



# Chaplains Manual

*Prepared for posting  
on the website  
of the  
American Legion Auxiliary  
([www.legion-aux.org](http://www.legion-aux.org))*

**Compiled by  
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National Chaplain**



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## **DEDICATION**

This manual is dedicated to all the members of the American Legion Auxiliary and The American Legion Family.

It is the belief of our organization that God should be at the helm and guide us in our work, in our community, with our children, and with our veterans. As our forefathers of this great nation, America, we place our trust in God. We want to preserve our freedom to worship God as we feel is right and not take that right from others. We thank the veterans who have kept this a strong nation and a free nation. May we always be one nation under God.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Dear Chaplains,

Congratulations on your election or appointment. You will find the office of chaplain to be a most rewarding experience. Serving as chaplain can be a source of joy and deep satisfaction.

This American Legion Auxiliary Chaplain's Manual was created to aid you as you serve. You will find that it contains prayers for numerous occasions, memorial services, as well as other services such as the Four Chaplains service. The prayers and services you in this manual are to be used as guidelines in your work. If you have your own prayers and services, we encourage you to use them. It is not mandatory that you use this manual.

As chaplain, the most important thing you must remember is that the American Legion Auxiliary does not promote any one religion. Therefore, we must not offend anyone by promoting our own religion.

Information contained in this manual came from the Unit Handbook, The American Legion Chaplain's Prayer Manual, the Sons of The American Legion, Past National Chaplains, and members who have submitted prayers for the National President's Prayer Book.

Some of the subjects covered are a result of the National Chaplains Conference. The Department Chaplains had a need for up-to-date materials. They asked for instructions on how to hold a prayer book contest and how to judge the prayer books. They also asked for prayer and service suggestions.

If there is something you feel is missing and should be added, please contact the current National Chaplain. If there is something you feel is offensive, please contact the National Secretary.

It is my hope that this manual will help aid chaplains on all levels. It was assembled with love for God and Country and love for all members of the American Legion Auxiliary.



Although the material contained in this manual may be changed or altered to suit the user, it should be noted that care has been taken to revise and edit the material to reflect the true non-denominational and non-sectarian vies of the "Service to God and Country" program of The American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary.

For God and Country,  
Rosey Newman, 2005-2006 National Chaplain

## **DUTIES OF THE CHAPLAIN AND SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES**

The chaplain should attend all meetings and have an opening and closing prayer at each meeting. These prayers may come from the Unit Handbook, or they may be others she has found or written herself.

Chaplains are the spiritual leaders of their Unit and Department and have been chosen to conduct all religious services. It is expected that they will so dignify their office that all fellow members will follow their example.

The chaplain should be involved in many activities. Such as:

1. Reporting the names of members that are ill at meetings and presenting cards for all who are present to sign.
2. Sending a sympathy card to the family and if possible visiting the funeral home when a member passes away. She may also be assigned to ask the family if they wish to have a funeral dinner.
3. Being in charge of any religious services the Unit may have, such as draping the charter or performing memorial services.
4. Visiting members and veterans in nursing homes and hospitals.
5. Visiting members and veterans who are shut-in at home.
6. Keeping in contact with all Gold Star Mothers and remembering them during all holidays.
7. Sending cards to members and their family members.
8. Volunteering in community projects.
9. Making a prayer and devotional book.
10. Encouraging members to send prayers and devotional thoughts so that she can use them to make a prayer book.

## **HOW DO YOU MAKE A UNIT PRAYER BOOK?**

The Unit Chaplain does not make the Unit Prayer Book alone. It is a collection of prayers, devotional thoughts and poems that mean something special to the Unit members. The chaplain and members may write their own prayers or devotional thoughts for the book. All members should be asked to give the Unit chaplain something for the prayer book.

The chaplain may want to type the material she receives. She may want to add pictures that go along with the prayer, devotional thought or poem. She may decide to use some of the decorative paper that is currently available.



A great source for the prayer book is the church bulletins you receive on Sunday morning. Many churches use bulletins that have a picture on the cover with a devotional thought or bible verse. Ask members to save these for you. You can then neatly put the whole front page in your book. Be sure to glue it to another piece of paper.

Making a prayer book is a very delightful job. You will receive beautiful prayers, devotional thoughts and poems from many different people. Be sure to enjoy every minute of it.

If you are a Department Chaplain and you plan to have a competition, you will need to make a set of rules for judging Prayer Books and put them in the Department Plan of Work.

### **Suggested Rules for Prayer Book**

National no longer has the Prayer Book Contest but many departments do. First decide what is wanted in the prayer book and then decide on the rules.

Some suggestions are:

1. The book cover should be one bought from National Emblem Sales with the Auxiliary emblem on it.
2. The book cover can be a three ring binder and decorated.
3. Prayers, devotional thoughts, and poems are to be collected from members.
4. The book must be typed, handwritten or a mixture.
5. Pictures may be used.
6. The book must contain the Pledge of Allegiance and Preamble to the Constitution.
7. The book must contain a cover page with Chaplain's name, address, Unit number, District number and Department.
8. The book must have a dedication in the front.
9. For judging, a point system will be needed. Appoint so many points for neatness, grammar, content, a cover page, the Pledge of Allegiance, the Preamble to the Constitution, etc.

Remember, these are just suggestions. The final decisions for content and rules are totally up to each Department.

## **INVOCATION**

Almighty God, Father of all mankind and Judge over nations, we pray Thee to guide our work in this meeting and in all our days. Send Thy peace to our nation and to all nations. Hasten the fulfillment of Thy promise of peace that shall have no end.

We pray for all those who serve the people and guard the public welfare; that by Thy blessing they may be enabled to discharge their duties honestly and well. We pray for our members; that by Thy help they may observe the strictest justice; keep alight the fires of freedom, strive earnestly for the spirit of democracy, and preserve untarnished our loyalty to our country and to Thee.

We especially ask Thy blessing and comfort for all those who are suffering from the ravages of war. May our duty to them be ever alive in our minds. Finally, O God of Mercy, we remember lovingly



before Thee our departed heroes who received from Thee the reward of life everlasting. May their splendid example guide us, now and forever. Amen.

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Dear Lord, as we gather for this meeting, give us the use of Your gift of peace and understanding that we may approach the matters we must handle with sincere and just hearts. May you watch over and guide our tongues that we may not hurt our friends with whom we work for the betterment of our communities and our country. Keep us always true to the principles on which The American Legion was founded. We ask this in Your name. Amen.

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Dear Lord, We thank You for our meeting and for the many chairmen who report the many works our members are doing in our local communities.

We thank you for your guidance in our decision-making and we ask that we receive it again today. We thank you for the leadership we have received.

Thank You, Lord, for America and the service men and women who defend and protect our freedoms. Please be with them and keep them and their families in Your care. Please help there to be peace so they may soon return home. All this we ask in Your precious name. Amen.

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Almighty God, creator of all that has been, that is, and is still to come, be with us we pray, as we meet as members and friends of the American Legion Auxiliary. Be with us as we meet our commitments as members of this great organization. Guide our hearts and our minds as we work together for you, our God and our country. Amen.

