



# **American Legion Auxiliary Chaplains Manual**

*Compiled by Rosey Newman  
National Chaplain (2005-2006)*

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## **DEDICATION**

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

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

## **INTRODUCTION**

Dear Chaplains,

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

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

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

If there is something you feel is missing and should be added, please contact the current national chaplain.

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

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

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

## **DUTIES OF THE CHAPLAIN AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

The chaplain should attend all meetings and have an opening and closing prayer at each meeting. These prayers may come from the *American Legion Auxiliary Chaplains Prayer Book*, or they may be others that the chaplain has found or written on their own.

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

The chaplain should be involved in many activities, such as:

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

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

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

The chaplain may want to type the material she receives. She may want to add pictures that go along with the prayer, devotional thought, or poem.

A great resource for the prayer book is a church bulletin. Many churches use bulletins that have a picture on the cover with a devotional thought or bible verse. Ask unit members to save these for you.

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

## INVOCATION PRAYERS

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

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

We especially ask Thy blessing and comfort for all those who are suffering from the ravages of war. May our duty to them be ever alive in our minds. Finally, O God of Mercy, we remember lovingly before Thee our departed heroes who received from Thee the reward of life everlasting. May their splendid example guide us, now and forever. Amen.

.....

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

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Dear Lord, We thank You for our meeting and for the many chairmen who report the many works our members are doing in our local communities. We thank You for your guidance in our decision-making and we ask that we receive it again today. We thank You for the leadership we have received.

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

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

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

Help us to remember that everyone's opinions are essential in making the correct decisions. Help us to always remember our true purpose as the American Legion Auxiliary. Bless and guide our unit president, as he/she conducts the meeting. Be with our servicemen and women and keep them in Your care. May all our decisions praise Your name. Amen.

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

Dear Lord, we thank You for America, our government leaders, and our veterans who gave so much. Thank You for the members of The American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary. Help us to always remember we are here to serve God and country. Thank You for our men and women serving in the military, and please keep them in Your care. God, we ask Your blessings for this meeting. Guide us in all we do and let all we do praise Your name. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

**BENEDICTION PRAYERS**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank You, God, for the fine leadership we have in our unit, and thank You for the fellowship and the new friends we have made. Our business meeting is now ending, and You have guided us well. May we use what we have learned here to help with our work for our veterans, our children, and our nation. Please be with our servicemen and women, and keep them safe and return them home to their loved ones soon. Please watch over us, and keep us safe as we return to our homes and loved ones. All this we ask in Your name. Amen.

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

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

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

Dear God, thank You for the fellowship we have received here today. We ask that You be with our guests and keep them safe. Be with our members and keep them in Your care. In Your name, we pray. Amen.

**GRACE OR BLESSING FOR MEALS**

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

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We are thankful, Father, for all the blessings You have given to us and for the fellowship we have shared with those here. We ask that You heal those who could not be with us due to sickness. As always, we pray for our servicemen and women and for their safe return to their families. We thank You for this meal, for those who prepared it, and for those who share it with us. We ask that we be strengthened with Thy grace as we strive to keep America “one nation under God.” Amen.

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

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

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Blessed are You, God; You bring forth food from the earth and sustain all Your creatures with goodness, mercy, and grace. Blessed are You, who gives food to all. Amen.

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

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Bless us, God, for this food to use, and us to Your service. Keep us ever mindful of the needs of others. Amen.

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

## **PRAYERS FOR SERVICEMEMBERS**

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

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Dear Lord, there is a young man or woman far from home,  
Called to serve their nation in a time of war;  
Sent to defend our freedom on some distant foreign shore.  
We pray You keep them safe,



We pray You keep them strong,  
We pray You send them safely home,  
For they've been away so long.  
Bless those who await their safe return and those who mourn the lost.  
Bless those who serve this country well,  
No matter what the cost.  
God, bless America and her heroes ... and thank You for the privilege to serve. Amen.



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



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



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



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

**PRAYERS FOR MILITARY**

Most gracious Heavenly Father, thank You for the men and women of our armed forces. Protect them as they protect us, and defend them as they defend us. Encourage and strengthen their spirits, souls and bodies in the execution of their duties and responsibilities. May they be mentally and physically strong as they face the challenges of combat. Guide them with Your spirit and might when they are called upon to endure the hardships of battle. Thank You, God, for providing America with the best trained, equipped, and lead military force in the world today. Fill them with Your saving grace, and the gospel of peace that they may be shining examples of Your love. In Your precious name we pray. Amen.

