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## How We Serve

### PRAYER SERVICE: SEPTEMBER 11, 2011

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#### A Prayer of Remembrance, Comfort and Hope

**Environment:** *Three candles and tapers; words for three verses of Make Me an Instrument of your Peace.*

#### Call To Prayer:

God of Mercy, of Wisdom and Mystery, we gather this day, "knowing that our bonds are rooted in God, and that we strengthen and enable one another for mission." (*Constitutions, Founding Document, July 20, 1991*) On the 10th Anniversary of September 11, 2001, we once again call on your spirit that is within us to help us deepen our response to our commitment to non-violence. We are so aware of the fear and violence that continues to permeate our world since 9/11. As we pray in remembrance of that tragic day, help us also to be people of hope who embrace a belief that a new vision is possible.

#### Psalm 46

Side 1: The Beloved is our refuge and our strength, a loving Presence in times of trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

Side 2: For the Beloved makes wars to cease, breaking through the barriers of fear, shattering the greedy and oppressors, refining hearts of iron!

Side 1: Be still and know that I am love. I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth!

Side 2: The One who knows all hearts is with us; The Beloved is our refuge and our strength.

*(Psalms for Praying, Nan C. Merrill)*

#### **Remembrance**

*(Light the first candle)*

**Leader:** God of the years, we call to you this day when the memories of 9/11 weigh so heavily upon our hearts. We recall with horror and renewed shock that day when airplanes flew into buildings and people perished. We remember our fear and anger, our confusion and sense of threat.

**All:** We remember all that was lost to us that day: our sense of security, our peace, our innocence, our belief that we were safe beyond such random violence and death. Most of all we remember those who died in New York, Washington, DC, and Pennsylvania, their lives of promise extinguished in hatred.

*(Participants are invited to speak the name of an individual or groups of individuals.)*

**Response:** *(either sing or say)*

Make Me a Channel of Your Peace (verse 1)

#### **Comfort**

*(Light the second candle)*

**Leader:** God of Mercy, even In our worst moments your loving kindness surrounds us. In those tragic days 10 years ago, our confident faith that you were with us enabled us to go on. We give you thanks for the ways in which you comforted us in those grim days through a deepened sense of community.

We trace the movement of your grace through those among us who risked their lives to save others. We are comforted by those who offered kindness to persons in distress, and by those who would not let hatred overcome love. For those whose witness to a deeper wisdom and faith comforted us, we give you thanks.

**All:** For all public officials, neighbors, friends and strangers who brought to our troubled lives solace and clarity of purpose, we give thanks. For the calm and reassuring voices of the wise who gave us comfort and strength, we give thanks.

*(Participants are invited to name a way in which they were comforted or inspired.)*

**Response:** *(sing or say)*  
Make Me a Channel of Your Peace (verse 2)

**Hope**  
*(Light the third candle)*

**Leader:** God of all creation, 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 for Earth. Grant us, we pray, hope for the future generations that they may never know or inflict the horror and terror we recall this day. Strengthen our hope when it falters and teach us to strive in all we do to realize the hope that is in your word and witness.

**All:** Eternal God, in you our hope is boundless. You renew hope in us through the promise of a future in which no one shall be afraid or lift up a sword against a neighbor. We pray in hope for the peace of the world among peoples and nations, religions and cultures, until we become a beloved community reconciled to one another under your sovereignty.

*(Participants are invited to express a word of hope.)*

**Leader:** May these candles represent for us the light of our shared memories, the light of comfort and strength and the light of our hope in a new vision. In our remembering, may we find new comfort and strength in our God, may we embrace and work toward a hope-filled vision for our world and may we acknowledge the peace of God that is within us all.

**Response:** *(sing or say)*  
Make Me a Channel of Your Peace (verse 3)

**Closing prayer:**  
Loving God, you inspire us with love for all creation. Give us today the strength and courage to transform the compassion of our hearts into acts of peace, mercy and justice. Forgive us for the arrogance that leads to moral blindness, for desires for vengeance and retaliation and for willingness to sacrifice others for our own security.

Empower us to shape a world marked by ways of life that lead to justice and peace. Fashion in us a people who are more ready to grow in understanding than eager to judge those who are different from us. Form us, a people determined to heal wounds rather than inflict them. We ask all of this in the name of Jesus who came among us to show us the way. **Amen**

*Parts of this prayer service were adapted from a prayer written by Rev. Eileen Lindner, for the National Council of Churches.*

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