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Heavenly Father, We thank You for our veterans, our service men and women, and The American Legion Family. Thank You for those present at this meeting this evening. Be with us and guide us as we make many important decisions that will affect all the members of our organization.

Help us to remember that everyone's opinions are essential in making the correct decisions. Help us to always remember our true purpose as the American Legion Auxiliary.

Bless and guide our President, as she conducts the meeting. Be with our service men and women and keep them in Your care. May all our decisions praise Your name. Amen.

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Dear Lord, we thank You for those present here today and the freedom we have to gather together to serve God and Country. Thank You for the members serving our veterans. We thank You and ask that You be with our many men and women serving in the military on foreign soil to protect our freedoms and the freedoms of others. Please be with their families and give them strength as they wait at home for their loved ones to return. Help there to be peace soon. May all that we do glorify Your name. Amen.

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Dear Lord, we thank You for America, our government leaders, and our veterans who gave so much. Thank You for the members of The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary. Help us to always remember we are here to serve God and Country. Thank You for our men and women serving in the military and please keep them in Your care.

Lord, we ask Your blessings for this meeting. Guide us in all we do and let all we do praise Your name. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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## BENEDICTION

O God from whom all holy desires, all right counsels and all just works do proceed, give to Thy servants that peace which the world cannot give; that our hearts may be disposed to obey Thy commandments, and the fear of enemies being moved, our times, by Thy protection, may be peaceful.

O God, who will not let the nations who believe in Thee to be overwhelmed by any peril; permit them to receive the prayers and offerings of Thy servants, that in Thy mercy Thou moulds'. Grant peace to all people and make them secure against all their enemies.

O God, the author and lover of peace, to know whom is to live, to serve whom is to reign; shield Thy people from all assaults, so that we who trust in Thy protection may fear no foe. We ask this through God's Name. Amen.

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Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your guidance in the American Legion Auxiliary. We thank You for the officers and members who have made important decisions for our organization. Thank You for Madame President, our officers and chairmen and our past presidents. Thank you for our service men and women and ask that You protect them as they protect us. Please be with those present as they go out and enjoy fellowship together and deliver them home safely. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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Dear Lord, send us away tonight in harmony, peace and good will to spread the spirit of our love for our country. Be with us and guide us in our labor for our fellowman. Amen.

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God, we ask Your presence with each of us as we begin our journeys to our homes, that we may have a safe return. Be with us until we meet again. Amen.

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Accept our praise, O Lord, for the blessings of this day and hour. Give us, we pray, a willing attitude and grateful hearts. Amen.

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Grant, O Lord, that as Americans and Auxiliary members we may continue to help our veterans and those in need. We thank you for these people assembled here, and pray you will bless their many works. Be with us, we pray. Amen.

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Lord, thank You for the fine leadership we have in our unit and thank You for the fellowship and the new friends we have made.

Our business meeting is now ending and You have guided us well. May we use what we have learnt here to help with our work for our veterans, our children and our nation.

Please be with our service men and women and keep them safe and return them home to their loved ones soon.

Please watch over us and keep us safe as we return to our homes and loved ones.

All this we ask in Your name. Amen.

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As we depart one from the other, May God bless us and keep us. Into His gracious protection we commit ourselves. May He be near us to defend us, with us to refresh us, around us to preserve us, before us to guide us, behind us to justify us and above us to bless us and keep us from all evil. Amen.

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Dear Heavenly Father, be with us as we leave this place. Grant us a peaceful night of rest as we prepare for our departure. Be with us and keep us in thy grace as we go our separate ways that we return to our homes safely. As always, we pray for the service men and women who serve our nation and the families who wait for their return. Keep them safe. These things we ask in Thy holy name. Amen

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Dear Father, we give thanks that we have again had the opportunity to come together. We are grateful for this time of work and fellowship. We pray that what we have done has been only for the betterment of those we serve. As we prepare to leave, each to go our separate ways, we pray once again for those who serve our country; that they may return to their loved ones safely. Now, dear Father, keep us in your grace and be with us until we meet once again. Amen

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Dear Lord, thank You for the fellowship we have received here today. We ask that You be with our guest(s) and keep His/Her/Them safe. Be with our members and keep them in Your care. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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## **PRAYER**

### **Grace or Blessing for Meal (Please remain seated)**

Heavenly Father, we thank You for those who have prepared the food we are about to partake of and for those who serve it. May the food and fellowship strengthen us to serve You better. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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We are thankful, Father, for all the blessings You have given to us and for the fellowship we have shared with those here. We ask that You heal those who could not be with us due to sickness. As always, we pray for our service persons and for their safe return to their families. We thank You, Lord, for this meal, for those who prepared it and for those with whom we share it. We ask that we be strengthened with Thy grace as we strive to keep American "One Nation Under God". Amen.

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For the joy of life we are grateful to Thee, Oh God, for the fun we have as we share with one with another we thank You. We pray for the food we are about to receive – will be used to strengthen us to better serve You. Amen

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Dear Lord, may this meal that we share be seasoned from above with Thy blessings and Thy grace – but most of all Thy love. Amen.

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Blessed are You, O Lord, God, King of the Universe; You bring forth food from the earth, and sustain all Your creatures with goodness, mercy, and grace. Blessed are You, who give food to all. Amen.

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Bless us, O Lord, and these gifts, which we are about to receive from Thy bounty, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Bless, O Lord, for this food to our use, and us to Your service; and keep us ever mindful of the needs of others. Amen.

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Our Father, how great Thou art – You have blessed us in so many ways and we thank You – for the opportunity to unite in this moment of prayer, this special privilege we have in America. We ask Your blessing as we strive to keep America – “On Nation Under God.” Amen.

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### **A Soldier's Prayer**

Lord, Bless the wives who grieve alone and comfort the mothers who mourn their own. Give solace to the fathers who lost their sons on foreign shores and in places unknown. Lord strengthen the resolve of we who remain to see that they did not die in vain. Amen.

Author: Maj. Gen. James B. Middleton

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Dear Lord, There is a young man or woman far from home,  
Called to serve their nation in a time of war;  
Sent to defend our freedom on some distant foreign shore.  
We pray You keep them safe,  
We pray You keep them strong,  
We pray You send them safely home,  
For they've been away so long.  
Bless those who await their safe return and those who mourn the lost.  
Bless those who serve this country well,  
No matter what the cost.  
God, bless America and her heroes ... and thank You for the privilege to serve. Amen.

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Heavenly Father, bless those who cry out for peace in times of war. Bless those who speak of love in times of hate. Bless those who move with courage in times of fear. Bless those who stand for justice in times of retribution. Bless those who keep the faith in times of uncertainty. Bless those who seek out good in times of evil. Bless those who believe in life in times of death. Amen.

Author Unknown

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Heavenly Father, We thank You for Your love and forgiveness. Thank You for our young people, our families, our jobs and our service men and women. We ask that You guide our young people, as they are our future leaders. Please be with our service men and women and keep them in Your care. We ask that You be with our service men and women who have returned home and help them as they try to put their lives back to normal. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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Dear Lord, we thank you for our many blessings You have given us. Thank You for our veterans and our service men and women. Thank You for America where we may worship You as we choose. Please be with our government leaders and the American Legion Family as they try to keep those rights strong. Please protect our service men and women and their families at home. May there be peace soon. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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Heavenly Gather, we thank You for all You have done for us in years pass. We thank you for Your guidance and for the trials You have given us to make us strong. We ask that You give us peace around the world and strengthen our nation. Protect our service men and women and their families and guide our world leaders. Be with the American Legion Family and our leaders that we will glorify Your name in all that we do. In Your Holy name we pray. Amen.

