

THE NEBRASKA UNICAMERAL

84th LEGISLATURE

FIRST SESSION

1975

PRAYERS

by

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Chaplain

January 8, 1975

O Lord, our God, if ever we needed Thy wisdom and Thy guidance, it is now - as our Legislature begins a new session, standing upon the threshold of a new year, fraught with so many dangerous opportunities.

Some old faces are gone from this chamber - and we remember them; other new faces have come - and we welcome them; many familiar faces have returned - and we are gladdened by them.

We are grateful that somehow our beloved State continues to go on with vitality, vigor and energized faith, and we pray that in this new year we together may move on to loftier heights and nobler achievements, for the good of the people in an invigorating climate of freedom, frankness, fortitude, and faithfulness - to what we believe, to one another, and to Thee.

Amen

January 9, 1975

Before we plunge into the duties of this day's sessions, O Lord our God, lift up our spirits for a moment at least, we pray, so that the pounding of our hearts may be eased somewhat by the quieting of our minds - so that our inner uncertainties may yield, however slightly, to a sense of adequacy and poise.

"What we know not, teach us; what we have not, give us; what we are not, make us; for what we have been, forgive us; as now we are, receive us; toward what we should be and shall be, guide, guard and direct us."

Amen

January 13, 1975

Our heavenly Father, in this moment of prayer, when there is silence in this senate chamber, may there not be silence in Thy presence. May our prayers be heard.

May no short circuits be made by our lack of faith, our high professions joined to low attainments, our fine words hiding shabby thoughts, or friendly faces masking cold hearts.

Out of the same old needs, conscious of the same old faults, we pray on the same old terms for new mercies and new blessings. In the name of Christ our Lord.

Amen

January 14, 1975

O God, our Father, as the battery is recharged without sound or motion, so wilt thou, in this moment of quiet, send thy spirit into the hearts and minds of each one here. With newness of life, with spiritual power, vision, and lively faith, enable them to meet all the demands which lie before them with glad anticipation, and then give them peace for the night. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

January 20, 1975

Our Father, before we become involved in the routine of another day, we stop to seek Thy help. Experienced in the ways of men so well, we know all too little of the ways of God. But Thou knowest each one of us, by name and by need. Therefore turn our wayward minds and hearts to Thee. Forgive our faults and failures that we have committed in the past and set us free from them. Forgive our failure to apply to ourselves the standards of conduct we demand of others. Forgive our slowness to see the good in others or to see the evil in ourselves. In our differences may we be kind; in our agreements may we be humble, that Thy will may be done in us and through us in our beloved State. For Jesus' sake.

Amen

January 21, 1975

We know, our Father, that there is a time to speak and a time to keep silent. Help us to tell the one from the other. When we should speak, give us the courage of our convictions to speak with clarity and strength. When we should keep silent, restrain us from speaking, lest, in our desire to appear wise, we give ourselves away. Teach us the sacraments of silence, such as this moment, that we may use them to know ourselves, to sympathize with others, and, above all, to know thee. Then shall we be wise. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

January 22, 1975

Whatever of the past or the future must pre-occupy our minds as we stand by our desks just now, O Lord, our God: enable us to become fully sensitive to the larger dimensions of the present moment. Prevent us from wasting the wonderful gift of time. Challenge us with an awareness of the potential for creativity and productivity with which every hour of life is endowed. So may we be recognized by our constituents as worthy representatives, and by our God as faithful servants.

Amen

January 23, 1975

Great unseen Spirit, eternal and majestic, ruler of the heavens and the earth, before whom a thousand years are as a watch in the night; yet ever mindful of even the small things of the earth - the sparrow that falls from the skies in death; the cup of cold water given to one in need.

We prepare now to invest another week of public trust in the service of those who have entrusted much to us. Grant that we may do nothing to weaken their trust in us, and may they do nothing to betray our confidence in them.

So may we be especially alert at this time to the frustrations and sensitivities of those who somehow feel that we can dispense easy answers to their complex problems.

Guard us against the ever present inclination to over-react when we feel a cause is being over-demonstrated.

Do not permit us to confuse the authentic promptings of the Divine voice with the noisy chatter of other voices we are hearing.

Give us strong backbones that will not sag under the weight of any amount of pressure from man, but will yield only to the guiding spirit of the God and Father of us all.

Amen

January 24, 1975

Creator and Preserver of all life; author and sustainer of our individual lives; high and beyond us, yet nearer than we can think; whose will moves everywhere - whose hand encompasses all the affairs of earth - in whom we live and move and have our being: we invoke your Name and seek your Presence, O Lord our God, as we assemble now for another segment of service. Conscious we are that the actions of this Legislature are being judged by those who have entrusted these offices to us: even more conscious must we be to labor as men and women under Divine judgment. May we stand tall in the eyes of all who watch us here.

Amen

January 27, 1975

O Lord, our God: whose work is never done, but ever advanced by the faithful service of men and women: meet with us as we begin another week.

Now that the seats in this House have all been filled, and committees are meeting, and bills are being considered, and the form of legislation is being fashioned, steer us in the proper direction!

Our thoughts, our aspirations, our weaknesses, our abilities, we would dare to dedicate to purposes far larger than ourselves. Share with us in the duties we take up once more that together we may make this a good week for Nebraska.

Amen

January 29, 1975

Before we do anything else this week, O Lord our God, we would attempt to align our spirits by the Great Creator Spirit of life, so that we might not wobble too noticeably, nor wander too frequently.

This is why we pray. And this is why we offer in prayer whatever endowments we have received of mind and heart and will to the work which is uniquely ours.

May the strength of God pilot us; may the power of God preserve us; may the wisdom of God instruct us; may the hand of God protect us; may the shield of God defend us.

Amen

January 30, 1975

O Lord and Saviour of us all: We need Your help to take resentment out of our thoughts and meditations - sometimes, more than others, but never, it seems, are we completely free of this need - for things happen in life generally, and the life of this Legislature, of course, which annoy and hurt us.

Words are spoken which we sometimes feel to be personally unkind or unnecessary; and we feel ourselves to be misjudged when we should be congratulated, or overlooked when we should be recognized.

Save us from inner rebellion and bitterness and moodiness, for such things can succeed only in destroying our souls.

Help us today by reminding us of that perfect one who tread these paths before us in the fullness of time; and may the way the Master went be the way the servant travels still.

Amen

January 31, 1975

For ties that continue to bind us together, even when the going is rough; for common purposes we continue to recognize as larger than we are, even when the business at hand taxes our patience and our constituents; for the privilege of sharing in the inspirations - as well as the frustrations - of events which make headlines . . . causing folks back home to smile, or to stop smiling; for the conviction we share that what helps our district helps our state; and what helps our state helps people; and what helps people is always right; for anything that may happen during today's session to deepen this conviction, and give it practical application; we now ask Your help, O Lord our God.

Amen

February 6, 1975

Creator God of the whole family of man; Father in Heaven of every family on earth; help us to understand that here in this house we are also one family.

We know that we cannot always be of one mind on the diverse issues which await our decision here, for we

are - Republican and Democrat, Conservative and Liberal, rural and urban, male and female, Catholic and Protestant, Veteran and novice, white and black. nevertheless, one house, one family - its members standing side by side, each head bowed before one God, together asking that the common good rather than our individual preferences may guide us in all that we do here.
Amen

February 7, 1975

Guide Nebraska Representatives in their crucial work today, as they consider momentous issues, O Lord our God. Continue to inspire them both by an understanding of the power for good which is theirs to use, and the hope for the good life which so many feel is theirs to dispense. May they not become too dismayed by the barbs of their critics, nor too deluded by the praise of their admirers.

May they realize that they are, even in the midst of personal frustration and partisan attack, among the most respected of Nebraska citizens.

Bless in special measure the members of this Legislature who are fulfilling roles of responsibility; and those who are at this time experiencing special physical or spiritual need. So guide Nebraska Representatives, O God, and may their work become a blessing to many.

Amen

February 10, 1975

We bow our heads, O Lord our God, for we would be stupid indeed to believe that our business is none of Your business. But we bow our heads also because we know that we need help. Tensions mount, and pressures build, and criticism sharpens, and each man and woman among us stands in need of special help this week. And You only know what our special needs are, Heavenly Father, for You know us better than we know ourselves. So help us, we pray. Get our family and our House off to a good week, and give us all a good conscience at the week's end.
Amen

February 11, 1975

Almighty Father, in decisions before us which effect the lives of human beings, give us an equation between the telescopic and the microscopic view of life. May we endeavor to see issues in their minute details and also from a long range perspective. May we not be absorbed in the tyranny of trifles and lose the meaning of the larger issues. Give us clear minds. May we not be submerged in indecisions which multiply our problems, divide our worth, add to our sleeplessness, and subtract from our value to the people of our State. In our Lord's name.

Amen

February 12, 1975

We are grateful for the lives of men and women who serve the needs of their times. The life of Abraham Lincoln speaks to us of the possibilities of our own lives. As we celebrate his birthday we would ask of Thee to help us to acquire his spirit of compassion, patience, and courage. Help us also to respond to the cries for help and guidance in our own times; this day is such a time; give us then a right spirit for the cries of this day. We ask for this in the Name of Thy loving Son, Christ our Lord.

Amen

February 13, 1975

O Lord our God: we pray once more - but sometimes we wonder what's left to pray for, because we've said it all so many times before, and we don't want to wear thin our welcome.

And sometimes we are unwilling to accept the answer to our prayer, because it is not what we have been expecting.

Yet we continue in this Legislature to feel the burden of being the few who act for the many on matters of importance, and we do need to have our spirits uplifted and held close to the heart of the Eternal, if only for a brief moment each day.

We have been aware of Your Presence, O God, even though we may not always have acted as if You were here.

Continue with us - we ask it once more: help us today, and stay with us to the end, O Lord our God.

