

Invocations at
City Council Meetings
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

January 22, 2009

Pastor Brian Jenkins: Chosen 300 Ministries

“Let us pray. Dear Father in heaven, we just thank you, God, for the opportunity to stand before this Council. We thank you for the business that is going to be taken care of today. We pray, God, for the laws that are passed, God, the rules that are made for the City, but they would be not for political gain, God, but they would be for the benefit of the people of this city. We pray, God, for all of those in power. We pray for our new President, Barack Obama. We pray, God, for our Governor. We pray for our Mayor Nutter. We pray for the President of this Council and every Councilmember that is in this place, God. We pray that the presence of God would rest on them, that you would guide them and give them the wisdom that they need to lead this city. And we thank you, God, for the victory of this session. *In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.*”

January 29, 2009

Pastor Garth Gittens: Calvary Baptist Church

“Father, we pray for this city. We pray for this Council. We pray for this leadership. We pray for wisdom, vision, unity, insight, and guidance. Lord, we pray that you will direct every path, that you would help every decision to glorify your name and bring results in this city. We commit this Council to you today, and we thank you, God, that what we commit, you are able to keep against every evil day. *In Christ's name we pray. Amen.*”

February 5, 2009

Reverend Warren Marshall: North Penn Baptist Church

“Let us bow our heads in prayer. Eternal God, our Father, once more you have allowed us to gather together to face the myriad problems, oh, God, with which this city is confronted. But, Lord, you have called a special people represented by this body for such a time as this. Enable us not to focus on the problems, but to focus on the solution to the problems, to the end that we recognize that although we have been called by a constituency, there is also a higher hand and a higher mind that is a part of all that is to take place. Help us to humble ourselves this morning as we continue, Lord, to work out that which needs to be worked out and to attempt to fix that which needs to be fixed. All good and perfect gifts come from thee, and we recognize, oh, Lord, that this body is a part of that gift that comes from thee. Enable each to be utilized, Father, to be guided by thy mind. Help us not to lean not to our own understanding, but in all our ways to acknowledge thee and recognize that thou shall direct our paths. And we will be careful to give thy name the glory, honor and praise as evidenced, oh, Lord, by the policies that are an extension of this body that will bring glory to thy name, solution to the problems and comfort to the people of the City of Philadelphia. *For we ask this all in that name that is above every name, Jesus the Christ, we pray. Amen.*”

February 12, 2009

Pastor Rob Burns: Real Life Ministry of Bridesburg

“Thank you, President of the Council, Verna, for inviting me today and special thank-you to Councilwoman Krajewski for her invitation and also for all the service to the 6th District and specifically to the neighborhood I live in, Bridesburg. We also want to extend our sympathy and prayers in the home-going of your brother, Sam Kline. Know that we're with you and we're praying for you through that.

I'd like to read you a short excerpt from a letter from Ben Franklin that he sent to President George Washington at a point where it seemed they may not be able to come to agreement and finish the Constitution. He writes this: He says, In this situation of this assembly, groping is a war in the dark to find political truth and scarce able to distinguish it when presented to us. How does it happen, sir, that we have not once thought of humbly applying to the Father of Lights to illuminate our understanding? And have we now forgotten that powerful friend or do we imagine that we no longer need his assistance? I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live, the more convincing proofs I see of this truth, that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable to think that an empire cannot rise without his aid? We have been assured, sir, the sacred writings that accept the Lord build the house. They labor in pain to build it.

Let's pray. Father in heaven, creator of all that we see and all that exists, we come before you this day to ask that you grant wisdom to this Council as they wade through the matters at hand. We ask that you remind us continually of our need for you. Not just to impart wisdom in difficult times, but also our need for a savior at all times. Thank you for the wonderful diversity and prosperity that you have blessed this city and its people with over its history. We pray that you would give this city a renewed sense of purpose and give its people a renewed consciousness of those around them that are in need, and then give them the courage and compassion to act in the interest of those in need, as you have called all men to do. We pray that in these difficult financial times, that you would provide the resources and ability for the leadership of this city and of this City Council to assist those that are most helpless, provide for those in greatest need, in the process that Philadelphia would weather the storm of this crisis and that you would use it to build unity and not division. We pray for the government officials and law enforcement that face and fight crime and evil in our city each day. Give them strength and endurance to bring about the safety we desire for all people of this city. Bless these proceedings. Help them to be prosperous, always reminding each of us that God does govern in the affairs of men. Help this Council to lead with courage, humility, wisdom, mercy and brotherly love.

