



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

Remembering September 11

Worship Resources for Observing the Anniversary

The following prayers, images for preaching, and hymn suggestions may be incorporated into various local contexts or forms of worship, including services of Holy Communion, Morning or Evening Prayer, Service of the Word, or ecumenical worship services.

Permission is granted for congregations to reproduce the following prayers provided copies are for local use only.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Day of Mourning

O God, strength of those who believe in you, give comfort and clarity of vision to us in this time of need. Open our ears to hear your voice and obey your will; open our hearts that true justice and wisdom may abound; and open our hands that violent resolution of conflict may cease, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

READINGS

First Reading: Jonah 3: 10–4:5, 11

God's compassion extends even to those who have caused great suffering for the people of Israel.

Psalmody: Psalm 140

A song of deliverance from evil.

Second Reading: Ephesians 2:1-7 [8-10]

A picture of the abundance of God's mercy.

Gospel: Luke 10:25-37

The Good Samaritan.

See *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (pew edition, pages 62-63)

IMAGES FOR PREACHING

You have heard it said, "The only good terrorist is a dead terrorist." Regardless of ethnicity, sex, or creed, most people, including those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord, would readily agree to that statement, because the practice of terrorism is not peculiar to any one group of people. However, a brief perusal of human history would illustrate that almost everyone is a descendant of people who have, at one time or another, inflicted pain and suffering on other people. But the Author of Life, the Source of salvation history has the last word.

In the first reading, Jonah disobeys God's command not because of faithlessness, but because of his faith in the mercy of God. He knows that God's mercy extends even to the enemy. Jonah wants to see the people of Nineveh destroyed because they have inflicted such pain and misery on his people. Not Jonah's will, but rather God's will is done.

While dying, hanging from a cross, the very first words spoken by Jesus are words of forgiveness for the very ones who were the cause of his agony. Although forgiveness for the carnage that took place September 11, 2001 may still be far from our hearts and minds, even in our anger, in our grief, and in our outrage, we are guided by the Holy Spirit to work for justice and peace.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Confident in the knowledge that God comforts and lifts up those who call on the name of the Lord, let us pray for the church, the world and all those in need.

A brief silence.

For the gift of life, O Lord, we give you thanks.
Infuse us with your light, and make us vehicles of that life-giving light.
O God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For all who live with fear, anxiety and uncertainty.
Comfort and strengthen them, we pray, that they may know the healing power of your love.
O God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For the leaders of nations and all who are in positions of political authority,
that they may hear your voice above all others
and act in such a way that brings about healing and reconciliation.
O God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For those who mourn and wonder, "O God, where were you?"
May they know your presence and see how you use something that was meant for evil
to bring about something that can be used for good.
O God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

For our enemies, the ones for whom we would rather not pray, and for ourselves:
lead us from prejudice to truth; deliver us from hatred and revenge;
give us courage to overcome our fears and build bridges,
that we may stand before you reconciled through Christ our Lord.
O God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We remember with affection those who now rest from their labors,
especially those we name before you now, on our lips or in our hearts. . . .
Keep us in fellowship with all your saints
and bring us at last to the joy of your heavenly kingdom.
O God of mercy,
hear our prayer.

Hear our prayer, O Lord,
increase in us the gift of faith that our lives may reflect your glory,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

See *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (pew edition, page 69)

MUSIC FOR WORSHIP

ELW 716/LBW 419 Lord of all nations, grant me grace

ELW 626/WOV 736 By gracious powers

ELW 757/WOV 782 All my hope on God is founded

HYMNS RELATED TO THE READINGS

Jonah 3: 10-4:5, 11

ELW 724/LBW 436 All who love and serve your city

Ephesians 2:1-7 (8-10)

ELW 495/LBW 207 We who once were dead

ELW 590/LBW 297 Salvation unto us has come

ELW 594/LBW 299 Dear Christians, one and all

ELW 779/LBW 448 Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound

ELW 816/LBW 513 Come, my way, my truth, my life

ELW 582/LBW 523 Holy Spirit, ever dwelling

Luke 10:25-37

ELW 750/LBW 325 Lord, thee I love with all my heart

ELW 716/LBW 419 Lord of all nations, grant me grace

ELW 715/LBW 425 O God of mercy, God of light

ELW 800/LBW 486 Spirit of God, descend upon my heart

ELW 696/LBW 494 Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult

ELW 805/LBW 495 Lead on, O King eternal!

