



September 11, Five Years Later

Reflections on Camp Noah

Meet LYO Vice-President Walter M.L. Hampton II

Youth Gathering 2006

My San Antonio Experience

Teen from Mexico Visits Sayre Congregation before Youth Gathering

September 11, Five Years Later

Remembering Katrina



Bishop Hanson's letter on the Fifth Anniversary of the September 11th Attacks

September 2006

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

September 11, 2001, changed the context of the church in this nation. The terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C., and the crash of a plane controlled by hijackers near Shanksville, Pa., shattered thousands of lives and galvanized millions more around the country and across the globe.

In the moments and days following the events of September 11, people responded with prayer and action. Unprecedented numbers of people gathered to pray, to express anguish, and to receive consolation from one another and from the Word of God. The Rev. Stephen P. Bouman, bishop of the ELCA Metro New York Synod, wrote: "For a brief time our houses of worship were the most important places in the community, and the Bible was a living document of drama encompassing our own."

Faith leaders demonstrated courage and dedication by providing a place to gather, a place for the community to grieve, and a place for attending to immediate needs. There were ecumenical and interfaith words of sorrow and compassion, and a worldwide reaching out to people suffering in the United States.



Five years later, the wounds from that day remain just under the surface for many whose lives were devastated — those still grieving the loss of a loved one, the loss of a job, the loss of a way of life, or a loss of trust in God.

Terrorism is intended to create fear and mistrust. If our reality is shrouded in fear and mistrust, we have not fully heard the story of God's love expressed through Jesus' death and resurrection. As it says in the ELCA Church Council's "[Message on Living in a Time of Terrorism](#)," we are called to "affirm the Gospel's gift of living beyond fear."

We give thanks for the many ways Lutherans have responded "beyond fear" to this tragedy. We give thanks for Lutherans across the country who opened their hearts and gave generously to help the survivors of this tragedy: more than \$10.6 million in gifts and matching funds were donated to ELCA Domestic Disaster Response.

- In New York, these gifts funded counseling services, outreach programs, day camps and scholarships for children affected, and supported many other programs funded by Lutheran Disaster Response of New York (LDR-NY).
- Congregations in the Washington, D.C., area have rallied around survivors and the families of those lost in the Pentagon.
- Lutherans in the Shanksville area have provided hospitality to victims' families and others who visit the crash site of United Airlines flight 93.

We give thanks for congregations, individuals, and agencies such as [Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service](#) that work for justice for immigrants and others who are suspect simply by virtue of their ethnicity or religion.

In a culture that says, "Get over it," we as faith leaders have an opportunity to create safe spaces for people to tell their stories, to express their fears and their pain, and to be reminded of God's presence in times of trouble.

In the first chapter of Luke, Zechariah's prophecy tells of the God who does not forsake us: "By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace" (Luke 1:78-79).

With deep gratitude, I give thanks to God for the witness of this church. God has been present through us — through our hands and our feet, through our ears and our voices, through our generous gifts of time and money, through our prayers and lament.

I am grateful for the partnership we share in the mission to which God calls us.

Living in God's amazing grace,

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Remembering September 11th - Five Years Later

Local memorial observance of the fifth anniversary of the September 11th attacks may vary according to congregational circumstances. These resources are shared for those congregations that wish to include elements of remembrance in their worship. These resources were created or recommended by clergy from the New York Metro area and persons from the ELCA Worship staff and Domestic Disaster Response staff at the Churchwide office.

[Prayer Litany from "9/11"](#) - Commissioned by St. Peter's Lutheran Church, New York City

[Prayer of Lament](#) - Recommended by Rev. Robert Rimbo, Holy Trinity Lutheran, New York City

[Sermon Starter](#) - Sept. '06 Liturgical Press, "Homily Helps" Contributed by Rev. Amandus J. Derr, St. Peter's Lutheran, New York City

[Scriptures & Sermon Starters](#) - Contributed by Rev. Kevin A. Massey, ELCA Domestic Disaster Response

[Benediction and Sending](#) - Recommended by Rev. Amandus J. Derr, St. Peter's Lutheran, New York City

For additional worship resources for use in remembrance of the September 11th terrorist attacks, please visit the [ELCA Worship website](#).

