MEMORIAL SERVICES & PRAYER MANUAL
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The American Legion’s Boys State program is one of the organization’s finest activities. The program serves as a laboratory for teaching citizenship and Americanism to selected high school students who have completed their junior year of study. As a 15-year-old, having just completed my freshman year of high school, I had the good fortune of attending the first Boys State sponsored by the Department of Arkansas. The present requirements for attending had not yet been established. Thus I have been associated with the program from its beginning. Over the many decades, my appreciation for and dedication to Boys State has continued to grow.

It is appropriate for Boys States to conduct memorial services as desired. Such services are helpful in keeping alive memories of persons and events. In preparation for and the conducting of memorial services, it should be remembered, as stated in the Introduction of this handbook, that “…Boys State delegates represent the diversity of our nation in their ethnic and religious heritage.” Thus the memorial services should be ecumenical – general or universal – and not sectarian in their nature. The events should further the unity or unification of the Boys State. An exception can be made, by request of the family, when a single person is being memorialized.

I add my words of appreciation for the contributions made by Past National Chaplains of The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion to this project!

Calvin C. Turpin, S.T.D.
National Chaplain (2000-2001)
The American Legion
INTRODUCTION

American Legion Boys State, a citizenship and government education program for male students completing their junior year of high school, strives to present a well-rounded curriculum of character development instruction. To do so, it must be sensitive to a nation of young people that is diverse in its ethnic and religious heritage.

This diversity among participants presents a challenge to Boys State officials to present instruction and activities that are acceptable to all. One area in which particular attention should be directed is the offering of religious messages and memorial services. It is in these activities that the diversity can become most obvious.

This handbook is designed to provide Boys State officials with sample messages and prayers that can be used in their Boys State programs. The suggested services and memorial messages may be edited to fit the needs of the respective program.

The National Americanism Commission thanks the following individuals whose knowledge and assistance has contributed to the publishing of this resource guide.

Dr. Charles Richmond, Past National Chaplain (1996-1997)

The National Americanism Commission also applauds the dedicated efforts of the many volunteers at the organization’s state and local levels who contribute to the success of the Boys State programs. It is these individuals that have made American Legion Boys State the training ground for many of tomorrow’s leaders.
The American Legion would like to note that this is a reprint of the original “American Legion Boys State Memorial Services and Prayer Manual” and many of the original authors and contributors are now at eternal rest in Post Everlasting including:

- Dr. Charles Richmond, Past National Chaplain (1996-1997)
SUGGESTED MEMORIAL SERVICE PROGRAM

Song

Invocation

Reading

Scripture Reading

Song

Scripture Reading

Memorial Message

Song

Benediction
CHRISTIAN MEMORIAL SERVICE
By
Bishop David R. Brown
Past National Chaplain
The American Legion

Father, God of all nations, You are our comfort and help in time of need. You have taught us that nothing can separate us from Your love and that all souls are Yours. Grant that we may come to know increasingly that as we draw nearer to You in faith and love, we draw nearer to all those dear to us who live in Your Heavenly Kingdom. Lord, we remember and honor all of our veterans who have gone before us. We remember especially: (                ).

Lord, help us to ever be mindful of their service to God and country. Watch over the graves of these men and women. Grant them peace and happiness and keep them until the hour of final reveille when all will be called before You, our Divine Commander. May their souls and the souls of all departed veterans rest in peace. Amen.

Someone reads the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:12-19).

"Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?

But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.

And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.

Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up – if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.

And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!

Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable."
Lord, we thank You for Your blessed assurance of the resurrection. We do not grieve as do those who have no hope, no belief in Your eternal goodness. Father, because of Your Son, we never grieve as though death is the end of all things. Because of Christ, we have the promise of the resurrection, the assurance of forgiveness, confidence in eternal life, and the love of God from which nothing can separate us.

O most Holy, Mighty, Immortal God, we commit to Your eternal care the souls of our departed loved ones. While they were here on earth, they sought to serve You and their country. They will be dearly missed by family and friends. Lord, we acknowledge You as the Creator, and we know that You maintain all things in existence by Your power. We ask now that You grant eternal peace and joy to these men and women in Your Kingdom. Father, we pray these things in Your all Holy Name. Amen.
GOD BLESSED OUR NATION

By
The Rev. Henry E. Eisenhart
Past National Chaplain
The American Legion

Proverbs 14:34 “Righteousness exalts a nation.”

Appropriate Holy Scriptures:
Proverbs 14:31-35
Psalm 66
Psalm 136

There has never been a nation in all the history of mankind, which has been as blessed by God as the United States of America. The divine providence of God shed His grace on America. Even Israel, during the reign of David and Solomon, never experienced the blessings that you and I have had the privilege of receiving. God has poured out blessings on our country in tremendous measure.

The men who wrote and signed the Declaration of Independence were moved by a magnificent dream—a dream that amazed the world in 1776. The dream was rooted in a book called the Bible. It proclaimed freedom which most of the world thought impossible to fulfill. Foremost is our freedom that involves the right to be right and the right to be wrong and still survive. We have the freedom to worship God as our conscience dictates, or not to do so. We have the right of free speech, even if we don’t speak wisely or even agreeably. We have the freedom to pursue the vocations we want, despite occasional failures and disappointments. Only in America can an individual challenge our government and make a difference.

America was founded on deep religious beliefs and convictions “to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.” It includes God’s name in its national anthem; imprints upon its coins and stamps, “In God We Trust;” adds the words, “One Nation under God” to its Pledge of Allegiance to the flag; begins its sessions of Congress with a prayer to God; and inaugurates its president by the laying of the hand upon the pages of an open Bible.

When George Washington was inaugurated as our first president he added four words, “So help me God,” to the official oath of office. They have been repeated by every president ever since. Under the white dome of the Capitol, the shrine of each patriot’s devotion in Washington, D.C., is this heavy freighted phrase,
“This Nation Under God.” As Abraham Lincoln delivered his stirring Gettysburg Address on the battlefield, he was suddenly conscious of his oneness with God and extemporized the expression, “That this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom.”

Officially, the motto of the United States is “In God We Trust.” The reverse side of the Great Seal of the United States, seen on the back of the one-dollar bill, asserts: Annuit coeptis, which means “He (God) has favored our undertakings.”

To keep America great and good, we can renew our covenant with God. The first document used in this land, the Mayflower Compact, stated: “In the name of God. Amen.” Apart from God, America has no meaning. Our ideas are religious ideals. Our standards are religious standards. Our goals are religious goals. God in the most vivid sense should always be at the heart, the soul, and the center of our national existence.

When a little boy was asked what he saw in the famous painting, the “Spirit of 76” by Archibald Willard, with Colonial soldiers on the march with muskets shouldered and colors unfurled, he said: “There is one man with a drum; another with a fife; and still another with a rag around his head and having a severe headache carrying a flag.” The indomitable trio rallied the disheartened Americans facing defeat to fight anew for the independence the declaration had proclaimed and for the triumph of a righteous cause. More than ever, America still needs that type of patriotic citizen who faithfully pledges “His life, his fortune, and his sacred honor” to God and, when freedom is challenged, to country.

We can reaffirm the righteousness of God. We have not even mentioned the text, “Righteousness Exalts a Nation.” But it has been there all the time, continuing an intimate relationship with God, who has done marvelous things for us.

“A nation’s real greatness consists not in its conquests, magnificence, military or artistic skill, but in its observance of the requirements of justice and religion,” established by a reverent practice of righteousness. Righteousness is a proper conduct before God. Righteousness will not descend to the people; the people must raise themselves to righteousness. Then God, as He has promised, will stretch forth His mighty hand to guard and exalt our fatherland.

George Washington declared: “God can get along without America. But America cannot get along without God.” How important it is to remember God as a rightful ruler. Pericles, a Greek statesman, built a civilization upon culture and it failed. Caesar built a civilization upon power and it failed. Hitler built a nation
upon conquest—not only as a right but also a duty—and it failed. But our Pilgrim forefathers built a nation upon righteousness—on the fundamental principles of liberty and freedom to worship God. “If we ever forget that we are One Nation Under God, then we will be a Nation gone under,” forewarned Ronald Reagan. America will live on great and good as long as God remains its one true living Lord and Sovereign of righteousness.

To keep the spirit and love of this glorious heritage alive in our day, The American Legion freely offers our nation’s youth a golden opportunity at Boys State to participate in the operation of local, county and state government, spark an intellectual interest in the political process, add value to life, and become law-abiding citizens. Practical insights and invaluable experiences are focused on forthcoming duties and obligations of public-minded citizenship to preserve the precious blessings of freedom, “which no other people on earth enjoy.”

Retired Navy Captain Eugene McDaniel remarked, “America isn’t perfect: never has been; never will be. But she’s the greatest country in the world.” Uphold it. Defend it. Pray for it. Be loyal to it.
Across the pages of the Holy Scriptures, there is one passage that has always brought comfort, compassion, and consolation for a Boys State Memorial Service. It is recorded in the beautiful words of the 23rd Psalm. Here we can see the Lord as a Good Shepherd who watches over his sheep by day and night, in storm and tempest, in rain and sunshine. Here we can see the clear, cool, still waters. Here we can see the green grasses – enough for each and all. On earth it seems to instill a heavenly bliss.

The Good Shepherd is a living presence. “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for Thou art with me.” The Shepherds had an angel. The Wise Men had a star, but we have the Good Shepherd. He has been our help in ages past; our peace for today; and our hope for years to come. He has been our rock and refuge; a very present help in time of need. He will never leave us or forsake us. He is the same yesterday, today, and always. He is a very present help in the time of need.