In the name of your son Jesus Christ, who came to earth and died for the sins of each of us and for the whole world, that we bring these prayers to you. ***We pray as you taught us to pray: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Thank you.***

February 26, 2009

Reverend Althea DeVaughn Goodwin, Associate Pastor: Zion Baptist Church

“Good morning, Council President, Council members and all present. The read of the invocation is an ecumenical one taken from First Corinthians, Chapter 12, Verses 12 and 26, and also the book of Jude, Verses 2 and 21. For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is God. And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; and one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Mercy unto you and peace and love be multiplied. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for mercy with our Lord unto eternal life. Amen.”

March 19, 2009

Bishop Benjamin Fisher: Greater Bethel Temple

“Thank you, Madam President. Bow your heads. Father, in the name of your son, Jesus Christ, as we huddle here today and convene at this time in this City Council Chamber, we thank you for another day, and honor you for the privilege of life and service. God, we also celebrate this opportunity you have afforded our Mayor and this City Council to once again pass effective legislation, address our needs, respond to our problems, and do good. Lord, we now pray for Mayor Nutter and his cabinet, all the members of City Council and their staff, and the many others who serve in this government and lead the affairs of our city. Father, lift our city and provide for all of our communities and neighborhoods. Your word shares that you would supply all our needs according to your riches and glory. Though we are in the throes of an international recession, Lord, the City of Philadelphia is blessed and refuses to participate. Lord, help us. Lord, help the City of Philadelphia that success and prosperity be in our future, and we will thank you. ***We ask this prayer in the name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.***”

March 26, 2009

Reverend Daniel Black: Gospel Temple Baptist Church

“Let us pray. Blessed God, our Father, we thank you for this day. Thank you for your grace and mercy over each of us, and thank you for last night's rest and this opportunity at life itself. And now we ask that you would be in the midst of us and all that shall be done on today to give glory to your great name to serve the people that you placed us over. We ask for your guidance, for your wisdom, for your protection. ***In the name of Jesus the Christ, we pray. Amen.***”

April 16, 2009

Reverend Lorraine Jenkins Gilmore: Church of God of Prophecy

“Let us all pray. Oh, Lord, our Heavenly Father, who has brought us safely to this day, we pray for those who lead us in our City Council and in our City government. May you give them wisdom, discernment and courage to make decisions which are morally right. According to your word, you said acknowledge you in all our ways and you would direct our paths. You also promised to be a light and a lamp to those who trust and believe in you. Now, Lord, I humbly come to you on behalf of the citizens of our great

city, the City of Brotherly Love and Sisterly Affection, to ask you to be their counselor and guide as they make tough decisions that will affect all of us. And, dear God, in your word, you said for us not to be anxious for anything, but in all things, through prayer, supplication and with thanksgiving, make our request known unto you, and the God of peace that surpasses all understanding will guard our hearts and mind. ***We ask this in the name of our Lord and Jesus Christ, our savior. Amen.***

April 23, 2009

Pastor D. Omar Epps: Bryant Baptist Church

“Good morning, City Council. I first want to thank Councilman Greenlee so much for inviting me here this morning and Bryant Baptist Church, which is located in President Verna's district.

Shall we pray. Father God, we do come to you this morning, Father, to thank you so much, Father, for this day, for this time, for this opportunity. We thank you so much for life, health and strength, Father. We thank you in this day and time with economic crisis that we do still have our jobs, Father. We do thank you so much for all there is to be thankful for. We do pause to ask that you will forgive us for all of our sins, iniquity, transgressions in the blessed name of Jesus. Father, we have assembled ourselves here this morning because the Bible reminds us that we should not lean to our own understanding, but in all of our ways, we should acknowledge you, and you will direct our path. So we've come to you because the Bible also reminds us, Lord, that you are the wonderful counselor. So we seek your counsel this morning, Father, as it relates to the matter at hand with your people, God. We just ask that you would endow this Council with your wisdom, your knowledge and your understanding as you have endowed King Solomon, who sought your face on behalf of your people. He asked you, God, to show him how to rightly deal with your people, how to go in and out before your people. So, Father, we do ask that you would let your wisdom rest upon this Council as they go forward, Father God, making decisions, God, that will affect your people. ***We ask that you would get the glory in all this. In Jesus' name we do pray. Amen.***”

April 30, 2009

Reverend Arlington Medley: Victory Community Church

“You may be seated quickly. Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice? Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to crawl and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. If such a fast that I choose a day to humble one's self, is it to bow down the head like a bullrush and to lie in sack cloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast an acceptable day of the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose, to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yolk, to let the oppressed go free and to break every yolk. Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and to bring the homeless poor into your house? When you see the naked, to cover them and not to hide yourself from your own ken? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn and your healing shall spring up quickly and your vindicator shall go before you. The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call and the Lord will answer. You shall cry for help and he will say, Here I am.