**THE FAMILIES OF OUR MILITARY**

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

**VETERANS DAY/THANKSGIVING**

God, thank You for Your everyday gifts to us. We have so much to be thankful for, not just on Thanksgiving Day, but each new day that You give us. We give You our thanks. Our prayers of Thanksgiving join those of our forefathers. God, You know the words we so often speak, but more than that, You know the secrets of our beam. We thank You for this day. We pray for peace in the world. We thank You for people who stand for truth and that which is right. Give Your blessing to our veterans who have given so much for our freedom. Remember those who have given the supreme sacrifice, for we pray they will never be forgotten. Be with us, we pray. Amen.



Our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for this day with its opportunities for service. We thank Thee for sustenance and Thy guiding hand — for friends, companions, and loved ones. Send Thy blessing upon our dear ones, wherever they may be. To those in sorrow, reveal unto them the comfort and humaneness of Thy tender mercy. Help us all to be more constant in our praise and obedience to Thee. Amen.



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

**CHRISTMAS**

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



In Thy infinite mercy, Our Father, grant to us and to all others, the spirit of kindness, goodwill, and charity. Hasten the day when men shall again hear the angel chorus paying homage to

Thee, the Prince of Peace, singing again the glad tidings “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of goodwill.” Amen.

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We beseech Thee, O Lord, that we, who rejoice in celebrating the nativity of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, may never cease to be grateful to Thee for Thy divine gift. May our actions at all times be directed toward good works and helpful ministrations, which are pleasing to Thee. Bless us all, we earnestly pray; gladden our hearts anew with the joyful tidings of this holy day. Let the day soon dawn when men shall permit Thy love to right every wrong, and when truth and justice and love shall overrule all the affairs of men, that here and everywhere there shall prevail the glorious message of the first Christmas morning “Peace on earth to men of goodwill” through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**THE NEW YEAR**

Lord, as we begin a new year, let us resolve to keep a promise, seek out a forgotten friend, listen, laugh, brighten the heart of a child, encourage the young, appreciate our elders, express our gratitude, take pleasure in the beauty and wonder of life, and speak your love to others. Dear Lord, guide us in the new year to grow closer together in our families, in our American Legion Auxiliary units, in our world. Let us always strive to bring peace to the world. Let us live each day to the fullest. For all the blessings of the year, we give you thanks, oh Lord. Amen.

**EASTER**

We thank Thee, God, for the day in which life and immortality were brought to light through the resurrection of our blessed Lord from the dead. Evermore in heart and mind we shall sing praises of joy to Him and we shall show our love for Him by our thoughts, words, and deeds, our helpful service to others, and faithful performance of all our obligations. We earnestly ask Thee to bless and preserve all whom we love; comfort and aid all in trouble and distress. We offer our thanksgiving for all graces and favors we have received in the name of Him, who rose triumphant from the dead. Amen.

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On this glorious day, our hearts are raised to Thee in joy and gladness as we celebrate the resurrection of Thy Son from the dead. May His loving kindness and His blessings rest on us and on our dear ones. Grant us, O Lord, that our devotion to Thee may reflect our happiness at this glorious season, and may we all enjoy sweet fulfillment of the promise of this day. We pray that love of Christ, the Risen King, may abide in our hearts forevermore and fill us with the joyousness and peace of Eastertide. Amen.

**MEMORIAL SERVICES**

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

We are thankful for the lives whom we have remembered here today. May their memory serve as an inspiration to us. Be with us and bless us, we pray. Amen.

**MEMORIAL DAY**

Dear God, as we approach Memorial Day, may we honor and remember those who died that we might live in freedom. We remember our departed loved ones gone on before. Those we honor will be a part of our lives forever. God, we are mindful of Your great love for us. We are thankful for that love. We praise you for the blessings of love and friendship, for our families, and our homes. Amen.

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Lord, be with us, and be our guide in time of need. We ask Your support in all we do. Help us to reach out to one another, to communicate, and show real care for others. Help us to be open to new experiences of personal growth and challenge. May we be alert to the opportunities before us each day. Accept our thanks, Lord, for the leaders of our American Legion Auxiliary, for their work this year, and for their leadership. As they have worked for God and country, we give them our grateful thanks. Amen.

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

**INDEPENDENCE DAY**

God, we remember the courage and determination of our founding fathers. We remember the brave patriotic men and women who gave so much for us. We thank them that we are a free nation and a free people. It is through them that we carry forward the ideals of Justice, Freedom and Democracy. We pray for our elected officials, for sound government, and just laws. Make us ever proud to be Americans. We ask that You rekindle the flame of compassion within us so that we might show real care for our fellowman. Teach us to be sensitive to the needs of others. Grant that as Americans and as a Legion Family, we may continue to help our veterans and those in need. Be with us and guide us, we pray. Amen.

