

THE CHAPLAIN'S MANUAL



**NEW YORK STATE
ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHAPLAINS, INC.**

Copyright 2024 - Third Edition

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Section I – General Information

Brief History of the New York State Association of Fire Chaplains, Inc.

Founded in 1967

The scriptures tell us in Psalm 127 verse one, “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it, unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain.” As we searched the past for God’s divine anointing, we discovered that the Lord had used an event of the past to lead our founders together. Research compiled by Rev. Gregory Brennan, past Chief Chaplain and Rev. Jim Van Houten; historian brought this to light. Additional details were provided by Rev. David Arnold and confirmed by Rev. Robert Winterkorn and Rev. John Steger. This event, which occurred on February 3, 1943, lead directly to the founding of our organization.

On that date in history a convoy of three ships was passing through “torpedo alley” 100 miles off the coast of Greenland. It was 1 A.M. when a torpedo struck the Dorchester, a troopship in the midsection; she was sinking quickly into the freezing sea with 900 men on board. Four Chaplains were on board, two Protestant pastors, a Catholic priest and a Rabbi, they were among the first on deck, and calming the men they handed out life jackets.

When they ran out of life jackets, they took off their own and placed them on waiting soldiers without regard to faith or race. It was approximately 18 minutes from the time the torpedo struck, until the ship went down. They were the last to be seen by witnesses; they were standing arm-in-arm on the hull of the Dorchester, each praying in his own way for God's care for the 669 men who would die that evening.

Those four Chaplains were Father John Washington a Catholic priest, Rev. Clark Poling a Dutch Reformed minister, Rabbi Alexander Goode a Rabbi from New York City and Rev. George Fox a Methodist minister. All four have been honored for their selfless acts of courage, compassion and faith. According to the First Sergeant on board the Dorchester, "They were always together, they carried their faith together." They had demonstrated throughout the voyage and in their last moments, interfaith compassion in their relationship with the men and with each other.

This event of history was the seed that touched the heart of Rev. Robert Field, Chaplain of FASNY. Over the next few months, the Lord began to give him a vision for Chaplains in the Fire Service. Fire Chaplains, well trained representing the three faiths; Chaplains known for compassion and faith, working together for their God in their Departments.

Rev. Field invited Father Vincent A. Kennedy, a fire Chaplain from Wantagh New York to be the keynote speaker at the Chaplain's seminar, which would take place at the Firemen's Association of the State of New York Annual Meeting, which was held on August 16, 1966 in Rochester, New York. There were 14 Chaplains who attended this seminar; they may not have realized it that evening, but the hand of the Lord had brought them together, with a divine purpose in mind.

Listen to the words of Father Kennedy as he addressed the group, and to the thoughts of those who attended, as you read these minutes you can sense the presence of the Lord at the meeting. Father Kennedy began his talk challenging all present, "We all, as Fire Chaplains, have a serious job to do. When the call goes out for the Chaplain, it is important to firemen to know that their Chaplain is there. Even when illness strikes, men of the department like to have the Chaplain call, especially during serious illness. During my eighteen years' experience as a Chaplain, I have come to realize the important role the Chaplain plays in the lives of firemen and people caught in tragedy. This is an historical moment in the history of New York State as we of different faiths gather here as brother firemen... We need to get to know each other, see eye to eye, clarify our standards, we are not Chaplains for ourselves but for God... we are sometimes the only link between firemen and God."

By the conclusion of this meeting our organization was formed. Father Field suggested that officers be elected and moved that Father Vincent Kennedy be made President, Rev. John Brown, Vice President and Rev. Robert Bromfield, Secretary; he himself would act as an advisor. That evening of August 16, 1966, with the Spirit of the Lord moving in the hearts of those who attended, the New York State Association of Fire Chaplains was born.

There were fourteen Chaplains present at this first meeting and they became the founders of our Association.

From the moment of its conception, the New York State Association of Fire Chaplains Inc. was to be an association uniting Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish Chaplains, whether lay or ordained, in the fire service. Through meetings, it provides fellowship, develops ideas and procedures for Chaplains to follow in their ministry and gives opportunities to develop skills in firematics through annual training periods.

The support provided by The Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY) allowed our new organization to begin. And their support continues today as we work together in the Fire Service. Many of our members are serving on the FASNY Chaplain's Committee.

The purpose of the founding seminar was nine-fold in its inquiry:

- General duties and responsibilities of Chaplains of fire departments and companies and other organizations.
- Duties and responsibilities of the Chaplain at a fire.
- Suggestions for a local annual Memorial Service at a wake in the funeral home.
- Conducting a service or wake in a funeral home.
- Blessings and dedication of a new fire house.
- Blessing of a new fire truck and /or other equipment.
- Prayers to be used on special occasions.
- Means of interesting more clergy to participate in the work of the volunteers.
- General knowledge of and how to use, if necessary, a Scott air pack and other equipment.

During that first successful meeting, it was decided that a committee should be formed to continue the work of formally organizing our Chaplains association. This committee met periodically in 1966 and 1967.

On March 10, 1967, a second formal meeting was called in Albany in which the charter was officially presented along with a Constitution and set of by-Laws, which would give both a foundation as well as structure to build upon in the future. There were nineteen Chaplains in attendance, and they became our nineteen Charter Members, their names will be listed later in this history.

The stated purpose of the Association reads: "The purpose of the Association is to unite all fire Chaplains of the State of New York in order to promote a deeper and wider knowledge of one another in the ecumenical spirit and to establish statewide procedures of standardization in serving our firemen and God, our supreme Chief."

The first order of business was the needs of those firemen living at the Firemen's Home in Hudson which was over scene by FASNY. The members of the home were to be part of our ministry as Chaplains, we were to pray for them and visit them, often sharing Communion with any shut-ins.

The new by-laws required the election of certain officers for this Association, they were as follows: Chief Chaplain, 1st Deputy Chief Chaplain, 2nd Deputy Chief Chaplain, Executive Secretary, and a board of Directors. Filling these offices were Rev. Vincent A. Kennedy, of Wantagh, NY Chief Chaplain; The Rev. John L. Brown, then of Jordan, NY, 1st Deputy Chief Chaplain; the Rev. David W. Arnold, of new City, NY, 2nd Deputy Chief Chaplain; the Rev. Robert A. Bromfield, of Marcy NY, Secretary-Treasurer. The Board of Directors were Rev Robert Field, Mr. Edward J. Sitzman; the Rev. Richard K. Much; Mr. James Reitz, Sr.; the Rev. John J. Steger; and Mr. Harold D. Robbie.

Our Association received their certificate of Incorporation on June 1, 1967, and it was presented to the Board of Directors on June 10th at the spring meeting at the Concord hotel.

The Association held two meetings per year, one in January and one in May. The spring meeting included actual firematic training. Many of the ordained and lay Chaplains, who were among our first members, were interior qualified firefighters as well as Chaplains.

They had a unique sense of dedication to their communities and their departments. Father Vincent Kennedy believed that it would be difficult to pray effectively for your men, if you didn't know what they were facing. Once you enter a working structure fire, you feel the intense heat, experience the darkness that limits your vision, and realize the sense of urgency, with every second counting, it will change the way a Chaplain prays forever.

It was also to build a relationship, a bond between the Chaplain and their fire company. Those in need will approach you because they know and trust you. This was the same relationship those four Chaplains on the Dorchester had with their men.

The History of Volunteer Firefighting

Volunteer fire departments have been around for a long time.
Where did they originate and who started them?

The man who established the first volunteer fire department also invented bifocals, wrote, and printed Poor Richard's Almanack, studied electricity and helped draft the Declaration of Independence. His name was Benjamin Franklin. The first volunteer fire department began in Philadelphia in 1736.

Ben Franklin moved to Philadelphia from Boston at the age of eighteen. Boston had been greatly affected by fire. The city of Boston experienced major fires in 1653 and 1676. After the fire in 1676, Boston purchased a London pumper. The city then hired Thomas Atkins and twelve other men to fight fires. These were the first paid firefighters in the United States. In 1711, another major fire occurred in Boston. One hundred and ten families lost their homes. At the age of six Benjamin Franklin witnessed this fire. Concerned citizens banded together and formed The Mutual Fire Societies in 1711. When fire struck a member of the Mutual Fire Society, other members of the club rushed to help battle the blaze. Each society had approximately twenty members. Dennis Smith stated the following: "The Mutual Fire Societies became social as well as protective associations, setting a pattern for organized volunteer firefighting groups, which would one day be the backbone of firefighting in America and would dominate it for a century and a half."

In 1682, the city of Philadelphia was founded by William Penn. When determining where to locate the city Penn gave careful thought to the dangers of fire. He had witnessed the London fire in 1666 and did not want Philadelphia to suffer the same fate. To reduce the possibility of fire, a fire ordinance in Philadelphia in 1696 required chimney cleaning. Philadelphia also had a large number of brick buildings that made it less susceptible to fire.

In 1718, Philadelphia bought its first engine. It was named The Shag Rag, but it was not put into service until 1730 when Philadelphia had a fire that destroyed much of the commercial district along the river. The Shag Rag was no match for the conflagration because it only produced a trickle of water. In the twelve years the city owned it no one had maintained it. Ben Franklin urged the city to get better organized to fight fires. Shortly thereafter the city bought four hundred fire buckets, twenty ladders and hooks and two additional engines.

In 1733, Ben Franklin often wrote about the dangers of fire and the need for organized fire protection in his newspaper *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. Ben Franklin was familiar with Boston's Mutual Fire Societies which were also known as "Fire Clubs." But the "Fire Clubs" existed for the protection of its members, not the community at large. Collins wrote that [Ben Franklin] "wanted organizations that would battle all fires, regardless of whose property was burning."

After an extensive fire in Philadelphia in 1736, Franklin created a fire brigade called The Union Fire company with 30 volunteers. The first full-fledged volunteer firefighter in America was Isaac Paschall. The idea of volunteer fire brigades gained popularity. Not wanting more than 30-40 men per company, additional companies were formed in Philadelphia. Some of them were: The Fellowship, Hand-in-Hand and Heart-in-Hand, and Friendship Companies. Each of the companies paid for their own equipment and located it throughout town at strategic places. Most early fire companies in Philadelphia and other cities had professionals, wealthier merchants and tradespeople serving in the volunteer fire department. These citizens were able to afford to purchase equipment and pay fines for missing meetings and fires.

Some famous Americans who served as volunteer firefighters were George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Paul Revere, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, John Barry, Aaron Burr, Benedict Arnold, James Buchanan and Millard Fillmore also served as volunteer firemen.

In 1818, women began serving as volunteer firefighters. The first recorded female volunteer was Molly Williams, a black slave who belonged to a New York merchant, Benjamin Aymar of Oceanus No. 11. Paul Ditzel in *Fire Engines*, Firefighters provided the following information: "Molly was a very distinguished volunteer of No. 11 Engine. She used to be called 'Volunteer No. 11.'" Molly fought fires wearing a calico dress and checked apron. During a blizzard in 1818, she helped drag the engine to the scene of a fire. She always told those who asked, "I belongs to ole 'Leven; I allers runs wid dat ole bull-gine."

In 1820, Marina Betts served as a volunteer in Pittsburgh and claimed she never missed an alarm during her ten years as a firefighter. Paul Ditzel stated: "Betts became famous for dumping buckets of water over male bystanders who refused to help fight fires."

Lillie Hitchcock, a resident of San Francisco, was America's most famous female firefighter. She worked with Knickerbocker Engine Company No. 5 beginning in 1851. According to Frederick J. Bowlen's account, one day on the way to a fire there were not enough men to pull the engine for the Knickerbocker Company. Not only that but when the Knickerbocker Company's engine was passed by the Manhattan No. 2 and Howard No. 3 on the way to a fire, the men received humiliating remarks from the other firefighters. Fifteen-year-old Lillie Hitchcock saw their plight and dashed to the vacant spot on the rope. Pulling with all her might she shouted to the bystanders, "Come on, you men! Everybody pull and we'll beat them!" This teenage socialite began attending fires and the company gave her an honorary membership. Even after her marriage to Howard Coit she was still interested in firefighting. As time passed, she no longer followed the engine to fires but she visited many an injured firefighter and sent flowers when firemen died in the line of duty. Her estate provided funds to build a monument to honor volunteer firefighters.

Before 1850 no city in the United States had fully paid, full-time firefighters. Volunteer firefighters played and continue to play an invaluable role in protecting lives and property.

The Maltese Cross



The badge of a firefighter is the Maltese Cross. The Maltese Cross is a symbol of protection; a badge of honor; and its story is hundreds of years old.

When a courageous band of Crusaders, known as the Knights of St. John, fought the Saracens for possession of the Holy Land, they encountered a new weapon unknown to European warriors. It was a simple but horrible device of war. It wrought excruciating pain and agonizing death upon the brave fighters for the Cross. The Saracen's weapon was fire.

As the Crusaders advanced on the walls of the city, they were struck by glass bombs containing naphtha. When they became saturated with the highly inflammable liquid, the Saracens hurled a flaming torch into their midst. Hundreds of the Knights were burned alive while others risked their lives to save their brothers in arms from dying painful, fiery deaths.

Thus, these men became our first firefighters, and the first of a long list of courageous firefighters. Their heroic efforts were recognized by fellow Crusaders who awarded each hero a badge of honor – a cross similar to the one that firefighters wear today. Since the Knights of St. John lived, for close to four centuries, on a little island in the Mediterranean Sea named Malta, the cross came to be known as the Maltese Cross.

The Maltese Cross is your symbol of protection. It means that the firefighter who wears this cross is willing to lay down their life for you, just as the Crusaders sacrificed their lives for their fellow man so many years ago. The Maltese Cross is a firefighter's badge of honor, signifying that they work with courage – a ladder rung away from death.

A floral tribute in the shape of a Maltese Cross should be used at a funeral or Memorial Service and has the official sanction of this Association. It is hoped that this floral tribute will be used throughout New York State.

A Welcome Introducing New Chaplains into The Fire Service

Written By: Chief Chaplain Thomas With, 1st Deputy Richard Bolster, 2nd Deputy Joseph McCarthy
Executive Secretary William Miles, Treasurer David Quinn
Historians Past Chief Rev. Jim Van Houten & Past Chief Rev. Leon VanWie
Director Rev. Robert Ruston

New York state Association of Fire Chaplains

The following material will help to introduce you as a fire department chaplain. It will provide you with basic information, however, it will certainly not cover every issue in detail. We all continue learning as we do this important work every day.

There is no substitute for time the chaplain spends with his or her department, getting to know the personnel and the culture of the department. Dropping in to have a cup of coffee with the duty crew may be the most valuable work a chaplain can do on a day-to-day basis.

The Following Are Things You Need to Know About Firefighting:

No department expects the chaplain to be an expert in firefighting. In fact, all FDNY Chaplains have zero firematic training when they are appointed. However, you do need to know something about this business for your own safety. You may also have the opportunity to explain the actions of the fire department to bewildered onlookers or homeowners.

One example will serve to illustrate. The fire department arrived at a two-story home with smoke seeping from every crack and crevice. They put a ladder up and even before there was water being applied to the fire, they were cutting a hole in the roof. Smoke billowed out of the hole in the roof and then ignited. A bright column of flame shot from the hole. A neighbor asked the chaplain, "Do these guys know what they are doing? The fire didn't look too bad until they cut a hole in the roof. Now look at it!"

What the neighbor did not understand, and what hopefully you could explain, is that the house was charged with smoke and heat. Rushing in through the front door would add oxygen to the mix, possibly igniting it in an explosive manner. The house would have been completely destroyed and it could have been deadly for the firefighters. The vent hole in the roof allowed some of the smoke and heat to escape. The fact that it ignited at the vent is acceptable. The roof will have to be replaced, but the house can be saved.

All Firefighters Wear Protective Gear:

Fire is dangerous. The heat of a house fire can be hot enough to melt glass. The smoke is poisonous and has become more and more poisonous as we have introduced more plastic into our homes. Firefighters wear protective gear (and you should too) to protect themselves from the effects of heat, smoke, fumes and other hazards of the fireground. Standard firefighting personal protective equipment (PPE) is often called turnout gear or bunker gear. This includes protective pants and a coat. Both have insulation against heat and a vapor barrier against steam and gases. The firefighter also wears a fire-resistant hood and a helmet. Proper gloves and boots are important in this work. Most firefighters have a PASS device (Personal Alert Safety System), which sounds an alarm if they remain still too long. This helps locate fallen firefighters. Rounding out the gear is the Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus or SCBA. This provides air for the firefighter to breathe in the fire situation. And no, those aren't oxygen tanks on the firefighter's backs. It's compressed breathing air. All of this is heavy. And it can be very hot. This is one reason firefighters need to go to rehab after an extended period of work on the fireground.

Are All Fire Trucks Red?

Fire trucks are often painted red, but you may find yellow, greenish yellow, or white, along with a few other color schemes, we have a blue one in my department. There is debate about which color is best, but the paint is not the most important part of a fire truck. It's what's inside that counts. Some fire trucks, called pumpers or engines, carry water, hose and a host of other items needed to "put the wet stuff on the red stuff." Their primary function is to pump water and since many of them can put out one thousand gallons of water a minute, the water they carry to the fire can be quickly used up. Larger hoses are used to connect the engine to a fire hydrant for a sustained water supply. In other cases, the pumper may be used to pump water out of a pond in an operation called drafting. In places where hydrants are not available another type of fire truck called a tanker helps to provide water. As the name implies, the most important aspect of this truck is a large water tank. There are a variety of trucks used for aerial operations, when height is needed to accomplish a rescue, open a vent hole in the roof or to pour water on a fire from above. Sometimes these are simply called "trucks". These include ladder trucks, tower ladders and snorkels.

There are Several Teams at Work at a Fire Scene:

Many fire departments divide equipment and personnel into different functional groups. An engine company uses an engine or pumper, and their primary task is to provide the water that snuffs out the fire. A ladder company uses an aerial truck. Their primary tasks are to make entry to the building, search for anyone who might be trapped and open the building to vent smoke and heat. Some communities also have rescue companies. They have specialized training and equipment that allows them to perform tasks such as automobile extrication, searching for victims, and other rescue from difficult situations. RIT, sometimes called FAST teams, are becoming more and more common at structure fires. The Rapid Intervention Team or Fast Action Safety Team stands by, ready to act immediately in the event of firefighters in need of help inside the fire building.

Teams Attacking the Fire:

A structure fire is a battle waged between the heat, fire and smoke, and the firefighters who are there first to protect the lives of anyone who might still be in the structure and second to protect property. There are really only two ways to attack a fire. The protective gear firefighters use has enabled them to make aggressive interior attacks. They take the hose into the building, find the fire and extinguish it, hopefully with a minimum of damage to the structure. When the fire gets larger it is no longer feasible or safe to attack from the inside. So, an exterior or defensive attack is made from the outside of the building. This can be done with hoses, sometimes called hand lines, but can be done with deck guns mounted on the apparatus or from ladder trucks.

Venting the Structure:

We already mentioned the process of venting, but a little more detail is helpful. Venting reduces the possibility of a sudden flare up in the fire, called a flashover, or even an explosion of smoke called a backdraft. Both of these can be deadly to firefighters working in the building. Venting clears some smoke and heat from the building, making it easier to work inside. There are three types of venting. Vertical venting is done by opening the building at the top, often at the roof, to release the hot gases. Horizontal venting is done by taking out windows. While it may not be as efficient as vertical venting, it can be done quickly by breaking the glass. Power venting employs fans to push air into the building,

forcing the smoke out through other openings. Another form of power venting uses water from a hose, directed out a window, to remove smoke. Power venting usually takes place after the fire is knocked down, but onlookers often wonder why the fire department is shooting water out the window.

Tools of Our Trade:

There are many tools used in the work of the firefighter. In fact, firefighters have been quite inventive over the years, creating new tools to meet their needs.

Everyone knows that firefighters use hoses. But there are different kinds. Hoses that are used to supply water are larger and can be three, four or five inches in diameter. Many fire engines carry one thousand feet of supply line. The hoses that are used to attack the fire are most commonly one- and three-quarter inches in diameter. This hose can pack quite a punch while being maneuvered into place by a few firefighters. Big fires require more water to extinguish, so sometimes a two- and one-half inch attack line will be used. You will see several firefighters struggling to get that into place and use. That reel with rubberized hose on the engine is called a booster line. You won't see that used as much anymore.

Sometimes the fire department arrives as people are streaming out of the building. In that case the firefighters don't have to force their way in. But there are times when the fire is in a building that is locked up tight. That's when other tools come into play. The Halligan Bar combines a claw like end with a pike and pry bar on the other end for a multipurpose tool. Pair the Halligan with a flat head ax and you have what is known as "The Irons", which can get through most any door – one way or another. Firefighters also use axes to break through roofs and walls, although saws are being used more often in those jobs.

A fairly new tool in firefighting is the thermal imaging camera. These precious items (which have thankfully come down in price in recent years) help a firefighter see through smoke and darkness to find warm objects. That object might be a victim waiting to be rescued or the seat of an unseen fire.

Firefighters depend on radios. An old timer (who began his firefighting experience in the early 1900's) was asked how they managed without radios on the fireground. He said, "There was a lot of yelling". The "bugles" or "trumpets" you see on an officer's insignia were really megaphones used to shout orders. Thankfully today radio technology helps us at every turn. Radio pagers summon off duty firefighters when their help is needed. Radios in the apparatus help direct and update firefighters on the way to the scene. And portable radios relay commands instantly. There is a caution. Always assume that people are listening because they are. Radio scanners that tune fire and police frequencies are quite popular and people like to listen to the action.

Most fire apparatus carry fire extinguishers. There are different types for different purposes. Pressurized water extinguishers, sometimes called "cans" can be used to put out small fires, such as a wastebasket fire. Extinguishers filled with carbon dioxide provide a cold blast that smothers fire. Dry chemical extinguishers use chemical powders that interrupt the fire's chemical reaction. The dry chemical extinguishers are useful in situations where water would only add to the danger, such as an electrical fire.

When the fire is knocked down the work has only just begun. The process called overhaul includes searching for hidden heat and fire that might flare up again later. Often walls and ceiling must be opened to search for fire in the hidden spaces or voids in a building. Long pike poles are useful for

pulling ceilings and axes and plaster hooks are other tools that might be used in this process. Overhaul may also include trying to protect belongings not already damaged by the fire.

Taking a break:

When an incident lasts for a long period of time, or occurs in times of heat or cold, there is a need for firefighters to take a break from their work on the fireground. A break or rest area may be established for this purpose, and this can be a good area for the chaplain to be present. During this break firefighters have an opportunity to take a breather, rehydrate and get ready to go back to work.

The Incident Command System:

The emergency services have adopted the incident command system (ICS) to coordinate response to emergencies. This is especially important in large scale events. ICS puts one person in charge, with a chain of command to coordinate response. The chaplain will be a part of this system, reporting to the incident commander or the person the commander designates. When the chaplain arrives on the scene she or he must report to the commander, asking if there is anything the chaplain needs to do. Often the chaplain will remain close to the incident commander. It is also important to report to the commander before leaving the scene.

MVAs (Motor Vehicle Accidents):

Responding to motor vehicle accidents (MVAs) is an all-too-common part of the firefighter's work. Many of these incidents are routine. However, a bad accident may require lengthy extrication efforts, produce serious bodily injury or cause death. Hydraulic extrication tools, often called "the jaws" are used to cut through metal car parts, spread crumpled metal and clear the way for removing the victims. Sometimes a medical helicopter will be called to transport severely injured people directly to a trauma center. Some of these situations may require the chaplain to be present at the scene or become a reason for follow up at a later time.

EMS:

Some fire departments provide Emergency Medical Services or EMS for their community. In other places EMS is provided by a separate branch of local government or a private company. EMS requires a great deal of specialized training and equipment, including ambulances. Some cities and towns are finding that the EMS side of the business takes up an increasing amount of fire department labor. The most common question related to EMS occurs when the patient is loaded into the ambulance, but the ambulance remains on scene for several minutes. What is the reason for the delay in transport? Departments with Advanced Life Support (ALS) can provide some of the care normally done at the hospital right on scene. Intravenous lines are started to provide fluids and lifesaving drugs can be administered. Patients can be intubated to allow oxygen to flow to the lungs. A monitor will allow the paramedics to check a patient's heartbeat and oxygen levels.

Fatal Fires:

Despite the best efforts of firefighters, fires still claim many lives each year. A fatal fire is a time of sadness and sometimes a test of patience. The investigation needs to be painstaking and complete. Hours may pass before the body can be removed from the scene. The presence of a fire chaplain on

the scene until the body is removed can add dignity to the situation and becomes a source of comfort. A short, inclusive prayer over the body when it is removed offers a blessing to a bad situation. Families that become aware of this prayer are often comforted to know that a chaplain was present.

Crime Scenes:

The fire department is frequently involved at crime scenes. Sometimes this is obvious, such as when the ambulance is called to assist the victim of an assault. Other times it is not as obvious. A building fire may be considered suspicious until proven otherwise. All fire personnel, including the chaplain, must be careful around potential evidence, disturbing it as little as possible. A death may have occurred, which is not fire related, the fire was set to cover this crime. This may be an arson fire, one set on purpose.

The Work of the Fire Chaplain:

Fire chaplaincy is an opportunity to do the work of God, but not an opportunity for proselytizing. It is not a time for winning converts, but a time to express the love that God has shown to us in practical ways. We are also called to minister to firefighters from a wide variety of faith traditions, including those of no faith.

Although you may be the greatest preacher in the last hundred years, your firefighters don't want to hear you preach. But they want you to be present, especially when the going is rough. We know that there are no magic words that can take away the pain of a failed rescue, the death of a child or the death of a brother or sister firefighter. But your presence will speak in ways you may never fully appreciate or understand.

The most important work of chaplaincy may be to provide a non-anxious supportive presence in times of trouble. A chaplain had been at the scene of a terrible event, saying few words, and later was thanked for all she or he did. "I didn't do much." the chaplain said. And the reply was, "You were there, and that made all the difference."

This presence is especially important in the case of a death. A short prayer may be said over the body, but it is the chaplain's presence that helps to provide dignity in that terrible moment. Families are often comforted to know that a chaplain was there to pray over their loved one's remains.

It sometimes seems that the words most used by a chaplain are, "How are you doing?" The answer is usually, "OK" even if that is not quite the truth. Occasionally, in a bad situation, an honest answer is given, which probably involves one or more profanities. The important thing is that the chaplain is there and the chaplain cares. You will find that the language of firefighters is not the language you would use in the pulpit. Often firefighters will apologize to the chaplain for swearing in his or her presence. Under stress some of our ladies will swear as much as the men. As a chaplain we look into their eyes and into their hearts, I am never bothered by their words.

Now, as in any other organization, the members have the right to complain... Firefighters are no exception, in fact they seem to have inherited this right as they carry on the fight to protect lives and property. The chaplain is certain to hear complaints about the leadership of the department, other firefighters, the equipment they have to work with, the conditions of the station and the support (or lack thereof) they receive from the municipality. Sometimes these complaints are just blowing off

steam. Other times there are serious issues involved. Either way, it pays to listen intently, listen but don't comment. Silence is golden and it may keep you out of personal conflicts.

The first focus of a fire chaplain must be the men and women of the fire service. We exist to serve them. In fact, one of the mottos of the New York Association of Fire Chaplains is "Serving those who serve." However, there are times when fire chaplains are also called to minister to those who have been affected by fires, disasters, accidents, and other events. The support given at the time of tragedy is usually short term. Often a fire chaplain might assist a family in making connections with their own faith community.

Naturally, the first step in fire chaplaincy is being appointed by the Chief of the Department. Before that happens, you need to sit down with the Chief and discuss expectations – what will the department expect from you and what do you expect from the department. Go over the sample "Standard Operating Guidelines" or SOGs but remember that the Chief will want to adapt this for the department.

Once you have been appointed by the Chief of the Department, the best way to get started in fire chaplaincy is to meet the men and women of the fire department. Drop by the station now and then for a cup of coffee and to shoot the breeze. Remember that most fire departments have four groups, while some departments have multiple stations. So, it might take several visits before you have had a chance to meet every firefighter. Even if you don't remember all their names, it is worthwhile that they have met you before they need you.

There are official events that call for the chaplain's presence. You may be asked to offer a prayer on Fire Fighter's Memorial Sunday (regrettably often held on Sunday mornings when many of us are otherwise occupied). There are also retirement dinners and other gatherings where you may be invited. Some chaplains see their only function in these events. We sometimes call them "Banquet Chaplains" and this is not to be considered a compliment.

The chaplain is not needed at every incident. In fact, there is no way that you can respond to every medical call, every fire and every rescue. Remember that the department is made up of volunteers on call to cover twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. And you will never be able to keep up. However, there are times when your presence would be helpful at the scene. That's why it is important for you and the Chief to work out when and how you would be called. The sample SOGs attached at the end of this document provide a list of incidents which could need attention from the chaplain. However, remember that even when your presence may be helpful, you might be the last thing on the mind of a very busy incident commander. That's why many of us keep an ear open to the fire department radio frequency whenever we can.

What you need to know about CISM:

A critical incident can be defined as any event that provokes a strong emotional reaction which has the potential to interfere with normal life. Firefighters, by the nature of their work, are exposed to critical incidents on a regular basis. In the past young firefighters were advised by their elders, "It's part of the job, toughen up, get used to it." We now recognize that these events take a toll on firefighters and that effect is cumulative over time. Naturally, some events have a greater effect than others. The death or serious injury of a child, the death or serious injury of another firefighter and any event causing a large number of deaths are examples of critical incidents that will have a lasting effect on firefighters. Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) is a system that provides help in dealing with these effects.

The goal is to limit the effects of critical incidents. The system takes key concepts from lessons learned by the military from traumatic events and has been developed in the emergency response community over the years. CISM cannot take away the pain, but it helps firefighters to understand, anticipate and cope with the effects of traumatic situations. There are several aspects of the CISM system. Fire chaplains will commonly encounter the following interventions:

- **Defusing** – takes place very soon after a traumatic event and provides a brief exploration of the event with information about how it may affect those who experienced it.
- **Debriefing** – a more detailed examination of the traumatic event, with examination of how the participants are being affected, along with suggested coping techniques. This typically takes place a few days after the event.
- **Individual Crisis Intervention** – a one on one meeting to discuss difficulties being experienced related to traumatic events.
- **Pre-incident Education** – Helping our firefighters understand critical incident response as part of an on-going educational effort.
- **Crisis Management Briefing** – A meeting with a group of people to explain what is happening in a particular situation, how it may be affecting people and giving ideas on how to handle these effects.

The chaplain must remember that these interventions, with the exception of the individual crisis intervention, are conducted by a team. The team should include a chaplain, but also includes peers, who are trained emergency responders and trained mental health professionals.

One of the key concepts of CISM is that the reactions people experience to a critical incident may seem troubling, even abnormal. There may be flashbacks and nightmares, to name a few of many possible reactions. We assure our people that these are “normal reactions to an abnormal event.”

Confidentiality is a vital part of any CISM intervention. Nothing said in an intervention should be repeated. No reports are given to department command staff, except to say that an intervention was held. In fact, confidentiality is vital to all of the work done by a fire chaplain. However, if there is a threat of harm to others or self, then the chaplain is required to seek help for that individual, even if it means breaking confidence.

Line of Duty Death:

No one wants to think about the pain and suffering caused by the death of a firefighter in the line of duty. But given the danger of firefighting, such deaths happen all too often. It is important that the department and especially the chaplain prepare for such tragic events. The chaplain will be involved from the time of notification to follow up after the funeral. It is important to note that while the chaplain may be present when notification is given to family members, it is not always the chaplain’s job to make the notification. The Air Force Chaplains have found that an officer makes the notification with the Chaplain present. Then the Chaplain takes over. The chaplain is always there for support. Line of duty deaths require assistance from CISM teams and other chaplains to care for the other firefighters and the families.

Caring for Ourselves:

We encourage firefighters to take advantage of CISM and other means of taking care of themselves as they deal with the stress of their jobs. It is vital that fire chaplains do the same. There is a need for

chaplains to take care of themselves physically, psychologically, and spiritually. This requires an intentional program of self-care. It also requires us to remember that at times we are the ones who need to be debriefed and we are sometimes the ones who need the support of others.

The New York State Association of Fire Chaplains Inc:

The New York State Association of Fire Chaplains was organized in 1967. Naturally, fire chaplains served for many years before this time. This is our calling and our ministry within the fire service.

Today the importance of Fire Chaplains can be seen in several areas:

- **Support** – The work of the fire chaplain is not always easy. In fact, at times it is quite painful. Chaplains in our association support one another in difficult times.
- **Standards** – Our association has set standards and expectations for chaplains that involve training, qualifications, and practice.
- **Training** – Our association provides, along with the Department of Fire Services, training opportunities for chaplains to enhance their knowledge and skills. The training of fire chaplains must be an on-going process. Our annual training conference provides three days of specialized training each Spring.
- **Mutual Aid** – Just as neighboring fire departments assist each other in dealing with larger incidents, so fire chaplains assist each other when coverage and help is needed. Our Association provides a framework for this to happen, based on the fire district system used by the Department of Fire Services. Our association also has the ability to mobilize large numbers of chaplains for large events and has done so at Ground Zero in 2001.

The Department Chaplain

The Fire Department and/or Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Chaplain functions in a similar way to the military Chaplain in that the Chaplain is responsible for the spiritual, moral and ethical life of all firefighters and EMS workers in the department to which s/he is appointed. Ordained Chaplains carry out these functions within the scope of their ordination vows.

An ordained Chaplain should have the educational requirements of their church (usually a minimum of four years of college and three years of seminary) and a minimum of five years of pastoral experience with adequate training in pastoral counseling. In the department that appoints a lay Chaplain (non-ordained), the lay Chaplain should have the endorsement of their pastor, church or synagogue.

Responsibilities of the Chaplain

If the Chaplain is also a firefighter or EMS trained, they should perform those duties unless otherwise directed by the Incident Commander.

- At the fire/EMS incident scene:
 - The Chaplain observes the activities of all personnel, watching specifically for approaching fatigue or undue stress.
 - In case of injury to firefighter/EMS personnel, the Chaplain is available to administer comfort, concern and prayer in accordance with the religious background of that person. If deemed appropriate, the following action would be taken:

- Contact the pastor, rabbi, or imam of the injured.
 - Contact the family of the injured.
 - Accompany the injured to the hospital.
- In the role of the Chaplain, the Chaplain never issues commands as far as the incident is concerned, but can recommend to the proper officer that, in good judgment, personnel should be removed because of fatigue, stress or hyperactivity.
- The Chaplain becomes involved with the families affected by the incident:
 - Keeping the distraught from entering the scene
 - Offering spiritual comfort
 - Contacting the appropriate clergy or spiritual leaders
 - Putting the family in touch with the Salvation Army and/or Red Cross.
- After the incident:
 - In the event of a death of personnel or any person at the incident, the Chaplain is available to assist in debriefing those firefighters who are having inward or external difficulty handling death or painful suffering.
 - The Chaplain may be invited by the officers involved to participate in a critique of the incident.
 - Be available to personnel for debriefing after a severe trauma event.
 - The Chaplain is available for personal counseling, as requested.
- At other times:
 - The Chaplain is available to all personnel for personal conversation or counseling, if requested by the person. All of this communication is strictly confidential.
 - As a result of this counseling, the Chaplain may refer the person to their own clergy or other professional personnel (doctor, psychologist, psychiatrist or other mental health worker). Obviously, this is not an independent action, but is handled through the chain of command.
 - The Chaplain counsels the personnel firefighter's family, if requested.
 - The Chaplain plans for Memorial, Dedication, or other religious services to which the personnel are invited.
 - If no clergy is available or involved, the Chaplain can officiate at weddings, baptisms or funerals involving personnel (as allowed by law).

The Chaplain is available to all department personnel as a listener, confidant and friend. The Chaplain takes no sides, but ministers to all.

The Chaplain may be assigned additional duties at an incident according to one's experience and skills.

Duties of a Department Chaplain

General Information

The Chaplain is the spiritual leader of the department. An active Chaplain must be available. This includes:

- Presence at all fire department activities: fire and emergency calls, drills, meetings, wakes and installation dinners.
- On public occasions.
- Be available to counsel the Chiefs and members in departmental and even domestic personal problems.
- At the call of the Chief of the department for any assistance that might be suggested.
- Responsible for the spiritual needs of the department members. This responsibility can be discharged in several ways: e.g., Referral to the person's own clergyperson or to a proper agency (counseling service, psychologist, etc.); or direct counseling by the Chaplain. Prudence is required so that the Chaplain forces neither the need nor the call for counseling.
- To circulate freely among the department members, when possible, as a source of encouragement.
- Be readily available to minister to their needs when required.

The following may be incorporated into a Chaplaincy program. This list does not include all the responsibilities that a Chaplain can undertake but these ideas can be taken into consideration as a vibrant Chaplaincy program is developed.

Spiritual Guidance

Two important functions of the Chaplain are to help firefighters/EMS personnel and their families in times of crisis and to help them with their spiritual needs. Of the many responsibilities a Chaplain may hold, these are the principal responsibilities. The Chaplain may use a variety of techniques to bring about spiritual truths and give assistance to an individual or family, however, the most important ministry is to simply be available when called upon. Spiritual need is the greatest of all needs and the Chaplain must be able to meet this need.

A Chaplain should remember that this job is not meant to direct a member to the religious beliefs of the Chaplain but should help the person in his/her own religious belief. A Chaplain should assist and direct a member to the religious leader of their own belief system. If they have no present affiliation, then a Chaplain may guide them in the Chaplain's own belief system. Under no circumstances, should a Chaplain compromise his/her own set of religious principles in the carrying out of the Chaplain's duties.

Emergency Situations

If the Chaplain is a trained active firefighter and/or rescue person, they will respond to the call as do the other members of the department and be available for service as directed by the Chief or incident commander.

If the Chaplain is not an active firefighter and/or rescue person, they will respond to the call in the capacity of Chaplain. Call types may include, but not be limited to:

- Confirmed working structural fires.
- Multiple alarm incidents
- Incidents involving multiple displaced persons.
- Confirmed fatalities (civilian or fire/EMS personnel)
- Motor vehicle accidents

- Serious injury to fire/EMS personnel
- Other emergencies as requested.

At fire incidents, the Chaplain should be alert to the needs of the personnel. The Chaplains should be especially mindful that the type of people responding to emergencies is easily capable of overexerting themselves to the point of exhaustion. Knowing this, the Chaplain can make incident command officers aware of potentially dangerous situations that need immediate and/or medical attention.

At major incidents, it is often the Chaplain who is free to assist in handling unruly or hysterical people (these people often tend to be family members of ones involved in the incident). This becomes a needed function at fires, rescues, extrications, situations that draw a sizable crowd, or incidents that involve children. A Chaplain who can remain calm and be able to explain what is happening to the public can be a helpful asset to the situation. *(Note that this is not a Public Relations Officer who talks to the media. This should be another person assigned by the Incident Commander to deal especially with the media.)* Comforting the bereaved and offering positive direction to the victim's family are also priorities at these incidents. The Chaplain can help explain the types of assistance that is available to the victims such as the Red Cross, Salvation Army, etc. and direct individuals to these programs.

The Chaplain will be available to the victims of disaster or loss, to comfort, to advise and to assist in any way possible. The Chaplain will obtain clergy of the person's faith when needed. If one is not available, the Chaplain will pray with or for the person(s), offering spiritual support.

Suggested procedure of the Chaplain at the Incident Scene

- Report to the Chief in charge as soon as possible. In a mutual aid call, report to the Chief in charge as a matter of courtesy.
- Inquire from the Chief if there is any special need. Remember that life is the first concern.
- In keeping with the Chaplain's own firefighting or rescue experience, you may survey the entire scene. If you have observed a condition that demands action, report this to the Chief or incident commander. Never, never give an order at an incident scene. A recommendation is often a valued aid, but commands are the responsibility of the Chief or incident commander.
- Words of comfort and sympathy are of great help to those whose homes and possessions have been destroyed or to the person who has just lost their place of business.
- The Chaplain shall assist directly when possible or contact and cooperate with local relief agencies on behalf of victims of fire or disaster.

In the event an injury (major or minor) or death of rescue personnel should take place, the Chaplain will be the primary contact with the victim's family. If an injury should occur, the Chaplain should meet the injured at the hospital, quickly determine the extent of the injury from the hospital staff, and then notify the family in a manner that will not cause undue panic or grief. At the time of contact a decision should be made as to whether the family needs transportation to the hospital and then prepare to meet with the family when they arrive.

Non-Emergency Situations

Liaison with Hospitals

A Chaplain should visit local hospitals to build a rapport with the medical personnel. These visits may help the Chaplain receive accurate and helpful reports from the hospital professionals. However, be

aware that with governmental and hospital regulations concerning privacy some information may be unavailable.

Conducting/Assisting at Funerals

The Chaplain can assist a family in the arrangements of a funeral for both active and inactive (retired) members. The Chaplain may be called upon to officiate at the service or to assist the family's minister.

The department should have a written set of funeral protocols for all funerals. A suggested set of protocols can be found in Section V of this manual.

Counseling and consolation for the member's family and children are the responsibilities of the Chaplain. The Chaplain should always send condolences at the time of death and represent the department by offering assistance according to the protocols.

The Chaplain may represent their department at services for deceased members of near-by departments, and when possible, attend county, regional, or statewide memorial services.

Visitation

A great deal of comfort, spiritual aid, and friendship can be given to the sick, distraught, and injured through personal contact. Visitation at the hospital or at home is an important function of the Chaplain.

Weddings

The Chaplain may be called upon to perform weddings for department personnel. Lay Chaplains are not able to perform these ceremonies while ordained Chaplains may be able to perform these events within the guideline of their religious beliefs.

Counseling

The daily pressures of the society in which we live and by the nature of rescue personnel can greatly contribute to the need of competent, caring counsel. A Chaplain must take extreme care not to overstep the abilities that he/she has. The need for counseling in the areas of marriage, profession, family, substance abuse, children, finances, acute traumatic stress management, and a wide variety of other issues can quickly overwhelm a Chaplain. A good Chaplain should know when to refer a person to a trained professional. Care must also be given to confidentiality issues.

In case of death, sickness or injury to a department member, the Chaplain will minister to all firefighters and to their families as requested. The Chaplain should be notified immediately upon the death, sickness or injury of any department member.

Department Functions

The Chaplain, when requested, will offer prayer at meetings, banquets, dedications, graduations, memorials and funerals as well as at other appropriate times.

Periodically, the Chaplain should conduct special training sessions for the department that include procedures to be used at places of worship with reference to religious items to be saved and/or protected in case of fire emergency. Local clergy should be invited by the Chaplain to update information on their church/synagogue on a regular basis. The New York State Association of Fire Chaplains has a PowerPoint training program called "What to Save in a House of Worship Fire."

The Lay Chaplain

The role and duties of a lay Chaplain are identical to that of an ordained Chaplain. Liturgical and ritual restrictions of a particular denomination are the only time it may require one who is ordained.

On all of the above occasions the Chaplain should wear distinctive clothing and/or uniform with insignia so as to be readily identified. Chaplains should have gold insignia on dress uniforms (as their department allows) and their Personal Protective Equipment should also indicate the position of Chaplain. The title and name of the Chaplain (e.g., Chaplain James Brown) should appear in all places where the list of company and line officers appear.

All of the foregoing requires dedication from the Chaplain, cooperation and permission from the Chief, common sense and a love of God and the fire/EMS service.

Chaplain's Emergency Service Bag

Chaplain Richard Holst
Huntington Manor

When an emergency occurs, there is little time to “gather a few things together.” The following items have been recommended as components of an Emergency Service Bag that can be carried at all times in the Chaplain's vehicle or be at the ready near the exit of your home.

- Heavy duty carry-all bag
- Emergency service identification card
- Flashlight with four extra batteries
- Writing paper with two extra pens
- Warm cap with ear covering.
- Cap with “Chaplain” on it
- Heavy warm gloves
- Light cotton/wool gloves (for dry warmth)
- Latex surgical type gloves (protection for blood borne pathogens)
- Over shoes
- Rubber boots
- Pair of socks
- Rain gear coat/jacket
- Bug spray or repellent
- Ministry book, small Bible
- Small personal religious or prayer book
- Small first aid emergency book
- Small first aid kit with band aids etc.
- A street map.
- Resource booklet with phone numbers
- Snack bars, raisins and fluid replacements where appropriate
- Specialty items required by your climate or particular circumstances.
- Personal soft body armor (you do not want to die)

Section II – Prayers for Various Occasions

Introduction

The Board of Directors respectfully submits the following prayers which have been gathered from many areas throughout New York State. A broad representative selection of those prayers has been selected for inclusion in this manual. If any are used, it is suggested that words may be changed and sentences added or deleted according to the locality and circumstances, or as custom dictates.

The traditions and customs of our many churches and synagogues and other houses of worship must be respected. For example, those who do not teach or believe in the “Trinity” may wish to eliminate any reference to Jesus Christ. Prayer conclusions that are more generic in nature can easily be substituted as needed, such as “We ask this in Your Eternal Name” or “We ask this in all faiths name.”

There is no set formula for prayer. It is necessary, therefore, for each Chaplain to pick and choose what they wish, add/or delete words, and change or modify according to their beliefs. The pages that follow offer suggestions and models that can readily be adapted to your needs.

Prayers for Emergencies

The Department Chaplain is often called upon to act in emergencies that involve life and death, or serious injury. This is especially true for Chaplains serving departments that operate rescue vehicles.

It is clear, in this ecumenical age that Chaplains can and should be of service to people of all religious faiths at the time of such an emergency. It is the Chaplain’s responsibility to be as familiar as possible with denominational traditions and expectations in emergency situations.

In all emergency situations, the wishes of the family involved should be respected. Also, the Chaplain is often in a position to notify the appropriate pastor, rabbi, or other religious leader, and should do so as quickly as possible.

When immediate religious services are called for, the following prayers and suggestions may prove helpful.

Absolutions

- The almighty and merciful Lord, grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of His Holy Spirit. Amen
- Grant, we beseech You, merciful Lord, to Your faithful people pardon and peace, that they may be cleansed from all their sins and serve you with a quiet mind, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

- Lord, for Your tender mercies' sake, lay not our sins to our charge, but forgive that which is past, and give us grace to amend our lives, to decline from sin and incline to virtue, that we may walk with a perfect heart before You, now and ever more. Amen
- Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of His great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins to all those who turn to him with true repentance and sincere faith, have mercy on you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins. God confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Blessings

- The Lord bless and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen
- May God the Father bless you. May God the Son comfort you. May God the Holy Spirit enlighten you. May Almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen
- May the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, come upon you and remain with you forever. Amen
- May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. Amen
- May the Almighty and merciful God bless and protect us, The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen

In Time of Sickness, Pain or Death

- O Lord God, in whom we live and move and have our being, open our eyes that we may behold Your Fatherly presence ever before us. Teach us to be anxious for nothing, and when we have done what You have given us to do, help us, O God our Savior, to leave the issue to Your wisdom, knowing that all things are possible to us through Your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen
- Almighty God, we entrust all who are dear to us to your never-failing care and love, for this life and the life to come; knowing that You are doing for them better things than we can desire or pray for, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen
- Breathe down, O Lord, upon all those who are bearing pain, your spirit of healing, the spirit of life, the spirit of peace and hope, of love and joy, the spirit of courage and endurance. Cast out from them the spirit of anxiety and fear; grant them perfect confidence and trust in You, that in Your light they may see light and experience your presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen
- O God, the strength of those who walk with You, without whom nothing is safe, nothing is tranquil; confirm in us the knowledge of Your presence that, you, being our companion, we may

so deal with our anxieties that at length our hearts may find their rest in You; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

- O Lord, who does feel the pain of the world, and looks upon all sick and suffering persons, enfolding them in Your love, grant that in the midst of pain they may find Your presence; to doctors and nurses grant tender hearts and healing hands; and give health again in body and mind, for Your tender mercy's sake. Amen
- Lord our God, the death of our *brother/sister*, name recalls our human condition and the brevity of our live on earth. But for those who believe in your love death is not the end, nor does it destroy the bonds that you forge in our lives. We share the faith of your Son's disciples and the hope of the children of God. Bring the light of Christ's resurrection to this time of testing and pain as we pray for name and for those who love *him/her*, through Christ our Lord. Amen
- Lord Jesus, our Redeemer, you willingly gave yourself up to death, so that all might be saved and pass from death to life. We humbly ask you to comfort your servants in their grief and to receive name into the arms of your mercy. You alone are the Holy One, you are mercy itself; by dying you unlocked the gates of life for those who believe in you. Pardon name *his/her* sins, and grant *him/her* a place of happiness, light, and peace in the kingdom of your glory for ever and ever. Amen

For Healing – Jewish

- May the one who blessed our ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, Bless and heal the one who is ill: name *son/daughter* of parent's name. May the Holy One, fount of blessings, shower abundant mercies upon *him/her*, fulfilling *his/her* dreams of healing, Strengthening *him/her* with the power of life.
- Merciful One: Restore *him/her*, heal *him/her*, Strengthen *him/her*, Enliven *him/her*.
- Send *him/her* a complete healing from the Heavenly Realms. A healing of body and a healing of soul, together with all who are ill, soon, speedily, without delay: Amen.

For Healing and Anointing

- O Almighty God, whose blessed Son laid His hands upon the sick and healed them; grant, we beseech You, to this person, on whom we now lay our hands in his Name, refreshment of spirit, and if it be Your holy will, perfect restoration to health; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
- O Almighty God, the giver of every perfect gift; hear us on behalf of this Your servant, and mercifully grant that by this anointing with holy oil *s/he* may receive relief from their sickness, cleansing from sin, and healing both of body and soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
- I lay my hands upon you in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, beseeching the mercies of our Lord Jesus Christ that He, by the power of His indwelling presence, may heal all

infirmities of body or mind or spirit that you may praise Him and serve Him with a grateful heart and a quick mind, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Guidance

- Lord, take me where you want me to go. Let me meet who you want me to meet. Tell me what you want me to say and keep me out of your way.
- Father Mychal Judge, FDNY Chaplain
- God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.
- Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
That I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
Forever in the next. Amen.
- Reinhold Niebuhr

Prayers For Various Occasions

Being A Member

Almighty God, we offer our grateful thanks for the opportunity to serve in the name of the organization. We are grateful that in this way we are given the privilege of discharging our duty to our fellow human beings and to our community. May we have the courage and the insight to carry out our tasks cheerfully and responsibly so that we may be a true credit to our department and to our community. This we ask in Your Name. Amen.

Following an Emergency Call

O God, we offer our grateful thanks that all our members have returned safely to quarters and to their families following the emergency. Our equipment is cleaned and ready for the next call. The station is quiet; our members are tired. May we now be granted that time of refreshing rest so that we may be prepared to return to the duties of the coming day, and so that we may be ready for the next alarm. This we pray in Your Name. Amen.

On the Death of a Member

Almighty God, as we return to quarters, we do so in the knowledge that name is not with us. *S/He* is now returning to final quarters in your presence. That life was given that others might live. The way has been shown. Name died in service; may *s/he* now live in service and rest in the peace of your presence. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Courage

Fortify us, O God, with the courage which comes only from You; that in the midst of all our perils and perplexities we may find that peace which only you can give; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For the Members

Eternal God, in whose hands lies the destinies of all persons, help us to feel our sacred unity as members of the human family and children of a common Father. Make us alert, vigilant, and in concord to our service to our community. May the spirit of love and good will possess and control our hearts as we bring blessedness to needy humanity and especially to those who look to us for protection. Bless our members and their service and hear our prayer, through the merits and mediation of the blessed Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Memorial Prayer at a General or Public Meeting

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we invoke Your blessing upon us as we enter into this very significant service in remembrance of those who have served in former years and who have entered into the life triumphant. We pray the cherished memories that well up in our hearts may now be a source of inspiration to us; that we may serve in our time as well as they served in their day. And as we go from this meeting and from this celebration back to our homes, we pray that we may give to our communities the same high devotion to duty, the same contribution of ourselves to the welfare of life that they gave in their day; that we may build in this time a heritage worthy to be handed to those generations yet to come. Our prayers are offered in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Amen

For the Fire/Rescue Service

Almighty God, look with your favor upon all who serve in the *Fire/Rescue* Service. Give to Chiefs and officers the wisdom and experience to lead and to direct; to our members the courage and determination to serve our communities; and to all of us the understanding and the realization of our role and responsibility in the protecting of our property, lives and natural resources. Amen

For Fire Service Families

Our heavenly Father, we offer our grateful thanks this day for our families, our spouses, our children and our parents, without whose support we could not function very well as members of the *name of the organization*. We know that our work takes time away from our families. We ask your blessing upon them. When we are away from home for meetings, drills, and especially at the *fire/rescue* scene, we ask your protection for them. Finally, Oh God, when the time of danger passes, may we be united in safety with them. We pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

To Honor a Group of Firefighters

Almighty God, our Father, how thankful we are for all You have given us. We ask Your blessing at this time upon the officers and members of this Department as we gather to honor (*our past presidents, retired members, deceased members, etc.*). May all the endeavors of this Department, these dedicated members who give so graciously of their time and efforts, constantly preserving life, limb, and property, from the hazards of fire and other emergencies, without thought of rich or poor, race, color or creed, have Your guidance and blessing.

We ask Your blessing upon our (*retired, ill, distressed, departed, etc.*) members and their families who cannot be with us at this time. We ask this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Opening of a Meeting

- Dear Lord and Father of all people, accept our thanks for all Your mercies of the past. We now call upon You for strength and guidance in this meeting.
- Teach us to always look to you for assistance, even as our fellow citizens look to us in their hour of need. Give us Your direction so we may plan that our service will be increasingly effective and efficient through the days ahead. We ask this in the name of the Servant of all. Amen
- Almighty God, direct our thoughts and decisions at this meeting that we may always serve the best interests of our department, and also that as individuals and as an organization we may more faithfully, responsibly, and effectively serve the community and people committed to our care. This we ask in Your Name. Amen
- Lord and Father of all, allow everyone here to have the awareness that You are the giver of every good and worthwhile gift; that our lives are in Your keeping; that our endeavors are directed by Your leadership; that our successes and failures are known to You; and that Your love and concern are limitless. Favor us with Your blessing as we attempt to fulfill the assignments of our department in Your Name. Amen

Closing of a Meeting

- Loving Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your guidance through this meeting. May Your loving spirit guide and keep us in all our ways, and so direct our paths that, like the Master, we may serve all creation with all our talents and abilities. Bless and keep all our dear ones in Your loving arms. Amen
- God, send us forth with a renewed commitment to serve. Renew us with your strength to do our job; with your wisdom to make the right decisions in time of emergency; and with your courage that we may be freed from fear. Keep us in your safety until we are together once again. Amen

For a Banquet - Opening Prayer and Grace

Almighty God, who alone spreads out the universe and kindles the fires in countless stars, confer Your favor and encouragement upon the frail efforts of all to curb the devastation that attends Your people daily throughout the world. To You we commend our security, and in particular the safety of all public guardians, especially these *firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians* and their families. Support them, O Lord, at their tasks, and keep them alert and skillful in every emergency. Endue them with courage, loyalty and confidence; shield them from the hazards that attend their duties; and grant that they may serve as an honorable safeguard to our communities and as a guarantee of good order to each of us at all times. And now we ask You to bless for our use these Your good gifts of which we are about to partake, making us truly thankful, and keeping us ever mindful of the needs of others. Amen

For a Banquet - Closing Prayer

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings by Your most gracious favor, and further us with Your continual help that in all our work begun, continued, and ended in Your Name, we may glorify You; and in particular, we beseech You to continue Your fatherly protection to us this night, now, and on the highways, and when we have returned to our homes. Defend us from all dangers and from the fear of them; that we may enjoy such refreshing rest as may fit us for the duties of the coming day. And grant us the grace always to live in such a state that we may never be afraid to die; so that living and dying, we may serve only You; through the merits of Your Son, in whose Name we offer up these imperfect prayers. Amen

A Meal Blessing

You do not walk a lonely road,
For God is always near.
He shares your heartbreak and your pain.
And knows the things you fear.

His hand will guide you safely,
For His love is always there
To give you strength and courage
If you ask for it in prayer.

Let us give thanks for the food we are about to receive.
Bless it to the nourishment of our bodies,
And us to Your service. Amen

Invocations, Benedictions, & Graces

- Oh God, we gather this evening with thankful hearts, mindful of all your gifts to us of a physical and spiritual nature. Help us in the fire/rescue service to best use those gifts to meet the needs we encounter within our service, and particularly those needs of the public we serve.
- As we dismiss Oh Lord, go with us always, guide our pathway, help us smooth the bumps in the road and always help us present ourselves so those we come in contact with will know we are yours.

- Gracious heavenly Father, we thank you for this special occasion when we can share about these tables in fellowship and food.
 - Unsigned
- Father, we ask for your presence to be with us tonight. Open our eyes and our hearts that we may see you at work in our world and in our lives. Fill us with your wisdom and keep us safe. Amen
- Dear Lord, we pray for your blessings to be upon the lives of the men and women here tonight. Watch over them and keep them safe as they risk their lives to help others. Give them the strength they need for all they will face and fill their hearts with your peace. In the name of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen
- Lord, we give you thanks for the meal we are about to share. Bless our fellowship around these tables, bless our lives as we serve you by serving others. In Jesus' name. Amen
 - Chaplain Barrie Lyn Foster
- Our heavenly Father, we thank you for allowing us to come together here in your name. We pray that all we do is in your name and for all the good of all here.
- Our heavenly Father, we thank you for allowing us to be here tonight. We pray that the decisions we make will help not only us but those we serve.

Our heavenly Father, we thank you for allowing us to come together here in your name. We pray that you will bless this food we are about to receive. We pray that it will nourish our bodies so that we will be able to do your will. Amen

 - Unsigned
- Loving God, we are gathered here this evening. We thank you for the opportunity to be together in fellowship. We remember those who cannot be with us because of illness or distance please bless our time together and help us to focus on the task at hand. Thank you, Lord, for our name of the organization and our work. Be with us today and every day. In Jesus name. Amen
- Fellow *firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians*, go in peace to love and serve the Lord and may the grace of our savior, Jesus the Christ and the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit be with you this day and every day. In Jesus' name. Amen
- Almighty God, we thank you for each and every *Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician* and for the work that you called them to do. We thank you Lord for each one who works in Emergency Services, for all who serve our community, for their caring and sharing.
- Lord, the work of a *firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians* is both dangerous and hard and so we ask that you continue to keep our *firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians* safe. Guard them from all harm. We thank you for the sacrifices they make for our community, for the hours of training for the missed meals and family events, for sleepless nights. We know that their work takes them away from their families and so we ask the Lord that you bless their families as they wait for their loved one's safe return. Lord, we thank you tonight for those who have served name of the organization and the community. We pray your blessings upon those who are retired and those who are ill. We also remember those who are no longer with us. Almighty God we ask that you bless all who serve with courage, perseverance, and determination, and we pray these things in Jesus' name.

- Gracious God, how thankful we are for all you have given us. We ask you special blessings at this time upon all who are gathered here this evening. We ask that you bless our food and bless us to your service.
- Rev. Cynthia Huling Hummel
- Let us pray; Our dear Lord we ask that you bless this organization. We would ask that you would honor this time we have together for this special time. Be with us now in Jesus' name we pray.
Amen
- Let us pray; Lord we pray that you would bless the time we have had together. Now we ask that you would be with us as we end this time and travel to our homes of abode. We ask in Jesus' name.
Amen
- Father, we would ask that you bless this food we are about to receive. Bless the hands that prepared it and bless it to our use. In Jesus' name. Amen
- Chaplain Don Elthorp
- Let us pray; Dear Lord, thank you for bringing us together, guide us in this meeting to be mindful of our members and our community, help us to make good decisions remember those families who have lost a loved one, be with them at this time. All this we ask in your name. Amen
- Lord thank you for all that you have done. Bless us now as we go forth to do your work, bless our families and friends as we continue to do your work. Amen
- Dear Lord, thank you for the food we are about to receive. Guide us and protect us as we go to our respective homes, protect us as we continue to do your work. Amen
- Unsigned
- Dear Lord, we thank you for attending this meeting of the name of the organization. We ask that you be with all the officers and members as they make decisions that will affect us all now and in the future. We also ask that we all safely return from all our calls to our families. We ask this prayer in all faith for the families and all firefighters.
- Thank you, dear Lord, for being with us this day. We thank you for your aid and guidance this evening. Please be with those who could not be here with us this evening. Allow us safe passage to our homes. Till we meet again, we ask this prayer in faith for the families and all firefighters.
- Thank you, dear Lord, for this bounty of food given by your hand. Bless those that have cooked and those the serve. We ask this prayer in faith for the families and all firefighters.
- Unsigned
- Gracious God, we thank you for this day and for this opportunity to gather to celebrate your love as it has been shown to us through your servants. We thank you for all members of name of the organization, for their dedication to the organization and to our community. Bless them and their families. Be with us in our fellowship around the table. Bless the food we will receive and the hands that have prepared it and keep us always in your love and care. Amen

- God of love go with us as we leave this place. May we go filled with your grace, your strength and your love to be servants of justice, safety, and peace in your world. Amen
- God, we thank you for this time to gather at table. Bless our time, our laughter, and tears. Bless the food we have before us, bless the hands that have prepared it. May it nourish our bodies as your spirit nourishes our souls. Amen
- Rev. Michaela St. Marie
- O Lord, as we come before you this *day/night* we ask that you bestow upon us your wisdom and guidance. We ask that you lead us and direct us that we may do your will. Bless all those who are not with us. May your light continue to shine upon their lives wherever they may be. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen
- Now may the Grace of God our Father, and his Son our Lord Jesus be with us all as we depart. Keep us safe and in your care until we are together again. Amen
- Lord, we ask that you bless this food for our bodies that we may continue in your service. Bless the hands of those who have prepared this meal and those who serve us our food. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen
- Rev. Mark Perkins
- We approach this occasion, O Lord, with an awareness that your Spirit flows through all things. This awareness leads us to humility, and humbly leads us to pray for your help and blessing. Grant to us your peace as we commence these festivities. With thanksgiving for all who serve so that others will have a higher quality of life. Amen
- As God led the people of Israel with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, so lead us, Lord, along the pathways of goodness and community. Empower us to do your will at all times, in the name of all that is good, and noble, honest, and true. Amen
- The provision of food and drink comes to us from your hand, O God. Not only do you provide nourishment, but you also provide enjoyment. With a spirit of gratitude, we honor your gifts. We pray that our enjoyment will lead us beyond gratitude to service to those for whom such food is not easily acquired. In the name of He who blesses. Amen
- Heavenly Father, we thank you for seeing us safely to this meeting. We ask you to help guide our officers in the decision making for the good and welfare of our organization. Rev. Dr. W. Kenneth Williams
- Heavenly Father, we thank you for a successful meeting. Before we leave, we ask for your protection for our men and women in uniform no matter where they are stationed and when we are called to service, we pray for your protecting hand. Amen
- Heavenly Father, as we prepare to partake of the fruits of Your bounty, we have in our thoughts our brothers and sisters who have answered their final alarm. Amen
- Chaplain Mike Brown

- Gracious and loving God, we have come together to (*state function, i.e. installing officers, honor our departed members, etc.*). We thank you for the opportunity to serve you and our community as members of the *fire/rescue* service. We ask your blessing on this gathering and your continued blessings on our efforts to protect life and property. All this we ask in your name.
- This has been an excellent occasion. We thank you, O God, for the time we have spent together. As we go forth to serve as members of the *fire/rescue* service and those who support us, may we go in safety. Bless our families and this community this day and always. Amen
- Gracious God, we ask your blessing on this gathering and the food set before us from your bountiful creation. Bless those who grew it, those who have prepared it and those who are serving it. May it nourish our bodies as our time together nourishes our hearts and minds. We ask your blessing on our brothers and sisters *firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians* who will be responding to the needs of the community as we dine here. May they be safe. Amen
- Rev. Thomas E.C. Margrave
- Gracious Lord, be with us as we gather to plan for our future. Help us to see the safety issues before we encounter them. Keep us in tune with our community so they feel confident in our abilities to serve. Be with our families as we rush out the door so that they know that you are with us and will see to our safe return home. Amen
- Almighty Father of all, quell our souls in this time of loss so that we who leave here this day feel your comforting love with all of us left behind. Amen
- Lord of all, we ask your blessing on this food and those who have prepared it. Allow this food to nourish our bodies as your word nourishes our spirit, let this gathering in fellowship continue to gather in your name. Amen
- Rev. Joe Auslander
- Our Father, who art in Heaven, we ask You to bless this meeting. Endow us with Your Spirit. May all our actions be guided by Your hand that we may be fair and just to all. Bless our *name of the organization* and all our members everywhere. We ask this in your most Holy name.
- Heavenly Father, we thank you for the privilege of meeting together. We ask Your blessing, care, and protection for all our comrades, now and forever. Amen
- Chaplain Israel "Sonny" Cohen
- Lord, as we gather here on this night of installation, we turn our thoughts to you. We ask your blessing on all those gathered here and for those who were unable to attend but are here in spirit. As we prepare to install new officers today, we are thankful to those who served faithfully over the past year, and we ask your blessing upon those for their sacrificial services to their community.
- Lord, as we prepare to close installation this evening of installation, we ask your blessing on those who have come forward to serve as leaders of our department over the next year. We thank you for their commitment to their department and community. Help us all Lord to support these new

officers on the execution of duty. As we depart for this place Lord, grant us all safe travel home until we meet to answer the next alarm. Amen

- Lord, we ask your blessing on the food and fellowship we are about to partake in. May it nourish our bodies and our spirit to execute our duties as firefighters. We ask your blessing upon those who have prepared the meal and those who have come to serve us. Amen
- Chaplain Eric Bennett
- Our heavenly Father, we offer our grateful thanks this day for our families, our wives, our children, our parents, without whose support, we could not function very well as firefighters. We know that our work takes time away from our families. We ask your blessings upon them. When we are away from home, we ask your protection for them. May we find strength in your strength being ever mindful of our need for you and each other. Unite our hands in a bond of brotherhood because of our affection and sympathy, for our brothers who are with you now. May we be sensitive to your ever-present Spirit as we offer our prayer in your name.
- Chaplain Richard Holst

Prayers for the Dead

- Lord our God, the death of our *brother/sister*, name recalls our human condition and the brevity of our life on earth. But for those who believe in your love death is not the end, nor does it destroy the bonds that you forge in our lives. We share the faith of your Son's disciples and the hope of the children of God. Bring the light of Christ's resurrection to this time of testing and pain as we pray for name and for those who love *him/her*, through Christ our Lord. Amen
- Lord Jesus, our Redeemer, you are willing gave yourself up to death, so that all might be saved and pass from death to life. We humbly ask you to comfort your servants in their grief and to receive name into the arms of your mercy. You alone are the Holy One, you are mercy itself; by dying you unlocked the gates of life for those who believe in you. Pardon name *his/her* sins, and grant *him/her* a place of happiness, light, and peace in the kingdom of your glory for ever and ever. Amen
- Lord God, in whom all find refuge, we appeal to your boundless mercy; grant to the soul of your servant name a kindly welcome, cleansing of sin, release from the chains of death, and entry into everlasting life. Amen
- God of faithfulness, in your wisdom you have called your servant name out of this world; Release *him/her* from the bonds of sin, and welcome *him/her* into your presence, so that *s/he* may enjoy eternal light and peace and be raised up in glory with all your saints. Amen
- Lord, in our grief we turn to you. Are you not the God of love who opens your ears to all? Listen to our prayers for your servant's name whom you have called out of this world: lead *him/her* to your kingdom of light and peace and count *him/her* among the saints in glory. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen
- Lord, almighty and eternal God, hear our prayers for your servant's name whom you have summoned out of this world. Forgive *his/her* sins and failings and grant *him/her* a place of

refreshment, light, and peace. Let *him/her* pass unharmed through the gates of death to dwell with the blessed in light, as you promised to Abraham and his children forever. Accept name into your safekeeping and on the great Day of Judgment raise *him/her* up with all your saints to inherit your eternal kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

- God of loving kindness, listen favorably to our prayers, strengthen our belief that your Son has risen from the dead and our hope that your servant's name, will also rise again. Amen
- Almighty God and Father, by the mystery of the cross, you have made us strong; by the sacrament of the resurrection, you have sealed us as your own. Look kindly upon your servant's name now freed from the bonds of mortality and count *him/her* among your saints in heaven. Amen
- Into your hand, O Lord, we humbly entrust our *brother/sister* name. In this life you embraced *him/her* with your tender love; deliver *him/her* then into paradise, where there will be no sorrow, no weeping nor pain, but the fullness of peace and joy with your Son and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen
- Almighty God and Father, it is our certain faith that your Son, who died on the cross, was raised from the dead, the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Grant that through this mystery your servant name, who has gone to *his/her* rest in Christ, may share in the joy of his resurrection. Amen
- God, glory of believers and life of the just, by the death and resurrection of your Son, we are redeemed: have mercy on your servant name and make *him/her* worthy to share the joys of paradise, for *he/she* believed in the resurrection of the dead. Amen
- To you, O God, the dead do not die, and in death our life is changed, not ended. Hear our prayers and command the soul of your servant name, to dwell with Abraham, your friend, and be raised at last on the great Day of Judgment. In your mercy cleanse *him/her* of any sin which *s/he* may have committed through human frailty. Amen
- Lord God, in whom all find refuge, we appeal to your boundless mercy: grant to the soul of your servant name a kindly welcome, cleansing of sin, release from the chains of death, and entry into everlasting life. Amen
- God of all consolation, open our hearts to your word, so that, listening to it, we may comfort one another, finding light in time of darkness and faith in time of doubt. Amen
- God, to whom mercy and forgiveness belong, hear our prayers on behalf of your servant name whom you have called out of this world; and because *s/he* put *his/her* hope and trust in you, command that *s/he* be carried safely home to heaven and come to enjoy your eternal reward. Amen
- God, in whom sinners find mercy and the saints find joy, we pray to you for our *brother/sister* name whose body we honor with Christian burial, that *s/he* may be delivered from the bonds of death. Admit *him/her* to the joyful company of your saints and raise *him/her* on the last day to rejoice in your presence forever. Amen

Auxiliary Prayers

Opening Prayer – Meeting

- Almighty God, we beseech You to bless us and all members of the Auxiliary, and to its officers vouchsafe the help and guidance of Your Holy will. Let each and every one of us pray that You are present watching over us, and that all our undertakings are in accordance with Your Holy will. Amen
- Lord, we are assembled in Your presence. Help us, we beseech You, in the performance of our duty. Be with our absent *sisters/brothers* in their hour of need. Help our *firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians* and send comfort into the homes of our sick. Help us to do our duty to this Auxiliary and its members. In Your Name we pray. Amen

Closing Prayer – Meeting

- Almighty God, we have met together in the spirit of friendship and goodwill. As we bring this meeting to a close, may we ask Your Blessing for an even greater future. Bless our homes. May our homes be places where peace and happiness is found and God is recognized. We pray that this meeting has been one of inspiration and uplift, and as we turn our steps homeward, may we feel that it was good to have been here. In Your Name we pray. Amen.
- With our work done, we must part again. Go your way and may God rest and abide with you all, now and forever more. Amen

A Thanksgiving Prayer

For this new morning with its light, we thank You. For rest and shelter of the night, we thank You. For health and food, for love and friends, for everything Your goodness sends we thank You. Amen

A Memorial Prayer

Almighty God, we thank You for the memory of our friends, for the joys and contributions they made to those who knew them, for the friendship and the useful work their life brought to those for whom they labored. Help us, dear Lord, to do our best all the days of our lives, and to show by what we say and do, that service to others and to You is truly the goal of our lives. Amen

Funeral Prayers

- Our association with name is no more, *her/his* days with us have ended. Let us remember name as one who was a friend. Let our mourning be made lighter by the thought of the happy hours spent with name. Though now gone, *s/he* is not forgotten, nor will it ever be so, while we who were friends yet live.

- God, look upon us who are gathered together because our member has gone from us. Take our fear and our sorrow into Your peace. Teach us to consider that we too must die and until that time let us remain thoughtful in that hope. Amen

Additional Prayers

The Fire Chief's Prayer

Rev. Jim Van Houten

In memory of all the deceased members of The Walden Fire Department and Auxiliary

I am called to many duties, Lord, and now I've been called home.
I've had to leave the ones I love to stand before your throne.
I'll not complain, it's not my way, but there are some things I'll ask,
And please, Lord, grant them to me for the loved ones I hold fast.

I dare to ask because I know how you've blessed in the past.
I've learned to trust in your grace, O Lord, that's how I've come this far.
So now, O God, I humbly pray this Fire Chief's prayer.

Bless my spouse and family – so often left alone.
They knew where I was going and trusted you to bring me home.
Well, now I'm home and wait for them – keep them within the faith
that one day, someday, we'll be together in this place.

And, O dear God, bless the members of my department.
I trained them the best I could.
I tried to do your will with them and lead them as you would.

I need to know you're with them, Lord, or else how can I stay,
And peacefully enjoy this place of endless day.
This haven, where there is no night, no fire to kill or burn.
I guess that's why it's now my rest, my place, my turn.

And, Lord, be with my community and keep it safe as it can be.
For all its folks are special and very dear to me.
They are all my friends, and, by your grace, I served them as best I could.
So, hear this Fire Chief's prayer, O Lord, and grant it please. I already knew you would.
Amen

The Firefighter's 23rd Psalm

This Psalm was originally written by a firefighter from North Tonawanda, NY.
It was re-written for FASNY and dedicated to its departed firefighters by
The Rev. Wayne F. Jagow, a member of FASNY's Chaplain's Committee.

The Lord is my Chief, he has chosen me to serve
He leads me to still the fires raging around me.

He restores my soul to fight even when all seems lost.
He has prepared for me a place in life,
Devoted to service, honor, joy, and fellowship.
He anoints my soul with courage in the presence of my enemy fire.
Yes, even though I have chosen to walk through life
In the shadow of death,
I will fear no fire, for He is with me.
His strength will comfort me.
And when life's final alarm for me has sounded
I will dwell in the station house of the Lord forever. Amen.

The Fire Chaplain's Psalm

The Lord is my Chief.
He has chosen me to serve.
He leads me to support those
who fight the fires raging around them.
He restores my spirit to fight on, when all seems lost.
He has prepared for me a place in life,
Devoted to service, honor, joy, and fellowship.
He anoints my soul with courage.
in the presence of my enemies.
Yes, even though I have chosen to walk through life.
In the shadow of death,
I will fear no fire, for He is with me.
His strength will comfort me and those around me.
And when life's final alarm for me has sounded.
I will dwell in the station house of the Lord forever. Amen

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd – "That's Relationship"
I shall not want – "That's Supply"
He makes me to lie down in green pastures – "That's Rest"
He leads me besides still waters – "That's Refreshment"
He restoreth my soul – "That's Healing"
He leads me in the path of righteousness – "That's Guidance"
For His name's sake – "That's Purpose"
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death – "That's Challenge"
I will fear no evil – "That's Assurance"
For thou art with me – "That's Faithfulness"
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me – "That's Shelter"
Thou preparest a table before me – "That's Hope"
Thou annointest my head with oil – "That's Consecration"
My cup runneth over – "That's Abundance"
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life – "That's Blessing"
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord – "That's Security"

Forever – “That’s Eternity”

A Junior Firefighter’s Prayer

Dedicated to Jake M. Hoeffner
Captain, Junior Firefighters
Yaphank Fire Department
Firematic Services held June 3, 1998

My God and Supreme Chief,
You know I am training as a Junior Firefighter
So that when I come of age
I will know how to save someone’s life
Wherever flames may rage.

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 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 help my every neighbor and
Protect their property.

And if I am to lose my life
I know that you are in control,
And to those who I leave behind,
Remember me
When that fire alarm doth toll.

EMS Prayer

Written by Chaplain Frank Knower

As I perform my duty Lord
Whatever be the call,
Help to guide and keep me safe
From dangers big and small.

I want to serve and do my best
No matter what the scene’
I pledge to keep my skills refined,
My judgment quick and keen.

This calling to give of myself.
Most do not understand,
But I stand ready all the time.
To help my fellow man.

To have the chance to help a child.
Restore his laugh and glee,
A word of thanks I might not hear,
But knowing is enough for me.

The praise of men is fine for some,
But I feel truly blessed,
That you oh Lord have chosen me
To serve in EMS

Ladies Auxiliary Prayer

The ladies wait, while the Firefighters respond,
United in one common bond.
The bond of serving, each in their own way,
The needs that arise, be what they may.

The reheated meals, the unsipped drink,
Are a common occurrence, much more than you think?
It's mostly routine and done without flair,
The Firefighter's return, and the ladies are there.

But then comes the call, a tough one to fight,
A working fire that may last through the night.
The ladies again wait, but this time they know,
That sooner or later, they too will go.

As they wait for the signal, the time soon draws near,
For the sooner or later is suddenly here.
The Firefighters are all weary, some of them spent,
The refreshments that arrive are like heaven sent.

The Auxiliary, in fact, is more than a name,
It's a Dedicated arm of the Volunteer game.
So, God when we pray, for the firefighter's care,
Include the Ladies, who will also be there.

A Prayer for September 11th

Rev. Jim Van Houten
14th Anniversary

Dear God, tonight we gather as a community of Faith on the evening of the 14th anniversary of 9/11,
and we lift our prayers before you.

We cannot pray for deliverance or a miracle, for this tragedy has already burned itself into our souls.
Because of the attack on 9/11 children have grown up fatherless. Families are long since bereaved. We
know there is no prayer to change the past.

So, we pray tonight that we might live with memory, with constant love, with the promise both to
combat evil and to cherish goodness.

Do not let our pain cloud our hopes or crush our hearts. Help us grow through this tragedy, may we
keep faith with its victims, and sustain our trust in You. Amen

The Firefighter's Prayer

Many know the "Fire Fighter's Prayer", also known as the "Fireman's Prayer", but do you know who
wrote it and what they were thinking of?

*When I am called to duty, God whenever flames may rage
Give me the strength to save some life whatever be its age.
Help me to embrace a little child before it's too late
Or some older person from the horror of that fate.
Enable me to be alert and hear the weakest shout
And quickly and efficiently to put the fire out.
I want to fill my calling and 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
Please bless with Your protecting hand My children and my wife.*

Today the prayer above is often thought of as simply a poem originally written by Alvin William
'Smokey' Linn. According to his granddaughter, Penny McGlachlin, it is so much more. Her grandfather,
Smokey Linn, joined the Wichita, Kansas Fire Department in 1947 after returning from World War II. He
retired in 1975 and became president of the local chapter of the Good Sam Camping Club. Linn passed
away on 31 March 2004 of complications following surgery.

The end of Linn's prayer can be found engraved on a memorial in front of the new fire station in
Brunswick, Maine. According to Woodstock Fire, the following was taken from a speech given by Penny
McGlachlin at the dedication of the Cook's Corner Fire Station in Brunswick, Maine on 15 July 2006.
"Alvin William Linn earned the name 'Smokey' when he was 15 by running into his grandfather's
burning barn and driving out his Model T truck. He and the truck made it out in one piece but the seat
of his pants were smoking. This must have been a sign of things to come because it wasn't the last time
he would charge into a burning building."

"When I was about four, I thought my grandfather was born a fireman, lived at the station and
occasionally would visit us at grandmother's house. I learned a few things on my visits to the station.
One was that if you walk in front of a truck being cleaned, someone will inevitably hit the siren button,
just to see how high you'll jump. My grandfather became one of the first Red Cross instructors in
Wichita to teach and certify people for CPR and first aid. I was the only eight-year-old in my school that
was certified in both, whether I wanted to be or not."

"I've learned a lot about my grandfather since he left us two years ago. My grandmother told me many stories grandpa never told anyone, such as his time in the Coast Guard during World War II on a ship in the North Atlantic that was hit by a torpedo from a Japanese submarine. He was one of the few survivors, but most stories were about what had happened on the job. After each shift he would come home and tell his family about the runs he'd been on. Some were more difficult than others."

"AW 'Smokey' Linn wrote 'A Fireman's Prayer' after he'd been at a call involving children trapped in a burning apartment building. The fire fighters could see the children in the windows but could not rescue them due to the iron bars that the apartment owner had installed. All they could do was try to contain the fire. About one in the morning, Smokey found himself sitting at the station's kitchen table putting into words the emotions inside of him from that evening."

"The words to 'The Fireman's Prayer' are one man's prayer, a man who was more than a fireman to his Lord and Savior. He was a husband, father, grandfather and a son who knew how precious and short life can be."

The 'Fireman's Prayer' was originally published in a book called, "A Celebration of Poets" in 1958.

The last copyright of the book was 1998. It is the family's desire that the credit for the Firemen's Prayer go to the author, AW Smokey Linn.

The 'Fireman's Prayer' is often accompanied by the 'Fireman's Wife's Prayer', whose author is unknown.

Fireman's Wife's Prayer

Author Unknown Source: Texas Hill Country

"The table's set, the meal's prepared, our guests will soon arrive.
My husband once more disappears with a hope of keeping a child alive.
While waiting at home alone, our plans having gone awry
My first impulse is merely to sit right down and cry.
But soon again I realized the importance of my life.
When I agreed to take on the duties of being a fireman's wife.
While there are many drawbacks, I'll take them in my stride.
Knowing "My Daddy saved a life" our children can say with pride.
The gusting winds and raging flames may be his final fate.
But with God's help I can remain my fireman's faithful mate."

Firefighter's Memorial Hymn

(Tune: Abide with Me)

In fond remembrance, gathered here today,
Tribute to pay to Comrades passed away.
Garlands of flowers placed about our dead,
Spring's brightest blossoms deck their quiet bed.

When duty called, our comrades they would go,

Never daunted, met the fiery foe.
May guardian angels o'er them vigil keep,
While they lie resting in eternal peace.

Father in mercy, guide us on our way,
Through storm and sunshine to eternal day,
And when our duty here on earth shall cease,
May we with them abide, in joy and peace

Dedication Prayer - Stained Glass window at the Firemen's Home

Rev. Jim Van Houten

Heavenly Father, you sent your Son to us to be the
Light of the world. To shine into every corner and into every heart.

This morning, we dedicate this Stained-Glass window.
In Loving Memory of our brothers and Sisters,
Members of the Hudson Valley Volunteer Firemen's
Association and the Hudson valley Volunteer
Firemen's Association Ladies Auxiliary.

We ask,
Heavenly Father, that as the light of your presence
Illuminates this window that it will forever stand as a
Reminder to us all, of the skill, the dedication and the
Friendship that we shared with these departed friends.

We ask that all who look upon this window will feel.
Your divine presence and be uplifted by Your divine
Peace.

And we ask all of these things in Your Holy Name,
Amen.

A Fireman's Prayer

Rev. Jim Van Houten

This can be used as a Company Prayer at the conclusion of a Funeral or Memorial Service

Lord, we call upon You for strength and guidance,
Look kindly upon us in our needs today.
Teach us to always look to You for assistance, as our neighbors look to us.
Give us courage and enable us to pass this courage to others.
Make us studious and give us pride and joy in our work.
When the alarm sounds, calling us to duty, give us speed and efficiency.
As we travel with sirens on, ride with us through the streets of our villages, shielding us from danger.
On the fire scene, may our officers and men always work as an Honorable, Courageous, and Victorious
Team.
Walk with us through the terror of flame and explosion.

May our hearts be always ready, should we be summoned before our Eternal Chief, in the midst of our labors.

As we work to help our neighbors in need, we dedicate our lives humbly to Your praise and glory. In both joy and sorrow, we ask only that You may be pleased with our service, and that when the Last Alarm has sounded for us, that we may receive our eternal assignment with You.
Amen.

Invocations

- Lord, and Father of All, allow everyone here this morning to have the awareness that You are the giver of every good and worthwhile gift; that our lives are in Your keeping; that our endeavors are directed by Your leadership; that our successes and failures are known to You; and that Your love and concerns for us are limitless.
Favor us all here today with Your divine blessing as we begin this convention this morning. Provide us with safety, friendship, and great weather.
Draw us together this morning in the bonds of our Firematic duties and in the bonds of your grace. And we ask all of these things in your Holy Name, Amen.
- Let us pray, Holy and eternal God, help us in sadness and darkness as we remember our fallen comrades. Comfort and strengthen us, as we honor those who have offered selfless service and the ultimate sacrifice of giving their lives in response of their duty; ad may, e, O God, pray that they have taken their rest from their labors, and have entered into the light of God's eternal rest. Holy and eternal God, we pray for their families, friends and us. May they, and we, be comforted in our sorrow in the sure confidence of everlasting hope, and direct us in thy great wisdom, as we remember those who have gone before us. In the matchless and Holy Name, we pray, Amen

Invocation Prayer - Rev. Jim Van Houten

Vice-Chairmen FASNY Chaplain's Committee

Gracious God, Giver of life. We come before you today to offer this invocation Prayer requesting Your blessing upon us. We give thanks for the beauty of our land and its many towns, cities and villages where we make our homes here in New York State.

We call upon You for Your blessing for this our 144th Memorial Service of FASNY members. We ask that as the Names of our friends who have been called home to You are read, that we would be reminded of the friendships, the companionship, and the memories which we shared together in past years.

We invoke your blessing upon these our deceased members whose Names we will read today. We ask you to welcome them into Your open arms and embrace them for all eternity. Bring comfort to their spouses, children, families and Firematic friends who they loved so much.

As we focus our attention and dedicate our new backdrop this morning, make us ever mindful of the words of John 15:13: Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

For this embodies the spirit and the dedication we have as firefighters for our neighbors and friends. And make us forever aware that as we risk our lives in our service to others that you are always with us, whatever the call may be. And may we remember both now and always those who have answered that final call and may this blessing be with them:

As fires swift that take away
Those who braved to save and stay,
That others not to perish on
They Risked their lives beyond respond.
For life and limb, they did respond,
To save a child, dad a mom
The risk, the task not always known,
For those they could not save alone.
So, bless them, keep them in your love.
Smile upon them from heaven above.
Give them peace now at the last
Forever more their task has passed.
Amen and glory be to Thee,
For now, and all eternity.

Invocation - Rev. Bob Ruston

Director

Father, we thank You for this day, for this meeting and for the friendships shared. We are also grateful for the bountiful food so graciously provided. Bless all we do and say may we each enjoy your wondrous blessings. May the love and respect we have for each other remain throughout the coming year. At the close of this meeting, lead us home safely so that we may be able to continue to serve you. As we celebrate this jubilant Christmas season fill us all with the joy of your birth. Amen.

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow... and may His perpetual light shine on each of you and give you peace as you travel home and throughout this coming new year.

Association Invocation

It's good to recognize how different we are.

Our talents, our dreams, our backgrounds and our occupations.

And it is good to know that when you created each of us, that you broke the mold. No one is exactly alike. Even our thumb print and voice track tell us how unique we are.

Yet, we thank you that we can take these differences and mobilize them for the good of this association, our fire houses, and our community. In our differences we can think the same thoughts and move together towards a common goal.

Bless us as we meet together this evening. Guide us in this meeting to accomplish what is good. Thank you for our individuality and also for our common bond. Too, we are thankful for the graciousness of our hosting company and the food we received from your bounty. Amen.

Invocation - Rev. Wayne F. Jagow

FASNY Chaplain's Committee

Let Us Pray. Almighty God, we give you thanks for our respective communities. Merge us into a common purpose of protecting them and providing for a higher quality of life in this State of New York. In Your hands lie the destinies of all persons. Help us as fire service and Legislatures to feel our sacred unity as members of the human family.

Make us alert, vigilant and in concord as to our services to our community. May the spirit of love and good will possess and control our hearts as we bring blessedness to needy humanity and especially to those who look to us for protection.

Bless the members of the Firemen's Association of the State of New York, fire service personal and especially, on this day, give Blessing to the members of this session of the Senate, May we all count it an honor and privilege to serve.

In Your Name, Amen

Invocation - Rev. Bob Ruston

Director

Invocation Dutchess County

Heavenly Father as we are gathered together for this special time of carrying on the work and programs of the Dutchess Country Volunteer Firemen's Association, we are thankful for thy presence. Strengthen our courage with a greater faith in thee and help us complete our assigned tasks. We thank you for your presence with us and for the bonds of friendship between those here. I would ask each of you to take a quiet moment to include those who are no longer with us, in your thoughts and prayers. All of this we ask in our father's name. Amen

Invocation of Brotherhood

Josph McCarthy 2nd Deputy Chief Chaplain

Almighty God, you are our creator and our sustainer.

You are our light and our fortress, our wisdom and our strength, the supreme chief of the fire service. We ask for your guiding hand to lead us through this meeting.

May we approach our tasks with wisdom, and may we approach our members with respect; as they are part of family, the brotherhood and sisterhood of the fire service.

May our conduct create an environment of cooperation and kindness. We ask that your wisdom would guide us as we seek to accomplish the goals on today's agenda.

May we remember the deeper meanings of this day as we share enjoyable fellowship with one another.

