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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN E. WALSH, a Senator from the State of Montana.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by Dr. Calvin V. French, Pastor Emeritus, Community of Christ Church, in Washington, DC.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Shall we pray.

Almighty God, we come as children in our Father's house, asking that we may envision the same spirit of our Founding Fathers—that we are one nation under God. May this oneness of spirit and purpose prevail that our legislation will be seamless.

The challenges we face are difficult, but we turn to You asking for wisdom to interpret rightly the signs of our times. Through our prayer, O God, in our search for understanding, we repeat our solemn oath of office: "So help me God."

We remember those who have served in this Chamber and will soon be leaving. Grant to them peace of mind, joyful hearts, and hallowed memories, reminding them that when they were in the service of their fellow beings, they have been doing Your work.

In this Advent season, may we be comforted by the words of Isaiah 9:6, "The government shall be upon His shoulders, and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." May this counsel guide us as we do our work this day. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The bill clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 4, 2014.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN E. WALSH, a Senator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WALSH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I yield to my friend, the junior Senator from Iowa.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Iowa.

WELCOMING THE GUEST CHAPLAIN

Mr. HARKIN. I wish to take a moment to introduce and thank our guest Chaplain today.

Dr. Calvin French is the pastor emeritus for the Community of Christ Church in Washington, DC, where he served that congregation for 30 years before retiring. He has served as a pastor for 60 years of his life, considerably more than, I would note, my 40 years in Congress.

Calvin French, Dr. French, is a native of Iowa. He holds degrees from the University of Iowa, Graceland College, and Drake University in addition to his

graduate studies at Harvard and Princeton.

For the past 25 years he has represented the parent church of his denomination in governmental affairs, providing liaison service to the various agencies of the government as well as to Congress.

I personally have known Dr. French for going on almost 50 years now. When we first met in Iowa, his now deceased wife LaVon was a great friend of my wife's. They were lawyers together in Iowa. We were close family friends, and this brings back so many fond memories of our times together in Iowa and later on.

I would note that Dr. French's granddaughter Dr. Kelsey French is here in the gallery today with her husband Vince Bzdek, the news editor for the Washington Post. Their two children are also here today Zola and Xavier who is celebrating his birthday today. Xavey is 13 years old today, so he was able to be here to see his grandfather give the opening prayer of the Senate.

I also note that in 1975, when I first came to the House of Representatives, I invited Dr. French to give the opening prayer in the House. So now, almost 40 years later, I am privileged to have had him here to give the closing prayer before I retire from the Senate.

Dr. French, I would say, is someone I have admired for his commitment not only to his church but the broader commitment he has had to humanity, to all that he has done to infuse—and all around him—a spirit of kindness, generosity, and a spirit of understanding that while we may be different in so many ways, we are all the same in our humanity. He is one of the most wonderful human beings I have had the privilege of knowing and being with in my lifetime.

I say to my good friend, Dr. Calvin French, thank you. Thank you for all your pastoral work. Thank you for your leadership and your guidance through the past 50 years of my life.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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