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1. Welcome and Thank You Prayers

Most Gracious God, we are thankful that you have once again allowed us to gather together as one. Help us to recognize your call, and to trust you enough to act in faith, even in the most improbable circumstances.

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for all things. We thank you for the people whose presence graces this Council and the mission and ministries of our Church. We thank you for the three parishes that are hosting us, St. Andrew's, Seguin, Church of the Resurrection, Windcrest; and St. Margaret's Church, San Antonio and for the respective co-chairs, K.T. Cockerell, Dorcas Sampson and Barbara Baugh. We thank you for the planning, attentiveness, hospitality, cookies, coffee, energy, patience and joy that these congregations have brought to this large task. Father, we ask that you continue to bless and guide them with your bountiful spirit.

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Dear Lord, we give you thanks for our friends from Mexico, especially Benito Juarez Martinez, Bishop of Southeast Mexico and his wife, Angelica and their son Eignar. We thank you also for Bishop Francisco Moreno of Northern Mexico and his wife Peri. We are blessed by their presence and friendship in Christ. Father, our bond of friendship was further strengthened through the experiences of Hurricanes Harvey, Maria and Katia as well as the Mexico City earthquake. We thank you that no catastrophe can shake us or our friendship in Christ. Send your Holy Spirit to give strength, comfort, courage and perseverance to those affected by peril all over the world.

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Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we give thanks for Bishop David Bailey of Navajoland. We thank you for this new mission partnership. Guide us in sharing the Gospel of our Christ Jesus and in building God's Kingdom.

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We give thanks for The West Texas House of Bishops; for their wise counsel and encouraging friendship. We lovingly remember our beloved Suffragan Bishop, Robert Hibbs, who provided for us an example of God's love and a life well lived. We give thanks for Bishops John MacNaughton and Bill Frey. We entrust all who are dear to us to your never-failing care and love, knowing that you are doing for them better than we can either ask or imagine.

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Almighty God, we give thanks for the continued work and presence of Bishop Jim Folts. We give thanks for the support, guidance and love of bishop Gary Lillibridge, wife Catherine. And we pray for Nancy Hibbs and all the gracious wives of all our retired bishops. Bless, guide and keep them under your precious care.

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

2. Prayers for Staff

Gracious Heavenly Father, you give us vocations that through our work we may bless our neighbors. Thank you for our Diocesan staff and their whole-hearted and joyful service. Bless and keep them as they serve our

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congregations, our bishops, and each other in your Name.

We give you thanks for Betty Chumney and her joyful obedience to be your servant in the World Missions department. Thank you for her continual reminder to be looking out to see where we can join in your work in the world.

Thank you for calling Bishop Jennifer to be our Suffragan Bishop. Strengthen her for your service, Lord, that as we may be strengthened by her and Bishop David's leadership so that may walk in the way of your Son Jesus.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

3. Prayers for Council Theme

Heavenly Father, enlighten us through our council theme for 2018, "The word is very near to us." Help us to use this lens to see more clearly the life and mission to which we are called as followers of Jesus. Your living word is powerful and active, near to us, within our hearts and upon our lips. Your word is given to us so that we, in turn, might offer it to others, rooted in our hearts and dancing off our lips. Support us in our diocesan study of all 66 books of the Bible, wherein we read the story of God, the love of all creation, and the word-made-flesh Jesus who comes to announce, bring and embody the kingdom of God, redeeming us from sin and death. Open our hearts to continue to be inspired by God's story and to be drawn together in a time when there are so many voices that seek to tear us apart.

Lord in your mercy.
Hear our prayer.

4. Prayers for Hurricane Harvey

Heavenly Father, thank you for your grace, love and mercy. Father, we make plans and life happens. Hurricane Harvey hit and our human plans were disrupted. But you Lord, were in the midst and sent your Holy Spirit to comfort the sorrowful and gather the people of your

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church to act. Thank you for allowing us to show God's love and light through acts of kindness and generosity.

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Wonderful Savior, we are a community that pulls together and displays strength in heartbreaking, troubled times. Thank you, Lord for the gift of money, supplies and volunteers which have poured in from individuals and congregations all over the country, which will aid in assisting the counties and churches that have been declared disasters. Keep us ever mindful that we must continue to serve the needs of others, remembering that whatever we do for one of the least we do for you.

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Gracious God, we thank you for the gift of Jennifer Wickham, Deputy for Disaster Recovery and her willingness to say "yes." Thank you for her tireless work and effort as she does so in the name of Christ and this diocese, facing situations of massive destruction and confusion in our communities. Father, please continue to bless and guide her. Give her strength and perseverance to do your work. Keep us all ever mindful that in troubled times, weeping may stay for the night but joy comes in the morning.

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we are thankful and eagerly await the arrival of our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry. We are grateful that he will be traveling to the Coastal Bend with our Bishops, Deputy Wickham and others to survey the damage first hand. We take comfort in knowing that our diocese is remembered and will be supported in the work still to be done. We entreat you, Heavenly Father, to keep us ever mindful that healing, rebuilding and renewal should not sound strange to those participating with Christ in the build up of his kingdom. Help us to pray, give thanks and listen for ways in which the spirit might be calling us to carry the love of Christ into these communities.