At the moment of birth, when every beat of our heart is marching us closer to the grave, he guides us safely through the journey of this life. At the moment of death, he walks with us through the dark valley of the shadow of death. He leads us from the present to the future; from the temporary to the permanent; and from the transitory to the eternal. Being with us every moment of every day, there is the assurance that in life and in death, we are never, never alone.

The Good Shepherd is an abiding comfort. “Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.” The rod and staff are symbols of discipline, protection, guidance, and comfort. In the Old Testament, he said: “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.”
(Isaiah 40:1). In the New Testament, he said: “Be of good comfort.” (Mark 10:49). He comes into our midst, stands by our side, speaks to us with a still small voice and says, “I will not leave you comfortless.”(John 14:18). There is a comfort the world cannot give. There is a comfort the world cannot take away. There is an inner abiding contentment of comfort that only God can give to those who put their trust in him, for he is “The God of all comfort who comforteth us in all our tribulations.” (2 Corinthians 1:4). He alone can turn our darkness into light; our sadness into gladness; our despair into hope; and our death into life.

The Good Shepherd is an everlasting abode. “And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” Where heaven is, no one knows. Where heaven is, no map can show, no poet can tell, no artist can paint. Where heaven is no telescope can locate, no cosmonaut can find, and no astronaut can discover. Heaven cannot be earned by our good works and deeds. Heaven cannot be bought with silver or gold. But heaven is an indescribable gift—a free gift through the amazing grace of God. Where heaven is, there is the Good Shepherd and his followers will be happy forever. “Never again will they hunger, never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.” (Revelations 7:16-17). There will be a life of joy, a life of peace, and life of love with the Good Shepherd.

Historians have recorded a gloomy picture of fighting conditions at Valley Forge. Thousands of soldiers did not have any shoes. Their march could be traced by the blood, which their naked feet had left in the snow. In adversity and suffering, George Washington was drawn to the Seeking Shepherd of our souls. Daily he went into the woods and returned with a more cheerful countenance. One day, a soldier followed him and saw him upon his knees in the snow and heard him pray to the Good Shepherd. The American soldiers placed their confidence, their hope in a commander who kept his eyes on the Good Shepherd.

With an ever-living faith, may we also keep our eyes on the Good Shepherd today, tomorrow, and to all eternity. Amen.
CHRISTIAN MEMORIAL SERVICE  
By  
Rev. Jerome D. Fortenberry, C.M.  
Past National Chaplain  
The American Legion

Outline of Memorial Service

Those to be memorialized:

1. A description of their lives, what they did, their effect on us and the world. By outlining their virtues, their good deeds, their achievements, we can express our gratitude for what they have done and we can resolve to emulate them, to pattern our deeds after their deeds.

2. A reflection on what happens when death takes place. An end or a beginning. There are many who have felt or believed that death is the end of everything. We do not believe that. We believe that through death we enter a new existence.

Today we have a memorial service and you may well ask yourselves, “What is a memorial service and why do we have it?” Let me try to answer those questions. First, what is a memorial service? In it we remember a person or many persons who have lived, worked, and made their mark here on earth. They could be our parents, grandparents, relatives or friends. They could be people who have done great things for the community or they could be people who have been almost unnoticed by the community.

The one thing that they all have in common is that they have lived here on earth and are no longer with us.

Why do we have a memorial service? Because we do not want them to be forgotten. We want the memory of what they have done to live on with us. We want the good things they did to serve as an inspiration to us so that we will continue the good they have done and build on it so that our lives and the world will be better.
Memorial Service

Opening Prayer

Almighty God, today we remember __________________________ who exemplified the ideals of the American Legion, especially our devotion to God and Country. We ask you to welcome them home as you promised to your disciples.

Quote Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus said to his disciples: “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels of heaven, he will sit upon his royal throne, and all the nations will be assembled before him. Then he will separate them into two groups, as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. The sheep he will place on his right hand, the goats on his left. The king will say to those on his right: ‘Come. You have my Father’s blessing! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me. I was ill and you comforted me, in prison and you came to visit me.’”

“Then the just will ask him: ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you or see you thirsty and give you drink? When did we welcome you away from home or clothe you in your nakedness? When did we visit you when you were ill or in prison?’”

“The king will answer them: ‘I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me.’”

“Then he will say to those on his left: ‘Out of my sight, you condemned, into that everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels! I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink. I was away from home and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing. I was ill and in prison and you did not come to comfort me.’”

“Then they in turn will ask: ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or away from home or naked or ill on in prison and not attend you in your needs?’”

“He will answer them: ‘I assure you, as often as you neglected to do it to one of these least ones, you neglected to do it to me.’”

“These will go off to eternal punishment and the just to eternal life.”

Those we commemorate today did what Our Lord Jesus Christ asked to be done.
They fulfilled the two great commandments, to love God with their whole heart, mind, and soul, and to love their neighbors as themselves.

They did this by their seeing that just laws were enacted and then saw that they were observed.

They saw that those in need were taken care of. They provided shelter for the homeless, food for the hungry, clothing for the naked. In short, they took care of their neighbors’ needs. In caring for others they demonstrated in a very real and practical way their love.

We can therefore say that God has welcomed them and that they are enjoying that eternal bliss promised to those who love God.

**As Jesus said in another place (Matthew 5:1-12):**

*When Jesus saw the crowds he went up on the mountainside. After he had sat down his disciples gathered around him, and he began to teach them:*

“How blest are the poor in spirit; the reign of God is theirs.  
Blest too are the sorrowing; they shall be consoled.  
Blest are the lowly; they shall inherit the land.  
Blest are they who hunger and thirst for holiness; they shall have their fill.  
Blest are they who show mercy; mercy shall be theirs.  
Blest are the single-hearted; for they shall see God.  
Blest too the peacemakers; they shall be called sons of God.  
Blest are those persecuted for holiness’ sake; the reign of God is theirs.  
Blest are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of slander against you because of me; Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is great in Heaven.”*
Today we remember those who have served us and have served our country. They are with us no more. They have passed from this life. Does that mean that they no longer exist or exist only in the memories we have of them? I don’t think so. I believe they still exist and have only undergone a separation.

Let me ask you to recall your earliest memory. It may have been when you were two or three years old, it may have been even earlier, but whenever it was you are quite sure that it was you. How you have changed since then, but you are still you. From being a baby to being a small child to being a boy entering school, finishing grammar school, going on to high school, developing a beard, becoming a man, constantly changing, but always being the same you. This will go on throughout your life, from youth to old age, the body always changing, but you remaining yourself.

There will come a time when you, your spirit, will no longer be able to animate your body and the separation we call death will take place yet the living, intelligent, loving, remembering you, continues to exist. But just as you animated many successive bodies as you lived and as didn’t cease to exist when you stopped being a baby and became a young boy, nor did you cease to exist when you left boyhood and entered adolescence, nor did you cease to exist when you emerged from adolescence and entered manhood, so will you continue to exist when you can no longer animate a body that has been racked by injury, disease, or advanced age. Your spirit, your soul, lives on. It steps from time to eternity, it enters the ever present now and stands face to face with its creator God and reaps the reward or punishment earned by its life on earth.

Today we remember those who have made this journey, who have undergone the separation called death and who now are in the eternal now. We ask God to look with favor on them to reward them for the good lives they led. We ask God to forgive whatever mistakes they made, whatever faults they had, whatever sins they committed. We believe that they, like the Apostle John, will see a new heaven and earth. As John says in the Book of Revelation, Chapter 21:1-5, 6-7:

I, John, saw new heavens and a new earth. The former heavens and the former earth had passed away, and the sea was no longer. I also saw a new Jerusalem, the holy city, coming down out of heaven from God, beautiful as a bride prepared to meet her husband. I heard a loud voice from the throne cry out: “This is God’s dwelling among men. He shall dwell with them and they shall be his people and he shall be their God who is always with them. He shall wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, crying out or pain, for the former world has passed away.”
The One who sat on the throne said to me, “See, I make all things new! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To anyone who thirsts I will give to drink without cost from the spring of life-giving water. He who wins the victory shall inherit these gifts; I will be his God and he shall be my son.”

Other scriptural passages that could be used.

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 5:1, 6-10):

We know that when the earthly tent in which we dwell is destroyed we have a dwelling provided for us by God, a dwelling in the heavens, not made by hands but to last forever.

Therefore we continue to be confident. We know that while we dwell in the body we are away from the Lord. We walk by faith, not by sight. I repeat, we are full of confidence and would much rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. This being so, we make it our aim to please him whether we are with him or away from him. The lives of all of us are to be revealed before the tribunal of Christ so that each one may receive his recompense, good or bad, according to his life in the body.

A reading from the book of Wisdom (Wis. 4:7-14):

The just man, though he dies early, shall be at rest.

For the age that is honorable comes not with the passing of time, nor can it be measured in terms of years.

Rather, understanding is the hoary crown for men, and an unsullied life, the attainment of old age.

He who pleased God was loved; he who lived among sinners was transported — Snatched away, lest wickedness pervert his mind or deceit beguile his soul;

For the witchery of paltry things obscures what is right and the whirl of desire transforms the innocent mind.

Having become perfect in a short while, he reached the fullness of a long career; for his soul was pleasing to the Lord, therefore he sped him out of the midst of wickedness.

