

## **PRAYERS FOR ALL OCCASIONS: PATRIOTISM AND CEREMONIES**

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Our garden club members enjoy growing and learning about the wonderful variety of plants we have in Florida. As they work together, they learn to love one another and develop treasured friendships. In doing so, they share each other's joy and sorrow. Most of all, they share a deep appreciation for the beautiful gifts in nature our Heavenly Father has provided for us to enjoy and pass on to future generations.

Opening a meeting with a prayer and the pledge helps everyone settle down and think for a moment how blessed we are to live in this land we love. Also, to be part of an organization that works continuously to protect and preserve its natural beauty.

The writer has served as the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. Chaplain for several years. She was asked by President Cissy O' Donnell to write a book on "Prayers for All Occasions". This is part of a collection of prayers she has written for meetings over the years. May they be helpful when selecting a prayer for your meeting.

Many thanks to Nancy Ferreira and Karen Flaacke for their help in publishing this booklet, Ann Schandelmayer, Chaplain.

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### ***PRAYER FOR MEETINGS***

Dear Lord,

We thank You for this beautiful day and for the joy it brings as the circles of our club come together. We are grateful for the projects completed this year, resulting in the enhancement of the beauty of our communities. Please guide us as we continue our efforts to protect and preserve the precious natural resources You have provided for our well-being. Forgive us Lord, when we take them for granted. In Your holy name we pray. Amen

Dear Lord,

We are grateful for the wonders of nature You have created, for the way You shaped our minds so that we may appreciate them and for the trust You have in us to use them wisely and protect them for future generations. We thank You, Lord, for these blessings. Please walk with us in our gardens and our communities as we work to maintain and improve the beauty that surrounds us. In Your holy name we pray. Amen

Gracious Lord,

We thank You for this land we love and for providing for our needs with clean air, fresh water, beautiful forests and a myriad of plant species. We are thankful for those who came before us, used these precious resources wisely and passed them on from generation to generation. Please guide us as we work to continue this practice in our garden club activities. May we always be aware of Your generosity and Your love for us. In Your holy name we pray. Amen

Heavenly Father,

We are grateful for the blessings we enjoy as guardians of Your garden. They instill in us a deep appreciation for the songs of birds, the beauty of a rose, the value of our natural resources, and the countless other gifts that we enjoy at Your hands. Please guide us as we share what we know and grow with residents of our community. May our love for You express itself in our eagerness to do good for others. In Your holy name we pray. Amen

#### ***PRAYER FOR NEW ADMINISTRATION***

Dear Lord,

As spring brings new growth and new color, our new administration brings new goals and new ideas on how to best care for and protect the beauty you have placed in our care. We are grateful for the knowledge we have gained this past year and for the friendships we have made. Please guide these officers and board members as they work to accomplish their goals and help them to inspire others to do so. In Your holy name we pray, Amen.

#### ***PRAYER FOR END OF ADMINISTRATION***

Dear Lord,

We are grateful for a very successful garden club year. With your guidance we have accomplished the goals of this administration. We learned how much joy can come from working together and we are grateful for the opportunity we had to do so. Please bless the officers for their dedicated service and bless all the members who contributed toward making this an especially enjoyable club year. In Your holy name we pray, Amen.

#### ***PRAYER FOR CAMP WEKIVA***

Almighty Father,

We see the work of Your hands on these Camp Grounds. The beautiful landscape, the water and the wildlife provide a special classroom for our youth gardeners. We also see the results of hard work, countless volunteer hours and monetary contributions. All these gifts have helped make a difference in

the lives of many children. We know this when we read the notes they write expressing their appreciation and their desire to return to camp. Please bless all who have contributed, especially those who have given selflessly from the beginning to help make this dream a reality. In Your holy name we pray. Amen

### ***ARBOR DAY CEREMONY:***

**HISTORY:** The idea of Arbor Day originally came from Nebraska, yet the state was a treeless plain. Among the pioneers who moved there was J. Sterling Morton, a journalist who soon became editor of Nebraska's first newspaper. He advocated tree planting by individuals and groups of every kind in his articles and editorials. Trees were needed as windbreaks to keep soil from blowing away and for fuel and building materials as well as shade from the hot sun. As time went by, his prominence increased and he became secretary of the Nebraska Territory. On January 4, 1872, Mr. Morton first proposed a tree-planting holiday to be called "Arbor Day." The date was set for April 10, 1872. Prizes were offered for planting properly the largest number of trees. Thanks to Mr. Morton, more than one million trees were planted in Nebraska on the first Arbor Day. The day is celebrated in every state in the United States and in many countries of the world.

### ***PRAYER FOR ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION (at a school)***

Dear Lord,

As we gather here on Arbor Day, we give thanks for our beautiful trees, one of Your most precious gifts. We remember J. Sterling Morton for his efforts in proposing Arbor Day, a tree-planting holiday to call attention the importance of trees to the environment. Please protect the newly planted trees from wind and harm. As they grow and spread their canopies, may students and faculty members enjoy them for many years to come. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.

