

Religious gathering has 'ecumenical twist'

By Stephen Huba
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Today's annual meeting of the Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati will contain some interfaith firsts.

The meeting will start at Pleasant Ridge United Methodist Church, Ridge and Woodford roads, and conclude at Nativity of Our Lord Catholic Church across the street.

Cincinnati Islamic Center member Mini'amah Rashid will sing two original compositions.

All present — Jews, Christians and Muslims — will sing together the hymn "The

God of Abraham Praise." And, Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman, Hebrew Union College president, will give the evening's address, "The Religious Community's Responsibility for the Wider Community."

Coalition director the Rev. Duane Holm said holding the annual meeting in two churches was "a convenient symbol that started out of sheer necessity."

The Catholic church did not have room available for the 6 p.m. meal and business meeting, so that portion will be held in the United Methodist church. The meeting will move to the Catholic church at 7:30 p.m. for Rabbi Zimmerman's speech. "There's a nice

ecumenical twist to it," Rev. Holm said. "It's consistent with an ecumenical organization to do that."

MARCC is a coalition of 16 religious organizations in Cincinnati that seeks to influence local social policy.

This is also the first time there will be an official Muslim presence at the annual meeting.

The Cincinnati Islamic Center, a predominantly African-American mosque in Kennedy Heights, was accepted in November as the coalition's newest and only Muslim judiciary.