

A SERVICE OF REMEMBRANCE & RESURRECTION

20TH ANNIVERSARY OF SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MOORESTOWN

SEPTEMBER 11, 2021 — 8:30AM



Cross erected by rescue crews at Ground Zero following the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2002. Photo by Jeffrey Blackwell; Memorial Church Communications.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

LITANY OF THANKSGIVING¹

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.

God's love endures forever.

Give thanks for the love at the heart of our God:

For the love that overflows with a bubbling joy to the world;

For love that welcomes and enfolds and reaches out to us;

For love that holds the hope of restoration.

God's love endures forever.

Give thanks for God's love that delights in creating:

For love that celebrated the fall harvest and new life in the spring;

For love that grants the warmth of the summer heat

And sparkles in the fallen snow;

For love that pays attention to the smallest seed and to the largest whale

For love that has created a world of dynamic wonder.

¹ Matt Timms, Reformed Worship, June 2021.

God's love endures forever.

Give thanks for God's love that draws near to us:

For love that sent God's only Son;

For love that delivered us and brought us out of bondage to sin;

For love that sought us out by God's Spirit and called us to faith.

God's love endures forever.

Give thanks for God's love that extends to all:

For love that welcomes people of every race, class and gender;

For love that endlessly endures and cannot be stopped;

For love that calls us, God's people, to love our neighbors as ourselves.

God's love endures forever.

Give thanks for God's love:

For love that remembers us when we have forgotten God;

For love that delivered us when we were in need;

For love that preserves us when we struggle;

For love that reigns, bringing restoration to our world.

God's love endures forever.

SONG OF REMEMBRANCE – INTO THE FIRE²

The sky was falling
And streaked with blood
I heard you calling me
Then you disappeared into the dust

Up the stairs, into the fire
Yea, up the stairs, into the fire
I need your kiss
But love and duty called you some place higher
Somewhere up the stairs, into the fire

May your strength give us strength
May your faith give us faith
May your hope give us hope
May your love give us love

You gave you love to see
In fields of red and autumn brown
You gave your love to me
And lay your young body down

Up the stairs, into the fire
Yea, up the stairs, into the fire
I need you near
But love and duty called you some place higher
Somewhere up the stairs, into the fire

May your strength give us strength
May your faith give us faith
May your hope give us hope
May your love give us love

² Bruce Springsteen; *The Rising*, 2002.

It was dark, too dark to see
You held me in the light you gave
You lay your hand on me
Then walked into the darkness of your smoky grave

Up the stairs, into the fire
Yea, up the stairs, into the fire
I need you kiss
But love and duty called you some place higher
Somewhere up the stairs, into the fire

May your strength give us strength
May your faith give us faith
May your hope give us hope
May your love give us love

PRAYER OF COMFORT & HOPE

Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious hand (*Isaiah 41:10*).

God of the years, we call you this day when the memories of 9/11 weigh so heavily upon our hearts. We recall with horror and renewed shock that day when airplanes flew into buildings and people perished. We remember our fear and anger, our confusion, and sense of threat.

We remember all that was lost to us that day: our sense of security, our peace, our innocence, our believe that we were safely beyond such random violence and death. Most of all we remember those who died in New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania; their lives of promise extinguished in hatred.

God of mercy, even in our worst moments your loving kindness surrounds us. I those tragic days two decades ago, our confident faith that you were with us enabled us to go on. We give you thanks for the ways in which you comforted us in those grim days through a deepened sense of community. We trace the movement of your grace through those among us who risked their lives to save others.

We are comforted by those who offered kindness and healing and shelter to those in distress, and by those who would not let hatred overcome love. For those whose witness to a deeper wisdom and faith comforted us, we give you thanks.

For public officials, neighbors, friends and strangers who brought to our troubled lives solace and clarity of purpose, we give thanks. For the calm and reassuring voices of the wise who gave us comfort and strength, we give thanks.

O God, you have taught us that faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. We live by hope in the future you hold for us and the whole world. Grant us, we pray, hope for our children and our children's children that they may not know or inflict the horror and terror we recall this day. Bolster our hope when it is weak and teach us to strive in all we do to realize the hope that is in your Word and witness.

