

A Service of Remembrance Thanksgiving and Hope

Welcome

Prayer of the Day

God of compassion and might, we come to you on this day to remember. We remember how fragile life is. We remember the devastation of raging waters and ravaging winds. We remember the grief, sorrow, fear and hopelessness so many have known this past year.

But we also remember your protection and care. When all else seemed washed away, you were our sure foundation which could not be moved.

When we felt lost and alone, you guided us and embraced us with your presence. When we felt dark despair and the future seemed uncertain, your light and love shined upon us.

And so we come with thankful hearts, giving you praise for your faithfulness. We trust in your promises, for our hope is in you alone. Quiet our fears, calm our troubled hearts, comfort us in our grief, and grant us your hope and your peace. Amen

Hymn "Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

Great is thy faithfulness, O God our Father,
There is no shadow of turning with thee;
Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
As thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.
(Refrain:) Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see,
All I have needed thy hands have provided;
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!
Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. *(Refrain:)*
Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! *(Refrain:)*

We Turn to God for Strength

Psalm 46

L: *(Leader)* God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.
C: *(Congregation:)* Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea;
L: though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.
C: There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.
L: God is in the midst of the city, it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns.
C: The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; the Lord's voice is uttered, and the earth melts.
All: The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.
L: Gracious, Forgiving, and Everlasting God: we gather in this community of your children, filled this day with much emotion.
C: Help us to trust in you, O God.
L: This year has brought tragedy to so many, and our hearts are filled with pain and anguish.
C: Help us to trust in you, O God.
L: We grieve the loss of life, home and property, the injuries to body and spirit, the uprooting of our daily living, the realization that lives are changed forever.

C: yet your Spirit moved over the troubled waters, bringing life and light.

L: Shine upon all who have known sorrow and loss,

C: that they might know your healing presence and mercy.

L: Send us out to be lights to the world,

C: that all might know your hope and peace. Amen

Blessing

L: And now, may the light of God shine in the darkness of our lives, dispel all fear, and bring hope and comfort to all in need. Go forth as light for the world, reflecting God's true Light.

C: Thanks be to God.

Closing Hymn "We Are Marching in the Light of God"

We are marching in the light of God,

We are marching in the light of God.

We are marching in the light of God,

We are marching in the light of God.

We are marching, we are marching,

We are marching in the light of, the light of God.

We are marching, we are marching,

We are marching in the light of God.

vs 2: We are praying in the light of God ...

vs.3: We are singing in the light of God ...

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O God, you bring healing and wholeness to a broken world. Be with those who serve in the vocation of healing. We especially remember with thanksgiving those who tirelessly cared for those injured in the storm. Grant all in the healing arts skill in their tasks and compassion in their care of others. Amen

(The fifth candle is lit)

Music

The Sixth Candle: For Those in Leadership

Let us pray for all civic leaders and for all who serve the common good.

(A brief silence)

“Give the leaders your justice, O God May they judge your people with righteousness, and your poor with justice. May (those in authority) deliver the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. May they have pity on the weak and needy, and save the lives of the needy.”

(Psalm 72 paraphrased)

Prayer:

O God, lord of all creation and ruler of the nations, we pray for all leaders and all who serve in positions of decision-making and authority.

Instill in them a fire for justice and peace . Grant them wisdom to pursue and provide for the safety and well-being of all. Amen

(The sixth candle is lit)

Music

The Seventh Light: The Light of Hope Shines in the Darkness

Let us pray that all in despair might know the light and hope of God.

(A brief silence)

“The Lord will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.” *(Isaiah 60)* “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” *(Jeremiah 29)*

Reflection on the Light A Time Will Come for Singing

(The seventh candle is lit.)

L: Gracious God, we trust in your promises,

C: for you are our Light and our Hope.

L: Those who dwell in the land of deep darkness,

C: on them has the light shined.

L: Let your light scatter the darkness,

C: and shine within your people here.

L: Holy God, our world has known the darkness of storms,

C: Help us to trust in you, O God.

L: We acknowledge our frailty and our failings. We confess our failure to be good stewards of your creation, our lack of care for wetlands and barrier islands.

C: Forgive us, Lord.

L: We confess our willingness to allow poverty and prejudice to exist and influence our decisions.

