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## Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable DEAN HELLER, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

### PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by Dr. Tommy Middleton, director of the Baptist Association of Greater Baton Rouge, from Baton Rouge, LA.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Good morning. Let's pray.

Father, we are grateful for this life and health and strength that You have given us so that we may serve You and serve others, so thankful for Your hand of blessing and favor that is rested upon this Nation. And, O God, may that continue.

So, Lord, we pray for these Senators, that, Lord, You would give them wisdom in the decisions they make and the crafting of legislation; Lord, that You would give them compassion as they deal with others—fellow Senators, legislators, elected officials, constituents; and that You would give them courage to make decisions based upon truth. Although there might be opposition, Lord, may they stay people of truth. Father, I do pray that You give them discernment so that in the deliberations they make, they will judge a righteous judgment.

Finally, O Lord, that we would walk in humility, realizing that the decisions we make, the course of our walk, our actions in our lives will be judged by those who have elected us here, but more than that, we will be judged by You, Almighty God.

Lord, we pray, we desire, we seek Your help, and, as Your Word says, our help is in the Name of the Lord, the maker of Heaven and Earth, and in that Name, the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I pray. 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. HATCH).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, December 6, 2018.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable DEAN HELLER, a Senator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ORRIN G. HATCH,  
President pro tempore.

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

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Louisiana.

### WELCOMING DR. TOMMY MIDDLETON

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I rise today to speak to my friend, Dr. Tommy Middleton, the executive director of the Baptist Association of Greater Baton Rouge, who just opened us in prayer.

Dr. Middleton oversees 100 churches and missions, which include services in 6 languages—Chinese, Burmese, Vietnamese, Filipino, Korean, and Spanish. I should say seven—also English. The ministries include the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Extension in Baton Rouge; student work at the Baptist Collegiate Ministries of Louisiana State University and Southern University; camp ministries at the

Judson Baptist Retreat Center; prison ministries in four State prisons and six local parish jails; governmental interface on the local, State, and Federal levels; ministry to the seamen through the Seafarers Ministries; church planting regionally; and international missions in 16 different countries in which he has been personally involved. I will add one more: bringing relief to victims of natural disasters across our country.

Overall, Dr. Middleton has spread the good news of the Gospel for nearly 50 years. It was my honor to invite Dr. Middleton to open the U.S. Senate in prayer this morning. We have all been blessed.

I yield back.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

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

### THANKING STAFF

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I have a number of important topics to discuss this morning, but first and foremost, I want to personally thank everyone in this building who gave so much of their own time and energy to facilitate the rituals that filled this Capitol for the last several days.

From the moment that news of President Bush's passing was made public, intricate plans were set in motion in both the House and Senate to arrange a public tribute worthy of a national treasure and a rare patriot like George Bush. Needless to say, the entire congressional family should be proud of the result.

As our 41st President lay in state earlier this week, the Bush family, world leaders, and tens of thousands of Americans were welcomed to the Capitol to pay their respects. I know my colleagues will join me in thanking the

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



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