
MASJID 1427 AH



Islamic Society of Greater Richmond (ISGR)

February 2006

Masjid

The **Word 'Masjid'** [Place of worship for Muslims] is derived from the Arabic verb '**sa-ja-da**' meaning to prostrate or bow down to worship Allah (SWT).

According to one Hadith "The [whole] earth is a Masjid for you, so wherever you are at the time of prayer, make your prostration there" [Sahih Bukhari, Vol 1, Book 7, no. 331].

The Qur'an makes it obligatory to build and maintain a place for worship, "The Masjid of Allah (SWT) shall be visited and maintained [amara] by those who believe in Allah (SWT) and the last day, and establish regular prayers..." [Al-Qur'an 9:18].

In another place in the Qur'an, "In houses (Masajid), which Allah has ordered to be raised (to be cleaned, and to be honored), in them His Name is glorified in the mornings and in the afternoons or the evenings" [Al-Qur'an 24:36]

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History of Local Masajid

Masjid Bilal: In the 1950s, Muslims from the East End got organized under Nations of Islam (NOI). They used to meet in Temple #24 located on North Avenue.

After the NOI split in 1975, the Muslims who joined mainstream Islam, start meeting at Shabaaz Restaurant on Nine Mile Road. By 1976, the Muslims used to meet in a rented church. They tried to buy this church, but due to financial difficulties the Muslims instead bought a old grocery store at Chimbarazoo Boulevard, the present location of Masjid Bilal. Initially, the place was called "Masjid Muhammad #24". Only by 1990 did the Muslims renamed it to "Masjid Bilal".

Petersburg Islamic Center: The community in Petersburg was part of the Nation of Islam (NOI) and the Masjid initially was called Muhammad Mosque. In 1983, after NOI split, the Muslims in the area formed the Petersburg Islamic Center. By 1985, they moved to the 1100 block of Washington street and later bought the current location at 503 Washington street. Since then, they have bought a lot in front of the current location and are planning to buy another lot in the back of the Masjid.

Islamic Center of Virginia (ICVA): In the late 1960s, some Muslim families used to meet at a rented church on Sundays and later on Fridays. The ICVA was established in 1973 as a non profit tax-exempt organization. With aggressive fund raising, ICVA was able to buy land on Buford road. Construction of the new Masjid began in early 1980s. Phase I was completed in 1984-85, Phase II (main musalla & school) in 1991, and Phase III (expansion of parking) in 2005.

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First Masjid of Islam: "The messenger of Allah [Prophet Muhammad pbuh] came to Madinah...ordered a Masjid to be built. Trees were [cut and thus] placed in rows towards qiblah (direction toward Makkah) and stones were set forth on both sides of the door..." [Sahih-al-Bukhari Vol I, no. 437].

Originally the Masjid was a rectangular enclosure approximately 60 x 70 cubits (distance from elbow to middle finger about 21 inches) with door pierced in the eastern and western walls. It contained a colonnade, a shaded porch supported by columns (zullah) consisting of palm trunk columns along the northern wall, where Muslims would gather to worship.

Sixteen or seventeen months after Hijrah, the qiblah was changed from Jerusalem to Makkah which altered the southern wall. A shaded portico was added along this wall from east to west facing Makkah which served as the qiblah.

The Masjid had adjacent residential quarters for Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and his family which can be entered through the sanctuary.

Northern zullah becomes the sanctuary for the poor to rest and pray. Many companions retire from material life to spend all their times in ibadat and were known as "ahl-al-Suffah".

The courtyard was commonly used as a civic space and on one occasion a group of Abyssinian performed a sword-and-lances dance. The Masjid was later used for Jummah (Friday Prayer), a minbar with three steps was added to make it easier for Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to be heard during the Khutbah (Friday Sermon).

In summary, the first Masjid of Islam was simple, open to all, and a center of all activities.

History of Masajid in North America: According to Chinese records, the first Muslims explorer to North America arrived in 1178. Many Muslim explorers came to North America before Columbus discovered America. In about 1863, Muslim immigrant from Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan

started arriving in North America. In 1915, Albanian Muslims build the first Masjid in North America. They established another Masjid in Connecticut. Earlier, the first 'white revert' Muhammad Alexandar Russell Web built a Masjid in New York. In 1926, Polish speaking Tartars build a Masjid in New York. In 1930, African Americans built a Masjid in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. The Masjid in Ross, North Dakota was also build in 1930s with 100 Muslims attending. Masjid was in the use until 1978.

The Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) released a study in 2001 with detailed profile on Masajid in North America. The study identified a total of 1209 Masajid for the survey. This study was compared with the one done in 1994. They found a 25% increase in the number of Masajid, a 94% increase in Jummah attendance, 300% increase in Muslims associated with the Masajid, (about 2 million since the study done in 1994). On average, each Masjid has 16 conversions per year.

The study found that the Masajid are relatively young, with most having been built recently. The Masajid have 33% South Asian, 30% African American, and 25% Arabs. The study found that 90% of the Masajid are attended by all major ethnic groups. Of the Masajid surveyed, 55% have no full time staff, and only 10% have more than two paid staff. In majority of Masajid, the leadership is compose of part-time volunteers who are employed elsewhere. In most, women are allowed to serve in the Masjid board.

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Local Masajid - continued from page 1**LIST OF MASAJIDS****Islamic Center of Prince Edwards**

300 Second Street, Farmville VA 23901
(434) 392-5174 (I mam's Work Phone)

Islamic Center of Virginia (ICVA)

1241 Buford Road, Richmond VA 23235
(804) 320-7333

Islamic Society of Greater Richmond (ISGR)

6324 Rigsby Road, Richmond VA 23226
(804) 673-4177

Masjid Bilal

400 Chimborozo Blvd, Richmond VA 23223
(804) 222-9825

Masjidullah of Richmond

2211 North Avenue, Richmond VA 23222
(804) 321-8864

Masjid ar-Rahman

1305 Hull Street, Richmond VA 23224
(804) 232-7640 (Store Across the street)

Petersburg Islamic Center

503 W. Washington St., Petersburg VA 23803
(804) 943-5199 (I mam's Mobile Phone)

Islamic Center of Prince Edwards, Farmville: In 1987 a group of brothers who moved to Farmville decided to establish a Masjid in the area. Initially they rented an apartment building on Main street. Many Muslims used to come from far away for prayers. Masjid changed its locations a few times before it moved to Second street. The congregation was finally able to buy the property in 2005.

Masjidullah: In 1990, a group of brothers from Masjid Bilal formed Masjidullah. Initially Masjidullah was located at 2209 North Avenue, but in June 1991 moved to the present location at 2211 North Avenue. Many Muslims joined together to renovate the building so it could be used as a Masjid. Since then, the Masjid has been working to establish the Muslim community in the area.

Masjid Rahman: From 1994, the Muslims in the area started using the room above the A&F Seafood Deli as a Masjid. The Muslims got together to renovate the facility and started worship services. Later the Masjid got registered as non profit organization. In 1997, the congregation bought a place across the street, a former furniture store, the present location of Masjid Rahman.

Islamic Society of Greater Richmond (ISGR): Muslims spend year or so looking for a land to build a Masjid in the West End. Finally on September 13th, 1997, they decided to rent a office building at 6325 Antler Road. After the property was sold to Home Depot, ISGR moved to its present location at 6324 Rigsby Road. ISGR is currently in the process of acquiring a permanent site.

[History of local Masajid was compiled from interviews of local Muslims and a journal paper "History of Islam Among the African American Muslims of Richmond" Muslim World, Vol LXXXIV, No. 3-4 July-October, 1994. This research was initially presented at ISGR as a weekly lecture on Mondays. Massajid are presented in chronological order.]



Jumma (Friday Prayer)

Islamic Center of Prince Edwards, Farmville
1:15 PM (April - Oct), 1:00 PM (Nov - Mar)

Islamic Center of Virginia (ICVA)
1:00 PM, 2:15 PM (April - Oct) 12:30 PM, 1:45 PM
(Nov - Mar)

Islamic Society of Greater Richmond (ISGR)
1:15 PM (After Zuhr prayer)

Masjid Bilal
1:15 PM

Masjidullah of Richmond
1:30 PM

Masjid ar-Rahman
1:30 PM

Petersburg Islamic Center
12:30 PM

Please contact the above Masajid for five daily congregational prayer timings. ❖

Islamic Schools

IORA Academy of Virginia

1241 Bufford Road
Richmond, VA 23235
(804) 327-8450

Islamic Home Schooling Academy

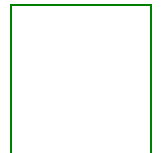
2710 Barton Avenue
Richmond, VA 23222
(804) 321-5658

Sr. Clara Muhammad School

400 Chimborazo Blvd.
Richmond, VA 23223
(804) 222-9825

Some Masajid offer Islamic Education for children on the Weekends. ❖

Islamic Society of Greater Richmond (ISGR)
6324 Rigsby Road
Richmond, VA 23226
www.isgr.org Email: info@isgr.org (804) 673-4177



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED