

35th Legislature Pre-Oath of Office Ecumenical Service

Legislature USVI

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0:00:00	*music* *music* *music* *music* *music* *music* *music* *music* *music*
0:02:06	*music* *music* *music* *music* *music* *music* *music* *music* *music* *music* *music* *music* Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
0:09:32	Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
0:11:02	Thank you. My name is Lauren Abramson-Williams and I'm honored to welcome each and every one of you.
0:11:38	It is a beautiful day and we are blessed to have awakened this morning. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
0:12:42	Hello, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
0:13:14	Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. So, thank you. So, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for your patience. We all know that things don't go perfectly, but again, we're glad that you are here.
0:14:24	Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
0:14:57	Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Lift me up, hold me down, keep me close, safe and sound. Burning in a hopeless dream, hold me when you go to sleep. Keep me in the strength of your arms when you depart, keep me safe, safe and sound. Lift me up, hold me down, keep me close, safe and sound.
0:16:03	Drowning in an endless sea, take some time and stay with me. Keep me in the strength of your arms, keep me safe, safe and sound. Lift me up, hold me down, keep me close, safe and sound. Burning in a hopeless dream, hold me when you go to sleep. Keep me safe, we need life, we need love.

- 0:17:09 Bend me up in your arms, I need love, I need love, I need love. Hold me, hold me, hold me, hold me, hold me, hold me. Hold me, hold me, hold me, hold me, hold me, hold me, hold me, hold me. Hold me, hold me, hold me, hold me, hold me, hold me. Save, we need life, we need love.
- 0:17:59 Thank you so much, Selah. Now we would like to have Father Anthony Abraham to the welcoming of the 35th, incoming 35th Legislature. Good afternoon, everyone. It's an honour and a privilege on behalf of all the clergy of St. John to welcome our 25th Legislature. We welcome you. 35th, sorry, 35th.
- 0:18:36 We welcome you and we thank God for you and for your presence and that song says it all. That we are committed to lift you up in prayer and to keep you covered in Jesus' name. Amen. Just to stand just a few minutes longer as we call on Reverend John T. Morose from the St. John Methodist Church for the opening prayer. Let us go to God in prayer.
- 0:19:16 Almighty God, Almighty God of any Father, whose name is great and whose goodness is inexhaustible, you are worthy to receive adoration, worship, and thanks even at all times and from all people. For your steadfast love in Jews forever and your faithfulness to all generations. In you we live, move, and have our being. You credit us in your own image and likeness. And our hearts are certainly restless until they find the rest in you. We affirm that you are the God of the nations and of the peoples of the world. On this day that you have made, you have led us apart from the business of this world into this sacred moment. Where we gather as a territory and as a community to celebrate and to give you thanks for these, your servants, who have been elected as representatives of your people to the 35th legislature.
- 0:20:25 You are the logistic branch of our government, who have been called to work individually and collectively with the executive and judicial branches of government to establish and maintain the laws of the United States Virgin Islands as a whole. You have revealed in your sacred word that rule and authority in government are in keeping with your divine order. And we are admonished by Paul the Apostle, your servant, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanks even be made for everyone, for kings and for all who are in high office, so that they may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. For this is right and acceptable in your sight, O God, our Savior. In this sacred moment, we bring these, your servants, before your throne of grace in these priest-sharing-in activities as they pause to reflect seriously and carefully on the task ahead and to give you thanks to have chosen them as elected representatives of your people as together they will plan ways in which the various departments of the government could operate more effectively and efficiently. Keep these, your servants, ever mindful of the sacred trust with which they have been entrusted to carry out your divine plans for the common good of your people and the sub-guarding of this territory. Fill them with a desire to obey the law of love which transcends all man-made laws. Grant them the desire to serve with wisdom, honesty, moral purpose, and compassion. Give them your grace that they may promote justice, freedom, and peace for all
- 0:22:24 rather than for companions or political advantages. We pray that they may be sustained by the love and loyalty of the people and find rest and strength in you. Bless these services and all the other pre- and post-sharing-in activities, we pray. Then, to your name, Lord, will be the glory and the praise throughout the ages. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, world, reward, end. Amen.
- 0:23:09 Thank you, Reverend. You may be seated. At this time, we would like to call on the Honorable Donna Fred Gregory, President of the 34th Legislature. Good afternoon to the clergy, the soon-to-be members of the 35th Legislature, family, friends, and guests. Good afternoon.
- 0:24:05 This ecumenical service is the start of the 35th Legislature's journey to provide committed service to the people of our territory. Today's service marks the last time that I will be speaking as President of the Virgin Islands Legislature. I want to take a moment as we are here in the house of the Lord to say thank you, Heavenly Father, for sustaining me and for your mercy always.
- 0:24:45 I am reminded of a verse found in Galatians Let us not become wary in doing good. For at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. We must always, always strive to do good even when we are criticized as politicians. We must do what is good.
- 0:25:19 As we embark on this journey in the 35th Legislature, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our three new colleagues. Ms. Rae Fonseca. Ms. Maryse James. And Ms. Diane Capehart. And I also would like to bid farewell to our colleagues who will not be with us in the 35th Legislature. Senators Janelle K. Saru, Senator Kurt Veillet, and Senator Genevieve Whitaker.
- 0:26:06 My wish is God will continue to bless them and keep them. United in Pride and Hope is more than a slogan, motto. It is a creed, something that we as elected members of the Legislature should strive to fulfill each day. Whilst preparing for today's event, the official motto, and somehow I forgot it, kept surfacing in my mind, United in Pride and Hope. United in Pride and Hope. Pride is often mistaken for conceit or ego. In psychology, pride is classified as an emotion. It is a deep

