

A Prayer Service of Remembrance Consolation and Hope

September 4, 2005

St Paul Lutheran Church
Lutheran Church of Our Savior
Baton Rouge, LA
6:00 PM

Prayer of the Day

God of compassion and might, we come to you realizing how fragile life is. We have seen the devastation of raging waters and ravaging winds. We know grief, sorrow, fear and hopelessness. When all else seems washed away, be our sure foundation which cannot be moved. When we feel lost and alone, guide us and embrace us with your presence. When we feel dark despair and the future seems uncertain, shine upon us with your light and your love. Be with us in this time to quiet fears, to calm trembling hearts, to comfort grief and to strengthen us. Hear our prayers and our praises, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

We Grieve

Psalm 130

L: *(Leader)* Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD.

C: *(Congregation:)* **Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!**

L: If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?

C: **But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.**

L: I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;

C: **my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.**

L: O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with the Lord is great power to redeem.

C: **It is God who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.**

L: O Israel, hope in the LORD from this time on and forevermore.

Reflection: Lamentations

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.

P: 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 week 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 recall the horror that this tragedy has brought. 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: **Help us to trust in you, O God.**

L: Healing God, we are so hurt and sad this day. We feel loss, and our grief seems endless.

C: **Help us to know your healing presence, O God.**

L: We gather here to share our tears, our pain, our hurt, and our fears.

C: **Help us to know your healing presence, O God.**

L: We take time to pray for so many this day; for the families and friends of those killed and injured; for the emergency workers and their families; for those who have lost homes; for those whose future is so uncertain; for all those involved in telling the story; for our leaders, especially our governor, the mayors of the cities affected by this tragedy, and those who have worked so tirelessly to direct and coordinate relief and rescue efforts.

C: **Hear our prayers, O God.**

L: We pray for the healing of our own hearts, that the days ahead will bring some sense of comfort, healing, and understanding.

C: **Hear our prayers, O God.**

L: Calm our spirits. Ease the great pain which we feel, and remind us of your presence and your love. Grant us your peace, your wisdom, your patience, and your healing presence. We ask this is the name of Jesus the Christ.

C: **Amen**

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.

The Service of Light

(Leader:)

Candles have long been a symbol of prayer, remembrance and hope.
Tonight we will light candles:

+ to remember those who have died in this tragedy

+ to express our unity in prayer and spirit with those who grieve

+ to remember the promise and hope of Christ, the light of the world

As we light our candles tonight, let us pray that our Compassionate God will lighten our darkness with the mercy and grace of the Light of Christ.

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; through Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. Amen

(The candle is lit as the hymn is sung)

Hymn

“O God, Our Words Cannot Express”

(Tune: DUNDEE CM "My God, How Wonderful Thou Art")

O God, our words cannot express The pain we feel this day.
Fear-filled, uncertain, we confess Our need to bow and pray.

We grieve for all who lost their lives. And for each injured one.
We pray for children, husbands, wives Whose grief has just begun.

O Lord, we're called to offer prayer For all our leaders, too.
May they, amid such great despair, Be wise in all they do.

We trust your mercy and your grace; In you we will not fear!
May peace and justice now embrace! Be with your people here!

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The Second Candle For Those Waiting to be Evacuated

Let us pray for those who are still in danger – those who wait for food,
water, and deliverance. *(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.” *(Psalm 31)*

Prayer

O God, our hope and our deliverer, we pray for those still in mortal danger,
trapped and in harm's way. Grant them the assurance of your presence;
deliver them speedily in their time of need. Guide those who are
attempting to help, so that lives might be saved and hope restored; through
Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. Amen

(The candle is lit as the hymn is sung)

Hymn

“I, the Lord of Sea and Sky”

“I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in deepest sin, My hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?”

(Refrain)

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me. I will hold your people in my heart.

“I the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them. They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?” *(Refrain)*

The Third Candle

For The Rescuers

Let us pray for those who serve the public good and safety, who 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 all who willingly step into the raging
waters and chaos to rescue and care for others. We especially remember
the rescuers in New Orleans, Mississippi, and Alabama, their tireless effort
and their courage as they respond to the needs before them. Grant strength
and courage to those who continue to serve; through Jesus Christ, the Light
of the world. Amen

(The candle is lit as the hymn is sung)

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 Fourth 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

O God, you sent Jesus Christ to be the Great Physician to bring healing and wholeness to a broken world. Be with those who serve in the vocation of healing. We especially remember those who tirelessly care for those injured in the storm. Grant them skill in their tasks and compassion in their care of others; through Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. Amen
(The candle is lit as the anthem is sung)

Hymn

“There is a Balm in Gilead”

(Refrain)

There is a balm in Gilead To make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead To heal the sin-sick soul.