Amen

February 14, 1975

In this prayer, O God, we come to Thee as children to a loving Father. We pray that thou wilt help our senators to face the problems that confront them, not alone by giving them wisdom greater than their own, but also by relieving their minds of all other anxieties.

May they now turn over to Thee loved ones who need the healing touch of the Great Physician, with every confidence that Thou wilt hear our prayer of intercession, and as we do the work that is before us, that Thou wilt do Thy work of healing in those whom we love. May Thy help be so plain and practical in our family affairs that we shall come to believe strongly in the help that Thou dost offer in our state affairs. Deliver thy servants from personal worries, that they may be able to give themselves wholly to the challenge of this hour. In Jesus' name.

Amen

February 18, 1975

Lord God of all good life:

We remember in prayer today the Districts of Nebraska which we represent in this House. We are thankful for all the good things that are found back home: the community spirit, the churches, schools, courts of justice, the homes, hospitals, offices and factories.

And we would remember also the special needs of our districts for employment, for recreation, for housing, welfare, safe streets, good highways.

Give us the vision and wisdom to surround our Districts and our state with the safeguards of sound laws which will preserve the good life for those who now enjoy it, and make it available to all.

We are bold to offer such a prayer, for we are those who believe that with God all things are possible.

Amen

February 21, 1975

Another week of big things and little things now approaches its end, O Lord our God, and we seek Divine help once more, as we pursue the work of the day, then go to our homes.

Even now we know that when we go, it will be with a sense of satisfaction because of our accomplishments, and unhappiness due to our failures. . .for we have been party to both this week.

For the sake of the work remaining to be done, strengthen the ties that bind us together as members of one family in this House, and weaken the forces that would divide us.

Amen

February 24, 1975

O Lord our God: by now it seems so very familiar to us all - the dash back to the Statehouse for the tasks of another week; the rap of the Speaker's gavel; the prayer of the Chaplain; the pile of unopened letters on our desks from those who see so clearly what we should be doing here; the guests in the gallery who are trying to see what we are doing here; the reporters who will tell the folks back home what they believe we have been doing here; and beyond all these, the things which we have convinced ourselves that we are in fact doing here; by now it seems so very familiar to us all - we've been down this road so many times before.

But the more familiar the way, the more treacherous the detours. Keep us on course, we pray!

Save us from the sin of over-familiarity with public trust.

May our accomplishments for Nebraska be so significant that even we, when we describe them, may not be guilty of bragging - nor when we accept our checks, guilty of sponging.

Amen

February 25, 1975

We acknowledge a creative and redemptive Power in events beyond our own; We seek forgiveness for whatever of our past that never should have been; We ask strength for whatever of the present is as it should be; We desire guidance toward those hopes for the future which conform to the Creator's design. O Lord our God: Forgive us, strengthen us, guide us for our own sake, and for the sake of the people we represent.

Amen

February 26, 1975

Father of all mankind, Who has given us the commandment to love one another - give us also, we ask, the grace to fulfill it. Make us to be courteous, patient, forbearing. So direct our lives that we may look each to the good of the other, and together, to the good of all. May nothing this day obstruct the blessings of love from flowing through us here, to the benefit of many far beyond these hallowed chambers. O Lord our God.

Amen

February 27, 1975

If we have been guilty at times of looking backward in anger, or forward to revenge, forgive us, O Lord our God. And if there have been moments when we have looked at one another in disgust or distrust, and have been selfish in motivation, and careless in action, forgive us.

If, in the midst of the many things that happen in this Legislature, we tend to grow skeptical about Your presence here, no longer remembering that our work is really Your work, forgive us.

In our finer moments, we know better. Help us to overcome those interludes of weakness when we know better than we do.

Amen

February 28, 1975

Almighty God, before whose face the generations of men rise and pass away, we thank you for this day for the opportunity of celebrating the birthday of our States. We remember in gratitude this native land - and all who have sacrificed so much to keep her strong and right.

We are thankful that our land was born and nurtured in liberty, and that those who settled on these plains were men and women who desired the opportunity to build here a better place in which all could live together in harmony and justice.

We are thankful that when there have been dangers before our State there have been those who have risen to defend her - placing their State's welfare above private gain.

So may this Nebraska celebration remind us anew of the importance of a continuing heritage, served by the

Senators here and those who assist them, and by all the people of the State, that together we may have a sense that this land is not only our land, but Your land, of the people, for the people, and by the people.

Amen

March 5, 1975

Gathered here this morning are a very special group of men - men who make laws - men who make decisions that affect the lives of millions of people. They are men who have pledged to be responsive to the needs of the people - men who have committed themselves to represent the best interests of their constituents. Like all of us, God, these men need Your guidance. They need You to look over their shoulder - and sometimes they need You to remind them that You are looking over their shoulder. These are good men, God, and don't let them forget it!

We live in a big state - in a state that has a tradition of greatness. And just as our aspirations are great so are our problems. We have all the problems of a great state: crime, drugs, problems with our youth, misunderstanding of our minorities, and a host of other problems that these men have long wrestled with. We have big problems, God, and we need big help from You. There are many people in our State - and faced with all these problems there are times when we are tempted to treat them like things - like mere numbers. But this is the great lesson that You have taught us, God - that we cannot solve human problems - unless we treat people like human beings. Dear God, very often we are tempted to forget this most important principle. God help us!

Amen

March 6, 1975

Father Almighty from all eternity:

In Whose eyes a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night, guide and direct the Nebraska Legislature as we prepare now to invest yet another of the segments of time entrusted to our use.

The needs of the moment are many and pressing, and we may be inclined to forget that current needs seem always of such magnitude; therefore we would ask that they might not seem so overwhelming in our thoughts as

to obscure the more distant goals toward which we should be advancing.

We feel that we might become better equipped to handle the pressures of the present, if our roots are sent deep into the soil of eternal values.

This is why we pray just now. Not because of any worthiness on our part; not because of any inherent right to special privilege or favor; but simply because we want to do our part to improve the allotment of time which is uniquely our own.

So hear us, and help us today - and throughout this week.

Amen

March 7, 1975

O Lord, help us to see the world in true perspective. In the pressures of daily life we sometimes lose our sense of proportions. We forget the great and eternal realities while we wrestle with the immediate and the temporal.

The grass looks large, the stars look small, and Thou seemest far away.

We pray Thee, restore to us the far look and the confident faith. In the midst of our struggles, let us know that there is a source of strength which will not fail us. Under the roar of machinery let us hear the everlasting harmony; after the earthquake, the wind and the fire, let us hear the still small voice.

Amen

March 10, 1975

O Lord Our God, as we assemble today for another week of work together, we ask Thee to look down with Thy love upon this our Senate family. Bless him who presides over us with the virtue of patience, bless the Senators with uprightness, the secretaries and stenographers with clear minds, the staff members with perseverance, the counsels and clerks with understanding, the doorkeepers with discernment, those in the gallery with dignity and those at the desk with zeal.

Give to each of us who serve in this House, we pray, some of that wisdom which cometh only from Thee so that we may be enabled to understand the problems that confront us before we even attempt to deal with them.

Many of us, O Lord, have loved ones who are far from us this day. Bless our dear wives, our children and all those for whom we would especially pray in our hearts.

And now, O God, we beseech Thee to so guide the State and all its people - Thy people - that we may be strengthened and prospered in our undertaking this day as we put our trust in Thee. In Thy blessed name we ask.

Amen

March 11, 1975

Many years ago a psalmist asked God a question, which was also in a sense a testimony and a witness. He asked: "Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit and whither shall I go from Thy presence and whither shall I flee from Thy Spirit? If I ascend up into Heaven Thou art there; if I make my bed in the grave, behold Thou art there; if I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me and Thy right hand shall hold me.

"If I say surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night is become light about me. The darkness hideth not from Thee but the night shineth as the day. The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee."

Let us pray together to our God. It is strange, Our Father, and yet true, that though there is no escaping Thee and wherever we turn Thou art already there. Thou dost surround us completely and we shall never successfully flee from Thee; yet we find it so easy to shut Thee out in the hurried affairs of the day with all the demands and pressures that come upon us we forget Thee, and in our forgetfulness we are successful in denying Thy will.

Watch over us then, we pray, especially in these sessions of this Legislative Session. Guide us through each day as pressures increase, as obligations multiply, as voices conflict with voices, urging us to do this or that, and grant that somehow inside each of our lives there shall be a central place of calm and quietness where we can turn and listen to a voice which is like a sound of gentle stillness, a still, small voice that guides and directs our lives, infallibly.

Help us to do Thy will in this House and in this Legislature through this and every year, we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen

March 12, 1975

Almighty God, first lawgiver and final judge, in this brief moment of recollection before the beginning of today's session, may we all remember that You have made man alone among an infinitude of wonderful creatures with the power to know Your laws, to fashion others of his own. May this august Senate be wise in its proceedings, just in its judgments, a reflection of Your eternal wisdom in its programs for the welfare of the State.

O Lord of all, stand beside the Senators at their legislative desks so that they may strive avidly for the enactment of just laws for the common good, welcome vigorously the challenge of honest debate, accept graciously the trial of committee hangups, conform heartily to the discipline of parliamentary procedures, represent candidly the wishes of their constituents, acknowledge sincerely the biting criticism of partisan or foe, uphold humbly the dignity of their serious and sacred office.

Above all else, O Supreme Legislator, let each Senator also seek the approving vote of his own conscience, a conscience formed by strict study, accurate analyses, able arguments and persistent prayer.

Finally, may the final roll call at the awesome adjournment of earthly affairs find each one recognized by the Infinite President of the Heavenly Senate with these victorious words: Well done, good and faithful servant of my people.

Amen

March 13, 1975

Upon all our Senators assembled here today may we pause to invoke the blessing and guidance of Almighty God as they resume their arduous and challenging responsibilities to all the people of our State. In the Senate hall hallowed by the voices and votes of your illustrious predecessors, the direction of our great State is charted. For, in faith, our fate will here be determined.

As our Ship of State sails on, give these Senators, Almighty God, a sense of direction so that with clarity of vision they may see the port and with determination arrive there.

Grant them fortitude to weather the rough seas, as they head into the tidal waves rocking the boat: poverty, sickness, old age, education.

Give them smooth sailing in the storms churned up by spiraling costs, decaying morality, escalating taxes, tight budgets and loose living.

Let them not be unnerved by necessary nuisances and grant them flexibility to accommodate the irreconcilables and durability to withstand the pressures of special pleaders.

May they all understand that this State, like Heaven, has room for all of us.

Therefore, we pray, Almighty Father, that You will continue so to renew these Senators with a sense of humaneness, a sense of honor and a sense of humor that they may serve the best interests of all our people - and in serving and helping them may they clearly recognize, Almighty Father - that they are serving and loving Thee.
Amen

March 14, 1975

Whatever of the past or the future must pre-occupy our minds as we stand by our desks just now, O Lord, our God:

Enable us to become fully sensitive to the larger dimensions of the present moment.

Prevent us from wasting the wonderful gift of time.

Challenge us with an awareness of the potential for creativity and productivity with which every hour of life is endowed.

So may we be recognized by our constituents as worthy representatives.

And by our God as faithful servants.

Amen

March 17, 1975

Have you ever wondered why we fold our hands when we pray? May I suggest the reason:

We fold our hands when we pray. The right and the left of us. The best and the worst in us. Heaven and earth about us. All come together when we fold our hands and pray. We fold our hands when we pray. The clenched fist of anger, the stubborn thumb of bitterness, the pointing

finger of scorn, and relax together when we fold our hands and pray. We fold our hands when we pray. Within the folded hands fingers cross fingers. Our crosses and the Cross. All aware together when we fold our hands and pray. From the folded hands from the heart within. From the God above, from the Cross of Christ: Love - forgiveness - peace all bless together when we fold our hands and pray.

Amen

March 18, 1975

O God: make the door of this house wide enough to receive all who need human love and fellowship, narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride and strife.

Make its threshold smooth enough to be no stumbling block to those who seek the welfare of their fellows, but rugged and strong enough to turn back all who would do them ill.

O God, make the door of this house to be the gateway to some small part at least of your eternal kingdom.

Amen

March 19, 1975

We give thanks today for nature's beauty shining through a spring-like day; for the spiritual illumination of the season of Lent now advancing toward Easter, and for all else that helps us to look upon the brighter side of life.

So often we encounter things that are not beautiful, and we are tempted to forget. We need to be reminded that this is our Father's world, and that for every act of hatred committed by man against man, there are thousands of acts of love performed.

When life grows dark, and the way ahead becomes uncertain, lift our thoughts to see Divine brightness reflected in a good world, in the love of God reflected in the lives of men and women and children. Somehow let a bit of the glory of this day and of this season rub off on each member of this House.

Amen

March 20, 1975

Take resentment out of our thoughts and actions today, O Lord our God, even though we may feel ourselves being misjudged or overlooked or underestimated.

Too often our speech and actions come as the release of pent-up emotions which burst out uncontrolled - and how can we be right in our actions when we are not right in our attitudes? Prove to us the foolishness of resentment, and the wisdom of forgiveness. Help us to understand that if we can be proud of our innermost motives and attitudes, we will have no reason to be ashamed of the record of this Legislature.

Amen

March 21, 1975

O Lord our God: even as we dash madly to meet our deadlines, remind us that all of life is a solemn trust - that no part of life is without significance - that every moment has its very special meaning. Help us to understand that because we represent others here, we are stewards for them both of time and of life. May we count ourselves successful stewards not in what we are able to keep for ourselves of life's blessings, but in what we succeed in making more available to others. This is the way the Master went; should not the servant tread it still!

Amen

March 24, 1975

O Lord our God: we are aware of the things which You did in the fullness of times to make this a Holy Week; but we may not be aware of all the things we should be doing in our own time to keep it Holy.

By the example and spirit of the Holy One who once walked in our midst, inspire us.

May the days ahead when we recall His crucifixion and resurrection strengthen our faith, and issue in special blessing for all.

May the peace and joy of the Easter Season be upon Nebraska's representatives, and upon all they serve.

Amen

March 25, 1975

O Lord, let us never be afraid of a new idea or unreceptive to a new thought, lest we pull down the shades of our minds and exclude Thy holy light. When confronted by mystery, help us to remember that we do not have to explain all we know or understand all we believe. But give us the grace of humility and the spirit of the open mind, the courage to persist in face of difficulties, and a steady confidence in the power of truth.

Help us to learn something this day, that we shall be wise at its close and more ready for our eternal home when we are one step nearer. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen

March 26, 1975

Meet with us as we meet once more, O Lord our God, for we do need help. Even our small mistakes become obvious, and our proudest accomplishment but temporary

... Our little bills seem so trivial beside the great, breaking events of these times, and so undertain in response to voices which urge: "do something about this," "do nothing about that"....

And those which complain: "Too little," "Too much," "Too soon," "Too late."

We do need help! Lobby within our hearts and minds, O God, for everything that is right, lest we give in to anything that is easy.

Amen

April 2, 1975

Almighty and all merciful God; source of all life; Father of all spirits; author of all good: we begin this important day in prayer - not because we are worthy, but because we are needy. We confess that the problems we have come to consider are ours - they are man-made; but whatever the ability we have to solve them, it is not ours; it must be God-given!

Somehow make us equal to the large demands of the present hour. Lest we become timid in the face of criticism, remind us that our citizens don't sit in the seats

of responsibility which have been assigned to us. Lest we become complacent in the face of our authority, remind us that if anything we decide here is in fact to happen, it is the taxpayer who must do it.

Amen

April 4, 1975

O Lord our God: we in this House want to become friends and advocates of every plan and program which will enable men and women and children to live better, easier, fuller lives; therefore we ask for imagination able to interpret statistical records and research papers in terms of the sufferings, the longings, the real life needs of human beings.

May it become the personal creed of each legislator never to seek anything for self which might short-change others, but always to seek for others the same good life that is sought for self. Our prayer is offered in the name of Jesus - our Friend, our Saviour, our Example, our Guide.

Amen

April 7, 1975

Once again we meet, O Lord our God, after a week-end which brought rest and refreshment to some, disappointment and sorrow to others.

Today we ask that we may be made equal to the service that will be demanded of us, and the pressures which will be exerted upon us throughout this week. Keep us physically well, mentally alert, morally responsible, spiritually sensitive.

In whatever doubts and uncertainties we experience, give us grace to ask in prayer what to do, so that we may be saved from false choices and serious mistakes. May the blessing of Almighty God be upon us today, and throughout this week.

Amen

April 8, 1975

Dear God, give these men who direct this great State the patience to be understanding, and the understanding to be patient.

May their enormous energy sharpen their intellect so that they may render justice to all men.

May their courage be of such a nature that they will allow every man to find his place in life without losing his dignity. May they not be obsessed with assembling endless concerns of making this world a Utopia, for we know, as You have said, the wheat and weeds shall grow together, good and evil will be intermingled and live side-by-side.

However, let us not be overcome by evil, but let us overcome evil with goodness.

Only at the end will there be a lasting decision between good and evil.

In the meantime, let us adopt an attitude to help every man, but every man must first find his own dignity. For each man has to pick his own fate so no matter what this great assembly does, some men will be failures by their own choice.

But many will succeed because, the Senators, have been an instrument of justice and hope, peace and charity, patience and understanding.

Amen

April 9, 1975

We acknowledge a creative and redemptive Power in events beyond our own;

We seek forgiveness for whatever of our past that never should have been;

We ask strength for whatever of the present is as it should be;

We desire guidance toward those hopes for the future which conform to the Creator's design.

O Lord our God: forgive us, strengthen us, guide us, for our own sake, and for the sake of the people we here represent.

Amen

April 10, 1975

O God, prepare our hearts and minds for the business of this day that we may throughout behave with genuine courtesy and honor before our colleagues. Help us to be just and honest in all our dealings. May we listen to those who have something to say but never lose our own capacity to discriminate between right and wrong. Save us from the fallacy of depending upon our personality or ingenuity to solve our problems, and make us more willing to do the hard work that is necessary to be well informed. Since we believe Thou art the source of truth, may we listen to Thee at the beginning of this day so that at the end we may hear Thy blessing, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Amen

April 14, 1975

For continuing health of body, that we may pursue our work here without interruption;

For the understanding that our work is important, and that it may be serving purposes which are much larger than we are;

For the sense of humor which helps us to take neither our critics nor ourselves any more seriously than we should;

For the spirit of harmony which surfaces in this Legislature frequently enough to reveal a Family solidarity greater than our local rivalries;

For courage to believe that goodness is always more to be desired than greatness, and the courage to act as if we believe that goodness is always measured in terms of service to others;

For these blessings we give thanks at the beginning of another week;

And for a continuation of such blessings we sincerely pray, O Lord our God.

Amen

April 15, 1975

O God, stop us for a minute of prayer. Stop our anxious minds from wandering, and our wearied spirits from desiring anything but to know Thy will. Let us stand at attention before Thee and hear what Thou hast to say to us. We believe that Thou canst tell us not only what to do, but also how to do it. If it needs making up our minds, Thou who didst make our minds can show us how to make them up. If it needs changing our minds, Thou canst work that miracle, too. Speak, O Lord, and make us hear, for Jesus' sake.

Amen

April 16, 1975

Our eyes are closed in prayer just now, O Lord our God, but in a moment they will be open once more to the calendar, the journal, the letters, the bills, the papers, the vote tally, the record.

And then also will the eyes of many be open and looking down upon us here; a few from the galleries in this room; some through the news media back home; others, in time, perhaps, from the pages of history.