consciousness of our self-worth, our merit, and our accomplishments.

0:27:08 Along with hope, it is an emotion that facilitates growth and achievement. According to psychology, pride, which is often given in a bad rap can be extremely positive and healthy. As a body, if we work in unity, collaboration, and we work collaboratively, we can achieve many great things. We demonstrated this in the 34th legislature, and I am looking forward to us building upon that and continuing the work in the 35th legislature of the Virgin Islands. We will continue to have cut and thirst of political debate as the legislature is a deliberative body. However, we must be reminded of the oath that we will take tomorrow and of the gravitas of the position we hold in our community. Proverbs 3.5-6 says, Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not onto your own understanding. In all your ways, submit to him and he will make your path straight.

0:28:30 I would like to close by offering this prayer. Dear God, give us the ability to discern as legislators. and help us to give careful consideration of legislative proposals. Help us, oh dear God, to purposefully appropriate the territory's financial resources. Help us, oh Heavenly Father, to graciously and respectfully, for us to graciously and respectfully provide oversight and hold to account the executive branch. Allow us, oh Father God, to faithfully represent and advance the greater good, the greater public good. And finally, I pray for strength and well-being of all my colleagues and the people of the United States Virgin Islands. I pray that there will be stability in our territory as we continue as legislators to be united in pride and hope.

0:29:39 God bless you all. Thank you, Senator Donna Fred Gregory. You may not be in the seat as president, but you will be in the body and so we know you'll be well-represented. Now we'd like to call and Senator-elect Ray Fonseca for the first reading. Blessings, blessings, good afternoon everyone. Jeremiah chapter 1, verse 4 through 9, a reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah.

0:30:41 Testing. A reading from the book of the prophet Jeremiah, the word of the Lord came to me, thus, before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I dedicated you a prophet to the nations I appointed you. Our Lord said, I do not know how to speak, I am too young. But the Lord answered me, say not, I am too young, to whomever I send you, you shall go, whatever I command you, you shall speak. Have no fear before them because I am with you to deliver, says the Lord. Then the Lord extended his hand and touched my mouth saying, see, I place my words in your mouth.

