

A Service of Prayer on the Anniversary of September 11

Opening Sentences: Psalm 46:1-3, 7

God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.

Lord of hosts, be with us still.

Therefore, we shall not fear
though the earth gives way,
though the mountains be hurled into the sea;
though its waters rage and foam,
though the mountains tremble at its tumult.

Lord of hosts, be with us still.

Welcome

Prayer of the Day

Strong God of love:
your Son Jesus told us
that in this world we will endure tribulation.
If we should suffer for righteousness' sake,
save us from self-righteousness.
Give us grace to pray for enemies,
and to forgive them,
even as you have forgiven us;
through Jesus Christ,
who was crucified but is risen,
whom we praise forever.
Amen.

Hymn: "Our God, Our Help in Ages Past" (GTG 687, PH 210)

Scripture: Psalm 32:1-7

Happy are those whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.
Happy are those to whom the Lord imputes no iniquity,
and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

While I kept silence, my body wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.
Then I acknowledged my sin to you,
and I did not hide my iniquity;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,"
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Therefore let all who are faithful
offer prayer to you;
at a time of distress, the rush of mighty waters
shall not reach them.
You are a hiding place for me;
you preserve me from trouble;
you surround me with glad cries of deliverance.

Call to Confession

Confession

**Merciful God,
in your gracious presence
we confess our sin and the sin of this world.
Although Christ is among us as our peace,
we are a people divided against each other
in our pursuits of power, control, and security.
The fears and jealousies that we harbor
set neighbor against neighbor
and nation against nation.
We abuse your good gifts of imagination and freedom,
of intellect and reason,
and have turned them into bonds of oppression.
Lord, have mercy upon us;
heal and forgive us.
Set us free to serve you in the world
as agents of your reconciling love in Jesus Christ,
in whose name we pray. Amen.**

Declaration of Forgiveness

Matthew 11:28-30

“Come to me, all you that are weary
and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me;
for I am gentle and humble in heart,
and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

Thanks be to God.

Prayers of Remembrance

O Lord of compassion,
 who wept at the tomb of Lazarus,
 who mourned over the city of Jerusalem,
 who stretched out your hands to embrace the suffering of the world
 on the hard wood of the cross,
Draw near to us now and hear our prayers
as we remember all those who lost their lives
in the tragedy of September 11.

We remember the individuals who died—
 office workers, firefighters,
 police officers, airline passengers,
 flight crews.
 We remember them all before you now by name . . . (100 people
simultaneously read lists of about 30 names each)

Tolling of the bell

We remember also those who, driven by darkened zeal,
committed these awful deeds.
Mindful of your judgment and your mercy,
We name before you . . . (name the perpetrators)

Tolling of the bell

We remember the families and friends of the victims
 who continue to mourn the loss of parents, children, husbands, wives,
 companions.
O Christ, the great healer,
 as you comforted Mary and Martha in their time of sorrow,
 so encircle grieving families with your loving care.

We remember the Presbyterian churches
 who lost faithful members in the violence.
 We remember . . . (read names of churches)
O God of hope,
 give them assurance that as the one body of Christ,
 we may look forward to being united with them
 in the glory of Christ's resurrection.

We remember the cities of New York and Washington DC,
 which suffered particular losses on September 11.
Lord Jesus our Savior,
 as you longed to comfort Jerusalem,
 so bring comfort to the neighborhoods and communities

still recovering from the devastation of plane crashes and collapsed buildings.

Surround those devastated by tragedy with a growing sense of your presence,
and lead them again to hope.

We remember all the nations who lost citizens in the tragedy of September 11.

We remember . . . (list countries affected)

God of all nations,
watch over every country of the earth,
comfort them in their distress,
and draw us together into your one kingdom that cannot be shaken.

Almighty God, we remember before you
all of the people and nations—
those who have lived among us and those who lived far away—
who have directed our steps in the way,
opened our eyes to the truth,
inspired our hearts by their witness,
and strengthened our wills by their devotion.

We honor them in their death,
and pray that we may one day dwell with them
in the joy of your eternal kingdom. **Amen.**

Hymn 275: “God of Our Life”

Scripture: Isaiah 43:1b-3a and I Peter 5:6-7

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.
For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.
1 Peter 5:6-7

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

During the periods of silence, feel free to speak a name or a place of particular concern.

To you, O Lord, I lift my soul.
O God, in you I trust.

Dear people of God,
God sent Jesus into the world,
not to condemn the world,
but that the world through him might be saved,
that all who believe in him
might be delivered from the power of sin and death
and become heirs with him of eternal life.

Let us pray for all nations and peoples of the earth,
and for those in authority among them:
for the President of the United States,
and the Congress and Supreme Court,
for the members and representatives of the United Nations,
for leaders of the nations,
for all who serve the common good,
that by God's help
they may seek justice and truth,
and live in peace and concord.

Silence.

**There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.**

Almighty God,
kindle, we pray, in every heart
the true love of peace,
and guide with your wisdom
those who take counsel for the nations of the earth,
that justice and peace may increase,
until the earth is filled
with the knowledge of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us pray for all who suffer
and are afflicted in body or in soul:
for the hungry and destitute,
for those in doubt and despair,
for the sorrowful and bereaved,
for prisoners and captives
and those in mortal danger,
that God will comfort and relieve them,
and grant them the knowledge of God's love,
and stir up in us the will and patience

to minister to their needs.
Within our hearts we name
those known to us personally...
those in the Middle East...
those in Pacific regions...
those in South America...
those in Africa...
those in Europe...
those in Asia...
those in North America...

Silence.

**There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.**

Gracious God,
the comfort of all who sorrow,
the strength of all who suffer,
hear the cry of those in grief, misery, and need.
In their distress show them your mercy,
and give us, we pray, the strength to serve them,
for the sake of him who suffered for us,
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us commit ourselves to God,
and pray for the grace of a holy life,
that with all who have departed this life
and have died in the peace of Christ,
and those whose faith is known to God alone,
we may be accounted worthy
to enter into the fullness of the joy of our Lord,
and receive the crown of life in the day of resurrection.

Silence.

**There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.**

Eternal God of unchanging power and light,
look with mercy on your people everywhere.
Bring to completion your saving work,
so that the whole world may see
the fallen lifted up,
the old made new,

and all things brought to perfection
by him through whom all things were made,
our Lord Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, forever and ever.
Amen.

Scripture: Romans 8:35-39

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hymn 276: “Great is Thy Faithfulness” (GTG 39, PH 276)

Scripture: Psalm 23 (KJV)

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
 he leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
 he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
 I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
 thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
 thou anointest my head with oil;
 my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:
 and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Hymn: “O God of Every Nation” (GTG 756, PH 289)

Benediction

The Peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

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