Lastly, lord, we lift up prayer for our country.

We ask that you bless our country with your wisdom, your love, and your compassion. May we be a people who are pursuing you and your plans for us.

We ask these things in your powerful name, God bless America. Amen

Invocation Hudson Valley Convention

God of all Creation, Supreme Chief of the Fire Service, we come before you today to give you honor and praise. You are worthy of our praise.

You are the source of all that is good. You are the source of all of our blessings. Thank you for every gift that we have been given.

We thank you for the opportunity to come and gather together this day in Latham at the commencement of our annual convention; happy to share as the family best known as “the brotherhood & sisterhood.”

We ask for your hand of blessing on this meeting. We ask that you guide and direct our meeting so that it is full of wisdom, productivity, and respect for one another that binds us together as family.

Thank you for helping us to accomplish our work and our goals on this day, and in the upcoming days of our convention. Please Lord, God Bless America. Amen

Meeting Invocation

Rev. Bob Ruston

In this the harvest season, let us give thanks for the bounty that we have received. We are from many walks of life, yet we are in unity, for we have the same goals. We ask Thy blessings upon this meeting that we may sense anew our responsibilities to members, departments, and to our peers. We praise Thee for this good land of ours and for the heritage which has come to us through the efforts of those to whom freedom, justice and righteousness meant more than life itself. Give us inspiration to meet the needs of the future. Give us wisdom to make the right decisions, persistence to support them, and radiance that will encourage others to work with and be a part of this association. We continue to pray for those members of the Armed Forces that are serving both at home and abroad and ask for peace in our troubled world. We thank you for your presence with us this evening, and for the bonds of friendship which will be strengthened. As firefighters and first responders, we are family. This we ask in thy name. Amen

Memorial Service Invocation Prayer

Heavenly Father, we set ourselves aside in these moments at our annual Memorial Service, before Your Presence, to commemorate the lives of these, our friends, our family, and comrades, of who lived and shared within our brotherhood & sisterhood of the emergency services who served their communities as part of Your plan for us to help our fellow human beings, and our communities at any time of need.

We ask You for comfort in this time when we have gathered here today at this important annual Memorial Service as one family of emergency service providers together, to remember those who have entered into Thy heavenly kingdom. May the special friendships and good memories of our loved ones, our comrades, who have gone before us serve to inspire us here to a better life in Your sight and before our fellow man. May we build upon the comradery between us as emergency personnel, one team, one family, under your guidance.

Thank you, Lord for being amongst us here today. Amen.

General Invocation

O Lord, and Father of All, allow everyone here this morning to have the awareness that You are the giver of every good and worthwhile gift; that our lives are in Your keeping; that our endeavors are directed by Your leadership, that our successes and failures are known to You; and that Your love and concerns for us are limitless. Favor us all here today with Your divine blessing as we begin this convention this morning. Provide us with safety, friendship, and great weather. Draw us together this morning in the bonds of our Firematic duties and in the bonds of your grace. And we ask all of these things in your Holy Name, Amen

Invocation Opening a Meeting

Dear Lord, allow everyone here this morning to have the awareness that You are the giver of every good and worthwhile gift; that our lives are in Your keeping; that our endeavors are directed by Your leadership. that our successes and failures are known to You; and that Your love and concerns for us are limitless.

Please fill us all here today with Your divine blessings as we begin this convention this morning. Provide us with safety, friendship, and great weather. Draw us together this morning in the bonds of our Firematic duties and in the bonds of your grace. And we ask all of these things in your Holy Name, Amen

Invocation For a 9/11 Service

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, help us in sadness and darkness as we remember our fallen comrades. Comfort and strengthen us, as we honor those who have offered selfless service and the ultimate sacrifice of giving their lives in response of their duty; and may we, O Lord, pray that they have taken their rest from their labors, and have entered into the light of Your eternal rest.

Heavenly Father, we pray for their families, friends, and us. May they, and we, be comforted in our sorrow in the sure confidence of everlasting hope. Direct us in Thy Great wisdom, as we remember those who have gone before us. In the matchless and Holy Name, we pray, Amen.

Invocation at a Funeral Service

Richard Bolster 1st Deputy Chief Chaplain

O God of grace and glory, we gather humbly before you this day to remember our brothers. We thank you for bringing them into our lives so that we might know and love them as companions on our earthly pilgrimage. In your boundless compassion, comfort us as we remember, as we mourn once more, and as we celebrate lives well lived, yet too soon ended. Give us faith to see in death the gate to eternal life so that in quiet confidence we may continue to run our course on earth until, by your call, we are reunited with those who have gone before, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Invocation Prayer Montgomery Fire Department Inspection Dinner

Rev. Jim Van Houten

Lord. We come before you this evening requesting Your blessing upon us all. We give you thanks for the beauty of our land and its many towns, cities and the village of Montgomery where we make our home.

We call upon You this evening for Your blessing on this Annual Inspection Dinner of the Montgomery Fire Department.

We ask your blessing upon our deceased members whose Names we recall to night. We trust that you will welcome them into Your open arms and embrace them for all eternity.

Bring comfort to their spouses, children, families and Firematic friends who loved them so much. Make us all aware that our lives are always in your hands, and that you are with us as we respond to the needs of our neighbors, both medical and Firematic.

Lord, give us all your divine protection on all the calls we will respond to this coming year. We ask that the food we will receive this evening will be blessed to our bodies. And as we share this time together, please deepen our friendships. And we ask these things in Your Name, Amen.

Benedictions

(Can be read as a Poem)

A Benediction Prayer

A Benediction prayer we make.
A pause, a moment, let us take.
And let us pray and let us say.
A blessing in a "Thank you" way.

To those who gave in sacrifice
Of courage without cost suffice
Of Fire's fought through wind and flame
A benediction to proclaim.

Their lives a blessing to us now
In memory do our heads here bow
A solemn moment does it tell.
They heard the call that rang the bell.

But we too shall hear the sound.
That rings eternal and profound.
The names recalled, the spouse, the son.
The daughter, mother, parent, one

To hearts that bear the loss and grief
Our tribute and our prayers do speak.
From those who live because of them.
Remember always, now and then.

Now may the Lord do bless and keep
All their names in heart so deep
God's smile upon us here today

And bless and keep us, this we pray.

And may God's peace be on us all
In thanks to firefighter's call
And ring the bell with strong conviction.
As we make this prayer in benediction.
Amen

Short Benedictions

- God keep you in the busy day, and in night's lonely hour. Though storms may gather 'round thy way, trust His protecting power. God guide you! May his wisdom shine unclouded o're your soul and lead you by its light divine to the eternal goal. Grant us each a safe journey home. Amen
- Almighty God - As we adjourn this annual inspection dinner, we do so in a spirit of camaraderie and respect. Respect for one another; respect for America, respect for the Department, our Town of Somers; and above all, with a deep humility and desire for Your love and care to keep us safe. Help those within our department, active, associate, and past members who are ill and facing economic difficulties so they may return to us. Guard our nation, O God. Guard our travels back home tonight! Lord, keep us ever so mindful of our daily lives, and guide us in all we do so as to please You, doing unto others as we would wish others might do unto us. And God, please protect, re-build, and bless America.
- May the Trinity of Life grant you safe passage returning to your homes, give you ways to serve your communities best, and to live the tradition of firefighter brotherhood and camaraderie, and return you safely to all of us when we meet again.
- May the spirit which brought us together keep us ever mindful of our obligations to our respective departments and this association, and remind us of our need to learn, share, and return here again. May the Master, our Creator, be with you until we meet again.
- May the Creator of all things Great and Small, watch over you and bring you back within this circle of brotherhood and camaraderie soon again.
- May the grace of God surround you; may the strength of God fill you and may the love of God sustain you, this day and every day. Amen.
- "May we go from this meeting, O Lord, with a strong determination to shouldering our individual share of the responsibilities in service to this Association, to help build the camaraderie of our Association, to offer our hands of peace to the people we come in contact with, and to those in our family of the fire service. Guide us safely in our steps as we do this, we pray in your name." Amen.

Benediction Following a Memorial Service

Thomas With Chief Chaplain

- Let us pray. Lord, in whom we trust, we thank Thee for the lives of the fellow EMS personnel and colleagues for whom we tolled the bell and extinguished candles tonight you have seen fit to call to

Thy service. We pray that all the influences for good that do survive them will grow more meaningful with time to generations to come. Give unto us that wisdom and that serenity of mind enabling us to see Thy perfect will in all things, so that when our names are called, we may lay down the things of life calmly and without fear and Father lead us from this moment henceforth in paths of faith and practice.

Please God, keep those in our Armed Services serving overseas from harm's way, bring peace in our world, and bestow Your blessing on America. May the grace of our Lord, and the love of God, be with each of us all evermore. Amen.

- Let us pray. Hold each of us Father, in the hollow of your hand so that when the time shall come for us to answer the call up higher, we may hear those welcome words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over the few things in the quarries of the world and you served your fellow beings, families, and community well, come, enter thou into the joy of the Lord forever." Amen

Benediction – Rev. Bob Ruston

Director

Heavenly Father, we thank you for this wonderful evening together. Your love has been reflected in the gentleness of your Presence among us tonight.

As we adjourn from this testimonial event in honor of Past President Paul O'Brien, we do so in a spirit of camaraderie and respect; respect for one another, respect for America, and respect of this Association.

Guard our nation, guard safely our travels home. May God bless this Association, and may God bless America. And to each gathered here, may the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up is countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. Amen.

Benediction – Rev. Bob Ruston

Director

Lord, Supreme Chief of the fire service, thank you for bringing us together to enjoy the food that was served, and for the camaraderie shared. As we go from this gathering, may we take with us the spirit that our individual faiths offer us. May we stay strong as a family caring for and supporting one another in good times and difficult times.

From our eyes, may the light shine brightly so that in darkness, we may see the needs of others. Through our ears, may we hear beyond the noise of self-interest to the calls for help from those in need, and may our hearts beat with compassion and our arms be strong in reaching out to lift up those who stumble.

Benediction – Unknown

May the blessing of the Lord be upon each one of us to assure brotherly love prevails, that every moral and social virtue cements and bind us in service to our community, to fellow members, and bind ties us as family. We ask for Your gentle hand and care of our respective families, and with those unable to having joined us due to illness. Let us, too, remember the spouses of members who gave gone before us. We pray for those serving in America's Armed Services and all first responders that they may be kept from harm's way.

And finally, to each here, may The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; may the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; may The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace, and lead you home from here safely. God bless and Lord, keep America safe.
Amen.

An Irish Blessing

May the Road rise up to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sunshine upon your face;
The rain fall soft upon our fields, and until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Funeral Benediction – Rev. Bob Ruston

Director

We are glad that (name of the deceased) lived. We are glad that we saw (her/his/their) face and felt the glow of (her/his/their) friendship and love. We cherish the memory of her/his/their) words and deeds and character.

Carrying (her/his/their) thus in our hearts, let us now go from this place in comfort and peace, assured that even in this time of loss and sorrow, life remains precious and good.

May we also on this day rekindle in our hearts an appreciation for the gifts of life and other persons.

Let us honor the life of (name of the deceased) by living, ourselves, more nobly and lovingly in the days ahead.

As we return to the routines of our lives, go in great peace, dear friends, and may God's abiding peace go with you. Amen

Benediction – Unknown

God of all blessings, source of all life, giver of all grace
We thank you for the gift of life: for the food that nurtures life,
For the life-giving love of family and friends.

We thank you for the communities to which we belong.
For family and friends, for neighbors and companions we work with.

We thank you for the strangers who welcome us into their lives.
And whom we invite to be part of ours.

We thank you for the brotherhood of the fire service, and for the multitude of ways that you call us to
Stewart the gifts of creation and to serve others in your name.

Thank you for this day, for the companionship we share and the bountiful goodness of the bread we
break together.

God of all goodness, we pray in thanks for your presence.
Among us as we gather together at this meeting and your promise to be with us now and always.
Amen

Memorial Service Benediction for Dutchess County - Rev. Bob Ruston

Director

Holy God, Lord of life and death, you made us in your image, and you hold us in your care. We are a
brotherhood and sisterhood together you called upon to serve as one. We thank you for your servants,
brave Fire Chaplains, Firefighters, EMTs, and the First Responders (those names read here today, as
well as those names we did not receive) for the selfless untiring duty and gifts they have given during
their lives. Lord may the firefighters, first responders, ambulance personnel who have heard your
words of welcome, "Come to you, blessed of my Father" and may they have received Your unfailing
crown of glory. May they have angels surrounding them, and the saints to welcome them in peace.
Now Bless all who have witnessed this memorial in honor of those of our own; And, be honor and
praise and glory to Our God, be now and forever more. Amen

Benediction Hudson Valley Convention - Rev. Bob Ruston

Director

May the truth that makes us free, the hope that never dies, and the love that casts out fear, lead us
forward together, till the dayspring breaks and the shadows flee away. The peace of God that passes all
understanding, that peace which the world can neither give nor take away, abide with you to bless
you, this day, and even forever more. Amen.

And now, may the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be
gracious unto you. And may God give you His peace in your going out and in your coming in, in your
lying down and in your rising up, in your labor and in your leisure, in your laughter and in your tears...
until you come to stand before God in that day in which there is no sunset and no dawning.
Amen.

Memorial or Funeral Benedictions - Rev. Bob Ruston

Director

God and Creator of us all, we are drawn together at this sad moment to acknowledge the loss of one of
our brothers. We lift our thoughts and our voices in supplication for those who most deeply feel this
loss; the widow, the children, the parents, and all others with whom he/she has shared his/her
presence. We all feel the loss and are aware of the gap in our fellowship because of this death. As in all

situations, sustain us in this time of great sorrow and loss, and at the same time remind us of our finiteness and how very short is the breath of life.

A Final Prayer at a Graveside - Rev. Jim Van Houten

Most Holy God, we ask that you bless _____ and his/her family.

May they each remain in your presence
and in the personal presence of each other.

May they have the serenity
to accept the things they cannot change,
the courage to change the things they can change,
and the wisdom to know the difference....

May they each grow in your spirit and love.

May they know a new freedom

May they grow and find peace in their relationship with each other, with their friends, and with you,
their God.

And may your blessing be upon them today and from this day forward.

Lord, please give _____ eternal rest,

and may your light always shine upon him/her and his/her family. And may his/her soul and the souls
of all the faithfully departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

Amen.

General Benediction Prayer - Tom With

Chief Chaplain

Holy God, Lord of life and death, you made us in your image, and you hold us in your care. We thank you for your servants, brave Fire Chaplains, and Firefighters, for the selfless untiring duty and gifts they have given with their very lives. Holy God may the fire chaplains and firefighters who have heard your words of welcome, "Come to you, blessed of my Father" and may they have received Your unfailing crown of glory. May they have angels surrounding them, and the saints welcome them in peace. And Now Bless all who have witnessed this memorial in honor of those of our own; And now, may honor and praise and glory be to Our God, both now and forever more. Amen

Meeting Benediction on Veteran's Day

Richard Bolster 1st Deputy

Dear God, we are thankful to our host, the _____ FD for providing us this opportunity to meet this evening, and thankful for this meeting of friends being a success. Please bless the veterans who wore the faded uniform. May they know the peace of a career well-served, and service completed. Give them our thanks for the doors opened, paths paved, and battles fought. Give them our thanks for the freedom preserved, the future defended, and the ideals embodied. Bless the veterans who defended our country with strength and selfless devotion.

And God, please care for us as we leave here tonight, and guide us to walk in your path and light. Let us remember the importance of Thanksgiving for all we have and the blessings you have bestowed upon each of us.

To each of you here this evening, may you have a blessed Thanksgiving, and God bless you. Amen

Prayer of Benediction - Rev. Wayne Jagow

Past Chief Chaplain

May the Lord go before you to lead you, behind you to encourage you, beside you to befriend you, beneath you to uphold you, above you to protect you and within you to inspire you. Amen

Graces

Introduction

The Board of Directors respectfully submits the following prayers which have been gathered from many areas throughout New York State. A broad representative selection of those prayers has been selected for inclusion in this manual. If any are used, it is suggested that words may be changed and sentences added or deleted according to the locality and circumstances, or as custom dictates.

The traditions and customs of our many churches and synagogues and other houses of worship must be respected. For example, those who do not teach or believe in the "Trinity" may wish to eliminate any reference to Jesus Christ. Prayer conclusions that are more generic in nature can easily be substituted as needed, such as "We ask this in Your Eternal Name" or "We ask this in all faiths name."

There is no set formula for prayer. It is necessary, therefore, for each chaplain to pick and choose what they wish, add/or delete words, and change or modify according to their beliefs. The pages that follow offer suggestions and models that can readily be adapted to your needs.

Sample Graces

1. Oh God, we gather this evening with thankful hearts, mindful of all your gifts to us of a physical and spiritual nature. Help us in the fire/rescue service to best use those gifts to meet the needs we encounter within our service, and particularly those needs of the public we serve.
2. As we dismiss Oh Lord, go with us always, guide our pathway, help us smooth the bumps in the road and always help us present ourselves so those we come in contact with will know we are yours.
3. Gracious heavenly Father, we thank you for this special occasion when we can share at these tables in fellowship and food.
4. Father, we ask for your presence to be with us tonight. Open our eyes and our hearts that we may see you at work in our world and in our lives. Fill us with your wisdom and keep us safe. Amen

5. Dear Lord, we pray for your blessings to be upon the lives of the men and women here tonight. Watch over them and keep them safe as they risk their lives to help others. Give them the strength they need for all they will face and fill their hearts with your peace. In the name of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen
6. Lord, we give you thanks for the meal we are about to share. Bless our fellowship around these tables, bless our lives as we serve you by serving others. In Jesus' name. Amen
 - Chaplain Barrie Lyn Foster
7. Our heavenly Father, we thank you for allowing us to come together here in your name. We pray that all we do is in your name and for all the good of all here.
8. Our heavenly Father, we thank you for allowing us to be here tonight. We pray that the decisions we make will help not only us but those we serve.
9. Our heavenly Father, we thank you for allowing us to come together here in your name. We pray that you will bless this food we are about to receive. We pray that it will nourish our bodies so that we will be able to do Your will. Amen
10. Loving God, we are gathered here this evening. We thank you for the opportunity to be together in fellowship. We remember those who cannot be with us because of illness or distance please bless our time together and help us to focus on the task at hand. Thank you.
11. Lord, for our name of the organization and our work. Be with us today and every day. In Jesus name. Amen
12. Fellow firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians, go in peace to love and serve the Lord and may the grace of our savior, Jesus the Christ and the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit be with you this day and every day. In Jesus' name. Amen
13. Almighty God, We thank you for each and every firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician and for the work that you called them to do. We thank you Lord for each one who works in Emergency Services, for all who serve our community, for their caring and sharing.
14. Lord, the work of a firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians is both dangerous and hard and so we ask that you continue to keep our firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians safe. Guard them from all harm. We thank you for the sacrifices they make for our community, for the hours of training for the missed meals and family events, for sleepless nights. We know that their work takes them away from their families and so we ask the Lord that you bless their families as they wait for their loved one's safe return. Lord, we thank you tonight for those who have served name of the organization and the community. We pray your blessings upon those who are retired and those who are ill. We also remember those who are no longer with us. Almighty God we ask that you bless all who serve with courage, perseverance, and determination, and we pray these things in Jesus' name.
15. Gracious God, how thankful we are for all you have given us. We ask you special blessings at this time upon all who are gathered here this evening. We ask that you bless our food and bless us to your service.

- Rev. Cynthia Huling Hummel

16. Let us pray; Our dear Lord we ask that you bless this organization. We would ask that you would honor this time we have together for this special time. Be with us now in Jesus' name we pray. Amen
17. Let us pray; Lord we pray that you would bless our time we have had together. Now we ask that you would be with us as we end this time and travel to our homes of abode. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.
18. Father, we would ask that you bless this food we are about to receive. Bless the hands that prepared it and bless it to our use. In Jesus' name. Amen
- Chaplain Don Elthorp
19. Let us pray; Dear Lord, thank you for bringing us together, guide us in this meeting to be mindful of our members and our community, help us to make good decisions remember those families who have lost a loved one, be with them at this time. All this we ask in your name. Amen
20. Lord thank you for all that you have done. Bless us now as we go forth to do your work, bless our families and friends as we continue to do your work. Amen
21. Dear Lord, thank you for the food we are about to receive. Guide us and protect us as we go to our respective homes, protect us as we continue to do your work. Amen
22. Dear Lord, we thank you for attending this meeting of the name of the organization. We ask that you be with all the officers and members as they make decisions that will affect us all now and in the future. We also ask that we all will return from our calls safely to our families. We ask this prayer in all faith for the families and all firefighters.
23. Thank you, dear Lord, for being with us this day. We thank you for your aid and guidance this evening. Please be with those who could not be here with us this evening. Allow us safe passage to our homes. Till we meet again, we ask this prayer in faith for the families and all firefighters.
24. Thank you, dear Lord, for this bounty of food given by your hand. Bless those that have cooked and those the serve. We ask this prayer in faith for the families and all firefighters.
25. Gracious God, we thank you for this day and for this opportunity to gather to celebrate your love as it has been shown to us through your servants. We thank you for all members of name of the organization, for their dedication to the organization and to our community. Bless them and their families. Be with us in our fellowship around the table. Bless the food we will receive and the hands that have prepared it, and keep us always in your love and care. Amen
26. God of love go with us as we leave this place. May we go filled with your grace, your strength and your love to be servants of justice, safety, and peace in your world. Amen
27. God, we thank you for this time to gather at table. Bless our time, our laughter and tears. Bless the food we have before us, bless the hands that have prepared it. May it nourish our bodies as your spirit nourishes our souls. Amen

- Rev. Michaela St. Marie

28. Lord, as we come before you this day/night we ask that you bestow upon us your wisdom and guidance. We ask that you lead us and direct us that we may do Your will. Bless all those who are not with us. May your light continue to shine upon their lives wherever they may be. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen
29. Now may the Grace of God our Father, and his Son our Lord Jesus be with us all as we depart. Keep us safe and in your care until we are together again. Amen
30. Lord, we ask that you bless this food for our bodies that we may continue in your service. Bless the hands of those who have prepared this meal and those who serve us our food. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen
- Rev. Mark Perkins
31. We approach this occasion, O Lord, with an awareness that your Spirit flows through all things. This awareness leads us to humility, and humbly leads us to pray for your help and blessing. Grant us your peace as we commence these festivities. With thanksgiving for all who serve so that others will have a higher quality of life. Amen
32. As God led the people of Israel with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, so lead us, Lord, along the pathways of goodness and community. Empower us to do your will at all times, in the name of all that is good, and noble, honest, and true. Amen
33. The provision of food and drink comes to us from your hand, O God. Not only do you provide nourishment, but you also provide enjoyment. With a spirit of gratitude, we honor your gifts. We pray that our enjoyment will lead us beyond gratitude to service to those for whom such food is not easily acquired. In the name of He who blesses. Amen
34. Heavenly Father, we thank you for seeing us safely to this meeting. We ask you to help guide our officers in the decision making for the good and welfare of our organization.
- Rev. Dr. W. Kenneth Williams
35. Heavenly Father, we thank you for a successful meeting. Before we leave, we ask for your protection for our men and women in uniform no matter where they are stationed and when we are called to service, we pray for your protecting hand. Amen
36. Heavenly Father, as we prepare to partake of the fruits of Your bounty, we have in our thoughts our brothers and sisters who have answered their final alarm. Amen - Chaplain Mike Brown
37. Gracious and loving God, we have come together to (state function, i.e. installing officers, honor our departed members, etc.). We thank you for the opportunity to serve you and our community as members of the fire/rescue service. We ask your blessing on this gathering and your continued blessings on our efforts to protect life and property. All this we ask in your name.
38. This has been an excellent occasion. We thank you, O God, for the time we have spent together. As we go forth to serve as members of the fire/rescue service and those who support us, may we go in safety. Bless our families and this community this day and always. Amen

39. Gracious God, we ask your blessing on this gathering and the food set before us from your bountiful creation. Bless those who grew it, those who have prepared it and those who are serving it. May it nourish our bodies as our time together nourishes our hearts and minds. We ask your blessing on our brothers and sisters firefighters/Emergency Medial Technicians who will be responding to the needs of the community as we dine here. May they be safe. Amen
- Rev. Thomas E.C. Margrave
40. Gracious Lord, be with us as we gather to plan for our future. Help us to see the safety issues before we encounter them. Keep us in tune with our community so they feel confident in our abilities to serve. Be with our families as we rush out the door so that they know that you are with us and will see to our safe return home. Amen
41. Almighty Father of all, quell our souls in this time of loss so that we who leave here this day feel your comforting love with all of us left behind. Amen
42. Lord of all, we ask your blessing on this food and those who have prepared it. Allow this food to nourish our bodies as your word nourishes our spirit, let this gathering in fellowship continue to gather in your name. Amen
- Rev. Joe Auslander
43. Our Father, who art in Heaven, we ask You to bless this meeting. Endow us with Your Spirit. May all our actions be guided by Your hand that we may be fair and just to all. Bless our name of the organization and all our members everywhere. We ask this in your most Holy name.
44. Heavenly Father, we thank you for the privilege of meeting together. We ask Your blessing, care, and protection for all our comrades, now and forever. Amen
- Chaplain Israel "Sonny" Cohen
45. Lord, as we gather here on this night of installation, we turn our thoughts to you. We ask your blessing on all those gathered here and for those who were unable to attend but are here in spirit. As we prepare to install new officers today, we are thankful to those who served faithfully over the past year and we ask your blessing upon those for their sacrificial services to their community.
46. Lord, as we prepare to close installation this evening of installation, we ask your blessing on those who have come forward to serve as leaders of our department over the next year. We thank you for their commitment to their department and community. Help us all Lord to support these new officers on the execution of duty. As we depart for this place Lord, grant us all safe travel home until we meet to answer the next alarm. Amen
47. Lord, we ask your blessing on the food and fellowship we are about to partake in. May it nourish our bodies and our spirit to execute our duties as firefighters. We ask your blessing upon those who have prepared the meal and those who have come to serve us. Amen
- Chaplain Eric Bennett
48. Our heavenly Father, we offer our grateful thanks this day for our families, our wives, our children, our parents, without whose support, we could not function very well as firefighters. We know that our work takes time away from our families. We ask your blessings upon them. When we are away

from home, we ask your protection for them. May we find strength in your strength being ever mindful of our need for you and each other. Unite our hands in a bond of brotherhood because of our affection and sympathy, for our brothers who are with you now. May we be sensitive to your ever-present Spirit as we offer our prayer in your name.

- Chaplain Richard Holst

Poems

A Memorial Poem - Gone but Not Forgotten

Author unknown - Read by Sen. Edward Kennedy at the memorial service following the Worcester (MA) tragedy of Dec. 3, 1999

Friend, when you weep for me
Remember that it was meant to be
Lay me down and when you leave
Remember I'll be at your sleeve
In every dark and choking hall
I'll be there as you slowly crawl
On every roof in driving snow
I'll hold your coat and you will know
In cellars hot with searing heat
At windows where a gate you meet
In closets where young children hide
You know I'll be there at your side
The house from which I now respond
Is overstaffed with heroes gone
Those who answered one last bell
Did the job and did it well
As firefighters we understand
That death's a card dealt in our hand
A card we hope we never play
But one we hold there anyway
That card is something we ignore
As we crawl across a weakened floor
For we know that we're the only prayer
For anyone that might be there
So, remember as you wipe your tears
The joy I knew throughout the years
As I did the job I loved to do
I pray that thought will see you through

Meet Me in The Stairwell

You say that you will never forget where you were when you heard the news on September 11th, 2001, and neither will I.

I was on the 100th floor in a smoke-filled room with a man who called his wife to say "goodbye" I held his fingers steady as he dialed the phone. I gave him the peace to say, "Honey, I'm not going to make it, but it's OK... I'm ready to go!"

I was with his wife when he called as she fed breakfast to their children. I held her up as she tried to understand his words and realized that he was not coming home that night.

I was in the stairwell of the 23rd floor when a woman cried out to me for help. "I have been knocking on your hearts door for 50 years!", I Said, "Of course I will show you the way home... Only believe in me now."

I was at the base of the building with a Priest named Father Mike, ministering to the injured and devastated souls. I took him home to tend my flock and his flock in Heaven. He heard my voice and answered!

I was on all four of those planes, in every seat, and with every prayer. I was with the crew as they were overtaken. I was in the hearts of believers there, comforting and assuring them that their faith saved them.

I was in Texas, Kansas, and London. I was standing next to you when you heard the terrible news. Did you sense me there?

I want you to know that I saw every face. I knew every name---- though not all knew me. Some met me for the first time on the 86th floor.

Some sought me with their last breath. Some couldn't hear me calling to them through the smoke and the flames; "Come to Me... This Way... Take my hand." Some chose, for the final time to ignore Me. BUT I WAS THERE!

I did not place you in the tower that day, you may not know why, but I do. However, if you were there in that explosive moment of time, would you have reached for me?

September 11th was not the end of the journey for you. But someday your journey will end. And I will be there for you as well. "SEEK ME NOW WHY I CAN BE FOUND." Then, at any moment, you know that you are ready to go."

I will be in the stairwell of your final moments.

Signed: GOD

I Wish You Knew...

I wish you could know what it is like to search in a burning bedroom for trapped children at 3 AM, flames rolling above your head, your palms and knees burning as you crawl, the floor sagging under your weight as the kitchen below you burns.

I wish you could comprehend a wife's horror at 6 in the morning as I check her husband of 40 years for a pulse and find none. I start CPR anyway, hoping to bring him back, knowing intuitively it is too late.

But wanting his wife and family to know everything possible was done to try to save his life.

I wish you knew the unique smell of burning insulation, the taste of soot-filled mucus, the feeling of intense heat through your turnout gear, the sound of flames crackling, the eeriness of being able to see absolutely nothing in dense smoke-sensations that I've become too familiar with.

I wish you could read my mind as I respond to a building fire "Is this a false alarm or a working fire? How is the building constructed? What hazards await me this time? Is anyone trapped?" Or to call, "What is wrong with the patient? Is it minor or life-threatening? Is the caller really in distress or is he waiting for us with a 2x4 or a gun?"

I wish you could be in the emergency room as a doctor pronounces dead the beautiful five-year old girl that I have been trying to save during the past 25 minutes, who will never go on her first date or say the words, "I Love you mommy" again.

I wish you could know the frustration I feel in the cab of the engine, squad or my personal vehicle, the driver with his foot pressing down hard on the pedal, my arm tugging again and again at the air horn chain, as you fail to yield the right-of-way at an intersection or in traffic. When you need us however, your first comment upon our arrival will be, "It took you forever to get here!"

I wish you could know my thoughts as I helped extricate a girl of teenage years from the remains of her automobile. "What if this was my daughter, sister, my girlfriend, or a friend? What were her parent's reaction going to be when they opened the door to find a police officer with hat in hand?"

I wish you could know how it feels to walk in the back door and greet my parents and family, not having the heart to tell them that I nearly did NOT come back from the last call.

I wish you could know how it feels dispatching officers, firefighters and EMTs out, and our heart drops because no one answers back or to hear a bone chilling 911 call of a child or wife needing assistance.

I wish you could feel the hurt as people verbally, and sometimes physically, abuse us or belittle what I do, or as they express their attitudes of "It will never happen to me."

I wish you could realize the physical, emotional, and mental drain or missed meals, lost sleep and forgone social activities, in addition to all the tragedy my eyes have seen.

I wish you could know the joy of working with other fire and EMS personnel, and the self-satisfaction of helping save a life or preserving someone's property or being able to be there in time of crisis or creating order from total chaos.

I wish you could understand what it feels like to have a little boy tugging at your arm and asking, "Is Mommy okay?" Not even being able to look in his eyes without tears from your own and not knowing what to say. Or to have to hold back a longtime friend who watches his buddy having CPR done on him as they take him away in the Medic Unit. You know all along he did not have his seat belt on. A sensation that I have become too familiar with.

Unless you have lived with this kind of life, you will never truly understand or appreciate who I am, we are, or what our job really means to us...I wish you could though.

The Dash

Linda Ellis

I read of a man who stood to speak
At the funeral of a friend
He referred to the dates on the tombstone
From the beginning...to the end

He noted that first came the date of birth
And spoke the following date with tears,
But he said what mattered most of all

Was the dash between those years

For that dash represents all the time
That they spent alive on earth.
And now only those who loved them
Know what that little line is worth

For it matters not, how much we own,
The cars...the house...the cash.
What matters is how we live and love
And how we spend our dash.

So, think about this long and hard.
Are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left
That can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough
To consider what's true and real
And always try to understand
The way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger
And show appreciation more
And love the people in our lives
Like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect
And more often wear a smile,
Remembering this special dash
Might only last a little while

So, when your eulogy is being read
With your life's actions to rehash...
Would you be proud of the things they say
About how you spent YOUR dash?

If Tomorrow Never Comes

Rev. Jim Van Houten

In memory of all those who perished; the passengers and the pilots on the United and AA flights and the passengers and crew of flight 93 that crashed in PA. To the workers in the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and all the innocent bystanders and to the Port Authority and the Fire and Police Departments of New York City.

If I knew
If I knew it would be the last time
That I'd see you fall asleep,

I would tuck you in more tightly
and pray the Lord, your soul to keep.

If I knew it would be the last time
that I see you walk out the door,
I would give you a hug and kiss
and call you back for one more.

If I knew it would be the last time
I'd hear your voice lifted up in praise,
I would video tape each action and word,
so, I could play them back in later days.

If I knew it would be the last time,
I could spare an extra minute,
to stop and say, "I love you,"
instead of assuming you would KNOW I do.

If I knew it would be the last time
I would be there to share your day,
Well, I'm sure you'll have so many more,
so, I can let just this one slip away.

For surely there's always tomorrow
to make up for an oversight,
and we'll always get a second chance
to make everything just right.
There will always be another day to say, "I love you so,"
But just in case I might be wrong, and today is all I get,
I'd like to say how much I love you
and trust you'll never forget.

Tomorrow is not promised to anyone,
young or old alike,
Today may be the last chance
you get to hold your loved one tight.
So, stop waiting for tomorrow,
And reach out for them today?

For if tomorrow never comes,
you'll surely regret the day,
That you didn't take that extra time
for a smile, a hug, or a kiss
because you were too busy to grant someone,
their one last wish.

So, hold your loved ones close today,
and whisper in their ear,

Tell them how much you love them
and that you'll always hold them dear.

Take time to say, "I'm sorry,"
"Please forgive me," "Thank you," or "It's okay."
And if tomorrow never comes,
you'll have no regrets about today.

Weavings

My life is but a weaving.
Between my God and Me.
I may not choose the colors
But HE knows what's best for me.

For He can view the pattern
Upon the upper side,
While I'll see it....
Only one the underside.

Some time He weaves only sorrow
Which seemeth strange to me,
But I will trust His Judgment
And work on Faithfully.

'Tis He who Fills the Shuttle
For He Knows what's best,
And I shall weave in earnest
And leave with Him the rest.

At last, when life has ended,
With Him I shall abide.
Then I may view the pattern
Upon the Upper side.

Then I shall know the reason why
Pain with Joy entwined.
Was woven in the fabric of life
..... That God Designed.

My Brother Has Fallen

Submitted By Rev. Jim Van Houten

My brother has fallen
No, I don't know his name,
We have not the same parents,
Yet family all the same.

He lives in this town,
I live in another,
But it doesn't matter,
For this man is My Brother.

My brother, I call him, yet, I have never seen his face.
For we have brothers and sisters all over the place.
For I am a firefighter, and our families are one,
A tradition passed down, from father to son.

Around the world, a brotherhood of unity,
A closeness, a bond, most people don't see.
I'll watch his back, and he'll watch mine,
I'll go, you go, "time after time.

His family is my family, and my family theirs,
We're part of a family, where everyone cares.
I'll look after your kids, please check in on my wife,
If the day should come, when I lay down my life.

We dedicate our lives, to helping our fellow man,
Living day after day doing all that we can.
Wherever we're needed, be it nighttime or day,
To save someone's life, we will step in harm's way.

My brother has fallen, doing what he loved best,
And among the honored, he stands with the rest.
For a mile, in dress uniforms, here everyone stands,
For my brother has fallen God, into your hands.

One Of the Best Poems Ever!

I was shocked, confused, bewildered
As I entered Heaven's door,
Not by the beauty of it all,
Nor the lights or its decor.

But it was the folks in Heaven
Who made me sputter and gasp--
The thieves, the liars, the sinners,
The alcoholics and the trash.

There stood the kid from seventh grade
Who swiped my lunch money twice.
Next to him was my old neighbor
Who never said anything nice.

Herb, who I always thought
Was rotting away in hell,
Was sitting pretty on cloud nine,
Looking incredibly well.

I nudged Jesus, 'What's the deal? I would love to hear Your take.
How'd all these sinners get up here?
God must've made a mistake.

And why's everyone so quiet,
So somber - give me a clue.'
'Hush, child,' He said, 'they're all in shock.
No one expected you.'

JUDGE NOT - Remember...Just going to church doesn't make you a Christian, any more than standing
in your garage makes you a car.

When a Fireman Leaves the Job

Past Chief Rev. Jim Van Houten

When a fireman leaves “the job” and retires, perhaps to a better life, many are jealous, some are
pleased, yet others who may have already retired, wonder.

We wonder if he knows what they are leaving behind because we already know. We know, as an
example, that after a lifetime of camaraderie that few experience, we know it will remain as a longing
for those past times.

We know in a firemen’s life there is a distinctive fellowship that lasts long after the uniforms are hung
up in the back closet. We know even if he throws them away, that they will be on him with every step
and breath that remains in his life.

We also know how the very bearing of the man speaks of what he was and in his heart is still. These are
the burdens of the job. You will see what others do not see, or choose to ignore, and always will look at
the rest of the fire service world with respect for what they do; only grown in a lifetime of knowing.

Never think for one moment you are escaping from that life. You are only escaping “the job” and
merely being allowed to leave “active duty.”

So, what is wished for you is that whenever you ease into retirement, in your heart you will never
forget for one moment that “Blessed are the firemen for they shall be called children of God,” and you
are still a member of the greatest fraternity the world has ever known.

The Fireman’s Last Call

Submitted by Chaplain Franklin Knower

He heard the first alarms
And he responded to the call.
Just like the other day
He was prepared to give his all.

In disbelief he saw the fire

Raining from the sky
He prayed, Dear Lord, who will we fight
A fire up so high?

He rushed into the building
There were lives he hoped to save,
He knew he had a job to do
The bravest of the brave.

He climbed the darkest stairway
Rising further from the ground
Saying, "This way... Come down this Way..."
He helped guide them safely down.

While most people hurried downward
He continued his accent...
... and he ascended into heaven...
Knowing not why he was sent.
He stood beside the Father
As the Towers tumbled down.
"Lord, you have to send me back there,
I'm needed on the ground.

God said, "You have earned your place here
You have done your duty proud
You have just one final task
Before you lay your helmet down."

Now the Firefighter understood
And answered this last call.
And he stood before his brothers
And gave the job his all.

The Policeman walked beside him,
They now understood their fate.
And those in service from the Pentagon,
Stood guarding heaven's gate.

As the victims rose to heaven,
Through the skies of heat and flame.
He said, "this way... come this way..."
And guided them safely home, to remain.

Banner Blessing

Written & Presented by Father Hugh Connaghan
Member of the Chaplains Committee at the FASNY convention

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen.
Almighty God, we have come to the most important part of our yearly convention. Up to this time, we have concerned ourselves with human things, worldly concerns, actions, and plans that change and come to an end.

Now we turn to the spiritual- that which never changes and is forever, eternal, never-ending- things of God.

The first act of our Memorial Service is the blessing of our new Memorial Banner. Its purpose is to bring to our minds and hearts eternal thoughts and primarily thoughts about specific people: the NEVER dying souls of our departed fellow firefighters.

Lord, we know life is simple and short. As someone once said, "Life is just a fleeting moment in the vastness of eternity."

As we bless this reminder of those who have served so well, we ask, Lord, that you give each of us fire service persons an abundance of the blessings of the gifts of awareness and sensitivity and also, Lord, lots of the precious gifts of thoughtfulness and gratitude.

On this Memorial Banner, there are candles- the flame and light of candles rises, signifying the soft and silent rising of our prayers to our Heavenly Father for our deceased brother firefighters.

The spirit of the various units of the fire service is well portrayed in the spirit image of a firefighter on the right side of the banner.

Almighty God may your blessing be on this banner forever that it may help us to attain eternal life for our brother firefighters and for ourselves.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

'Twas the Night Before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas
Peace throughout our little town.
Our equipment is ready, nothing is down.
The bunkers are hung in the lockers with care.
In hopes St. Florian will bless every pair.
The firefighters are restless, but snug in their beds.
Visions of past traumas, danced in their heads.
The Chief hunkered down, his radio on his stand.
Trying to sleep with the Lord's cross in his hand.
The community feels safe, knowing we are here.
For they call upon us, to save them from fear.
We don't just fight fires, we save lives, too.
In your moments of distress, we help you through.
We are not the type, who will say "no".
Friends and neighbors, people you know.
We don't do it for glory, we don't do it for fame.
For years of training taught us it's not a game.
So, celebrate with friends and family this year.
You never have to question; the FIREFIGHTERS are here.

Christmas is upon us; the time is near.
Merry Christmas to all and a Happy New Year.
MERRY CHRISTMAS From Rev. Jim

Ode To Firefighters

Reverend David C. Shepson

The Fire Alarm rang with a heavy clang.
And woke him from his sleep.
The Plectron (home pager) spoke, It is no joke
This one was for keeps.

He donned his coat and grabbed his hat.
And shouted through the door,
“Don’t worry, I’ll be back”,
As he always was before.

The gas he fed as on he sped.
With flashing light of blue.
His duty called without applause.
This firemen’s coming through.

In the night he caught the sight
The orange reddish glow.
His eagle eye gave reply.
That this would be his foe.

The engines came as the smoke and flame.
Increased a hundred-fold.
Everyone knew, including you.
The need for a fireman bold.

A mother cried as she stood outside.
He read her anxious face.
There was a child, tender and mild.
Within that burning place.

No time to lose, or even choose.
He knew what he must do.
With head bent, in he went.
And searched the building through.

He gave a sigh when he heard a cry.
The babe was still all right.
There, in bed as his mother said.
Was this wonderful, precious sight.

The room was hot, he took the tot.
And clutched it to his breast.
The smoke was thick, to make one sick.
To get out would be his quest.

His body ached, his skin was baked.
His eyes were stinging sore.
The scot-pak spent, his lungs now rent.
He searched for the open door.

Out he came, staggering lame.
No child could be seen.
Down he fell as he tried to tell.
When he heard the mother's scream.

Exhausted and faint, this Firemen-Saint
Now lay there on the ground.
To his side, afraid he'd died,
His buddies gathered round.

Then they heard those faltering words.
That came from his fevered throat.
"The child was well, from that burning hell.
He's tucked beneath my coat."

There our Souls Focused on God

Written For the Dedication of the Chapel at the Firemen's Home (2/25/12)
Chaplain Rev. Jim Van Houten

It was a sunny warm day that day
When my friend and I went touring
In a nearby town and there by chance
Having an unplanned hour decided
To visit a chapel at the Firemen's home,
There our souls focused on God.

Coming from the bright sunny afternoon
Into the semi darkness of this quiet chapel,
Unlit by the usual artificial bright lights,
The stain glass window was a beacon
Glowing with a dazzling rainbow of colors,
There our souls focused on God.

Light flooded the small chapel,
With multi-colored prisms of color,
Soft light that brought our eyes
To stare in wonder at the beauty

Of these unique colorful windows of glass,
There our souls focused on God.

These lovely windows of great color
We're not created to be worshipped,
For God does not live in their colored glass
But they were created to focus us on God,
To remind us to stop, be awed, and pray
There our souls focused on God.

That day as my friend and I entered
In this small chapel with its special
lighted windows showing scenes of dedication,
Awed by their beauty after viewing
I sat down, bowed my head and prayed
There our souls focused on God.

While praying my spirit seemed to glow
With a wonderful peace and awe
To be able to sit in a place where
Artwork glows showing in a colorful display
The life of my Lord and my Firematic friends
There our souls focused on God.

I looked at my watch and soon realized
That it was time to leave for the day!
Could I not, stay a bit longer,
But alas my friend and I walked away!
Knowing we would return to this chapel,
There at the Firemen's home. There viewing this window.
Where our souls could focus on God.