But the people saw and did not understand, nor did they take this into account.
MEMORIAL SERVICE MESSAGE

By

Michas M. Ohnstad, M. Div.
Past National Chaplain
The American Legion

Scripture References:
Ecclesiastes 3:1 (KJV)*
Amos 4:12 (KJV)*

Dear Friends, Families and Fellow Americans:

INTRODUCTION

One of the important lessons in life that each of us will learn, and must remember, is that we are not permanent personnel on earth. A memorial service is positive proof and a timely reminder of that stark fact.

Memento Mori
(“Remember that you must die”)

Two words from the Latin language personalize a powerful message for each of us and teach us well. Those words are: “MEMENTO MORI” – translated they mean: “Remember that you must die.”

This is not a morbid preoccupation with death but a realistic realization of the fact that life is truly uncertain and that death will come to each of us some day – and at any age – as we hear and read in the media every day. So we need to face that reality. And to be prepared.

A little country church of Scandinavian background in Minnesota reminds its congregation of this fact in an interesting, if not unique, way for each time as worshippers leave the church they pass under an original-language inscription that decrees, in the commanding comment of the Old Testament prophet Amos, “PREPARE TO MEET YOUR GOD.”* A memorial service is a time to remind ourselves to do just that!
Words To Remind Us

Not often do words assembled on the printed page fairly leap out at us to demand our notice. But there are occasions when they do and then we pay particular attention to them.

I cite two examples, which I find to fit the criteria for this kind of print power and I will blend the messages of these two examples to form the foundation for this memorial meditation.

The first example of words of power is from the Old Testament – from the book of Ecclesiastes* -- where we read the familiar words that many have memorized. Hear those words and be instructed by the lessons they teach:

“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven. .”*

And then, in sequential and chronological order, the Old Testament scripture continues for several verses the equally familiar comparison of opposites that describe the biographic story and history of every one of us.

Hear them and take note of how centuries after they were written they apply to the life of each of us:

“A time to be born and a time to die;

to plant and to pluck;

to kill and to heal;

to break down and to build up;

to weep and to laugh;

to mourn and to dance;

to cast away stones and to gather stones;

to embrace and to refrain from embracing;

a time to get and a time to lose;
to keep and to cast away;

to rend and to sew;

to keep silence and to speak;

to love and to hate;

a time of war and a time of peace.”

Yes! Well proclaims that Old Testament scripture as it propounds the truth that:

“To everything there is a season and a time . . .”

And the second example of words that grip our attention are those recorded in an old, and probably mostly unfamiliar, maxim that has given guidance and counsel to the Church.

Listen very carefully to this old maxim lest you miss the powerful message and the profound wisdom of its carefully crafted and intricately interwoven words addressed to the Church.

“When it is NOT NECESSARY for the Church to speak, it IS NECESSARY for the Church NOT to speak.”

From this we take the lesson that we, like the Church, must practice an economy of words; that sometimes silence is our mandate. But at other times we must speak. And on those occasions, in those seasons when we must speak, we dare not tolerate in ourselves either the cowardice of, nor the luxury of, silence.

The lesson for us from these two examples, then, and the message I would leave with you, based upon them, is that a memorial service is not only the opportune time and season when we are privileged to consider – but a time when we must consider – the eternal verities proclaimed by Church and holy scripture in these words which form the basis for our meditation.

May we find lessons for our lives from these two examples as we use the allotted time of this memorial service to dwell upon the implication of these timeless, eternal, truths.
Life’s Divisions

As does a running river, so too, do our lives flow inexorably onward from birth to death. And as with a stream, there are identifiable life markers or places or stages along life’s way. For convenience of consideration we separate life into segments called Past, Present and Future.

With these divisions as markers I would ask you in this memorial service to ponder afresh the meaning of your life from the perspective of past, present and future.

Under the influence of the timeless truths of our text and its theme, may we briefly examine each of these different dimensional directions and find, therein, guidance for our lives, meaning to our mourning, and inspiration for days ahead.

The Irretrievable Past

A memorial service is, by definition, a time for recalling; a time for reaching back into the recesses of our past to recollect there from the memory of those no longer with us; a time to hear again, in memory, those voices now silent in death; a time to observe again, in memory, those busy hands now reposed in eternal rest; a time to renew, in memory, or appreciation of those whose creative minds and unremitting efforts place us forever in their debt for their achievements and service.

A memorial service is a time to be grateful for the memory of those whose contributions are living, lasting memorials. Memorials that inspire us to follow the example of their dedicated service to community, state and nation. May we take the time to recall those friends of days and years now past and thereby honor their memory through this memorial service today.

The Opportunity-Laden Present

While a memorial service is a time to look at the past it is also a time to make an assessment of the purposes for which we invest that thing called time. Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow is not here. Today is the time to renew our realization that the clock and the calendar of life move only onward and that we DO NOT “go around a second time.”

Billy Graham was once asked by a reporter to comment on his impressions of life as he moved into his increasing years. His immediate response was that he was
most impressed with “the brevity of life.” We all sense the fact that no matter how long we live “life is short.” How tragic then that people sometimes say they are “just killing time!” May we in this memorial service commit ourselves to invest time, not kill it! Tomorrow is not guaranteed. Opportunities missed today are forever beyond our grasp. May we see and seize opportunities for this day is filled with them.

**Look To The Future With Hope**

As we conclude these comments may we be reminded that though we are inheritors of the past, the past is but a prologue for a future filled with hope. A future filled with hope if we acknowledge that progress is always by degrees for history, in simple form, is a record of failures and successes. It tells us that we learn from the mistakes of the past and that if we do not we are condemned to repeat them.

As the eagle in flight is either lifted up to the heavens or dashed to destruction on the rocks below – depending upon the bent of the wings – so too our mindset and determination defines the course that forms and frames our future.

A memorial service is a time for us to remember our past and those who preceded us by building upon the foundation of their accomplishments and the ideals under which they labored and lived. In so doing we honor our present obligations and with confidence we can face the future filled with hope.

May we recognize the opportunities and obligations before us. With commitment to the accomplishment of these noble goals as our intention this memorial service is concluded.

God bless you. And God bless America.
MEMORIAL MESSAGE
By
Dr. Charles Richmond
Past National Chaplain
The American Legion

I. Introduction
You are a select, chosen elite group. You have the privilege of a splendid heritage and special ability. You are privileged physically, mentally and spiritually. You have been selected by your school, Legion post, etc., to attend Boys State.

A. Americans are a privileged select people. Many people would give their right arm to be here in America.
   1. A selective method brought the courageous adventurous, freedom lovers to America.
   2. Pilgrims came for religious freedom and right to worship.
   3. Political prisoners came to escape tyranny and form a better democracy as did the adventurous.
   4. The adventurous economic freedom lovers and innovators came to find economic advancement.

B. Our heritage is one of religious freedom and individual worth.
   1. Britain gave us the Magna Charta and its freedom.
   2. The Mayflower Charter was based upon democracy and moral values.
   3. Declaration of Independence appeals to the laws of nature and nature’s God, and states “men are created equal that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.”
   4. Our coins say, “In God we trust.”
   5. The American Revolution gave us our freedom.
   6. Heritage has made us the world leader.

C. The future of America depends upon you. You are the memorial of their sacrifices. Will you preserve it?

II. Your talents are a gift of God through your parents, nation, schools, etc.
A. The Holy Scriptures give us the Parable of the Talents:
   For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one
he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, lord, thou delivered unto me five talents; behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things; enter thou into the joy of the lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, lord, thou deliverest unto me two talents; behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou has been faithful over a few things. I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, lord…I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou has that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant…Take therefor the talent from him and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. (Matthew 25:14-29)

B. Talents are God given but you are responsible for their development and growth. The story is told of a farmer and minister out looking at beautiful fields terraced, fertilized and cultivated. The minister said, “Isn’t it wonderful what God can do?” The farmer, thinking of an eroded, barren, uncleared for but overgrown field, said, “Preacher, you should have seen it when God had it by himself and I began to help him.” You must develop what God gave you.

III. Opportunities are there but you must find them.
A. When petroleum oil was first discovered, it was only a polluting element in the water and on the land. When we learned its use, it greatly improved our life style.
B. Electricity was only destructive lightening causing fear and even death, until it was discovered, controlled and put to use. We credit Benjamin Franklin and his kite, along with others.

IV. You must be persistent and overcome even overwhelming obstacles.
A. In the War for Independence John Adams said that in 1776 no more than a third of the population was on the revolutionary side. One third openly or
covertly loyalist on the British side and the other third were those who knew nothing, felt nothing and stood for nothing.

B. In the War of Independence John Paul Jones was placed as captain of a sailing vessel. His flag was made by the girls of the town from silk cut from their best dresses. In the battle between his ship, the Bon Homme Richard and the British ship, the Serapis, the British captain lost sight of the American flag and saw the ship sinking. He, shouting, asked if Jones had surrendered. Jones replied, “I have not yet begun to fight.” After a terrible hand-to-hand battle, the British surrendered. The American ship was lashed to the British ship until men and weapons were transferred. The American ship sank but the British ship was used for America.

V. Your life must be based on a foundation of high moral principles.

A. Men fail in life and lose positions not as much because of lack of ability or knowledge, but because of a lack of character and high moral principles. The Holy Scriptures say:

For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man gain in exchange for his soul?

(Mark 8:36-37)

B. Plato, in his book *The Republic* in reply to Socrates, the Greek philosopher, tells of a ship’s crew who thought their captain was crazy because he took his bearings from the stars in the heavens, as they sailed in the ocean. Therefore, they threw him in the brig, mutinied and took over the ship to wreak havoc with it. We must not permit this to happen, but as potential leaders, take our bearings from the light that has kept America alive and great.

