



OFFICE OF
VETERANS SERVICES

September 11th Ceremony – Opening Prayer

Dear Lord

_____ years ago, this date—September the 11th—was seared into America's memory. Nineteen men attacked us with a barbarity unequalled in our nation's history. They murdered people of all colors, creeds, and nationalities — and made war upon the entire free world. Sadly, 9-11 has become the modern generation's Pearl Harbor!

Lord, on that awful day, we also witnessed something distinctly American:

- Ordinary citizens rising to the occasion, and responding with extraordinary acts of heroism.
- Courage in office workers trapped on the high floors of burning skyscrapers who called home so that their last words to their families would be of comfort and love.
- Bravery of the Pentagon staff who made it out of the flames and smoke — and then ran back inside to answer cries for help.
- And we saw courage in passengers aboard Flight 93, who recited the 23rd Psalm—and then charged the cockpit, saving an untold number of lives on the ground.

Our Father, On this day, we remember the innocent who lost their lives—and we pay tribute to those who gave their lives so that others might live. For many of our citizens, the wounds of that morning remain fresh. Firefighters and police officers still choke up at the memory of fallen comrades. Young children and teenagers still long for the parents who will never share the joys of their youth nor guide them to adulthood. Fellow Americans take bittersweet pride in loved ones who refused to be victims — and gave America our first victory in the war on terror.

We also remember the sacrifices made by our nation's armed forces to keep us safe. Every one of our troops is a volunteer, and since the attacks of September 11th, more than two million Americans have stepped forward

to put on our nation's uniform. Over 50,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and guardsmen have suffered terrible injuries—and over 6,000 have given the ultimate sacrifice in the defense of freedom! America cherishes their memory and we pray for their families. We will never forget!

Lord, Out of this suffering, we resolve to honor every man and woman lost. And we seek their lasting memorial in a safer and more hopeful world.

In your name we pray....AMEN.



September 11th Ceremony – Closing Prayer

Gracious God,

Today, we come before you with heavy hearts as we remember the events of 9/11. For years, those numbers simply meant a call for help. Now they also remind us of September 11th, 2001, the date of the worst terrorist attack on the United States of America and one of the deadliest days ever on American soil.

We are here today to remember the attacks and honor those we lost from both our community and our armed forces. Andover lost Christopher Morrison, who died in the World Trade Center; Millie Naiman and flight attendant Betty Ong, who were both on American Airlines flight 11; and Len Taylor, who was on American Airlines flight 77. Their names appear on a plaque inside the town office building where residents can remember our loss.

For some of us, today is a mixed bag of emotions. We hurt deeply for those who lost their lives and those who lost their loved ones. We mourn the nearly 3,000 who died that day. We are humbled by the bravery of the first responders. We continue to grieve with our neighbors in the loss of our national innocence - our false sense of constant safety.

We Remember as churches, synagogues, and temples opened their doors to ALL people,

We Remember as strangers carried each other out of buildings,

We Remember as those who had - shared with those who had lost

We Remember the bravery of the passengers and crew of United Airlines Flight 93.

Yet, we struggle today, not wanting to get caught up in the chilling celebration, this sometimes too prideful remembrance of loss.

Lord, We still remember how the world responded, supporting us and even declaring us one people.

God of all people, teach us to be patriotic, but humbly so. Teach us to see the frailty, beauty, and value of life in light of this tragedy rather than using it to elevate trivial difference to the heights of divisive reasons for hatred. Remind us of the way the true heart of our nation's people was revealed in open doors, open arms and open hearts. May we never forget that on that day we did not focus on nationality, wealth, race, or education. We focused on humanity and love for our fellow AMERICANS.

Lord, Call us back to that place in our hearts. Instill in us the deepest sense to be that people once again. We lift up to you all those who, even today, 12 years later, suffer from the loss. May we continue to heal and help each other just as we did that day.

Amen.