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### **Our Military**

Most gracious Heavenly Father, thank You for the men and women of our armed forces. Protect them as they protect us, defend them as they defend us. Encourage and strengthen their spirit, soul and body in the execution of their duties and responsibilities. May they be mentally and physically strong as they face the challenges of combat. Under grid them with Your spirit and might when they are called upon to endure the hardships of battle.

Thank You Lord, for providing America with the best trained, equipped and lead military force in the world today. Fill them with Your saving grace, and the gospel of peace that they may be shining examples of Your love. In Your precious name we pray. Amen.

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### **The Families of Our Military**

Heavenly Father, we thank you for our service men and women who are protecting us here at home and preserving our freedoms. Please protect them and keep them in Your care.

Please be with the families of these service men and women and protect them as they await the return of their loved one. Give them strength physically and emotionally as they too have hardships here at home. Help them financially and keep their spirits up. Be with those who have lost their loved ones and now have but memories. Thank You, Lord for our brave service men and women, and thank You, Lord, for their families who wait at home. Bless them all and protect them so that they may once again be united as a family. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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### **Veterans Day/Thanksgiving**

Lord, thank You for Your everyday gifts to us. We have so much to be thankful for, not just on Thanksgiving Day, but each new day that You give us. We give You our thanks, Lord.

Our prayers of Thanksgiving join those of our forefathers. God, You know the words we so often speak; but more than that, You know the secrets of our beam. We thank You for this day.

Lord, we pray for peace in the world. We thank You for people who stand for truth and that which is right. Give Your blessing, Lord to our veterans who have given so much for our freedom. Remember those who have given the supreme sacrifice for we pray they will never be forgotten.

Be with us, we pray. Amen.

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Our Heavenly Father we thank Thee for this day with its opportunities for service. We thank Thee for sustenance and Thy guiding hand — for friends, companions and loved ones. Send Thy blessing upon our dear ones wherever they may be. To those in sorrow, reveal unto them



the comfort and humaneness of Thy tender mercy. Help us all to be more constant in our praise and obedience to Thee. Amen.

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We acknowledge our gratitude to Thee, Our Father, for all good gifts. May we prove by our use of them that Thy trust has been well bestowed. May we be ever constant and faithful in our service of mercy, comfort and cheer to those veterans whose bodies and minds have been maimed in battle, to the needy families, the widows and orphans, and all who in anyway have suffered or are now suffering from the honors of war. May our ministrations to them and our activities in their behalf always be pleasing to Thee and be guided by Thy holy will. Amen.

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## Christmas

Our Heavenly Father, on this holy Christmas day, our hearts are filled with solemn joy and gratitude for the gift of the Savior, Christ the Lord. For the fullness of His grace, and for His redeeming love, we humbly join in ceaseless praise and thanksgiving.

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In Thy infinite m e r c y , Our Father, grant to us and to all others, the spirit of kindness, goodwill and charity. Hasten the day when men shall again hear the angel chorus paying homage to Thee, the Prince of Peace, singing again the glad tidings "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will." Amen.

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We beseech Thee, O Lord, that we, who rejoice in celebrating the nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, may never cease to be grateful to Thee for Thy divine gift. May our actions at all times be directed toward good works and helpful ministrations, which are pleasing to Thee.

Bless us all, we earnestly pray; gladden our hearts anew with the joyful tidings of this holy day. Let the day soon dawn when men shall permit Thy love to right every wrong, and when truth and justice and love shall overrule all the affairs of men, that here and everywhere there shall prevail the glorious message of the first Christmas morning "Peace on earth to men of good will" through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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## The New Year

Lord, as we begin a new year, let us resolve to keep a promise, seek out a forgotten friend, listen, laugh, brighten the heart of a child, encourage the young, appreciate our elders, express our gratitude, take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of life, And speak your love to others.

Dear Lord, guide us in the new year to grow closer together in our families, in our Units, in our world. Let us always strive to bring peace to the world. Let us live e a c h day to the fullest.

For all the blessings of the year, we give you thanks, O Lord. Amen.

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## Easter

We thank Thee, O God, for the day in which life and immortality were brought to light through the resurrection of our blessed Lord from the dead. Evermore in heart and mind we shall sing praises of joy to Him and we shall show our love for Him b y o u r thoughts, words and deeds, our helpful service to others, and faithful performance of all our obligations.



We earnestly ask Thee to bless and preserve all whom we love; comfort and aid all in trouble and distress. We offer our thanksgiving for all graces and favors we have received in the name of Him Who rose triumphant from the dead. Amen.

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On this glorious day, O Lord, our hearts are raised to Thee in joy and gladness as we celebrate the resurrection of Thy Son from the dead. May His loving kindness and His blessings rest on us and on our dear ones.

Grant us, O Lord, that our devotion to Thee may reflect our happiness at this glorious season, and may we all enjoy sweet fulfillment of the promise of this day. We pray that love of Christ, the Risen King, may abide in our hearts forevermore and fill us with the joyousness and peace of Eastertide. Amen.

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### Memorial Service

Almighty God, grant to us the grace to remember with love and reverence our dear departed members. Grant peace and eternal rest to those who have gone before us. We ask for consolation for those who sorrow, and that you bestow upon us your everlasting blessing.

We are thankful for the lives whom we have remembered here today. May their memory serve as an inspiration to us.

Be with us and bless us, we pray. Amen.

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### Memorial Day

Dear God, as we approach Memorial Day, may we honor and remember those who died that we might live in freedom. We remember our departed loved ones gone on before. Those that we honor will be a part of our lives forever.

O God, we are mindful of your great love for us. We are thankful for that love. We praise you for the blessings of love and friendship, for our families and our homes. Amen.

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Lord, be with us and be our guide in time of need. We ask your support in all we do. Help us to reach out to one another, to communicate and show real care for others. Help us to be open to new experiences of personal growth and challenge. May we be alert to the opportunities before us each day.

Accept our thanks, Lord, for the leaders of our Auxiliary, for their work this year, and for their leadership. As they have worked for God and Country we give them our grateful thanks. Amen.

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May you, our members, bring joy and happiness to others through your smile, a warm hand clasp and kindly deeds. Be with us today and give us hope. Amen.

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### Fourth of July

God, we remember the courage and determination of our founding fathers. We remember the brave patriotic men and women who gave so much for us. We thank them that we are a free nation and a free people. It is through them that we carry forward the ideals of Justice, Freedom and Democracy.

Lord, we pray for our elected officials; for sound government and just laws. Lord, make us ever proud to be Americans.



We ask that you would rekindle the flame of compassion within us so that we might show real care for our fellowman. Teach us to be sensitive to the needs of others\_ Grant that as Americans and as Legion. Family, we may continue to help our veterans and those in need. Be with us and guide us, we pray. Amen.

