

## House to hear Muslim chaplain

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Duke University's Muslim chaplain will deliver the opening prayer for the U.S. House of Representatives today, an honor few clergy, and even fewer Muslim clergy, get.

Abdullah Antepli, appointed the university's first full-time Muslim chaplain in 2008, was invited to give the 10 a.m. prayer by Rep. David Price, a Democrat from Chapel Hill.

The Turkish-born chaplain is one of a dozen Muslim chaplains at U.S. universities, of which only a handful are full-time staff members. He directs religious programs for Duke's Muslim students and teaches in the Duke Divinity School and the Duke Islamic Studies Center.

Antepli said Price called the Duke Islamic Studies Center a few months ago and asked for a meeting with faculty members. The two developed a friendship that led to the invitation.

Each member of Congress is allowed to nominate one clergy person per session to give the opening prayer. North Carolina's congressional delegation has frequently taken advantage of the guest chaplaincy program. Last year, the Rev. Michael Cummings, past president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the first Native American to hold that post, was invited by Rep. Mike McIntyre, a Lumberton Democrat.

Guest chaplains are allowed no more than 150 words. Antepli said he was able to negotiate 188 words.

He said he will pray for members of Congress' health, and ask God to make their efforts to eliminate poverty, ignorance, hate and racism successful.

"I am deeply honored and humbled to be able to do this," said Antepli, 36. "It's wonderful that Congress, through their invitation, is acknowledging Duke's commitment to diversity and a pluralistic society."