Remind us also, O God, that Your eyes are open and You see what is going on in this House, and in each heart within it.

Amen

April 17, 1975

We feel a sense of the history and heritage of this House each time we stand for prayer, O Lord our God: so many others have stood here where we now stand. So much has transpired here before we came along. And we know that some of the things we now do will also become part of that continuing stream of history - destined, perhaps, to be remembered even when our names are long since forgotten. Inspire us day by day, O God, by an understanding of the history of which we are a part.

Amen

April 30, 1975

O God our Father, may these Thy servants communicate truth and life as did Jesus Christ our Lord. Guide them until they acquire abilities equal to their opportunities. Assign to them tasks in which others have failed and help them to find answers from the failures of others. Grant them sufficient time to reach their goals. Discipline them toward meeting human need. Endow them with patience and continuing compassion toward the weak.

And, O God, in the writing of new laws, grant that they may write well, so as to be acceptable in Thy sight. May they not be discouraged when their best is rejected by others. May they understand that life's best laws are ever rewritten and rewritten in agony and hope.

Grant to these senators this day a new sense of Thy presence here and now. May a sense of eternal values grip them.

We ask this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Amen

May 1, 1975

God of our fathers, in whose name this republic was born, we pray that by thy help we may be worthy to receive thy blessings upon our labors. In this troubled time, when men have made deceit a habit, lying an art, and cruelty a science, help us to show the moral superiority of the way of life we cherish. Here may men see truth upheld, honesty loved, and kindness practiced. In our dealings with each other, may we be gentle, understanding, and kind, with our tempers under control. In our dealings with other nations, may we be firm without obstinacy, generous without extravagance, and right without compromise. We do not pray that other nations may love us, but that they may know that we stand for what is right, unafraid, with the courage of our convictions. May our private lives and our public actions be consistent with our prayers. Through Jesus Christ our Lord,

Amen

May 12, 1975

Heavenly Father, we pause before You this morning not to inform You, not to guide You, not to direct Your purposes but to ask that You will guide, direct, sustain, and strengthen us with the strength that we need for the problems confronting us, that we may realize that You are the great lawgiver of the universe and that the things we do here conform to Your great purpose, that they will benefit our fellowmen and be acceptable in Your sight. If we should falter in the lack of understanding of Your purposes and Your great basic principles, our efforts will be futile. Thank you for the great people who have convened in this chamber through the years, for the great purposes which have guided them and for the strength which You have been able to exercise through their willing spirits.

For such strength we pray this day.

Amen

May 13, 1975

Eternal God, Whose Spirit from the beginning of the world has been bringing order out of chaos, we ask that today we may be connected with those creative forces so that we can help bring orderliness out of the confusion of our time.

We bow at the beginning of business this day not to ask for divine favors, but rather for strength to use the ordinary opportunities we have at our disposal, the chances to help create a society where justice and freedom may flourish.

Help us therefore to do our homework so that we may have wisdom a sense of fairness and humor in order that the decisions that are made here may reflect the best judgments of enlightened politicians. In Your Name, we pray.

Amen

May 15, 1975

O God of our fathers, standing here in this Chamber, their heads bowed in prayer, are those who have been chosen by their peers through the democratic process to discuss and to deliberate, to enact and cause to be enforced the laws by which our lives are governed within this State.

May 5, 1975

Our schedules, our plans, our bills for a new week we have in mind as we pause now for an opening moment of Prayer, O Lord our God, in the continuing faith that we are instruments in the fulfilling not of our own will, but the will of the God and Father of all men.

As we sincerely seek to do what is right, make it plain to us -- and keep it plainly before us as pressures mount and deadlines approach.

Through the often discordant tones of human need and human choice, may we yet hear the unifying theme of human love -- and may that unite us to one another in the service of others.

Amen

May 6, 1975

In this, the day that the Lord hath made, help us to appreciate its beauty and to use aright its opportunities.

Deliver us from the tyranny of trifles during these closing days of the legislature. May we give our best thought and attention to what is important, that we may continue to accomplish those things which are worth while. Teach us how to listen to the prompting of Thy spirit, and thus save us from floundering in indecision that wastes time, subtracts from our peace, divides our efficiency, and multiplies our troubles. In the name of Christ.

Amen

May 8, 1975

God, our Father, you have listened for many years to prayers asking guidance and wisdom and knowledge for these Senators who represent so many of Your people.

Now we ask Your guidance and wisdom and knowledge for the citizens of this State, most of whom do not know what goes on here during the sessions. They do not know how hard our lawmakers work, not only during these few months but all year long. They do not recognize the sacrifices these men and their families make in money and in time in order to serve this government.

Please help them to understand this, bless us all and help us all through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Given to the task of preserving the rights of all peoples regardless of their color or creed, their political views or religious convictions;

Given to the task of preserving the natural resources of our State, its fields and its streams as well as its atmosphere;

Given to the task of bringing hope to the forlorn, material comfort to the poverty-stricken, adequate housing to the depressed; better economic opportunities to the downtrodden and health to the diseased;

Help us to do Thy will in this House through this and every year, we ask in Jesus' name.

Amen

May 16, 1976

Just now we come to the final session in yet another week, O Lord our God, as the process of legislation continues to run its course, hour after hour, day by day, week in - week out; and while we may feel somewhat fatigued and frustrated by now, yet are we still challenged by the privilege of being part of things that are happening for good in our times.

Bless us in our work here this day; in our travels upon the conclusion of today's work; in our homes this weekend.

Amen

May 22, 1976

Eternal God, grant these leaders, I pray, knowledge and wisdom, insight and foresight so that in the true tradition of Thy prophets of old they might serve Thee and their constituents with selfless devotion and unerring righteousness. Bless them with health of body and strength of mind so that they might resist the ravages of ill health and the alluring temptation of corruption, dedicating themselves heart and soul to the fulfillment of their duties as members of this State legislature.

Imbue them with the spirit of kindness. May they realize that only when all men are free - free to think, free to speak, free from the fear of poverty, free from the fear of ignorance and free from the fear of disease - can the true potential of this noble State and glorious land be realized.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen

THE NEBRASKA
UNICAMERAL

85th LEGISLATURE

1977-1978

PRAYERS

by

Dr. Robert E. Palmer

Chaplain

FOREWORD

The prayers in this book were offered at the opening of the daily session of the Nebraska Unicameral Legislature during 1977-78. The prayers are a sincere effort of this part of the "people of God" to raise their minds and hearts in praise of the Father of us all. They are presented in the hope that those who joined in these prayers may recall with meaning the brief periods of dedication and reflection with which each new day began.

Often, we have thanked God for the many blessings that He has bestowed on us. On occasion we have sought His forgiveness for our transgressions of His law. Almost daily we asked our Lord on behalf of ourselves and our fellow citizens to alleviate sufferings, inspire righteous laws, motivate and guide us all in our pursuit of the Will of God.

It has been my privilege to offer such prayers before the Nebraska Legislature for the past several years, and I wish here to acknowledge the gracious friendship and dedicated leadership exemplified by the Senators. They, along with others related to the work of the Legislature, have made these years as Chaplain meaningful and rewarding.

I am continually impressed and inspired by the attitudes, dedication and competencies of the members of the Nebraska Legislature. No one can fully appreciate the personal sacrifice and months of service rendered by every Senator each term. They and their families, along with those who work with them, deserve the deep gratitude of us all.

My continuing prayer for our Legislature and those who serve with them is that they may be guided of God, informed of the truth, and supported by our citizens in their endeavors to ensure the "good life" for all the people of Nebraska.

03-01-59-78

January 5, 1977

Dear Lord and Father, if ever we needed Your wisdom and guidance it is now as our Legislature begins a new session standing upon the threshold of a new year, filled with so many wonderful and dangerous opportunities. Although we have been organized as a Legislature for 40 years, our traditions go back to the first dreams of democracy, and our thoughts stretch forward with high hopes for what we may yet accomplish in the future.

Some familiar faces are gone from this chamber, and we remember them; other new faces have come, and we welcome them; many familiar faces have returned, and we are gladdened by them.

We are grateful that somehow our beloved State continues to move forward with vitality, vigor and energized faith, and we pray that in 1977 we together may move on to loftier heights and nobler achievements, for the good of the people in an invigorating climate of freedom, frankness, fortitude and faithfulness — to what we believe to one another, and to You the God and Father of us all. Amen.

January 11, 1977

Our heavenly Father, in this moment of prayer, when there is silence in this senate chamber, may there not be silence in Thy presence. May our prayers be heard.

May no short circuits be made by our lack of faith, our high professions joined to low attainments, our fine words hiding shabby thoughts, or friendly faces masking cold hearts.

Out of the same old needs, conscious of the same old faults, we pray on the same old terms for new mercies and new blessings. In the name of Christ our Lord. Amen.

February 1, 1977

We know, our Father, that there is a time to speak and a time to keep silent. Help us to tell the one from the other. When we should speak, give us the courage of our convictions. When we should keep silent, restrain us from speaking, lest, in our desire to appear wise, we give ourselves away. Teach us the sacraments of silence, that we may use them to know ourselves, and, above all, to know thee. Then shall we be wise. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

February 7, 1977

Eternal Father, we ask thy divine guidance, strength, and sense of purpose be given to the members of this Legislature. Although they have great diversity within themselves and the people they represent, may they not strive to be individualistic comets flashing across the sky, but stars which are united into a constellation which gives a pattern and unity in the midst of diversity while amplifying their individual convictions, may they ever remember they are part of the team working together to win the game for the benefit of the people of this state. In our Lord's name. Amen.