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Lord, as we work in our great organization, help us look beyond the outward appearances to the person underneath. Teach us to love and accept them. Forgive our critical thoughts and harsh words; replace our impatience with your love and forgiveness. Open our eyes to the needs of the world, and fill our hearts with love. Make us sensitive to the issues of poverty, racial, sexual, and age discrimination; war and peace; pollution and environment. God, help us to recognize and grasp the opportunities for service that each one of us might make a difference. Let us reach out and touch someone with a helping hand. Help us to never lose sight of your continual guidance in our lives as we work for our fellowman. Amen.

## **INSTALLATION**

God, this is the beginning of a new year of work in our beloved American Legion Auxiliary. Let us speak words of encouragement to our newly elected officers. Be with them, God, as they work to lead us in working on all of the good programs we hold so important. Remember each one of our members, for they are needed in their own units for the work in their communities. Let us all work for God and country together in harmony and love. Dear God, teach us to think in wisdom and act in love and caring for others. Amen.

## **GIFT SHOP OPENING**

God, we come with grateful thanks today for the unit members represented here in these lovely gifts for others. Our members have given their time and effort to provide this beautiful Gift Shop for hospitalized veterans and their families. Love and care are exemplified by these members who serve so willingly to provide happier holidays for veterans and their loved ones. We thank You, Father, for the joy they bring. Let us remember the lonesome and often forgotten individuals, and give them the joy of packages, visitors, and carols. God, we wish we could all keep the same joy of this day overflowing all year. Keep our hearts joyful, Lord, we pray. Amen.

## **OLD IRISH VERSE**

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

## **GOLD STAR MOTHERS OR MEMBERS (PRAYERS DURING TEAS OR SOCIAL GATHERINGS)**

Dear Heavenly Father, we are gathered here this day to honor the Gold Star Mothers [or members] of this community – women who have given a loved one in our country’s defense. Their sacrifice has been great. Keep them always under Thy loving care and tender mercy. May their courageous spirit and unselfish patriotism inspire us, Lord, to greater service for our beloved country and for Thee.

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



Our Father, who art in Heaven, we thank Thee for the opportunity of meeting here this day, and especially that we may pay reverent tribute to these Gold Star Mothers [or members] whose loved ones died for us in war’s heavy toll. Let us always honor the memory of these

brave men and women, and all of our heroic dead, for their supreme service and their incomparable sacrifice.

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

## **ALA JUNIOR MEMBER GRADUATION**

Our Heavenly Father, we ask Thy blessing on these American Legion Auxiliary Junior members who are now being received into senior membership. May the high and lofty principles and ideals for which our organization stands inspire these young members and strengthen them to fulfill all of their obligations and duties as loyal patriotic American citizens. May they be true leaders among their friends and associates and thus reflect the benefits that membership in our organization provides to them. Receive them under Thy loving care and protection now and forevermore. Amen.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Our Heavenly Father, we ask that Thy blessing may rest upon us as we gather here for this meeting. May our deliberations have Thy divine guidance, and may we now and in the days to come rededicate our organization and ourselves to the advancement of our sacred ideals. Direct us so that we may perform our duties faithfully and efficiently, and abundantly bless us all, forevermore. Amen.

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

## **THE AMERICAN LEGION'S BIRTHDAY (FOR JOINT OBSERVANCE OF UNIT AND POST)**

Heavenly Father, bless us as we are gathered here to celebrate the anniversary of The American Legion, the great organization which has continued to serve America for more than a century. We thank Thee for the opportunity given to the American Legion Auxiliary to have a part in everything The American Legion has done and in sharing its endeavors. Grant that the patriotic enthusiasm that inspired these Legionnaires to serve our country in time of war may continue to guide their activities at all times, and that the Auxiliary's founding principles of Justice, Freedom, Loyalty, and Democracy may be preserved for a happy and secure America.

Bless all of our effort for God and country, and may we continue to be mutually helpful to each other. Amen.

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Almighty God, we thank Thee for permitting us to gather here for the purpose of celebrating the anniversary of the founding of The American Legion. Deepen our earnestness and devotion to the high ideals for which our two organizations stand. May our membership and volunteerism be increased, and may we, as members of these two great patriotic organizations, with Thy help, rededicate ourselves anew to our service. Lead us fearlessly, courageously, and nobly, increasing our usefulness and tempering our work with constant prayer for peace in our hearts. Amen.