0:31:40 The word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Thank you. Thank you, Senator-elect Fonseca. We'd like to continue by calling on Ms. Leandra Dagu. Leandra is a member here at the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church. Leandra. Leandra. Good afternoon. Today I will be reading a poem, Do It Anyway, by Mother Teresa. People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway. If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway. If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies. Succeed anyway. If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you. Be honest and frank anyway. What you spend years building, someone can destroy overnight. Build anyway. If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous. Be happy anyway. The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow. Do good anyway. Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough. Give the world the best you've got anyway. You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

0:33:30 Thank you. Thank you, Leandra. Be kind anyway. Now, I'd like to call on Senator-elect Diane Capehart for the second scripture reading coming from 1 Corinthians 12, verse 31.

0:34:09 Blessed good afternoon, church. I bring you readings from 1 Corinthians 12, verse 31. A reading from the first letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians. Brothers and sisters, strive eagerly for the greatness spiritual gift. But I shall show you a still more excellent way. If I speak in human and angelic tongues, but do not have love, I am resounded, gong of a clashing symbol. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and knowledge, if I have all faith, so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own and if I hand my body over so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient. Love is kind. It is not jealous. It is not pompous.

0:35:18 It is not inflated. It is not rude. It does not seek its own interest. It is not quick-tempered. It does not barred over injury. It does not rejoice over wrongdoing, but rejoices the truth. It bears all things, believe all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

0:35:55 Thank you Senator-elect Diane Capehart. Next we call on Reverend Dennis Estridge from the St. John Pentecostal Church for the Gospel reading. I have to get my helper.

0:36:34 I am the Good Shepherd. The Good Shepherd gives his life for a sheep. But a Hyaline, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leave the sheep and flee. And the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The Hyaline flees because he is a Hyaline and does not care about the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd and I know my sheep and I am known by my own.

- 0:37:34 As the Father knows me, even so I am known the Father and I lay down my life for the sheep and other sheep and other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Them also I must bring and they will hear my voice and there will be one flock and one shepherd. The Word of the Lord. Thank you. Thank you, Reverend Estridge. I keep my helpers on at all times.
- 0:38:25 Moving right along, we would like to call on Pastor Vankis Isaac for the message. Sisters and brothers, good afternoon. And it's good to be in the house of the Lord. Come on, somebody shout amen in the house. Amen. It's good to be alive.
- 0:38:54 Amen. And it's good that we have been through the valley and we have been through our seasons of drought and we have been through our seasons of plenty and so we gather this evening to give God thanks not just for another year but for our very lives and as difficult as 2020 to us we know that the God we serve is the same yesterday and the same today and the same forever. A God who doesn't change. And so this evening I want to share with us from the gospel reading just a few seconds or a minute ago John chapter 10 and I want to speak to us this evening because I know that leadership is hard. Come on senators if I'm wrong shout me down. Leadership is hard and when you have to carry the burden of every citizen of this community they're looking to you for answers and solutions and sometimes you don't have a clue and sometimes you don't even know what to say but nevertheless we work for the good of our community to argue for the existence of square circles is a logical absurdity there are many things in life that just doesn't make any sense a square pizza box with a round pizza pie inside cut up in triangular sizes makes absolutely no sense doesn't make sense
- 0:41:16 and why do we press hard on the remote when we know the battery is dead or dying and why is a peer of pant when in fact it's a pant because we tend to think of two as fear but we call it a peer a pant when all it is is a pant and why do a kicker from the New England patriots make millions of dollars while teachers hail in the Virgin Islands can I get an amen make to win a few thousand dollars per year salary but but Jesus mentions something that doesn't make sense he says that he is a good shepherd and we are the sheep and we know his voice and we follow him he assumes that it is the nature of the sheep to follow the shepherd a sheep who doesn't follow the shepherd does not live long yet there are always some sheep who wander off and the shepherd has to go scrambling after them we are sheep Jesus is the shepherd best to follow and not wander off sheep who do not follow doesn't make sense let us pray almighty and loving God almighty God giver of strength father of mercies God our provider our peace
- 0:43:16 our shepherd our refuge and our rock most high God father of our Lord Jesus Christ Emmanuel friend of sinners good shepherd light of the world wonderful counselor master mediator messiah we gather in your name this afternoon to join in worship with our elected senators of the 35th legislature we act so God that even now you'll open our eyes to behold wondrous things from your law we pray even now Lord that you will pour out your spirit as you promised oh God to pour out your spirit upon all flesh oh God endow them with wisdom and knowledge and understanding oh God Lord let your word oh God flow through them let them oh God believe that you are the savior of the world and Lord let throughout these virgin islands oh God that justice will roll down like water and righteousness like an ever flowing stream open our lips oh God that the people of these virgin islands oh God will witness to your ever to our ever living Lord to fulfill your promise in us as a people so that all of us living in these islands may be truly blessed that your blessing oh God will run after us your blessing oh God will overpower us and your blessing oh God will lead us so bless what we do this evening in your name we pray Amen
- 0:45:13 it was Abraham Lincoln who said it is most cheering and encouraging for me to know that in the efforts which I have made and I'm asking for the restoration of righteousness and peace to our country I am upheld and sustained by the good wishes and prayers of God's people no one is more deeply than myself aware that without his favor our highest wisdom is but as foolishness and that our most strenuous effort would avail nothing in the shadow of God's disfavor so permit me to share once again from the reading that was read a few moments ago Jesus said I am the good shepherd the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep the hired hand who is not the shepherd does not own the sheep sees the wolf coming and leave the sheep and run away and the wolf snatches them and scatters them the hired hand who run away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep I am the good shepherd I know my own and my own know me just as the father knows me and I know the father and I lay down my life for the sheep I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold I must bring them in also and they
- 0:47:04 will listen to my voice and there will be one flock and one shepherd for this reason the father loves me because I lay down my life in order to take it up again and so there are a few things I want to share from the text this evening in verses 11 to 13 of the text Jesus defines for us the good shepherd in these verses we see Jesus the good shepherd the true savior of the world we see some hired hands we see some false teachers we see some irresponsible leaders and what is it that Jesus is saying to us saints of God tonight he's saying that he's a good shepherd the true savior of the world and because he gave and sacrificed his life for the sheep he is the good shepherd the savior of the world he's not a hired hand or employed shepherd Jesus is the shepherd by birth he was born to be shepherd with all of the rights and privileges of shepherd we are his sheep and the people of his pasture so senators this evening I really do not want you to be like the