February 18, 1977

Our Father, as we pray for Your guidance and help, we know that You did not intend prayer to be a substitute for work. We know that we are expected to do our part for You have made us, not puppets, but persons with minds to think and wills to do. Make us willing to think, and think hard, clearly, and honestly, guided by Your voice within us, and in accordance with the light You have given us. May we never fail to do the very best we can. We pray in the knowledge that it all depends upon You. Help us then to work as if it all depended on us, that together we may do that which is pleasing in your sight. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

February 24, 1977

O Lord our God: we pray once more — but sometimes we wonder what's left to pray for, because we've said it all so many times before, and we don't want to wear thin our welcome.

And sometimes we are unwilling to accept the answer to our prayer, because it is not what we have been expecting.

Yet we continue in this legislature to feel the burden of being the few who act for the many on matters of importance, and we do need to have our spirits uplifted and held close to the heart of the eternal, if only for a brief moment each day.

We have been aware of your presence, O God, even though we may not always have acted as if you were here.

Continue with us — we ask it once more: help us today, and stay with us to the end, O Lord our God. Amen.

March 2, 1977

O Lord and Saviour of us all: We need Your help to take resentment out of our thoughts and meditations — sometimes more than others, but never, it seems, are we completely free of this need — for things happen in life generally and in the life of this Legislature, of course, which annoy and hurt us.

Words are spoken which we sometimes feel to be personally unkind or unnecessary; and we feel ourselves to be misjudged when we should be congratulated, or overlooked when we should be recognized.

Save us from inner rebellion and bitterness and moodiness, for such things can succeed only in destroying our souls.

Help us today by reminding us of that perfect one who tread these paths before us in the fullness of time; and may the way the Master went be the way the servant travels still. Amen.

March 4, 1977

Hurried affairs of the day with all the demands and pressures that come upon us we forget Thee, and in our forgetfulness we are successful in denying Thy will.

Watch over us then, we pray, especially in these sessions of our legislative session. Guide us through each day as pressures increase, as obligations multiply, as voices conflict with voices, urging us to do this or that, and grant that somehow inside each of our lives there shall be a central place of calm and quietness where we can turn and listen to a voice which is like a sound of gentle stillness a still, small voice that guides and directs our lives, infallibly.

Help us to do Thy will in this house and in this Legislature through this and every year, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

March 18, 1977

Meet with us as we meet once more, O Lord our God, for we do need help. Even our small mistakes become obvious, and our proudest accomplishment but temporary. . .

Our little bills seem so trivial beside the great, breaking events of these times, and so uncertain in response to voices which urge: "do something about this," "do nothing about that" . . .

And those which complain: "Too little;" "Too much;"
"Too soon;" "Too late."

We do need help. Lobby within our hearts and minds, O
God, for everything that is right, lest we give in to anything
that is easy. Amen.

March 23, 1977

We feel a sense of the history and heritage of this House
each time we stand for prayer, O Lord our God: so many
others have stood here where we now stand. So much has
transpired here before we came along. And we know that
some of the things we now do will also become a part of
that continuing stream of history - destined, perhaps, to be
remembered even when our names are long since forgotten.
Inspire us day by day, O God, by an understanding of the
history of which we are a part. Amen.

March 29, 1977

Father in Heaven, this day holds the elements that could
bring enmity between friends and betterness between
colleagues.

During the proceedings of this day, let every member give
credit to every other member for having intentions at least
as good as his own. Let them speak with conviction but not
ire. Let them listen openly. Let the duration of their talks
be reasonable.

Do not let the days work end with crevices that can't be
bridged or disappointments that cannot be endured.

Let them remember they are 49 men and women doing
their job and not 49 children fighting. Amen.

April 1, 1977

Father in Heaven, on this day which we call Fool's Day,
help us to be wise. Hear the prayers of this House as we
pray for the needs of Your people.

Aid us in gaining solutions to our energy crisis and
economic problems.

Be of assistance to our fellow citizens who are in our
institution for the mentally and emotionally disturbed.

Help our brothers and sisters, who are deaf or blind.
Console those who are in our prisons and give them hope.
Be strength and light to our State Patrol and National
Guardsmen. Give patience to our school teachers.

Bless and reward all elected officials of our State and give them the love and understanding they deserve. Amen.

April 4, 1977

Today as we are about to celebrate the great Holy Days of Christians and Jews, Holy Week and Passover, let us be reminded again through the faith and beliefs of our religions of the principles and directives which should guide us. May there be a continuing concern on your part as legislators for those who are in need, for those who are deprived of any of their rights in our State, and for the promotion of justice and prosperity for all. May these Holy Days, then, enable us to act as true followers of the beliefs which we have and may it find expression in every act and law that is passed. May this Holy Season be a happy season for us and for all people of this State. Amen.

April 5, 1977

Father in Heaven, make us all instruments of Your Peace. Where there are bitter factions, let us find means to untie them. When there are misunderstandings, let us seek occasions to remedy them. When there is friction, help us to solve it.

In time of trouble, make us understanding. When people are arguing, help us to be a source of mitigation. When people are hurt, lead us to be healed.

Let us be a source of peace and not just seekers. Let us be a cause of peace and not just talkers. Let us be a font of peace and not just watchers.

And help us to turn every location of hatred or fear into a seed bed of peace. Amen.

April 6, 1977

Father in Heaven, the Christian Community has embarked upon the season of Lent which is a time of penance for past sins, self denial to bring one's desires under control and contemplation in order to reestablish perspective.

Help us to observe this season and merit from our practice of penance.

Give us a healthy sense of guilt and a knowledge that You have removed the sin and the guilt.

Bring our good, but sometimes unruly desires, under the control of our intellect.

Let us understand more clearly that You are the Beginning and the End. Amen.

April 12, 1977

Father in Heaven, we thank You this day for the gift of life. As Spring returns to our countryside, we are reminded that the inevitable cycles of Nature are Your creation and no one is exempt.

We thank you for the gift of Your Son, whose Resurrection we are celebrating, who is the reason for our hope and the source of our joy.

Help us now, rejuvenated by the recess, and inspired by Your Son's victory over death, to take up the business of the people and conduct it with justice, equality and love. Amen.

April 13, 1977

Father in Heaven, we ask You for the ability to be sensitive to Your teaching. Adjust our ears to Your word so that our hearts may be adjusted to Your will.

Help us pray together so that when Your will is known, we may do it together; that when crises occur we may face them together.

Nourish us with Your Spirit poured out for all of us; feed us with the Bread of Life; strengthen us with the power that makes us Your children. Amen.

April 14, 1977

Father in Heaven, even the best of us need encouragement on occasion. Fatigue, disappointment and just plain long hours and hard work drain us of our pep and good humor.

We ask this day that You send the inspiration to the members of this Assembly to buoy them up so that they can do this work. Give them the consolation of knowing they are serving their constituents and the realization that what is said and done here can result in a better life for all. Amen.

April 15, 1977

Father in Heaven, we labor unceasingly to learn more

about our job; to stay up with trends; to please our constituents, and to pass better laws in order to better people.

Sometimes we suffer disappointment, sometimes we become downright unhappy over projects gone awry.

When we are successful, we sometimes act as if we created the phenomenon of success.

In either case, let us recall the words of the Psalmist:

"Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it.

Unless the Lord guard the city, in vain does the guard keep vigil.

It is vain for you to rise early, or put off your rest,

You that eat hard-earned bread, for He gives to His beloved in sleep." Amen.

April 18, 1977

Father in Heaven, Your Son rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Help us to keep our life fixed on the fact that we are to follow Him; that He went to prepare a place for us; otherwise, why would He have said, "In my Father's house there are many mansions"?

Let us not forget that while He prepares a place for us; and draws us to Himself — we will be judged and our actions and intentions will be the determining factor. Amen.

April 19, 1977

Father in Heaven, our minds and our souls are turned to the question of energy. You have blessed this world with minerals and other sources which we, sad to say, sometimes have squandered.

Help us to find a way to preserve our resources, find new sources and to use them wisely.

Bless this Assembly today and inspire our leaders to provide leadership and courage in our search for solution.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

April 20, 1977

Father in Heaven, we pray each day for a great many people and a great many things. Today we ask only for a

deeper insight into ourselves. Help us to know ourselves better. Help us to know our motivations and our goals. Help us to know what uplifts us and what lets us down.

Help us to see ourselves as others see us. Help us to be sensitive to the feelings and needs of others so that in turn our feelings may be responded to and our own needs be met.

In knowing ourselves better let us be able to be a mirror of the goodness and the wisdom of Your Son. Amen.

April 21, 1977

Father in Heaven, when we ponder the problems of Nebraska, the Country, and the World, we get the feeling sometimes that we ought to quit and go sit under a tree.

The road seems endless, the hills insurmountable and the streams uncrossable.

It seems that no one really cares but a few of us; and we don't really trust most of them.

But somehow we go on. And when we consider that every generation in the memory of man has felt the same way, we get some consolation. Then we consider why we stayed — which is to do Your Will and to serve Your people — the struggle makes sense.

Then we remember that You have promised us to be with us to guide and guard us; that Your Son's victory over death is the basis for our hope; that we live not for ourselves, but for You; all our troubles come into perspective and our day makes sense. Amen.

April 22, 1977

Father in Heaven, help us to appreciate all of Your gifts but especially the gift of rain.

We know that vast areas of this world and many thousands of people are suffering from lack of it.

We know that our whole economy, the life style of many of our citizens, and all of our food is dependent upon rain. It turns our land green, it refreshes and renews, rain is like joy.

Let us not take it for granted; let us daily be thankful; and as all things, remember that it comes through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

April 25, 1977

The most consoling assurance that any of us could possibly have, Lord, is Your promise that we can come to You any hour of the day or night with any kind of problem at all, and know that You are willing, even anxious to help us. What a shame it is, then, that often we give You really serious thought only when we are in some kind of desperate scrape. Actually, there isn't a moment in our lives when we don't need You. It's like our need for food. . . .we don't usually think much about it until we're really hungry. In view of how much we depend on You, and how very much You have so willingly done for us all our lives, Lord, please give us the wisdom and determination to raise our minds and hearts to You daily. Continue to guide our actions always, so that everything we do may give You glory and bring us eternal salvation. Amen.

