

## In Mourning For Those Lost And Those Who Survive

Rev. Elizabeth "Kit" Ketcham, minister Wy'east Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
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I invite you to reach out and make contact with the person next to you, a hand on shoulder, hand in hand, arm in arm, arm around, that we might feel our human connection at this dreadful time of mourning.

And I ask you to be silent with me in remembrance of those who died on Tuesday, Sept. 11, in the fire and chaos of disaster, the workers in the World Trade Center and Pentagon and the passengers and crew members of the 4 planes which were crashed.

I ask you to be silent in honor of those who gave their lives in sacrifice to help others, those who ran into burning buildings and were crushed by falling debris as they worked to salvage what life might remain, and those who knew they were about to die and heroically did what they could to save other intended victims, who overpowered hijackers, who called out on cell phones to alert the world.

I ask you to be silent in support of those who wait for news of loved ones, those whose friends and family are gone forever, perhaps never to be found, identified, laid to rest in traditional ways.

I ask you to be silent in mourning for all of us, all of humanity, for we are all victims of this terrible injustice, we all were wounded by this terrible hatred, and we all wait in fear of the outcome.

And I ask you, now, to be vocal, to be loud, to be powerful, to roar in speaking your truth, the truth that comes from understanding that human beings are meant to live in peace. (say it with me....) We are not meant to hurt and kill each other, for every blow we strike against another life injures us ourselves, injures all humanity. We do not gain revenge from striking back. We kill our own souls when we do so.

The Islamic poet Saadi has written, "To worship God is nothing more than to serve the people....All peoples are members of the same body, created from one essence. If fate brings suffering to one member, the others cannot stay at rest."

Please join me in a time of meditation and prayer.

Spirit of Life and Love,

Draw near to us and help us to draw near to one another as we try to cope with this terrible tragedy.

Help us to find solace in others' presence and help us to be solace for their pain as well. Help us to express our anger and our pain in ways that do not further wound, without seeking revenge.

Help us to cherish our connections with others, to share the love we feel freely and openly, and may our compassion be strengthened and our commitment to justice deepened.

We hold in our hearts the loved ones of those who died or were wounded or who wait long hours for news of loved ones.

Help us to respond with love to those who would seek revenge, who would punish innocent people for the sins of others.

Help us to reject racism and religious intolerance, firmly and clearly, and help us understand people who are different from us.

May our fear not hold us hostage, but let us seek comfort by reaching out to help those who are hurting.

Help us live with this new knowledge that even our strong country is not invulnerable.

Help us to live with the knowledge that our country is not blameless in this terrible event and help us to have compassion for our leaders as they seek solutions that are just. Give them strength to resist retaliation that demeans our country's noble purpose. May they listen to those voices that protest further violence.

May we take heart from the many stories of selfless sacrifice that are emerging from the wreckage and may we remember that Goodness can prevail, with our help.

May we keep our faith in the ideals of freedom, which are the hallmarks of our nation, and may we work to create a worldwide culture of peace, liberty and justice for all.

O Spirit of Life and Love, Be with us as we struggle through these days and give us strength and courage to build a better world together.

Amen, Shalom, Salaam, and Blessed Be.

Benediction: You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.'

You must do the thing you think you cannot do. ---Eleanor Roosevelt