Eternal God, in you our hope is boundless. You renew hope in us through the promise of a future in which none shall be afraid or lift up sword against a neighbor. We pray in hope for

the peace of the world among people and nations, religions and cultures, until we become a beloved community reconciled to one another under your sovereignty. Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING – PSALM 23 (IN UNISON)

**The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me besides still waters,
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.**

**Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff —
they comfort me.**

**You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.**

**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long (NRSV).**

NEW TESTAMENT READING – 2 CORINTHIANS 4:1, 5-10

Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies (NRSV).

REFLECTING ON THE WORD

"Light Shines Out of Darkness" — Rev. Wes Allen

SONG OF HOPE – AMAZING GRACE (MY CHAINS ARE GONE)³

Amazing grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see

'T'was grace that taught my heart to fear

³ John Newton (stanzas); Chris Tomlin and Louie Giglio (refrain).

And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love, amazing grace

The Lord has promised good to me
His word my hope secures
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures

My chains are gone
I've been set free
My God, my Savior has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love, amazing grace

The earth shall soon dissolve like snow
The sun forbear to shine
But God, Who called me here below,
Will be forever mine.
Will be forever mine.
You are forever mine.

PRAYER OF HEALING

God of all nations, look with favor upon this great nation as we remember the tragic terrorist attacks of 9/11. Be our source of strength, healing and comfort as our wounds still bleed.

God of wisdom and compassion, You create eventual blessings out of every kind of evil. Make us instruments and agents of such creation as we strive to turn the post-9/11 challenges into opportunities and blessings for others and ourselves. God of mercy and grace, we bring up the immediate victims and their loved ones of these heinous acts into your attention. Be their light in these moments of darkness and difficulty. God of hope and glory, do not let our hopes overcome by our fears. Do not let our souls crippled by despair. Be our source of hope and guidance in these times of sorrow and mourning. Oh God, if we forget You. Do not forget us. In your most Holy and Beautiful name we pray.⁴

SONG OF RESURRECTION - THE RISING⁵

Can't see nothing in front of me
Can't see nothing coming up behind
Make my way through this darkness
Can't feel nothing but this chain that binds me
Lost track of how far I've gone
How far I've gone, how high I've climbed
On my backs a sixty bound stone

⁴ Imam Abdullah Antepli

⁵ Bruce Springsteen; *The Rising*, 2002.

On my shoulder a half mile of line

Come on up for the rising
Come on up, lay your hands in mine
Come on up for the rising
Come on up for the rising tonight

Left the house this morning
Bells ringing filled the air
Wearing the cross of my calling
On wheels of fire I come rolling down here

Come on up for the rising
Come on up, lay your hands in mine
Come on up for the rising
Come on up for the rising tonight

Spirits above and behind me
Faces gone black, eyes burning bright
May their precious blood bind me
Lord as I stand before your fiery light

I see Mary in the garden
In the garden of a thousand sighs
There's holy picture of our children
Dancing in the sky filled with light
May I feel your arms around me
May I feel your blood mix with mine
A dream of life comes to me
Like a catfish dancing on the end of my line

Sky of blackness and sorrow (dream of life)
Sky of love, sky of tears (dream of life)
Sky of glory and sadness (dream of life)
Sky of mercy, sky of fear (dream of life)
Sky of memory and shadow (dream of life)
Your burning wind fills my arms tonight
Sky of longing and emptiness (dream of life)
Sky of fullness, sky of blessed life

Come on up for the rising
Come on up, lay your hands in mine
Come on up for the rising,
Come on up for the rising tonight

BENEDICTION - GO IN PEACE

May our lives honor the lives of all who have been lost, all who have suffered in the wake of that terrible day. May we honor them with our eagerness to work for a world in which our lives are not swallowed up in violence and hatred, but in which we are set free to be the people God created us to be. God has not placed us at each other's mercy, but in each other's care. May the Spirit of the Living God enlighten us, transform us, and lead us into life. **Amen.**