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Lord, as we work in our great organization, help us look beyond the outward appearances to the person underneath. Teach us to love and accept them. Forgive our critical thoughts and harsh words; replace our impatience with your love and forgiveness.

Open our eyes to the needs of the world and fill our hearts with love. Make us sensitive to the issues of poverty; racial, sexual and age discrimination; war and peace; pollution and environment. O God, help us to recognize and grasp the opportunities for service that each one of us might make a difference.

Let us reach out and touch someone with a helping hand. Help us to never lose sight of your continual guidance in our lives as we work for our fellowman. Amen.

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## Installation

God, this is the beginning of a new year of work in our beloved American Legion Auxiliary. Let us speak words of encouragement to our newly elected officers. Be with them, God as they work to lead us in working on all the good programs we hold so important.

Remember each one of our members, for they are needed in their own Units for the work in their communities. Let us all work for God and Country together in harmony and love.

Dear God, teach us to think in wisdom and act in love and caring for others. Amen.

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## Gift Shop Opening

O God, we come with grateful thanks today for all those Unit members who are represented here in these lovely gifts for others. Our members have given their time and effort to provide this beautiful Gift Shop for our hospitalized veterans and their families. Love and care are exemplified by these members who serve so willingly to provide a happier Christmas for the veterans and their loved ones. We thank You, Father, for the joy they bring.

Let us remember the lonesome and often forgotten individuals and give them the joy of packages, visitors and carols.

O God, we wish that we could all keep the same joy of this day overflowing all year. Keep our hearts joyful, Lord, we pray. Amen.

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## Old Irish Verse

May the road rise up to meet you – May the wind be always at your back, May the sun shine warm upon your face, And the rains fall soft upon the fields, And until we meet again, May God hold you in the palm of His hand. Amen.

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## Gold Star Mothers or Members (Teas or social gatherings)

Dear Heavenly Father, we are gathered here this day to honor the Gold Star Mothers (or members) of this community – women who have given a loved one in our country's defense.



Their sacrifice has been great. Keep them always under Thy loving care and tender mercy. May their courageous spirit and unselfish patriotism inspire us, O Lord, to greater service for our beloved country and for Thee.

May the beauty and luster of the Gold Star which they so proudly wear ever remain a challenging symbol to us, and, as their loved ones gave their "last full measure of devotion" to preserve the ideals of free America, may we, in grateful remembrance, ever remain steadfast in our devotion to Thee, O Lord, and may the time be not far distant when, throughout the world, there may be righteousness and peace. Amen.

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Our Father Who art in Heaven, we thank Thee for the opportunity of meeting here this day, and especially that we may pay reverent tribute to these Gold Star mothers (or members) whose loved ones died for us in war's heavy toll. Let us always honor the memory of these brave men and all of our heroic dead, for their supreme service and their incomparable sacrifice.

Our Father, may we work side by side, serving constructively for the security and progress of America, with these valiant women over whose hearts the Gold Star gleams as an evidence of their own faith, their courage and their high spirit of patriotic devotion. Very earnestly do we pray for the hastening of the day when, among all peoples of the earth, Thy Kingdom will come, Thy will be done, and all the earth shall seek refuge in Thee. Amen.

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### **Junior Graduation**

Our Heavenly Father, we ask Thy blessing on these Junior members who are now being received into our Senior group. May the high and lofty principles and ideals for which our organization stands inspire them and strengthen them to fulfill all their obligations and duties as loyal patriotic American citizens, obedient to Thy will at all times. May they be true leaders among their friends and associates and thus reflect the training and dignity which membership in our organization affords them. Receive them under Thy loving care and protection now and forevermore. Amen.

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Almighty God, as these Junior girls assume the duties of Senior membership, may they have more firmly implanted in their minds and hearts the unselfish and courageous service and sacrifice of a loved one in our country's defense which has earned for them this coveted privilege of membership in our organization. May they always remain loyal to God and country, and responsive to whatever obligations or duties may devolve upon them, at all times revealing by their thoughts, words and actions a constant devotion to Thy teachings as expressed in the Golden Rule. Amen.

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### **Executive Committee Meeting**

Our Heavenly Father, we ask that Thy blessing may rest upon us as we gather here for this meeting. May our deliberations have Thy divine guidance, and may we now and in the days to come rededicate our organization and ourselves to the advancement of our sacred ideals, ever remembering that the American Legion Auxiliary's principal service is for God and country. Direct us so that we may perform our duties faithfully and efficiently; and abundantly bless us all, forevermore. Amen.

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We thank thee, O God, that we are privileged to come together for this Executive Committee meeting. Direct our thoughts and our deliberations so that we may exhibit fair judgment and understanding of the matters submitted and trials of a world at war, endow us with fortitude, courage and faith. Bless those gone away from our homes into the service of our country. Be their companion in danger, their solace in pain, and at death, grant them eternal rest in Thy heavenly Kingdom. Continue to surround us all with Thy loving care. Amen.

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### **Legion Birthday (For joint observance of Unit and Post)**

Heavenly Father, bless us as we are gathered here tonight to celebrate the anniversary of the birthday of The American Legion, that great organization which has continued to serve America for the past \_\_\_ y e a r s . We thank Thee for the opportunity which has been given to the American Legion Auxiliary to have a part in everything which The American Legion has done and in sharing its endeavors.

Grant that the patriotic enthusiasm which inspired these legionnaires to serve our country in time of war may continue to guide their activities at all times, and that the principles of Justice, Freedom, Loyalty and Democracy may be preserved for a happy and secure America. Bless all of our effort for God and country, and may we continue to be mutually helpful to each other. Amen.

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Almighty God, we thank Thee for permitting us to gather here for the purpose of celebrating the anniversary of the founding of The American Legion. We thank Thee for granting to the mothers, wives, sisters, daughters, granddaughters, great-granddaughters and grandmothers of these men the opportunity to share their unselfish program of service consecrated to God and country.

Deepen our earnestness and devotion to the high ideals for which our two organizations stand. May our numbers be increased and may we, as members of these two great patriotic organizations, with Thy help, rededicate ourselves anew to our work. Lead us fearlessly, courageously and nobly, increasing our usefulness and tempering our work with constant prayer for peace in our hearts. Amen.

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### **Dedication of Honor Roll (If Unit is asked to have a part in the ceremony)**

O God, bless those whose names appear upon this Honor Roll and all who have gone from our homes and hearts into the service of our Country. Grant to them patience in the long wait, hope in the dark hours, steadiness in victory and loyalty in defeat. We thank Thee for the unselfish devotion of those who have sacrificed their lives that we might enjoy the liberties for which our forefathers fought.

Especially, Dear Lord, let Thy blessing abide this day upon those of us whose lot it is to be at home in rime of war. Teach all the ancient wisdom that "They also serve who only stand and wait". Amen.

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Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we ask that Thy blessing may be bestowed upon those whose names appear on this Honor Roll, who have relinquished home and happiness and all drat they hold dear, and accepted the call to service so that Justice, Freedom and Democracy might survive, and so that the name and fame of this land we love may be kept unblemished. O God, keep them in Thy gracious care wherever they go and wherever duty calls them and, if



it be Thy will, bring them safely home. May Thy merciful blessing rest upon those departed heroes who have answered the last summons. Amen.

