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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Today's opening prayer will be offered by Rev. Thad Austin, Associate Pastor of the First Methodist Church in Murfreesboro, TN.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

O Lord, in whom we find life, bind our Nation to You. Make us a people devoted to prayer. Tame our wandering hearts and help us discover the meaning of freedom, justice, and mercy. Help our people to have the faith to seek You and the grace to pray for our enemies.

Lord, this is a solemn and holy day. Today, we celebrate a saint of Your church. May the virtues that St. Patrick embodied be instructive to us. For despite adversity, Patrick helped others find good news, and his actions changed a society.

May our lawmakers, like Patrick, grow in their love for You and their service to others. Enable them to see beyond the positions that divide this body and help them to long after humility, piety, and shared purpose.

Increase our faith, O Lord, and help our unbelief. Rouse our spirits and make us one Nation under You.

Eternal Father, Spirit, Word, we praise You, the Lord and light of our salvation. Hear our prayer, O Lord.

Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable TOM UDALL 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. INOUE).

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 17, 2011.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable TOM UDALL, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

DANIEL K. INOUE,
President pro tempore.

Mr. UDALL thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

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

GUEST CHAPLAIN REV. THAD AUSTIN

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, it was a great honor to have the Reverend Thad Austin, of the First United Methodist Church in Murfreesboro, TN, provide the opening prayer this morning. I thank him for his wise words. Remembering the St. Patrick in St. Patrick's Day was a wonderful way to begin the session.

I first met the Reverend Austin at his alma mater, Asbury University in Wilmore, KY, when I visited there in 2007. Asbury University's mission is to engage the world and serve the Word through public service. Our guest Chaplain today has pursued that mission with great success.

Maybe it is a family calling. The Reverend Austin's grandfather, Dr. Edward U. Austin, was an admiral in the

U.S. Navy who volunteered overseas as a medical missionary. His father, Stephen B. Austin, is a doctor who cares for our Nation's veterans.

They taught Thad that it was important to serve others—that in a nation that so generously provides what many in other parts of the world do not enjoy, it is important to give back.

The Reverend Austin has taken that advice very much to heart. He is still a young man, but he has accomplished a great deal. And he is not one to look back with pride on where he has been, but rather, look forward to all that he has left to do.

The Reverend Austin earned his degrees from Asbury University and the Asbury Theological Seminary, and he has also studied at Oxford University and the Wesley Theological Seminary here in the Nation's Capital. He is the pastor of congregational care at the First United Methodist Church, as well as a commissioned Elder there.

The Reverend Austin has preached in England, South Korea, and Mexico as well as in Kentucky, Tennessee, and several other States, and provided spiritual guidance and volunteer work in Mexico, Guatemala, Kentucky, and Tennessee. And while he has clearly gone on to do bigger and bolder things, let me also note that in 2009 he served as an intern in my office.

ADM Edward Austin, whose grandson has just addressed the Senate Chamber, is buried at Arlington. Our own Senate Chaplain Barry Black, also a Navy admiral, delivered his interment service. And I know Chaplain Black is just as pleased to have the Reverend Austin here with us today as I am.

Once again let me say it was a true honor to listen to the Reverend Austin's words this morning. I want to thank him for taking time from his important work to be here. And I thank him for his lifetime of service to his community and our Nation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

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



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