C. Businessmen fail and are even sent to prison not for lack of intelligence or information, but for dishonesty and other character and moral flaws.

D. A state governor a few years ago was sent to prison for character weakness. Otherwise, he was a good governor.

E. A United States president and vice president, a few years ago, were forced out of office for character traits and misuse of office, political authority and deceit. Otherwise many considered them as wise, knowledgeable, and efficient.

F. Even ministers, priests, and religious bodies fail and sometimes are imprisoned because of sexual abuse and money dishonesty or other character flaws.

VI. What is moral character?

A. There are great universal laws of morality accepted by all humanity. They
are stated in the Holy Scriptures, in the Ten Commandments 3500 years ago, and in the Babylonia Code of Hammarobi probably 500 years before that:
1. I am the Lord thy God,…Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images. 3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. 4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 5. Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long. 6. Thou shalt not kill. 7. Thou shalt not commit adultery. 8. Thou shalt not steal. 9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. 10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house. These rules were first developed as necessary for humans to live together. As religions developed, they were renamed moral values and then as governments developed, became laws.

B. It is sometimes difficult to make right decisions. President Johnson said, “It is sometimes more difficult to know what is right than to do what is right.”

C. Moral convictions will make or break a person’s life. Benedict Arnold was a great American military leader. He was a major general, commander of West Point. He inspired his men many times when the way was dark. He was successful in battle. But because of failure of his American ideals and values, he turned traitor and betrayed his country. He was then made a general in the British army but was scorned by the British people and died an outcast. His downfall was lack of character convictions.

D. Let us look at the advice and life of another American during the Korea War. When General Dean was captured by the Korean Communists, he was taken to the little town of Chungju. He was told that he had a few minutes to write a letter home to his family. It looked as though he was to be taken out and shot…The letter was short. It consisted of only eight or nine lines, and down in the middle of it was this one line: “Tell Bill the word is integrity.”…He did not say, “Tell Bill the word is financial security, or happiness or security.” He said the one word that every young man ought to hear from is father today: “Tell Bill the word is integrity.”

VII. In Memorial
Many military men and women have given their lives fighting for the American flag and have been buried under it. They now lie in cemeteries throughout the world, beneath the crosses row on row, as seen in Arlington Cemetery.

The Holy Scriptures give a good definition of American morality and patriotism. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man give his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)
You are the hope of America. You are their memorial. They live only through us. We either honor or dishonor their memories. Will you live for the cause for which they died?

The American flag is the symbol of all that you have received as a priceless gift. You inherited those privileges. What will you do to preserve them?

The American flag honors those men and women who have served their country in wartime and have died during or after this service. May I draw a word picture? In school I honored the flag, gave the pledge of allegiance, etc.

During World War II, I was half way around the world. We were on foreign soil. In a war zone in a combat area. I was lonely and missed my home and family. I stood with fellow soldiers over the body of a young man who had died in the service of his country. It was my first military funeral to attend or to conduct. I had been in the army only a few months. We were able to go back to a small civilian cemetery and have a flag and full military honors.

I stood over the open grave of the young man, only a year or two older than you, who did not want to die, but to live. He gave his life and future that I might have a future, that you might have a future, and that America might have a future.

A military funeral has the body and casket covered with a flag, a 21-gun salute of 3 volleys from 7 riflemen, and the bugle plays taps. The rounds of ammunition that day were live rounds because no blanks were available. We were in a combat zone. I heard those rifle volleys with the greater volume of live rounds and the whistle as they echoed back from the Himalaya Mountains, and waited for the haunting notes of the bugle sounding taps.

As I stood and saluted the American flag over this lifeless body, as I have done many times since, something happened to me. My eyes were misty, my throat choked and heart was deeply moved. My thoughts of the flag changed. I saw that young man’s face in that flag and I still see it today. I see added to this American flag the face of every man and woman that I have buried or have been buried under it.

When I see the American flag today, I see the faces of those who have died that we might have a today and a future.
As long as that flag flies over the graves, schoolhouses, churches, government buildings, parades, etc., America still lives and they have not died in vain. I face the flag with pride and reverence. Desecration of this flag is destroying their tombstone, their graves, and is like spreading their bones and remains on the ground.

In the future as you stand at a ceremony or as a flag goes by, and render a hand salute to that flag, maybe as taps are played, I hope you see the faces of every person who has sacrificed and given up their future or a part of it that America may live.

I ask today that you remember and rededicate yourself to the cause for which they have given so much. Only in this way will they and America still live.
BOYS STATE MEMORIAL SERVICE

By

Rev. George Rumney
Past National Chaplain
The American Legion

“This day shall be to you for a memorial” (Exodus 12:14)

- People had been led on the way to independence.
- Reminder of what had been done for them.

Boys State is the product of what has been done for students of the past, by those who worked with others, for others, to prepare others for the future, as citizens of our nation. Remembering our experiences and accomplishments is what gives us reason for our present and future actions as individuals.

What will remembering do to help others? This is the spirit of Boys State. Many unpaid men have provided their service and teaching with the attitude of “You do not owe me anything. I just pass it on.” There is a Legion post in Texas whose motto is, “This we fought for—This we stand for.”

Memory is our link with the past—it gives impetus and incentive for the future—of self and our nation through appreciation and education. What vision do you have, what thought of the future?

Your leaders and teachers have shared themselves, experiences, hopes and visions. Who are we remembering? And why? Much of life consists of remembering—in every type of experience. Counselors and workers of Boys State share their knowledge and experience to help prepare students for their future. It’s an unpaid work of generosity and concern. It is indeed to assist boys in preparation for their part in themselves and their country.

Those we remember gave their service to hope for a continuing life and country for your generation. This is a time to remember and express appreciation—and accept the opportunity of your time to encourage the continuing spirit and action for God and Country.
REMEMBER WHERE THE ROCKS ARE

By
Rev. Claude Smithmier
Past National Chaplain
The American Legion

Scripture: Matthew 7:21-27
Text: Proverbs 3:5-6

“The story of three men in a boat fishing—the 1st and 2nd men, wanting to stretch their legs, stepped out of the boat and walked across the water to the shore. The 3rd man decided he wanted to join the other two on shore. Every time he stepped out of the boat he would go under and had to climb back into the boat. Finally the two men on shore decided they had better tell their friend where the rocks were before he drowned.”

It is hoped that in your time here at Boys State you will learn and remember where the solid Rocks of Life are that can help you to live life at its highest and best.

This is a great time to be alive. Our world is full of challenges. Your future can be the greatest era this world has ever known if you, the youth of today will learn and remember where the rocks are.

“Three horsemen in ancient times riding across a desert heard a voice out of the dark saying ‘stop, get off your horses, pick up the rocks from this dry river bed and fill your saddle bags. -- When morning comes you will be both sad and glad.’ The next morning as they looked at the rocks in their bags they understood the riddle—the bags were filled with precious stones, very valuable and they were truly glad and sad—glad they had the rocks, but sad they had not picked up more.”—(Dr. Adolphson – University of Wisconsin)

Here are some of the rocks you can depend on:

- Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.
- He who would save his life must lose it; and he who loses his life for my sake shall find it.
- Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.
- These three remain: Faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.
• Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.
• Faith is the confident assurance that something we want is going to happen. It is the certainty that what we hope for is waiting for us, even though we cannot see it up ahead.
• Without faith you cannot please God.
• He who would be great among you—let him be your servant.
• Be not deceived, God is not mocked—for whatsoever you sow that you shall also reap.

The list of rocks and precious stones on which a life should be built could go on and on; as we see them in the lives of many great people of the past; as well as in our own experience. Hear God as is recorded in the letter to the Hebrews 12:1, “Since we have such a huge crowd of witnesses (the faithful) watching us from the grandstands, let us strip off everything that slows us down or holds us back, and especially those sins that wrap themselves so tightly around our feet and trip us up; and let us run with patience the particular race that God as set before us.”

A person does not have to have 20/20 vision to observe how often these foundation rocks are missed. Conformity to certain conduct codes of today are not reliable supports or guides; cultural standards are tides that change and wash away faulty foundations. Therefore, you must find for yourself a reliable source of help and guidance for your future. Ann Landers tells us where she has found the “rocks” in her life and writes, “The answer to every problem can be found between the covers of the Bible.” Another says, “I would rather have a knowledge of the Bible without a college education than a college education without the Bible.” Dr. Louis O’Caldwell says, “As you stand at this new stage in life the Bible is your best source of help. The eternal promises and principles found in God’s word will safely guide you into your future. They will chart a course approved by God. The Creator of the terrain is best qualified to give reliable directions and the Divine Map Maker has done his part in pointing out ‘Where the Rocks are.’”

Wise people will build their life on the rocks that have proven to be a sure foundation, while the foolish people overlook the solid rocks as a foundation and lose their footing in life – remember where the rocks are – build your life on the foundation that has proven to be sufficient. Follow the teachings and patterns that have proven to be sufficient. Follow the teachings and patterns of those who have helped and are now helping you to know where the rocks are. Hold fast to your faith in your God; know that in following the directions he has laid down for you, you can know that when you take your next step into your future you will be standing on solid rock.
Memorize Proverbs 3:5-6 and fit it into your life as a constant reminder – “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not to your own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths.”