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Strengthen our devotion to Thy teachings and make us worthy of the citizenship, which these young people are fighting to maintain. Bless those in authority in our city, state and nation with wisdom to know and strength to do their duties honestly and well. Hear our prayer, Our Father, help us and bless us. Amen.

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### **The War Bereaved**

Almighty God, sustain with Thy healing power all those whose loved ones have given their lives in the service of our country. Redeem, we pray Thee, the pain of their bereavement, that knowing their loss to be the price of our freedom, they may remember the gratitude of the nation for which they gave so costly a sacrifice. And grant, O Lord, that we may highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, and that out of the agony of the present hour there may arise a new and better world in which Thy will shall rule. Amen.

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### **In Wartime**

O God, our refuge and our strength, we beseech Thee to guide and protect our nation in the fiery trial of war. Grant us true repentance, and take away the offenses of our people, that with clean hands and pure hearts we may go forward in Thy name. Save us from hatred, cruelty and malice. Imbue our leaders with courage and wisdom. Strengthen and protect our defenders by land, by sea, and by air, and suffer no dishonor to stain our arms. Safeguard and multiply the ministries of mercy; heal the wounded, receive the dying, comfort the bereaved. Bless those who labor in field and factory, in office and home, for our country's welfare. Make a speedy end of tyrannies in the earth, and deliver the desolate and oppressed of all nations. Hasten the advent of a righteous peace, and with great might establish Thy Kingdom. Amen.

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### **Peace**

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

O , Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

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## **CEREMONIES**

### **Funeral Service**





The American Legion Auxiliary service is non-sectarian. Therefore, it may be varied in accordance with the religious belief of the deceased. The wish of the family of the deceased, and of the officiating pastor, should be respected.

**Music.**

**Prayer.**

**Unit President:** "Death has entered our ranks and members of (name of Unit) of the American Legion Auxiliary are here to pay tribute to one who has been called to the High Command."

**Chaplain:** "Let us pray. God of infinite Love and Mercy, draw near to us in this hour of grief. Open our hearts to Thy comforting presence and our eyes to the realities of Eternal Life. May the darkness of death give place to the dawn of eternity, and the present pangs of separation to the joys of future reunion.

"Grant us, O Father, that our present sorrow may bring us closer to Thee, and that our hearts may be cleansed and purified by Thy grace. We thank Thee for the understanding that death does not really separate us from the departed. Help us to look beyond the grave and see the glories of that new Life. Help us to know that our loved ones who have passed on are not dead, but are living and enjoying Thy Grace and love more than when here upon earth.

"O Father, we earnestly pray for our departed member, that she may enter into all the joys of the life beyond. We pray that by cherishing her memory and by cultivating Thy presence, we, too, may grow up into that more perfect Life in which death has no power and sin no part. Amen."

Or this:

"Let us pray: "Lord of all life, who ever lives, again Thou has taught us the measure of our days. We are strangers with Thee, and sojourners as our fathers were. Our days are as a shadow and there is none abiding. But Thou abides. Thy years fail not. Thou changes never. A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. The grass withers, the flower fade, but Thy word endures forever. And therein is our help and hope.

"Thou heals the broken in heart and binds up their wounds. Comfort Thou Thy people. In their sorrow may there be no bitterness, no doubt of Thine eternal goodness. Have them to know that Thou hast not mocked us with this stubborn hope of life eternal; that having created and cared for us Thou wilt not desert us to the dust; that Thou holds us with a love unending; that our dead are in Thy keeping; and that Thou are able to do for them above all that we ask or think.

"Until for us also the day break and the shadows flee away, grant us to so live that our lives may honor the members who have gone before us. Thus together may we come to that City which Thou has prepared for them that love Thee and keep Thy commandments. For Thine own name's sake we pray. Amen."

**Music.**

**Unit President:** "Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord."

**Unit Chaplain:** "And let perpetual light shine upon her."

**Unit President:** "May she rest in peace."

**Unit Chaplain:** "Amen."

**Unit President:** "May her soul and the souls of all faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace."

**Unit Chaplain:** "Amen."

**Prayer.**

**Chaplain:** "Let us pray. O God, our heavenly Father. who ushered Thy children into life and recalls the soul to Thyself in Thine own good time, we thank Thee for the sweet memory of those dear to us who have been gathered to their fathers. We



praise Thee for all the hallowed influences of our lives and for the rest and peace, which they have found with Thee. May they still be a joy and an inspiration to us; may they quicken us to a more useful life, to higher hopes and greater contentment of spirit, so that in our departure we, too, may leave a memory and example that shall serve as a hope and inspiration to those who follow us.

"Send Thy consolation, we pray Thee, to those who today recall the loss of loved ones. Speak peace to hearts that are wounded by recent bereavement. Comfort them with the thought of Thy wisdom and justice, which Thou in Thy fatherly love, grants to Thy trusting children.

"In final submission to Thy will and in joyous hope of life everlasting, we praise Thee in whose hands are the souls of all creatures and the spirits of all flesh."

**Unit President:** "Extolled and hallowed by the name of God throughout the world which He has created, and which He governs according to His righteous will. Just is He in all His ways, and wise are all His decrees.

"May His kingdom come, and His will be done in all the earth."

**Unit Chaplain:** "Praised be the Lord of life, the righteous Judge forevermore. Amen."

*(Music if desired.) Scripture. Appropriate portion, such as the 90th, 103rd or 130th Psalms — Donay version, 89th, 102nd, or 129th; Jewish Publication Society version, Psalms 15th, 23rd, or 91st.*

**Unit President:** "This final moment of visible presence with the one who has left us is sacred. Let us not remember her in anguish, for she would not have it so. Tears or words of sympathy cannot bring back the comfort of those loving hands, or the music of the voice that is stilled. Only solemn pride in her service is theirs who live to remember.

"To those who are left behind, we realize how futile are mere words to express our deep and abiding sympathy in their loss. May they feel that she is at rest and in endless peace.

"Surely there is an after-life for all who have been loyal and true: a life to which light and peace shall come, where the burden shall be lifted and the heartache shall cease, where the love, the hope, and the fulfillment that escapes us here shall be given to us to be ours forever."

*When there is a service at the home, the President and members may at this point place a poppy or carnation within or upon the coffin.*

*Benediction by Chaplain, if desired.*

**Unit President:**

"Goodbye, till morning come again,  
We part, if part we must, with pain, But night is short, and hope is sweet,  
Faith fills our hearts, and wings our feet  
And so we sing the old refrain,  
Goodbye, till morning come again.  
"Goodbye, till morning come again,  
The thought of death brings weight of pain  
But could we know how short the night  
That falls, and hides them from our sight,  
Our hearts would sing the old refrain,  
Goodbye, till morning come again."

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**Chaplain:** We gather this day to remember.



**Members:** We come to affirm our faith and our hope. We come longing for the Caring One who calls us from darkness into the light of love.

**Chaplain:** We gather this day to be drawn together.

**Members:** Embraced by nurturing arms of all who walk along this path we call life.

**Chaplain:** We gather this day in sadness,

**Members:** remembering our friends and loved ones who have died. We gather before You, O Lord, in praise and song to seek Your healing for all who live in fear and pain.

