

**September 17, 2023**  
Thanksgiving Service for First Responders

**Prelude and Chimes**

**Welcome and Announcements**

**\*Call to Worship** (Inspired by Psalm 103)

Leader: Bless the Holy One with our whole selves. Praise the Maker of our being!

**People: Remember the mighty deeds and the good works of our God.**

Leader: The Sovereign One endows us with many gifts and equips us to do good work.

**People: Remember the mighty deeds and the good works of our God.**

Leader: Holy Love entered the world without condemnation but with grace and forgiveness, mercy and compassion, redemption and restoration.

**People: Hallelujah! We give thanks for the mighty deeds and the good works of our God!**

**\*Hymn #21: "God Reigns o'er All the Earth"**

**\*Passing of the Peace**

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 46 David Alexander

**Special Music** Keith Johnson, Tom Gill, Rick Ransom

**Time With Young Disciples**

**\*A LITANY OF THANKS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS (by The Rev. Dr. Karen A. Monk)**

You saw the need in your community. You looked in the mirror and said, "I can't do everything, but I can do something."

**You are a blessing, and we thank God for you.**

You signed up for training. You studied countless hours; you sweated through exams and waited for the results. You showed up for drills, when you might have spent the evening or the Saturday with friends.

**You are a blessing, and we thank God for you.**

You got the pager and the uniform. You took on the responsibility to respond when your neighbors, your friends, or even a stranger passing through needed someone to help.

**You are a blessing, and we thank God for you.**

The pager went off during dinner; it went off during the big game; it went off when you finally fell asleep at the end of a long day. You grabbed your gear, and went to the building, to the scene. You set aside your comfort and your plans, that someone else might have life, or hope, or comfort.

**You are a blessing, and we thank God for you.**

Then came the tough call. Too young. The long-time neighbor. The unimaginable scene. You gave your best. Then you went home, and hugged your loved ones, and prayed for those who had lost so much. You wondered if you'd done enough.

**You are a blessing, and we thank God for you.**

We give thanks to God for you.

You exemplify for us, and for the next generation, the values of courage and service and commitment. You do not seek or wish our recognition, but this morning we say THANK YOU for all you do, quietly, faithfully, each day to make our community stronger.

**You are a blessing, and we thank God for you.**

## **Meditation**

**Hymn #466:** "Unto the Hills We Lift Our Longing Eyes"

**The Community at Prayer** (*Joys and Concerns, Prayers for the People, Lord's Prayer*)

If you are watching online, type any prayer requests in the chat by the end of the sermon and we can voice them and get the names on the prayer list.

## **The Firefighter's Prayer**

When I'm called to duty God, wherever flames may rage,  
give me strength to save a life whatever be its age.

Help me to embrace a little child before it is too late  
or save an older person from the horror of that fate.

Enable me to be alert to hear the weakest shout  
And quickly and efficiently to put the fire out.

I want to fill my calling and to give the best in me  
to guard my neighbor and protect his property.

And if according to your will I have to lose my life  
bless with your protecting hand those family members of my life.  
Amen

### **The EMT's Prayer**

GOD, grant me the ability to give emergency care, with skillful hands, knowledgeable mind, and tender loving care. Help me deal with everything, when lives are on the line. To see the worst, administer aid, and ease a worried mind. So help me as I go today, accept what fate may be.

### **The Police Officer's Prayer**

Lord I ask for courage

Courage to face and  
Conquer my own fears...

Courage to take me  
Where others will not go...

I ask for strength

Strength of body to protect others  
And strength of spirit to lead others...

I ask for dedication

Dedication to my job, to do it well  
Dedication to my community  
To keep it safe...

Give me Lord, concern  
For others who trust me  
And compassion for those who need me...

And please Lord

Through it all  
Be at my side...  
Amen

We lift these prayers and the prayers of our hearts to you O God and together we join in praying the Lord's Prayer...

### **Prayer Response**

#### **Invitation to the Offering**

*(Opportunities to give for the ministries of this church are available through an offering plate during service, by mailing your gift to the church office, or by signing up for electronic giving through our website.)*

**\*Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God for all that love has done  
Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.

**\*Prayer of Dedication**

**Merciful God, receive our humble offerings as a testimony to your provision and a demonstration of our love. May they be magnified and multiplied for the benefit of our community and all creation.**

**\*Hymn #77: "Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing"**

\*Commissioning and Blessing

\*Choral Response

\*Postlude