Always remember – you only get from life that which you put in.
MEMORIAL MESSAGE
By
Rev. Donal “Jack” Squires
Past National Chaplain
The American Legion

Luke 6:31 “Do to others as you would have them do to you.” (International Version)

Have you ever thought about the fact that someone would hold you in such high esteem that they use you as a model of how they would like to be every day of their lives? Age doesn’t necessarily make the difference as some who are much older can learn by the example of someone younger than themselves.

I read an article some years ago that made an imprint on my life and I would like to share it with you. No, I don’t know who wrote it, but the words can certainly have meaning for most of us.

To Make Life Beautiful

“If you would increase your happiness and prolong your life, forget your neighbor’s faults. Forget all the slander and unkind remarks you hear each day. Forget the temptations, forget the faultfinding, and give thought to the cause which provoked it.

Forget the peculiarities of your friends, and only remember the good which makes you fond of them. Forget all the persona; quarrels or histories you may have heard by accident, and which, if repeated, would seem a thousand times worse.

Blot out as far as possible all the disagreeables of life. They will come, but will only grow larger when you remember them. And the constant thought of acts of meanness or malice will only tend to make you more familiar with them.

Obliterate everything that yesterday was disagreeable; start today with a clean sheet, writing upon it for memory’s sake only those things which are lovable. Remember that someday we must give an account of our words and deeds and thoughts. Therefore, let us try to make life beautiful for ourselves and for others.”

Yes, let us try to make life beautiful for ourselves and for others!
Memorial Message

It was bitter cold – as the new day dawned bright and clear on January 20, 1961. The entire nation was excited with the prospects of what the new president would bring to our nation.

Robert Frost was present to recite a poem in his honor.

John F. Kennedy, a part of what Tom Brokaw called the “greatest generation,” promised a bright future and a new beginning for America in his inaugural address.

Kennedy’s proclamation to “Ask not what your country can do for you…,” is probably the most recognizable quote from that address. However, I want to draw your attention to a different passage in his address. Kennedy said, “Let the word go forth from this time and place, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans…Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty.”

Today we pause to remember those who carried the torch of freedom as Lincoln intoned “(that) these honored dead… (who) gave the last full measure of devotion…shall not have died in vain.” We remember these fallen heroes—who fell—but did not let the torch of freedom flicker and be extinguished.

So, we gather to remember, hopefully to learn. But who is it that we remember? Yes, it could be those of great historical significance. People, such as George Pickett who led the Southern charge at Gettysburg. It might be Alvin York or Eddie Rickenbocker and their heroic adventures in and above the fields of France. We could dwell on Audie Murphy of my father’s generation. Audie Murphy was born near Kingston, Texas. He tried to enlist in the Marines, but was told he was too young. The Navy also said sorry – too young. Enlisting in the Army, Audie L. Murphy went on to become the most decorated soldier of WWII. Included in the 33 awards and decorations he received was every award for valor including the Medal of Honor.

We could dwell on the war in Vietnam.

We might even speak of the men and women of Desert Storm.

But, I ask you to spend a few moments with me reflecting about the men and women whose indomitable spirit turned back world tyranny and gave you and me this wonderful nation we call America.
The winds of war were blowing across Europe and Asia as Germany and Japan used the sword to expand their empires.

While America provided support for the British, French and Chinese it was clear America wanted to avoid going to war.

America’s role as observer – changed instantly on December 7, 1941. America did not cower and sue for peace. Instead she rolled up her sleeves and joined the fight to rid the world of these oppressive tyrants.

Across this nation men and women volunteered to take up the fight. Factories geared up to produce the machines of war. From this united effort came victory. Please allow me to describe one family’s contributions to that war effort.

The Niland family of Tonawanda, New York had four sons. The four brothers Edward 31, Preston 29, Robert 25 and Fritz 24 all joined the Army and Army Air Corps to do their part in winning the war. Letters to their mother said not to worry they would be all right and return home soon.

On D-Day Robert was killed in the invasion. The next day Preston was also killed. Shortly thereafter, Fritz was shot down behind enemy lines over Europe and Edward was shot down over Burma, listed as MIA and presumed dead.

Within a span of a couple of weeks the Niland family had lost all four sons to the war.

Then military leaders learned Fritz had survived. He was found and sent home as the sole survivor of the Niland family.

Miraculously, 18 months later Edward escaped from a Japanese POW camp and finally returned home.

Steven Speilberg retold the Niland's story in his film “Saving Private Ryan”.

We begin this week together, a week that may be a defining moment in your life, a week we hope will be one in which you will learn something of our government, and something of yourselves. We begin as a grateful nation because of the liberty that has too often been purchased with the lives of its young, most not much older than you. So, we say thank you to the men and women who defended liberty and freedom.
I want you to do three things for me–

One – Each Memorial Day – stop and remember those veterans who died for this great nation.

Second – Not only on Veterans Day, but anytime you have the opportunity– tell a vet “Thank you.” It doesn’t matter whether that vet is a combat veteran Marine who saw “action” on a volcanic Pacific island called Iwo Jima and later in the frozen hell of South Korea dubbed the “Chosin Reservoir” or a veteran who served stateside. Each did his part as a defender of liberty. Tell ’em “thank you” and let them know you appreciate their contributions to preserve this nation.

Now it is your turn to take up the torch. As the class of 20__, you face enormous challenges – but you have the potential to conquer those obstacles and achieve greatness.

Look at the delegates seated to your left and right. There you will see a future doctor. A lawyer. A Pulitzer Prize winning journalist. An actor. An astronaut. A Member of Congress. A state supreme court justice. And maybe, just maybe someone who will someday call 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue home.

What will the legacy of your generation be?

Will your generation rid the world of AIDS or cancer?

Will one of you discover the key that unlocks the mystery of the disease called, Alzheimer’s?

Will your generation eradicate racism and hatred, building a place where “…children will… not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character?”

Will one of you pioneer new technologies to grow bountiful crops – to feed the world’s hungry? Or develop an alternative energy source to meet the energy needs of a growing nation and economy?

Will one of you become that engineer whose discovery in rocket propulsion systems enables man “to boldly go where no one has gone before?”

Will you be the one to negotiate a lasting peace between the Catholics and
Protestants in Northern Ireland or find common ground so that Israelis and Palestinians can live side-by-side in harmony?

Will a future “Tom Brokaw” write that your generation – earned the title “the greatest generation?”

Listen to what Robert Frost says.

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveler, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

Finally, the third thing I want you to do – paraphrasing Frost – I challenge you to carry the torch of liberty and freedom high and – “Take the road less traveled and make a difference.”
BOYS STATE PRAYER MANUAL
Compiled and Edited
By
Fr. Gary Gummersheimer
Past National Chaplain
Sons Of The American Legion
FOREWORD

This text took form over several years of encouragement from members of the staff of The American Legion Boys Nation and participants in the Boys State Directors Conference. While many of the words contained herein are original, some are an editing of a work published in 1972 by the Boys Nation Senate Chaplain, a Mr. Douglas M. Hendrix of Alabama.

I am grateful to many people for the inspiration of the prayers that follow. But I wish to acknowledge two individuals. The first is Mr. Thomas Johnson, President of the Board of Directors of The American Legion Premier Boys State of Illinois. His unique gift of being able to turn a phrase in such a way as to give it new meaning is reflected in the structure of some of the prayers.

The second is Mr. Alden Johnson of Nebraska. “Coach,” a member of the Boys Nation staff has encouraged, no, more like needled me for the past several years to make this a reality. To both of these gentlemen, thank you and may God’s blessings always be yours in abundance.

DEDICATION

If I may be allowed to do so, I would like to dedicate this work to one individual and to a group of people. The individual is my father, a veteran of World War II, who through his involvement in his faith, his church, and his country, taught me that serving one’s country can be done in many ways.

The second is a general dedication to all of these men and women who comprise The American Legion. To those past, who saw the need to develop the leadership potential of young Americans by founding the Boys State program and made it possible for many to experience. To those who currently make it work. And those who will in the future meet the challenges that will continue to make Boys State a program of leadership, citizenship, and patriotism “For God and Country.”

Father Gary Gummersheimer
O, God of our ancestors, be with us now as we beg your grace and blessing. May we who gather in the shadows of those who have gone before us be as highly resolved as they were to bring about good to all who grace our land. May we be dedicated to the unfinished task of making all of its citizens committed patriots to the principles of freedom, equality, justice and humanity, gifts for which many sacrificed their lives and their fortunes. Amen.

Gracious God, though we believe that you have given us a perfect Union, we realize that often time we have been and are imperfect people. Strengthen our resolve to learn from the mistakes of our past and to be highly dedicated to the work of eliminating discrimination in any forms. May the power that our elected officials have truly be derived from the consent of the governed. May they be guided by your Spirit, a spirit of justice, freedom and democracy. Amen.

Enlighten us O God, that the truths that we proclaim to be self-evident might find in our lives positive expression. May we see all people as equal with rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. May we always work to make these the hallmarks of our great Nation, that we might continue to be a beacon of hope to the oppressed, a light to the nations and the glory of your name. Amen.

Long ago, relying on your Divine Providence, our Founders pledged to each other their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. O just God, allow us to find within ourselves the courage to bind ourselves to the same pledge. Grant us the grace not only to speak the words, but to live them in our daily lives. Help us to be resolved that our faith in you and each other will not be in vain but by our actions it may the fruit of justice and freedom for all. Amen.

Perhaps O God, the greatest gift that you have given to us is the gift of freedom. May we then in turn pledge to you and each other that we will accept this gift and the responsibility that goes with it. May we, with your help, always conduct ourselves in a gentle manner, use our personal giftedness to the best of our ability, protect and preserve the natural resources that you have given us, and always respect the rights of all citizens. Having done these we will have given you praise. Amen.