C: Forgive us, Lord.

L: We confess our apathy and inaction when confronted with injustice and corruption.

C: Forgive us, Lord.

L: We trust in your steadfast love and your promise of forgiveness,

C: For you have been our help in ages past, and you are our hope in years to come.

Hymn “*O God, Our Help in Ages Past*”

O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come,

Our shelter from the stormy blast, And our eternal home.

Under the shadow of your throne Your saints have dwelt secure;

Sufficient is your arm alone, And our defense is sure.

Before the hills in order stood, Or earth received its frame,

From everlasting you are God, To endless years the same.

O God, our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come,

Still be our guide while troubles last And our eternal home.

Images of Faith and Hope in the Midst of the Storm

The Service of Light

L: Candles have long been a symbol of prayer, remembrance and hope.

Today we light candles:

* to remember those who have suffered loss in the tragedy of hurricanes Katrina and Rita

* to express our unity in prayer and spirit with all in need

* to remember the promise and hope of God who brings light out of darkness and hope out of despair

(In the following liturgy, an invitation to pray for a specific concern will be extended, followed by a time of silence for prayer. A reading from a sacred writing will be heard, followed by a prayer and an accompanying musical offering. A candle will be lit as the music is heard.)

Let us pray, lifting our hearts, hands, and voices to God.

The First Candle: For Those Who Lost Loved Ones

Let us pray for all who have lost family members and friends. *(Brief silence)*
“Though I walk through the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.” *(Psalm 23)*

Prayer

O God, we pray for the families and friends of the thousands of innocent victims – for those who have died, those who are injured, and those who grieve. Grant them the light of your comfort and presence.

Amen

(The first candle is lit)

Music

The Second Candle: For Those Forced to Evacuate

Let us pray for those who were forced to flee the storms' fury, and for those who remain in exile from their homes, families, and communities.

(Brief silence)

“In you, O Lord, I seek refuge; in your righteousness deliver me. Incline your ear to me; rescue me speedily. Be a rock of refuge to me, a strong fortress to keep me safe. Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord.” *(Psalm 31)*

Prayer

O God, our hope and our deliverer, we pray for those forced to leave home and community, and all who still live and wait in exile. Grant them the assurance of your presence, that their hope may be restored.

Amen

(The second candle is lit)

Hymn “Precious Lord, Take My Hand”

Precious Lord, take my hand, Lead me on, let me stand.
I am tired, I am weak, I am worn.
Through the storm, through the night, Lead me on to the light,
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

When my way grows drear, precious Lord, linger near,
When my life is almost gone,
Hear my cry, hear my call, hold my hand lest I fall.
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.
When the darkness appears and the night draws near,
And the day is past and gone,
At the river I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand.
Take my hand, precious Lord, lead me home.

The Third Candle: For Those Who Are Homeless

Let us pray for those who have lost homes, property, livelihood and belongings in the storms. *(A brief silence)*

“The Lord will cover you with his pinions, and under the Lord's wings you will find refuge.” *(Psalm 91)*

Prayer

O God, you are our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. We pray for those who have experienced loss. Comfort them in their time of grief and devastation. We give thanks for all who opened their homes and places of worship as shelters. Inspire and mobilize all your people, that those who have much might give generously to assist those who have little. Make us all good stewards of the gift of life, that all may have shelter, comfort, and daily bread. Amen

(The third candle is lit)

Music

The Fourth Candle: For Those Serving in Rescue and Relief

Let us pray for all who serve in relief agencies, and for those who daily place themselves in harm's way to rescue and care for others. *(A brief silence)*

“I lift up my eyes to the hills; from where is my help to come? My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.” *(Psalm 121)*

Prayer

O God, our defender, we remember with thanksgiving all who willingly stepped into the raging waters and chaos to rescue and care for those in peril, and all who continue to offer themselves in service for the good and are of others. Grant them strength and courage as they continue to serve.

Amen *(The fourth candle is lit)*

Music

The Fifth Candle: For Those in the Medical Profession

Let us pray for doctors, nurses, medical technicians, counselors, and those in the healing arts. *(A brief silence)*

“The Lord upholds all who fall; the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down.” *(Psalm 145)* “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bind up the brokenhearted.” *(Isaiah 61)*

Prayer