Memorial Prayer for September 11

This prayer was written by The Rev. David Reed-Brown for an interfaith community memorial service on September 11, 2003. He was serving the First Baptist Church in Essex, Connecticut, at the time. It is located on the shoreline just two hours north of New York City. People from the community volunteered in the disaster recovery and most everyone in the region knew a family who had lost someone. The prayer was offered at Town Hall.

O God in whom we live and move and have our being,

In the course of human events there has always been calamity,

But today, God, is especially difficult because two years ago

at this moment in New York, Washington and a field in Pennsylvania,

Ignorance, fear, hatred and terror stuck the heart of all humanity.

Thousands of people died:

women, children, men,

mothers, fathers, spouses, siblings,

sons, daughters, cousins, aunts, uncles,

grandparents, strangers, friends,

people from dozens of nations and most every walk of faith.

Seemingly everyone in our community knew someone whose life had been shattered.

Our communal heart was broken.

Innocence was lost.

The veiled illusion of security was torn.

We thank you for each one.

We thank you for their selfless love.

We thank you for these seasons in time

that reveal the true preciousness of life.

O God your scriptures tell us

To love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us.

Lord, that can be so very hard to do

And it may even provoke us to cries of treason.

Yet, you remind us that we Christians, Muslims and Jews

Are all your children, born of Abraham.

We pray, dear God, that in this struggle

for the goodness of the collective human soul

that we might not be overwhelmed

by pride, anger, hatred or vengeance.

We pray that we would not lose to hardness of heart

the God given liberty that defines us.

We pray for the leaders of our community, state, nation and world

That they might be surrounded by your strong and loving wisdom.

We pray that your peace and wholeness, your shalom,

Will come on earth as it is in heaven.

Amen.

- The Rev. David Reed-Brown