We struggle O God to make good choices. Help us with your spirit, that in choosing to follow your commands we might further the work of our hands and that you might "Crown our good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea." Amen.
Gracious God, we come to a time to make important decisions and choices. We beg you to give us the spirit of true fellowship that we might not reject someone because of the color of their skin, not reject them because of the number of vowels or consonants their name contains, not reject them because of the language that their parents speak, not reject them because of their physical imperfection, or not reject them because of the way they and their ancestors worship you. Rather, let us choose based on the character of their soul and their integrity. So that having chosen well and wisely they might lead us as “one Nation under God, indivisible with liberty and justice for all.” Amen.

O God, your promise was to proclaim liberty to captives, and recovery of sight for the blind. May those who are enslaved and blinded by injustice find in us the resolve “that this Nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom-and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.” Amen.

Wonderful, awesome and gracious God, we have gathered these young people from bustling metropolis, sleepy village and picturesque rural settings. They will trod paths made sacred by their patriotic ancestors and stand humbled in the shadows of former great leaders.

Yet they come here as ordinary young Americans, some of whom aspire to greatness, some who will have it thrust upon them and some who will work to avoid it. In the midst of this time together may they learn to be humble in word and action, to grow in understanding themselves, to realize their gifts of leadership, to be compassionate in dealing with others and committed to being of service. And when they finish this time together, may they return to their homes dedicated to working “For God and Country.” Amen.

Gracious God, the second most important gift you have given us is liberty. As creatures you have allowed us the freedom to choose. May we always use this gift wisely making choices that are right and just.

Your most important gift was that you created us, in love equally, but gifted us uniquely. May we share the gift of love with each other celebrating a unity that comes in the midst of the diversity of our talents.

You have gathered us together as a fraternity—a fellowship of believers. May we always strive to bring out the best in each other as we work together. May our...
commitment to God and Country be as evident in our actions toward each other as in the words we share. May we guide well our Nation (state) so that when our time together draws to a close we all might have a deeper appreciation for all of our gifts, departing with a renewed sense of patriotism grounded in liberty, equality and fraternity. Amen.

Lord of Nations, God eternal we place our trust in you. May we be here dedicated to make this time of true learning based on our drive to give the most in order to make the most of this experience. May we overlook each others short-comings and praise each others talents. May we grasp, with humility, our successful achievements and learn, with character, from our defeats.

Let us go forth then with excitement and courage to grasp each moment that this time together will present to grow and to learn from each other.

May we honor the memory of those who have gone before us by our devotion to the cause, which brings us together: to learn liberty and bring justice to all who seek these goals. Amen.

The following six prayers have been edited from the work of Mr. Douglas M. Hendrix, 1972 Boys Nation Senate Chaplain.

O God of eternal justice, whose judgment is tempered by a compassion beyond our understanding, hear our cries for guidance and divine help. Watch over and protect our Nation. Help us to recultivate those ideals of freedom and liberty with which you have so richly blessed us.

Bless the leaders of our Nation and guide them in their awesome responsibilities.

Preserve the youth of America and help us this day “to commit all that we know of ourselves to as much as we know of you, trusting you to strengthen us for your purposes.” Amen.

O Creator of wonderful beauty, we thank you for this day because we realize that we will never again have these moments. No matter how effective we think we may have been, no matter how outstanding we believe we may become.

Help us to ask not that our days be made easier, rather that our wills be made strong. Help us to ask not that our loads be made lighter, rather our backs be strengthened. Help us to ask not that our challenges be lessened, rather that our
drives be replenished. Help us to ask not for fewer responsibilities, rather help us to depend on you so that we can accept our responsibilities. Amen.

Loving God, let us experience the true and lasting happiness that comes from doing your will. Help us to be happy because of the simple fact that we are loved. Let us grow in the knowledge that comes from your concern and compassion.

Great God of understanding, guide us in our discussions. Let them be constructive rather than destructive and rational rather than emotional. Help our questions to be piercing, but steer us from individual attacks. And let our minds be open to accept difference opinions. We pray all these things trusting and believing in your guidance. Amen.

Our most gracious God, we come before you with a sense of humility and thankfulness for all the opportunities this day will present. Help us never to forget that the qualities of character that brought us here are your gift. Be with our families and loved ones who helped to shape us and teach us to be humble. As we learn the rules and procedures of our government, help us to remember that there are guidelines for our spiritual life as well. Bless our discussions, guide our deliberations, steer us away from petty arguments, and help us to think before we speak and consider carefully our actions. Lift your countenance upon us and give us peace. Amen.

O Lord of light, lift from our mortal bodies the blindness of ignorance and selfishness. Shape our wandering intentions into positive action. Bring us through all trials and difficulties with your compassion. Grant us Lord the grace to realize that if we are to be leaders we must first be followers of wisdom. We pray these things with humility as we seek with anticipation to serve with joy and live with hope. Amen.

O wisdom of the ages, prod us when we are hesitant; reprove us when too hasty; calm us when too angry; guide us when we stumble and direct us when we go astray. Guide our lips in all debate and show us compassion when we seek to hate, that we may see each other as friends. Show us Lord, that because of love, though we are often troubles, we are never crushed; though sometimes in doubt, we should never despair. For though we have enemies we are never without a friend and though badly hurt, we are not destroyed. Amen.
CALL TO WORSHIP AND INVOCATION

In the life of the Indian there was only one inevitable duty—the duty of prayer—the daily recognition of the Unseen and Eternal. His daily devotions were more necessary to him than daily food. He wakes at daybreak, puts on his moccasins and steps down to the water’s edge. Here he throws handfuls of clear, cold water into his face, or plunges in bodily. After the bath, he stands erect before the advancing dawn, facing the sun as it dances upon the horizon, and offers his unspoken praise. Each soul must meet the morning sun, the new sweet earth and the great silence alone!

Whenever, in the course of the daily hunt the hunter comes upon a scene that is strikingly beautiful or sublime—a black thunder cloud with the rainbow’s glowing arch above the mountain, a white waterfall in the heart of a green gorge, a vast prairie tinged with the blood-red sunset—he pauses for an instant in the attitude of worship. He sees no need for setting apart one day in seven as a Holy day, since to him all days are God’s.

Let us pray:

Almighty God, we pause at the beginning of this day and week that we might remember those men and women who have defended our liberty and have been an influence for God in our lives and in the life of our Nation. As we listen to their stories may we learn the lesson of their lives: that one person can make a difference and every person should try. Teach us that to whom much is given—much is required, so that when the Season of Service is upon us we will hear the trumpets and with your help answer the call. Amen.
REFLECTION AND PRAYER OF CONFESSION

From Presidents Kennedy and Clinton we read these words:

For those to whom much is given, much is required. And when at some future day the high court of history sits in judgment on each of us, recording whether in our brief span of service we fulfilled our responsibilities to the state, our success or failure, in whatever office we hold will be measured by the answers for four questions: “First, were we truly people of courage? Second, were we truly people of judgment? Third, were we truly people of integrity? Finally, were we truly people of dedication?”

There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured by what is right with America. I challenge a new generation of young Americans to a season of service. We have heard the trumpets we have changed the guard. And now each in our own way, and with God’s help, we must answer the call.

Please remain seated for a prayer of confession:

Father, we confess that we have been poor stewards of your good creation. You have given us a world of immeasurable riches and beauty, and yet we continue to pollute water and fouled its air. You have given us sight, and yet we miss the glory that surrounds us. You have given us conscience, and yet we tolerate wrongdoing. And you have given us imagination, and yet we plod along, afraid to dream, unwilling to hope. Forgive us now for those failures that hurt, not only ourselves, but other lives as well. Amid all the confusion of our time, give us a vision of the world as you would have it be, grant us some part in molding it nearer to your purpose, so that we may be responsible in the measure we have received. Amen.
REFLECTION AND PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING:

From ancient texts we read:

Even the youth shall faint and be weary; and young men shall fall; but they who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as of eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint. And many people shall come and say: “Let us go to the mountain of the Lord, so that he may teach us his ways and we may walk in his paths. He shall judge between nations and shall decide for all people. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nations neither shall they learn war any more. For the Lord has a controversy with his people. He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and walk humbly with your God.”

Please remain seated for the prayer of thanksgiving:

Father, we thank you for these ancient words which have brought comfort and peace to people in sorrow and people in danger. We thank you also for the rich heritage of our past, and for this nation which has been made great by the sacrifice of those who have gone before us. We bring you thanks particularly for those who will not grow old as we are left to grow old, but will remain forever young. Although they are gone, they will be immortal, because they have given their lives to something which is immortal, the dream of liberty and justice for all. We thank you also for the homes that have nourished us, the people who have loved us, and all those who have sacrificed to teach us and help us grow. We thank you finally for your love for us, for seed time and harvest, for sunshine and rain. You have given us this good land as our heritage. Help us appreciate the many other blessings which you provide in such abundance, to be content with them, to be grateful for them, to be proud of them, not in a selfish pride that boasts of our wealth, but a grateful pride that strives to be more worthy. Amen.
REFLECTION AND CLOSING PRAYER:

From Presidents Truman and Kennedy we read:

I continue to be optimistic about the future. It is only fair to say that I am an optimist by disposition but my confidence in the future is based more on my reading of history and evolution of man’s works. I have never seen pessimists make anything work or contribute anything of lasting value. It takes ideals to make the world work because eventually some of the ideas they develop are put into practice to help mankind.

