

Prayer for the Opening of the Maine Senate

by Rev. Carie Johnsen

Wednesday, April 27, 2011, 10:00 a.m.

God of Grace, God of Wisdom and Creativity, God of love divine.

As we open today's session of the House, we invite the spirit of justice, liberty and freedom to gather and mingle in the chambers with us. We invite the spirit of truth, love and compassion to be their companion in the day ahead.

In the quiet of this morning, in the still of this day, let us remember the people of Maine who have elected the officials who gather now to begin their work on behalf of the people. Let us remember the people of Maine who seek to live with dignity and hope for a bright tomorrow. Let us remember those who are vulnerable and afraid, suffering and at risk, disenfranchised and marginalized.

The work ahead of this legislative body is no easy task. It is demanding and relentless. It is at times powerful and rewarding; yet it has the potential of being harsh and ruthless. We pray that it may never be heartless.

God of Grace, when the day is long and hard, and when we find ourselves in the middle of dialogue unforgiving, may we pause and look into each other's eyes and remember we are all in this together.

God of Diversity, remind us to listen deeply and compassionately to the constituents and the leaders who bring divergent and conflicting ideas to the table.

We pray that our words be kind rather than divisive. We pray our words bring forth solutions rather than barriers. May we be reminded our religious, social, political, and ethnic diversity is a precious and fragile gift to be treasured and celebrated.

God of Creativity, open our hearts as we work together in the direction of a sustainable tomorrow. Open our minds to the collective wisdom of our colleagues, our constituents, our state, our country, the global community and our universe.

God of Wisdom, remind us *No one person or group of people can comprehend the full reality of any situation.* May we be reminded not to discard our convictions but rather *to hold them lightly as if they were resting in the palm of our own hands.* *In this way, we invite the others to take them from us to refine them, strengthen them or perhaps replace them.*

God of Courage and reason, give us strength. Grant us the audacity to stand forever vigilant to the values of justice, integrity, and equality. May we be bold and brave in our attempt to render legislation that is reasonable, fair and just.

God of Humility, remind us to laugh at our foibles and be kind to our fellow travelers. May we be reminded we are one among many in a vast interdependent web of existence that is never ending and always unfolding.

And finally, God of Wisdom, remind us to bow toward the greater mystery that something more powerful than ourselves exists in the universe.

God of Justice. God of Glory. God of Wisdom and Creativity, we bow to you as we enter this auspicious day. So may it be, amen.