

GUARDING WITH
WATCHFUL
★ EYE ★

*For the eyes of the Lord range throughout
the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully
committed to him. 2 Chronicles 16:9*

A SERVICE FOR A NATIONAL HOLIDAY

GUARDING WITH

WATCHFUL

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About “Guarding with Watchful Eye”

Guarding with Watchful Eye is a complete order of service for all or any of the national holidays of the summer and fall—Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day and Veterans Day. We are blessed to have a God who looks down upon our land and protects it. His view extends to all corners of our nation, and each one of us is safe in his care. The order of service includes the hymns “God Bless Our Native Land” (from which the title of the service is derived), “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” and “America the Beautiful,” along with readings, sermons, children’s sermons and prayers for all your national holiday needs. Kits are not returnable.

The digital files include a .pdf of the entire services, text of the entire services in .rtf (rich text format), a list of contemporary music song suggestions and PowerPoint documents of the services (with a copyright release) for use on screens.

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Order Of Service

For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. 2 Chronicles 16:9

Opening Litany.....God Bless Our Native Land

God bless our native land; firm may she ever stand
Through storm and night: when the wild tempests rave,
Ruler of wind and wave, do thou our country save
By thy great might.

- P** From your home above, you have looked with love upon us, O gracious God.
- C** **You have cared for us in sunshine and storm, in good times and bad, every day and every night. In all circumstances you are our constant protection and stay.**
- P** Your gaze has never wavered and your view is always keen.
- C** **Help us to trust your watchful eye over us and know that you know what is best for us as a people, a nation and citizens of this country.**
- P** Watch over the work of those in government and those who serve in the armed forces. Keep them strong in their commitments and firm in their resolve to speak on our behalf and fight for the freedoms we have been given.
- C** **Let them lift their eyes to you and look to you for guidance and direction.**

For her our prayers arise to God above the skies;
On whom we wait; thou who art ever nigh,
Guarding with watchful eye, to thee aloud we cry,
God save the state!

- P** Our prayers ascend to you for your grace and favor, that they may continue to rain down upon our land, by your will and in your way.
- C** **We cry to you in confidence that you always have a plan prepared for us that will unfold in your time.**
- P** Through the history of this land, you have watched us grow. Help us to grow closer to you and to one another in all that we do as a nation.
- C** **Let us stand united both inside and outside of our borders, turning to you and your eye for all power and authority.**

Not for this land alone, but be God's mercies shown
 From shore to shore; and may the nations see
 That all should neighbors be, and form one family
 The wide world o'er.

Confession And Absolution

- C** **Dear Jesus, you see all that we have done to disobey you and all that we have not done that we should have done. Forgive us for letting our eyes look at things that are not in line with your will. Have mercy on us for not looking upon those who need our help and care. Turn our glances away from our material possessions we sometimes honor more than you, and draw our faces toward your blessings to us from above and your presence with us here.**

(Observe a moment of silence for self-examination.)

- P** In his mercy, God has looked upon our sinful condition and taken every stain of sin away from us forever through the death of Christ on the cross. Therefore, I announce to you the forgiveness of all of your sins and proclaim to you that God now sees you as his own beloved sons and daughters.

Psalm ResponsoryPsalm 67

- P** May God be gracious to us and bless us
C **and make his face to shine upon us,**
P that your way may be known on earth,
C **your saving power among all nations.**
P Let the peoples praise you, O God;
C **let all the peoples praise you!**
P Let the nations be glad and sing for joy,
C **for you judge the peoples with equity**
P and guide the nations upon earth.
C **Let the peoples praise you, O God;**
P let all the peoples praise you!
C **The earth has yielded its increase;**
P God, our God, shall bless us.
C **God shall bless us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!**

Prayer of the Day

Old Testament Reading.....Exodus 13:17-22

*The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them
along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light.*

Epistle Reading..... Ephesians 1:16-23

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened.

Gospel Reading Matthew 6:25-33

Will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

Children's Sermon

Hymn.....The Battle Hymn of the Republic

Mine eyes have seen the glory
Of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the vintage
Where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning
Of his terrible swift sword;
His truth is marching on.
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
His truth is marching on.

I have seen him in the watchfires
Of a hundred circling camps,
They have builded him an altar
In the evening dews and damps;
I can read his righteous sentence
By the dim and flaring lamps;
His day is marching on.
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
His truth is marching on.

He has sounded forth the trumpet
That shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men
Before his judgment seat;
Oh, be swift, my soul, to answer him;
Be jubilant, my feet;
Our God is marching on.
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
His truth is marching on.

In the beauty of the lilies
Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom
That transfigures you and me;
As he died to make men holy,
Let us die to make men free;
While God is marching on.
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
His truth is marching on.

Sermon

Offering

Prayers

P O God who guards with watchful eye, look kindly upon those who mourn loved ones who died in military service for our nation. Grant them comfort in knowing that their loved ones served our country well and dedicated themselves seriously to protecting us all. O Seer of the people,

C gaze upon us with your grace.

P O God who guards with watchful eye, look with compassion on those who lead and govern this land. Give them insight and wisdom to do what is best for the citizens of this country and of the world. Let legislators see solutions to problems and bring compromises that can work to satisfy the needs of all involved. Let just laws and decrees be honored and supported faithfully. O Seer of the people,

C gaze upon us with your grace.

