

Solemnly Swear: America Marks Oath With Prayer

Wednesday marks a historic day in American history—the anniversary of the first time an American president took the oath of office.

This year's anniversary is bringing big names in politics and the evangelical community together in a national celebration and prayer event from coast to coast.

Since our founding in 1776, the United States has only known 44 presidents, from George Washington to Barack Obama.

Arguably, few have had a more lasting impact than the country's first: a Revolutionary War hero who served as commander in chief of the Continental Army and a man who's revered as the father of the nation.

All over the nation's capital, Washington's legacy is apparent in monuments and statues. The city is even his namesake.

But for the organizer of an upcoming event honoring the country's first president, Washington was more than a Founding Father. He set many precedents for the new nation, none more important, he says, than a public profession of faith in a divine God.

"After being sworn in there at Federal Hall, he placed his hand on an open Bible and he pledged an oath before God and the nation to uphold the Constitution," pastor Dan Cummins, with Bridlewood Church in Texas, said.

"George Washington, immediately after he took the oath of office under the Constitution, leaned down, picked up his Bible, and kissed the Bible. From there he invited his vice president, his cabinet, to follow him," Rep. Michele Bachmann,

R-Minn., said.

"They walked down the street to St. Paul's Chapel where they had divine services. And there in that service America was dedicated to God," Cummins said.

This year marks the 225th anniversary of Washington's first inauguration, which will be commemorated by a prayer event in the U.S. Capitol building. The event is called "Washington, A Man of Prayer."

Bachmann is this year's congressional host.

"It's an overlooked day, but we are not going to overlook it," she said. "This is a seminal moment and we as members of Congress are inviting the nation to come back and remember this very great man—more importantly, what he did. He dedicated our nation to the glory of God."

Now in its third year, the prayer event brings together members of the House and Senate to pray for the nation and its leaders.

CBN News spoke with Cummins, the event's founder, at Washington's historic Mt. Vernon home.

"It is our hopes and desires that having this event, 'Washington, A Man of Prayer,' will bring attention to the fact that not only was our nation founded on the principles of God's word, but it was also a moment for all men around the world," Cummins said. "Because ... for the last 225 years men from all nations, all creeds, all colors have desired to come to America where they can be free."

The event, emceed by former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, is only for members of Congress. But this year, it will be beamed into homes and churches on the Daystar Television Network.

It will also be available on a live webcast, inviting Americans to join in with the prayers of their leaders for

America to return to its Christian heritage.

"Seven hundred million homes have access to their viewing, and we're trusting God that He will allow the world will see—members of the Senate, members of the House, noted Christian leaders acknowledge George Washington as a man of faith, a man of prayer," Cummins said.

Now, 225 years after his first inauguration, Washington is remembered much like he was eulogized by Henry Lee: First in war. First in peace. First in the hearts of his countrymen.