### ***PRAYER AT HOLIDAY TIME***

Dear Lord,

We are grateful for this time of year when families make every effort to be together for the holidays, for the friendships we hold dear and for people of all faiths who reach out to the less fortunate to help make their holidays bright. Please Lord, be with our service men and women who can't be with their loved ones for the holidays and keep them safe from harm. May the love you have given us influence our thoughts and actions in the coming New Year. In Your holy name we pray. Amen

### ***PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR***

Heavenly Father,

We thank you for a New Year. May we use each day in a manner pleasing to you. May the peace and love of the holiday season be with us throughout the year. May we remember, the needs of the less fortunate are with them year 'round. May we take a few moments each day from our busy schedules to

make a phone call that will help lift the spirit of a lonely person and may we be helpful and patient with members who may fail to achieve that which is expected. Lord, for all of this we ask Your help and guidance. In Your holy name we pray. Amen

***BEATITUDES FOR STEWARD OF EARTH*** by Father Ed Eschweiler

Blessed are they who reverence all created things as sacred: In God's eyes all creation is good.

Blessed are they who understand that creation is like a beautiful tapestry, with every strand depending on all others.

Blessed are they who see the beauty of Earth as a reflection of the beauty of God, who creates it.

Blessed are they who do not waste or spoil Earth's resources, which are for everyone, even those not yet born.

Blessed are they who reverence the air, the breath of God and the spirit of life.

Blessed are they who reverence the life-giving waters that sustain the Earth's climate and nourish Earth's inhabitants.

Blessed are they who reverence the soil that supports our homes and footsteps and yields abundant harvests.

Blessed are they who reverence the trees and other plants that call down the rains, stabilize the soil and freshen the air.

Blessed are they who reduce what they consume, reuse what they can and recycle what they no longer use.

Blessed are they who praise God the Creator in their reverent and gentle use of all things on Earth.

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***PRAYER FOR AFTER A STORM***

Dear Lord,

It is with much sadness that we look out at the devastation caused by the storm. Please give strength, courage and hope to those who have suffered losing loved ones and to those who have lost their homes and personal possessions. We are grateful for the outpouring of generosity by neighbors helping neighbors and by those who live long distances away. We believe this help is the work of Your hands. Thank you, Lord, please stay with us during this difficult time. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.

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## ***PRAYER FOR PEACE***

Heavenly Father,

It saddens us to see the way our world is changing. The violence that exists is troubling to us as we observe how destructive those who harbor hatred can be. We pray the people of all nations will try to understand each other's customs and needs, put prejudice aside and treat others as they would want to be treated, so that peace may soon come to our troubled world. In Your holy name, we pray. Amen

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## ***BLUE STAR MEMORIAL MARKER CEREMONY***

We dedicate this Blue Star Memorial Marker provided by \_\_\_\_\_ Garden Club for placement on the US \_\_\_ Highway in cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation, to our men and women who have served, are serving or will serve in the Armed Forces of the United States of America so that we may continue to live in freedom. In life they give full measure of devotion and in death gave their all for the land they loved...these United States.

May the sacrifices made by these valiant men and women being honored today by the \_\_\_\_\_ Garden Club serve as an instrument of eternal peace among all nations.

Let us pray. Almighty Father, we are grateful for the sacrifices made by the brave members of our Armed Forces in our behalf. Bless them one and all and keep them in Your loving care. Please watch over their families and give them the courage and strength they need for the sacrifices they must make while their loved ones are away. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.

### Blue Star Memorial Marker History

In 1945, National Garden Clubs, Inc. requested that a Blue Star Memorial Highway Program be implemented as a living tribute to the men and women who serve in the Armed Forces of the United States of America. The name commemorates the blue star which is in the center of the white service flags which were first used during World War I. Usually, they are placed in windows or on the front of homes to denote a member of the family was away serving in the nation's Armed Forces.

US 1 was designated as Florida's first Blue Star Memorial Highway by the state legislature in 1947. Our first Blue Star Marker was dedicated on May 30, 1949, in Key West's Bay View Park. US 1 was officially dedicated as Florida's only Blue Star Memorial Highway on March 17, 1950 in Wayside Park, a few miles north of St. Augustine. Nine years later, the Florida legislature authorized the chairman of the State Road Department (now the Department of Transportation) to designate other highways also as Blue Star Memorial Highways. This was done as a result of a request by resolution of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc. The current list of US highways designated as Blue Star Memorials now includes US 1, US 17, US 19, US 41, US 90, US 92 and US 98.

