





"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.... I therefore beg leave to move—that henceforth prayers, imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the Clergy of this City be requested to officiate in that service."

Benjamin Franklin | June 28, 1787 From a speech to the Federal Convention





HISTORY

When it all began...

On September 7, 1774, the Continental Congress began with a prayer by the Reverend Jacob Duché, an Episcopal rector in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. That was the beginning of a prayer practice in Congress that continues to present day. On April 5, 1789, the first Congress under the newly ratified U.S. Constitution passed a resolution to continue the practice, and on May 1, 1789, the House voted to appoint the Reverend William Linn, a Presbyterian, as the first Chaplain of the House.

For more than 230 years, the Congress has named a chaplain, excluding a few years preceding the Civil War when local clergy served as volunteer chaplains. The early chaplains alternated duties with their Senate counterparts on a weekly basis. They also conducted Sunday services for the Washington community in the House Chamber. Since 1789 sixty-two chaplains have served the House. View a complete list on the Office of the Chaplain website (chaplain.house.gov).

At the beginning of each Congress, Members of the House elect the Chaplain to a two-year term. There is no term limit.



BIOGRAPHY

The Reverend Doctor Margaret Grun Kibben Chaplain, U.S. House of Representatives

Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)

On January 3, 2021, Chaplain Margaret Grun Kibben was elected by the House and sworn in as the 62nd Chaplain of the United States House of Representatives.

Chaplain Kibben is an ordained Presbyterian Minister (PCUSA) and served more than thirty years as a chaplain in the U.S. Navy, completing her career as the U.S. Navy's 26th Chief of Chaplains, and previously the 18th Chaplain of the Marine Corps. Her military service comprises a variety of both Navy and Marine Corps assignments where she served ashore, at sea, and abroad, to include a combat tour in Afghanistan.

Dr. Kibben is a graduate of Goucher College in Towson, Maryland. She received both her Master of Divinity and her Doctor of Ministry from Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey. She served as a Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace and holds a master's degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the Naval War College in Washington, DC.



CONGRESSIONAL PRAYER ROOM

The Congressional Prayer Room is a quiet place in the Capitol exclusively for Members of the House and Senate to use for personal prayer and reflection. Established in 1954, the prayer room displays a beautiful stained-glass window of George Washington kneeling in prayer, surrounded by an inscription of Psalm 16:1 "Preserve me, O God, for in Thee do I put my trust." The names of the fifty states and both sides of the Great Seal of the United States are also incorporated.

THE DUTIES OF THE CHAPLAIN

Prayer

Prayer is the first duty of the Chaplain. As set forth in House Rules, the Chaplain is responsible for opening each legislative session with prayer. The Chaplain intercedes for Members and asks for blessings on them as they labor to make decisions for the good of the nation.

If the Chaplain is not available, a guest chaplain offers the opening prayer. This practice allows different religious leaders to pray for Congress and the nation with the voice of their religious tradition. View past prayers on Live. House.gov or the Office of the Chaplain website (chaplain.house.gov).

Numerous official events, including memorial services, statue dedications, historical commemorations, congressional award presentations, and retirement ceremonies, take place on Capitol Hill. The Chaplain is often given the honor to sanctify these ceremonies with prayer. The Chaplain welcomes the opportunity to pray individually for members of the congressional community.

Presence

In addition to praying for everyone on Capitol Hill in a variety of circumstances, the Chaplain offers a welcoming presence to all who work and visit the Capitol. The role of a chaplain is to provide spiritually for those who are interested, facilitate for those who request assistance, and care for all. In carrying out this role for the House, the Chaplain spends time on the House Floor to connect with Members informally, attends congressional hearings to observe Members and keep current on their important work, and walks the halls to listen and speak to a wide range of people. From Members, custodial staff, Capitol Police, interns, tourists, to staff who have just arrived and those who have been here for decades, the door of the Chaplain's office is always open.



Service

The Chaplain recognizes that for many individuals who work on the Hill, their faith and values are an important part of who they are and how they approach their work. To that end, the Chaplain supports Members and staff in a variety of ways to connect their daily lives with those values. The Chaplain is available for spiritual care and counsel for Members, congressional staff, and families. The office provides prayer services and spiritually themed events and discussions, publishes spiritual reflections, facilitates religious expression by staff groups, meets with national and international visitors interested in the juxtaposition of faith and politics, and offers complimentary reading materials and books on spiritual themes. Resources for the congressional community and the public are available on the Office of the Chaplain website (chaplain.house.gov).

The Chaplain gratefully receives input from Members and staff about themes and activities that will help them with their work. By providing a listening ear, the Chaplain helps others understand their purpose and meaning with thoughtful conversation and a welcoming presence.

HB-25, The Capitol Washington, DC (202) 225-2509

 $Chapla in Office @mail.house.gov\\ chapla in.house.gov$