April 26, 1977

Eternal Father, we ask with confidence and a feeling of security that You will answer our petitions. We are in need of Your direction and the strength to follow your guidance. May we be conscious of and work toward the union and community of all the people of this State. May the legislation that we are completing be for the good of all the people of this State. In these very important days may our deliberations and decisions show the wish and desire to promote the good of our State. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit may this be accomplished through Christ our Lord. Amen.

April 27, 1977

Almighty God, We think of You now in prayer. We look for and hope for the strength and the guidance of Your help.

May we be guided by the spirit of Your truth, and spirit of Your justice, and the spirit of Your peace.

May we be strengthened by the spirit of courage, the spirit of generosity, the spirit of love.

So strengthened and so guided, may our actions today and everyday be a source of good and a cause of blessings for our fellowmen whom we seek to serve. Amen.

April 28, 1977

Father in Heaven, we wish to thank You for the blessings and favors that You have bestowed on us. We are thankful for the stamina you have given us. We thank You for each other, friendships, example, yes and even, criticism we receive.

We thank You for our homes and families, our churches and our schools. We thank You for children who can laugh and do. We thank You for doctors who are considerate.

We thank You for our government and its leaders, and especially today we pray for the courage to successfully face those difficult and complex situations which can be turned into greater and challenging opportunities. Amen.

April 29, 1977

Father in Heaven, Your Son taught us many lessons; among them patience.

He was never completely understood, even by those closest to Him; yet He took the time to continue to teach. We so often can't take time for one brief explanation.

His "program", a "budget for happiness", was divinely inspired and simple to comprehend, and yet 2,000 years later, it's still in committee. If we don't get our way in six weeks, we consider it a personal rebuke and shred our opponents in public.

Give these members patience as Your Son had patience and make them more like Your Son in attitude and demeanor. Amen.

May 2, 1977

Almighty Father. . . .Source of all good. Help us now to know Your truth and to share Your love in our lives.

Give direction to our thoughts and strength to our wills, so that protected from the errors of false judgments and the misinformation of false reports, and guarded from human frailties that would lead us astray, we will be faithful in following the way that leads to the justice and peace that You promise. Amen.

May 3, 1977

Father in Heaven, we thank You for Your help and guidance in bringing our democratic form of government to

such a sophisticated level as we are enjoying today. We know that it is not perfect but that is our fault not Yours.

We know that there are still groups because of race, creed or color, who are not in reality and in the concrete, treated equally.

We ask for the strength and the unbiased heart to correct these wrongs and we ask that good officials all over the state be nominated or elected today. Amen.

May 4, 1977

Father in Heaven, Your Son taught us that not by bread alone does man live. We know that the truth He taught us is the basis for our life and our hope. Keep these teachings ever before us.

But we certainly live by bread to a degree and are in need of Your blessings to make the ingredients grow. We thank You for the fine sowing weather and ask You now for fine growing weather. Soak our fields and meadows and in turn shine the marvelous rays of the sun on our crops that there may be enough to spare and to share. Amen.

May 5, 1977

Eternal Father, give us a careful analysis of the issues before us, but as well a respect for and a patience with all of our colleagues. For problems that seem to be on dead center, lead this body toward perseverance and openness rather than frustration and defeat. When difficulties face us, may we find new roads until the impossible becomes possible and the possible becomes successful. So help us through this day to do our work with integrity and with the best that is in us. In our Lord's name. Amen.

May 6, 1977

Eternal Father of our souls, grant to the members and officers of this Legislature a sacred moment of quiet before we take up the duties of the day. Turn our thoughts to Thee, and open our hearts to Thy spirit that we may have wisdom in our decisions, understanding in our thinking, love in our attitudes, and mercy in our judgment. Let us not think, when this prayer is said, that our dependence upon Thee is over, and forget Thy counsels for the rest of the day. Rather from these moments of hard searching may

there come such a sweetness of disposition that all may know that thou art in this place. From this holy interlude may there flow light and joy and power that will remain with us until night shall bring thy whispered benediction, "Well done good and faithful servant." So help us all this day, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May 12, 1977

Eternal God, we confess we so often use our agility to avoid responsibility. Help us with the rush of constant pressures not to follow the lower levels and the easy escapes. Guide us lest we hurt those deeply upon whom we are most dependent. Through chance, or providence, we are here to do strategic work, and are challenged by issues far beyond our limited knowledge. Give to this Legislature humility of spirit, yet tenacity of intellect, that they may rise to new heights because of the mountainous issues before them. May each have a serenity of spirit which keeps them from frustrations, and enables the making of vital decisions in a calm and sane manner. In the name of our Master. Amen.

May 13, 1977

O God, who has given to all persons talents and varying capacities, Thou dost only require of us that we utilize Thy gifts to the maximum. In this Legislature to which Thou hast entrusted special abilities and opportunities, may each recognize his stewardship for the people of this State. Through the perplexing problems and needed decisions give them calmness and wisdom. May heated debates always be on the issues and not develop into personal jealousies which only defeat the purpose of our representative government. May we at the beginning of a new morning say, "This is the day that the Lord hath made, let us rejoice and be glad in it." Amen.

May 18, 1977

O God, our Loving Father, we pray Thou wouldst give the motivation to each member of this assembly that they be not frustrated or anxious because of issues facing them, but that each to his ability may live up to his God-given capacity. Preserve them from faithless fears and foolish

anxieties. May they be sensitive to that inner spark of celestial fire call conscience. May no clouds of rationalization or moral evil hide the light of Thy will from their lives. In our Master's name we pray. Amen.

May 23, 1977

Eternal God, at the beginning of a new and busy day we close our eyes, not to shut out the world but to look beyond it to Thy boundless horizon, so we may be more relevant in the things we do and say. Give to this strategic body poise and a right sense of timing. There is that tide in life which, when taken, leads to victory. Guide these leaders of our State that they may discern the signs of the times and lead us in the paths of fullness and peace. In our Lord's name. Amen.

May 25, 1977

O God of us all, may the members of this Legislative body keep ever before them the high responsibility which is theirs. They have an unprecedented challenge; may they make appropriate responses and continually to develop into statesmen. May their debates ever be upon issues, rather than upon human personalities. Give this body the vision to have courage for greatness. May they respond to their challenges, living neither in their vacuum of futility or the gold fish bowl of exhibitionism. Guide them to live as responsible, elected officials, with courage, integrity, vision, cool minds and compassionate hearts. In our Lord's name. Amen.

June 1, 1977

Dear Lord, An honest prayer some of us might make this morning is simply, "Thank God its over!" These many weeks have been such a drain on so many of us, taking us away from responsibilities and loved ones elsewhere, and demanding so much of us. The memory of our last working day is still fresh in our minds, and some of us hope there will never be another one like it, even though it was a record day!

On the other hand, Lord, we are also grateful for these past months and for all the good that has been accomplished. May our decisions be for the benefit of the

people of this state. Continue during the interim to give vision, courage, and integrity to each of the Senators. Bless them, their families and loved ones, till we meet again. Be with our Governor and Lieutenant Governor, the various officers and servants of this Legislature. May the people of this state, who often hear only the unusual things which occur in this room, appreciate the ability and dedication of this Legislature. Implant again upon our minds the truth that greatness is found in serving, and success in helpfulness. May this Legislature continue to love you, their God, and serve all the people. In our Lord's name. Amen.

January 4, 1978

Eternal God, who makes all things new, we ask your guidance as we begin another session together as leaders of this State. We remember others who have served with us in the past and who are gone from us now; we welcome other new faces on the scene and pray that they and we may work together well; and we are always grateful for the familiar faces which have returned, and ask that you'll continue to work through us all. Give us courage for the great challenges which face us, and endurance for the trivia that clogs our calendars, and the wisdom to tell the difference from the two. Instruct each one of us, the officers of this body, each Senator, each secretary, each aide, each one involved in the enactment of legislation for the people of the State this year, that together we may "do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God" and with one another all the days of our lives. Amen.

January 5, 1978

O Lord our God, as we seek thy guidance this day, we do not ask to see the distant scene, knowing that we can take only one step at a time. Make that first step plain to us, that we may see where our duty lies, but give us a push, that we may start in the right direction. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

January 6, 1978

Oh God, our Father, we know that our laws can be no better than those who make the laws and administer the laws, and the people who follow the laws.

As this legislature initiates laws, give them the courage to look at themselves. Our pride, our passions, and our self-interests are very real, and often dominate the center of life from which our thinking stems and our decisions follow.

We pray that Thou wouldst allow other qualities, which may be buried, to rise again in our lives - decency, consideration, unselfishness, and hard thinking with a warm heart.

In our Lord's name. Amen.

January 9, 1978

Dear Lord, we recognize that prayer cannot balance a budget, but it can balance our minds; we also realize that we cannot expect you to come into our world everyday the way you came that first Christmas Day, but you can come into our worlds through the lives of others around us who care and share our dreams and goals, so in this prayer in this day, we ask that your truth be made known in our minds and hearts and in the minds and hearts of others around us that, together, your spirit may guide us as we strive to make this world more like what you intended it to be for all people. Amen.

January 12, 1978

Eternal God, our loving Father, may we become more aware of the immediate concerns of our state - the minute problems confronting the various districts and the pleading of our constituents. But keep ever before this significant body the eternal and all-encompassing goals upon which smaller issues must be measured: to love mercy; to right wrongs; to live for justice, and to serve Thee, our God, and our fellowman as we would serve ourselves. We pray in our Lord's name. Amen.

January 13, 1978

With all the resources of an Infinite God available to them that ask Thee, forgive us, O Lord, for our lack of faith that begs for pennies when we could write checks for millions; that strikes a match when we could have the sun. Give to us the faith to believe that there is no problem before us that Thy wisdom cannot solve. As Thou guided men in the past, so guide these men and women today. At every desk may

there be the whisper of Thy counsel. Help our leaders to weigh their words, that their words may carry weight and, what is more, the echo of Thy will; for Jesus' sake. Amen.

