



## Invocation Policy

### **Policy Information**

Policy Number:	23
Adoption Date:	2/17/26
Effective Date:	2/17/26
Lead Department:	City Manager

### **Revision/Amendment History**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b> (Adopted / Amended / Rescinded)	<b>Resolution # / Approval</b>	<b>Notes</b>
2/17/26	Adopted	2026-	—

# City of Canyon Lake

## Invocation Policy

### 1. Intent and Purpose.

The City of Canyon Lake recognizes the long-standing democratic tradition of legislative bodies solemnizing through invocations. This policy ensures that invocations before City of Canyon Lake events are conducted in a manner consistent with constitutional principles of freedom of religion and non-establishment of religion while providing an opportunity for voluntary participation.

### 2. Policy Statement.

The City Council may open its meetings with an invocation for the purpose of acknowledging traditions, promoting solemnity, and inviting reflection. Invocations shall be inclusive, voluntary, and respectful of the diversity of beliefs represented within the City of Canyon Lake.

### 3. Scope and Applicability.

This policy applies to all meetings of the City Council and, where applicable, to meetings of any board, committee, or commission of the City of Canyon Lake.

### 4. Invocation Guidelines.

A. Voluntary Participation. Participation in or attendance for the invocation shall be completely voluntary. No person shall be required to participate, and no official action or decision shall be influenced by an individual's participation, presence, or absence. No invitational speaker shall receive compensation for his or her service.

B. Non-Denominational and Inclusive. Invocations should not proselytize, disparage any faith, or advance any particular religion. They should strive to be inclusive and respectful of the community's diversity, including individuals of different faiths and those with no religious affiliation.

#### C. Speaker Eligibility.

1. City Staff may compile a list of religious leaders, spiritual representatives, and community members that are located within or serve the City of Canyon Lake.

2. Any adult representative of an established religious congregation, spiritual organization, or secular/non-religious group located within the City of Canyon Lake may request to provide an invocation.

3. Individuals shall be scheduled in a manner that provides for fairness and diversity.

4. City Staff will invite individuals through fair and neutral criteria.
5. City Staff may also request participation from chaplains who serve the City of Canyon Lake Police and/or Fire Department or any nearby military facilities.
6. Any Council Member or City employee may voluntarily provide an invocation.

D. Content of Invocations.

1. The content of the invocation shall be left to the discretion of the speaker, within the boundaries of this policy.
2. The invocation may include a request for reflection, guidance, peace, unity, or solemnity.
3. The City Council shall not review or approve the content of any invocation.

E. No Endorsement. The invocation is not intended to serve as an endorsement or disapproval of any religion, belief, or non-belief by the City of Canyon Lake, its City Council, or staff.

**5. Procedures.**

A. Scheduling Speakers.

1. City Staff shall make reasonable efforts to contact and schedule individuals or groups willing to provide an invocation.
2. City Staff will maintain a record of scheduled and past speakers.

B. Time for Invocation.

1. The invocation shall take place prior to the official start of the City Council meeting.
2. Speakers shall limit their invocation to no more than 2 minutes.

C. Opt-Out Option. Council Members, staff, or attendees may choose whether to participate or step out during the invocation without consequence or stigma.

D. Notification. Prior to each City Council meeting, the meeting agenda shall include notice of the invocation and a statement clarifying the voluntary nature of participation.

**6. Legal Compliance.**

This policy shall be implemented in compliance with applicable federal and state law, including but not limited to the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment and relevant case law.

**7. Adoption and Review.**

This policy shall be adopted by the City Council and reviewed periodically to ensure continued compliance with legal standards and community needs.