Let the word go forth from this time and place, to friend and foe alike, that the torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans…that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support and friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty.

Please join me in the closing prayer as it is printed in your program:

O God of every time and place, prevail among us too; within this Nation that we love and promise to renew. O thou whose will we can resist, but cannot over come, forgive our harsh and strident ways and harm that we have done. Behind the masks that we maintain to shut our sadness in, there lives a hope, however dim, that all may live as kin. Though wrong emboldens us to fight, may peace ex-cite our care; if not us, who? If not now, when? If not here, God, then where?
GUIDELINES FOR FOUR CHAPLAINS
INTERFAITH/MEMORIAL SERVICE

Saga Of The Four Chaplains

It was known as Torpedo Junction, the U-boat infested, icy waters of the North Atlantic during World War II. On February 3, 1943, the USAT DORCHESTER, an old coastal steamer quickly pressed into military service, was slowly making her way through those waters bound for Greenland.

Most of the men were seasick, and green with nausea. Because they were in submarine waters, the captain directed the men to keep outer gear and life jackets on at all times. Moving among them were four Army Chaplains: George Fox (Methodist), Alexander Goode (Jewish), Clark Poling (Dutch Reformed), and John Washington (Roman Catholic). The Chaplains talked with and listened to the men - soothing apprehensions, offering encouragement, or sharing a joke. By their concern, their camaraderie with the men and one another, and their very presence, they brought solace.

An enemy submarine, stalking the ship undetected, fired a torpedo toward the ship's aging flank. The missile exploded in the boiler room, destroying the electric supply and releasing suffocating clouds of steam and ammonia gas. Many on board died instantly; some were trapped below decks. Others, jolted from their bunks, groped and stumbled their way to the decks of the stricken vessel. Taking on water rapidly, the ship began listing to starboard.

Because security reasons prevented the use of distress flares, escort vessels, still close enough to assist, pushed on into the darkness unaware that the DORCHESTER was sinking.

Overcrowded lifeboats capsized; rafts drifted away before anyone could reach them. Men clung to the rails, frozen with fear, unable to let go and plunge into the
dark, churning water far below.

The Four Chaplains calmed frightened men, got them into the spare lifejackets, and urged them over the side. The supply of extra jackets ran out with men still waiting. Having decided to remain, the Four Chaplains forced upon frightened servicemen their own lifejackets.

Too quickly, no more lifeboats could be launched and many men were left aboard, but there was more for the Chaplains to do. When last seen, they were standing together on the deck leading the men in prayer. With arms linked in friendship and heads bowed in prayer, they sank beneath the waves. Two of those chaplains were Protestant, one was a Catholic, and one was a Jew. Monsignor John McNamara, former Chief of Chaplains of the U.S. Navy, said at a Four Chaplains Award Service, "No casting director in Hollywood could have selected a better cast of characters than these four to portray the basic unity of the American people."

The self-sacrifice of the Four Chaplains was a heroic act. It was not the only heroic act aboard the DORCHESTER. But it was the identity of these four young men, representing three great faiths of the American people, that adds symbolism to their sacrifice.

It is our charge to see that this brief, but significant, portion of American history is not lost, and that the lessons of cooperation and selfless service are proclaimed.

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SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR
FOUR CHAPLAINS SERVICE

Background:

These community services began in the late 1940's across the nation on or near February 3rd of each year. They are held to honor the Four Chaplains and the other 668 men who perished when the USAT DORCHESTER was torpedoed and sunk on February 3, 1943. Because of the interfaith nature of the sacrificial act of the Four Chaplains, this is an excellent way to bring together people of all races, faiths, and creeds in an observance of a common unity among Americans. We urge your organization to hold a Four Chaplains observance with this purpose in mind. It is appropriate that this is also the time of National Brotherhood Week.

Music:

Elsewhere in this packet is a list of appropriate music for Four Chaplains Services. The sheet music for The Four Chaplains Anthem, sung at Chapel services, is available upon request.

Offerings:

Many organizations take an offering during the service for the work of the Chapel of Four Chaplains. These offerings enable us to continue our many worthwhile programs, and are truly appreciated.

Guests:

It is a special honor to recognize DORCHESTER survivors, and family members of the victims and chaplains, if any are present.

Location:

The service can be held in veterans or fraternal halls, auditoriums, parks, churches, synagogues, and chapels. We recommend that clergy or representatives of the different faith groups be participants. Clergy to represent the Four Chaplains is always impressive.
Programs:

Printed programs add to the dignity and importance of the occasion. A copy of the program should be sent to the Chapel of Four Chaplains for their archives.

Publicity:

News releases can be sent to local newspapers, television stations, and radio stations. Encourage the media to publicize the upcoming service or to do a follow-up report. Copies of any publicity items should be sent to the Chapel of Four Chaplains for their archives.

Introductions:

For a smooth flowing service, it is recommended that minimal introducing be done. Let each participant follow the other as listed in the program. There should be a brief introduction of the main speaker. The person presiding is responsible for keeping the service flowing smoothly.

Rehearsal:

A rehearsal prior to the event always makes for a more effective service.

Color Guards / Honor Guards:

Veterans, civic, and fraternal organizations wishing to participate with their color/honor guards, including organizational flags, enhance the service.

Focal Points:

To symbolize the tragic sinking of the USAT DORCHESTER, there can be any number of focal points for the service: four lit candles, four red roses, a lifejacket, or four empty seats near the altar or speaker's area. (For a breakfast or banquet, this can be a completely set table for four, but with no one sitting at the Four Chaplains table.)

A Final Word:

To make your Four Chaplains Service special and memorable, be sensitive, creative, and enthusiastic!
THREE SUGGESTED FORMATS FOR FOUR CHAPLAINS SERVICES

(1) With a breakfast or banquet:

POSTING THE COLORS
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
"AMERICA, THE BEAUTIFUL"
(Assembly or Solo)
WELCOME
INVOCATION
MEAL
INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS
HOMILY
MESSAGE
(focused on the Four Chaplains and sacrificial service)
TRIBUTES TO THE FOUR CHAPLAINS
(Wreath laying or candle lighting by four clergy or other persons of each faith)
"LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH"
(Assembly)
BENEDICTION
RETIREMENT OF COLORS
(2) Major program:

POSTING THE COLORS
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
NATIONAL ANTHEM
WELCOME
INVOCATION
INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS
THE COLLECT
(read aloud by Assembly)
MUSICAL SELECTION
(choral or band)
HOMILY
MESSAGE
(focused on the Four Chaplains and sacrificial service)
TRIBUTES TO THE FOUR CHAPLAINS
(Wreath laying or candle lighting by four clergy or other persons of each faith)
"LET THERE BE PEACE ON EARTH"
(Assembly)
BENEDICTION
MOMENT OF SILENCE
TAPS
RETIREMENT OF COLORS

(3) Short program:

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
"AMERICA, THE BEAUTIFUL"
(Assembly or Solo)
INVOCATION
WELCOME
INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS
THE COLLECT
(read aloud by Assembly)
HOMILY
MESSAGE
(focused on the Four Chaplains and sacrificial service)
BENEDICTION
On February 3, 1943, the USAT DORCHESTER was tragically sunk. Of the 902 young men on board, only 230 survived. Many of those survivors owe their lives to the courage and leadership exhibited by the heroic Four Chaplains, who, in sacrificing their lives, created a unique legacy of brotherhood.

Since 1951, the Chapel of Four Chaplains has spread the message of interfaith cooperation and selfless service, touching the lives of thousands of people across this great country.

There will be thousands of Four Chaplains Interfaith Memorial Services held across the nation on or near February 3rd. This service is a tribute to those courageous Chaplains and the 668 brave young men who lost their lives on that fateful night. Further, this service honors all those who have served, and whose courage and faith have sustained our country.

It is important that we teach our children and youth about these great events and great sacrifices, for they are our future. It is vital for them to understand what selfless service on behalf of others can accomplish.

This prayer is interfaith in nature, and may be read aloud by everyone at the appointed time in the program. This prayer is a part of each Legion of Honor Award Service sponsored by the Chapel of Four Chaplains.

THE COLLECT

God of our Fathers and our God, we thank You for the unity that the DORCHESTER Chaplains, these four men of God, demonstrated in life and in death. Unity that is not uniformity.

Unity that strengthens within each of us every worthy loyalty of faith and practice.

Unity that transcends all our differences and makes us one in loyalty to our country and our fellowmen, and to you our God.

Grant us now Your abiding presence and may we remain faithful to the spirit of our Four Chaplains who, having learned to live and serve together, in death were not divided.
SUGGESTED MUSIC FOR
FOUR CHAPLAINS SERVICES

The following is a suggested, but not inclusive, list of music appropriate for Four Chaplains Services. In a gathering of Jews and Christians, it is preferable to have music acceptable to all, or to counter one selection with the other.

The National Anthem
The Four Chaplains Anthem
America, The Beautiful
How Great Thou Art
God of Our Fathers
My Country, 'Tis of Thee
Battle Hymn of the Republic
Eternal Father, Strong to Save (Navy Hymn - includes stanza for each branch of military service)
This Is My Song
Pomp & Circumstance
God Bless America
Let There Be Peace On Earth
Taps
Auld Lang Syne
PRAYER: THE FOUR CHAPLAINS

Gracious Lord, we ask your blessing upon this gathering. We join together as people of many faiths. We join together as people of different experiences and backgrounds.

Yet we have all come to this sanctuary to share in this time of worship.