January 17, 1978

Eternal God, at the beginning of a new and busy day we close our eyes, not to shut out the world but to look beyond it to Thy boundless horizon, so we may be more relevant in the things we do and say. Give to this strategic body poise and a right sense of timing. There is that tide in life which, when taken, leads to victory, but when missed, leaves us in the shallows of defeat. Guide these leaders of our State that they may discern the signs of the times and lead us in the paths of fullness and peace. In our Lord's name. Amen.

February 2, 1978

O Lord our God: By now it seems so very familiar to us all - the dash back to the Statehouse for the tasks of another week; the rap of the Speaker's gavel; the prayer of the Chaplain; the pile of unopened letters on our desks from those who see so clearly what we should be doing here; the guests in the gallery who are trying to see what we are doing here; the reporters who will tell the folks back home what they believe we have been doing here; and beyond all these, the things which we have convinced ourselves that we are in fact doing here; by now it seems so very familiar to us all - we've been down this road so many times before.

But the more familiar the way, the more treacherous the detours. Keep us on our course, we pray.

Save us from the sin of over-familiarity with public trust.

May our accomplishment for Nebraska be so significant that even we, when we describe it, may not be guilty of bragging nor when we accept our checks, of sponging. Amen.

February 3, 1978

O God of us all, may the members of this legislative body keep ever before them the high responsibility which is theirs.

They have an unprecedented challenge; may they make appropriate responses and continually to develop into statesmen. May their debates ever be upon issues, rather

than upon human personalities. Give this body the vision to have courage for greatness. May they respond to their challenges, living neither in their vacuum of futility or the gold fish bowl of exhibitionism. Guide them to live as responsible, elected officials, with courage, integrity, vision, cool minds and compassionate hearts. In our Lord's name. Amen.

February 7, 1978

Teach us, O Lord, the disciplines of patience, for we find that to wait is often harder than to work. When we wait upon thee, we shall not be ashamed, but shall renew our strength. May we be willing to stop our feverish activities and listen to what thou hast to say, that our prayers shall not be the sending of night letters, but conversations with God. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

February 8, 1978

Much of yesterday's snow is still left on the ground, Lord. It boggles the mind to realize that, of the billions of snow flakes that fell, no two are exactly alike. What a tremendous testimony to Your creative powers!

Yet, fantastic though it is, it's even more mind-boggling to realize that you made each human being different from every other. Every human person is a unique product of your marvelous creation.

Certainly, Lord, this has some very important implications for each of us present here this morning. If we let them, these differences can spell out division and discord, conflict and confusion.

But we're also capable of using these differences in another way, Lord. We can let Your love knit us together in a beautiful patchwork quilt that reaches out to cover and transform the many problems that confront our State today.

It is only when we allow your gracious love and mercy to unite us, that we become capable of achieving anything worthwhile.

Like the individual snow flakes, only when they permit themselves to be pressed together do they form the jolly, fun-filled snowman. Apart, they remain just a solitary snow flake.

So, too, with us, Lord, press us together today so that we may become a united community, capable of resolving, with your help, the myriad problems that lay before us.

We ask this with the full confidence that nothing sought in your name will ever go unanswered. Amen.

February 9, 1978

Father in Heaven, it was dark and cold and wet when we left our homes this morning. As we drove along, our minds were a mixture of thoughts about our loved ones recently left and business of the House awaiting us here.

We ask You to protect those loved ones we left until we return. We ask You to guide us along the path of Your will in conducting the business of the House.

And let what we do alleviate the sufferings of the less fortunate whose lives are always dark and cold and wet. Amen.

February 14, 1978

O God, we consider our resources in money, men and land, yet forget the spiritual resources without which we dare not and cannot prosper. Forgive us for all our indifference to the means of grace thou hast appointed. Thy Word, the best seller of all books, remains among the great unread, the great unbelieved, the great ignored. Turn our thoughts again to that book which alone reveals what man is to believe concerning God and what duty God requires of man. Thus informed, thus directed, we shall understand the spiritual laws by which alone peace can be secured, learn what is the righteousness that alone exalteth a nation. For the sake of the world's peace and our own salvation, we pray in the name of Christ, thy revelation. Amen.

February 15, 1978

Eternal Father of our souls, grant to the members and officers of this Legislature a sacred moment of quiet before we take up the duties of the day. Turn our thoughts to Thee, and open our hearts to Thy spirit that we may have wisdom in our decisions, understanding in our thinking, love in our attitudes, and mercy in our judgment. Let us not think, when this prayer is said, that our dependence

upon Thee is over, and forget thy counsels for the rest of the day. Rather from these moments of hard searching may there come such a sweetness of disposition that all may know that thou art in this place. From this holy interlude may there flow light and joy and power that will remain with us until night shall bring thy whispered benediction, "Well done, good and faithful servant." So help us all this day, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

February 16, 1978

O Father in Heaven, ere we become involved in the routine of the day, we pause to seek Thy help. Experienced in the ways of men, we know all too little of the ways of God. But thou knowest us, each one of us, by name and by our needs. Turn our wayward minds and hearts to Thee. Forgive the faults and failures of the past and set us free from them. Forgive, O Lord, our failure to apply to ourselves the standards of conduct we demand of others. Forgive our slowness to see the good in our fellows and to see the evil in ourselves. In our differences may we be kind; in our agreements may we be humble, that thy will may be done in us, and thru us in our beloved State. Amen.

February 20, 1978

O God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, raise our minds and hearts to You so that we may know your greatness and pay tribute to Your glory.

You who created us by an act of Your will, sustain us by the same process. Our every action, our every thought, our every word, is foreknown by You and yet remains free.

When we contemplate Your nature, we are delving into mystery sublime and unfathomable. It is only at such moments that we can get a fair appraisal of ourselves in relation to reality. In comparison, we are nothing, insignificant, practically non-existent.

But we are of infinite value because You made it possible to call you Father.

We can only recite with the Apostle, "Oh, the depths of the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How inscrutable His judgment, how unsearchable His ways!" Amen.

February 21, 1978

Eternal God, while working with bills and procedures of an objective nature, may we try to be objectively honest with ourselves and with others. We pray for strength to harness our unruly tongues; to carry our responsibilities; to have the same criteria for judging ourselves that we apply to others. Forgive us for often wearing a friendly mask which hides a sullen heart, and using fine words which conceal shabby thoughts. May we strive to develop an identity between our outward and our inner person, that we may see ourselves as persons of integrity. In our Lord's name. Amen.

February 22, 1978

Father in Heaven, be a source of consolation for the members of this House who are beginning the tedious work of preparing, studying and voting.

During these months of hard work and anxiety, let your example be an inspiration and your grace a source of strength to these men and women. . .citizens of Nebraska.

Let their families at home be understanding of their absence from home and bless them too with the stamina to live with conditions brought about because they serve their fellow men. Amen.

February 27, 1978

Father in Heaven, there are 49 people gathered here from various and sundry reasons. In each of them, there is a variety of motivation. Each of them represents a variety of people with a variety of needs. Help these 49 to clarify in their own minds their chief motivating force.

Let them come to grips with the will to power, financial enchantment, a feeling of fulfillment, prominence, and service. Help them to admit to themselves when their motivation is selfish. Help them see that while all of these motives may well be there, their genuine concern for their neighbors must be paramount.

And let their Chaplain keep in mind that it may well be that these 49 are the good sheep that the Good Shepherd left to go in search of the one, the 50th member. Amen.

February 28, 1978

O God, our Father, at the dawning of another new day, we are grateful for fresh hopes for facing old problems, and for Thine assurance of ultimate victory.

So grant to this body of men and women wisdom to perceive the issues facing them, love to understand the problems before them, and power to act toward a solution. Amen.

March 1, 1978

Almighty God, before whose face the generations of men rise and pass away, we thank you for this day for the opportunity of celebrating the birthday of our State. We remember in gratitude this native land—and all who have sacrificed so much to keep her strong and right.

We are thankful that our land was born and nurtured in liberty, and that those who settled on these plains were men and women who desired the opportunity to build here a better place in which all could live together in harmony and justice.

We are thankful that when there have been dangers before our State there have been those who have risen to defend her—placing their State's welfare above private gain.

So may this Nebraska celebration remind us anew of the importance of a continuing heritage, served by the Senators here and those who assist them, and by all the people of the State, that together we may have a sense that this land is not only our land, but Your land, of the people, for the people, and by the people. Amen.

March 6, 1978

Dear Lord, we thank you for the leisure time which has been ours during this past weekend, the time we have spent with families and friends, the opportunity to be away from the busy-ness and the business of this chamber. We pray that such weekends can be opportunities for lifting our eyes above the immediate and seeing the larger horizons of tomorrow. Day by day, for these past weeks, just as our state has been deluged by snow and ice, by cold and fog, and it seems at times that winter might never end, so also in our lives as Senators we are deluged by bills and decisions, by conversations and pressures, so that it seems the end will never come.

Yet, here we are, in the second half of this session. May we find in it not just the down-hill time of our dedication, but a heightening of our sensitivities to the issues that are before us, an enlarging of the friendships with one another, a formulating of the decisions that are required of us, and a fulfilling of the dreams that brought us to this place: to serve you and the people of this state to the best of our abilities. In our Master's name. Amen.

March 7, 1978

Dear Lord, just as a turtle never makes progress until it sticks its neck out, so may we realize that we often have to stick out our necks: in standing up to the pressure groups, in resisting the temptation always to side with our friends, in wanting to take the easy way, or trying to be popular. May our vision of what this state can yet become make us more willing to be vulnerable to criticism when we know our beliefs to be right, so that when this session may end, though we may not have always sided with the majority, we may know that we have done our best, and stuck to our guns, have stood for our convictions, and thus merited your benediction: "Well done, good and faithful servant." Amen.