hired shepherd just a man or woman passing through and looking for his salary now I'm going to mash a little corn tonight right so you better have a shoe stretcher to stretch your shoe you were elected to put the needs of the people first and if you are gloomily shout amen senators so if nobody else here shout amen let the senators shout amen tonight you were elected to put the needs

0:49:09 of the people first and so I don't want it to be false unfaithful and irresponsible shepherds the people across this territory voted overwhelmingly for you and this must be a mark of trust that they have in you this must not be a job or a profession it must not be about money and comfort it must not be about acceptance and recognition and position and prestige authority and esteem I do not want you my friends to lose your sense of responsibility not seek to benefit yourself but seek to benefit all the people of these virgin islands here verse 13 of the text again the hired hand runs away because the hired hand does not care for the sheep I know it's going to be hard and sometimes you may have to work up to midnight but do not seek to save yourself for the next election you see one of good things around here you know friends unlike the rest of the british caribbean they don't know when the next election is got the prime minister carry the thing in his pocket but we know in november next year god's willing his election come on senators give me the amen you mean I have to beg for it give me the amen I don't need to beg for it

0:51:00 your security and your position at the expense of the people remember friends that in real life with sheep you have dogs and worms waiting to ravage and eat the sheep because the wolf here in our text could mean abuse of power or anything that seeks to undermine and destroy this community so I want you to be caring do not wait until election time to show up make time for the people get involved and show the people that you care that you concern about their welfare let me quote Theodore Roosevelt for us this evening people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care the second thing from our text proof that Jesus is a good shepherd shepherd it was a Chinese philosopher who said go to the people live with them learn from them start with what they know build with what they have but with the best leaders when the work is done