When Tomorrow Starts Without Me

When tomorrow starts without me and I am not here to see
If the sun should rise and find your eyes all filled with tears for me
I know how much you love me as much as I love you
And each time you think of me I know you'll miss me too.
But when tomorrow starts without me please try to understand
That Jesus came and called my name and took me by the hand.
He said my place is ready in heaven far above
And that I have to leave behind all those I dearly love.
But as I turned to walk away a tear fell from my eye
For all my life I'd always thought it wasn't my time to die.
I had so much to live for and so much yet to do
It seems almost impossible that I was leaving you.
I thought of all the yesterdays the good ones and the bad

I thought of all the love we shared and all the fun we had.
If I could have stayed for just a little while
I'd say goodbye and kiss you and maybe see you smile.
But then I fully realize that this could never be
For emptiness and memories would take the place of me.
And when I thought of worldly things that I'd miss come tomorrow
I thought of you and when I did my heart was filled with sorrow.
But when I walked through Heaven's gate and felt so much at home
As God looked down and smiled at me from his great golden throne.
He said This is eternity and all I've promised you
Today your life on earth is past but here it starts anew.
I promise no tomorrow but today will always last
And since each day's the same here there's no longing for the past.
So, when tomorrow starts without me don't think we're far apart,
For every time you think of me, I'm right here in your heart.

The June Bride by Edgar Guest

Submitted By Rev. Jim Van Houten

She is Fair to see and sweet,
Dainty from her head to feet,
Modest as her blushing shows
Happy as her smile disclose,
And the young firemen at her side,
Nervously attempts to hide
Underneath a vestige grim,
That the fuss is bothering him.

Pause a moment, happy pair!
This is not the station where
Romance ends and wooing stops.
And the charm from courtship drops.
This is but the outward gate,
Where the souls of mortal's mate.
And the border of the land,
You must travel hand and hand.

You who come to marriage bring,
All your tenderness and cling,
Steadfastly to all the ways
That have marked your wooing days.
You are only starting out,
On life's roadways hedged about
Thick with roses and with tares,
Sweet delights and bitter cares.

Heretofore you've only played

At loves game, young man and maid,
Only known it, at its best,
Now you'll have to face its test
You must prove your loves worthwhile,
Something time cannot defile,
Something neither care nor pain
Can destroy or mar or stain.

You are now about to show
Whether love is real or no;
Yonder down the lane of life,
You will find as man and wife.
Sorrows, disappointments, doubt
Hope will almost flicker out,
But if rightly you are wed,
Love will linger where you tread.

There are joys that you will share,
Joys to balance every care.
Arm and arm remain and you
Will not fear the storms that brew.
If when you are sorest tried,
You face your trials, side by side.
Now your wooing days are done
And your loving days begun.

God Gives and God Takes

Rabbi Allen S. Maller

God gives opportunities for us to love but not forever.
God takes opportunities away after a while.
So don't hesitate or delay or curse the darkness while remaining mired in sadness and hopelessness,
because God gives; and God takes away.
Blessed be the name of God.
But why bless God when God takes away?
Because if opportunities were always there, we would wait until the time was just right and never
make the leap, and more of life would slip away.
So, God gives and God takes; Blessed be God's name.

We Remember Them

At the rising of the sun and it's going down
We remember them
At the blowing of the wind and the chill of winter
We remember them
At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring
We remember them

At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer
We remember them
At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn
We remember them
At the beginning of the year and when it ends
We remember them
As long as we live, they will live;
For they are now a part of us, as
We remember them
When we are weary and in need of strength
We remember them
When we are lost and sick at heart
We remember them
When we have joy, we crave to share
We remember them
When we have decisions that are difficult to make
We remember them
When we have achievements that are based on theirs
We remember them
As long as we live, they too will live;
For they are now a part of us, as
We remember them

The Abiding Love

It singeth low in every heart, we hear it each and all –
a song of the kind, the brave, the sweet, who walks with us no more.
Tis hard to take the burden up, when He has laid it down;
He brightened all the joy of life, He softened every frown;
But O, 'tis good to think of Him, when we are troubled sore!
Thanks be to God that such have been, although He is no more.
More homelike seems the vast unknown since He has entered there;
to follow Him is not so hard, wherever He may fare,
He cannot be where God is not, on any sea or shore:
Whate'er betides, thy love abides, with our God, forever more.

A Letter from Heaven

When tomorrow starts without me,
And I am not there to see.
If the sun should rise and find your eyes,
Filled with tears for me.

I wish so much you wouldn't cry,
The way you did today.

When thinking of the many things,
We didn't get to say.

I know how much you love me,
As much as I love you.
And each time you think of me,
I know that you'll miss me too.

When tomorrow starts without me,
Don't think we're far apart.
For every time you think of me,
I'm right there in your heart.

I'm Special

Rev. Jim Van Houten
For my Grandson Brayden

In all the world there's nobody like me.
Since the beginning of time, there has never been another person like me.
Nobody has my smile. Nobody has my eyes, my nose, my hair, my hands, my voice.
I'm special.

No one can be found who has my handwriting.

Nobody anywhere has my taste for food or music or art. No one else sees things just as I do.
In all of time there's been no one who laughs like me, no one who cries like me, and what makes me
laugh and cry will never provoke identical laughter and tears from anybody else, ever.

No one reacts to any situation just as I would react. I'm special.

I'm the only one in all of creation who has my set of abilities. Oh, there will always be somebody who is
better at one of the things I'm good at, but no one in the universe can reach the quality of my
combinations of talents, ideas, abilities and feelings. Like a room full of musical instruments, some may
excel alone, but none can match the symphony sound when all are played together. I'm a symphony.

Through all of eternity no one will ever look, talk, walk, think, or do like me.

I'm special. I'm rare.

And, in all rarity there is great value. Because of my great value, I need not attempt to imitate others. I
will accept -- yes, celebrate -- my differences. I'm special.

And I'm beginning to realize it's no accident that I'm special.

I'm beginning to see that my Higher Power made me special for a very special purpose. He must have a
job for me that no one else can do as well as I. Out of all the billions of applicants, only one is qualified,
only one has the right combination of what it takes.

That one is me. Because ... I'm special!

Footprints in the Sand

For a Funeral or Celebration of Life Service

One night I dreamed I was walking along the beach with
the Lord. Scenes from my life flashed across the sky. In
each, I noticed footprints in the sand. Sometimes there were
two sets of footprints; other times there was only one.

During the low periods of my life, I could see only one set of footprints, so I said, "You promised me, Lord, that you would walk with me always. Why, when I have needed you most, have you not been there for me?"
The Lord replied, "The times when you have seen only one set of footprints, my child, is when I carried you."

The Unbroken Chain

We little knew the day that,
God was going to call your name,
In life we loved you dearly,
In death we do the same.

It broke our hearts to lose you.
But you didn't go alone.
For part of us went with you,
The day God called you home.

You left us peaceful memories.
Your love is still our guide.
And though we cannot see you,
You are always at our side.

Our family chain is broken
And nothing seems the same,
But as God calls us one by one
The chain will link again.

Will The Circle Be Unbroken?

Hymn Lyrics

There are loved ones in the glory,
Whose dear forms you often miss;
When you close your earthly story,
Will you join them in their bliss?

Will the circle be unbroken
By and by, by and by?
In a better home awaiting
In the sky, in the sky?

In the joyous days of childhood,
Oft they told of wondrous love,
Pointed to the dying Savior
Now they dwell with Him above.

You remember songs of heaven
Which you sang with childish voice,
Do you love the hymns they taught you,
Or are songs of earth your choice?

You can picture happy gatherings
Round the fireside long ago,
And you think of tearful partings,
When they left you here below.

One by one their seats were emptied,
One by one they went away;
Here the circle has been broken
Will it be complete one day?

The Fire Fighters' Creed - About the Author

Rev. Jim Van Houten

This is a Tribute to Timothy John Murphy an accomplished composer and guitarist. Tim wrote the ballad entitled "The Firefighter's Creed" in 2001. He played and sang the ballad for many years when the services at the wall in Albany were held outside.

Tim loved this country, and he loved those who faced danger to protect it. He understood danger having served in Viet Nam where he received the Silver Star and The Bronze Star Medals. Tim's love for country was evident in everything he did, from his unwavering patriotism to his selfless willingness to help others in need. Tim was my friend.

Tim was called home to be with the Lord in April of 2023. I attended his funeral representing our Association on April 19th, he was laid to rest in Assumption Cemetery in Cortlandt Manor, New York.

The Firefighters' Creed

Ballad By Timothy John Murphy

This can be sung or read as a poem

There's a War that's being fought without Bombs or Rifle-shot;
There are deadly confrontations every day.

For the Enemy is Fire; and the Casualties grow higher,
Among those who place themselves in Danger's Way.

It's a Warrior Breed of men, who face the fires,
and fight again, When the Screaming Sirens sound their Battle Cry!

Where the Klaxons blare the call, they'll be there to give their All:
They'll lay their Lives on the Line, Do or Die !

When the terrorists attack, stab our Nation in the back

Then our Firefighters lead the way once more;

With their brothers, the Police, the Volunteers and EMT's,
They are joined to combat this Unholy War.

With the strength of Saving Grace, they met the challenge Face-to-Face,
Even though the stakes had never been so high -

They took the Job and got it done, unsung Heroes every one:
They laid their Lives on the Line, Do or Die!

(Chorus) When the flames are blazing high against the smokey midnight sky,

You will hear their Mighty Diesels raging by!

They'll proceed at greatest speed - it's The Firefighters' Creed:

They'll lay their Lives on the Line, Do or Die!

There's a Piper on the hill, in the misty morning chill;
You can hear his lonesome bagpipe's mournful drone.

Another Firefighter died; and his Brothers at graveside,
Will see his Widow and their Children aren't alone.

For every Fireman has to know that he could be the
Next to go: It's just the Nature of the Beast they can't deny;

Every year they add more Names to the Brotherhood
of Flames: They'll lay their Lives on the Line, Do or Die!

(Chorus) When the flames are blazing high against the smoky midnight sky,

You will hear their Mighty Diesels raging by!

They'll proceed at greatest speed - it's The Firefighters' Creed:

Countless Lives have been Saved by the Bravest of the Brave!

Years of training - Endless Drill! Dedication - Iron Will!
Village Square - City Street! They're the Ones who Take the Heat!

At each Station's strident Bell, still they charge straight into Hell!
They'll lay their Lives on the Line, Do or Die

The Firefighters' Creed - Tim Murphy © 1998, 2001

On 28 November 2001, The Firefighters' Creed was designated the Official Anthem of Every year they add more Names to the Brotherhood of Flames:
They'll lay their Lives on the Line, Do or Die!

A New Firematic Hymn

New Lyrics by Rev. John G. Fleischmann
Chaplain for the Southampton Town Police
Member of NYSAFS

Sung to the tune of Eternal Father, Strong to Save or read as a poem

For Those Who Brave the Flame

Firefighters

O Lord, for those who brave the flame
And serve their neighbor in Your Name,
Watch over them by night and day,
As they the fiery dragon slay.
Defend them from all death and harm.
As they respond to each alarm.

Police Officers

For all who serve in Michael's stead
Defending us from crime and dread,
Watch over them who bear this shield,
With Your protection keep them sealed.
Lord, grant them wisdom, peace, and grace.
To further justice in each case.

EMS

As sick and injured cry for aid,
In pain, abandoned, or afraid,
Your healing hand, O Lord, provide.
Through those who come unto their side.
With skill, compassion, knowledge, care
May they your healing comfort share.

Congregation

O Trinity of love and power
Our people shield in danger's hour.
From trauma, sickness, fire, and foe
Protect them where so e'er they go.
For those who serve we give all praise
Unto You, Lord, through all our days.

Creation of a Firefighter

When the Lord was creating Firefighter, He was into his sixth day of overtime when an angel appeared and said, "you're doing a lot of fiddling around on this one."

And the Lord said, have you read the specifications on this person? Firefighters have to be able to go for hours fighting fires or tending to a person that the usual everyday person would never touch, while putting in the back of their minds the circumstances. They have to be able to move at a second's notice and not think twice of what they are about to do, no matter what danger. They have to be in top physical condition at all times, running on half eaten meals, and they must have six pair of hands."

The angel shook her head slowly and said, "Six pair of hands, no way."

"It's not the hands that are causing me the problems," said the Lord, "It's the three pair of eyes a firefighter has to have."

That's on the standard model? asked the angel.

The Lord nodded, "One pair that sees through the fire and where they and their fellow Firefighters should fight next. Another pair here in the side of the head to see their fellow Firefighters and keep them safe. And another pair of eyes in the front so that they can look for the victims caught in the fire that need their help."

"Lord", said the angel, touching his sleeve, "Rest and work tomorrow."

"I can't said the Lord. "I already have a model that can carry a 250 pound man down a flight of stairs and to safety from the burning building, and can feed a family of five on a civil service paycheck."

The angel circled the model of the Firefighter very slowly, "Can he think?"

"You bet, said the Lord. It can tell you the elements of a hundred fires; and can recite procedures in their sleep that are needed to care for a person until they reach the hospital. And all the while they have to keep their wits about themselves. This Firefighter also has phenomenal personal control. They can deal with a scene full of pain and hurt, coaxing a child's mother into letting go of the child so that they can care for the child in need. And still they rarely get the recognition for a job well done from anybody, other than from fellow Firefighters."

Finally, the angel bent over and ran her finger across the face of the Firefighter.

"There's a leak," she pronounced. "Lord, it's a tear."

"What's it for?" asked the angel.

"It's a tear from bottled up emotions for fallen comrades.

A tear for commitment to that funny piece of cloth called the American Flag.

It's a tear for all the pain and suffering they have encountered.

And it's a tear for their commitment to caring for and saving lives of their fellow man!"

“What a wonderful feature Lord, you’re a genius,” said the angel.

THE LORD LOOKED SOMBER AND SAID,“I DIDN’T PUT IT THERE.”

Section III – Ceremonies and Services

Of the many tasks that Chaplains are called on to perform, the most visible activity a Chaplain may have is the performing of ceremonies and services. These may range from being called upon to serve as the Installing Officer or as a participant in an Installation Ceremony to blessing of equipment to the most solemn activity the participation in a memorial service.

The information included in this section is meant to be guides and suggestions to assist a Chaplain in planning the ceremonies and services. Like much that is in the Chaplain’s Manual, they may need to be adapted to the local situation.

In the planning stages for these events, it is also a good idea to practice these ceremonies and services before the actual event. A Chaplain will want to be well versed in what s/he will say and do in each of the public rituals. Other members of the department may also wish to review what they are to be doing to enhance the experience of both the participants and the viewing community.

In the services for a deceased member, care must be taken to include and respect the family’s wishes. It is also possible that some items may not be able to be done because of personal or religious preferences. Whenever a service is to be held at a house of worship, the religious leader must be included in the planning of the service so that religious traditions are respected.

We pray that these ceremonies and services will be helpful and beneficial to all who participate in them.

Installation Ceremonies

Long Form

Installing Officer: Do you accept the office to which you have been elected?

(Answer: “I Do”)

Are you ready to assume the obligation and perform all the duties of your office without reservation?

(Answer: “I Am”)

The Charge: (Optional) That you know the duties of your office is manifested by your election. Devote yourself to these duties and conduct yourself as an Officer and person of integrity at all times.

Work honestly and faithfully with your fellow Officers. This organization can only function with smoothness and perfection when all is in harmony.

The name of the organization has placed in your custody the welfare of your organization. This was not done on their judgment of your popularity but solely on the basis of your ability to conduct the affairs of your Company, your devotion to duty and your ability to serve in a leadership capacity.

It is universally understood that the purpose of this organization is to protect the people and the real property of this district from the dangers of fire. Further, we are pledged to the protection and preservation of life through efforts in first aid and rescue.

Finally, it is your obligation and responsibility to serve wisely, so that the organization may be strengthened, preserved and continued.

The Pledge: I (state your name) hereby promise that I will perform the duties of the office to which I have been elected, to the best of my ability and for the best interests of name of the organization.

OR

I (name), pledge upon my honor that I will faithfully and to the best of my ability perform the duties of the office to which I have been elected. And I further promise that I will conduct myself as a true and loyal *Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician* in every way.

Installing Officer: By the authority invested in me as the Installing Officer, I do declare that the officers of the name of the organization have been duly and regularly installed.

Chaplain (name), will you invoke the blessing of Almighty God?

(All stand)

Blessing: (Clergy or Company Chaplain)

God of mercy and compassion, make us understand that everyone whom misfortune has touched, is our neighbor. Help us by Your grace to see that by ministering to them we are really serving You. As they courageously serve You, may we honor and assist them, all of us working together in redemptive charity towards the glorious advent of Your eternal Kingdom, wherein the Prophet has said "Whatsoever you shall do to the least of these my brethren, you will have done to Me". Implant in their hearts the spirit of service and direct them to the cause of their neighbors in their hour of need.

And we especially ask that peace and harmony may prevail in the name of the organization and that prosperity may attend it and every individual member, and finally, O Father, we pray, permit us to assemble around Your throne at the great day, to remain near You forever and ever. Amen.

Short Form

And now, (name of Installing Officer) will give you the oath of office, (and present you with your badge).

Installing Officer: Please repeat after me: I (give your name) hereby promise that I will perform the duties of the office to which I have been elected to the best of my ability and for the best interests of the name of the organization.

This concludes the installation ceremonies and at this time I congratulate you and wish all of you success during your term of office.

Will you please turn around and face the audience.

(Ladies and Gentlemen), These are the officers of the name of the organization for the year ____.

Prayer (optional): Heavenly Father, we ask Your blessing on the officers of the name of the organization during their term of office, and when decisions are to be made, guide them well. Pour forth Your blessings also on all of us assembled here tonight.

Bring us safely home from this gathering. Amen

At the Installation of a Chief

Chief (name), I charge you with the honor and responsibility of the name of the organization. You must plan well and wisely, being ever watchful of the lives and safety of your *firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians* and your townspeople, safeguard their property and render aid when called upon.

Be ever mindful that the science of *firefighting/healthcare* is always advancing; prepare yourself and your fellow members with that knowledge when made available.

Always conduct yourself as an Officer and a person of integrity. Take no reward or acclaim for a job well done without sharing such with your officers and members. That you have been chosen to be Chief of your company is a singular honor, for many are called but few are chosen.

May God grant you the wisdom to carry on.

I name, pledge upon my honor that I will faithfully and to the best of my ability perform the duties of the office to which I have been elected.

And I further promise that I will conduct myself as a true and loyal *Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician* in every way.

Installation Banquet Invocation

Lord, we seek Your blessing upon us on this night of installation. The men and women who have gathered here are a testimony to the importance of the occasion. We ask that You will meet with us; inspire us with Your presence and cause the name of the organization to be filled with your Spirit as we eat and fellowship and celebrate together. Amen

Auxiliary Installation – Opening Prayer

Let us pray and look to God for His blessings.

Almighty God our Heavenly Father, we ask You to grant us Your blessings as we gather here for this evening's installation service. We rejoice that we may always count upon Your favor and upon Your blessed presence. May each officer installed do *his/her* duty to God and to the office they are about to accept. Bless all here present tonight and those that through sickness and sorrow have been kept away. We again ask for Your blessing in Your name. Amen

Auxiliary Installation – Closing Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, bless our officers installed here tonight. Give them the courage to carry on and make our organization one we can be proud of, Bless our *firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians* as they do their duty protecting life and property. We ask it all in Your name. Amen

Dedications

At a Groundbreaking

Almighty God, we set apart this land today for a very special purpose. May the building that will rest upon this soil adequately serve the firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians of name of the organization. We ask your continual blessing on the persons who serve here. May they be given wisdom, courage and strength to do their work well and may they be given a sense of responsibility for the people and the property of our community.

Lord we would pray that a light might always shine from this place as a sign of service to those in need. May we always be ready to serve. Finally, we dedicate this land to the firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians of the past, present, and future of name of the organization and to the people who live here. In the name of Him who serves us all. Amen.

Of a New Station House

Almighty God, we set apart this building today for a very special purpose. We name this building as a place of service. May it adequately serve the *firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians* who will work here. May it safely house the equipment of the *name of the organization*.

We ask your continual blessings on the persons who serve here. May they be given wisdom to do their work well, and may they be given a sense of responsibility for the people and the property of our community.

Lord, we would pray that a light may always shine from this place, indicating our readiness to serve in time of need. We offer, if need be, the light of our lives to those who call upon us. May we always be ready to serve.

Finally, we dedicate this building to the *firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians* who serve here; to the people who live here; and in the Name of Him who serves all. Amen

Opening a Building

We are here today on this very special occasion, and in Your sight dear Lord, to help celebrate the opening of this new facility. We will always be in debt to those who gave so much time and effort to make this a possibility and reality.

This building will be a living testimony to those who have served this organization in the past and to those who will serve it in the future, and in the name of him who serves us all. We ask this in all Your name. Amen

Of a New Apparatus

- Our Father, we dedicate this *engine, ladder, truck, pumper, ambulance etc.* to the people of our community, we offer our grateful thanks to all those who have made its purchase possible. May their support and encouragement be given recognition by our wise and responsible use of this equipment. May it always be kept in readiness. May it always be in good repair, and always be ready to serve our community. In His Name we pray. Amen
- Almighty God, we offer our grateful thanks that we have an opportunity to serve our community by serving in the *name of the organization*. We are especially thankful for this day for the opportunity of dedicating a new (apparatus name). We would ask your blessing upon it, and upon the persons who use it. May they be kept in safety, especially in times of danger. May they always have the support of their families. Finally, Lord, we dedicate this (apparatus name) to service in our community, and in Your Name. Amen

Of a New Ambulance

Chaplain John Bennett

Heavenly Father, we thank You for the opportunity to serve You as members of these volunteer ambulances. We pray the You will bless this new ambulance, and that You will watch over the skills of the technicians, drivers, and dispatchers, and that You will show Your great mercy to the patients we carry. We hereby dedicate this ambulance to serve the people of Community in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen

A Ceremony of Placing New Apparatus into Service

Chaplain says to the Chief: "Have these pieces of apparatus been named and christened yet?"
The Chief responds "No."

The clergy and the Chief proceed to each piece of apparatus and the Department Chaplain says to the Chief: "Name this apparatus".

After all pieces of apparatus have been named, then the Department Chaplain shall say: "Let God who has begun this good work in you, bring it to fulfillment."

The Department Chaplain says: "Let us Pray.... Blessed art You Lord God of our fathers, King of the Universe, you have called us into service to our community and the people committed to your care. Bless and consecrate this (apparatus name) to Your honor and glory, and to the service of the name of the organization, and the people and community they serve. Amen."

Dedicatory Address (designated speaker)

The reading of the 51st Psalm:

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Surely, I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

During the reading, the apparatus will be christened.

Optional) The Chief shall have pre-appointed representative firefighters (2 young people, 2 officers and a veteran firefighter whom the Department wishes to honor) who shall "HOUSE" the apparatus.

As the apparatus is "HOUSED", the lights shall flash, the bells ring, and the sirens blow, and the tones be sounded (about 30 seconds or longer).

Benediction:

After the sounding, the Department Chaplain will give the Aaronic Prayer:

May the Lord bless and keep you.

May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord lift his countenance upon you and grant you peace.

Dismissal:

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord and the community committed to our care. Amen

Litany For Firefighters

Leader: O God, The Father, Lead us into true brotherhood

Assembly: Indeed, cause us to care for one another.

Leader: For wisdom to be our brother's keeper, especially in times firefighting, answering distress calls and seeking to comfort the distressed

Assembly: We implore you to hear us Good Lord.

Leader: To protect us from fatigue of body, to give us courage to face the flames and smoke, to speak kindly to those facing loss of life and property.

Assembly: We beg your constant presence Good Lord.

Leader: To answer each call to duty in the spirit of our loyal brethren now deceased, whose face we see no more,

Assembly: So, inspire us to lead us onward Dear Father.

Leader: Finally, as men and women concerned for our beloved community and citizens, the aged and the little ones,

Assembly: Prevent the onslaught of fire and flood, destructive winds and storms, and when our services are needed, make us ready and willing to answer the cry of those in danger, who depend on us, Amen, Good Lord, Amen

Litany for Dedication of our Stained-Glass Windows (1)

In Memory of Joseph F. Kelly Vice President of FASNY

At the Firemen's Home in Hudson by: Rev. Jim van Houten Past Chief Chaplain

We dedicate this window to the glory of God.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting for you are God.

(Psalm 90: 1-2)

In making this window we included blocks of granite colored glass to show us the strength and power of God, our refuge and our strength.

You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me, take me out of the snare that is set for me, for you are my refuge. (Psalm 31: 3-4)

We placed upon this window the Maltese Cross. Emblem of the Fire Service

You have raised up an emblem for those who fear you, a symbol they can rally to when under any attack. (Psalm 60: 4)

This Emblem is a symbol of Faith.

For I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the Faith. Wherefore there is laid up for me treasures in heaven (2 Timothy 4:7)

This Emblem is a symbol of Protection

But God will give his angels charge over you to protect you and keep you wherever you go. (Psalm 91)

We placed a map of our State upon this window to remind us that Joe served every firefighter in New York State.

He endeavored to keep the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace. For we are one family, with one spirit and we are called to the same purpose. (Eph. 4:3)

On this window we placed Oak Leaf Clusters to Honor Him.

A man's pride in his work keeps him humble a man's good character gives him Honor. (Malachi 4: 6)

As we Dedicate this window in remembrance of our friend Joe Kelly today, we are assured that he is in heaven with our Lord.

And he showed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. In the midst of the street of heaven, and on either side of the river was the tree of life, and its leaves were for the healing of the nations. And we shall see his face; and his name shall be on our helmet shields. And there will be no night there, for the Lord God gives them light; and he shall reign forever and ever with Him. (Rev. 22: 1-2, 4-5)

Litany for Dedication of our Stained-Glass Windows (2)

At the Firemen's Home in Hudson by: Rev. Jim van Houten Past Chief Chaplain

We dedicate these windows to the glory of God.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting for you are God. (Psalm 90: 1-2)

In making these windows we included blocks of blue glass like the sky, to reveal to us the magnificence of God.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. (Psalm 19:1)

We included blocks of granite colored glass to show us the strength and power of God, our refuge and our strength.

You are indeed my rock and my fortress; for your name's sake lead me and guide me, take me out of the snare that is set for me, for you are my refuge. (Psalm 31: 3-4)

We placed the Emblem of the New York State Association of Fire Chaplains upon this window. On our Emblem is the Holy Bible.

For the word of God is living and full of power, and is sharper than any two-edged sword, cutting through and making a division even of the soul and the spirit, the bones and the muscles, and quick to see the thoughts and purposes of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)

Upon the Bible we placed the Maltese Cross a badge of Honor for Firefighters.

The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before Honor. (Proverbs 15:13)

Upon our Emblem are three Trumpets.

And He will send His angels, with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together his people from the 4 winds, and from one end of the heaven to the other. (Matt. 24:31)

Upon our Emblem is a Fire Helmet.

And they put on righteousness as a breast plate, and a helmet of salvation upon their heads; and they put on garments of protection for clothing, and their coats were clad with zeal. (Isaiah. 59:17)

Upon our Emblem is also the Star of Life.

When I consider your heavens and the work of your fingers, the moon and stars which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of them or human beings that you care so much for them. (Psalm 8: 3-4)

Upon the Star we placed the Staff of Aaron with a serpent on it.

And the Lord said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and place it on a pole like Aaron's rod, and anyone bitten or afflicted, who looks upon it shall live. (Numbers 21: 8)

We are Dedicating these windows in remembrance of Past Members by including Oak Leaf Clusters to Honor them.

And he showed me a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb. In the midst of the street of heaven, and on either side of the river was the tree of life,

and its leaves were for the healing of the nations. And they shall see his face; and his name shall be on their helmet shields. And there will be no night there, for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign forever and ever with him. (Rev. 22: 1-2,4-5)

Dedication Prayer for the Caring Window

At The Firemen's Home in Hudson

Rev. Wayne Jagow

Past Chief Chaplain, FASNY Chaplains Committee

Almighty God, Our Heavenly Father, we ask Your blessing upon us as we dedicate the, "Caring Window," of the firemen's Home.

May it be a creative symbol of the intangible gift of caring given by the volunteer firefighters throughout history.

May it also be an inspiration for generations yet to come.

We dedicate this creation of art in glass to the memory of those who have entered life triumphant.

We pray that the cherished memories that well up in our hearts would always be a source of comfort and hope to us. May we build in this time a heritage worthy to be handed to a future generation.

Lord, let Your light shine through this window that it may be a constant symbol of all that is good as we continue to serve and care for mankind. In Your Name Amen.

A Prayer of Rededication

125th Anniversary of the Firemen's Home

Rev. Jim Van Houten

Past Chief Chaplain, FASNY Chaplains Committee

Almighty God, today we gather here with joyful hearts to set apart and rededicate this building and this campus for a very special purpose, that is the loving care of our Firematic brothers and sisters.

For the past 125 years, this building and the ones it replaced were more than just structures, they were in fact, "A Home away from Home", for so many of our friends who are and have been residents here. Because of your divine blessings, this building has not been a place for life to end, but instead it has been a place of new beginnings.

It is fitting that the picture inscribed on this stone monument which we dedicate as well here today has the gates to this Firemen's Home ever open as a sign that all who enter through them will be forever welcome and may they all receive your divine peace not only today on this milestone occasion of the 125th celebration of this home, but for years to come as well.

We ask your continual blessings upon all of the residents as well as the dedicated staff who serve here today. May the staff be given the wisdom and strength to perform their work well, always reflecting a deep sense of compassion.

Lord, we thank you for the vision which you gave to the Officers, Directors and Trustees of FASNY 125 years ago as they began this project of loving care. And we are grateful that this same vision has remained in the hearts of all who hold these same positions today. We are grateful for their dedication and tireless service to this cause.

Lord, we pray that your light may always shine from this place, may it be seen and felt in all of the hearts and lives of those who are gathered here today for this 125th celebration.

Lord, we ask these things today in the Name of Him who Serves us all. Amen

Dedication of a Site

Rev. Wayne Jagow
Past Chief Chaplain, FASNY Chaplains Committee

Lord, we dedicate this place to those who served Niagara County in the Fire Service. They are no longer with us, but their spirit lives on. Accept our thankfulness for their leadership, dedication and example of service and sacrifice. May this be a place to be inspired and educate new generations of men and women to care for their communities. In Your Name We Pray, Amen

Order Of Service for the Decommissioning of a Fire House

Rev. Wayne Jagow
Past Chief Chaplain, FASNY Chaplains Committee

Invocation:

The Firefighters 23rd Psalm
Farewell Prayer

Almighty God our Heavenly Father, we invoke Your Blessing upon us as we enter into this very significant service in remembrance of those who have served in former years. We pray the cherished memories that well up in our hearts now may be a source of inspiration to us so that we may serve in our time as well as they served in their day.

As we go from this firehouse and from the celebration to our new station, we pray that we may give to our community the same high devotion to duty, the same contribution of ourselves to the welfare of life that was given each day, so that we may build in the time a heritage worthy to be handed to those generations yet to come. Our prayers are offered in the spirit of Jesus Christ. Amen

Benediction
Last Siren Call
Moment of Silence

Order of Service for the Dedication of a Memorial Site

Rev, Wayne Jagow
Past Chief Chaplain, FASNY Chaplains Committee

Invocation:

A lifetime on earth is not enough. God in his infinite wisdom has plans far beyond our comprehension- plans which could not end in death.

Oh Lord, we set aside this special place to honor those who have given to us and our community the example of the ultimate in service. Help us to fill the void in our hearts and remember those who are no longer with us. May this physical place be a reminder of the intangible spirit of serving mankind.

Give us the knowledge that our brothers and sisters are at peace and have joined those who have passed away and are no longer with us in the fire service, fill the emptiness that is in our hearts with the knowledge that they are at peace. Accept our thankfulness for their leadership, dedication and example of service. May their ultimate sacrifice and spirit of service be ours also as we leave this sacred place. Grant to those who mourn the spirit of faith and hope and the sweet expectation of a joyful reunion in eternity. Amen

Benediction:

May the Lord go before you to lead you, behind you to encourage you, beside you to befriend you, beneath you to uphold you, above you to protect you and within you to inspire you. Amen

Dedication of the Memorial Bell

Wrights Corners Volunteer Fire Company

Rev. Wayne Jagow

Past Chief Chaplain, FASNY Chaplains Committee

Prayer of Invocation:

Oh, Lord, we are here in this special moment and place to remember those who have given us the ultimate sacrifice and service. Help us to fill the void in our hearts and lives. May this physical place be a reminder of the tangible spirit of serving mankind. Give us the knowledge that our brothers and sisters are at peace and have joined those who have gone before those in triumph. Help us to lift our heads higher to the heavens where there is glory and a challenge to serve a generation yet to come Amen.

Prayer of Dedication:

Lord, we dedicate this Memorial Fire Bell to those who served Wrights Corners Volunteer Fire Company. While they are no longer with us, their spirit lives on. Accept our thankfulness for their leadership, dedication and example of service and sacrifice. May the tolling of this bell be an inspiration to us and a challenge to educate new generations of men and women to care for their community.

In Your Name we pray, Amen.

Prayer of Benediction:

May the Lord go before you to lead you, behind you to encourage you, beside you to befriend you, beneath you to uphold you, above you to protect you, and within you to inspire you. Amen.

Dedication of a New Engine

By: Rev. Wayne Jagow

Past Chief Chaplain, FASNY Chaplains Committee

Almighty God, we offer our thanks that as members of the Youngstown volunteer fire department we have the opportunity to serve. We are especially thankful that we are able to dedicate this engine today. We offer appreciation to all those who have made this purchase possible. May their support and encouragement be given recognition by our wise and responsible use of this equipment. May it always be kept in good repair and readiness to serve this community. We ask your blessing upon this engine and the people who use it. May they be kept in safety, especially in times of danger. May they always have the support of their families. Finally, Lord, we dedicate this engine to service in our community. We pray in Your Name, Amen.

Dedication or Blessings of Motorcycles

Rev. Jim Van Houten - Past Chief Chaplain

I am a member of the **Red Knights International Motorcycle Club**. Our membership is comprised of active firefighters. I also serve as the chaplain of **The Blue Knights International Motorcycle Club Chapter 14**, whose membership is comprised of Police Officers. I am called upon to bless their bikes, usually each spring.

Prayer of Blessing

Let us pray...

Our gracious Lord and Heavenly Father You have created this world and all that is in it. We thank you for the blessings you continue to pour into our lives. You daily richly provide us with home and work, family and friends, food and drink, and all of our possessions.

Today we especially thank you for these motorcycles you have given to us to enjoy. We thank you for the beauty of nature in all its richness and variety, which we will enjoy as we ride. We thank you for the freedom of the open road we are blessed with in this great land. We thank you for those friends we have come to know through it all, and the brotherhood we share with each other.

We ask also, this day, for your Blessing, for your Protection as you guide us as we travel on these bikes. Make our ways safe and our homecomings joyful. Ride with us as our partner as we travel the highways of America. Amen.

The Blessing

"Lord, I ask you to Bless this Motorcycle and this rider and the passengers who will enjoy it. Keep them safe and out of harm's way. I ask this in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit Amen.

Christen The Bikes

Wedding Services

By: Rev. Jim Van Houten Past Chief Chaplain

Wedding Service

Dearly Beloved, we are gathered here today in the sight of God and in the face of the company to join together this man and this women in the holy estate of Matrimony, which is honorable before God, and was instituted by God, signifying unto us the mystical union between Christ and his church. This

estate Christ adored and beautified with his presence and first miracle at the wedding feast at Cana of Galilee and is commended to us by St. Paul to be honorable among all men; and is therefore not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly; but instead, reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God. Into this estate these two persons come now to be joined.

Prayer of Invocation

Oh, Lord, we thank you for this moment and your guidance in the lives of _____ and _____. We ask that your divine love may burn within them in an ever-growing intensity, until it fuses their lives into a true and perfect oneness. Make them wise in the true values of life and give them your peace and inward satisfaction together.

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

Wedding Message

Ruth 1: 16-17

This is not a wedding passage; in fact, the Wedding had taken place probably several years before.

You see Naomi and her husband, and two sons had gone into the land of Moab, because there was a famine in the land of Israel. The sons married local girls, then sickness came and Naomi's husband and both sons died.

Naomi was traveling back to her own country, and she encourage the daughters-in-law to remain there. One returned but Ruth refused.

Here at the border of the land Ruth makes this incredible statement of committal to Naomi her mother-in-law.

Listen to these words:

But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go, I will go., where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God My God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me."

This was a lifetime commitment, and one which Ruth kept, and the Lord honored.

You see God had a plan for their lives and God has a plan for all of us. Ruth was to meet Boaz they would fall in love; Naomi would live with them all of her life. Ruth and Boaz would have children and grandchildren, in fact Ruth's grandson was King David.

God loves it when we make lifetime commitments to each other as well as to him.

Listen to the words of Eccl. 4: 9 to 12

Two are better than one, because they have good return for their labor; If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend the enemy. A cord of three strands cannot be quickly broken.

_____ you are one strand, _____ you are the second strand, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior is the third strand.

By making that lifetime commitment to each other and to him there will be no force in this universe that will be able to pull you apart.

Reading From I Cor.13

Love is Patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful, or proud, it's never filled with contempt nor is it ever selfish or rude. Real love does not demand its own way. It's never irritable or touchy, it does not hold grudges and will hardly ever notice when others do it wrong.

Real Love is different, its glad about all its heart when truth prevails. Real Love knows no limits to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope, it can out last anything. It is in fact the one thing which still stands when all else has fallen. Real Love never ends!

The Exchange of the Vows

_____ will you take _____ to be your wedded wife. To live together after God's will in the Holy Estate of Marriage? Will you Love her, and comfort her and keep her both in sickness and in health, so long as you both shall live?

_____ will you take _____ to be your wedded husband. To live together after God's will in the Holy Estate of Marriage? Will you love Him, and comfort Him, and keep Him both in sickness and in health, so long as you both shall live?

In the words of the Song, they choose:

It's a promise I'm making you. Whatever may come your heart I will choose, Forever I'm yours, forever I do. I get to love you.

Blessing of the Rings

The Exchange of the Rings

Symbols of love each for the other:

Perfect circle - Unbroken

Precious Medal - Value.

Never to be viewed as a symbol of ownership, but instead as a symbol of partnership.

Please Repeat After Me

I, _____, take you _____ as my wife and friend forever. I promise to bring Faith Hope and Joy to our marriage. I will be consoling, understanding, and forgiving. And I will share my love with you forever.

I, _____ take you, _____ as my husband and friend forever. I promise to bring Faith, Hope and Joy to our marriage. I will be consoling, understanding, and forgiving. And I will share my love with you forever.

Wedding Prayer of Blessing

Formal Statement of Marriage

Those Whom God Hath Joined Together, Let No Man Put Asunder.

For as much as _____ and _____, have consented together in Holy Wedlock. And have witnessed the same before God and this company, by the pledging of these vows each to the other, by the joining of their hands and by the giving and receiving of these rings. I now pronounce them Husband and wife. _____, YOU MAY KISS THE Bride

Benediction

Now may God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit bless preserve and keep you, May the Lord make his face to shine upon you and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace. That you may live in this world, that in the world to come, you will have joy everlasting. Amen

Wedding Message – Sample 1

“The Wedding Feast and First Miracle”

In John’s gospel we have the story of the first miracle ever performed by Jesus and it took place at a wedding service. Weddings and receptions lasted sometimes an entire week; people came in the morning and stayed all day. This was properly the last day of the wedding, and because of the crowd, they ran out of wine. Mary, Jesus’ mother, was a friend of the bride and groom, she brought them to Jesus. Whatever he tells you to do, just do it!

Called the servants and requested that the water containers at the door used for washing, be filled with water, they were, and they contained 162 gallons. Jesus took a cup full and blessed it and then gave it to the governor of the feast, the best man today. He tasted it and said, No one ever does this, everyone serves the best first and whatever is left is served last. But you have saved the best for last. Jesus came as a guest and left as a friend, that’s exactly what he’d like to do today. He would like to be a part of your lives today and forever.

Jesus came as a guest and left as a Friend B sure to include him in your marriage.

Wedding Message – Sample 2

Wedding Message Gen.24:67

“And He Loved Her”

A bride for Isaac, Abraham not able to go so he sent his servant Eliezer. He went to a well, asked the Lord for his help. Give me a sign so I will know that I have found the right one.

God said “as the young ladies come to draw water for their families as them for a drink. The one who gives you a drink and then offers to draw water for your camels is the right one.”

Rebecca came to get water; she gave him a drink and watered his camels. He gave her the proposal of marriage, she invited him to her home, and he meets her family, he offers the proposal to her father, he tells her to think about it, in the morning she accepts. Isaac is in the field every evening watching for the servant to return. When they do return, he sees her for the very first time, it’s love at first sight!

The Wedding takes place, key words verse 67, "AND HE LOVED HER" different from many other services because love was not always involved,

Love was in this wedding, and it lasted the rest of their lives. The couple. MOVED INTO MOTHER'S TENT, which was their custom, and she became his best friend and partner for the rest of their lives.

A Bit of History

The first known wedding ring to be given was at the wedding of a young pharaoh in Egypt about 3500 years ago. But it took several hundred years before it became a custom.

In the Middle Ages we see the custom return, but not at every wedding. You see, marriages were arranged by the families, so in many cases love was not involved.

If the groom really loved the bride, he would give her a wedding ring with his signet on it. Most people could not read or write, so you would place your signet or your mark on a document. In giving her this ring, she was included in his estate, she could buy or sell anything, just like he could.

Like sharing credit cards today.
The ring has other Symbolism.

Perfect circle, unbroken, I can see no end to it.
Symbol of unbroken love with no end in sight.

A precious medal speaks of the value of real love.
Solomon, the richest man to ever live said," the value of a good woman was worth more than all the riches he had in his treasury."

You see, real love can't be purchased at any price, it has to be GIVEN!

The wedding rings should never be viewed as symbols of ownership. They are symbols of partnership, and if you view them that way, there will be no end of happiness in your marriage.

Statements of Commitment

- I stand before you today to proclaim my devotion and love to you.
- I promise to honor our marriage through all the seasons of our lives. To encourage you through all obstacles that you may ever encounter, and to praise you when you succeed.
- I stand before you today to proclaim my devotion and love to you.
- I promise to honor our marriage through all the seasons of our lives. To encourage you through all obstacles that you may ever encounter, and to praise you when you succeed.
- I will comfort you through rough times in our lives, so we can see our triumphs together. I will devote my life and attention to your needs and aspirations.

- I will tell you how special you are and always will be. Most of all, I pledge to love you through whatever may happen to us on our journey through life together.
- I declare to the world that I love you, mind and soul. These pledges I make to you, the person who holds my heart.
- My Promise of Love: The moment you asked me to marry you, the promise of my eternal love was in effect. I look forward to seeing our love grow even more throughout our lifetimes,
- My Promise to you: I promise to not only be your wife (Husband), but your best friend. I will listen openly and honestly to what you have to say. I promise to be a wife (Husband) who is willing to compromise. Communication and honesty will be the key words, with which you will be able to describe me, for I will always talk to you openly, so things will never get out of hand. I give you my honest... So, you can always trust me! I give you my devotion... So, I will always be at your side! Thank you for loving me so much.
- My Dream for us: My dream all along has been to marry you. That dream is being fulfilled! Now, my dream is to make you the happiest Woman (Man) in the world, and I have the rest of our lives to accomplish this. I love you so very much!

Scriptures

Genesis 2: 21 to 24

And the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, as he slept, he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then with the rib that the Lord had taken from the man he made a woman, and he brought her to the man. And Adam said: This is now the bone of my bone and the flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

(A little poem with a great deal of wisdom behind it)

A woman was made from a rib of Adam; She was not created from his head to top him, nor was she created from his feet ...to be stepped on by him. She was created from his side to be equal to him. From beneath his arm to be protected by him, and from near to his heart, to be loved by him.

A Reading from the Book of Ruth Verses 16 & 17

But she said, do not urge me to leave you, or to turn back from following you.
 For where you go, I will go.
 And where you lodge, I will lodge.
 Your people will be my people.
 And your God will be my God.
 Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried.
 And this may the Lord do to me, or worse, if anything but death parts you and me.

Reading From I Cor.13 (The Love Chapter)

Love is Patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, it's never filled with contempt nor is it ever selfish or rude. Real love does not demand its own way. It's never irritable or touchy, it does not hold grudges and will hardly ever notice when others do it wrong.

Real Love is different, it's glad with all its heart when truth prevails. Real Love knows no limits to its endurance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope, it can out last anything. It is in fact the one thing which still stands when all else has fallen. Real Love never ends!