**Chaplain:** We give praise for the gift of healing and love.

**Members:** We gather today as one Auxiliary to remember our members and to lift up and praise Your holy name. We seek to live our lives in courage and strength and hope. Move us from suffering to healing; out of darkness to light; and from silence to celebration.

**Music.**

**Prayer.**

**Chaplain:** We give thanks, O God, for our friends – those whom we love and those who love us – for in our love we meet You!

**Members:** Come Spirit of God, to the friendless, the needy, the lonely, and the brokenhearted. Empower us as those You love. We give thanks, and for the quenching of our deep thirsts.

**Chaplain:** Come Spirit of God to the hungry and thirsty. Empower us as those You love.

**Members:** We give thanks Gentle Maker of our earth, for this fragile planet; for all that grows; for the beauty of clear lakes and summer green; for the music of birds, for the sweet aroma of flowers; for the rhythm of seasons and change, of living and dying; for the resources of our common wealth!

**Chaplain:** Come Spirit of God, to this creation groaning from environmental stress. Empower us as those You love.

**Members:** We give You thanks, O Empowering God, for our sisters and brothers in all nations – black, brown, yellow, red and white; older and younger, richer and poorer, spouses, parents, children, teachers and learners, workers in many tasks, siblings in a common home.

**Chaplain:** Come Spirit of God; to the poor and oppressed. Empower us as those You love.

**Members:** We give You thanks, for teaching us, calling us, encouraging us, bearing us into our vocations as lovers of humanity and all creation. We thank You for those who go with us, and for those who have gone before us.

**Chaplain:** Come Spirit of God, stand beside us. Empower us as those You love.

**Members:** We give thanks to You, O Loving God of justice, a lover of humanity, who opened His heart to Your power and in doing, helped us see that You are here, an eternally active source of our well being and common good.

**Chaplain:** Come Spirit of God, to us and to those who cannot be here today. Empower us as those You love.

*Light a candle and then give any memorial tribute.*

**Music.**

**Prayer.**

**Chaplain:** Dear Lord, help us always to remember that You are for us, therefore, who would dare be against us. Through You we can gather strength and face tomorrow no matter what it may bring. Help us to always remember You are but a prayer away. Thank You, Lord, for Your grace and forgiveness. We love You Lord. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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## **At the Graveside**



*If no previous American Legion Auxiliary service has been held, the service for church chapel or home may be read at the grave, prior to the following committal.*

**Unit President:** "Forasmuch as it has pleased God to take unto Himself the soul of our departed member (name), we therefore place these poppies, the memorial flower of the American Legion Auxiliary, in her memory."

*Chaplain places poppies on casket or in some designated place.*

**Chaplain:** "The Lord bless and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace, both now and evermore. Amen."

**Benediction.**

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### **Memorial Service for Auxiliary Members — Short Form**

**Music.**

**Prayer.**

**President:** "Death has entered our ranks and we pause to pay tribute to those of our members who have passed to the Great Beyond during the past year.

"We shall keep in hallowed memory the lives of these members whom we have loved and `lost awhile.' We shall strive to pattern our lives after their zeal for patriotism and their devotion to duty, and we rededicate ourselves to the unfinished work which their hands began."

*As each name is called, a candle is lighted or a white flower placed in a low bowl while soft music is played.*

**Memorial Chairman:**

In God's great garden of our lives,  
Some rain is sure to fall,  
But after that He sends the sun  
To triumph over all  
And so when sorrow comes to us  
And teardrops cloud our day  
He sends us strength to bear our load  
And light to guide our way:

**President:** "The Chaplain will offer prayer."

*Three raps of the gavel for membership to stand.*

**Chaplain:** "Let us pray. We give Thee thanks for the good examples of all those Thy servants who, having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labors. Have us to know that we shall be remembered for what we have done for others, not what others have done for us. Each one of us exerts an influence upon those with whom we come in contact. As we go along the years, a single act of advice, encouragement, or caution, may decide a question of usefulness and happiness for another. O God, whose presence is everywhere and whose mercy never fails, we magnify Thee for Thy gifts, especially for the promise of the peace, which passes all understanding. We commit ourselves to Thee. Amen."

**TAPS or Solo.**

*One rap of the gavel for members to be seated.*

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### **Draping the Charter**



When a Unit is deprived of one or its members by death, it is customary to drape the Unit charter with black crepe during the period of mourning. There is no set time for how long the Charter is draped. The following ceremony is suggested for the draping of the charter.

**President:** "We have assembled here at the call of our Maker who has taken from us one of our beloved leaders. We have come to give, by simple token, official expression of the grief of the Unit of ..... Let us first bow our heads in prayer."

*Chaplain offers a brief prayer.*

**President:** "We stand before the document which gives our Unit life and being. Under its authority years of devoted service were given by ..... She contributed greatly to its significance. Her service is ended, but the results of her loyal efforts will go on and on for our American Legion Auxiliary and for God and the country which the Auxiliary serves.

"It is therefore fitting that about our charter we should drape this crepe of black, an expression of the sorrow that is in our hearts and of the mourning of the Unit of ..... over its great loss. (Drapes the charter.) Now we will ask God's blessing for our departed friend and co-worker, then go silently to carry forward the tasks to which she was giving so much when called away."

*Chaplain gives a brief concluding prayer.*

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**Other Ceremonies**

*The following commemoration ceremonies are under the direction of The American Legion.*

- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Veteran's Day

**Memorial Service**

**TAPS**

*Any officer or member other than those designated may be assigned to parts in the memorial service.*

**Unit President:** "We have come to that time set aside in our program, to pay tribute to the memory of those members of the American Legion Auxiliary who have answered the call of our Heavenly Father during the past year. The rich blessings of their lives of Service to God and Country inspire us to rededicate ourselves anew in their memory."

**Unit Chaplain:** "Many years ago a group of women had a dream. They visioned the formation of an organization that could render SERVICE to others — an organization to give a hand of love and comfort to the wife, the mother or the orphan of the hero dead and to those in sickness. Those valiant women, with the true spirit and ambition of pioneers, surged forward to great heights and their dreams became a reality, The AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY. An organization founded on the sacred principles that there is no rank among us; no distinction as to color, race or creed, but rather the wish, the desire and the firm determination to be of SERVICE to others. As we observe a quiet moment to pay tribute, by word and song, to the memory of those beloved members whom Our Heavenly Father, in His Infinite wisdom hath called Home; those whose lives have reflected much glory for us; we believe it is a time for rededicating our SERVICES and ourselves for 'GOD AND COUNTRY.' It is time for remembering that death is not the end, rather it is the beginning of a new life to be lived in the presence of our Lord.

"As we assume the unfinished tasks of these departed members, may we consecrate that task as a living memorial within ourselves; a firm determination to so live our lives that our priceless heritage,



won for us at so great a cost, shall be ours to uphold, to defend, to pass along to those who shall follow in our footsteps."

**Memorial Chairman:**

"There comes a time for all of us, when we must say Goodbye,  
But Faith and Hope and Love and Trust can never, never die;  
Although the curtain falls at last, is that a cause to grieve?  
The future's fairer than the past if only we believe  
And trust in God's eternal care. So when the Master calls  
Let's say that life is still more fair, although the curtain falls."

