

Beaufort Birthday Prayer

January 17, 2011

By Bishop Alden Hathaway

Father God, Creator of heaven and earth,
Maker of sea and sky and river deep,
Of Islands fair and gold marsh creeks.
We gather here because we love this land.

Sovereign Lord over all peoples and nations,
Author of Freedom and Prince of Peace
Gathered we have come from far and near;
From Spain and France and England,
Africans in Chains, Original Yemassee;
From north and south, east and west;
Those who came early and those of us who came late.
We are together here today because
We are Beaufort.

Oh God our help in ages past,
The unfolding years now Three Hundred Since
John (Tuscarora Jack) Barnwell
The Charter of Beaufort Town
Of wars and conquest, Of Gray and Blue
Robert Smalls and Reconstruction.

Of building and burning, Of wealth and want,
Rich harvests of indigo and cotton and rice;
Storms and blight, Wind and flood.
For Dr. King his dream shaped at Penn,
Brantley Harvey and Harriet Keyserling
All those through whom our currant public and political life has been formed.

Our skies streaked by Freedom's Sound,
Drill Instructor's sharp commands,
Pat Conroy to tell the stories that describe our manners and our ways.
For Church towers and steeple bells
And Synagogue Shabbat,
The Faith of our fathers living still

Oh Lord of light and Palm and Moon,
Bay Street shops and restaurant chatter,
Gullah Grub and Foolish Frog,
Boating, Fishing and Water Joys,
Bicycle races around the streets,
Ghost Tours under Mossy Oaks.

Parades to mark the great events of our common American life.
Band concerts by river's Edge,
And parking meters that cause us grief,
And lighted Christmas tree
To honor thee, O Lord of life.
It's our town dear God - we love it so.

Gracious Lord, the Good Shepherd, of abiding good care,
Bless Our Mayor
And Council And Fire and Police,
Those who keep our accounts and haul our trash,
Who make their business to satisfy our wants and service our needs.
And sort out our issues and worldly disputes
By justice and by right;

Who teach our kids - And inspire our youth,
Of physicians and Surgeons and Nurses - Who care for the sick,
Who comfort the lonely, the troubled, the weak;
The dying
And who bury our dead

And Those who would tell of the city not made with hands,
The City of God
Which by Hope and by faith, would make of us a people and a town
Of truly gracious welcome and love and respect
For both neighbor and stranger ever and always good keepers we shall be.

And so dear Lord, abide with us we do pray
As together in joy we celebrate
Our 300th Birthday.
That as you have been guiding, and chiding, and inspiring our past.
So in thanksgiving and hope we may look to the future.
Content and at peace that You
Bless, Preserve and Keep Beaufort Town.

Oh God of our Fathers by whose almighty hand
Continue to lead forth in beauty
All this Blessed Land.

Amen