Joshua 24: 5

But for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Vows

Vows that cover all areas of life & are easy to say!

- I, _____, take you _____ as my wife and friend forever. I promise to bring Faith Hope and Joy to our marriage. I will be consoling, understanding and forgiving. And I will share my love with you forever.
- I, _____, take you, _____ as my husband and friend forever. I promise to bring Faith, Hope and Joy to our marriage. I will be consoling, understanding and forgiving. And I will share my love with you forever.

The Rope

Rev. Jim Van Houten

In Firefighter One we all went over Ropes and Knots

REMEMBER?

Today at your wedding I'm going to test your knowledge.

Sometimes at wedding people say your tying the knot.

So please take this piece of rope (Piece of rope about 2 ½ feet long) Now I want you to tie a square knot (make sure it's a square knot)

The couple holds the rope with both hands.

1. Today is perfect it's a great wedding day (the rope is relaxed)
2. Three months from now the motor goes in her car, it will cost 5,000 for a new one. (Pull on the rope)
3. Six months after that, your boss closes his business, you're without a job. (Pull on the rope)
4. One month later a letter from the IRS you're audited (pull on the rope)
5. Four months later she finds she is pregnant and as she waits to tell you the landlord calls and doubles your rent. (Pull on the rope)
6. And three months after that the doctor smiles and says congratulations on your having triplets! (Pull on the rope)

Now let's look at the knot, The greater the strain the tighter the knot! Problems may come but they will only make the knot tighter, your bond is stronger.

In Ecclesiastes 4:12, the Bible tells us that "though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." The Cord of Three Strands represents God, the groom, and the bride – braiding these three strands symbolizes the joining of one man, one woman, and God in marriage.

And with Him in your marriage no force in this universe will ever pull you apart.

Nuptial Blessing – Short Version

Be appeased, O Lord, by our humble prayers, and in Your kindness assist this institution of marriage which You have ordained for the propagation of the human race; so that this union made here, joined by Your authority, may be preserved by Your help. Through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, Who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, world without end.

Amen.

A Prayer of Remembrance

Couples sometimes ask to have a prayer for family members called home on their wedding day. I wrote this prayer for one such occasion. It might be of help to you at your next wedding service

O Lord, and Father of All, allow everyone here this afternoon to have the awareness that You are the giver of every good and worthwhile gift; that our lives are in Your keeping; that our endeavors are directed by Your loving hand; that our successes and failures are known to You; and that Your love and concerns for us are limitless.

As we pause this afternoon and remember Susan's father Marty who has been called home to be with you. We are grateful that on this special day, that we can feel his presence with us, as well as Yours.

We have no doubt that as JUSTIN & SUSAN pledged themselves to each other on this their wedding day, that there is a time of rejoicing in the courts of heaven.

We ask that as we continue our Wedding Service that you will look favorably upon us all and grant us your peace.

And we ask all of these things in your Holy Name, Amen.

The June Bride by Edgar Guest

Submitted By Rev. Jim Van Houten

She is Fair to see and sweet,
Dainty from her head to feet,
Modest as her blushing shows
Happy as her smile disclose,
And the young firemen at her side,

Nervously attempts to hide
Underneath a vestige grim,
That the fuss is bothering him.

Pause a moment, happy pair!
This is not the station where.
Romance ends and wooing stops.
And the charm from courtship drops.
This is but the outward gate,
Where the souls of mortals mate.
And the border of the land,
You must travel hand and hand.

You who come to marriage bring,
All your tenderness and cling,
Steadfastly to all the ways
That have marked your wooing days.
You are only starting out,
On life's roadways hedged about
Thick with roses and with tares,
Sweet delights and bitter cares.

Heretofore you've only played
At loves game, young man and maid,
Only known it, at its best,
Now you'll have to face its test
You must prove your loves worth while,
Something time can not defile,
Something neither care nor pain
Can destroy or mar or stain.

You are now about to show
Whether love is real or no;
Yonder down the lane of life,
You will find as man and wife.
Sorrows, disappointments, doubt
Hope will almost flicker out,
(Continued)

But if rightly you are wed,
Love will linger where you tread.

There are joys that you will share,
Joys to balance every care.
Arm and arm remain and you
Will not fear the storms that brew.
If when you are sorest tried,
You face your trials, side by side.

Now your wooing days are done
And your loving days begun.

Funeral Services

These services honoring the deceased Firefighter or emergency personnel fall into three categories.

1. At the funeral home for a “wake” or “viewing”.
2. At the funeral or at the graveside.
3. Memorial Services.

These services vary from a short and simple service to a very elaborate service. It is impossible to include all those available.

The official “Suggested Ritual for Memorial Service for Deceased Brother/Sister” seems to be used widely throughout the State, mainly at the wake in the funeral home. Many departments appear in full uniform and following the short service file by the casket and individually salute the departed fellow firefighter, and/or express their respect to the family.

Firefighter’s Memorial Hymn (Page 48)

In fond remembrance, gathered here today,
Tribute to pay to Comrades passed away.
Garlands of flowers placed about our dead,
Spring’s brightest blossoms deck their quiet bed.

When duty called, our comrades they would go,
Never daunted, met the fiery foe.
May guardian angels o’er them vigil keep,
While they lie resting in eternal peace.

Father in mercy, guide us on our way,
Through storm and sunshine to eternal day,
And when our duty here on earth shall cease,
May we with them abide, in joy and peace

How To Write a Eulogy

Rev. Bob Ruston and Rev. Jim Van Houten

To be chosen to present the eulogy for a fellow Fire Fighter and friend is one of the greatest honors a person can achieve. But it can feel like one of the most stressful endeavors you have ever attempted. It is our hope that the following information will help relieve the stress and assist you in delivering a meaningful and moving tribute.

Step 1: Theme

It is helpful to establish a theme. A pattern of thought which can be used to tie this tribute in words together.

The Theme: A Good Man - Example: Justin defined what it means to be a Good Man.

So, what kind of a man was he? To me he is defined by three main things:

1. A Good Man because of his love for his family.
2. Good Man because of his love for the Silver Lake Fire Department.
3. A Good Man because of his love for the world around him.

Other themes:

- Whatever Justin did, he was successful! (Home, fire department, church, business etc.)
- Justin always put others first! (At home, in the Fire Department, in the community, in her business.)
- Justin was a person who could be trusted!
- Justin had a positive attitude in everything he did!
- Justin loved adventure!
- In everything he did, Justin reached out to other people!

The theme will help you with your main points and will allow you to tie the facts of this tribute together.

Step 2: Research

- You must get key facts, Biographical facts, Early years, years in the fire service, names of his closest friends, his personal accomplishments, honors and awards received in the fire service and in personal life.
- Ask close friends and family members for stories that illustrate how they want to remember their loved one.
- If you use any of these stories, make sure that you acknowledge the person who gave you the story. For example, "Justin's brother told me.... Or Justin's teacher reminded me about the time...etc. Serious stories are meaningful but so are funny stories, they help to lighten the souls of family and fire fighters alike.

Example: Chief _____ reminded me about a structure fire ten years ago where Joe discovered an 8-foot pet snake while he was completing an overhaul. None of us had ever seen Joe run before, but we did that day!

- Include information about the firefighter's character and personality. Tell what the firefighter was proudest of in his or her life? For what he or she would like to be remembered for?
- Since you knew the firefighter very well include personal anecdotes and memories. This will help you to "CONNECT" to the person who has died, and it will allow you to speak with real feeling.

Step 3: First Draft - Write out your draft of the eulogy using your theme to tie the thoughts together.

- Begin by expressing your condolences and the department's loss.
- Acknowledge family members, including spouse or significant other, children, parents, siblings, and close friends. Be sure to write out the names and practice how to pronounce them correctly.
- Focus on the person's life, not the circumstances that led to their death.
- Include funny stories. Even in the midst of grief, it is important to smile.
- Include a statement of support from the department. Acknowledge the department member who is acting as family liaison for the family. We need to follow through on our promised support.

Step 4: Final Draft - Write out your final draft.

- It's easy to type out the draft on a computer where changes as well as additional material can be included.
- Make at least two extra copies, the family will want at least one and a copy should be on file at the fire department office.

Step 5: Practice

- Review your remarks before the service, practice speaking in front of someone you trust will give you positive and supportive feedback.
- Have a backup plan so that someone else can finish your remarks in case your emotions get the better of you. Remember, it's OK to show emotion.
- Be ready to adjust your planned remarks. Someone else may use some of the same stories or information. Have an extra story to tell, just in case!
- Remember above all that the family as well as the department will remember your sincerity and your words of kindness for years to come.
- Your presentation does not have to be perfect, but it does need to come from your heart. The family will be looking for compassion, not perfection!

A Brief Sample Eulogy

Thank you for coming today, it means a lot to the Speights family as well as the Silver Lake fire department to have you here.

Theme: As we reflect on the life of our friend Justin it is easy to see that he was a young man who loved adventure.

Our brother Justin was born in ___Place___ in year___. He was the (oldest, middle or youngest) child of ___Parents___. Growing up, our friend Justin was known as someone who was (Speak here of a character trait, for example, generous to a fault/ a daredevil, and a born fireman)

Tell a story that Justin loved or that someone else loved to talk about Justin's early years that illustrate this character trait of adventure.

Justin excelled at (school, / a sport / a hobby/ making friends etc. One of his proudest moments was (winning a competition, beating the odds, joining the Silver Lake fire department, achieving a personal best)

In his early years he (meant someone a fireman, role model,) who had a lasting effect on his life.

He loved adventure and it showed in the jobs he loved to do at the firehouse.

Adventure led him to join the (Ladder Company, loved height) or joined a hose Company because he loved being the first into the building and the last out)

He was fearless.

Tell a story about something he did at a fire scene!

Tell a story about an adventurous thing that they did with his friends or family, (Hiking, camping, boating, hunting fishing etc.)

Justin was passionate about traveling, card playing, hunting or fishing, golf etc. as well as firefighting. It went hand and hand with his sense of adventure.

He was passionate about being a good friend, his sense of adventure allowed him to reach out to help anyone at any time. He'd say, well I never tried this before, but come on, we can do it together!

In John 14 it tells us "In our Fathers house are many dwelling places, if it were not so he would have told us. Jesus said, I'm going to prepare a place for you, and if I go, I will come back again to receive you unto to myself, so that we can be together forever." An Adventure.

In closing I'd like to thank everyone who helped the Speights family in these difficult days, especially, (members of the Silver Lake fire company, the Mutual Aid Companies the clergy, the chaplain, the medical personal, visitors, friends) And the family joins me in welcoming you to (stay for the reception, come back to the fire house etc.) after the service here today.

If you have a story of an Adventure that you shared with Justin, please be sure to share it with the family.

At the Funeral Home for a "Wake" or "Viewing"

Suggested Ritual for Memorial Service for Deceased Brother/Sister

Presiding Officer: Brother/Sister Secretary, has the roll of the name of the organization been called?

Secretary: The roll has been called and all have answered except Brother/Sister name.

Presiding Officer: S/He has answered the summons of the Creator, and it is with solemn thoughts that we assemble here to pay our tribute and affection to his/her memory. S/He was a loyal and faithful member of name of the organization, dedicated to the protection and service of our community in any time of need. We rejoice in his/her unselfish spirit and devotion to the welfare of all people. S/He stood forth a person of character, a beloved firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician, and has the high regard of all. No expression of ours can fill this vacant place held in the home and community. We do, however, commend his/her friends and loved ones to the loving care of the Creator who "Does All Things Well". We can no longer be of service to name who served others so well, but in living memory let us here resolve to render a better service in his/her name.

Secretary: The secretary shall read a brief history of the deceased's service record indicating when s/he joined the organization, a listing of any offices held, and award received and any other items of note should be stated here.

Chaplain: Let us pray. Almighty God, Father of all, whose love and mercy is limitless; we commend unto You the soul of our brother/sister name. We thank You for the example given of the true spirit of greatness which realizes that it is nobler to serve than to be served. We pray that the cause s/he

served so well may ever inspire us; and when our turn comes to answer Your summons, may we hear from You, as we hope and pray our brother/sister has heard, the gracious words “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord. To Your loving care, and gracious provision, we commend all his/her loved ones.

O Lord, support each one of us until the shadows of life lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and our work is done. Then in Your Infinite Goodness, Grant us a safe lodging, a holy rest, and peace at last. Amen.

Presiding Officer: The Firefighter’s 23rd Psalm (Page 43)

The Firefighter’s 23rd Psalm

The Lord is my Chief, he has chosen me to serve
He leads me to still the fires raging around me.
He restores my soul to fight even when all seems lost.
He has prepared for me a place in life,
Devoted to service, honor, joy, and fellowship.
He anoints my soul with courage in the presence of my enemy fire.
Yes, even though I have chosen to walk through life
In the shadow of death,
I will fear no fire, for He is with me.
His strength will comfort me.
And when life’s final alarm for me has sounded
I will dwell in the station house of the Lord forever. Amen.

Chaplain: The Firefighter’s Prayer (Page 47) or EMS Prayer (Page 45)

The Firefighter’s Prayer

When I am called to duty, God whenever flames may rage
Give me the strength to save some life whatever be its age.
Help me to embrace a little child before it’s too late
Or some older person from the horror of that fate.
Enable me to be alert and hear the weakest shout
And quickly and efficiently to put the fire out.
I want to fill my calling and 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
Please bless with Your protecting hand My children and my wife.

EMS Prayer

As I perform my duty Lord
Whatever be the call,
Help to guide and keep me safe
From dangers big and small.
I want to serve and do my best
No matter what the scene’
I pledge to keep my skills refined,
My judgment quick and keen.
This calling to give of myself.

Most do not understand,
But I stand ready all the time.
To help my fellow man.
To have the chance to help a child.

Chaplain: Join me in reciting the Lord's Prayer. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen

A Brief Memorial Service for a Deceased Brother/Sister

Presiding Officer: Brother/Sister Secretary, has the roll been called?

Secretary: It has, and all have responded except Brother/Sister name.

Presiding Officer: To the family of our brother/sister name and members of the name of the organization once again death has taken its toll from our ranks. To our Brother/Sister who has answered the last roll call, we are assembled here to pay tribute to his/her memory which has been so well earned.

During his/her lifetime here, every best effort was given in serving this community in which s/he lived, without hope of reward, but rather to make real that which has been written: "To love your neighbor as yourself". We that are left, bow our heads for a moment in tribute to name who has gone before us. The good that has been done will live after him/her. The privilege now is ours to labor where s/he died, that these efforts may not go for naught, and on this day resolve to carry on with greater effort, the examples of serving that have been set for us. To live and labor so that when the final roll comes it may be said of us: "Well done, Good and Faithful Servant".

Chaplain: Closing Prayer and Benediction

Ritual Outline for a Deceased Brother/Sister

- Firefighters march in two by two
- Presiding Officer calls the assemblage to attention
- General Statement by the Presiding Officer
- Introductory Prayer or Scripture by the Chaplain
- The reading of Scripture
- Words of the Chaplain
- General Prayer and Benediction
- Firefighters pay respects two by two and file out.

General Statement – Firefighter 1

Recognizing the (number) years of service name has rendered to the name Fire Department and the friendships that have been made over those years, we meet to pay tribute to our departed

brother/sister. His/her memory will remain with us and his/her dedication to the department will serve as an incentive to all of us. We salute name with respect and gratitude.

Prayer: Lord, grant name eternal rest and peace in your kingdom. May we who mourn name find comfort for our grief. Allow your blessing of strength to be visited upon each of us and send us forth to do your will as we serve this community as firefighters. Amen

General Statement – Firefighter II

We gather here to present our farewell salute to our friend, name, who has served the name Fire Department faithfully for (number) years. Our name Company is lessened by his/her death, but we will always be mindful of his/her spirit of good will and camaraderie. Let us unite in a prayer of remembrance and appreciation.

Prayer: Lord, name had a great capacity for life. S/He loved it. His/her hopes and dreams were contagious; all of us have been strengthened by his/her own special brand of good humor and fair play. Name gave us a sense of pride in our endeavors and made us aware that being a firefighter was important. May s/he find welcome rest in Your presence. Amen

General Statement – Firefighter III

Our gathering is a solemn one. We do not want to say farewell, but we must. Death has claimed one of our finest and we are saddened by the loss of our brother/sister name. His/her sense of duty and service has meant much to all of us. May s/he find rest and peace in God's house.

Prayer: Our Father, we look to you for comfort in our sorrow. We are not always as certain as we might be, and we would seek Your courage on our journey. May we find strength in Your strength for the days ahead by being ever mindful of our need for You and each other. Unite our hearts in a bond of brotherhood because of our affection and sympathy for name. May we be sensitive to Your ever-present Spirit as we go from this place and be aware of Your concern in all circumstances of life. Amen

General Statement – Firefighter IV

Our ranks have been diminished by the death of our friend, name. S/He has been a part of our lives for so long we cannot imagine his/her cheerful personality will no longer be with us. S/He was honest and decent and gave so much to the name Fire Department. We salute his/her generous, outgoing spirit.

Prayer: Our Father, death is a profound mystery to us. Its silence of it causes so much pain. But we pray for Your healing to be at work among us. Renew our trust. Grant us inner fortitude and outward endurance. May we go from weakness to strength in Your word. May the eternal aspects of life take on new meaning for us as we offer our prayer for name in Your name. Amen

General Statement – Chief

When a Chief dies a little of each of us dies with him/her. The leadership and example, the outstanding dedication to duty, the performance in crisis situations, the generous acts of bravery and the talent to encourage others will long be in our hearts. The Chief's name was never too busy to stop and help. Happy to lend a hand, whether it was setting up for a banquet, or putting out a fire. And s/he was always supportive of the firefighters who served under him/her.

Prayer: Lord, renew within each of us a keener sense of commitment for the sake of those who are no longer with us. Chief name has shared our sorrows, our joys, our troubles, our happiness. S/He has helped us by words of cheer and understanding, by deeds of kindness and good will. May the unity that comes through the common ties of our fellowship bind us even closer to You and each other as we say farewell to our Chief. Amen

General Statement – In the Line of Duty

The work of the name of the organization was all important to name. It was no ordinary job; it was a way of life. S/He saw what had to be done and did it, even though it meant risking his/her own life. We meet here with great sorrow and with great pride. People like name remind us of all of the dangers and joys that are ours as firefighters. We will think of name and his/her courage with gratitude and praise.

Prayer: The gift of the life of name humbles us by its greatness. We are touched by the tragedy of its loss. Help us through this experience and restore our faith, so that we may be made stronger by the memory of one who at enormous personal jeopardy thought only of others. May we be worthy of his/her sacrifice and return to our tasks with new hope and confidence. For this we pray in Your name. Amen

General Statement – Commissioner

Our hearts are heavy tonight as we pay our final respects to name. S/He has lightened our burdens. S/He has shown us more creative ways to do our jobs on many occasions. We will miss him/her. Skill and integrity were his/her outstanding attributes, and his/ her death affects us deeply. Our department mourns a faithful Commissioner.

Prayer: Eternal God, name has been one of us for so many years and we are finding it difficult to say goodbye. Encourage each of us with the words of Christ, “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”, until our minds absorb the depth of their meaning, and we are enabled to find Your peace which surpasses understanding. May we endeavor to live more faithfully and bravely for Your sake and for the sake of those who are no longer with us. Amen

General Statement – Ambulance Driver

The Ambulance Corps has lost a conscientious member. The name community may not really be aware of name’s commitment, but there are many families who can testify to his/her prompt response to their need. Name was more than just an ambulance driver, s/he was concerned about people. Name took all assignments seriously and was good at the work.

Prayer: Infinite and Eternal Spirit, we join in a prayer of gratitude and recognition for the life and service of name. We are obligated to name for his/her excellence in the performance of his/her task. We will cherish his/her memory and ask that You fill us with Your benediction as we carry on our work with the name of the organization. Amen

General Statement – EMT/Paramedic

Name took the time to learn about life saving techniques because s/he felt it was vital to know what to do in an emergency. The name of the organization has lost a most valuable member and we

have lost a most valuable friend. Name also felt that being an EMT/Paramedic was close to being a doctor. S/He had the physician's touch and a quickness of administering first aid that was exciting to watch, for name knew what s/he was doing. S/He was sensitive to the needs of all patients and was compassionate.

Prayer: O Great Physician, we come to You with our need for healing. Our spirits are sorrow filled and we seek after your tender remedy for our grief. Perfect in us a steadfast trust in your divine authority and grant us Your calm as we leave name in Your safekeeping. Amen.

Wake Introduction from Sam Lundy

Fr. Sam Lundy

When bad things happen to good people we cry out in anguish, "why, why"! To my brothers and sisters in the fire and emergency services community who are mourning the loss of a dear and valued friend, my answers are feeble indeed. I quote from the Bible 1st. Book of Corinthians: "Now we see through a glass darkly, then we shall know face to face."

All our questions shall not be answered, perhaps in our lifetime, but then we shall know face to face. Commend Chris to God's care and keeping, however strained hold on to our faith, do good things in his memory!

At the Funeral or at the Graveside

Presiding Officer: Brother/Sister Secretary, whose grave is this we are gathered around?

Secretary: This is the final resting place of the earthly remains of name, of the, name of the organization.

Presiding Officer: Brothers and Sisters, uncover and give your attention to our Chaplain.

Chaplain: Brother and Sister Firefighters, we are gathered together to pay our final respects to name. As we gather by this graveside, we are reminded that the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, in rising from the dead, teaches us that the grave is a symbol of hope for those who believe in Him, remembering always that life is eternal, love is immortal, and death is nothing which limits our earthly sight.

Presiding Officer: Sergeant-at-Arms, please place the memorial wreath upon this grave.

Sergeant-at-Arms: This wreath of remembrance signifies our sorrow at the loss of our brother/sister and is symbolic of the sure and certain hope that we shall meet once again in the eternal land of blessedness to which s/he has gone.

Presiding Officer: Brother/Sister name will never again respond to our roll call. S/He has answered the final summons and it is with solemn thoughts that we are assembled here to pay his/her memory a public tribute of honor and affection. S/He was a loyal member of the name of the organization, whose outstanding and vital purpose is to protect this community in time of need. S/He stood forth a beloved firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician, who held our regard and friendship. We can be of no further service to him/her, except to remember him/her in our prayers, that in God's mercy s/he may have peace and everlasting joy, and that s/he may go from strength to strength in God's Holy Kingdom.

Chaplain: Let us join together in reciting the Lord's Prayer.
(All recite the Lord's Prayer)

Almighty God, we remember this day before You Your faithful servant, name, and we pray that, having opened to him/her the gates of larger life, you will receive him/her more and more into Your joyful service: that s/he may win, with You and Your servants everywhere, the eternal victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

(Other prayers may be added as desired.)

Bugler: (Plays Taps)

Presiding Officer: This concludes the Graveside Service.

History Of Taps

The bugle call “Taps,” the familiar mournful notes played at military funerals, was composed and first played during the Civil War, in the summer of 1862.

A Union commander, Gen. Daniel Butterfield, with the help of a brigade bugler he had summoned to his tent, devised it to replace the bugle call the U.S. Army had been using to signal the end of the day. The bugler, Private Oliver Willcox Norton of the 83rd Pennsylvania Regiment, used the call for the first time that night. It was soon adopted by other buglers and became very popular with the troops. “Taps” eventually spread throughout U.S. Army during the Civil War. It was even overheard by Confederate troops listening beyond the Union lines and adopted by their buglers. Over time it became associated with military funerals, and it is played to this day as part of the military honors at the funerals of American veterans. General Daniel Butterfield, the Composer of “Taps” The man most responsible for the 24 notes we know as “Taps” was General Daniel Butterfield, a businessman from New York State whose father had been a founder of American Express. Butterfield took a great interest in military life when he formed a militia company in upstate New York in the 1850s.

At the outbreak of the Civil War Butterfield reported to Washington, D.C., to offer his services to the government, and was appointed an officer. Butterfield seemed to possess a busy mind, and he began to apply his penchant for organization to military life.

In 1862 Butterfield wrote, without anyone asking for it, a manual on camp and outpost duty for the infantry. According to a biography of Butterfield published by a family member in 1904, he submitted his manuscript to his division commander, who passed it along to General George B. McClellan, commander of the Army of the Potomac. McClellan, whose obsession with organization was legendary, was impressed with Butterfield's manual. On April 23, 1862, McClellan ordered that Butterfield's “suggestions be adopted for governance of the army.” It was eventually published and sold to the public.

“Taps” Was Written During 1862's Peninsula Campaign in the summer of 1862 the Union's Army of the Potomac was engaged in the Peninsula Campaign, an attempt by General McClellan to invade Virginia by its eastern rivers and capture the Confederate capital at Richmond. Butterfield's brigade was engaged in combat during the drive toward Richmond, and Butterfield was wounded in the furious fighting at the Battle of Gaines' Mill.

By July 1862 the Union advance had stalled, and Butterfield's brigade was encamped at Harrison's Landing, Virginia. At that time, the army buglers would sound a bugle call every night to give the signal for soldiers to go to the tents and go to sleep.

Since 1835, the call used by the U.S. Army was known as "Scott's Tattoo," named for General Winfield Scott. The call was based on an older French bugle call, and Butterfield disliked it as being too formal. As Butterfield could not read music, he needed help in devising a replacement, so he summoned a brigade bugler to his tent one day.

The Bugler Wrote About the Incident

The bugler Butterfield enlisted was a young private in the 83rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, Oliver Willcox Norton, who had been a schoolteacher in civilian life. Years later, in 1898, after the Century Magazine had written a story about bugle calls, Norton wrote to the magazine and told the story of his meeting with the general.

"General Daniel Butterfield, then commanding our Brigade, sent for me, and, showing me some notes on a staff written in pencil on the back of an envelope, asked me to sound them on my bugle. I did this several times playing the music as written. He changed it somewhat lengthening some notes and shortening others, but retaining the melody as he first gave it to me.

"After getting it to his satisfaction he directed me to sound that call for 'Taps' thereafter in place of the regulation call.

"The music was beautiful on that still summer night and was heard far beyond the limits of our brigade.

"The next day I was visited by several buglers from neighboring brigades asking for copies of the music, which I gladly furnished. I think no general order was issued from Army Headquarters authorizing the substitution of this for the regulation call, but as each brigade commander exercised his own discretion in such minor matters, the call was gradually taken up all through the Army of the Potomac.

"I have been told that it was carried to the Western Armies by the 11th and 12th Corps when they went to Chattanooga in the fall of 1863, and rapidly made its way through those armies."

Editors at the Century Magazine contacted General Butterfield, who had, by then, retired from a business career at American Express. Butterfield confirmed Norton's version of the story, though he pointed out that he had been unable to read music himself:

"The call of Taps did not seem to be as smooth, melodious and musical as it should be, and I called in someone who could write music, and practiced a change in the call of 'Taps' until I had it to suit my ear, and then, as Norton writes, got it to my taste without being able to write music or knowing the technical name of any note, but, simply by ear, arranged it as Norton describes."

The story about General Butterfield and Private Norton has been accepted as the true version. And the U.S. Army took it seriously: when Butterfield died in 1901, an exception was made for him to be buried at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, though he had not attended the institution. A lone bugler played "Taps" at his funeral.

Tradition of "Taps" at Funerals

The playing of "Taps" at military funerals also began in the summer of 1862. According to a U.S. officers manual published in 1909, a funeral was to be held for a soldier from a Union artillery battery that was in a position fairly close to the enemy lines.

The commander thought it unwise to fire the traditional three rifle volleys at the funeral and substituted the bugle call “Taps” instead. The notes seemed to fit the mournfulness of the funeral, and the use of the bugle call at funerals eventually became standard.

For decades, one particular flawed version of “Taps” has lived on in the memory of many Americans. When the funeral for President John F. Kennedy was held at Arlington National Cemetery in November 1963, Sergeant Keith Clark, a trumpet player in the U.S. Army Band, played “Taps.” On the sixth note, Clark went off-key, partly because he was struggling in the cold weather. The writer William Manchester, in a book on Kennedy's death, noted that the flawed note was like a “swiftly stifled sob.” That particular rendition of “Taps” became part of American lore. The bugle Clark used that day is now on permanent display in Arlington National Cemetery's visitor center.

The melody of “Taps” is composed entirely from the written notes of the C major triad (i.e., C, E, and G, with the G used in the lower and higher octaves). This is because the bugle, for which it is written, can play only the notes in the harmonic series of the instrument's fundamental tone; a B-flat bugle thus plays the notes B-flat, D, and F. “Taps” uses the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth partials.



Taps in C

“Taps” is a bugle call – a signal, not a song. As such, there is no associated lyric. Many bugle calls had words associated with them as a mnemonic device, but these are not lyrics. Horace Lorenzo Trim is often credited for a set of words intended to accompany the music:

*Day is done, gone the sun,
From the lake, from the hills, from the sky;
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.*

*Fading light, dims the sight,
And a star gems the sky, gleaming bright.
From afar, drawing nigh, falls the night.
Thanks and praise, for our days,
'Neath the sun, 'neath the stars, neath the sky;
As we go, this we know, God is nigh.*

*Sun has set, shadows come,
Time has fled, Scouts must go to their beds
Always true to the promise that they made.*

*While the light fades from sight,
And the stars gleaming rays softly send,
To thy hands we our souls, Lord, commend.*

Why You Hear Bagpipes at a Fireman's Funeral

The tradition of bagpipes at a firefighter's funeral dates to the Great Potato Famine.

If you have ever attended a fireman's funeral, you know the sound of bagpipes playing is hauntingly beautiful. The mournful sound of bagpipes respectfully lends itself to the somber mood of a funeral. But how did this lovely tradition begin?

History: Scotch and Irish immigrants brought many of their traditions with them to the United States after the Great Potato Famine of 1845. One of these traditions was the playing of bagpipes at weddings, dances and funerals.

Theories: During the 1800s, many Irish were discriminated against. Signs were placed in shop and business windows reading "NINA," which meant "No Irish Need Apply." The job of fireman was a profession that did not discriminate. It was considered a dirty, tough and sometimes dangerous job that no one wanted.

Effect: Since the firefighter profession welcomed immigrants, many Irish applied and were hired. So, it was only natural that firefighter funerals took on the tradition of an Irish funeral--one where bagpipes were central in the service. According to the Kemah Fire department, "Before too long, families and friends of non-Irish firefighters began asking for the piper to play for these fallen heroes. The pipes add a special air and dignity to the solemn occasion."

Fun Fact: Even though bagpipes at funerals is an Irish tradition, Scottish bagpipes are used rather than Irish uilleann pipes because Scottish bagpipes are louder.

Jewish Funerals

Past Chief Chaplain Mr. William Mayo

As a religion primarily focused on life, Judaism has a set way to cope with death. Many passages in the Bible and the Talmud talk about living well—and suggest ways to make other people's lives better. Yet Judaism still provides a way for mourners to transition through the stages of grief. Prayers, compassion, and rituals serve as a guide. Even as a religion passed down by word of mouth, many prayers have survived. These are like poetry, intending to exalt God and provide hope to mourners at a Jewish funeral.

Funeral Service Guidelines for a Jewish Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician

1. Normally, a Jewish family buries the deceased the day after death.
2. Find out where the funeral is to take place.
3. If possible, visit the family before the service.
4. Make as many calls to fellow firefighters as possible, giving them the information, or use the county radio communication system (if available).
5. The deceased's family usually holds services in the evening, noted by the Rabbi or the people designate for the family.
6. Members should visit the family of the deceased during the period of mourning, called (Shiva). The period of mourning usually lasts approximately 4 to 7 days after the burial.
7. NO FLOWERS should be sent to the house or the funeral parlor.
8. Usually, the organization should send a basket of fruit, or a platter of meats, or something for a meal.

9. When a fellow firefighter visits the family, it is customary to bring with you something sweet: cookies, box of candy, etc. (This is not always necessary.)
10. The organization usually makes a donation to a charity in memory of the fallen personnel.

Mourner's Kaddish

Kaddish prayers are a cornerstone of Judaism. They provide an opportunity for mourners to praise God's name and acknowledge their pain. The term comes from an Aramaic word that means 'holy.' This praise is obvious in an excerpt of the prayer:

"May His great name be kept magnified and sanctified in the world that is to be created anew, where He will revive the dead, and raise them up to eternal life; and rebuild the city of Jerusalem; and establish His Temple in its midst; and uproot alien worship from the earth and restore the worship of Heaven to its place. May the Holy One, blessed be He, reign in His sovereignty and glory, during your life ring your days."

The Kaddish provides hope. In the Jewish faith, God will resurrect the righteous to experience eternal life. This allows mourners to believe that they will see their loved ones again.

The Kaddish also serves as a guide through many complex stages of grief.

When a close relative passes away, a Kaddish is recited by mourners for eleven months. This allows a slow transition back into the ordinary world as they deal with their grief.

El Maleh Rachamim (Jewish Prayer of the Dead)

The phrase "**el maleh rachamim**" translates to "**God full of compassion.**"

Indeed, this prayer is a call to God's compassionate nature. In Jewish thought, souls go to paradise after death.

This prayer pleads with God to give them rest and contentment in the next world. Asking God to have mercy is a tradition in the Jewish faith.

An excerpt from the prayer demonstrates this:

"Oh God, full of compassion, who dwells on high, grant true rest upon the wings of the Divine Presence, in the exalted spheres of the holy and pure ... Therefore, may the All-Merciful One shelter him with the cover of His wings forever, and bind his soul in the bond of life. The Lord is his heritage, may he rest in his resting-place in peace; and let us say: Amen."

My Protector

My protector. You are our abode, one generation to the next. Since before the mountains came to birth, before the birth pangs of the land and world. From eternity to eternity. You are divine. Truly, a thousand years are in your eyes like yesterday---so quickly does it pass---or like the watchman's nighttime post. You pour upon them sleep, they sleep--- At Dawn, life blossoms and renews itself, at dusk it withers and dries up Psalm 90

The Psalms are a cornerstone of the Jewish liturgy and faith. They express a broad range of emotions. From anger with God to heart-stopping sorrow, to endless joy, the Psalms are a form of human expression. The extent of emotions they discuss is why they are commonly used in funerals King David, a figure who experienced much personal loss, is said to have written many of these Psalms.

Life Is a Journey by Alvin Fine

Poetry has been a vehicle of expression for millennia. It preserves emotions, history, and cultural elements.

Without poems, many parts of our history would be lost. Judaism relies on poetry, as shown by the Psalms.

This excerpt from a funeral poem illustrates the cyclical nature of life.

“Birth is a beginning and death a destination; / But life is a journey. / A going, a growing from stage to stage: / From childhood to maturity and youth to old age. / From innocence to awareness and ignorance to knowing; / From foolishness to discretion and then perhaps, to wisdom.”

The goal of attaining the wisdom to pass on to others is present in this poem.

Psalm 23

This Psalm is common in both Christian and Jewish services. It provides comfort and emphasizes reliance on God.

It also expresses the hope that the deceased will “abide in the house of the Lord forever.”

“The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He has me lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He revives my soul; He guides me on paths of righteousness for His glory. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no harm, for you are with me ... Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, And I shall abide in the house of the Lord forever.

What Is Man?

This prayer is composed of many Psalms pieced together.

As a harmonious whole, it talks about how short life is.

The fleeting nature of life is a cornerstone of Judaism.

Since life is so short, shouldn't we make the most of it by honoring God and doing good to others?

“O Lord, what is man that You regard him, or the son of man that You take account of him? Man is like a breath; his days are like a passing shadow ... So, teach us to treasure our days that we may get a wise heart. Observe the good man, and behold the upright, for there is immortality for the man of peace. Surely God will ransom my soul from the grave; He will gladly accept me ... The dust returns to the earth as it was, but the spirit returns to God who gave it.”

Psalm 121

Another Psalm, this one talks about God's role as a guardian. It affirms God was watching out for the deceased. It states that God is in control with a plan that spans the ages.

“... If I raise my eyes to the hills, from where will my help come? My help comes from ADONAI, the maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip — your guardian is not asleep. No, the guardian of Isra'el never slumbers or sleeps. ADONAI is your guardian, at your right hand. ADONAI provides you with shade — the sun can't strike you during the day or even the moon at night.”

We Remember Them

This prayer is a formal performance.

It's structured as a back-and-forth dialogue between a synagogue leader and a congregation.

This prayer requires community participation.

“In the rising of the sun, and in it's going down, we remember them. From the moment I wake till I fall asleep, all that I do is remember them. In the blowing of the wind and the chill of winter, we remember them. On the frigid days of winter and the moments I breathe the cold air, I warm myself with their embrace and remember them. In the opening of buds and the rebirth of spring, we remember them. As the days grow longer and the outside becomes warmer, I am more awake, and I remember them.”

Blessing of the Mourners

One of the key features of a Jewish funeral is ensuring that mourners receive support. This blessing reminds mourners that they aren't alone.

Their grief doesn't exclude them from the community. As a gentle tradition of reminder, it serves its purpose.

“Those who are worn out and crushed by this mourning, let your hearts consider this. This is the path that has existed from the time of creation and will exist forever. Many have drunk from it, and many will yet drink. As was the first meal, so shall be the last. May the master of comfort you. Blessed are those who comfort the mourners.”

When All That's Left Is Love by Rabbi Maller

In all cultures, there's talk of living like the deceased would have wanted.

Sometimes, it's the only way to pick up the pieces and move on from the tragedy. This poem talks about how the deceased want their loved ones to mourn them.

“When I die / If you need to weep / Cry for someone / Walking the street beside you. / You can love me most by letting / Hands touch hands, and / Souls touch souls. / You can love me most by / Sharing your Simchas (goodness) and / Multiplying your Mitzvot (acts of kindness). / You can love me most by / Letting me live in your eyes / And not on your mind.”

The Circle of Life

Judaism's focus on the circle of life is comforting.

Life begins, life ends, and it's all part of the world.

Judaism doesn't despair and wish the world were different. Rather, it focuses on the hope of resurrection, eternal life, and reuniting with loved ones.

The Jewish Funeral Service by Zalman Goldstein

Kavod - Paying Respects

Accompanying the deceased to his or her final resting place is a tremendous mitzva and displays great respect. One even interrupt Torah study to participate in a funeral. A memorial service is generally held before the burial at the funeral home chapel or at the gravesite. This allows the family and community members to recite Psalms and to speak of the good qualities of the deceased.

The Service

Once the members of the Chevra Kaddisha (Jewish Burial Society) have completed preparing the deceased for burial, the funeral can proceed.

The family and the community gather for the funeral service either in the funeral home, synagogue, or at the cemetery.

There should be at least a Minyan of ten Jewish males over the age of thirteen at the service and burial.

The casket is present during the service but remains closed. The Jewish custom is not to serve fancy foods, nor have flowers or music at the funeral.

Those items are associated with festivity and joy, and this is a solemn occasion.

The rabbi, or designated Jewish person, begins the service by reciting Psalms, followed by the mourner's Kriah (ritual rending of the outer garments).

Some follow this with remarks from family members or close friends. Afterwards, some close the gathering with the traditional memorial prayer "Kel Molay Rachamim" (O G d, full of compassion).

At the conclusion of the service, the pallbearers accompany the casket to the hearse, and those who are going to be present at the burial proceed to the cemetery.

The order of prayers at a funeral may vary according to local custom. One should follow the custom of his community or ask a competent rabbi for guidance.

The memorial service is a fitting time to give charity in memory of the deceased.

The Focus at the Funeral Service

The Jewish funeral service is more directed at honoring the deceased than comforting the mourners. Judaism does not hide from, nor try to numb, the pain of mourning.

The Torah views mourning as an important passage for mourners to experience before moving on. As a matter of fact, the Torah teaches that one should not console a mourner while his deceased lies before him. Death, as life, has its important lessons, and we must allow ourselves to hear them. Therefore, festivity, fancy foods, flowers, and music, all have no place at a Jewish funeral (or thereafter).

Thematically, the Jewish funeral emphasizes higher, more spiritual matters. True honor and respect for the deceased are achieved by recalling his or her fine character traits, special values, mitzvot he or she excelled in, and/or by telling short stories or anecdotes that will inspire the living to increase their commitment to Jewish observance and adapt the fine qualities and values of the deceased.

Sensitivity in Delivering Remarks

Our sages state that until the body is buried, the deceased hears all that is said about him. Therefore, people should be careful how they speak.

Mourners and friends should also remember that the deceased is facing his final judgment in Heaven, and that the “testimony” given below is heard on High.

Therefore, one should choose his words carefully, and neither praise the deceased excessively nor undeservingly, for an accounting will be demanded of him above.

Beginning the Funeral Service

The casket is present or brought in. All gathered will stand.

The rabbi or designated Jewish person begins with the recitation of Psalm 16 (below). Some have the custom of reciting it out loud verse-by-verse, responsively.

Mich-töm l'dövid, shöm'rayni ayl ki
chösi-si vöch. ömar-t la-donöy
adonöy ötö, tovösi bal ö-lechö.
Lik-doshim asher bö-öretz hay-möh,
v'adiray köl chef-tzi vöm. Yir-bu
atz'vosöm achayr mö-höru, bal asich
nis-kayhem mi-döm, uval esö es
sh'mosöm al s'fösöy. Adonöy m'nös
chelki v'chosi, atöh tomich goröli.
Chavölim nöf'lu li ban'i-mim, af
nacha-lös shöf'röh ölöy. Avö-raych
es adonöy asher y'ö-tzöni, af lay-los
yis'runi chil-yosöy. Shi-visi adonöy
l'neg-di sömid, ki mimi-ni bal emot.
Löchayn sömach libi va-yögel k'vodi,
af b'söri yish-kon lö-vetach. Ki lo
sa-azov naf-shi lish'ol, lo si-tayn
chasid'chö lir-os shöchas. Todi-ayni
orach cha-yim, sova s'möchos es
pö-nechö, n'i-mos bi-min'chö netzach.

מְכַתֵּם לְדָוִד, שְׁמַרְנֵי אֵל כִּי
חֲסִיתִי בְּךָ: אֲמַרְתָּ לִּי
אֲדֹנָי אַתָּה, טוֹבַתִּי בִלְעָלְיָךְ:
לְקַדוֹשִׁים אֲשֶׁר בְּאָרְץ הַמָּה,
וְאֲדִירִי כָל חֲפָצֵי בָם: יִרְבוּ
עֲצָבוֹתֶם אַחֵר מִהָרוּ, בִּלְאִסְרֵךְ
נִסְכֵיָהֶם מִדָּם, וּבִלְאִשָּׁא אֶת
שְׁמוֹתֶם עַל שְׂפָתַי: יי מִנְתָּ
חֲלָקִי וְכוֹסִי, אַתָּה תוֹמִיךָ גּוֹרְלִי:
חֲבָלִים נָפְלוּ לִי בִנְעָמִים, אֶף
נִחַלְתָּ שְׂפָרָה עָלַי: אֲבָרְךָ
אֶת יי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲצֵבֵנִי, אֶף לִילוֹת
יִסְרוּנִי כְלִיּוֹתַי: שְׁוִיתִי יי
לְנִגְדֵי תְמִיד, כִּי מִימֵנִי בִלְאִמוּט:
לְכֵן שָׁמַח לְבִי וַיִּגַּל כְּבוֹדִי,
אֶף בְּשָׂרִי יִשְׁכַּן לְבִטָּח: כִּי לֹא
תַעֲזֹב נַפְשִׁי לְשֵׂאוֹל, לֹא תִתֵּן
חֲסִידְךָ לְרֵאוֹת שְׁחַת: תוֹדִיעֵבֵנִי
אַרְח חַיִּים, שֶׁבַע שְׁמַחֹת אֶת
פְּנֵיךָ, נְעֻמֹת בְּיַמֵּינְךָ נֶצַח:

A Michtam, by David

Watch over me, O God, for I have put my trust in You. You, [my soul,] have said to G d, “You are my Master; You are not obligated to benefit me.” For the sake of the holy ones who lie in the earth, and for the mighty - all my desires are fulfilled in their merit. Those who hasten after other [G ds], their sorrows shall increase; I will not offer their libations of blood, nor take their names upon my lips.

The Lord is my allotted portion and my share; You guide my destiny. Portions have fallen to me in pleasant places; indeed, a beautiful inheritance is mine. I bless the Lord Who has advised me; even in the nights my intellect admonishes me. I have set the Lord before me at all times; because He is my right hand, I shall not falter. Therefore, my heart rejoices and my soul exults, my flesh, too, rests secure. For You will not abandon my soul to the grave, you will not allow Your pious one to see purgatory. Make known to me the path of life, that I may be satiated with the joy of Your presence, with the bliss of Your right hand forever.