## **DEDICATION OF HONOR ROLL CEREMONY**

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

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

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Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we ask that Thy blessing may be bestowed upon those whose names appear on this Honor Roll, who have relinquished home and happiness and all that they hold dear, and accepted the call to service so that Justice, Freedom, Democracy, and Loyalty might survive, and so that the name and fame of this land we love may be kept unblemished. God, keep them in Your gracious care wherever they go and wherever duty calls them and, if it be Your will, bring them safely home. May Your merciful blessing rest upon those departed heroes who have answered the last summons. Amen.

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

## **THE WAR BEREAVED**

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

## **IN WARTIME**

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

## **PEACE**

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

## **CEREMONIES**

### **Funeral Services**

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

*(Music)*

*(Prayer)*

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

Chaplain: Let us pray. God of infinite love and mercy, draw near to us in this hour of grief. Open our hearts to Your comforting presence and our eyes to the realities of eternal life. May the darkness of death give place to the dawn of eternity, and the present pangs of separation to the joys of future reunion.

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



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

*(Alternate version):*

Let us pray. Lord of all life, who lives, again You have taught us the measure of our days. We are strangers with You and sojourners as our fathers were. Our days are as a shadow, and there is none abiding. But You abide. Your years fail not. You change never. A thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night. The grass withers, the flower fades, but Your word endures forever. And therein is our help and hope.

You heal the broken in heart and bind up their wounds. Comfort Your people. In their sorrow may there be no bitterness, no doubt of Your eternal goodness. Have them to know that You have not mocked us with this stubborn hope of life eternal; that having created and cared for us You will not desert us to the dust; that You hold us with a love unfailing; that our dead are in Your keeping; and that You are able to do for them above all that we ask or think.

Until for us also the daybreak and the shadows flee away, grant us to so live that our lives may honor the members who have gone before us. Thus together may we come to that city which You have prepared for them that love You and keep Your commandments. For Your own name's sake, we pray. Amen.

*(Music)*

Unit President: Eternal rest grant unto this American Legion Auxiliary member, God.

Unit Chaplain: And let perpetual light shine upon him/her.

Unit President: May he/she rest in peace.

Unit Chaplain: Amen.

Unit President: May his/her soul and the souls of all faithfully departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

Unit Chaplain: Amen.

*(Prayer)*

Chaplain: Let us pray. God, our heavenly Father, who ushered Your children into life and recalls the soul to Yourself in Your own good time, we thank You for the sweet memory of those dear to us who have been gathered to their fathers. We praise You for all the hallowed influences of our lives and for the rest and peace, which they have found with You. May they still be a joy and inspiration to us; may they quicken us to a more useful life, to higher hopes and greater contentment of spirit, so that in our departure we, too, may leave a memory and example that shall serve as a hope and inspiration to those who follow us.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Unit President: To those who are left behind, we realize how futile are mere words to express our deep and abiding sympathy in their loss. May they feel that he/she is at rest and in endless peace. Surely there is an afterlife for all who have been loyal and true: a life to which light and peace shall come, where the burden shall be lifted and the heartache shall cease, where the love, the hope, and the fulfillment that escapes us here shall be given to us to be ours forever. *(When the funeral service at the home, the unit president and attending members at this time may place a poppy or carnation within or upon the coffin.)*

*(Benediction by chaplain, if desired.)*

Unit President: Goodbye, till morning come again,  
We part, if part we must, with pain, But night is short, and hope is sweet,  
Faith fills our hearts, and wings our feet  
And so we sing the old refrain,  
Goodbye, till morning come again.

Goodbye, till morning come again,  
The thought of death brings weight of pain  
But could we know how short the night  
That falls, and hides them from our sight,  
Our hearts would sing the old refrain,  
Goodbye, till morning come again.



Chaplain: We gather this day to remember.

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

Chaplain: We gather this day to be drawn together.

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

Chaplain: We gather this day in sadness.

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

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

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

*(Music)*

*(Prayer)*

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

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

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

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

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

Members: We give You thanks, empowering God, for our sisters and brothers in all nations.

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

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

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

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

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

*(Light a candle and then give any memorial tribute)*

*(Music)*

*(Prayer)*

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

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**At the Graveside**

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

Unit President: Forasmuch as it has pleased God to take unto Himself the soul of our departed member [Name], we therefore place these poppies, the memorial flower of the American Legion Auxiliary, in his/her memory.