**Solo.** (*"You'll Never Walk Alone," or an appropriate piano solo is suggested.*)

**Unit Chaplain:**

"A child or loved one to us loaned;  
Was ever by the Father owned;  
Allotted time they're ours to keep;  
When God reclaims, we'll trust, not weep."

"Deep within our hearts will remain the sainted memory of those members whose names shall be engraved on the pages of our BOOK OF MEMORIES," as we honor them today."

*Unit Chaplain reads the names of all deceased Unit Members Deposits white and colored flowers in their memory.*

**Gold Star Mothers:** "To those members whose lives had been saddened by the sacrifice of War, but whose Loyalty and Devotion to the American Legion Auxiliary, in order that they might be of service to others, has ever been an inspiration, a guiding light to all. We pay homage to their memory. "May they live together in Faith and Love and with the Hope of Divine Blessing, which is immortality."

*Place flowers for deceased Gold Star Mothers.*

**Junior Members:**

"She is not dead—the child of our affection-  
But gone unto that school  
Where she no longer needs our poor protection.  
But day after day we think of what she's doing  
In those bright realms of air;  
Year after year, her meager steps pursuing,  
Behold Her, grown more fair."

"To those Junior members, Our Seeds of Destiny, whom we have loved and lost so soon, and who hold in their hands the future of the American Legion Auxiliary, we lovingly place these flowers."

**To Our Membership:** "To the memory of those members, numbering including our Past Unit Presidents who have been mourned by the Unit this year, we bow in tribute. To those members units unrecorded but who leave a vacant chair at their family fireside and whose passing is known to God, we reverently add these flowers."

**Unit Chaplain:** "God's beautiful handiwork, the blossoms of Youth and Life are so closely associated with our organization and with our membership, that we leave these flowers, knowing that they too, as all material things do, shall wither and die but their fragrance shall linger forever in our memory."

**Solo.** (*"The Lord's Prayer" or any appropriate solo is suggested.*)

**Unit President:** "The Chaplain will offer prayer." The Presided shall give three raps of the gavel and the members shall rise.

**Unit Chaplain:** "Now that they have gone, we can well believe that a voice is saying:



"Well done Thou good and Faithful Servant, Enter Thou into the Joy of Thy Lord.' To all of these members whose well-won right to stand among that valiant company of women, who by their courage, their unselfishness and their vision have helped so largely down through the years to make America great, we solemnly bow our heads in Prayer. " O Gracious Heavenly Father, we lift our voice to Thee, to thank Thee for continuing to watch over us in our hour of trial, ever ready to direct and guide our faltering steps. We thank Thee for the rich experiences and for the many friendships enjoyed by Thy children here. We Thank Thee for the knowledge that In their passing they do not tread the Valley of Shadow alone, that always that Giver of Gifts, the Great Comforter is present as they enter that Eternal Haven of Rest.

"Grant O Lord, continued Peace to the souls of our departed members and give us understanding and appreciative hearts. Help is to bequeath added blessings to the generations yet to be. Lead us and guide us evermore by the teachings of Thy goodness. As we witness Thy handiwork in the Heavens and the beauties about us, we feel Thy presence ever near. Grant that Thy spirit may continue to dwell in the hearts of the American Legion Auxiliary. Let us not fail those whom we honor by ceasing to do good, or to turn from Thy guiding hand. "We know, O Lord, Thy will be done. Amen."

*One rap of the gavel and the members shall be seated.*

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### **POW/MIA Ceremony**

**Narrator:** Today, we pay tribute to the men and women who have served our nation unselfishly. Within each of us lies the American spirit, a burning desire to dedicate and commit ourselves to the American ideals of freedom. This desire is deep within the heart and soul of each soldier, sailor, airman, marine and coast guardsman. It is undaunted by weather conditions, living conditions, or hardship of mission.

When the bells of freedom first rang out, we were there at Bunker Hill, Lexington and the brutal winter at Valley Forge. Thousands of us gave our lives at Bull Run, Manassas, Antietam and Gettysburg. We rode with Teddy Roosevelt and his rough riders up San Juan Hill.

Whenever and wherever America called, we were there.

We fought battles of the Marne and Chateau Thierry in World War I. We were at the Battle of the Bulge, the Ardennes Forest and all along the European front of World War II. We endured Corregidor. We survived the Bataan Death March. We raised the Flag at Iwo Jima. We landed at Utah and Normandy on D-Day, 1944.

We have never failed to answer our Country's call.

We fought the unrelenting fight at the 38th parallel, better known as Korea. We trudged through the rice paddies and jungles of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. We were the 241 marines killed in Beirut. We were the pilots who flew the daring mission against Libya and international terrorism.

America has always counted on us.

We were the peacekeepers in the Sinai; liberators of the tiny island nations of Grenada; restorers of democracy in Panama; victors in the sand of the Middle East. We were givers of hope in Somalia and Bosnia.

America's military has always been the beacon of freedom, shining for all to see. We have marched with our heads held high and served with pride.

Through all these periods of war and American history, one question remains unanswered. Where are our brothers: our prisoners of war; our missing in action veterans?



This is not an absence of choice but rather one, which emulates duty, honor and country. Let us remember their absence. (Pause)

We call your attention to the small table, which occupies a place of dignity and honor. It is set for one symbolizing the fact that members of our armed forces are missing from our ranks. They are referred to as POWs and MIAs.

We call them comrades. They are unable to be with their loved ones and families, so we join together to pay humble tribute to them, and to bear witness to their continued absence.

The table is small, symbolizing the frailty of one prisoner, alone against his or her suppressors. The table cloth is white, symbolic of the purity of their intentions to respond to their Country's call to arms.

The single rose in the vase signifies the blood they may have shed in sacrifice to ensure the freedom of our beloved United States of America. This rose also reminds us of the family and friends of our missing comrades who keep faith, while awaiting their return.

The red ribbon on the vase represents the red ribbons worn on the lapels of the thousands who demand, with unyielding determination, a proper account of our comrades who are not among us.

A slice of lemon on the plate reminds us of their bitter fate.

The salt sprinkled on the plate reminds us of the countless fallen hearts of families as they wait.

The glass is inverted, they cannot toast with us at this time.

The chair is empty. They are NOT here.

The candle is reminiscent of the light of hope, which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home, away from their captors, to open arms of a grateful nation.

The American Flag reminds us that many of them may never return - and have paid the supreme sacrifice to insure our freedom.

*(As you say the following, a veteran of each military branch will place his or her cap, on the appointed plate. If preferred, members of The American Legion; American Legion Auxiliary, including Juniors; or Sons of The American Legion could place a flower rather than a cap.)*

Please rise.

*(Wait a few seconds)*

In honor of the United States Army, we place this cap. (flower) In honor of the United States Marines, we place this cap. (flower)

In honor of the United States Navy, we place this cap. (flower) In honor of the United States Air Force, we place this cap. (flower)

In honor of the United States Coast Guard, we place this cap. (flower)

Please observe one minute of silence to honor these missing Americans.

*(Pause for one minute)*

Remember them, for surely they remember you. May God forever watch over them and protect them and their families.