Some also recite Psalm 91:

Yo-shayv b'sayser el-yon,
b'tzayl sha-dai yis-lonön. Omar
la-donöy mach-si um'tzudösi, elohai
ev-tach bo. Ki hu ya-tzil'chö mi-pach
yökush, mi-dever havos. B'ev-röso
yösech löch v'sachas k'nöföv
tech-seh, tzinöh v'sochayröh amito.
Lo sirö mi-pachad löy-löh,
may-chaytz yö-uf yo-möm. Midever
bö-ofel ya-haloch, mi-ketev yöshud
tzö-höröy-im. Yipol mi-tzid'chö elef
ur'vövö mimi-nechö, aylechö lo
yigösh. Rak b'ay-nechö sabit,
v'shilumas r'shö-im tir-eh. Ki atöh
adonöy mach-si, el-yon sam-tö
m'o-nechö. Lo s'uneh ay-lechö rö-öh,
v'negah lo yik-rav b'ö-hö-lechö.
Ki mal-öchöv y'tzaveh löch,
lish-mör'chö b'chöl d'rö-chechö.

יִשָּׁב בְּסֵתֶר עֲלִיוֹן,
בְּצֵל שָׁדַי יִתְלוֹנֶן: אָמֵר
לִי מַחְסֵי וּמְצוּדֹתַי, אֱלֹהֵי
אֲבֹטָח בּוֹ: כִּי הוּא יִצִּילֵךְ מִפֶּחַ
יָקוּשׁ, מִדְּבַר הַמוֹת: בְּאֲבָרְתוֹ
יִסָּף לְךָ וְתַחַת כְּנָפָיו
תִּתְחַסֶּה, צִנָּה וְסִתְרָה אֲמֵתוֹ:
לֹא תִירָא מִפֶּחַד לַיְלָה,
מִמָּחַץ יְעוּף יוֹמָם: מִדְּבַר
בְּאִפֶּל יִהְיֶה, מִקֶּטֶב יִשׁוּד
צָהָרִים: יִפֹּל מִצִּדְּךָ אֶלֶף
וּרְבָבָה מִיְמִינֶךָ, אֲלֵיךָ לֹא
יִגָּשׁ: רַק בְּעֵינֶיךָ תִּבְטֵא,
וְשָׁלַמְתָּ רַשָּׁעִים תִּרְאֶה: כִּי אֲתָה
יְיָ מַחְסֵי, עֲלִיוֹן שְׁמֹתָ
מְעוֹנֶךָ: לֹא תֵאָנֶה אֲלֵיךָ רָעָה,
וְנִגַּע לֹא יִקְרַב בְּאֶהָלְךָ:
כִּי מִלְאֲכָיו יִצִּיֶה לְךָ,
לְשֹׁמְרֶיךָ בְּכֹל דְרָכֶיךָ:

You Who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, Who abides in the shadow of the Omnipotent, I say [to you] of the Lord Who is my refuge and my stronghold, my G d in Whom I trust, that He will save you from the ensnaring trap, from the destructive pestilence. He will cover you with His pinions and you will find refuge under His wings; His truth is a shield and an armor. You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, the pestilence that prowls in the darkness, nor the destruction that ravages at noon. A thousand may fall at your [left] side, and ten thousand at your right, but it shall not reach you. You need only look with your eyes, and you will see the retribution of the wicked. Because you [have said,] "The Lord is my shelter," and you have made the Most High your haven, no evil will befall you, no plague will come near your tent. For He will instruct His angels in your behalf, to guard you in all your ways.

Prayer for Jewish Firefighters

Past Chief Chaplain Mr. William Mayo

"Give Me Concern. A willingness to seek out those in need.

Give Me Courage & The boldness of spirit to face and conquer fear, share and endure the ordeal of others in need.

Give Me Strength, strength of heart, to bear whatever burden might be placed on me and strength of body to deliver safely all those placed in my care.

Give Me Wisdom to Lead and Compassion to comfort and the Love to serve unselfishly wherever you take me.

And please Lord, through it all, be at my side."

Jewish Prayer for First Responders

Past Chief Chaplain Mr. William Mayo

God of the selfless,

God of the strong and the brave,
Grant a perfect rest among the souls of the righteous
To those who died in service to others during the
The [Name of Fire Department]
May their dedication to protecting life serve as a shining lamp of love
And the works of their hands bring us all merit in heaven.
Bless the souls of all who have died to save others,
Volunteer and professionals Firefighters and EMT's
The trained and the untrained,
In every age and in every land,
Men and women who answered the call of honor, duty and service.
May their memories be sanctified with joy and love.
May their souls be bound up in the bond of life,
A living blessing in our midst.

A Jewish Memorial Prayer

Past Chief Chaplain Mr. William Mayo

Eternal Father, Creator of the Universe and of All, it is with a feeling of deep sadness and loneliness that we meet today to offer our final respect and tribute to the dearly beloved soul of name who is no longer with us. His/her friendship and radiance warmed many a life and now that we are bereft of his/her companionship we feel the void that his/her loss has caused us. With resignation, O Lord, we accept Your inscrutable decree. We cannot understand why such sorrow and pain are visited upon those we love, nor can we fathom Your infinite purposes. Though we cannot see the eternal effect of Your actions in this world, our faith in You affords us the strength to bear this blow.

As we reflect upon the life of name, we discover that in the midst of our grief we have much for which to be thankful. S/He lived a full and meaningful life that was dedicated to serving all others. His/her time and labor on behalf of the name of the organization was typical of his/her characteristic of unselfishness and love for others. Personal sacrifice was a hallmark of his/her being and s/he exemplified this trait to the very end. Truly s/he was inspired by love of You and love of mankind. His/her life contributed greatly to the safety and security of all and now that s/he has been taken from us, we offer to You, O God, our gratitude for giving us a one of his/her breadth and action who taught us how we can be better and more useful people in our communities. We valued his/her person in life, and we shall cherish his/her memory in death.

Be with the members of his/her family, O Lord, who are bowed with intense grief in this moment. Teach them to emulate the good and noble in the life of their dear departed so that through their deeds and conduct they will reflect glory upon his/her name. Strengthen his/her (mate, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, parents), relatives and friends as well as all those who mourn, and send unto them Your sweet consolation. Enable them to lift themselves from the gloom of this dark moment and receive Your comforting presence. May the soul of name be bound up in the bond of the living and may his/her memory remain for a blessing. Amen

I give you thanks, O God of my father; I praise you, O God my savior! I will make known your name, refuge of my life; you have been my helper against my adversaries. You have saved me from death, and kept back my body from the pit, From the clutches of the nether world you have snatched my feet; you have delivered me, in your great mercy.

From the scourge of a slanderous tongue, and from lips that went over to falsehood; From the snare of those who watched for my downfall, and from the power of those who sought my life.

From many a danger you have saved me, from flames that hemmed me in on every side; From the midst of unremitting fire, from the deep belly of the nether world; From deceiving lips and painters of lies, from the arrows of dishonest tongues.

I was at the point of death, my soul was nearing the depths of the nether world; I turned every way, but there was no one to help me, I looked for one to sustain me, but could find no one. But then I remembered the mercies of the LORD, his kindness through ages past; For he saves those who take refuge in him and rescues them from every evil. So, I raised my voice from the very earth, from the gates of the nether world, my cry. I called out: O Lord, you are my father, you are my champion and my savior; Do not abandon me in time of trouble, in the midst of storms and dangers. I will ever praise your name and be constant in my prayers to you. Thereupon the LORD heard my voice, he listened to my appeal; He saved me from evil of every kind and preserved me in time of trouble. For this reason, I thank him, and I praise him; I bless the name of the LORD.

Memorial Services

Firefighter Memorial Service

Prayers, Scripture, Last Alarm, Memorial Resolution

Invocation

Let us pray, Holy and eternal God, help us in sadness and darkness as we remember our fallen comrades. Comfort and strengthen us, as we honor those who have offered selfless service and the ultimate sacrifice of giving their lives in response of their duty; ad may, e, O God, pray that they have taken their rest from their labors, and have entered into the light of God's eternal rest.

Holy and eternal God, we pray for their families, friends and us. May they, and we, be comforted in our sorrow in the sure confidence of everlasting hope. And direct us in Thy Great wisdom, as we remember those who have gone before us. In the matchless and Holy Name, we pray, Amen

Isaiah 61:1-4 KJV

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you.

When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior (Isa.61:1 to 4 and Isa.43:1 to 4)

Reading Of the Last Alarm

Memory is a precious heritage of the ages. It echoes voices of happy days, and emotions, fond recollections, beautiful traditions, cherished friendships and joyful camaraderie.

Today we stand in memory of the departed brothers and sisters who have responded to their "last alarm." Throughout most of history, the lives of firefighters have been closely associated with the ringing of the bell. As they began their hours of duty, it was the bell that started it off.

Through the day and night each alarm was sounded by a bell; the bell called them to fight fire and place their lives in harm's way for the good of their fellow man.

And when the fire was out, and the alarm had come to an end, the bell rang three times to signal the end. And now our brothers and sisters have completed their tasks, their duties well done.

Those responded to their last alarm between October 1,2010 and October 18,2011, each name will be read, one by one and the bell will ring once; and at the completion of all of the names read, the bell will ring three times in memory of, and tribute to, their lives and sacrificial service.

With deepest reverence, let us bow our hearts in silent prayer in repose as the names are called of our departed comrades, and the bell tolls.

A Memorial Resolution

Past Chief Chaplain Pastor William Miles

The Board of directors of the New York State Association of fire Chaplains has offered a Resolution to the memory of and honor to all of those who have responded to their "last alarm."

Whereas members of fire departments and citizens throughout the United States we call on you today to remember those who have paid the supreme sacrifice of giving their lives to save their fellowman and,

Whereas we pray for and express our most sincere sympathy to their families-widows, children, parents, siblings, their friends their fellow firefighters, and

Whereas we are continually mindful that the greatest love anyone can show is to give their life that another might live, and,

Whereas it may be understood that the incident which caused the death of our beloved fellow firefighters happened when they were serving their communities as they responded to their last alarm,

Be it therefore resolved that the firefighters to be remembered here today are the record of their service and achievements made public in this place.

Be it finally resolved, a copy of this resolution is placed in the minutes of the New York State Association of Fire Chaplain's and a copy made available on the website to the families of those names of the deceased being read during this Memorial Service.

Signed by the President and Executive Secretary

Memorial Prayer

Almighty God, Supreme Chief of the Universe, we humbly bow before Thy Sovereign will, as in Thy providence Thy has seen fit to call our brothers and sisters home, their higher calling completed their earthly careers, and now received to the glorious entrance into eternal bliss and everlasting joy. And we have called, one by one, the names of our brothers and sisters who faithfully discharged their duty when flames were raging, and when they offered their supreme sacrifice in service to others; and we solemnly sounded the bell in their memory and in their honor.

O. Lord our God, we cherish their memories in our hearts as we feel their absence. Nothing can make up for the presence of our brothers and sisters who lived and worked with us who have fallen, and it would be wrong to try to do so. Thinking of those brave men and women who have died in the line of duty for their fellow man, our hearts are aching, our spirits are darkened in the blackness of night, we are feeling numb, saddened, and heartbroken.

However, by faith, in the darkness of night, we know that God's light scatters our darkness.

We know, O God, that He is our shepherd, that there is nothing that we should go wanting; knowing that when we are tired and weary, He leads us in fresh and green pastures; and besides still waters that restores our dark and drooping spirits.

We know, Heavenly Father, that He guides us along the right path, true to his name. and He walks with us through the deep dark valley of death, while being not overcome by it. We know that He supports us with a crook and a staff and gives us comfort in the midst of our grief- in the families and relatives bereaved of those of our fallen comrades, and us' He consoles us in our sorrow. He supports active firefighters facing daily hazards in their duty of protecting our citizens from the devastating ravages of fire and keeps them in their earthly tasks and in their own day of their last alarm.

O God, we believe that You have prepared a banquet for our fallen comrades in the sight of all who do not understand their doings. O God, your mercy and love, You will amount us with oil and our cups will be overflowing with mercy and grace. And, by our faith, surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, dwelling now and forever in His house.

And now, O Lord, God of Power and Might, in heaven and in earth, may be full of your glory now and forevermore. Amen

Memorial Benediction

Holy God, Lord of life and death, you made us in Your image, and you hold us in your care. We thank you for your servants, brave Fire Chaplains, and Firefighters, for the selfless untiring duty and gifts they have given with their very lives, Holy God may the fire chaplains and firefighters who have

heard your words of welcome, ‘Come to you, blessed of my Father”, and may they have received Your unfailing crown of glory. May they have angels surrounding them, and the saints welcome them in peace.

And Now Bless all who have witnessed this memorial in honor of those of our own; And Be Honor and praise and glory to are God, be now and forever more Amen.

Annual Memorial Services

A Brief Outline

The following outline is suggested as a guide to use for Memorial Services. You may add or subtract items as needed for the local customs.

1. Organ Prelude
2. Processional Hymn
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. National Anthem or “America the Beautiful”
5. A reading (or readings) from the Scriptures
6. Reading of the Necrology (placing of flowers on a Maltese Cross, lightening a candle, and/or tolling of the bell for each name)
7. Memorial Prayer
8. Lord’s Prayer
9. Hymn or Musical Selection
10. Memorial Message
11. Benediction
12. Recessional Hymn

A Suggested Memorial Service

Clergy: In the spirit of peace and rest for all the dead called to God from the firefighting/medical service, we offer this memorial liturgy to give praise and glory to God through our fallen comrades. Before any gift or service is worthy of the Lord, let we ourselves, in the spirit of humility and love, and confident of God’s mercy, renew the innocence of our souls and rededicate the purity of our service to God. If we die with Jesus, we shall rise with Him. Let us strive to die to sin and rise to lasting peace of conscience. You call us who are weary and overburdened, through You we find peace and rest; Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Clergy: You are the Savior of all; through You we come to the Father. Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Clergy: You prepare a place of happiness for us; through You we come to our true home in heaven; Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Clergy: Sharing the hope of eternal life through Jesus, we pray for peace for the living and the dead, for all those in the family of the fire service/medical community, and we ask our heavenly Father to accept

our offering of life and prayer until we are one with our brothers and sisters in the fraternity of the Saints in heaven. Let us pray: Lord Jesus, our Redeemer, you willingly gave yourself up to death so that all people might be saved and pass from death into a new life. Listen to our prayers, look with love on us, your servants, who mourn and pray for their dead brothers and sisters of our community. Lord Jesus, you alone are holy and compassionate; forgive them their sins. By dying you opened the gates of life for those who believe in you; do not let our fellow firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians be parted from you, but by your glorious power give them light, joy and peace in your presence where you live forever and ever.

All: Amen

Chaplain: A reading from the Prophet Ezekiel (37:12-14)

Therefore, prophecy and say to them: Thus says the Lord God: O my people, I will open your graves and have you rise from them and bring you back to the Lord of Israel. Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and have you rise from them. O my people: I will put my spirit in you that you may live, and I will settle you upon your land; thus, shall you know that I am the Lord. I have promised, and I will do it, says the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Clergy: Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord hear my voice in supplication.

All: My soul hopes in the Lord.

Clergy: If you, O Lord, mark iniquities, Lord, who can stand? But with you is forgiveness, that you may be revered.

All: My soul hopes in the Lord.

Clergy: I trust in the Lord, my soul trusts in His Word. My soul waits for the Lord more than sentinels wait for the dawn.

All: My soul hopes in the Lord.

Clergy: More than sentinels wait for the dawn, let Israel wait for the Lord. For with the Lord is kindness and with Him is plenteous redemption, and He will redeem Israel from all their iniquities.

All: My soul hopes in the Lord.

Chaplain: A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans:

My brothers and sisters, none of us lives as his own master and none of us dies as his own master. While we live, we are responsible to the Lord, and when we die, we die as His servants. Both in life and death we are the Lord's. That is why Christ died and came to life again, that He might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. We shall have to appear before the judgment seat of God. It is written, "As surely as I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bend before me, and every tongue shall give praise to God". Every one of us will have to give an account of himself to God.

This is the word of the Lord.

Clergy: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John:

Jesus said to his disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Have faith in God and faith in me. In my father's house there are many dwelling places; otherwise, how could I have told you that I was going to prepare a place for you? I am indeed going to prepare a place for you, and then I shall come back to take you with me, that where I am you also may be. You know the way that leads where I go." "Lord,"

said Thomas, “we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus told him: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Short Talk – Silent Meditation and Reflection

Clergy: Now that we have been comforted by God’s Holy Word, let us all pray together for our departed comrades in the fire/medical service that they be found worthy of the promise of Christ. Let us pray also for ourselves and all Christians who are living witnesses of the Risen Christ and of our victory over sin and death.

That God, our Almighty Father, may continue His blessing and protection upon all those in the fire service, that no physical harm may befall them, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Clergy: That all those who have died in the fire/medical service be not forgotten by the Creator but receive a merciful judgment and rejoice in the company of the Saints where they may find peace in God’s kingdom forever, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Clergy: For all bereaved relatives and friends, that the families of our firefighters find comfort in the hope of resurrection, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Clergy: That the providence of God care for all the dependents of our firefighters who served God and community in the line of duty, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Clergy: That the bond of faith and unity that has joined all members together in the name of the organization grow and be blessed, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Clergy: Father, we entrust our fellow firefighters/Emergency Medical Technicians, to whom we have dedicated this service, to your mercy. You loved them greatly in this life and now that they are freed from all its cares, give them happiness and peace forever. You have made us one, O Lord, in prayer and worship. Let the bond of your blessing follow us as we return, each our own way, to serve our communities in the fire service and the souls entrusted to us. Bless the work of all Chaplains and may they find satisfaction in their pastoral cares. Welcome into paradise all the souls who have passed away from this vale of tears where there will be no more sorrow, no more weeping or pain, but only peace and joy with Jesus, Your Son, and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. May the souls of all our faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Clergy: As we are all joined by the bond of faith and our dedication to the fire service, let us all join together in the words Jesus taught us to say

All: Our Father...

Blessing: (Blessing of Aaron-see Prayers for Various Occasions)

All: Amen

Additional Material for Memorial Services

Scripture Readings

- Psalms: 23, 24, 27, 39, 46, 65, 90, 121, 130, 148
- Job 19:23-29
- John 14: 1ff.
- Romans 6:14ff.
- 1 Corinthians 13

See Section IV for additional readings

Opening Prayers

1. Into Your hands, Almighty God, we commend our loved ones departed this life. We ask You, Almighty God, Chief of Your earthly fold, to take into Your loving hands the souls of Your servant(s) name[s]. Acknowledge that they are sinners of Your own redemption and children of Your own creation; that having served You in this life, they fail not to serve You in the life to come. And grant that we, following their good examples, may, together with them, obtain that crown which fades not away. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen
2. Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we pause now and put aside our consideration of the business and activities of this world. We turn our attention upon the eternal home where You live. We remember with sadness, but also with pride, the souls of our relatives, friends, and fellow firefighters now with you. They have answered their last alarm, they have caught the last hydrant, laid their last line and climbed their last ladder; all of which they did in their service of You, in helping and loving their neighbor. This faithful performance of their duty has brought credit to the fire service. Comfort their families and friends. Remind us constantly of their honor. Give us grace to follow them safely home to You. Amen
3. Almighty God, we remember before You this day those members of the name of the organization who have passed away while members of this organization, especially name[s]. We are grateful for their leadership, their dedication, and for the sense of individuality that each one of them has given. May the spirit of service which was theirs be ours also as we begin this new year.
4. May we, like them, be satisfied not with mediocrity, but strive for excellence. And finally, Lord, we ask for them the refreshing spirit and strength of your presence; that they may know the joy of being full members in Your kingdom. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen
5. Grant, O Lord, to all who are bereaved, the spirit of faith and courage, that they may have strength to meet the days to come with steadfastness and patience; not sorrowing as those without hope, but in thankful remembrance of Your goodness in past years, and in the sure expectation of a joyful reunion with those they love; and this we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen
6. Almighty God, our heavenly Father, in whose hands are all Your children; we give You thanks for all our departed members who have served with us and are now at rest. Grant to them Your mercy

and the light of Your presence, that the good work which You have begun in them may be perfected, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

7. Remember Your servant, name, O Lord, according to the favor which You bear unto Your people, and grant that, increasing in knowledge and love of You, *he/she* may go from strength to strength, in the life of perfect service, in Your heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen
8. O God, our Father, Supreme Chief of all firefighters, have mercy on the soul of name who has answered *his/her* last alarm. May the joys of heaven be *his/hers* forever. Remember *his/her* charitable spirit and service in protecting the lives and property of others. May we be united under Your supreme command in heaven for all eternity. Amen

Closing Prayers

1. Support each one of us, O Lord, until the shadows of life lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed. Then, in Your Infinite Goodness, grant us a safe lodging, a Holy Rest and Peace at last. Amen
2. Almighty God, source of forgiveness, hope and salvation for all people, hear our prayer. May all our deceased comrades of the *fire/medical* service; indeed, all our friends, relatives, and benefactors who have gone from this world come to share Your eternal happiness with all Your saints. In your Holy Name we make this prayer. Amen
3. Lord God, the days allotted to each of us are in Your Fatherly care. Though we are saddened that our brothers and sisters are no longer with us in the *fire/medical* service, we entrust them to You with confidence. May they live on in our memory and in Your presence in the happiness of Your kingdom where You live and reign forever and ever. Amen
4. Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen
5. May their souls, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Section IV - Scripture Readings

Epistle Readings

Romans 6:3-9 (NIV)

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we

know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him.

Romans 14:7-12 (NIV)

For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written:

*"As surely as I live," says the Lord,
'every knee will bow before me;
every tongue will acknowledge God."*

1 Corinthians 15:51-57 (NIV)

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."

*"Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?"*

The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:1, 6-10 (NIV)

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

Therefore, we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So, we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

Philippians 3:20-21 (NIV)

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (NIV)

Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will

certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

1 John 3:14-16 (NIV)

We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.

Revelation 14:13 (NIV)

Then I heard a voice from heaven say, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

Gospel Readings

Matthew 5:1-12 (NIV)

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them.

He said:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 11:25-30 (NIV)

At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.

"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Mark 16:1-6 (NIV)

When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him.

John 3:16 (NIV)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Luke 23:33-34, 39-43 (NIV)

When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!"

But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

John 11:17-27 (NIV)

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

"Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

John 14:1-6 (NIV)

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

John 16:20-22 (NIV)

Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.

Qur'an Readings

Surah 1

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, the Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds; Most Gracious, Most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgement. You do we worship, and Your aid do we seek. Show us the straight way. The way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, those whose portion is not wrath, and who do not go astray.

Section V – Suggested Protocol for Fire Department Funerals

The following materials are three protocol suggestions for Fire Department funerals. The first is written for the Walden Fire Department by Chaplain Jim Van Houten and the second is from the Dix Hills Fire Department written by Chaplain Jim Hanly. We thank both departments for use of their protocols. The final protocol is a generic version from which both previous protocols were based upon which the Federation of Fire Chaplains in conjunction with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation produced. This material was reprinted with their permission and for which we are extremely grateful.

Although this material is written specifically for firefighters, it can be easily adapted for other organizations.

We encourage all Fire Departments and EMS Agencies to have a written set of protocols for funerals. Please feel free use these guidelines in helping to prepare your own set of protocols, appropriate for your department's needs.

Placing of the Glove Service

Written by Rev. Jim Van Houten Chaplain of the Walden Fire Department

In World War I, a tradition began among the sailors of the United States Navy. When a ship was involved in an engagement and a fire broke out on board the ship, certain sailors were also trained as firefighters. Their job was to protect the ship and contain the fire while the rest of the crew was fighting the enemy. This tradition began as one of these sailor/firefighters lost their lives battling the fire. At the sailor's burial (most often at sea), fellow firefighters on board would come forward, salute and then remove their right glove, place it on the casket, and silently leave.

Some fire departments have revived this Silent tradition at funerals for their fellow firefighters. While sharing in such a graveside service for my best friend Ray, a 44-year member of the Totowa Boro FD, these words just came to me. The symbolism of the right hand inspired me, I believe it was the Lord who gave me these insights. So, that day I spoke these words from my heart for the first time. Following Ray's committal service, the Chief of the Totowa Boro Fire Department in New Jersey asked that I write them down and share them with other Departments. I have used these words for Line of Duty Deaths as well as for the deaths of active firefighters. The following introduction may be used just before the final salute to introduce this tradition to the family and community.

Chaplain: In honoring our friend [Name], the members of the name of the organization will remove their glove from their right hand following their final salute. It is, first of all, the symbol of our HAND of STRENGTH. It stands as a reminder of the years of service working together as firefighters as we have aided those in need.

Secondly, it represents our HAND of FRIENDSHIP. We in the fire service have a special brotherhood, a bond that ties us together. Even if we have seen this friend the day before, you will see us shaking hands in friendship.

And thirdly, it is the HAND of HONOR. That final salute does not end at the graveside. By placing the glove on the casket that salute remains with our friend until we meet again in the courts of Heaven as our Supreme Chief greets us with the words "Well done my good and faithful servant, enter into my rest."

[Name] is honored for a life well lived,
Honored for a Race well run,
Honored with a crown well deserved.

The graveside service concludes as members of the Fire Department silently come forward, salute the casket, remove their right glove, place it on the casket and leave. The Chaplain remains, salutes, places his glove and closes with a prayer.

The Placing of the Glove Service Can Be Used as an Outline for a Memorial Service

The Chaplain begins the service with an opening prayer. And then shares the HISTORY of the Placing of the Glove Service from WWI.

Chaplain continues

- In honoring our friend _____ the members of the _____ Department will be removing the glove from their right hand, for its **first of all the symbol of our hand of strength**

It stands as a reminder of the years of service working together as firefighters as we have aided those in need.

At this time the chaplain will share a brief history of this firefighter. Years of service, offices held, number of fires attended. Perhaps some personal stories about their involvement, serious stories as well as funny stories.

- **Secondly, it represents our hand of friendship.** We in the fire service have a special brotherhood a bond that ties us together. Even if we have seen this friend the day before, you will see us shaking hands in friendship.

The Chaplain can relate some stories of friendship and Brotherhood which have occurred over the years, and how much this firefighter will be missed.

- **And thirdly, this is the hand of Honor.** That final salute does not end at the grave side, by placing the glove on the casket that salute remains with our friend until we meet again in the courts of Heaven as our Supreme Chief greets us with the words,

“Well done my good and faithful servant, enter into my rest.”

READ: PSALM 23 and John 14

At this time the company will step forward and give their final salute, they will place their gloves and file out offering their respects to the family.

Before the Chaplain salutes and places his glove

The bell will be sounded

Moment of silence

Chaplain salutes and places his glove

Chaplain closes in prayer

Chaplain and chief present the bible to the family before taking their leave

These are two prayers which I have used at the conclusion of the service.

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,

Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
To be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive.

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.

Amen.

A Fireman's Prayer

Rev. Jim Van Houten

This can be used as a Company Prayer at the conclusion of a Funeral or Memorial Service

Lord, we call upon You for strength and guidance,
Look kindly upon us in our needs today.

Teach us to always look to You for assistance, as our neighbors look to us.

Give us courage and enable us to pass this courage to others.

Make us studious and give us pride and joy in our work.

When the alarm sounds, calling us to duty, give us speed and efficiency.

As we travel with sirens on, ride with us through the streets of our villages, shielding us from danger.
On the fire scene, may our officers and men always work as an Honorable, Courageous, and Victorious
Team.

Walk with us through the terror of flame and explosion.

May our hearts be always ready, should we be summoned before our Eternal Chief, in the midst of our
labors.

As we work to help our neighbors in need, we dedicate our lives humbly to Your praise and glory.

In both joy and sorrow, we ask only that You may be pleased with our service, and that when the Last
Alarm has sounded for us, that we may receive our eternal assignment with You.

Amen.

The Striking of the Four Fives

Director Rev. Robert Ruston and Rev. Jim Van Houten Past Chief

The sound of a bell holds special significance for firefighters. Historically, the toll of a bell summoned members to the station, signaled the beginning of a shift, notified departments of a call for help, and indicated a call was completed and the unit had returned to the station.

Departments also sounded a series of bells when a firefighter died in the line of duty to alert all members that a comrade had made the ultimate sacrifice.

One of the most meaningful series of bells is commonly called “Striking the Four Fives”. The fire service is rich with ceremony, custom, and tradition. Our custom of rendering final honors has its origins in the fire department of the City of New York, where many years ago, long before the advent of radios or pagers, fire alarms and daily announcements were dispatched from central headquarters to outlying firehouses by a system of bell commands and telegraph.

Each different type of alarm or announcement would have its own number and series of bell strikes. When a firefighter died in the line of duty or when some important official or personage died, headquarters would transmit five bell strikes, repeated in four series, with a slight pause between each series, followed by the announcement.

This was done as long ago as 1865 in the New York City Fire Department to inform the rank and file of the death of President Abraham Lincoln. The custom has continued down to the present day.

(The Striking of Four Fives)

Order of Service at the Graveside

1. Call to attention and company salutes
2. (BELL STRIKES – “Striking of the Four Fives”)
3. (The signal 5-5-5-5 repeated four times has been rung.)
4. Last Call is transmitted announcing the passing of our member.
5. Taps can be played.
6. Placing of the glove service
7. Benediction

Walden Fire Department LODD Protocols

Protocol to be followed in the event of a Line of Duty Death

Rev. Jim Van Houten - Chaplain Walden Fire Department

This protocol will help us in our response to the two following situations:

1. In the event of a serious injury sustained in the line of duty that is or may become, life threatening or cause permanent disability.
2. In the event of the death of any emergency service personal (firefighter, fire police, or EMS) while on duty, performing in their job or other related activities.

This protocol is based on three guiding principles of the fire service:

1. Tradition
2. Honor
3. Respect

A line of duty death effects everyone in the surviving family, all the on-scene responders and the spouses & families of these on-scene responders, all members of your department including junior

firefighters and retired members, and all the members of neighboring EMS, fire police and fire departments; many of which may have been called to the scene because of a mutual aid request.

An essential part of this pre-plan is the use of the emergency contact forms. If these forms are completed by all our members, then in the case of such an emergency, we will know their exact wishes. We will know who we are to contact as well as all the basic arrangements, which this member desires.

It has been recommended that every department place in their budget the amount of \$5,000 which can be used in the case of a line of duty death. These costs can be covered by an insurance policy, which of course must be purchased in advance. This internal resource can be used to cover the costs of food, lodging and transportation for both the surviving family as well as the visiting agencies.

Essential Information

It is essential that all departments be aware of an additional source of funding called the Public Safety Officers' Benefits Program (PSOB). This program was established in 1976, and it provides at present up to \$422,035.00 to the surviving family. Included in this program are educational grants for spouses and their children. It is increased by congress by about 1,200.00 each year.

As of October 2017, all PSOB application and claims are now filed via the online claim portal

- Benefits Page for filing a new application: <https://bj.a.ojp.gov/program/psob/benefits>
- For help on filing for PSOB Benefits: <https://youtu.be/nxvZuT4Nb4Q>

If you are following up on a pending claim filed prior to October 10th, 2017, please contact the PSOB Office at AskPSOB@usdoj.gov or 1-888-744-6513 for information on how to access your claim.

An autopsy must be performed, and the results must be submitted to the PSOB program.

An application will be sent to you online to complete.

- Give them the contact person's name and contact information.
- List the time, place and date of Line of Duty Death
- List Departments name, phone number and address.
- Give them the deceased's full name.
- Give them a brief description of the incident.
- Request copy of PSOB Fact Sheet.

PSOB Program Voids:

- Void in the case of suicide of the responder.
- Void if gross negligence is determined.
- Void if there was intentional misconduct.
- Void if there is evidence of voluntary substance abuse or intoxication.

Important Information for The Department Chief to Have Filed in The Case of a LOOD

1. Statement by the Fire Chief clearly but concisely stating what happened, including events leading up to, or following, the injury to the deceased, signed and notarized.
2. A copy of the Fire Report ("Run Report") or other document, which clearly shows the activity in which the deceased was injured was an official activity; signed by the Fire Chief and notarized.
3. Copy of the toxicology report (which will include blood and urine analysis), signed by the toxicologist or by the medical examiner's custodian of records with the medical examiner's raised seal or notarized to include notary's raised seal. If such a report was not made, submit a statement to that effect signed by the medical examiner or by the Fire Chief; statement must be notarized.
4. Copy of death certificate with raised seal of the Health Department or the medical examiner.
5. If the deceased received more than first aid medical treatment, then a statement by the medical personnel/ambulance attendants must be submitted, to include anything administered (e.g., oxygen) and the amount(s); statement must be notarized.
6. A copy of hospital records or the physician's report must be submitted also, signed by the custodian of hospital records or by the physician, as applicable; statements must be notarized.
7. Certified copy of department's non-profit corporation charter or a copy of the minutes of a local government meeting which show that the local government established the department or encouraged citizens to establish it and function as that area's fire department.

The Hometown Heroes Survivors Benefit Act

Introduced to Congress in 2/26/03 provides for extended benefits to any public safety officer who dies as a result of a heart attack or stroke, directly linked with the rigors of emergency services.

- Heart attacks & strokes will be questioned, and many will be denied
- Many Claims have been denied because a direct link could not be made to prove that the call or emergency caused that Public Safety Officer to suffer the attack.
- Your report must show that in responding to this call that the responder was subjected to physical exertion or stress or strain which went beyond his or her normal duties. The Key Word is Traumatic Injury!

Examples:

"Traumatic injury" means a wound or condition of the body caused by external force, including injuries inflicted by bullets, explosives, sharp instruments, blunt objects, or other physical blows, chemicals, electricity, climatic conditions, infectious diseases, radiation, and bacteria. Smoke inhalation is considered a traumatic injury and is a substantial factor in a heart related death, if the firefighter's blood carbon monoxide level is 10% or greater at the onset of his attack; 15% or greater if the individual was a smoker. Other causes include physically aiding in a rescue, lifting heavy weight at the scene, dragging hose lines, lifting ladders, walking or running a distance to reach the scene of the emergency, these are factors which need to be considered.

Was your member placed under great emotional stress because they believed they were responding to an urgent call for help?

A radio transmission informing the member that there were children trapped, or a victim pinned in a MVA or that a fellow fire fighter might be down. Information such as this will push all of us beyond our limits.

An autopsy must be performed, and it is essential that these toxicological examinations be completed:

- The report must clearly state the levels of carbon monoxide and of alcohol, as well as any other finding of substance(s) in our member's blood stream. These levels must show a precise percentage. For example, Blood alcohol level of .089%; or Carbon Monoxide level of .10%.
- Toxicology reports which state vague or generalized levels, such as "positive for alcohol", "Carbon Monoxide normal", or "Carbon Monoxide less than 10%" could result in claim denial. A precise carbon monoxide level is particularly important to claim eligibility in a heart or stroke related death. It is recommended in such deaths that the medical examiner/coroner be reminded that a precise percentage of carbon monoxide is needed for benefits purposes even though that percentage may fall below "non-injury level". If the medical examiner/coroner is confused by this request, suggest he or she call the PSOB Office to receive further advice.
- Clearly identify any opinion stated as an opinion. If certain facts are not known, say so. If it is necessary to include circumstantial evidence, do not attempt to draw any conclusions from it in your statement.

LODD Go Team

This will be the team sent by the department to notify the family of the news of the serious injury or death of a responder. Time is an important factor, if you delay someone else will contact the family, everyone seems to have a cell phone and the results from this notification can be devastating if not delivered properly.

1. The Family Liaison
2. Logistics Point Person
3. Hospital Liaison
4. Public Safety Officers Liaison
5. Public Information Officer
6. CISM Liaison
7. Funeral Coordinator
8. Visiting Agency Contact

Please Remember this:

The delivery of this news will be the only time the survivors will hear this. How well the notification is done (with great amounts of dignity, empathy, and honor) will directly impact the survivors' grieving, surviving the event and their eventual recovery and ability to move forward.

The Go Team notification will be the beginning of the grieving process.

There are five classic steps in this process:

1. Denial
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance

The Go Team must be in place before the line of duty injury or death occurs. There will not be time to put a team together and train them at a moment's notice.

The Go Team can be led by the Chaplain or the Chief but should also include:

- At least two other department members.
- If the Chief of the department and the Chaplain are leading the team then a member who knows the family should also be included, if possible.
- It can be very helpful to have a female firefighter on this team.

- All members should be in uniform or wearing department jackets.
- The Chaplain should carry their bible, it gives people a deep sense of comfort when the scriptures are read, and just the sight of a bible gives them a sense of peace.

Emergency Contact Form

At this time a copy of the emergency contact forms for the deceased responder should be opened, and this information shared with the go team. This information will help to guide the team as to who to contact. It will also inform them of the wishes of this responder.

Suggestion: The responder's clergy can be invited to go with the team (their name will be listed on emergency contact form). However, there will not be time to wait for anyone, the go team must move quickly, and that clergy can join the family at the hospital.

The Family Liaison

One of the Go Team members will assume the duties as the family liaison. Their responsibility will be the care of that responder's family, and they will be the contact for all arrangements. The department member who knows the family can assume this position, aided by the chaplain. This person must be available 24/7 if the family needs them.

This team member must be switched every two days. The stress and strain of this position can cause both emotional and physical problems. Marriages have been destroyed because of emotional and physical bonds that have been formed in such circumstances.

Logistics Point Person

The Logistics Point Person takes on the duties of all extended operations on-scene. They are to see to the needs of all personnel at the scene, food, water, etc. This member makes the calls to engage a CISM team to handle the immediate emotional needs of our members. A debriefing should be arranged for all department members.

Important: S.O.P. That every department member at the scene must attend.

Hospital Liaison

This member of the team goes to the hospital where the responder has been taken; they should be in uniform their duty is to prepare a private waiting area for the family.

There should also a private area for members of the department to meet and support one another. All our area hospitals now have a chaplain; they can help with these arrangements. The department chaplain will accompany the family to the hospital, once there he will be ministering to the needs of both the family as well as the department members.

It might be helpful if the responder's clergy could be at the hospital at this time. If this is not possible have mutual aid requests a chaplain from a neighboring department to join you at the hospital.

Public Safety Officers Liaison

This person will immediately call the offices of the PSOB at 1-888-744-6513 and notify them of the death.

They must be able to provide up to date information including:

- The fire department name and address.
- Their name as liaison, they will be the link for the department and deceased family from this time on.
- They must provide the phone numbers of the department as well as for themselves.
A fax number is important of PSOB can send the death benefits questionnaire.
- They must be able to provide the deceased firefighter's name, the date of the incident and a brief description of the incident.

This information is vital, please provide as much detail as possible, but do not speculate if the cause of death is not known.

A claim package will be sent to the department, it will include a guidance letter explaining the requirements, a form which the department must complete and submit reporting this Public Safety Officers death, and a form "Claim for Death Benefit" which the surviving spouse must complete and sign. The PSOB liaison will make sure both forms are submitted. The family will need to submit a birth certificate, a marriage license or divorce decree.

A PSOB specialist will receive the package and review its contents. The department liaison will be contacted if more information is needed. Their findings will be forwarded to the General Counsel who will contact the family directly to either approve or deny the claim.

The Public Safety Officers Liaison can also notify the New York State Compensation Board to file the claim for the firefighter's family. They have **90 days** to file this claim.

In the case of a Line of Duty Death the NYS Workers Compensation Board will pay a one-time benefit of \$50,000 dollars, provide \$8,000 dollars towards funeral expenses and provide weekly cash benefit of \$800.00 dollars. College tuition will be paid for at any SUNY college.

Public Information Officer

This team member will handle all media contacts and press releases for the department. They may be asked by the family to be their spokesperson. They will keep all members of the department, as well as visiting agencies, informed about arrangements.

People want to know details, especially the members of your department, a department website can be used to communicate important information.

This officer should be in a department uniform during any interviews with the media press or television reporters, and all their information.

CISM Liaison

This team member will call in a local team and help to set up the first of several counseling sessions. They will provide the CISM team with an **accurate** list of all personnel who were present at the scene.

This team member will help to determine what the defusing and debriefing needs might be in your department. They will also serve as the inside contact for the CISM team leader, aiding them in assessing the long-term mental health of the department members.

Funeral Coordinator

If you have a department member who is a funeral director, they can serve in this position. If this is not possible choose a member who will work closely with an area funeral director helping the family with these final arrangements. Once again, the information which each responder provides on his emergency contact form will serve as a guide in finalizing these arrangements.

The funeral coordinator will be the liaison between the family, the funeral home, the church and the cemetery. He will see that there is an honor guard at the funeral home, and a color guard, bagpipes or bugler at the cemetery. He will also see to it that a 5' by 9 ½' flag is provided for the casket. They will see to it that the fallen fighter's gear is displayed at the station house and that the honor guard has gloves to place on the casket at the internment services.

In cases of line of duty deaths, the Lighthouse Uniform Company will provide any firefighter with a Class A uniform at no charge. They can be contacted online at <https://lighthouseuniform.com/>

Visiting Agency Contact

This member will assist in providing for the needs of all the visiting agencies and departments who will be attending the funeral services.

They will arrange for food and lodging for those who require them. It may be necessary to provide a staging area for the visiting companies to gather at, and then bus transportation from there to the funeral home or church. They will coordinate all traffic preparations with the local police, as well as the staging of all funeral procession vehicles. They will also arrange for mutual aid coverage during the funeral services with neighboring departments.

For The Chief of The Department

Since statements will need to be filed the following are samples which you may wish to follow: I believe that sample A must be written and signed, and a copy posted as well as given to every department member to cover the department, this should be done right away.

This statement must become a part of your permanent records of your department. It should be written on department stationery and signed by the chief officer.

Standing Order

Department Letterhead

[Date]

I, Chief _____ of the _____ Volunteer Fire Department, do order all members of this department to take appropriate action at any time you may be involved with any fire or other emergency to which you would normally be alerted. I furthermore order all members of this department to take appropriate action when and where they see a need for action within the realm of their training and experience, wherever such action may be required. All members of this department are directed to attend any and all firematic meetings, local, county, or state, and other activities that they are delegated to attend as a delegate or member. Travel to and from such firematic meetings shall begin and end at the fire station.

Signed: _____

Typed: (Name and Title)

This will help especially in cases of heart attack and strokes.

In cases of a line of duty death the chief will need to certify a department run report, the following is a sample of such a statement to forward with the claim.

Run Report

Department Letterhead

[Date]

I certify that the attached Fire Department (Report) (Run Report) (Fire Report) (or other Title of Document) is an exact and true copy of the original document, which is on file in this department.

Signed: _____

Typed: (Name and Title)

Note: This statement must be notarized and include the raised seal of the notary.

As Chief you will be required to submit clearly and concisely the facts concerning an individual whose injury resulted in death in line of duty. The following is a sample statement which might be helpful to you. The information needs to be concise, sometimes the less written the better.

Fire Chief's Statement

Department Letterhead

[Date]

This is to certify that _____ (Name) _____, a firefighter of this fire department, died (at) (about) _____ (Time) _____ AM/PM, on _____ (Date) _____ as the result of injuries received in the line of duty at _____ (Time) _____ AM/PM, on _____ (Date) _____ at _____ (Give the location, Town and State) _____.

Firefighter, _____ (Name) _____, was engaged in (going to) (participating in) (returning from) _____ (State what activity & again include location) _____ (use whatever space is required) as required by standing orders of this department.

Signed: _____

Typed: _____ (Name & Title)

Note: This statement must be notarized and include the raised seal of the notary.

Helpful Information

- National Fallen Firefighters Foundation
<http://www.firehero.org/>
- Firefighter Autopsy Protocol
www.usfa.fema.gov/pdf/usfapubs/fa-156.pdf
- International Assn. of Fire Chiefs
www.iChiefs.org

Suggested Guidelines

The following are suggested guidelines which can be followed while conducting fire department funerals.

Responsibilities of Notification Following a Line of Duty Death

1. The Go Team will be dispatched to notify the family and the eight other key members or teams will begin their responsibilities as are outlined in the pages above.
2. The Chief or Designated Officer will notify the Mayor or Township official.
3. After the member’s family has been completely notified the Chief or DR will instruct the dispatcher to transmit the following message.
4. The members who are in Quarters at this time will assemble in company formation and stand at attention to receive the announcement.

Attention all Members of the _____ Fire Department, or all Members of Battalion Two, please stand by to receive a message from Chief _____.

It is with deep regret that I as Chief of the _____ Fire Department announce the death of (Fire Fighter or Rank, Name, of the _____ Fire Company) who lost his or her life in the Line of Duty while participating in operations of Fire Call

(Number, Location, Date and Time). All of our prayers and sympathy are extended to his or her family at this time.