P O God who guards with watchful eye, look with gladness on those who celebrate the birth of this nation and the principles upon which this country was built. Bless the

memory of our forefathers and -mothers who fought to preserve our people and helped us to stand united as one under the banner of freedom and liberty and truth. Declare among us a promise to go with us into the future as you have been with us in history.

O Seer of the people,

C gaze upon us with your grace.

P O God who guards with watchful eye, look with pride upon all those who have worked hard for you and accomplished the tasks you have given them to do. Strengthen and sustain all who serve as part of the job force within this nation. Give them satisfaction in what they do and fill them with a drive to help others in the tasks that you have given them both personally and professionally. May all who dwell among us respect and value the work that has been blessed by you. O Seer of the people,

C gaze upon us with your grace.

P O God who guards with watchful eye, look with encouragement upon the veterans among us who have served the country well in the armed forces. Fill them with fulfillment in what they have done, and surround them with those who hold their accomplishments in high esteem. Help us to hold in utmost regard all those who currently serve in positions with the military. Let their roles advance the endeavors of our country and government. O Seer of the people,

C gaze upon us with your grace.

P All this we pray through Christ our Lord, whom you sent to earth to save us when you saw us in our sin.

C Amen.

Lord's Prayer

(If Holy Communion is celebrated, it may occur here.)

Benediction

P The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you with his favor and be gracious unto you. The Lord look upon you with his watchful eye, and grant you his peace.

C Amen.

Closing Hymn.....America the Beautiful

O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain!
America! America! God shed his grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet, whose stern, impassioned stress
A thoroughfare for freedom beat across the wilderness!
America! America! God mend thine every flaw,
Confirm thy soul in self-control, thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife,
Who more than self their country loved and mercy more than life!
America! America! May God thy gold refine,
Till all success be nobleness, and ev'ry gain divine!

In the beauty of the lilies
Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom
That transfigures you and me;
As he died to make men holy,
Let us die to make men free;
While God is marching on.
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
His truth is marching on.

- The **Sermon** for Independence Day is delivered by the pastor:

¶ On July 4, 1776, delegates from the 13 colonies of what had been called the New World adopted the Declaration of Independence, written by Thomas Jefferson, and the new nation of the United States of America was born. We have been celebrating this date every year since with parades and fireworks and barbecues. This is what we celebrate this weekend.

What is truly fascinating about the Declaration of Independence is its foresight. It, in many ways, sees people as they should be seen and gazes into the future and forecasts what is needed to be said for us to maintain order and freedom in our land.

Just think of these words: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

The Declaration of Independence acknowledges that we should be seen as equal. No one is better than another. We are all the same in the sight of God. And we are all created by God. Each one of us is specially crafted by the hands of our Creator to do certain things. As citizens and as Christians, we know that the most basic things that we are created for by God are life (because Christ is risen from the dead), liberty (because we are liberated from our sins through Christ's cross), and happiness (because we have the joy of the Lord in our hearts for his great goodness to us).

When we look at where our nation has gone over its history, it is these very foundational aspects of our citizenship that have been tested and upheld and continue to be tested and upheld. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are things that we should never take for granted and things that should never be denied to others in our nation.

When we look back on where we have been as a nation, we must admit that we as a whole have discriminated against people and not always afforded them the inalienable rights imparted to them. But looking back, we, too, can see times in our history when life was restored, liberty was given back and the pursuit of happiness reigned.

As we look ahead toward the years to come in our nation, we do so with the hope that we will embrace our independence and celebrate the gifts that it affords to us. The freedom of religion allows us to sit here today, gathered together to listen to the Word of the Lord without penalty or persecution. The ability to live where we want and work where we wish and travel where we desire should never be discounted. We have been given the opportunity to vote and elect officials to our government positions, which is not something available in some other nations. Our citizenship in the United States of America (and everything that that means) is a blessing that we should always hold fast to as the future unfolds.

Another citizenship that we should hold dear is our citizenship in the kingdom of God. As we look back over the years, we see with our eyes of faith how our God has poured his bounty upon those in his kingdom, granting us abundant grace through his Son Jesus, who rose from the dead for us, and giving of us a place at the table in his heavenly banquet hall.

Now as we look forward to the days to come, we know that God continues to have his watchful eye on us, guarding us and protecting us, until that day when his Son returns to take us home to be with him, where our duties as citizens will be to praise and adore him forevermore.

Shortly after the Declaration of Independence was drafted, the Constitution was enacted. In the preamble to this document, we read: "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

The objectives named in this proclamation help us to envision how we should live in this nation and in the kingdom of God. Establishing justice means treating people fairly and according to God's design. Insuring domestic tranquility entails being at peace with one another. Providing for the common defense involves standing up for the rights and beliefs that are instilled in us all. Promoting the general welfare describes caring for the needs and well-being of every person. Securing the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity announces that we should treasure the good things we have been given and pass them down to future generations so that they may grow and flourish throughout the days to come.

Because of our forefathers and -mothers of this nation and of God's kingdom, the good news of our independence as a nation and our freedom from sin as God's people has been carried down to us. Now it is our turn to carry on those same messages to our children and our children's children. Every day is a new day to spread the word that we are blessed by this nation and by our Lord. God is always scanning the horizon and making sure that future days will be brimming with new chances to live more fully for him.