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Hackensack's Mount Olive Baptist Church To Open House Of Representatives With Prayer As Guest Chaplain

Washington, DC -- Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today brought Reverend Gregory Jackson of Hackensack's Mount Olive Baptist Church to the U.S. House of Representatives to serve as guest chaplain and open the day's proceedings with a prayer. Each Member of Congress has the opportunity to invite a clergy member from his or her Congressional District to serve as guest chaplain of the House for a day.

"I was delighted to bring my dear friend, Reverend Gregory Jackson, to Washington to serve as guest chaplain for the U.S. House of Representatives," Rothman said. "Reverend Jackson is a man of great wisdom, warmth, and compassion who serves as an inspiration to those in his church and his community at large. I was very pleased that this great man of faith was able to come to the House floor and deliver such a thoughtful and important invocation that clearly uplifted the Congress and made the people of New Jersey's Ninth Congressional District very proud."

The following is the text of the speech Reverend Jackson delivered on the House floor:

"Fix our steps, O Lord, that we stagger not at the uneven motions of the world. Steady our fainting hearts and our trembling hands as we journey ever forward into an unknown future.

"As we gather in these hallowed halls -- halls hallowed by the sacrifices of slaves and slave owners; halls hallowed by men and women who gave their lives for our freedom; halls hallowed by the blood, sweat, and tears of those who built our great republic, hear our prayer.

"Today we ask that you would keep our minds focused upon righteousness. Keep our hearts in tune with your spirit. Keep our eyes open to the pain and suffering of your people, not only in our nation, but around the world.

“We thank you, dear God, for the opportunity that is ours. Help us to use this wonderful privilege that you have given unto us: to serve the poor, to encourage the depressed, and to make America everything she claims to be.

“In your name we pray, Amen.”

After Reverend Jackson’s speech and the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, Rothman delivered the following remarks introducing and welcoming Reverend Jackson to the U.S. House of Representatives:

“Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have the great privilege of representing the District that is the home to Reverend Gregory Jerome Jackson “the wonderful man who just gave the invocation. Reverend Greg Jackson is a man of great ability, integrity, and compassion, who has committed his life to helping others and in strengthening the bonds of family and community.

“He started his life the grandson of sharecroppers in South Carolina. He made his way at the age of 16, no doubt with divine guidance, to the promised land of New Jersey where he went on to graduate from St. Peter’s College and the Colgate Rochester Divinity School. He even served two years here as an intern to Congressman Cornelius Gallagher.

“Whether it is in his role as pastor of the Mount Olive Baptist Church in Hackensack, New Jersey, whose membership has risen with 1,000 new members under his leadership since 1984, or as an executive board member of the Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Convention, which seeks to prevent HIV/AIDS and provide comfort and counsel to those who have been affected by the disease in Africa and the Caribbean, or as a leader of countless other civic and community organizations, or as the loving husband of Barbara and father of Michael and Monique, Reverend Greg Jackson has used his unique gifts as a pastor and community leader to improve the lives of those around him.

“Mr. Speaker, everyone who has ever met Greg Jackson knows that he is a true humanist -- a man of great warmth, conviction, and character, who has literally improved the lives of tens of thousands of my constituents over his nearly twenty year career at Mount Olive, and who has traveled the world saving lives and bringing his deep faith in service to millions more.

“I am delighted and proud to be the Congressman for my dear friend, the Honorable Reverend Gregory Jerome Jackson, and so proud, Mr. Speaker, that this institution saw fit to allow him to make the invocation this morning. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.”

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[Go back](#)