5. Upon receipt of this message the person on watch shall record this message in the company logbook. With the company standing at attention, the Chief or DR will order a right-hand salute, at which time the Station Flag will be lowered to half-staff and the front of the station shall be draped with black bunting, which will remain until seven days following the funeral.
6. A news conference or formal news release should be arranged as soon as possible so that factual information is available for dissemination.
7. The eight key members or teams outlined above will begin their duties. The Family Liaison and the Chief or Chaplain will approach the family and offer a Full Firematic Funeral.
 - They may accept your offer or reject it; they are in charge and their wishes will be followed. The wishes of the member killed in the line of duty, recorded in the emergency contact forms on file in the department office can be shared with the family at this time.
 - If the family accepts the offer of a full firematic funeral then this key person or the funeral liaison team, working with the Chief or DR, will take over and be responsible for the department's involvement in the funeral procedures.
8. The following is a list of Four Types of Funerals which may be requested by the family or next of kin of your member. These services include Line of Duty Deaths as well as the passing of members outside the realm of our firematic duties.
 - **A Formal Funeral** - This service would involve full honors which would begin at the member's home, formal services at the funeral home, church and cemetery. It would involve the use at least one pumper, active pallbearers, honorary pallbearers, funeral detail, color guard, bag piper, rifle squad, and a bugler. Honor Guard placing their gloves at the cemetery.
A Sample Service for your Chaplain to use is included later in this report.
 - **Semi-Formal Funeral** - This service includes a Firematic service at the funeral home the night before the funeral. At the church active pallbearers and honorary pallbearers, honor guard and funeral detail at the cemetery. The placing of the glove can still be done, but it may be reserved for Life Members.
A Sample of this service are included later in this report.
 - **Non-Formal Funeral** - There will be no Firematic involvement at the funeral home, church or cemetery. The members attending would do so in a passive role, either at the viewing or at the church.
 - **Private Funeral** - In cases such as these the wishes of the family will be honored, and the Fire Company will not participate. To honor a friend and member when the family desires a Private Funeral, a memorial service can be held at the fire station for the members to attend. Prayers and words of remembrance can also be offered at the time of that member's next company meeting.

In cases when our member is a Jewish Fire Fighter, this protocol can be followed. Prayers for a Jewish Service will be included later in this summary.

Customary Funeral Arrangements for a Formal Funeral

1. Arrange for an Honor Guard to stand watch during the viewing, a minimum of four should be chosen. They need to be rotated about every twenty minutes.

2. Arrange for active pallbearers, six plus an officer. Be sure that extra gloves are on the truck.
3. Arrange for Honorary pallbearers. (Family old friends, company officers, retirees)
4. Arrange for funeral detail (All uniformed members in attendance)
5. Arrange for a bugler to play taps, two if possible.
6. Arrange for a Piper to play the Bag Pipes.
7. Arrange for a Color Guard and rifle squad.
8. Obtain an American Flag for the casket.
9. Provide all members of the Fire Department with the information necessary to carry out their roles in the funeral.
10. Survey the area of the funeral services and make provisions for placement of all attending units and provide information for map preparation.
11. Designate an area of assembly for all attending Chief officers and dignitaries. (The funeral home, church, school or fire station)
12. Designate an area of assembly for all other members of the department and visiting firefighters.
13. Note: this area should be a block or two away from the funeral home or church, where ample parking and assembly are available. The group will then march as a unit to the church or funeral home to act as a funeral detail.
14. Obtain sufficient rolls of black plastic tape along.
15. With small round tipped scissors that can be carried in a pocket and made available in the assembly area for all uniformed personnel to place a horizontal black band over the breast badge of all participating officers and personnel.
16. The Officer in Charge will coordinate all.
17. Commands during the movement of the casket as prescribed in this directive.

Special Arrangements for Formal Funerals

- A fire department pumper or pumpers in the case of multiple LODD, designated by the Chief, will be appropriately prepared with flowers and black bunting, they will be stripped of hose for use to transport the casket.
- Arrange for the proper placement of all vehicles that will participate in the funeral procession. NOTE: If a joint service is held and interment will be at two or more locations, separate processions must be established according to guest preference.
- A map of the areas involved will be prepared to expedite the proceedings and assist out of town guests.
- The map should include:
 1. Location of Fire Departments
 2. Location of Funeral homes
 3. Location of Church
 4. Location of Chief officer & dignitary assembly area.
 5. Location of firefighter's assembly area.
 6. Location of auxiliary parking area.
 7. Location of hotels for out-of-town guests.
 8. Location of food areas
 9. Separate map or coding on a single map should designate location of multiple funerals and processions as required.
 10. Any other information which might be necessary

- On the map or separate sheet, a copy of the diagram should show the proper arrangement and movement of personnel for various ceremonies and locations as necessary.
- Arrangement for reproduction of sufficient quantities of the maps and firm commitment on delivery should be established.
- The Officer in Charge or designated representative will coordinate all commands during the movement of the casket and personnel.
- Proper arrangements with the police department or fire police should be made to handle traffic and parking at various locations involved and along the funeral procession route.
- Photography Coverage: A fire department photographer or private photographer should be assigned to cover the funeral.
- Media Arrangements: Establish guidelines for radio, Television and Press. at the Church, at the Funeral home both inside and outside and at the cemetery.
- Arrangements for out-of-town guests
 - Transportation
 - Airports
 - hotels, motels
 - Funeral Services
 - Cemetery
 - Food service area
 - cars can be borrowed or rented.
 - Arrange for housing for overnight guests as necessary.
- Arrange for food service areas.
 - For Chief Officers
 - For Dignitaries
 - For Firefighters

Note: Food service may be needed between morning and afternoon funeral services or following funeral services at more than one location. Consider help from Auxiliaries from mutual aid companies or a caterer.

Depending on the number of personnel involved in the fatal accident, the number of out-of-town guests could range from a few hundred to several thousand.

Responsibilities Of Members

- All members will, at all times, maintain a clean, pressed, and properly fitted uniform for use at funerals and/or other formal functions at all times.
- All off duty members and those on- duty members, upon proper relief from normal duty, should make every effort to honor their fellow members by attending the funeral services.
- All members of the fire department shall acquaint themselves with the prescribed courtesies of the fire department's funeral procedures as outlined in this operation guide.
- Honor Guard
 - At least 4 Honor Guard are required.
 - One member of the Honor Guard shall be designated as the Officer of the Guard. They shall be responsible for obtaining the necessary equipment (white gloves, black badge bands, etc.) And for the scheduling of the Honor Guard members.
 - Two Honor Guards, one for the head and one for the foot of the casket, shall be scheduled at ten-minute intervals.

- Honor Guards' uniforms shall be dress uniform or dark suits, white gloves, black badge bands.
- Honor Guards shall stand at attention at their assigned positions for the duration of their ten -minute tour of duty.
- The Honor Guard may be used during viewings and prior to the service as custom dictates.
- Honorary Pallbearers
 - Those designated as Honorary Pallbearers, usually retirees or members of the deceased's company, shall at all times move ahead of the casket, as it is moved.
 - The Honorary Pallbearers shall sit on the designated side of the church during the service.
 - Dress for Honorary Pallbearers
 - Retirees will normally wear proper attire.
 - Active members will wear dress uniforms, if the department has them.
- Active Pallbearers
 - The active pallbearer Detail shall consist of six pallbearers plus an officer.
 - The officer of the detail shall contact the Funeral Director for detailed instructions.
 - The pallbearers will remain covered at all times while acting in that capacity and shall wear white gloves.

NOTE: If the order is given to uncover, it does not ever refer to them. If a prayer is offered, they remain covered. There is never an exception to this rule.

 - The Pallbearers will not salute while acting in this capacity.
 - The Flag shall be placed over the casket with the field of blue at the head over the deceased's left shoulder.
- If the casket arrives at the church from the funeral home, the pallbearer Detail shall position themselves to receive the casket in front of the church (See diagram)
- During the service the pallbearers will sit on the designated side of the church with the funeral detail
- At the cemetery, after placing the casket over the gravesite and upon the Officers command, the Detail shall raise the Flag to waist high over the casket and hold it there during the committal service conducted by the clergy or the Chaplain. After the committal service is read, taps may be sounded. The Flag is than folded, upon the Officer's command, in prescribed military manner and presented to the next of kin.
- The Flag
 - Red stands for hardness and valor
 - White symbolizes hope, purity and innocence.
 - Blue stands for reverence to God, loyalty, vigilance, perseverance and justice.
- The Detail, on orders of the Officer, shall take their place with the funeral detail, once they rejoin the main Detail they will salute whenever the order is given with the rest of the detail.
- During the graveside service, where the flag is not draped over the casket, the Pallbearer Detail, placing the casket over the gravesite, on orders of the Officer shall step back with the funeral Detail and follow the procedures for the funeral detail.
- Funeral Detail
 - The members of the department, not otherwise detailed, will act as the funeral detail, in dress uniforms, but no gloves are required. They can be worn especially if the gloves are to be placed on the casket following the committal services.

- The Funeral Detail will arrive as a group from the staging area prior to the arrival of the funeral coach at the church and take position in front of the church, on the right side as indicated in the diagram.
- For formal and semi-formal funerals, the Funeral Detail will take position in front of the church in two facing ranks with senior officers closest to the church.
- As the Active Pallbearers move the casket from the coach, the Funeral Detail will be called to attention by the Officer in Charge. If the casket is draped with a flag the OIC will order a hand salute as the casket passes.
- The command shall be, “PRESENT ARMS”
To end the salute the order given will be, “ORDER ARMS”
- After the casket passes, the OIC will order, “AT EASE” and the Funeral Detail will file into the church according to rank and sit in the designated area of the church. Heads will remain covered in the church since we are following military protocol. Heads are uncovered if the clergy requests during a prayer or taking communion. (OIC should ask the clergy in charge for their directive)
- After the service, the Funeral Detail, on order of the OIC, will file out of the church and, in case of a formal funeral, take position on the right of the entry as indicated on the diagram.
- At a semi-formal service, the Funeral Detail will form facing ranks on both sides of the entry with senior officers closest to the hearse.
- As the Flag draped casket is brought out of the church, the detail is brought to attention and a hand salute is executed on the orders of the OIC. If no flag covers the casket, ranks stand at attention.
- The Funeral Detail rides as a group in designated cars to the cemetery or between the funeral home and the church.
- The Funeral Detail, at the cemetery, again forms two ranks according rank from the location of the hearse to the gravesite, with officers closest to the grave. (See Diagram)
- As the Flag draped casket is removed from the hearse by the Active Pallbearers, the Funeral Detail executes a hand salute on the orders of the OIC (“Present Arms!”)
- They will hold their salute until the order is given by the OIC, (“Order Arms!”) If the casket is not covered with a Flag, the Funeral Detail stands at attention.
- After the casket is placed over the grave the Funeral Detail will form two ranks in front of the grave, the highest rank on the right. (See Diagram)
- If Taps are sounded, uniformed members should execute a hand salute on the order of the OIC. (Present Arms and again Order Arms!)
- During the religious graveside services, all personnel will bow at the words, “Let Us Pray”.
- All personnel, except the Active Pallbearers, while holding the Flag, will follow the example of the officiating clergy. If he or she uncovers, they will uncover, if they remain covered, the Detail remains covered.

NOTE: These procedures and formations are accepted courtesies, they are to act as a guideline only and may be adjusted depending upon existing conditions at the funeral home, church, etc.

Inventory Of Necessary Equipment

- On hand in the fire department stock room.

- Color Guard standards
 - Flag for casket
 - Black Plastic tape or elastic bands
 - Round tipped scissors
 - 12 pair of assorted size gloves
 - Signs which read Fire Department
 - Courtesy car, (Six should be in inventoried)
 - Black Bunting for Station
- Where to obtain necessary items:
 - Flags; locate VFW, local supplier
 - Color Guard American Legion and VFW
 - Band Local schools, other local fire departments.
 - Additional white gloves, Army Navy Store, local supplier.
 - Additional vehicles: Local car dealer, local rental car agencies (LODD will donate many times)
 - Signs: local graphic and sign shops
 - Black Bunting: local supplier.

People You May Want to Contact

- State Fire Commissioner (State Fire will really help you, they are amazing)
- State Public Safety Officers Benefit Program
- State Firemen’s Association Secretary
- Orange County Firemen’s Association
- Hudson Valley Firemen’s Association
- FASNY
- Federal Public Safety Benefit Program
 633 Indiana Ave. N.W. Room 784
 Washington, DC. 20531
 (202) 376-8799

Suggested Memorial Services for Deceased Members at The Funeral Home

Formal Service

Can be used for a life member an active member, or a member killed in the line of duty.

President: Brother Secretary, has the roll of the _____ Company been called?

Secretary: The roll has been called and all have answered except Brother/sister _____.

Presiding Officer: _____ has answered the summons of the Creator, and it is with solemn thoughts that we assemble here to pay tribute and affection to his memory. _____ was a loyal and faithful member of the _____ Company for ___ years dedicated to the protection and service of the Fire District of _____ in any time of need.

We rejoice in _____ unselfish spirit and devotion to the welfare of all people. Tom stood forth a person of character, a beloved firefighter, and fire police officer and a man held in high regard by all. No expression of ours can fill this vacant place held in the home and the fire department. We do, however, commend his friends and loved ones to the loving care of our creator, who “Doeth All Things Well”

We can no longer be of service to _____ who served the fire district so well, but in living memory, let us here resolve to render a better service in his name.

Chaplain’s Prayer: Almighty God, Father of all whose love and mercy is limitless; we commend unto Thee, the soul of our brother/ sister. _____ We thank you for the example given of the true spirit of greatness, which realized that it is nobler to serve than to be served. We pray that the cause _____ served so well may ever inspire us; and when our turn comes to answer your summons, that we may hear you, as we hope and pray that _____ has heard, those gracious words, “Well done, my good and faithful servant, enter now into the joy of the Lord.”

To thy loving care, and gracious provision, we commend all of _____ loved ones.

O Lord, support each one of us until the shadows of life lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and our work is done. Then in your infinite goodness, grant us a safe lodging, a holy rest, and peace at last. Amen

Presiding Officer: The Firefighters 23rd Psalm

*The Lord is my Chief, He has chosen me to serve.
He leads me to still the fire raging around me.
He restores my soul to fight even when all seems lost.
He has prepared for me a place in life.
Devoted to service, honor, joy and fellowship.
He anoints my soul with courage in the presence of my enemy, fire.
Yes, even though I have chosen to walk through life,
In the shadow of death, I will fear no fire, for He is with me.
His strength will comfort me.
And when life’s final alarm for me has sounded,
I will dwell in the stationhouse of the Lord, forever. Amen.*

Chaplain: The Firefighter’s Prayer

*When I am called to duty, God
Wherever flames my 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 to save an older person from
The horror of that fate.
Enable me to be alert,
To hear the weakest shout,
And quickly and efficiently,*

*Put the fire out.
And if, according to my fate,
I am called to Thee,
Please bless with your protecting hand
My friends and family.*

Chaplain: Join Me in reciting the Lord's Prayer... Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever, Amen.

NOTE: The Chaplain is free to include any personal thoughts that they wish to during this service

Brief Service

President: Brother Secretary, has the roll of the _____ Company been called?

Secretary: The roll has been called and all have answered except Brother/sister _____.

Presiding Officer: To the family of Brother/Sister _____ and members the _____ Company /department, once again death has taken its toll from our ranks. To our brother/sister who answered the last call, we assemble here to pay tribute to his/her memory which has been so well earned.

During his or her lifetime here, every best effort was given in servicing this community in which s/he lived, without hope of reward, but rather to make real that which has been written, "to love our neighbor as yourself". We that are left, bow our heads for a moment in tribute to (name) who has gone before us. The good that has been done will live after him/her. The privilege now is ours to labor where s/he died, that these efforts may not go for naught, and on this day resolve to carry on with greater effort, the examples of serving that have been set for us. To Live and labor so that when the final roll comes it may be said of us, "Well done, Good and Faithful Servant.

Chaplain: Closes prayer and benediction.

Service Outline for Deceased Firefighter

- Firefighters march in two by two
- Presiding Officer call Assembly to attention
- General Statement by Presiding Officer
- Introductory Prayer or Scripture by Chaplain
- Reading of Scripture:
 - Psalm 23; Psalm 11, Psalm 107: 1-3,21-22, Psalm 16:2,5-9,11, I Peter 1:3-9, Romans 14:7-8, I Tim. 6:12-16,2 Cor.5:1-9, I Cor.15:12-22
- Words of the Chaplain
- General Prayer and Benediction
- Firefighters pay respects two by two (file out)

Semi-Formal Service

This evening as the roll of the _____ Company has been called; all have answered except our brother _____.

_____ has answered the summons of the creator, and with solemn thoughts we assemble here to pay tribute to his memory. _____ was a loyal and faithful member of the _____ Company, where he served for over ___ years. He was dedicated to the protection and service of the _____ Fire Department in any time of need.

We rejoice in _____ unselfish spirit and devotion to the welfare of all people. _____ stood forth as a person of Character, a beloved firefighter and has held the high regard of all. No expression of ours can fill this vacant place held in the home and the Fire Department.

But this evening we do commend _____ family and friends into the loving care of our Heavenly Father, Who "Doeth All Things Well."

Share Matthew 25:35-36, When I was hungry, thirsty, naked, sick in any kind of need, you cared for me.

When did we see you in need?

Because you did these things even to the least of mine, you did them to me, Well done my good and faithful servant, enter now into my peace.

Reading of Psalm 23 "Wonderful Words of Peace."

Words of assurance from John 1:1 – 4

Dix Hills Fire Department - Departmental Funerals

Submitted by: Jim Hanly
2nd Deputy Chief Chaplain

Part I: General Guidelines

- 1.1 When a member of the Fire Department or the Rescue Squad dies in the line of duty, several considerations are crucial for those dealing with the tragedy. These include:
 - a. *Identifying and meeting* the needs of the surviving family
 - b. Ensuring that the *needs and wishes of the family always come before* the needs and wishes of the department.
 - c. Providing *ongoing emotional and spiritual support* for the next of kin
 - d. Using *good organization, coordination and communication*
 - e. Maintaining *flexibility*
 - f. *Monitoring constantly* not to overload any individual
- 1.2 The *primary goal* of the department should be to *work with the family, the funeral director and others involved to ensure that the fallen firefighter receives a fitting tribute*. At all times the

department must carry out the wishes and desires of the surviving family regarding the funeral ceremonies.

- 1.3 The *department's responsibilities are not the same as those of the funeral director*. Department personnel should work with the funeral director in the best interest of the departed members family.

Part 2: Pre-incident Planning

Pre-planning is essential to ensure the department meets the needs of the family and department members.

- 2.1 Department Chaplain – The department should maintain an active chaplaincy program. The chaplain should be contacted immediately whenever the death of a member is imminent or confirmed, regardless of the circumstances involved. The chaplain's services will be available to the surviving family, before, during and after the funeral.
- 2.2 Personnel Information – The department should maintain an Emergency Contact Information Record on all department personnel. The department will use it to assist in the treatment of personnel following serious injury, and in the notification of next of kin following a serious injury or line-of-duty death. At the very least, the form will contain the following information:
- a. Complete name of the department member
 - b. Name and address of next of kin with specific directions to the address as needed
 - c. Names of parents and children/dependents, including those who may not live with the member.
 - d. The member's religion and church affiliation and membership
 - e. See recommended form from the National Fallen Firefighter's Federation – attached.
- 2.3 Photographs – The department should arrange for individual photographs of all department personnel and should maintain current photographs in department personnel files. The photos may be needed for immediate identification after an incident. After a line-of-duty death, there will be requests for photos from the media and other sources.
- 2.4 Local Support Agencies – The department should periodically contact local public safety agencies to maintain a current resource list of:
- a. Honor guards and color guards
 - b. Bands, buglers, pipers
 - c. Firing parties
 - d. Bells for "Last Alarm" service
 - e. Vocal and instrumental performers
- 2.5 Funeral Directors – The department should contact and provide the local funeral directors a copy of the department's funeral procedures. This will allow them to understand local protocols before a line-of-duty death occurs.
- 2.6 Ceremonial Clothing and Equipment – The department should have the following available for use during department funerals:
- a. Badge and name tag presentation frame

- b. An extra badge for each rank in the department as well as the name of a source for obtaining a duplicate name tag on an emergency basis
- c. Presentation flags (U.S., state, municipality, fire department)
- d. White gloves in sufficient numbers for the Honor Guard and eight pallbearers.

2.7 Key Positions – The department should maintain and annually update a list of personnel selected to serve in the following key positions:

- a. Survivor Action Officer
- b. Notification Officer
- c. Family Liaison Officer
- d. Hospital Liaison Officer
- e. Funeral or Memorial Service Officer
- f. Procession Officer
- g. Service Officer
- h. Final Committal Officer

Personnel selected to serve should receive a manual and training on the responsibilities of key positions. The manual should contain copies of department procedures relating to funerals or memorial services.

2.8 Honor Guard and Color Guard – The department should encourage personnel to participate in a department Honor Guard and Color Guard that will function during department funerals and at other appropriate times. If possible, the department should provide the following:

- a. Class A (“dress”) uniforms with cap, white shirt, black tie, and white ascot, for all members.
- b. White gloves for all members
- c. White shoulder braiding for all members
- d. Patent leather low-quarter shoes for all members
- e. Parade flags (U.S., state, municipality and department) with holders
- f. Two display axes with chrome or brass heads.

Part 3: Funeral Types

The death of a department member may occur under a variety of circumstances. Based on the circumstances, the department should provide appropriate services from the planning of the funeral through the survivor follow-up process. To ensure all members are honored in a consistent manner, the department should adopt a policy on the types of services it will provide. The following is an example of what some departments have adopted:

3.1 Definitions:

- a. Line-of-Duty: The death must be the result of a traumatic injury suffered in the line of duty.
- b. Job-related traumatic injury: A blow to the body by an outside force, e.g., crushing injuries suffered in a building collapse, apparatus accident or fall. Burns, smoke inhalation and such climactic injuries as heatstroke or frostbite are considered traumatic injuries.
- c. Job-related non-traumatic injury: A non-traumatic injury that is strongly believed or has been proven to be attributable to the job. Examples are stress, heart attacks, strokes, diseases and mental illness (suicide).
- d. Active member: A member of the department serving in an active capacity.

- e. Inactive member: A former member of the department.
- f. Affiliate member: an individual who has served in some capacity with the department, such as a commissioner, trustee, dispatcher, etc.
- a. Non-job-related death: Deaths, natural and traumatic, that are not related to the departmental duty.

3.2 Types of Services

- a. Level One: A line-of-duty or job-related death. This may include an inactive member whose death has stemmed from an injury sustained during active duty
- b. Level Two: A non-job-related death of an active member.
- c. Level Three: A non-job-related death of an inactive or affiliate member.

3.3 Suggested Funeral Service Options:

Level One	Level Two	Level Three
American Flag	American Flag	American Flag
Badge Shrouds	Badge Shrouds	Badge Shrouds
Bagpipers		
Bell Service	Bell Service	Bell Service
Bugler		
Color Guards		
Crossed Ladders		
Eulogy	Eulogy	
Fire Engine Caisson	Hearse	Hearse
Fire Service Flag	Fire Service Flag	Fire Service Flag
Flower Unit	Flower Unit	
Honor Guards	Honor Guards	Honor Guards
Honor Detail	Honor Detail	
Pallbearers	Pallbearers	Pallbearers
Level One	Level Two	Level Three
Station Bunting	Station Bunting	Station Bunting
Vehicle Bunting		
Walkthrough	Walkthrough	Walkthrough

Part 4: Funeral or Memorial Service Planning Considerations

There are many ways for the department to offer help for the funeral or memorial service. Some families will welcome all offers of help, while others may choose to have no departmental involvement. *The family must always be allowed to make that choice.*

- 4.1 Honor Guards – If the family requests an Honor Guard, the Funeral Officer should coordinate with Honor Guard personnel to schedule honor guard activities according to the family’s and funeral director’s wishes. The following basic rules apply to these activities.
- a. Two honor guard members should be posted at the casket. During viewing hours, they should be posted at the head and at the foot.
 - b. There should be a minimum of four honor guard members for each set of viewing hours.

- c. Honor guard members should rotate at 15-minute intervals. Relief guards should march up together. Posted guards should come to attention and smartly make the transfer and then march off together.
- d. Posted honor guards should assume the position of parade rest.
- e. American and departmental flags (or a state flag, if there is no departmental flag) should be posted at the casket.
- f. Honor guard members should wear Class A uniform with white gloves. They should use black mourning bands over uniform badges.

- 4.2 Pallbearers – Should the family choose to use department members as pallbearers, it is the Family Liaison Officer’s responsibility to ask which department members the family would like to use. There should be between six and eight pallbearers. They should wear Class A uniforms with hats and white gloves.
- a. Due to their specific responsibilities, pallbearers are exempt from following the majority of orders given to the remainder of the formation
 - b. The Funeral Officer, assisted by the Funeral Director, should give instructions on removing, handling, and transporting the casket.
 - c. If a fire engine serves as a caisson, pallbearers should hold a practice session the day before the funeral. If this is not possible; pallbearers should report to the funeral home several hours before the beginning of the service for a protocol briefing and practice.
 - d. If the casket is draped with a flag to present to the next of kin, three pallbearers will be instructed on the proper method of removing, folding, and presenting the flag. Two pallbearers will fold the flag and present it to the third pallbearer who, in turn, will present it to the next of kin. The Final Committal Officer will coordinate the flag folding. Flag folding instructions appear in the Appendix.
 - e. If the casket is not draped with a flag, the department can present a pre-folded flag to the next of kin.
 - f. If department engines serve as caisson and flower vehicle, pallbearers should ride on them. If engines are not used, the department will provide the pallbearers other department vehicles for the procession.
- 4.3 Transportation:
- a. The department should offer a department vehicle and driver to the immediate family during the viewing and funeral period. The Family Liaison Officer normally arranges for this service.
 - b. The department should ensure that the next of kin have limousine service available on the day of the funeral.
- 4.4 Meals – The department should plan to provide meals for the deceased member’s family at least until after the funeral. Friends of the family and members of the department may help provide these meals. The Survivor Action Officer, in conjunction with the Family Liaison Officer, will determine the need and coordinate providing the meals.
- 4.5 Family Liaison Officer – Regardless of the circumstances surrounding the death, or the deceased member’s status in the department, a Family Liaison Officer should be assigned to make contact with the family. The officer will determine the amount of involvement the family wants from the department. The officer will provide this information to the Survivor Action Officer. The Family Liaison Officer will assist the family throughout the process.

- 4.6 Initial Family Support - The department will determine this based on the family requests as relayed by the Family Liaison Officer. The department should assign appropriate key personnel as the needs arise. The department should not act on assumptions without contacting and getting the consent of the immediate family.
- 4.7 Department Chaplain – The amount of involvement the chaplain has will be determined by the family. One option is a shared responsibility between the family’s clergy and the department chaplain. Should the department chaplain be requested, the following are areas of responsibility:
- a. Comfort and support for family members
 - b. Prayer services at the funeral home
 - c. Church services
 - d. Final committal
 - e. Follow-up support for the family
 - f. Departmental or community memorial services
- 4.8 Procession – The family may request a procession from the funeral home or church to the place of final committal. The procession involves staging vehicles at the funeral home or church prior to the funeral, directing vehicles as they leave for the place of final committal, and staging of vehicles upon arrival there. Specific considerations include:
- a. Department vehicles used as caisson, flower car, and for transportation
 - b. Coordination with the funeral director to determine the procession route, including a drive by the deceased member’s fire station and/or home. If the procession passes the fire station, apparatus should be parked on the apron with emergency lights on. Members should assemble outside, come to attention as the procession passes, and toll a muffled bell as the caisson or hearse passes.
 - c. Static displays of apparatus along the procession route.
 - d. Crossed ladders or aerial equipment at the funeral home, church, or place of final committal entrance.
- 4.9 Caisson – A department engine may be appropriate as a caisson to carry the casket. If an engine is used, personnel must take it out of service for a period of time and prepare it as follows:
- a. Thoroughly wash and wax the engine
 - b. Add available mourning flags or bunting
- The operator of the engine should be in dress uniform. In the event of inclement weather, an enclosed hearse should carry the casket and the apparatus should serve as a flower car.
- 4.10 Flower Car – A department engine may also serve as a flower vehicle. If so, personnel must take it out of service and prepare it as indicated above for a caisson. The hoses and dividers need not be removed.
- 4.11 Formations – Special formations may be appropriate at the following points:
- a. Walkthrough of all attending members at the funeral home or church
 - b. Honor Guard formations on either side of the casket’s path from the funeral home to the hearse or caisson
 - c. Honor Guard formations on either side of the casket path during entry to and exit from the church

- d. Honor Guard formations on either side of the casket path from the hearse or caisson to the place of final committal.
- 4.12 Taps – Taps may be sounded by one or more buglers at the place of final committal. The location of the bugler should be approximately 75 feet from the final committal site.
- 4.13 Firing Party – A military-type firing party may be used at the final committal. If so, the party will fire three volleys 75 feet from the final committal site.
The salute may startle people at these services. The family should consider this in making a decision on this option.
- 4.14 Musical Selections
 - a. A band, a piper, an organist, a choir or soloists may play or sing during various funeral ceremonies.
 - b. The Family Liaison Officer should discuss this option with the family and communicate its wishes to the Funeral Officer.
- 4.15 Last Alarm Service – A traditional bell-ringing ceremony at the end of the church service or committal service usually signifies the member’s last alarm. A short reading accompanies the ringing of the bell. See Appendix
- 4.16 Readings – Numerous scripture passages and fire-service-related readings are appropriate during the funeral services. The Family Liaison Officer will work with the family to determine if they would like any readings and who should read them.
- 4.17 Eulogy – A eulogy may be appropriate at any point in the funeral ceremonies. The family should decide who will deliver the eulogy and when it is fitting. The Chief, a clergy member, the department chaplain, or a close family friend from the department may be asked to perform this task. the Family Liaison Officer will make the necessary contacts and advise the Funeral Officer.
- 4.18 Crossed Aerial Ladders – If the family wishes to have the crossed aerial ladders at the entrance to the final committal site, the Family Liaison Officer will forward this request to the Survivor Action Officer for approval and coordination.
- 4.19 Static Equipment Display – During the processions, the family may choose to have a static display of department apparatus and crews at attention and saluting the passing casket and family vehicle. This final tribute may be set up at the funeral home or church, at key locations along the procession route, at a fire station on the procession route, or at the place of final committal entrance. The Family Liaison Officer will communicate this request to the Survivor Action Officer.
- 4.20 Burial in Uniform – If the family chooses to bury the deceased member in the departmental uniform, the Family Liaison Officer will deliver the uniform to the Funeral Officer or funeral director. If the family selects non-departmental clothing, the Family Liaison Officer should deliver this.

- 4.21 Presentation of Department Badge – As a part of the funeral service at the funeral home or church, the Chief may present the badge and name tag worn by the deceased member to the next of kin. The items should be in a framed display containing a departmental uniform patch. Administrative and support personnel will work with the Chief to obtain the badge and name tag actually worn by the member and to obtain duplicates to be placed on the burial uniform.
- 4.22 Closed Casket – If the family requests a closed casket, the family may wish to place a picture of the member in uniform along with the member’s dress hat on top of or next to the casket.
- 4.23 Walkthrough – A walkthrough of members at the funeral home may occur to pay tribute to the deceased member. If so, the Funeral Officer will schedule the walkthrough and have members form line by company. The formation will pass single file by the casket with each member stopping briefly to pay tribute. (Usually by means of a hand salute)
- 4.24 Post-service Reception – A reception may be held following the funeral. A church hall, school cafeteria, fire station, or other facility may serve for this purpose. The Survivor Action Officer will coordinate the event and ask department members to assist in the set-up and break-down of this event.
- 4.25 Memorial Fund – Department members and local organizations may want to start a memorial fund for the member’s family. The Survivor Action Officer should work with local financial organizations in establishing this fund. The family should be involved in deciding how this will occur. The officer will emphasize to the family the importance of working with a local bank to avoid legal complications.
- 4.26 Flags at Half-staff – Upon notification that a member has died, the Chief will direct that all station flags be lowered to half-staff. They will remain at half-staff until 1700 hours the day of the final committal. When the American flag is at half-staff, no other flags will fly on the same pole. In the case of a line-of-duty death, the Chief will request that the local officials ask other facilities to fly their flags at half-staff.
- 4.27 Badge Shrouding – The shroud should appear on badges at the time of notification of the death and should remain on the badge until after the funeral and final committal. For line-of-duty deaths, the badge shrouds will remain in place for a 30-day mourning period. If the chaplain’s badge contains a cross, a crescent, tablets, or the Star of David, the chaplain’s badge remains uncovered.
- 4.28 Flag Presentation – When the casket is draped with a flag, an appropriate flag presentation ceremony should take place immediately before the conclusion of the committal service.

Part 5: Key Assignments for Department Funerals

- 5.1 When a department member dies, the department must focus on the family’s needs and wishes and give them the highest priority. The support offered by the department will vary depending on the type of death, as described in Part 4.
To support the family, a department must be prepared to manage a series of interrelated responsibilities. These duties extend from initial notification of next of kin through continuing

support after the final committal service.

A department should have a funeral plan that will enable it to staff the needed assignments should a death occur. The department should identify and train personnel to handle these assignments.

Depending on the size of the department, it may need to combine many of the following major assignments.

5.2 Survivor Action Officer

The Chief may assume the position of Survivor Action Officer but will probably assign another senior officer this function. As a direct representative of the Chief, the Survivor Action Officer should receive the full cooperation of the entire fire department.

The officer is responsible for managing several important activities, the principal concerning being the ongoing welfare of the next of kin. The officer will give whatever assistance is necessary to assist the family.

The Survivor Action Officer may appoint the following positions as needed and delegate responsibilities as required to successfully complete all assigned duties.

The detailed Responsibility Sheets for all officers are in the section following the appendices.

5.3 Notification Officer

The Federation of Fire Chaplains provides comprehensive information on how to make notifications as part of its Chaplaincy training resources.

5.4 Family Liaison Officer

The Family Liaison Officer provides the Survivor Action Officer with regular updates on the family's status and needs because of the critical nature of the liaison's role and the around-the-clock coverage required, a department should appoint a back-up liaison to provide relief as needed.

All officers must work closely with the Family Liaison Officer to ensure that the family understands their options and that their wishes are honored.

5.5 Funeral Officer

The Funeral Officer's role is to serve as intermediary between the funeral director and the other department personnel involved in funeral or memorial service activities.

This officer is not a funeral director and should not interfere in funeral management.

5.6 Procession Officer

The Procession Officer arranges and directs the funeral procession from the funeral home to the church, if there is a church service, and to the final committal site. It is most necessary that this Officer maintain a working relationship with the local police precinct officers and the patrol officers.

5.7 Service Officer

If the family had decided to have a religious service, the Service Officer coordinates with clergy selected by the family.

5.8 Final committal Service Officer

The Final Committal Service Officer provides coordination to all the individuals responsible for the final committal service.

Part 6: Other considerations

- 6.1 Inclement weather may impact upon funeral services. If severe weather conditions are anticipated, personnel involved in coordinating the funeral services should work with the Survivor Action Officer and Family Liaison Officer to implement alternative plans.
- 6.2 If services will occur outside the local area, the department should coordinate all planning steps with officials and agencies in that location. If possible, representatives from fire and police departments in all the communities involved should participate in the planning.
- 6.3 For a line-of-duty death, a large contingent of out-of-town fire and rescue service personnel will want to attend the funeral, if there will be a procession from the funeral home to the church, ask these fire and rescue personnel to report directly to the church for staging prior to the start of the procession from the funeral home.
- 6.4 All department members and apparatus may take part in the procession from the funeral or memorial site to the place of final committal. If there will be a procession of department members marching to the church, only members from the Dix Hills department should participate.

Part 7: Ceremonies

- 7.1 If the family requests, the following personnel may take part in the ceremonial portion of the funeral:
 - a. A Chief
 - b. Six or eight pallbearers
 - c. A Color Guard of for department members and one officer
 - d. A bugler and piper, pipe band, or drummer.
- 7.2 Due to the important role of pallbearers and color guards, a practice session should occur the day before the funeral. If this is not possible, these personnel must report to the funeral home several hours before the service for a protocol briefing and practice. The funeral director will instruct the pallbearers on how to handle the casket.
- 7.3 If the procession will include department members marching from one point to another, the Procession Officer must coordinate with the Funeral Officer, Service Officer, or Final Committal Officer to establish an assembly point, order of alignment, and route for the march. If marching is to occur, a drummer should be part of the parade contingent to provide a steady cadence. Cadence should not be called verbally.
 - a. Determine an appropriate assembly point for department personnel participating in the march. Visiting personnel will assemble at the end point of the march.
 - b. Basic alignment for the elements of a march is:
 1. Color Guard
 2. Pipe band/drummer
 3. host department members
 4. apparatus caisson or hearse

- i. The Officer-in-Charge (OIC) will walk immediately in front of the caisson or hearse.
 - ii. Three pall bearers will march on either side of the caisson or hearse.
 - iii. Two pall bearers will ride on the tailboard of the caisson or walk immediately behind the hearse, if there are only six pallbearers, two Honor Guard members will assume this position – Check if this is permitted in our jurisdiction.
- 5. Family's cars
 - 6. Friend's cars

Note: If the immediate family of the deceased member desires to join in the march, family members will fall in immediately behind the caisson or hearse and will receive an Honor Guard escort.

- c. If the casket is being driven from the funeral home to the church, the following actions should occur:
 - 1. Determine an assembly point several blocks from the church for department personnel and the pipe band/drummer.
 - 2. Assign an assembly point for visiting departments at the church on the church side of the street.
 - 3. Immediately after loading the casket at the funeral home, transport the color guards to the department meeting location.
 - 4. Have the pallbearers board the apparatus, with two of them remaining on the rear step – Check if this is permitted in our jurisdiction.
 - 5. With a police escort, have the apparatus proceed slowly to the meeting point with the department contingent.
 - 6. Line up the procession in the same order as listed above.
 - 7. Direct the pallbearers to dismount and march as follows:
 - i. The OIC in front of the apparatus
 - ii. Two or three pallbearers on each side of the apparatus
 - iii. Two pallbearers on the rear step – Check if this is permitted in our jurisdiction.
- d. When the procession arrives, the following actions should occur:
 - 1. As the procession nears the location of the service, move the color guards to the side and allow the pipe band/drummer and department members to pass.
 - 2. Near the entrance to the service area, assemble the pipe band.
 - 3. Line up the national, state and local dignitaries near the entrance leaving room for the Color Guard.
 - 4. When marching department members arrive at the location of the service, move them to the other side of the street. When they are in place, give the command "Right face."
 - 5. when personnel line the street on both sides and face the center, begin the Color Guard march toward the service location followed by the apparatus or hears. Leave a space between the Color Guard and hearse. The service assembly OIC commands "Present arms" (hand salute)
 - 6. As the Color Guard arrives, assemble it near the front of the church
 - 7. Move the apparatus to the front of the service location and shut off the engine.
 - 8. Have the service assembly OIC command "Order arms."
 - 9. Assemble pallbearers at the rear of the apparatus, with two in the hose bed, and prepare to remove the casket.
 - 10. Have the Honor Guard OIC command "Present arms."

11. Have the pipe band play as the pallbearers carry the casket to the entrance of the service location. If the chaplain or another cleric performs a blessing at the rear of the apparatus, the pipe band should delay playing until the pallbearers begin to move.
12. Have the pallbearers escort the casket to the front of the service area.
13. Have the assembled department personnel file into the area and take positions in the designated seating areas.

7.4 Following the close of the service, the following ceremonies should take place:

- a. Department personnel file out and assemble in specified areas in the following order:
 1. Visiting service personnel
 2. Department personnel
 3. National, state and local dignitaries
 4. Color Guard
- b. At the funeral director's signal, the pallbearers move to the front of the location of the service and escort the coffin to the rear.
- c. The service assembly OIC commands "Detail, attention."
- d. When the casket arrives at the rear of the area, the OIC commands "Present arms."
- e. If used, the piper/pipe band plays.
- f. The pallbearers move slowly to the rear of the hearse or apparatus to load the casket.
- g. After loading, the pallbearers face each other and the OIC commands "Detail, present arms." The pallbearers give a hand salute.
- h. The OIC commands "Order arms" for all personnel.
- i. The Color Guard officer commands "Color Guard, dismissed."
- j. The OIC commands "Detail, dismissed" to the pallbearers.
- k. The color guard, bugler/piper, and OIC enter the waiting department vehicles for transportation to the place of final committal. The pallbearers will ride on the caisson or other apparatus directly behind the caisson.
- l. Fire and rescue personnel and national, state and local dignitaries prepare to leave for the place of final committal.
- m. The Procession Officer and assistants direct vehicles taking part in the procession to the place of final committal.

7.5 Upon arrival at the place of final committal, the following ceremonies will take place:

- a. The department personnel and Color Guard take up positions in formations as determined by the Final Committal Officer.
- b. If space permits, the Color Guard assembles near the place of final committal.
- c. The bugler is 75 feet away from the grave and will await the command from the OIC.
- d. When the caisson or hearse is in position, the pallbearers take up positions at the rear and remove the casket.
- e. The pallbearers carry the casket and place it on the grave stand. The family and other guests follow.
- f. As the pallbearers begin to move the casket, the OIC commands "Detail, attention" and all department personnel come to attention. When the pallbearers place the casket on the grave stand, the OIC commands "Parade rest."
- g. If the family wants the casket draped, two pallbearers will drape it with an American flag. If the casket is not draped, an already folded flag will be placed on the casket for presentation.

- h. The chaplain and/or cleric will conduct the committal service and lead in the final prayer.
NOTE: If not part of the funeral or religious service, the "Last Alarm" ceremony may occur at this point. The OIC orders "Present arms" prior to the ringing of the bell, the hand salute should occur during the playing of Taps.
- i. The OIC next commands "Detail, attention" and "Present arms." A hand salute follows, the Color Guard presents arms and dips the departmental flag. The hand salute occurs during the playing of Taps.
- j. The bugler plays Taps.
- k. The OIC commands "Order Arms."
- l. At the conclusion of Taps, the Honor Guard removes the American flag from the casket and folds it. The Honor Guard Officer presents the folded flag to the Chief who, in turn, presents it to the family. The Chief can say: "On behalf of a grateful department, we thank you for the service of (the departed member's name) to the Dix Hills Fire Department.
- m. The funeral director gives words of thanks on behalf of the family and indicates the conclusion of the services.
- n. The OIC commands "Detail, dismissed."

Appendix 1

Dix Hills Fire Department Emergency Contact Information

The information that you provide will be used ONLY in the event of your serious injury or death in the line of duty. Please take the time to fill it out fully and accurately because the data will help the department take care of your family and friends.

Personal Information

Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
Home Address		
City	State	Zip
Phone Number: ()		

Contact Information

Family or friends you would like the department to contact. Please list in the order you want them contacted. If needed, provide additional names on the back of this sheet.

NOTE: If the contact is a minor child, please indicate the name of the adult to contact.