0:52:49 and the task accomplished the people will say we have done this ourselves let that be said about you senators whatever project it is in any one of the islands when it is done let the people feel like we did it so give them a little input don't say St. Thomas and make decision for St. John come to St. John sit down with the people come on give me the amen senators sit down with them so that when it is done they could say we have done this ourselves but how do we know that Jesus is a good shepherd Jesus knows his sheep and they know him here we are speaking of an intimate relationship between Jesus and his sheep he knows them their lives their beings their all he knows them by name individually and personally he knows them in their joy and blessing he knows them in all their trials and solos he knows them in all their wanderings and stumbling he knows them in all their need and lack so friends as you prepare to embark upon this journey keep your mind on the things that would benefit the people of these islands like Jesus his mind is always on the sheep and guess what the sheep know him they believe him

0:54:37 and they trust him you see there is too much distrust among us as a people and so when trust is broken everything is broken let's seek to rebuild that trust that trust and confidence love and care know the islands I am not telling you to know every voter tonight because that may not be possible you know it may not be possible but certainly you can know the needs of each island become familiar with the businesses here in St. John the people and the institutions and the restaurants become with all four islands so don't say to me that if I invite you to St. John the coral bay is too far go to skinny legs and buy a hamburger so if people who come from far and white go to skinny legs we live here in the territory right go to Mandel and soil pond and see what's happening out there because one of our problems in this territory we live in the virgin islands but we do not know the virgin islands establish bonds and fellowship build bridges and relationships because here Jesus I have other sheep that

0:56:28 do not belong to this fold I must bring them also and they will listen to my voice so there will be one flock and one shepherd I long for the day when we will be one virgin islands but we behave as we are free virgin islands and so my good friend think outside the box be global and what now right think global and act local be responsible the word must mean the word must in our text mean necessity or constraint Jesus is a good shepherd he enlarges the flock work with each other for the common good mind your disagreement is good you know but find common ground and consensus work for the common good of all because all who call these islands home one shepherd one flock work for the benefit of the people or health facilities or schools jobs affordable housing whether you go to Atlanta to North Carolina to New York Washington wherever you go Virgin Islands are telling you I cannot come back home because housing too expensive give me the amen senators so we need to work on programs and policies and activities

0:58:25 that certainly would improve the economic well being and quality of life for all who call these islands home most of all friends remember that we are all accountable to God the third thing I want us to see from the text is Jesus sacrificial death it was Nelson Mandela who said and I quote I have always admired men and women who use their talents to serve the

community and who are highly respected and admired for their effort and sacrifices even though they held no office whatsoever in government or society you are holding the offices you are the legislative branch the people who make the policy and sometimes I quiz myself I wonder where the power lies if the legislator at government house because I know you guys if the governor vetoed your bill you could override it right so you have the power right and you have the person so the governor sometimes behave like he's a big man but when the waters get you guys override the veto right and the thing happened right oh come on shout amen senators because a shepherd could do no greater good than give his life for his sheep senators of the 35th legislature I know you have not taken

1:00:17 your oath yet but I'm going to be presumptuous this evening and I'm going to prophesy this evening right that this is the Lord's willing tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock right that you will take that oath this is your moment to do great good for our community this is your hour and in the words of Winston Churchill let this be your finest hour and let this be the finest hour of these virgin islands this is your season this is your stage embrace the moment and do all you can to better the lives of all the people who call these virgin islands home always bear in mind that it's a people it's all about people and so this let this at the end of this 35th legislature let the people across this territory say this is our finest hour when the 35th legislature work for the good of all the people and so I want to leave you this evening with blessings from Numbers chapter 6 verses 24 to 26 the Lord bless you and keep you the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace God

1:01:58 bless you senators and I pray that God will fill you with wisdom and knowledge and understanding be assured of our continued prayers for you as you grapple with the issues of the territory we will hold you up in our prayers God bless you thank you pastor isaac and just so you know we have a beautiful office up there that any of the 15 senators can come to meet with the constituents but of course constituents you also have to reach out and hold your elected leaders accountable so if you can't reach them call me I'll make sure that I get them for you and of course we have the senator at large who has an office there at all times so no worries there now we'd like to continue the program and we would like to ask you the congregation to join in and sing lift every voice and sing you can find it on page 772 in hymnals and Mr. Ronnelly will be playing for us Ronnelly Jr.