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## ***MEMORIAL SERVICE***

Since our last meeting, we have learned that our Heavenly Father picked one of our dear members for His beautiful garden. Most likely He has chosen her/him for her/his love of gardening and her/his kindness in sharing her/his knowledge and her/his plants with others. For years, \_\_\_ served our club in many capacities as \_\_, \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_, and she/he enjoyed doing so. Let us be happy that her/his resting place is probably where she/he would want to be.

Let us pray: Dear Lord,

We are grateful for the years \_\_\_\_\_ was with us, for the talent you gave her/him, the manner in which she/he generously shared it with others and for the pleasant times we had together. Please keep her/him in Your loving care. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.

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***BLESSING AT FLOWER SHOW TIME***

Dear Lord,

We thank you for a beautiful day and for the opportunity to show the results of the time spent nurturing our plants. Especially at show time, we realize how blessed we are to be able to grow and enjoy a wonderful variety of plants and flowers in our gardens. We express our gratitude and love for You Lord, as we share them with others. Please bless this food and those who prepared it. In Your holy name we pray. Amen

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***BLESSING AT DISTRICT MEETINGS***

Heavenly Father,

We are grateful for the joy we share as the clubs of our district come together, for the seeds planted in our minds by those who share their knowledge so that we may become better custodians of this precious land, and for the bounty that helps nourish us as we continue our work. Please bless this food and the hands that toiled in the fields to produce it. Help us always be mindful of those less fortunate than we. In Your holy name we pray. Amen

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***BLESSING AT CELEBRATION OF REFURBISHED BUILDING***

Gracious Lord,

We thank You for this celebration of our beautiful refurbished building. We are grateful to our chairman and all who participated in any way to help make it possible. We understand that the beauty of our garden center is only overshadowed by the history that lies within its walls. Please bless the gifts we are about to partake. May our gratitude be shown in the manner we serve You each day. In Your holy name we pray. Amen

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***BLESSING AT HOLIDAY TIME***

Dear Lord,

As the holiday season approaches, we are reminded of the many blessings You have bestowed upon us. We pause to give thanks for our families, friends, our beautiful country, and our brave service men and women overseas. Please bless and keep them in Your loving care. Please bless this food. May it nourish

our bodies so that we may spread the seeds of joy and kindness as we remember those less fortunate than we. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.

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### ***BLESSING FOR HOLIDAY FUND RAISER***

Heavenly Father,

We come to You today with grateful hearts. We are grateful for our members and friends who are with us today to help support our various projects, for the love and joy expressed in the holiday season when there is an outpouring of generosity to help those in need and for this land we love and the bounty You have provided for our well-being. Please bless this food and help us be mindful of the needs of others. In Your holy name we pray. Amen.

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### ***A PRAYER FOR THANKSGIVING***

Gracious Father,

We have so much to be thankful for. Please listen as we express our gratitude and love for You for providing for us in so many ways. We thank You always for being with us. We thank You for our families and friends. We thank You for our homes and our beautiful country. We thank You for the countless gifts in nature You have created for our comfort, pleasure and well-being. We thank You for our garden clubs and the learning opportunities they provide. We thank You for the members who inspire us as they share their knowledge. We thank You for protecting us in times of storms and other dangers. We thank You for the outpouring of generosity after disasters. Most of all, we thank YOU for good health and for strengthening us in times of illness or death. For all these gifts, we praise You, Lord. Please forgive us when we take them for granted. Amen.

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### ***SCRIPTURES***

*Psalm 23: The Lord is My Shepherd*

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. In verdant pastures he gives me repose; Beside restful waters he leads me; He refreshes my soul. He guides me in right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; for you are at my side. With your rod and your staff that give me courage.

*Psalm 100: A Psalm of Thanksgiving*

Sing joyfully to the Lord, all ye lands; serve the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful song. Know that the Lord is God; he made us, his we are; his people, the flock he tends. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; Give thanks to him, bless his name, for He is good; the Lord whose kindness endures forever, and His faithfulness, to all generations.

*Ecclesiastes 3:1,2,4*

For everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance...

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***BENEDICTIONS***

Dear Lord,

We thank You for Your presence here today. May all that was accomplished be pleasing to You, we pray. Please be with us as we drive safely home to our families.

Heavenly Father,

We thank You for creating a world of natural beauty. May the example of how we work together to protect it be seen in the ways others learn from us and try to keep our planet green. Please be with us as we travel home to our loved ones.

Peace be in thy home and in thy heart, or if thou roam Earth's highways wide, the Lord be at thy side to bless and guide. (Submitted by Canny O'Donnell, 2008)

Be alive. Think freely. Smile often. Tell those you love that you do. Rediscover old friends. Make new ones. Hope. Grow. Give. Give in.

Pick some daisies. Share them. Keep a promise. Laugh heartedly. Reach out. Let someone in. Hug a kid. Slow down.

See a sunrise. Listen to rain. Trust Life. Have faith. Enjoy. Make some mistakes. Learn from them. Explore the unknown. Celebrate life! (Submitted by Jo Williams, 1997)

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