Quickly, I shared once before that Philadelphia has something of a hearing problem, that being born and raised here, I could share that there was a man who was caught doing something strange and peculiar. He was a 95-year-old man who was walking around town, hugging and squeezing a 25-year-old girl. He one day ran smack dab into his doctor, and his doctor said, Arthur, what are you doing? He said, Doctor, I'm doing what you told me to do. You told me to get a hot momma and to be cheerful. The doctor said, No, Arthur. I said you have a heart murmur and to be careful. The hearing problem that's in Philadelphia is described differently in the text just read. It says that maybe we're not hearing well enough from God.

Let's bow and pray. Dearest God, again, we come asking that you guide us with your eye, that you lead us in your paths of righteousness, that you call us to do not our will, but your will. Lord, let us take up the intention of heaven that we work for those who are needy, that we give ourselves to the things of righteousness and justice. God, we ask this morning and the rest of our lives that you move by your spirit and have your way, that the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of the Christ, that all will be turned over to you, that you, God, will be all in all. So, Lord, we purpose to be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in your work. For as much as we know, our labor is not in vein in the Lord. Have your way today, *for it's in the name of your son we pray*. Let everyone say amen."

May 14, 2009

Reverend Terrence Griffith: First African American Baptist Church

"Let us pray. God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, thou has brought us thus far on our way. We have lost our way and we need your guidance. We have fallen and we just can't seem to get up. Please lift us. We are hemmed in on every side and there seems to be no way out. We need your direction. I believe you guide and govern everything with order and love. Therefore, I pray that you look upon our City Council and fill them with the spirit of your wisdom. May they always act in accordance with your will. And give them, God, the fortitude to make decisions for the well-being of every citizen of Philadelphia. Give them the courage to stand up for the right in the face of opposition. Give them the boldness to be unflinching in the presence of hostility. Give them the daring to fight for causes others deem unwinnable, the audacity to stand alone when friends and colleagues desert them and the nerve to make right political, social and economic decisions for city.

May they not be motivated by their own concerns, but by your hand and the need of those they represent. And then, God, reward them for their faithfulness and their service. Open for them doors that no man can shut. Make their enemies their footstool. May their days be long on earth and their retirement in heavenly mansions, when the words "we're done" will be music to their ears and a golden crown their reward. And, God, what I failed to ask for them, grant it according to your riches and glory. *In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.*"

June 4, 2009

Pastor Keon Gerow: Catalyst for Change Church

“We can assume the position and posture of prayer. Our great God who has brought us from a mighty long way, we give you praise, adoration and thanks for who you are and what you're doing in the lives of these, your people, here in the City of Philadelphia. How grateful we are and humbled, honored even, that you would give us breath in our bodies and the activities of our limbs on this day. God, we pray for every City Council member here. We pray that you will raise up leaders of integrity, morals and ethics to lead this city into a brighter tomorrow. God, we pray for the young people that are gathered here today from Imhotep. Thank you for their victory and championship, not only on the field but also in the classroom. God, we pause to remember, reflect and pray for the young daughter of our community, small, precious, innocent 11-year-old girl who was brutally raped at the hands of her perpetrator and predator. God, we pray for healing in her body, healing in her emotions, healing in her mind. We pray that the community will gather around her to love her, to be there for her, and we pray that justice would take place. We pray that justice will roll down like a mighty river and righteousness like a mighty stream. Now, God, continue to be glorified here in the Chambers. Touch every single individual gathered here on today. And we thank you for unity across the aisles. We pray for our President and every elected leader in the federal government. We pray that you would give them vision that's unparalleled. And we give you praise for what you're going to do in advance. *In Jesus' name, amen.*”

June 18, 2009

Reverend John Roberts: Garden of Prayer Church

“Let us bow our heads. Our Father, we take time now to thank you for allowing us to see another day, for not only did you wake us up, but you gave us strength to get up, and we were able to put our own clothes on without any assistance. And you brought us safely here this morning for this meeting. For this, we say thank you. We ask you now that you would bless all of us here today, for we are your children in the sheep of your pasture. We pray a special prayer for President Anna Verna and the loss of her husband of 54 years. We realize that earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal. We pray for her strength at this time. We pray for the great leaders of this city, our Mayor, these Councilpersons that are here today. We ask, God, that you would speak peace to all of us. We're closing now the end of this Council meeting for the summer. We have children that will be playing on the streets. We ask that you would keep us under your divine protection. Watch over our children. Watch over our mothers and fathers and husbands and wives that go back and forth to work. We pray now that you would be in this meeting today. We seek your wisdom and we seek your guidance. We ask that you would bless us and then make us a blessing, not only to this meeting on today, but even in our communities and in our neighborhoods. We pray for peace. We ask that you would be with us today. Let everything be done to your glory. *We ask this in the name of our resurrected and soon-coming king, Jesus the Christ, the anointed of God. And as always, Lord, I thank you for listening. And all God's people said amen.*”
(Amen.)