

# The City Church, New York

The Prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession – Sunday July 2, 2006

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The first English Bible printed in America was published in Boston on this day in 1752.

Let us pray.

Eternal Father and Author of Life, Holy Spirit of Truth and Blessed Savior of the world:

You create us in Your image and imbed the world with telltale signs of Your Presence. And yet, for all of this, we'd be at a loss to know the fuller story of Your grace and peace but for Your words of truth, given to us in our own language. You are unlike all the idols that have no word to speak and all the idols that speak only what their inventors mumble through them. But You are the real God who speaks truth in love, and You have entrusted Your words of truth and love to our hearing for our doing. And so, on this anniversary of the English scriptures published on these shores, we express our gratitude – for the Bible itself and for all who risked life and limb to pass it on to us. May we never fail to read these precious words of Yours and, as the Psalmist said, may we hide them within our hearts, that we might do Your will and not sin against You and one another.

On this weekend, when our nation is observing another birthday, we thank You for the freedoms we've been given in this land. May we not forget the responsibilities that go with them. May we always use these freedoms to extend, and never to restrict, the freedom of our neighbors – and thus exercise the whole law and the prophets. Help us to use our freedoms within the constraints of love and Your will for our lives. We're free to read and study Your holy word. May we exercise this freedom. We're free to speak up for You and the blessed gospel of our Savior. May we exercise this freedom. We're free to speak out on behalf of the oppressed. May we exercise this freedom. We're free to be the servants of Jesus Christ and to serve one another. May we exercise these freedoms. And Lord, if we're ever attacked or restricted or chastised for exercising these freedoms, remind us that they are ours as unalienable rights by Your grace and peace.

Bless us through the remainder of this hour that we might worship in spirit and in truth.

And now we add to our words of praise and petition the very words we were graciously taught to pray to You, saying:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.