ELW 708/WOV 765 Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love

Litany from "9/11"

Written by Gabe Huck, Music by Gregg Smith
Commissioned by Saint Peter's Lutheran Church, New York City
Amandus J. Derr, Senior Pastor; Thomas Schmidt, Cantor
First performed on September 8, 2002

Lord and lover of humankind,
Teach us to groan as you must groan, sudden mourners, all of us.
Cry with us, instruct us in the language of lamentation.
For wars we thought were far away have snatched lives so near,
Anonymous as our own, and dear as our own,
And what shall we do Lord, with all our might?
What are we to do?

Lord, Good Lord, hold us in your arms as we tear open the gospel's hard truth.
Is this the hour to trample down violence, to deny death any more lives?
To refuse false safety in walls and weapons, to beg of you Lord,
Courage enough to look at all that is amiss in our world?

Father, forgive.
Father, forgive the hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class.

Father, forgive.
Father, forgive the greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth.

Father forgive.
Father, forgive our envy of the welfare and happiness of others.

Father forgive.
Father, forgive our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugee.

Father, forgive.
Father, forgive the lust which dishonors the bodies of men, women, and children.

Father, forgive.
Father, forgive the pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God.

Father, forgive. Father, forgive.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you.
Amen.

Sermon Starters

For the occasion of the anniversary of the September 11th attacks on New York City.

Contributed by the Rev. Kevin A. Massey, ELCA Disaster Response

Fear

Do you remember how afraid we were that day? No one knew what was going to happen next, we didn't really even know what had happened that day. We couldn't believe what we were seeing. It just seemed like it couldn't be real.

Do not fear ... be not afraid ... fear not ... worded different ways, it is probably the words Jesus repeated the most. He said it to his followers the first time they saw him after he rose from death. He's not telling us that it's somehow a sign of weakness or unfaithfulness to feel fear, he's assuring us that he is with us no matter what happens.

Grief

This too will pass. I heard someone say those words once to someone immediately after news of the death of a loved one. It is very hard for many of us to be in the presence of grief that sometimes we say things to try to move it away. Sometimes it is hard to be in the presence of grief because our own feelings of grief frighten us. Many of us have feelings of grief that remain from people we love who have died many years in the past.

To all those who lost someone they love on September 11th five years ago, we express to you our deep condolences. Please know that friends here care for you and will continuously remember you in our prayers. To all others I wish to share that remembrances of disaster and loss such as we remember today from September 11th five years ago can awaken feelings of grief from other losses. Please let those feelings come, don't stifle them. Tears are the communication of feelings so deep that we don't have words for them. Let them come. Jesus wept when he lost a friend and will give us comfort and his nurturing presence in these times.

Peace

We knew our lives had all changed the moment the attacks happened, we didn't know how much. We knew that the world and our country had entered a frightening and dangerous time, we didn't know how dangerous. We knew that peace may be gone, we didn't know for how long.

The last five years has brought our people and the peoples of many other lands conflict and war. The fighting in so many countries, and the violence escalating in so many parts of the world shows us that we don't know when peace, true and lasting and just peace will ever come.

The world in Jesus' time was also an unstable and dangerous world. He didn't promise to his earliest followers that he would change all that, and unfortunately we don't have that promise now. He did promise then, and his promises endure forever that in the midst of difficult times, that he gives us something rich and comforting and enduring, the peace of his presence. Jesus said "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." John 14:27

Evangelical Lutheran Worship
Additional Prayers (pg. 72-87)

The following prayers from Evangelical Lutheran Worship may be appropriately inserted into the prayers of the people, used in pastoral care situations, or drawn upon at other opportunities for prayer around the devastation of the wildfires.