March 8, 1978

O Lord, we ask You to give us the willingness to be a good listener in our conversations and the business we are part of. That we accept the wisdom and knowledge of others in dialogue and discussion and willingly open our minds to receive what others offer. Let us control hostility and anger and seek to communicate truth and understanding. May we be helped by you, O Lord, who receives and accepts our prayers and pleas and may we in seeing You as our model, wish to act in imitation of You in our relations with our fellow associates, especially when others are affected. May we have this guidance and direction from You, God our Father. Amen.

March 13, 1978

Dear God and Father, Someone suggested that chaplains spend their time praying too much for the people of the state and not enough for the legislators. So, will You please

bless the Members of this Assembly. Keep their heads clear, their hearts warm, their eyes and ears open, their feet on the ground, and their vision fixed on a finer, freer, fuller life for all men. Help them to do their job so well, O Lord, that no one will need to pray for the people. Amen.

March 14, 1978

God our Father, You know our needs and our ability to cope with them. You have not destined Your people or Your world for disaster or destruction. In these complex times we pray that each legislator will realize that he or she has a contribution to make. Great or small, significant or insignificant, it is a contribution without which we will be the poorer. Do not let us try to impose our morality on others but keep us always reminded that there are ideals spelled out in Your Commandments. Give us understanding for those who, in good conscience, differently interpret their scope and meaning, and for those who are unable to reach ideal standards of behaviour. However, never let us forget that there are ideals nor cease in our legislation to motivate people to higher standards. In this new day inspire us with a new confidence in ourselves and in each other and an optimism born of trust in You, God, and the basic goodness of human beings. Amen.

March 15, 1978

Our God and our Father, we have come to the beginning of this day burdened, bewildered, and even smothered by the many contradictory images of who we are: the supporters of this legislation or the opponents of that school of thought, representatives of our constituency or ones entrusted with leadership for our communities and state, wise beyond all human wisdom or fools without parallel in the history of legislators. The voices around us and within us say we are good or we are bad, loving or selfish, competent or powerless. We feel misunderstood by others and mocked by our own deepest convictions. How can we make wise decisions for the people of this state when we doubt our capacity to plan and act constructively for ourselves?

Help us in this moment to regain our own most basic identity, to allow You, our Creator, to tell us who we are:

Your loved children, the heirs of Your eternal purposes of love, co-workers with Your Son who calls us His brothers and sisters, as well as the brothers and sisters to all the rest of humanity. In that understanding of ourselves may we find the confidence to think clearly, to decide justly, to lead courageously, and to act with loving compassion. Whoever and whatever else we may be, we are Yours. May we live in that truth this day.

In the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, we pray. Amen.

March 20, 1978

Father in heaven, the suffering and death of your son brought life to the whole world moving our hearts to praise your glory. The power of the cross reveals your concern for the world and the wonder of Christ crucified.

The days of his life-giving death and glorious resurrection are approaching. This is the hour when he triumphed over Satan's pride; the time when we celebrate the great event of our redemption.

We are reminded of the price he paid when we pray with the Psalmist:

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me, far from my prayer, from the words of my cry?

O my God, I cry out by day, and you answer not; by night, and there is no relief for me.

Yet you are enthroned in the Holy Place, O glory of Israel! In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.

To you they cried, and they escaped; in you they trusted, and they were not put to shame.

But I am a worm, not a man; the scorn of men, despised by the people.

All who see me scoff at me; they mock me with parted lips, they wag their heads:

He relied on the Lord; let Him deliver him, let Him rescue him, if He loves him." Amen.

March 21, 1978

O Lord our God: We resume work now which many call profane, on this week so many call Holy, and we are caught up in the cross-currents of things temporal and things divine.

Help us to understand that a week does not become Holy merely because we say it is so, but because we become somehow more Holy during it. Provide us with the help we need, O God, in order to live with the necessary tensions of our lives. Amen.

March 22, 1978

Father in heaven, the season of Lent is well into its course; this Assembly is months into its work; our country is past its 200th year and most of us here are middle aged or beyond.

Time is a treacherous thing when there's not enough of it. It can cause panic as it ticks away. It can seem a mortal enemy as it drags through a long and sleepless night.

But time is the framework within which we live and breathe and have our being. It is the fluid in which we swim. It's to be used and enjoyed and even challenged.

For in it we know, love and serve you. We pray that when it ceases we may be happy with you for all eternity. Amen.

March 28, 1978

O Lord our God: even as we dash madly to meet our deadlines, remind us that all of life is a solemn trust — that no part of life is without significance — that every moment has its very special meaning. Help us to understand that because we represent others here, we are stewards for them both of time and of life. May we count ourselves successful stewards not in what we are able to keep for ourselves of life's blessings, but in what we succeed in making more available to others. This is the way the Master went; should not the servant tread it still! Amen.

April 3, 1978

Father in heaven, sadness, suffering and pain are a part of every human being's life. Each one of us seeks to alleviate them and we as a legislative body we work together in this task.

We ask your guidance and direction in this task and ask you to bless our efforts.

But don't let us forget that part of the price of loving others is pain and suffering sometimes. Never let us love less because of the price it demands. Let us not step into a

shell because of the pressure of people we love. That kind of pain we must suffer and it cannot be legislated away. Your son showed us this way. Let us walk it. Amen.

April 4, 1978

Father in Heaven, we are entering the last days of this Assembly. The novelty has worn off for the new members; the freshness has passed for the old. We are in that part of the term where the romance has lessened and the work has lengthened.

Inspire the members to see that these are the days when the most can be accomplished. Long hours and hard work now will assure success in the end.

Bless them and their families; protect them as they travel and reward them for the wear and tear they suffer. Amen.

April 5, 1978

Lord of our lives, wilt thou teach us true discrimination, that we may be able to discern the difference between faith and fatalism, between activity and accomplishment between humility and an inferiority complex, between a passing salute to God, and a real prayer that seeks to find out God's will. We can stand criticism. We can stand a certain amount of pressure. But we cannot stand the necessity of making grave decisions with nothing but our own poor human wisdom. Our heads are not enough and our hearts fail us. Cabbages have heads, but they have no souls. We, who are created in the image of God, are restless and unhappy until we know that we are doing thy will by thy help. This is what we pray for, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

April 10, 1978

Father in Heaven, help us to understand and be understood. So often I misjudge others meanings or intentions and often I am misunderstood.

Help us to be candid in our communication without being overly blunt. Help us be direct in our conversation without being unkindly direct.

Help us to stand for our principles, even in the face of active disagreement.

And in dealing with others, help us to give them credit for having intentions at least as honorable as our own. Amen.

April 11, 1978

We ask your guidance O Lord on these men and women who represent the people of this State in the decisions they will make today. In these days of very serious consideration of important bills may they be sensitive to the needs of all people of this State. As they approach the finish of the work of this session direct them, O Lord, with Your wisdom and instill in them the desire to reach the decisions that will enable this State to serve justly and with concern for all the people. Grant them Your strength, O Lord, in the days that remain in this session. Amen.

April 12, 1978

Father in Heaven, watch over the people of this house. Give them courage for their convictions and stamina to withstand criticism. Help their families who remain at home, some times lonely, always longing.

Let their desks and offices be places where people are taken care of, not factions or groups.

Let these aisles be paths leading to solutions for the need and want of others.

Let this room be the room of businessmen and artisan, professional man and poets.

Let the area behind the rail be witness to good men talking and working for others.

Let its buzzer be the voice of the people crying out "help us."

Let its gavel punctuate that work and ever be a reminder that we are not our own — we belong to you. Amen.

April 17, 1978

In this, the day that the Lord hath made, help us to appreciate its beauty and to use aright its opportunities.

Deliver us from the tyranny of trifles during these closing days of the Legislature. May we give our best thought and attention to what is important, that we may continue to accomplish those things which are worthwhile. Teach us how to listen to the prompting of Thy spirit, and thus save us from floundering in indecision that wastes time,

subtracts from our peace, divides our efficiency, and multiplies our troubles. In the name of Christ. Amen.

April 18, 1978

Father in Heaven, we pray this day for the gift of hearing. It may be strange to pray for that when we are surrounded by sound. We are being continually spoken to by the media. Lobbyists and other representatives of specific segments of our society send their messengers regularly. Our constituents are in contact on weekends and quite often in between.

But do we hear the voice of the poor, the lame, the halt, the down trodden, the prisoner, the institutionalized.

Father, we beg you for the power to hear them; to hear the counsel of one another; to hear your voice. Amen.

April 19, 1978

As we end this legislative session, we thank You, God, that there were among us those who grappled with issues of major import to the people of our state and did so with success.

We thank You for those who tried but failed, and who are ready to try again in a new day.

Help us to heal any wounds we have opened or remove any barriers we have erected between us.

Help us to go forth from here as people of peace and honor to leave rancor and discord to the scattering winds of spring. Amen.

April 21, 1978

Dear Lord, An honest prayer some of us might make this morning is simply, "Thank God its over." These many weeks have been such a drain on so many of us, taking us away from responsibilities and loved ones elsewhere, and demanding so much of us. The memory of our last working day is still fresh in our minds, and some of us hope there will never be another one like it, even though it was a record day.

On the other hand, Lord, we are also grateful for these past months and for all the good that has been accomplished. May our decisions be for the benefit of the people of this state. Continue during the interim to give

vision, courage, and integrity to each of the Senators. Bless them, their families and loved ones, till we meet again. Be with our Governor and Lieutenant Governor, the various officers and servants of this Legislature.

May the people of this state, who often hear only the unusual things which occur in this room, appreciate the ability and dedication of this Legislature. Implant again upon our minds the truth that greatness is found in serving, and success in helpfulness. May this Legislature continue to love you, their God, and serve all the people. In our Lord's name. Amen.