1:03:54 the heart of the ring of the great world team and hope to rejoice and love our heart of his name is told and in his heart
God of the holy sea sing our song full of the hope of the presence of God sing our song full of the hope of the presence of
God the stream will rise and sing to the heart who may be done let us fall down till the great will be his one so be the one
we show in church in love but in the desert and hope of the hope of the rest that can be the same we have found the way
we live up to the place for each

of the side we have we have come we have come to live on the water we have come to the water to the water
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water The God where He made it, blessed heart.

1:07:29 Strongly, the pride of the world, we forgive. Shall all be free, shall we forever stand? To do a great, to do a great, to do a great. Ronald Jr. is also a St. Johnian, he is, happens to be here on vacation, he's also studying abroad.

1:08:27 Ronnie, where are you studying again, I'm sorry? Washington D.C., George Mason University. George Mason University in Washington D.C. And we will continue with unity prayers. We will have Pastor Elva Richard Goodwin for the MS and Bethany Meravine Church as she prays for our local and national leaders. And we will follow with Pastor David Obando of the Iglesia de Dios EDLM Church, who will pray for our children and community. Let us pray.

1:09:06 Gracious and loving God, we, your children, gather this afternoon there, God, to ask your blessing on this, the 35th legislature of the Virgin Islands. To ask their God that as you have brought them from various backgrounds into the house where they will take the oath tomorrow and organize themselves. We pray their God for unity. Father God, I am sure they all have their own special agendas. Agendas for which they believe their constituents sent them. But Lord, even though they may have been elected from St. Thomas, St. Croix, and from all three islands, St. Thomas and John and our Senator at large, the three islands, they're gone.

1:10:08 They're only in this position, they're gone because of you. And so God, as you pray that your son Jesus pray that we want us to be one as he and his father is one. Lord, make them be one. Let them realize that their greater good, their purpose is the interest of the U.S. Virgin Islands or the Virgin Islands of the United States. It is not about self. Help them to come together, their God, with the differences of opinion.