Sometimes I feel discouraged And think my work’s in vain;
But then the Holy Spirit Revives my soul again. *(Refrain)*

So if you feel discouraged, know Jesus is your friend;
and if you lack for knowledge He’ll ne’er refuse to lend. *(Refrain)*

The Fifth Candle

For Those Who Are Homeless

Let us pray for those who have lost homes, property, livelihood and belongings in the storm. *(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 in the storm. Comfort them in their time of grief and devastation. Inspire and mobilize all your people, that we who have much might open our hearts, our homes, and our resources 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; through Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. Amen

(The candle is lit as the hymn is sung)

Hymn

“How Long, O God”

(Tune: LAND OF REST "Jerusalem My Happy Home")

“How long, O God?” the psalmist cries, A cry we make our own,
For we are lost, alone, afraid, And far away from home.

The evil lurks within, without, It threatens to destroy
The fragile cords that make us one, That bind our hearts in joy.

Your grace, O God, seems far away; Will healing ever come?
Our broken lives lie broken still; will night give way to dawn?

How can we hope? How can we sing? O God, set free our voice
To name the sorrows, name the pain, That we might yet rejoice.

“How long, O God?” the psalmist cries, A cry we make our own.
Though we are lost, alone, afraid, Our God will lead us home.

like a scroll, The trumpet shall sound, and the Lord shall descend.
Even so, it is well with my soul.

The Sixth Candle

For Those in Government

Let us pray for all civic leaders and for all who serve in government. *(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, king of all creation and ruler of the nations, we pray for all civic leaders and those who serve in government in our nation and state. We especially remember President Bush, Governor Blanco, Ray Nagin, the mayor of New Orleans, Kip Holden, mayor/president of Baton Rouge, and all in positions of decision-making and authority. Grant them strength to face the days ahead; grant them wisdom to pursue and provide justice and care, that they might work to ensure the safety and well-being of all; through Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. Amen
(The candle is lit as the hymn is sung)

Hymn

“All Who Love and Serve Your City”
(Tune: GALILEE "Jesus Calls Us, O'er the Tumult")

All who love and serve your city, All who bear its daily stress,
All who cry for peace and justice, All who curse and all who bless,

In your day of loss and sorrow, In your day of helpless strife,
Honor, peace, and love retreating, Seek the Lord, who is your life.

Risen Lord, shall yet the city Be the city of despair?
Come today, our judge, our glory; Be its name “The Lord is there!”

The Seventh Light

The Light Shines in the Darkness

Let us pray that all in darkness might know the light of Christ.
(A brief silence)

Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” *(John 5.25)*

L: Jesus Christ is the Light of the world:
C: The light no darkness can overcome.
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 great darkness this week.
C: Shine upon all who know the darkness of sorrow and loss with your healing presence and mercy, that we might know the brightness of your light and your peace; through Jesus Christ, the Light of the world. Amen

Reflection on the Light

A Time Will Come for Singing

Blessing

L: And now, may the light of Christ, rising in glory, shine in the darkness of our lives, dispel all fear, and bring hope and comfort in our time of need. Go forth as light for the world, reflecting the One true Light, Jesus Christ our Lord..
C: Thanks be to God.

Hymn

“Savior, Again to Your Dear Name”

Savior, again to your dear name we raise
With one accord our parting hymn of praise;
Once more we bless you ere our worship cease,
Then, lowly bending, wait your word of peace.

Grant us your peace upon our toilsome way;
With you begun, with you shall end the day;
Guard all our lips from sin, our hearts from shame,
That in this house have called upon your name.

Grant us your peace, Lord, through the coming night;
For us transform its darkness into light.
Keep us from harm and danger till the dawn;
Your evening presence promise to your own.

Grant us your peace throughout our earthly life,

Our balm in sorrow, and our stay in strife;
Then, when your voice shall bid our conflict cease,
Call us, O Lord, to your eternal peace.

Announcements

All are invited to gather in the fellowship hall after the service for refreshments and conversation.

There is an offering plate in the narthex as you leave. The offering this evening has been designated for the ELCA Domestic Disaster Response, which is working together with the Lutheran Disaster Response partners as part of a coordinated response to this tragedy. For more information and ways to help, go to www.elca.org/disaster.

The ELCA churches here in Baton Rouge stand ready to support and assist in whatever ways possible.

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