

SERVICE ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001
First Unitarian Church of Dallas
Dr. Laurel Hallman, Minister

Our ability to give meaning, even to find cause comes to nothing.
---The Reverend Laurel Hallman

OPENING WORDS

Our hearts are moved by all we cannot save:
So much has been destroyed.
Our minds are numbed by what we cannot understand:
For words do not explain.
We gather in loss.
We gather in disbelief.
We gather in this home for the free spirit,
To be comforted,
To remember again who we are.
And what is important.
Let us worship together.
Opening phrase by Adrienne Rich, followed by L.H. words

CHOIR: GOD WEEPS (Words: Shirley Erena Murray; Music: Carlton R. Young) in *Voices of the Spirit*, First Unitarian Church of Dallas, 1999.

MEMORIAL READINGS:

from Theodore Spencer
We know nothing of what happened, or where or when it was.
We can imagine very little of the final disastrous hour,
Yet we know one thing; of one thing we are certain,
Just as knowledge (has its quiet certainty)
If, before the violence, there was something right to say,
We who knew them, know they were sure to say it;
And if at the last there was anything brave to do,
We who knew them, know it was done by them.

from Paul Carnes
Inevitably our anguish frames the question "Why?" if not on our lips, in our hearts. There is no answer that removes this question-no answer that can bridge the chasm of irreparable separation. Life will never be the same, and this is as it should be, for (human beings) are not expendable. We can meet such loss only with our grief, that uncontrived mixture of courage, affirmation, and inconsolable desolation. Grief is enough; for, in our grief we live an answer. . . .

Helen Keller
We bereaved are not alone. We belong to the largest company in all the world-the company of

those who have known suffering. When it seems that our sorrow is too great to be borne, let us think of the great family of the heavy-hearted into which our grief has given us entrance, and inevitably, we will feel about us their arms, their sympathy, their understanding.

LITANY by Laurel Hallman

Please join me in this responsive litany, responding as "the people's voice"

For passengers, flight attendants, and pilots in
American Airlines Flight 77
American Airlines Flight 11,
United Flight 175 and United flight 93
whose last hour we cannot imagine, and whose lives are lost

For unfathomable numbers of men and women who died in
The World Trade Center Tower I
The World Trade Center Tower II,

For police and firefighters,
For rescue workers and citizens
Who moved toward the disaster, to help, to save
and who died as the buildings imploded

For those in the Pentagon
killed in the line of duty
The people said: "We grieve"

For children, and wives, and husbands
who mourn tonight because of loved ones gone

For wounded, terrorized, horrified witnesses
who are forever changed
The people said, "May they be comforted"

For doctors, nurses, rescue workers, firefighters, and police who are at this hour continuing their struggle to help those who are injured

For national guard and police and members of our armed services called to high alert to secure our land
The people said, "May they be strengthened."

For our President, for our congress,
for the Governor of New York, and the Mayor of New York,
for those who will make strategic decisions in the hours and days to come
The people said, "May they have courage and wisdom."

May each and every one of us who grieves for what was lost today,
find strength and courage and wisdom as well. Amen.

INTERLUDE

CANDLES OF CONCERN AND REMEMBRANCE

Now I invite all who wish to come to the front, light a candle-either in silence, or to speak the name of a special concern-perhaps someone who is especially affected by the events of today. Speak briefly, or light a candle in silence-or if you wish, remain seated in quiet meditation.

HOMILY

PRAYER

God of many names, and mystery beyond all our naming. We our hearts and minds cannot fathom the tragedy of this day. This unprecedented series of events that have killed numberless people, at their desks, at their work, on domestic flights. Our ability to give meaning, even to find cause comes to nothing.

Comfort the broken, we pray. Be with those who are with grieving children, we pray. Calm frantic hearts, we pray. May the structures of our institutions, so shaken today, find calm and clarity and new strength in the morning light, we pray. And we also.

These and the prayers of our hearts, we pray in the silence.

We pray in the names of all those, known and unknown, present and absent, remembered and forgotten. We pray in the names of all the helpers of humankind. AMEN.

Hymn When Our Lives Know Sudden Shadow

Words: Shirley Erena Murray; Music: Carlton Young
in *Voices of the Spirit*, First Unitarian Church, 1999.

CLOSING WORDS

Let our steps be fixed that we stagger not at the uneven motions of the world, but go steadily on our way neither censuring our journey for the weather we meet, nor turning aside for anything that may befall us. AMEN.

(author unknown)