Peace

O God, it is your will to hold both heaven and earth in a single peace. Let the design of your great love shine on the waste of our wraths and sorrows, and give peace to your church, peace among nations, peace in our homes, and peace in our hearts; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Peace

Gracious and holy God, lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth. Lead us from despair to hope, from fear to trust. Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace. Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

National distress

Eternal God, amid all the turmoil and changes of the world your love is steadfast and your strength never fails. In this time of danger and trouble, be to us a sure guardian and rock of defense. Guide the leaders of our nation with your wisdom, comfort those in distress, and grant us courage and hope to face the future; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Time of conflict, crisis, disaster

God, our refuge and strength, you have bound us together in a common life. In all our conflicts, help us to confront one another without hatred or bitterness, to listen for your voice amid competing claims, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Time of conflict, crisis, disaster

O God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance. Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams. All these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Time of civic mourning

God our creator, through whose providing care we enjoy all goodness and life, turn our eyes to your mercy in this time of confusion and loss. Comfort this nation as we mourn; shine your light on those whose only companion is darkness; and teach us all so to number our days that we may apply our hearts to your wisdom; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Health of body and soul

By your power, great God, our Lord Jesus healed the sick and gave new hope to the hopeless. Though we cannot command or possess your power, we pray for those who want to be healed. Mend their wounds, soothe fevered brows, and make broken people whole again. Help us to welcome every healing as a sign that, though death is against us, you are for us, and have promised renewed and risen life in Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.

Those in affliction

Lord Christ, you came into the world as one of us, and suffered as we do. As we go through the trials of life, help us to realize that you are with us at all times and in all things; that we have no secrets from you; and that your loving grace enfolds us for eternity. In the security of your embrace we pray. Amen.

Those in emotional distress

Merciful God, you give us the grace that helps in time of need. Surround *name* with your steadfast love and lighten *her/his* burden. By the power of your Spirit, free *her/him* from distress and give *her/him* a new mind and heart made whole in the name of the risen Christ. Amen.

Those who suffer abuse and violence

Holy One, you do not distance yourself from the pain of your people, but in Jesus you bear that pain with all who suffer at others' hands. With your cleansing love bring healing and strength to *name*; and by your justice, lift *her/him* up, that in body, mind, and spirit, *she/he* may again rejoice. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Those in trouble or bereavement

Almighty God, your love never fails, and you can turn the shadow of death into daybreak. Help us to receive your word with believing hearts, so that, confident in your promises, we may have hope and be lifted out of sorrow into the joy and peace of your presence; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Emergency workers

God of earth and air, water and fire, height and depth, we pray for those who work in danger, who rush in to bring hope and help and comfort when others flee to safety, whose mission is to seek and save, serve and protect, and whose presence embodies the protection of the Good Shepherd. Give them caution and concern for one another, so that in safety they may do what must be done, under your watchful eye. Support them in their courage and dedication that they may continue to save lives, ease pain, and mend the torn fabric of lives and social order; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Caregivers and others who support the sick

God, our refuge and strength, our present help in time of trouble, care for those who tend the needs of *[the sick]/[name/s]*. Strengthen them in body and spirit. Refresh them when weary; console them when anxious; comfort them in grief; and hearten them in discouragement. Be with us all, and give us peace at all times and in every way; through Christ our peace. Amen.

Health care providers

Merciful God, your healing power is everywhere about us. Strengthen those who work among the sick; give them courage and confidence in all they do. Encourage them when their efforts seem futile or when death prevails. Increase their trust in your power even to overcome death and pain and crying. May they be thankful for every sign of health you give, and humble before the mystery of your healing grace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Recovery from sickness

Almighty and merciful God, you are the only source of health and healing; you alone can bring calmness and peace. Grant to us, your children, an awareness of your presence and a strong confidence in you. In our pain, our weariness, and our anxiety, surround us with your care, protect us by your loving might, and permit us once more to enjoy health and strength and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Guidance

Direct us, Lord God, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and extend to us your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name; and finally, by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Young persons

Lord God of our ancestors, we thank you for what you have done and will continue to do with our daughters and sons. Walk with them in life, and keep the evil one from obstructing their path. You see all; you know where the water is deep. Keep them from danger. Order their steps and guide their feet while they run the race of faith. May the good work that you have begun in them be brought to completion at the day of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Protection through life

O God, full of compassion, we commit and commend ourselves to you, in whom we live and move and have our being. Be the goal of our pilgrimage, and our rest by the way. Give us refuge from the turmoil of worldly distractions beneath the shadow of your wings. Let our hearts, so often a sea of restless waves, find peace in you, O God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.