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

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

*(Benediction)*

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

*(Music)*

*(Prayer)*

Unit President: Death has entered our ranks, and we pause to pay tribute to those of our members who have passed to the Great Beyond during the past year. We shall keep in hallowed memory the lives of these members whom we have loved and lost awhile. We shall strive to pattern our lives after their zeal for patriotism and their devotion to duty, and we rededicate ourselves to the unfinished work which their hands began.

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

Memorial Chairman:  
In God's great garden of our lives,  
Some rain is sure to fall,  
But after that He sends the sun  
To triumph over all

And so when sorrow comes to us  
And teardrops cloud our day  
He sends us strength to bear our load  
And light to guide our way.

Unit President: The chaplain will offer prayer.

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

Chaplain: Let us pray. God, have us to know that we shall be remembered for what we have done for others, not what others have done for us. Each one of us exerts an influence upon those with whom we come in contact. As we go along the years, a single act of advice, encouragement, or caution may decide a question of usefulness and happiness for another. O God, whose presence is everywhere and whose mercy never fails, we magnify You for Your gifts, especially for the promise of the peace, which passes all understanding. We commit ourselves to You. Amen.

*(Playing of "Taps" or a solo.)*

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

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## **Draping the Charter**

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

Unit President: We have assembled here at the call of our maker who has taken from us one of our beloved leaders. We have come to give, by simple token, official expression of the grief of the unit of [unit's name]. Let us first bow our heads in prayer.

*(Chaplain offers a brief prayer.)*

Unit President: We stand before the document which gave our unit life and being. Under its authority, years of devoted service were given by [name of deceased member]. He/she contributed greatly to its significance. His/her service is ended, but the results of his/her loyal efforts will go on and on for our American Legion Auxiliary and for God and the country which the Auxiliary serves.

Unit President: It is therefore fitting that on our charter we should drape this crepe of black, an expression of the sorrow in our hearts and of the mourning of [unit's name] over its great loss.

*(Unit president drapes the charter.)*

Unit President: Now we will ask God's blessing for our departed friend and co-worker, then go silently to carry forward the tasks to which he/she was giving so much when called away.

*(Chaplain gives a brief concluding prayer.)*

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## OTHER CEREMONIES

The following commemoration ceremonies are under direction of The American Legion: Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Veterans Day.

### Memorial Service

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

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

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

Unit Chaplain: As we assume the unfinished tasks of these departed members, may we consecrate that task as a living memorial within ourselves: a firm determination to so live our lives that our priceless heritage, won for us at so great a cost, shall be ours to uphold, to defend, to pass along to those who shall follow in our footsteps.

Memorial Chairman:

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

*(Song – “You'll Never Walk Alone” or an appropriate piano solo is suggested.)*

Unit Chaplain:

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

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

*(Unit chaplain reads the names of all deceased unit members. Places flowers in their memory.)*

Gold Star Mothers: To those members whose lives had been saddened by the sacrifice of war, but whose loyalty and devotion to the American Legion Auxiliary, in order that they might be of service to others, has ever been an inspiration, a guiding light to all. We pay homage to their memory. May they live together in faith and love and with the hope of divine blessing, which is immortality.

*(Place flowers for deceased Gold Star Mothers.)*

Junior Members:

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

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

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

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

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

Unit President: The Chaplain will offer prayer.

*(Give three raps of the gavel for members to rise.)*

Unit Chaplain: Now that they have gone, we can well believe that a voice is saying: Well done, Thou good and faithful servant. Enter Thou into the joy of thy Lord. To all of these members whose well-won right to stand among that valiant company of women and men, who by their courage, their unselfishness and their vision have helped so largely down through the years for America, we solemnly bow our heads in prayer.

Unit Chaplain: Gracious Heavenly Father, we lift our voice to Thee, to thank Thee for continuing to watch over us in our hour of trial, ever ready to direct and guide our faltering steps. We thank Thee for the rich experiences and for the many friendships enjoyed by Thy children here. We thank Thee for the knowledge that in their passing they do not tread the Valley of Shadow

alone, that always that giver of gifts, the great comforter is present as they enter that eternal haven of rest.

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

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

**Additional prayers are available through the *American Legion Auxiliary Chaplains' Prayer Book*:**

- **Download for free at [www.ALAforVeterans.org](http://www.ALAforVeterans.org).**
- **Purchase a copy through American Legion Flag & Emblem Sales at [emblem.legion.org](http://emblem.legion.org) or by calling (888) 453-4466.**