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Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

5. Iona Prayer

Ever living creator, we ask your blessing upon the candidates, instructors, sponsors, and for all others involved with the Iona initiative. As the candidates commit themselves to being instructed in what it means to be a pastor, priest and teacher in your holy catholic Church we ask for their continual strengthening by your Holy Spirit. Guide them as they stretch and grow. Let their wills be knit with your divine will so that your son is honored and glorified in all they do. Grant them patience and understanding in dealing with your children. Let their life and teachings be an example to all of your generous mercy and love. May their love and service be a reflection of your love and service to us.

Lord in your mercy.
Hear our prayer

Lord of Creation, you gave your people minds to learn to think after your thoughts and hearts to learn to love what you will. Fill our Iona seminarians with a yearning to know more of how you call leaders to pastor your people. And bless them with encouragement and a deeper love for your people as they grow in their pastoral vocation. And use all of the Iona Collaborative, seminarians, instructors, and sponsors, to expand the reach of your Word truly preached and your Sacraments faithfully administered.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

6. Prayers for Bishop's Six Initiatives

God of light and life, you give your people boldness to pursue your vision. Help us to use the six initiatives of Church Planting; Evangelism; College Missions; Small Church, Big Mission; Young Adult Leadership Formation; and Military Ministry to reach your world with the good news of your Son Jesus.

Lord, in your mercy,

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Hear our prayer.

Gracious God, you made your Son Jesus the cornerstone of the foundation of your one holy catholic and apostolic church. Lead us to build on that foundation by planting churches in the Diocese of West Texas, and give us wisdom and perseverance as we see the vastness of the mission field through your eyes.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

7. Prayers for Grace Church

Heavenly Father, you called Grace Church into being for the praise and glory of your name. And you have equipped Grace to become a parish by the power of your Holy Spirit. Bless this congregation, and may their example of persistence in Christian fellowship strengthen us all for your service.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

8. Evangelism Prayers

Holy Spirit, by your power, the Word draws near to all God's people. Enliven us with the breath that created humanity from the dust of the earth. Reconcile us with the calling that knit knee to bone in Ezekiel's valley. And make us bold with the same Pentecost wind that brought tongues of fire to your praying people. We long to proclaim - with courage and kindness - the good news of our salvation, the forgiveness of sins, and the hope of everlasting life. With our lips and our lives, may we testify to neighbors, strangers, and enemies that our citizenship is in a Kingdom whose gates are never shut, a Kingdom where our Lord's table has room and food enough for all, the Kingdom of the Risen Lord where nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

9. Budget Task Force Prayers

Gracious God, giver of time, talent, and treasure, we thank you for opportunities that call us to significant work from time to time. Today we thank you especially for the discipline of examining every aspect of our Diocesan budget and how we may best navigate the change from a voluntary ask to a mandatory assessment by the national Episcopal Church. We thank you for the work done on our behalf by Caroline Mown and John Warren; we thank you for leading Bishop Reed to invite them into this work; and we thank you for the wisdom and grace to pursue our budgetary conversations with seriousness and faith. Open our hearts to ensure that all viewpoints are heard, and enliven our minds to ensure that all viewpoints are constructive and in good faith.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Gracious God, we thank you for opportunities that call us to significant work from time to time; especially the large task of examining every aspect of our Diocesan budget. We thank you for leading Bishop Reed to Caroline Mowen, St. Luke's, San Antonio and John Warren, Good Shepherd, Corpus Christi - leaders in their congregations and in the diocese; knowledgeable about The Episcopal Church, General Convention, and budgetary things - who led the task force through its work prayerfully and respectfully seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all their deliberations.

Lord in your mercy.
Hear our prayer.

We pray that their work will continue to provide opportunities for serious study as we consider how Resolution D013 passed by General Convention in 2015 creating a mandatory assessment, moving away from a voluntary asking, will affect our Diocesan budget.

Lord in your mercy.
Hear our prayer.

We pray that as we undertake these opportunities to study that we might work to understand all viewpoints presented and always remember that we

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are called to be committed disciples and serious, faithful stewards of all that God has entrusted to us.

Lord in your mercy.
Hear out prayer.

10. Stewardship

Heavenly Father, help us to be mindful that stewardship is a financial issue and a spiritual issue and a missional issue. Remind us it is all we do, with all we have, all the time. Keep us aware that the bottom line about stewardship is not our personal household budget, or the church's budget, but it is the mission of the Church. Help us be the best possible stewards of the mission our Lord Jesus has entrusted to us. Help us seek to follow Jesus and build up the Church so that we participate with him in spreading the kingdom. Where our treasure is, there will be our heart be also. Lead us to have a faithful and grateful response to you in all creation and to practice stewardship as a spiritual discipline. You, dear Lord, can change us, enlarge us and deepen our capacity to receive grace and become more gracious. You can move us from fear to freedom, from stinginess to joy in this effort.

Lord in your mercy.
Hear our prayer.