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## **Four Chaplain's Day Program**





- Words of welcome by the President or Commander
- Invocation
- Pledge of Allegiance
- The Story of the Chapel (See below.)
- Talk in Memory of Chaplain George L. Fox by Protestant Minister
- Music
- Talk in Memory of Chaplain Alexander D. Goode by Rabbi
- Offering (Donated to American Legion Program of Chapel of Four Chaplains)
- Talk in Memory of Chaplain John P. Washington by Catholic Priest
- Music
- Talk in Memory of Chaplain Clark V. Poland by Protestant Minister
- “God Bless America” – Sung by all
- Benediction
- Taps

*(Refreshments and social hour for community Fellowship.)*

### **The Story of the Chapel**

Early on the morning of February 3, 1943, the U.S. troop transport “Dorchester” was wallowing through icy seas off Greenland. Most of the 900 troops on board were asleep in their bunks. Suddenly a torpedo smashed into the Dorchester’s flank. Frantically pounding up the ladders, the troops milled in confusion on the decks.

In those dark moments of panic, the coolest men aboard were four U.S. Army Chaplains: First Liets. Clark V. Poling (Reformed Church of America); Alexander D. Goode (Jewish); John P. Washington (Catholic); George L. Fox (Methodist). The four chaplains led the men into boxes of life jackets, passed them out to the soldiers with boat-frill precision. When the boxes were empty, the four chaplains quietly slipped off their own precious life preservers, put them on four young GIs and told them to jump.

The Dorchester went down 25 minutes later in a rumble of steam. Some 600 men were lost, but the heroic chaplains had helped save over 200. The last anyone saw of them, they were standing on the slanting deck, their arms linked in prayer to the one God they all served.

Far away in North Africa, Dr. Daniel A. Poling, distinguished American clergyman and father of Chaplain Clark Poling, was crouching in a foxhole when he learned of the heroic death of his son and his three fellow Chaplains. In his mind was born the idea of a shrine in the memory of this noble sacrifice; a shrine where people of all faiths could worship God in a spirit of unity without the need of uniformity.

In the heart of a great city, Philadelphia, PA, the Chapel opens its doors to people of all races and religious faiths. Every Sunday there is a service of worship. It is also a memorial to the Four Chaplains who went down on the S.S. Dorchester. It is an interfaith shrine; in it are three alters, one for each faith – Catholic, Jewish and Protestant. Above the entrance burns an eternal light, which calls men to the unity these four chaplains so heroically demonstrated. Chiseled deep into the stone is this dedication:

Chapel of Four Chaplains



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An Interfaith Shrine  
Here is Sanctuary for Brotherhood  
Let it never be violated

#### George L. Fox

George Fox was the oldest. Up in Vermont they called him, "The little Minister," because he was only five feet seven inches tall. Back in 1917 he lied about his age and enlisted in the Marines as a medical corps assistant. He won a Silver Star for rescuing a wounded soldier from a battlefield filled with poison gas, although he himself had no gas mask on.

When George Fox came home to Vermont, he continued his education and became a public accountant as he had planned. He was successful, happily married, with two children. Then one evening he came home from work and told his wife he wanted to study for the ministry and she approved. So George Fox became a minister. The war came again. "I've got to go," he told his wife. "I know from experience what our boys are about to face. They need me." Before he boarded the Dorchester he wrote a letter to his little daughter. She received it after the news that the ship was torpedoed. "I want you to know," he wrote, "how proud I am that your marks in school are so high - but always remember that kindness and charity and courtesy are much more important."

#### Alexander D. Goode

Alexander Goode was too young for World War I. While George Fox was winning medals on the battlefield of France, Alexander Goode was receiving medals in Eastern High School, Washington D.C., for tennis, swimming and track. He led his class in scholarship too. He planned to follow in his father's footsteps and become a Rabbi, but that did not keep him from having a laughing, shouting, hail-fellow-well-met boyhood with all the Protestant and Catholic boys in the neighborhood.

He married his childhood sweetheart and they had four children. After he got his synagogue, he felt he was still not worthy. He would know better how to heal men's souls if he knew how to heal their bodies too, and so for three years he drove everyday to John Hopkins University, forty-five miles away, until he won his medical degree.

On day in 1943, Mrs. Goode received a telegram from her husband... "Having a wonderful experience," it read, and then Mrs. Goode knew that her husband had found a warm companionship with the men with whom he could share his faith and his laughter.

#### Clark V. Poling

Clark Poling was the youngest of the Four Men of God. Clark's first letter was written to his father. It was written in square block printing and was addressed to his mother. The letter found Dr. Poling, February 1918, in a dugout on the Western front of another World War. The letter read: "Dear Daddy: Gee, I wish I were where you are. Love, Clark." And in exactly twenty-five years, that eager little boy received his wish. Clark was the seventh generation in an unbroken line of ministers of the Gospel.



When the war came along he did not want to go as a Chaplain, "I can carry a gun as well as the next guy," he told his father. "I'm not going to hide behind the Church in some safe office out of the firing line." "I think you're scared," the elder Poling joked. "Don't you know the mortality rate of the chaplains is the highest of all? As a Chaplain, you have the best chance in the world to be killed. The only difference is, you can't carry a gun to kill anyone yourself." And so Clark Poling became a Chaplain.

Just before Clark sailed, he visited his father and they were alone in D. Poling's study when Clark turned to his father and said: "Dad, Dad – you know how much confidence I have in your prayers, but Dad, I don't want you to pray for my safe return – that wouldn't be fair. No, Dad. Don't pray for my safe return – just pray that I shall do my duty and something more, pray that I shall never be a coward. Pray that I shall have the strength and courage and understanding of men, and especially pray that I shall be patient. Oh, Dad, just pray that I shall be adequate."

Johnny P. Washington

Up in Newark, New Jersey, there was once a little Irish boy named Johnny Washington. Things weren't always easy in an Irish immigrant family. Things usually aren't easy for poor immigrant folk. But, Johnny had his Father's Irish grin and his Mother's Irish tick-to-itiveness, and Johnny sold newspapers. Sure, he liked to play ball, just as much as the rest of the kids in his block, but if he took time off from his newspaper route, it was just so many pennies less to take home to Mom, and there were nine mouths in the Washington household to feed. Johnny loved music and sang in the church choir and Johnny loved to fight.

And Johnny was always laughing, right through his training as a priest and after he was ordained. He played ball in the streets with the boys from his parish; he organized baseball teams, and when the war came along and his boys went into the Army, Father Johnny went right along with them as a matter of course. They say that when the *Dorchester* went down he was still laughing – laughing and singing and praying to comfort those who could not reach the lifeboats.

And so, these four men – Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, from four different towns; the country boy from Vermont; the city boy from Washington, the slum kid from Newark; and the parson's son from New York City – met on the slanting deck of the *Dorchester*. It was a rendezvous with God, too, and their voices rose above the cold, black churning water: "Our Father... which art in Heaven... hallowed be Thy name..." "Schma Yisroel Adonay Eoohenu Adonay Echod," ...Thy Kingdom come... Thy will be done..." The hand of God plucked these four men from their parishes and set them together in that icy February fog... and all at once the fog melted away and all about them there was light.