- 1:10:46 To understand that we are all different people. But we have to agree to disagree for the good of the people. Bring them together, their God, with that understanding. And Lord, even though we may be in the Virgin Islands of the United States, we know that we have to deal with other persons, their God. We have to deal with the leaders of the government of the United States of America for which we are under. And Lord, again, there will be differences of opinion, but help us to come together for the best interest of the people. Help us, their God, as we are located in this, the Caribbean, that we have to work together with other leaders, their God, within the Caribbean.
- 1:11:37 Father God, we are different. Different backgrounds, culture differently, but all created by you. So, in our differences, their God, make us one. Make us united, their God, to stand together as your people. Make us united, their God, to do your will. Make us united, their God, to fulfill the purpose for which we have been elected. In your name, precious God, we give thanks and praise. Amen. Amen.
- 1:12:16 Amen. Good afternoon. Good afternoon. I just want to greet all the senators and leaders that are here. And I want us to come together in agreement to pray on behalf of our children and our community. All right? And let us pray. Lord, I thank you, O God, on this day.
- 1:12:50 I thank you, O God, for this opportunity and this privilege, O God, to be able to pray on behalf of our community and to pray on behalf, Lord, of our children, O God. Lord, we come before you, O God, and we pray for unity within our community, O God. Lord, but I understand and we know, Lord, Lord, that, Lord, the health of our community is a reflection of the health of the homes and the families that compose our community, O God. Lord, so before the community, we pray, Lord, first and foremost, O God, Lord, for our families and the homes that compose, O God, and that build our community, O God. Lord, and we pray for healing in our homes, O God. Lord, because if there is division in our community, it's because there is division in our families and the homes, O God, that make up our community, O God. Lord, and there's no way we can get better communities, O God. Lord, if we don't have, O God, healthy and strong families, O God. Lord, if we don't have healthy and strong, O God, homes, O God. Lord, so we pray at this time, O God, Lord, for healing in our homes and the families, O God, in them, O God. Lord, we pray, O God, for there to be reconciliation, O God. Lord, even every home that is represented here, O God, this afternoon, O God. Lord, we pray for your hands, O God, your healing hands, O God, to touch, O God, every member of every family, O God. Lord, to bring unity, O God, in our homes and in our families, O God. Lord, I pray for healing. Lord, I pray that there would be forgiveness, O God, in our homes and our families, O God. Lord, so that in our communities, O God, Lord, we are going to have children, O God. Lord, that are going to be able to love one another, O God. Lord, instead of being, O God, Lord, reflecting, O God, the division, O God. Lord, and the strife, Lord, that exists, O God, among friends and families, O God. Lord, we pray, O God, for your healing hands, O God. Lord, to touch every home, O God. Bring reconciliation, bring forgiveness, O God. Lord, heal every wounded heart, O God. Lord, we need, O God, your divine touch. Lord, we need your divine intervention, Lord. And we pray, O God, for a healthy community, O God. Lord, we don't seek, O God, and pray, Lord, for a rich community. Lord, because we can have all the riches of the world, but if we have love, O God, we are nothing, O God.
- 1:15:36 Lord, we pray first and foremost, O God, for there to be love, O God. Lord, we don't know what 2013 is going to bring, O God. Lord, but I pray, O God, that in midst of calamities and adversity, O God, Lord, we can be one people, O God. Lord, that flag, O God, Lord, will not divide us, O God. Lord, that political party will not divide us, O God. Lord, I pray, O God, that in midst of calamity and adversity, O God, Lord, we can seek for the betterment, O God, and for the well-being of one and another, O God. Lord, I pray, O God, that you help us, O God. Lord, be a community who will seek after the common well-being. Lord, a common unity, a common goal, O God. Lord, I thank you, O God. Lord, and I pray for, Lord, this legislature and this, Lord, new administration, O God. Lord, to be, O God, a blessing to the Virgin Islands, O God. Lord, and I pray, O God, for a community, O God.
- 1:16:41 Lord, not only, O God, that can identify problems, O God, and what is wrong and what needs to fix. Lord, but a community, O God, who will come together, Lord, to even bring forth solution to the problems that, Lord, that we face, O God. Lord, a people who will not only point out what is wrong, O God. Lord, and what needs to be fixed, O God, but is capable and willing, Lord, to be part of the solution, O God. Lord, and we pray for our children, O God. Lord, our children, O God, needs direction, O God. Our young people need direction, O God. Lord, and I don't think they need more government programs, O God. Lord, I think they need, Lord, fathers, O God. Mothers, O God, who will be able to stand and raise, O God, and guide. Lord, and we pray for that, O God. Lord, we pray for healing in our homes, O God. Lord, so that our children, O God, Lord, can have guidance, O God. Lord, I thank you, O God, and we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.
- 1:17:55 Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you, Pastor Elva Richards Goodwin and Pastor David Obando. Next, we'll have a musical selection on pan by the talented, Rana Lee, Jr. I'd like to also mention, I graduated from . Thank you. I

[illegible]

People named in this transcript

SUSPECTED, and a finding aid only. Names were matched by machine against the spellings used across all 426 of our transcripts, and the title is the one used in the room. Being named here is NOT evidence that a person attended or spoke - only that the name was said. Speech recognition mishears names, so a spelling may be wrong even where no alternative is offered.

2x **Senator Genevieve R. Whitaker**
heard in this transcript as: Genevieve Whitaker

2x **Senator Kurt Veilley**
heard in this transcript as: Kurt Veillet

1x **Senator Donna A. Frett-Gregory**
heard in this transcript as: Donna Fred Gregory

1x **Senator Donna Frett-Gregory**
heard in this transcript as: Donna A. Frett-Gregory