Catholics, Jews, and Protestants – we come together in the house of the Lord, to worship, to praise your name, to thank you for your constant presence in our lives.

And we come together to honor four men – men who had gone to war as chaplains – to be the human touch of your love and caring among troops called upon to risk their lives for their country. We honor four chaplains who knew how to love their neighbors as themselves. We are thankful for the lesson they give to the generations – a lesson of self-sacrifice; a lesson of true brotherhood. With thankfulness, we ask your blessing upon the souls of Clark Poling and Alexander Goode, of John Washington and George Fox.

We pray also for the souls of the men who joined these chaplains in death that February day many years ago. More than 600 men saw the end of their hopes and dreams that icy morning, in the effort to sustain the hopes and dreams of their families at home.

May our hearts feel a special kinship today with those who were aboard the Dorchester when a torpedo hit it... and yet who live and remember the experience, and the loss. We know they must recall the morning with sadness, which has remained with them through the decades.

Lord, we know the story we remember today is just one fine example of the many times men and women have sacrificed themselves for others. And we know this story is one among many examples of true brotherhood. Yet we single out and hold it before us as a reminder that all persons – of all faiths and colors and creeds – are capable of showing such courage and such compassion. Such has been true of so many who have served in all branches of service, in times of war and peace. Such has been true throughout the generations.

Help us to see, even today, the times that we might stand up for that which is most important, and to do so with more concern for others than for ourselves.
Help us to recognize the times when we might overlook the insignificant differences between people, and respond to the needs of someone just because he or she is a person in need.

Forgive us for those times in which we participate in the freedoms of our land, yet fail to honor the rights of all Americans. Help us to learn how to show justice in our lives, to love mercy in our relationship with others, and to walk humbly with you at all times.

Thank you, Lord, for watching over us and comforting us in grief. May we also feel your presence in the joy of celebrating your love – as it shines through the human spirit of the four chaplains we remember today; as it shines through all who truly love justice and peace.

May all who are present at this service gain wisdom and compassion from worshipping together this day. Amen.

ALEXANDER D. GOODE
(Pause for bell)

Alexander Goode was too young for World War I. While George Fox was winning medals on the battlefield in France, Alex Goode was receiving medals in Eastern High School, Washington, DC, 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.

When the body of the Unknown Soldier was brought to Arlington Cemetery, Alex Goode attended the ceremonies. He could just as well have ridden that fifteen miles – for after all – there were trolleys and buses in Washington, and the Goode family had a fine family car, but Alex thought it showed more respect to walk – and walk he did – all the way to Arlington and all the way back....thirty miles. That’s how he felt about the Unknown Soldier. Even while training for his calling he joined the National Guard and kept up the active membership.

He married his childhood sweetheart and they had a daughter. After his call to a synagogue in York, Pennsylvania, he continued his studies at John Hopkins University, forty-five miles away, and earned his Ph.D.
One 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.

(Drape stole on the Star of David.)

GEORGE L. FOX
(Pause for bell.)

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 Army 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. He won the Croix de Guerre – and many months in a hospital with a broken spine – for outstanding bravery in an artillery barrage.

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. Then 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."

(Drape stole on Cross.)

JOHNNY P. WASHINGTON
(Pause for bell.)

Up in Newark, New Jersey, there was once a little Irish boy named Johnny Washington. Things usually aren't easy for poor immigrant folk. But, Johnny had his Father's Irish grin and his Mother's Irish 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 less pennies 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. It
must have been about the time he decided to become a priest that he was the leader of the South Twelfth Street Boys in Newark, a position which required not only moral suasion but, on occasion, a black eye and a bloody nose.

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.

(Drape stole on Cross.)

**CLARK V. POLING**

(Pause for bell.)

Clark Poling was the youngest of our Four Men of God. Clark's first letter was written to his father. It was written in square block printing and was addressed by 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 was 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. He was ordained in a Dutch Reformed Church and was assigned a pulpit in Schenectady. He married a girl named Betty and they had one little boy, called Corky. A little girl was born to Mrs. Poling at Easter time after the Dorchester went down in February.

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 that the mortality rate of the Chaplains is the highest of all? As a Chaplain you'll 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 Dr. Poling's study when Clark turned to is 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. Many will not return and to ask God for special family favors 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

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especially pray that I shall be adequate." Dr. Poling tells us that was the prayer he prayed. Clark Poling was adequate.

He taught his men not to bear personal hatred for German and Japanese soldiers or civilians. His text was simple. Hate the system that made your Brother evil. It is the system we must destroy.

(INTRODUCTION FOR CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY)

At 12:30 A.M. on February 3, 1943, the bell on the troopship DORCHESTER rang twice and never sounded again. The DORCHESTER was torpedoed by an enemy submarine and 672 young men paid the supreme sacrifice. Included in the 672 were Four Men of God – a rabbi, a Roman Catholic priest, a Methodist minister, and a Dutch Reformed minister – all Army Chaplains.

These Four Chaplains gave their life jackets to save four soldiers and, in so doing, gave up their only means of survival. They were last seen on the deck of the ship with their arms linked together and their heads bowed in prayer as they went to their watery graves in the North Atlantic off the coast of Greenland. Each chaplain received the Purple Heart and Distinguished Service Cross posthumously.

At this time, a candle will be lit for each of the Four Chaplains, as their biographies are read...

(I LIGHT THIS CANDLE IN MEMORY OF CHAPLAIN GEORGE L. FOX)

George L. Fox, the oldest of the four, knew all about war. Lying about his age in 1917, he enlisted in the Army as a medical corps assistant. He won a Silver Star for rescuing a wounded soldier from a battlefield filled with poison gas, the Croix de Guerre for outstanding bravery in an artillery barrage, and the Purple Heart for wounds. A resident of Vermont, he was a successful accountant and family man when he heard God's call to the ministry. Fox went back to school and later was ordained into the Methodist denomination. When war came, he once again enlisted, telling his wife, "I've got to go. I know from experience what our boys are about to face. They need me." Fox began active duty on August 8, 1942, and served until that fateful morning of February 3, 1943.
I LIGHT THIS CANDLE IN MEMORY OF
CHAPLAIN ALEXANDER D. GOODE

Alexander D. Goode was both an outstanding athlete and scholar. Following in his father's footsteps, this young man known for his laughter and love of life, became a rabbi. While studying for his calling, he joined the National Guard and kept an active membership. The return of the body of the Unknown Soldier had a profound effect on Goode. He attended the ceremonies, choosing to walk the thirty miles rather than drive or take a bus, because he thought it showed more respect. Goode married his childhood sweetheart and was serving a synagogue in York, Pennsylvania, when World War II broke out. He served on active duty from August 9, 1942 until February 3, 1943.

I LIGHT THIS CANDLE IN MEMORY OF
CHAPLAIN CLARK V. POLING

Clark V. Poling was the youngest of the Four Chaplains and the seventh generation in his family to be ordained in the Dutch Reformed Church. When war came, he was anxious to go, but not as a chaplain. "I'm not going to hide behind the church in some safe office out of the firing line," he told his father. The elder Poling replied, "Don't you know that chaplains have the highest mortality rate of all? As a chaplain you'll have the best chance in the world to be killed. You just can't carry a gun to kill anyone yourself." So Clark Poling left his pastorate in Schenectady, New York, and enlisted as a chaplain. Just before he left for active duty, Clark asked his father to pray for him – "not for my safe return, that wouldn't be fair. Just pray that I shall do my duty... and have the strength, courage, and understanding of men. Just pray that I shall be adequate." Poling began active duty on June 10, 1942, and served until February 3, 1943.

I LIGHT THIS CANDLE IN MEMORY OF
CHAPLAIN JOHN P. WASHINGTON

John P. Washington grew up poor, scrappy, and determined in the toughest section of Newark, New Jersey. One of nine children born to an Irish immigrant family, he was blessed with a sunny disposition, a beautiful singing voice, and a love for music. He also loved a good fight, and was leader of the South Twelfth Street gang when he was called to the priesthood. He played ball with the boys of the parish, organized sports teams and, when war came along, went with his "boys" into the Army. He began active duty on May 9, 1942. His wonderful voice, raised in song and prayer to comfort those around him, could be heard until his final moments on February 3, 1943.
SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, February 3, 20__, will mark the ( ) anniversary of the sinking of the troopship U.S.A.T. Dorchester, which carried to their deaths four U.S. Army chaplains of three faiths who stood united in prayer as the ship went down; and

WHEREAS, These four chaplains, Roman Catholic, Jewish and Protestant gave their own life jackets to four soldiers and thus sacrificed their own lives to save the lives of others; and

WHEREAS, The heroic deeds of Chaplains Lt. George L. Fox, Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Lt. Johnny P. Washington and Lt. Clark V. Poling and their combined act of supreme devotion and sacrifice for American liberty and human freedom will be an inspiring and ever shining example of real brotherhood for all time to the people of the world; and

WHEREAS, we must all see to it that their supreme sacrifice to the common cause of human freedom and justice for all shall not have been in vain;

NOW, THEREFORE, I _____________________________ (title) of (city/county/etc.) of _____________________ do hereby designate Sunday, February ___, 20__, (1st Sunday in February) to be observed as Four Chaplains Sunday and the week of February __-_ , 20__, (the week following the 1st Sunday in February) be observed as Religious Emphasis Week and call upon all our citizens to commemorate the day and week with appropriate observances in public places and by prayers in their homes and houses of worship.

Given under my Hand and the Seal of ________________
This ______ day of ____________
20__
____________________ (title)