

Liturgical Elements from 9/11 Service of Testimony and Reflection

Prayers of Remembrance, Comfort and Hope (Adapted from PC(USA) 10th Anniversary Resources- <https://www.pcusa.org/news/2011/8/11/presbyterians-compose-worship-resources-911/>)

Leader: Remembrance: God of the years, we call to you this day. We remember 9/11; what we lost, what we gave, and how we are changed. We hold sacred those who died and those who mourn; and those who came from near and far to give aid and comfort.

It was on the heels of Ramadan, and from the rubble a magnificent steel cross met the forlorn sound of the Rosh Hashana shofar. One shared humanity looked to You, O God. And we look to you still.

Some of us remember what was lost to us that day: our sense of security, our peace, our innocence, our belief that we were safely buffered from random violence. Today we keep company with a generation that never knew such a time. From fallen towers to pandemic, from civil war to a planet in distress, we cry out to you for mercy.

All: We remember the innocents who died in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania, and those who guard the memory of loved ones lost. And we remember the innocence in each of us that also perished.

Leader: Comfort- God of mercy, even in our worst moments your loving kindness surrounds us. In those tragic days, our confident faith in Your Presence with us kept us going. We give you thanks for the ways in which you comforted us. We bless you for blessing us with a deepened sense of world community.

We trace the movement of your grace through those who were among us. Those who risked their lives to rescue and retrieve. Those who offered kindness, and succor and shelter. Those who ministered in Your name. For all who gave witness to a deeper wisdom and faith, we give you thanks.

All: For public officials, first responders, neighbors, friends and strangers... we give thanks. For the calm and reassuring voices of the wise, we are grateful.

Leader: Hope- O God, you have taught us that faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. We live by hope in the future you hold for us and the whole world. Grant us, we pray, hope for our children and our children's children. Especially we lift up the children of the fallen. Bolster our hope when it flags. In all we do, teach us to realize the hope that is in your Word and witness.

All: Eternal God, in you our hope is boundless. You show us the promise of a future where no one is afraid, and none shall lift up sword against a neighbor. We pray in hope for the peace of the world. May all peoples and nations, religions and cultures, live as your beloved community. Reconcile us to one another under your sovereignty.

Closing Prayer

God of all creation, with the passing years the details fade. But we remember in faith that on that day, yours was the first heart to break. We stand as witnesses to those who mourn still, and those who cannot forgive. Through remembering may we find new comfort in your care. May we be drawn to a new hope for the whole world, and may we gain for ourselves a measure of your peace.

You, O God, can turn the shadow of night into the bright promise of a new day. Call us to shape a world marked by ways of life that lead to justice and peace for all peoples. Fashion in us a people ready to grow in understanding. In a broken world, form us as a people who heal wounds rather than inflict them.

We pray that you would cultivate such love in us. May we show Your heart to those who are still wounded by the events of that day, and so many days since. By serving as your eyes and ears and hands and heart in the world, may we experience a love that makes us whole. This we pray in Your Holy Name. Amen