Name:
Relationship:
Home Contact Information: Address: Phone:
Work Contact Information: Name of Employer: Address: Phone: Pager/Cell Phone:
Special circumstances – such as health conditions or need for an interpreter

Name:
Relationship:
Home Contact Information: Address: Phone:
Work Contact Information: Name of Employer: Address:

Phone:	
Pager/Cell Phone:	
Special circumstances – such as health conditions or need for an interpreter	
List the names and dates of all of your children:	
Name	DOB:
Name	DOB:
Name	DOB:

List the department member(s) you would like to accompany the Chief to make the notification:
Name
Name

List anyone else you want to help make the notification. (For example, your rabbi or minister)
Name:
Relationship
Home Contact Information:
Address
Phone
Work Contact Information:
Name of Employer:
Address:
Phone:
Pager/Cell Phone:

Optional Information

Please make certain that someone close to you also knows this information

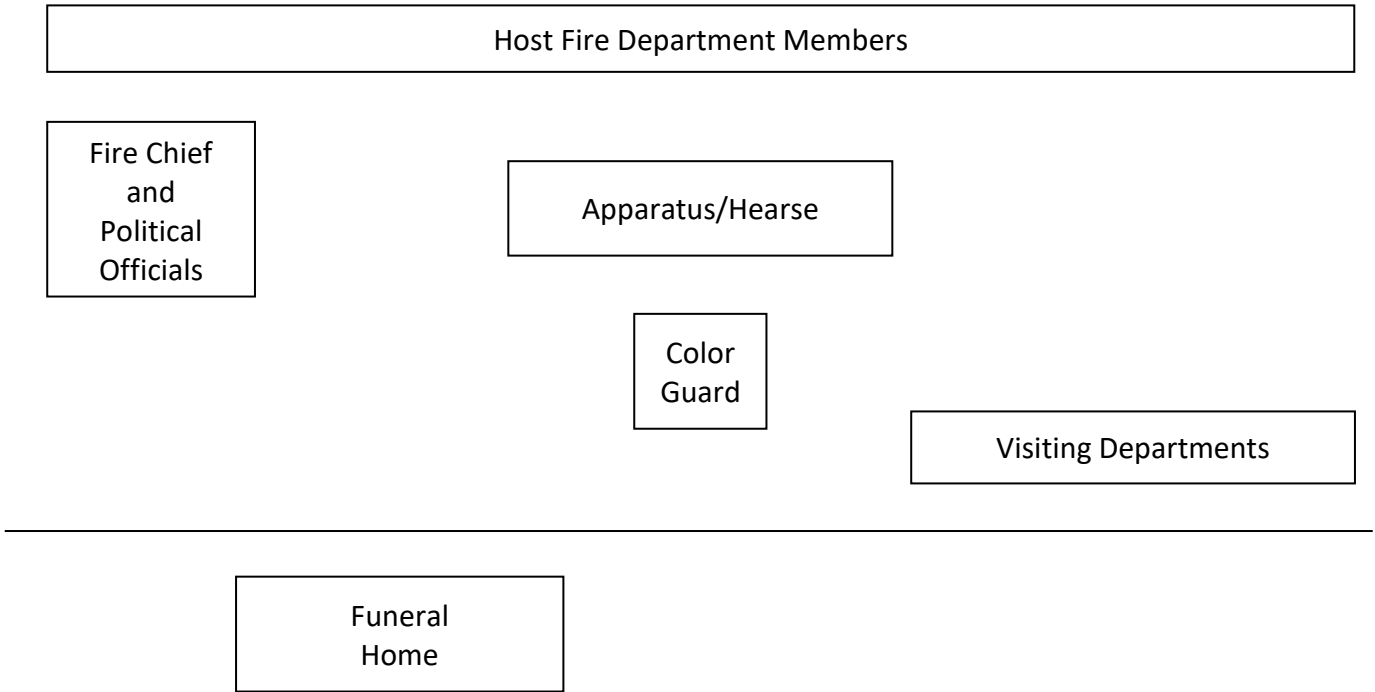
Religious Preferences:		
Religion:		
Place of Worship:		
Address:		
Funeral Preferences:		
Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Services?	Yes	No
If you are entitled to a military funeral, do you wish to have one?	Yes	No
Do you wish to have a fire service funeral	Yes	No
Please list your membership in department service, religious, or community organizations that may provide assistance to your family:		

Do you have a will?	Yes	No
<i>If yes, where is it located or who should be contacted about it?</i> _____		
List all life insurance policies you have:		
Company	Policy Number	Location of Policy
Is all information current? (Beneficiary names, contact info, etc. This information may determine who gets Federal benefits)		
Special Requests		
If you are an organ donor, coordination with the medical officials will be necessary. List any request in this section:		

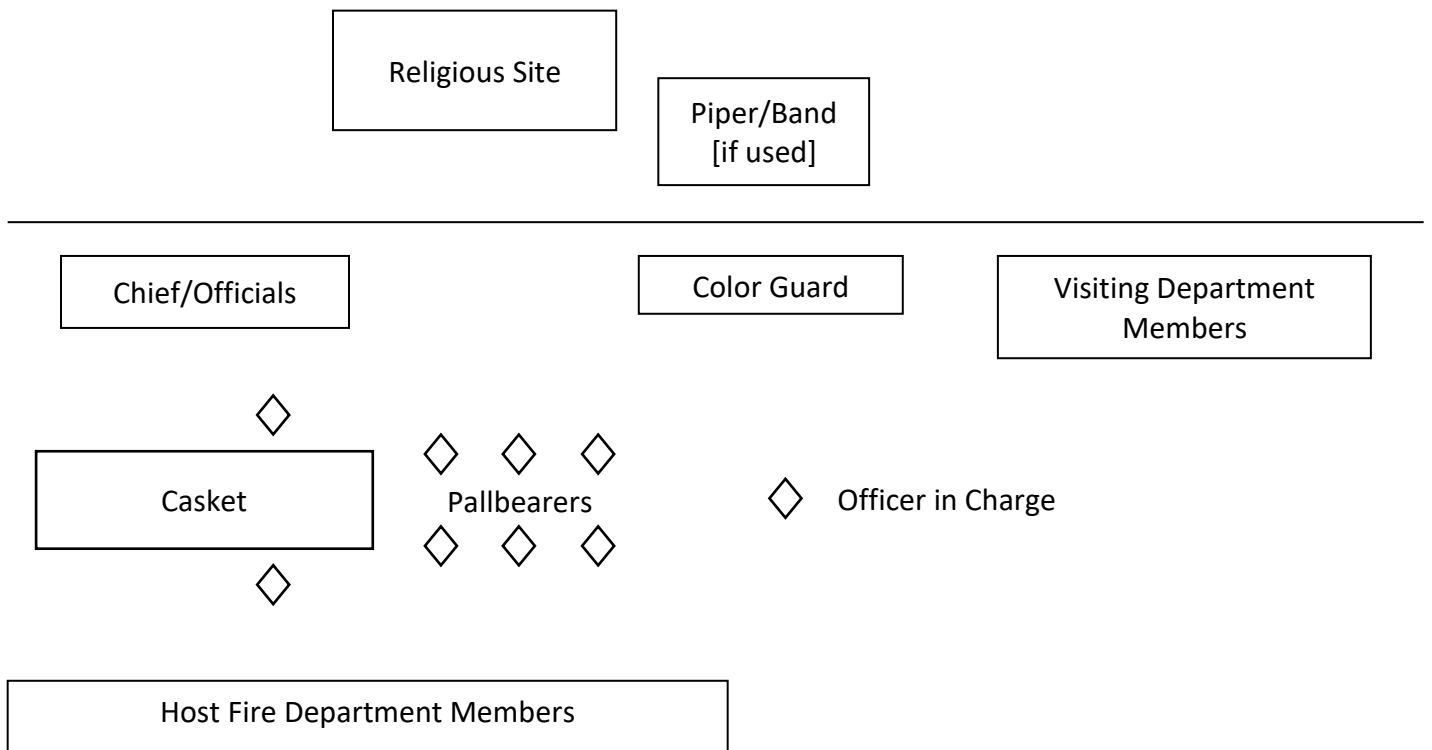
Form last updated on _____

This form was reprinted from the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation's *Taking Care of Our Own* materials.

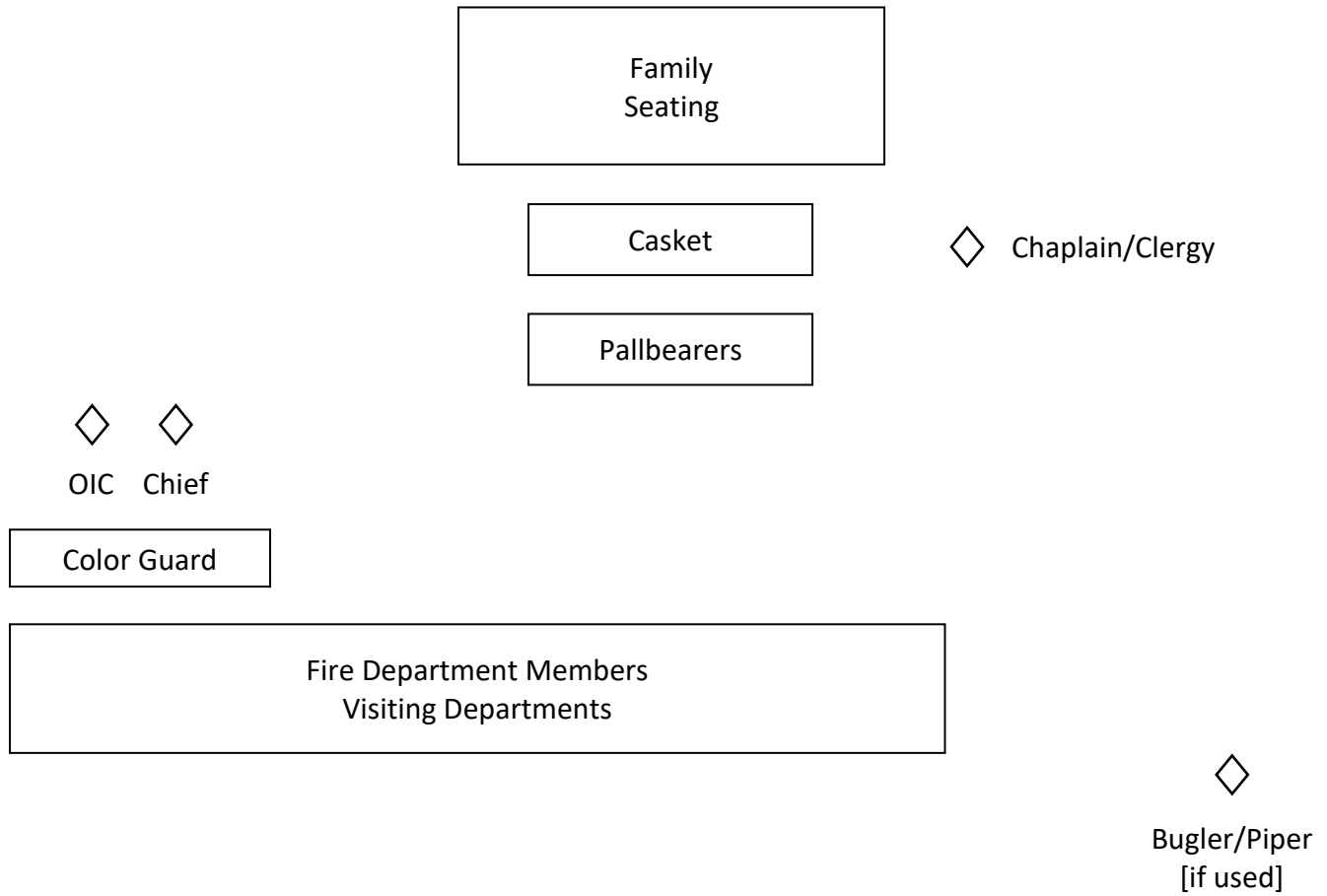
Appendix 2
Suggested Funeral Home Formations



Appendix 3
Suggested Formations at Religious Site

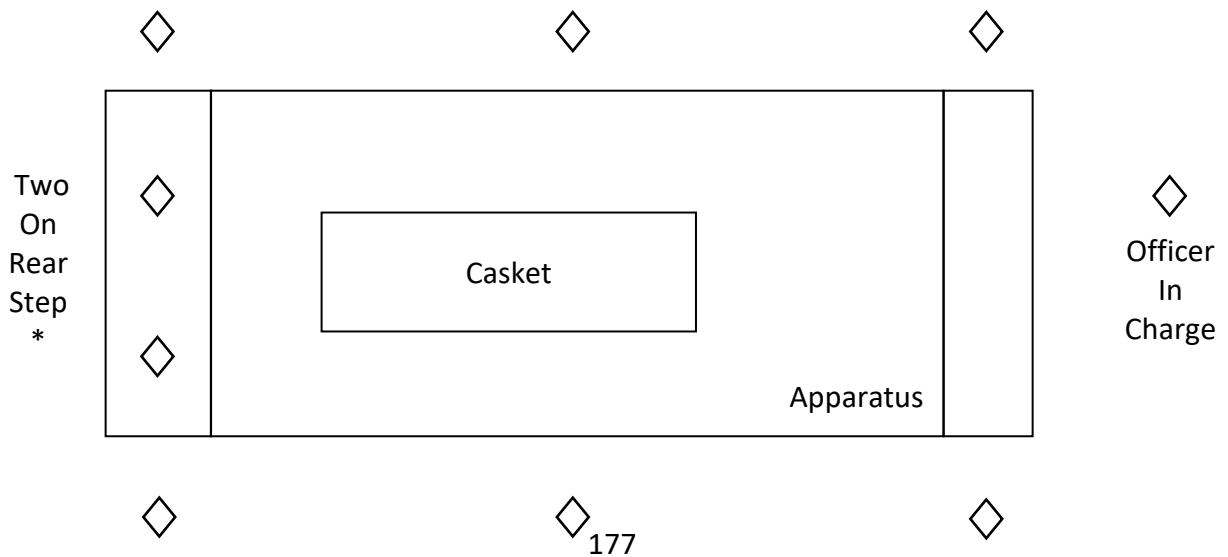


Suggested Final Committal Service Formation



Appendix 5

Pallbearers Location When Marching



*Note: Only if this practice is allowed in jurisdiction.

Appendix 6

Suggested "Last Alarm" Ceremony

The chaplain or a department member reads the following:

Throughout most of history, the lives of firefighters have been closely associated with the ringing of a bell. As they began their hours of duty, it was the bell that started it off. Through the day and night, each alarm was sounded by a bell, that called them to fight fire and to place their lives in jeopardy for the good of their fellow human beings. And when the fire was out, and the alarm had come to an end, the bell rang three times to signal the end.

And now, our Brother (Sister) _____ has completed his (her) task, his (her) duties well done, and the bell rings three times in memory of, and in tribute to his (her) life and service.

The Officer-in-Charge calls everyone to Attention.

The Color Guard is called to Present Arms.

The bell is struck three times.

The Color Guard is called to Order Arms.

The department members are seated (if in a religious site or funeral home)

The chaplain offers a closing prayer.

Appendix 7

Sample Order of Events

Funeral Service for (Rank) John Doe
Dix Hills Fire Department

October 1, 2003

1:00 Arrival of hearse at site of religious service

Honor Guard Posted
Color Guard Posted

1:30-2:00 Arrival of guests, department personnel, and fire apparatus

Fire personnel place in formations
Explanation of commands to be given

Attention
Present Arms
Order Arms

2:00-2:15 Arrival of family and processional

Pallbearers remove the casket
Procession enters the site of religious services
Clergy
Color Guard
Pallbearers and casket
Honorary pallbearers
Family and friends
Department members
Visiting departments

2:15-3:15 Funeral Service (Some Options)

Readings
Eulogy
Sermon (Homily)
Presentation of badge

3:15-3:30 Funeral recession

Clergy
Color Guard
Pallbearers and casket
Honorary pallbearers
Family and friends
Department members
Visiting departments

3:30-4:00 Procession to place of final committal (Order of vehicles

Lead escort
DHFD engine
Hearse (it may be the same if an apparatus serves as caisson)
Family limousines
Pallbearers' vehicle
Honorary pallbearers' vehicle
Honor Guard
DHFD Chief's vehicle
Other department vehicles
Police vehicles
Local officials' vehicles
Visiting department vehicles
Other emergency service departments
Vehicles of friends or other private vehicles

Rear escort

4:00-4:15 Graveside processional
Color Guard
Department members
Visiting departments
Honorary pallbearers
Clergy
Pallbearers and casket
Family
Friends

4:15-4:45 Graveside service options*

Opening prayer
Words to the family
Final prayer
Last Alarm Ceremony
Taps
Presentation of the flag
Benediction
Dismissal

4:45 Graveside recessional

Color Guard
Department members
Visiting departments
Honorary pallbearers
Clergy
Pallbearers
Friends
Family

*The family may choose to have the body or ashes placed in a crypt. In this case, the same protocols apply, but the Final Committal Service Officer should modify them appropriately to fit the specific circumstances.

Appendix 8

Survivor Action Officer's Responsibilities

1. As a directed representative of the Department Chief, the Survivor Action Officer should receive the full cooperation of the entire department. The Survivor Action Officer will appoint assistants and delegate responsibilities as required to successfully complete all assigned duties.
2. The Survivor Action Officer is responsible for the management of several important activities. The principal concern is the ongoing welfare of the next of kin. The officer will render all necessary assistance to help the family through the crisis.

3. The Survivor Action Officer coordinates and supervises the activities of a number of key personnel assigned to handle the specific aspects of the funeral arrangements and to assist the surviving family. These key personnel include:
 - a. Family Liaison Officer – Remains on call to the surviving family 24 hours a day to assist and support as needed. Provides the Survivor Action Officer with regular updates on the family's status and needs. This officer probably needs a backup to provide on-going assistance over a multi-day period.
 - b. Funeral Officer – Provides coordination and interaction with the Funeral Director and other personnel on funeral arrangements.
 - c. Service officer – Provides coordination and interaction with the church/synagogue to arrange the funeral service.
 - d. Final Committal Officer – Provides coordination with others involved in the funeral arrangements in order to arrange all details at the final committal site.
 - e. Procession Officer – Arranges and directs the funeral procession.
4. Additional duties for the Survivor Action Officer include:
 - a. Assuring that next-of-kin notification has been properly accomplished.
 - b. Officially notifying all department members of the death and passing on the order to have flags lowered to half-staff.
 - c. Notifying the following personnel and agencies of the death:
 - d. Officials from other local government offices. Other fire, rescue and police departments
 - e. Making appropriate follow-up contacts when the funeral arrangements and schedules have been determined.
 - f. Working with the Family Liaison Officer to determine the desired method of collecting the deceased member's personal items from the firehouse.
 - g. Conducting a coordination meeting with the key personnel as soon as possible so that everyone understands the family's wishes regarding options chosen for the funeral ceremony. Once the funeral procedures are established, instructing all key personnel to make the appropriate contacts and setting a date and time for a final coordination meeting.
 - h. Conducting a final coordination meeting with key personnel to:
 - i. Establish schedule and timetables.
 - ii. Identify times and places for group gatherings as required by the ceremonies.
 - iii. Contact all appropriate individuals and agencies with the schedule, meeting places, and special instructions.
 - i. Serving as a key contact person for outside agencies, news media, and other departments in relation to the death and subsequent ceremonies.
 - j. After obtaining family approval through the Family Liaison Officer, making appropriate arrangements for a post-funeral reception and a facility to handle a large group of people.
 - k. Arranging for a department member to be on hand at the residence to assist the family and provide for security during the funeral funeral-related activities. Additional meals for immediate family members will be provided as needed.
 - l. Contacting neighboring departments and arranging for mutual aid stand-in departments during the funeral.
 - m. Ensuring accessibility to the family for the duration of the funeral process.
 - n. Coordinating meals for the family and assuring ongoing family contact by the Family Liaison Officer.
 - o. Alluring that all department functions continue as requires.

Family Liaison Officer's Responsibilities

In every incident involving the death of a department member, or when the death of an injured department member appears imminent, the Chief will assign a Family Liaison Officer. This individual will perform the following duties:

1. Be readily available with a department vehicle, pager, and portable radio for the entire funeral process.
2. Immediately report to the deceased's residence or that of the next of kin, or to the medical facility or morgue, and provide reassurance and support to the family. Ensure that the NEEDS OF THE FAMILY come before the wishes of the department or any other officials.
3. Be prepared to discuss all aspects of the funeral process and relay to the Chief the family's wishes on the level of the department's involvement in the funeral process. These considerations include:
 4. What the department can offer in the way of assistance if the family is eligible for and chooses a "line-of-duty" funeral
 5. Churches, synagogues or funeral homes with seating capacity large enough to accommodate attendance at the funeral. First, any alternate churches, synagogues or funeral homes will need to agree that the family minister or department chaplain will officiate or assist at the service.
 6. Department funeral ceremonial options (i.e., gun salute, presenting of the flag, playing of taps, last alarm, the ladder archway, etc.)
 7. Proper recognition for the family and friends during the funeral and funeral procession.
 8. Ask the family to select six or eight primary pallbearers and the optional honorary pallbearers. Make suggestions only if the family asks for some.
9. Assist the family in determining:
 - a. The type of final committal
 - b. The funeral home to use
 - c. The clergy to use
 - d. The place of final committal
 - e. Whether to bury the deceased in a department uniform and, if so, to obtain one.
 - f. Alternate clothes for burial and arranging to deliver them to the funeral director
 - g. A photograph of the deceased and arranging to deliver it to the funeral director
 - h. Length of the wake and a tentative schedule
 - i. The length of the funeral service to include:
 - i. Readings and readers
 - ii. Music and musicians
 - iii. Deliverer of the funeral tribute and/or eulogy
 - iv. Inclusion of a "Last Alarm" bell service
 - j. Ceremonies at the place of final committal:
 - i. Band or Piper
 - ii. Singing
 - iii. Honor Guard/Firing Party
 - iv. Readings
 - v. Last Alarm Service
 - vi. Taps

- vii. Use of an engine or a caisson or a hearse
 - viii. Use of an engine or ladder truck to carry flowers
 - ix. Personnel walking alongside the caisson or riding in the procession
 - k. Any other special considerations
10. Be available to the family on a 24-hour basis to assist in any way necessary.
11. Address the following items with the family:
- a. Autopsy report
 - b. Obtaining birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates (worker's compensation), VA or military records.
 - c. If requested, identify an attorney for the family.
 - d. Determine the benefits for with the survivors may be eligible.
 - i. Department benefits due to surviving beneficiaries
 - ii. VA spouse and children's benefits and burial benefits
 - iii. Social Security survivor benefits
 - iv. State benefits for survivors of fallen firefighters
 - v. Educational assistance and scholarship programs for spouses and children
 - vi. Life insurance payouts.
 - e. Identify accountants or financial advisors to assist with financial planning and taxes.
 - f. Offer to identify professional assistance in doing the following:
 - i. Transfer ownership of property and vehicles to survivors.
 - ii. Review all outstanding bills before payment by survivors for legality and accuracy. This should include last illness, previous debts, and funeral expenses. Some bills may be covered by insurance.
 - iii. Change name on all bank accounts
 - iv. Check on mortgage insurance.
 - v. Consult an attorney on any damages resulting from the circumstances of the death.
12. Be constantly alert for ways to help the family of a fallen department member to cope with the tragedy. Immediately relay any special needs to the Chief to obtain the resources to meet those needs.

Appendix 10

Funeral Officer's Responsibilities

1. Coordinate with the Family Liaison Officer and the funeral director to ensure that the funeral wishes of the deceased member's family are carried out.
2. Attend all meetings called by the Survivor Action Officer to determine the following:
 - a. The schedule of events and the length of the funeral service
 - b. Whether department vehicles will serve as a caisson or flower carrier. If they are not used, make alternate arrangements with the funeral director.
3. If the member's immediate family has not requested limousine service from the funeral home on the day of the funeral, ask the funeral director to provide the service and send an invoice for the service to the department.
4. Coordinate with Honor Guard members to establish an Honor Guard schedule at the funeral home and at the site of the funeral service.
5. Coordinate with the departments involved and with the funeral director a formal walkthrough of uniformed personnel. This includes seating arrangements.

6. Work with the department chaplain or clergy member designated by the family to coordinate any prayer services to be conducted at the funeral home and forward this information to the Survival Action Officer.
7. Develop a schedule for uniformed personnel to follow the day of the funeral at the funeral site. This includes:
 - a. Arrival time for uniformed personnel and specific instructions as to where to gather
 - b. Briefing and practice of formations that will be present when the casket is removed
 - c. Briefing on proper protocols for entering and leaving the funeral site.
8. Coordinate vehicle staging with the Procession Officer, including arrangements for department vehicles. Ensure the availability of sufficient personnel to properly direct and stage incoming apparatus and vehicles.
9. Obtain from the Family Liaison Officer the uniform or other clothing that the deceased will wear during viewing and deliver it to the funeral director.
10. Coordinate with the Family Liaison Officer on special reading or eulogies for the funeral.
11. Obtain white gloves for all department pallbearers.

Appendix 11

Procession Officer's Responsibilities

The Procession Officer is responsible for coordinating the procession from the funeral home to the site of the funeral service or other service area (if necessary) and from there or other funeral site to the place of final committal. Duties include:

1. Attend all coordination meetings to determine the following:
 - a. Name of the funeral home
 - b. Name of the church or other service location
 - c. Name of the place of final committal
 - d. Use of an engine as a caisson or a conventional hearse
 - e. Use of an engine as a flower carrier
 - f. Schedule of events the day of the funeral
 - g. The logistics of the procession:
 - i. Honor Guard
 - ii. Band or Pipers
 - iii. Pallbearers
2. Establish a system for staging and coordinating vehicles at all locations where funeral activities will occur. Coordinate the vehicle staging with appropriate key personnel (service officials, officials at the site of final committal). Ensure that sufficient personnel are available at all staging locations to efficiently direct and stage apparatus and vehicles.
3. Coordinate with the Family Liaison Officer to determine any special circumstances affecting the procession. These may include:
 - a. Passing the department member's, station, or other special location
 - b. Special static displays of equipment and personnel at locations on the procession route
 - c. The use of crossed aerial ladders at the entrance to the site of final committal or other location. If used, contact the Survival Action Officer to obtain the necessary apparatus.
4. Contact the local law enforcement authorities for assistance in working with the funeral director to:
 - a. Establish routes for the procession.

- b. Determine traffic control needs.
 - i. Traffic rerouting and street closings at the funeral home and funeral site. Contact the appropriate government agency or department to obtain barricades if needed.
 - ii. Traffic control at any special assembly point.
 - iii. If necessary, post “No Parking” signs around the funeral home, funeral site and any other assembly points.
 - iv. Directing of staged vehicles as they line up for procession(s).
- c. Arrange for procession escorts.
5. Develop maps showing the procession route and other needed information. Maps will be handed out at the briefing at the funeral site prior to the beginning of the service and sent to attendees from out of town. Post them on the department’s website along with times and required dress.
6. Align vehicles in the procession in coordination with the funeral director:
 - a. Lead Escort
 - b. Fire department vehicle used as flower carrier
 - c. Hearse or engine used as caisson
 - d. Family vehicles
 - e. Pallbearers (if not riding on flower vehicle and caisson)
 - f. Honorary pallbearers
 - g. Honor Guard/Color Guard
 - h. Chief’s vehicle
 - i. Other department vehicles
 - j. Local law enforcement vehicles
 - k. Local officials’ vehicles
 - l. Vehicles from other departments
 - m. Vehicles from other police departments
 - n. Vehicles of family friends and other private vehicles
 - o. Rear Escort
7. If department apparatus serves as a caisson and/or flower vehicle, contact the Survivor Action Officer and determine which apparatus will be used. Ensure the following preparations have been made:
 - a. Apparatus is thoroughly cleaned
 - b. Apparatus operators wear full dress uniforms while driving.
 - c. Deceased member’s bunker gear is place in a riding position on the caisson with the bunker boots turned backwards.
 - d. If used, bunting and/or funeral flags are affixed to the apparatus.

Appendix 12

Funeral Service Officer’s Responsibilities

The Funeral Service Officer has the primary responsibility of coordinating all the activities and ceremonies at the church or funeral site. Duties include:

1. Attend coordination meetings and obtain the following information from the Survivor Action Officer and Family Liaison Officer:

- a. Schedule of events
 - b. Location of the service
 - c. Clergy involved, including the department chaplain
 - d. Readings and readers
 - e. Type and length of service
 - f. Requested ceremonial items:
 - i. Badge presentation
 - ii. Special readings
 - iii. Special eulogies
 - g. Music and musicians
 - h. Information on the deceased member, both departmental and personal. Give this information to the person delivering the tribute or eulogy.
2. Contact the Procession Officer and coordinate vehicle staging at the service location
 3. Make seating arrangements for those attending the service. In addition to family members, provide dedicated seating for:
 - a. Pallbearers
 - b. Honor Guard
 - c. Uniformed personnel
 - d. Dignitaries
 4. Determine the formation s to be used and coordinate them during the arrival and removal of the casket from the location of the service. Review military commands for the formations and issue them when appropriate.
 5. Develop a program for the service and give it to the Family Liaison Officer to discuss with the family. Ask if they want any special prayer cards and, if so, provide a draft to the funeral director.
 6. After approval by the family, provide a draft to the funeral director for reproduction. If a program for the service is needed, coordinate this with the department chaplain and the clergy

Appendix 13

Final Committal Service Officer's Responsibilities

The Final Committal Service Officer is responsible for the preparation and coordination of events at the site of the final committal. This starts from the time procession vehicles arrive and people exit the vehicles. The officer is also responsible for liaison with personnel who manage and operate the final committal site. Duties include:

1. Attending coordination meetings and obtaining the following information from the Survivor Action Officer and Family Liaison Officer:
 - a. Type of final committal:
 - i. Burial
 - ii. Placement in a crypt
 - iii. Cremation
 - b. Family requests:
 - i. Final Alarm Service
 - ii. Taps
 - iii. Firing party

- iv. Reading and readers
 - v. Music and musicians
2. Schedule and coordinate the sequence of events that will take place at the final committal site. This includes coordinating any special requests received from the Survivor Actions Officer or Family Liaison Officer.
 3. Develop the type of formations for uniformed personnel and their locations. Issue appropriate orders consistent with military standards.
 4. Ensure that the officials at the final committal site take care of all necessary items, such as:
 - a. Overhead protection for immediate family
 - b. Seating for the immediate family
 - c. A public address system if needed
 5. Ensure that Honor Guard members are thoroughly familiar with folding and presenting the flag to the next of kin.
 6. Coordinate with the Survivor Action Officer to see if any family members have medical conditions requiring emergency medical personnel and equipment at the site.
 7. Upon dismissal of the formation, announce the location of the post-funeral reception, if any.

Section VI – Sample Funeral Services

The following are complete funeral services written for fire fighters funeral services. They can be used as written or as an outline. The illustrations may also be helpful.

Funeral Service Based the Firemen’s Hymn

In Fond Remembrance

Service by Chaplain Franklin Knower & Chaplain Rev. Jim Van Houten

A Firemen’s Memorial Service which can be used at funeral homes or at the church.

The Service is centered on the words of the Firemen’s Hymn, which is sung to the tune of “Abide with me.”

The verses of the hymn can be Quoted by the reader, sung by a Soloist or Sung by the Company.

If the company sings the verses, a practice will be necessary, but it will allow every member to share in the Service, it’s very moving.

The company files in led by the Chaplain, everyone remains covered, and the company takes their position near the casket and the order is given to uncover.

Opening Prayer by the Chaplain:

Eternal Father in the heavens, we thank you for your Mercies and your Help and Strength, both in times past as well as today (this evening) as we are gathered on this solemn occasion. We ask that your blessing of perfect peace would fill the hearts and lives of the family and friends of our brother/sister_____. Hold us all in the Hollow of your precious hands, Amen.

(First Verse of the Firemen’s Hymn is Sung or Quoted)

In Fond Remembrance gathered here today
Tribute to pay to Brothers(Sisters) passed away
Garlands of flowers placed upon the dead
Spring's brightest blossoms deck their quiet bed.

Chaplain: Brother Secretary, has the roll of the _____ Company been called?

Secretary: "The roll has been called and all have answered, except our Brother/Sister _____."

Chaplain offers a Prayer after Roll Call: _____ has answered the summons of his(her) creator, and it is with solemn thoughts that we assemble here to pay our tribute of honor and affection to his memory. _____ was a loyal and faithful member of the _____ company, dedicated to the protection and service of our community in any time of need.

We rejoice in his (her) voluntary service, his (her) unselfish spirit, and his (her) devotion to the welfare of his (her) family and all mankind. _____ stood forth as a real man (women) a beloved firefighter who had the high regards of all of his (her) company members. No expression of ours can fill the vacant place in both his (her) home and community.

We do, however, commend his (her) family and friends to the loving care of the creator who, "doeth all things well." We can no longer be of service to him (her), He (she) who served others so well. But in living memory, let us here resolve to render a better service to all in his (her) name. Amen

(Second Verse of the Firemen's Hymn is sung or quoted)

When duty called our brothers (Sisters) they would go.
Ever undaunted, met the fiery foe.
May guardian angels o'er them vigil keep,
While they lie resting in Eternal sleep.

Ringin Of the Bell

At this time the Bell is rung in memory of the deceased Firefighter.
The Bell is Rung Three (3) times, however, if this is a Line of Duty Death the Bell is rung Five (5) times.
Five bells are the signal for a Firemen down.

Prayer by the Chaplain:

Almighty God, Father of all mankind, whose Love and Mercy is limitless, we commend unto You the soul of our brother (Sister) _____ here departed. We thank You for the example He (She) gave of that true spirit of greatness which realizes that the cause he (she) served so well may ever inspire us. And when it comes our turn to answer Your summon, may we hear from You, as we hope and pray that our Brother (Sister) _____ has heard, the gracious words, "Well done My good and faithful servant, enter now into the Joy of the Lord." Into Your Loving care and gracious provision, we commend all of his (her) loved ones. Lord, support us all until the shadows of life lengthen and

evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and our work is done. Then in Your infinite goodness, grant us a safe lodging, a Holy rest and Your Peace throughout all Eternity. Amen.

(The Third verse of the Firemen’s Hymn is Sung or quoted)

Father in Heaven, guide us on our way,
Through storm and sunshine to Eternal Day.
And when our duty here on earth is O’er
Vouchsafe our journey to the gladdened shore.

Closing Prayer

Loving Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your guidance through this service today. May Your loving spirit guide and keep us in all our ways. And so direct our paths that like the Master, we may serve our fellowman with all our talents and abilities. Bless and keep Our Company and the friends and family of our Brother (Sister) _____ in Your loving arms. Amen.

Eternal Father in the heavens, we thank you for your Mercies and your Help and Strength, both in times past as well as today (this evening) as we are gathered on this solemn occasion. We ask that your blessing of perfect peace would fill the hearts and lives of the family and friends of our Brother/Sister _____
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Spring’s brightest blossoms deck their quiet bed.

Chaplain: Brother Secretary, as the roll of the _____ Company been called?

Secretary: “The roll has been called and all have answered, except our Brother/Sister _____.”

Chaplain offers a Prayer after Roll Call:

_____ has answered the summons of his(her) creator, and it is with solemn thoughts that we assemble here to pay our tribute of honor and affection to his memory. _____ was a loyal and faithful member of the _____ company, dedicated to the protection and service of our community in any time of need.

We rejoice in his (her) voluntary service, his (her) unselfish spirit, and his (her) devotion to the welfare of his (her) family and all mankind. _____ stood forth as a real man (women) a beloved firefighter who had the high regards of all of his (her) company members. No expression of ours can fill the vacant place in both his (her) home and community. We do, however, commend his (her) family and friends to the loving care of the creator who, “doeth all things well.” We can no longer be of service to him (her), He (she) who served others so well. But in living memory, let us here resolve to render a better service to all in his (her) name. Amen

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Prayer by the Chaplain:

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(The Third verse of the Firemen's Hymn is Sung or quoted)

Father in Heaven, guide us on our way,
Through storm and sunshine to Eternal Day.
And when our duty here on earth is O'er
Vouchsafe our journey to the gladdened shore.

Closing Prayer

Loving Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your guidance through this service today. May Your loving spirit guide and keep us in all our ways. And so direct our paths that like the Master, we may serve our fellowman with all our talents and abilities. Bless and keep Our Company and the friends and family of our Brother/Sister _____ in Your loving arms. Amen.

The Wreath of Remembrance Service

The following is a graveside service which can be performed following the graveside services for a Line of Duty Death, for a life member or for any of the membership.

At The Graveside

President: Brother/Sister Secretary, whose grave is this we are gathered around?

Secretary: This is the final resting place of the earthly remains of _____ of the _____ Fire Company.

President: Brother and Sister Firefighters, uncover and give attention to our Chaplain.

Chaplain: Brother and Sister Firefighters, we are gathered together to pay our final respects to _____.

As we gather by this graveside, we are reminded that the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, in rising from the dead, teaches us that the grave is a symbol of hope for those who believe in Him, remembering always that life is eternal, love is immortal, and death is nothing which limits our earthly sight.

President: Sgt-at Arms, place the memorial wreath upon this grave.

Sgt.-at Arms: This wreath of remembrance signifies our sorrow at the loss of our brother/sister and is symbolic of the sure and certain hope that we shall meet once again in the eternal land of blessedness to which he/she is gone.

President: Brother/Sister _____ will never again respond to our roll call. He/she has answered the final summons and it is with solemn thoughts that we are assembled here to pay his/her memory a public tribute of honor and affection. He/she was a loyal member of the _____ Fire Company, whose outstanding and vital purpose is to protect this community in time of need. He/she stood forth a beloved firefighter, who held our regard and friendship. We can be of no further service to him/her, except to remember him/her in our prayers, that in God's mercy he/she may have peace and everlasting joy, and that he/she may go from strength to strength in God's Holy Kingdom.

Chaplain: Let us join together in reciting the Lord's Prayer. (Recite the prayer)

Chaplain: Almighty God, we remember this day before You Thy faithful servant _____, and we pray that having opened to him/her the gates of larger life, thou wilt receive him/her more and more into Thy joyful service; that she/he may win with Thee and Thy servants everywhere, the eternal victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

President: Company Attention, Present Arms.

Bugler: Play Taps

* (Option) You Can Place the White Gloves at this time

President: Company Order Arms, this concludes the Memorial Service, Company Dismissed.

The Measure of a Man

By Chaplain Franklin Knower and Chaplain Jim Van Houten

“This outline can be used to structure a Eulogy or the Sermon for a Fireman, the theme being “The Measure of a Man.”

1. Every year we celebrate Memorial Day.

We pause for a moment during our worship services, and silently reflect on the lives that have been lost during the wars of this century.

In our own minds, we think of those we knew who had died.

We bring them back to life again, if only for an instant, and we give them a value, a place of worth in our hearts.

We have to do that with those who die, don't we?

We need to measure their worth to us. And we do that by remembering them.

2. It's so important for each of us to have a measure of worth here.

On earth that's why we celebrate births, and birthdays, and special events in our lives, we were born to mean something Every life has significance.

Even when we die, we need to have an obituary in the newspaper. It has to matter to somebody that we were here and now we're gone.

The most tragic thing that could happen to us is that we would die alone, friendless with no family, and no one to care that we are gone.

That is why those of us in the fire service have united together today to let the family of our brother _____ know that he will never be gone from our memories, and that he will always live on in our hearts.

That's why nations erect monuments to the “Unknown Soldier.”

There are people in every war who die without a chance of being surrounded by family, and friends.

And our hearts say: But somebody has to remember them!

And so, we put up monuments to recall their secret lives.

3. Today is a kind of Memorial Day for us again.

Our Brother Fireman _____

A husband,

A father,

A grandfather,

our friend, is with us no longer.

We knew that he could say with the Apostle Paul:

I am already being poured out like a drink offering,
and the time has come for my departure.

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race,

I have kept the faith. (II Timothy 4:6-7)

And now he is at home with the Lord.

4. But how do we, the living, measure his worth?
How do we mark his passing, and assess what it was that made him someone special?
5. We could do it in a variety of ways:
A chemist once analyzed the composition of an average human body. He said that an average person:
 - Has enough fat to make seven bars of soap.
 - Enough iron to make a medium-sized nail.
 - Enough lime to whitewash a small building.
 - Enough phosphorus to make twenty-two hundred match tips.
 - Enough magnesium for a single dose of "Milk of Magnesia."
 - Enough potassium to explode a toy cannon.
 - And there's a little sulfur thrown into boot.

That's the measure of each of us, from a chemical standpoint.

From Prime Ministers to schoolteachers to bus drivers to nurses, to chaplains to firemen, our chemical measure is a little pile of goods worth less than \$3.00.

But we know that's not the real worth or the measure of our brother_____.

6. So how do we measure the worth of a man?
There are other ways we do it, aren't there?

Sometimes we look at the accomplishments he achieved.

And sometimes we think of the wealth he gained.

And sometimes we remember the firematic courses he acquired, as well as the training he received.

But even when we talk about it, we know these couldn't begin to describe the measure of the man called _____.

There's got to be more. There's got to be something far more significant than all of that.

7. And we find it in these verses from Scripture, these verses together take the measure of a man.
And they do it in three ways.

- The Measure of a Man Is His Relationship with His Family and Friends!

The first of those ways is seen in III John 4: I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

The measure of the man we remember today is found in the lives of his children and his grandchildren and his friends.

And so, this is one of the ways we measure the worth of this life as well.

The measure of life we knew as _____ is the way in which his character influenced us.

- The Measure of a Man Is His Relationship with God
But that's only part of the story, isn't it? There's more to this remembrance than just thinking of what our friend meant to us.
The words from the Psalms remind us of the second measure by which we assess the worth of a life.
The measure of a man is his relationship with God.
David shouts:
*The Lord is my light and my salvation--
Who shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life--
of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1)*

And he sings to others:

*I will extol the Lord at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.
My soul will boast in the Lord;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
Glory in the Lord with me;
let us exalt his name together! (Psalm 34:1-3)*

One of the ways that people measured the life of David was by his relationship with God. He was a man after God's own heart, He trusted in the Lord. And it was worth a whole lot more than \$3.00.

Our Friend _____ life could be measured by the prayers he spoke for his family.

- Some lives are measured by the final words that are spoken.
Horatio Nelson, the famous British admiral, was wounded in battle, and said this to his crew: Thank God, I have done my duty! And then he died. In all the preparations for his death, that could have been the testimony of _____ as well. Nothing was left undone that he had been made responsible for.

I have done my duty! He could say it without shame.

Such was the measure of the man.

But there are other dying words that may be more fitting.

The last words recorded in Scripture from the lips of Simeon in the Temple, were these:

Now Lord, let your servant die in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation.

And that too, was the measure of _____.

The songs that we sing today are his songs. They speak of the testimony he spoke. They are the measure of his life.

Conclusion

1. What's the measure of a man?

\$3.00 worth of chemicals? The amount of money he's made in a lifetime.
The education he's acquired, or the accomplishments he's mounted up. No.

The measure of a man, the measure of the one we knew as _____, is in these three things:

- The way in which he influenced our lives: Do we walk in the truth of God because of him?
- The way in which he loved God: Was he a man after God's own heart?
- and most of all, the way in which God loved him.

He will keep me safe in his dwelling! (Ps. 27:5) 2) Says the poet:

*Our God is far greater than words can make known.
Exalted and holy, he reigns on his throne.
In infinite splendor he rules overall,
Yet he feeds the poor sparrows, and he knows when they fall.
The earth and the heavens are the work of his hands,
And millions of angels obey his commands.
He guides the great galaxies spinning through space,
Yet he gave us his son as the gift of his grace!
He rides the wild heavens, he strides through the sea,
The high mountains tremble to hear his decrees!*

*His voice with great thundering sounds from above,
But to his own children, he whispers his love!
His power is great and will ever endure.
His wisdom is peaceable, gentle, and pure.
But greater than all these glories I see
Is the glorious promise that he cares for me!*

2. Such is the true measure of a man.

When Death Is Gain

(Fireman who loved music)

Scripture: Philippians 1:21

Franklin Knower & Rev. Jim Van Houten

“For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

The Apostle Paul declared, “For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Paul loved life and loved his friends, but he knew it was better to die and be with the Lord. Our Brother _____ too felt it was time to lay aside the burden of illness and disease and to find that sorely needed rest and refreshment that only Heaven can give. While his death brings sorrow to us, it has brought victory to him. To live in and for Jesus Christ is to conquer death and to experience all that Heaven affords.

_____ gave his life in service to Christ through his dedication and service to the _____ Fire Department for the past _____ years. He was a constant source of

encouragement through his words and deeds, his character was outstanding. So, death for him is gain indeed.

Death is always gain for a Christian. Let me list two out of many reasons why this is so.

DEATH ENDS THE LIMITATIONS OF THIS LIFE.

It sets us free to serve God in a perfect body and mind unhindered for Eternity. Charles Kingsley suggests that death is gain “when it means the end of sorrow; terminates all the diseases of our body; the errors of our minds; the imperfections of the present...unites us with the society of the ‘just made perfect’ and gives us the honor of serving God without weariness or end.”

Christians come to look forward to the resurrection of the body which God gives. Paul strains at the limits of language in I Corinthians 15 to describe the perfection of that body. In the end we who trust in Christ look to the resurrected body of Christ as an example of the body we'll have, and so we accept his gracious promise as our hope: “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die.” That is why a Christian and only a Christian can say, “For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.”

Bruce Dunn, a well-known pastor and speaker to a vast radio audience, says in one of his writings that he believes God wants us to be a little homesick for Heaven, that He doesn't want us to sit too tight in this world. He says that death, sorrow, and the pains of body and heart while we are on earth can all be contributing factors in making Heaven more wonderful for us. Naturally, young people are going to want to experience some more of life here on earth, and even older people will want to stay on if everything is going great, with all the family healthy, the bills paid, the kids behaving themselves and nobody breaking your heart. But the tears and hurts of life are earthly reminders that Heaven is our real home. Dr. Dunn concludes that it is the tears that keep our hearts and minds Heaven-bound. Death ends the limitations of this life.

DEATH ALSO IS GAIN, BECAUSE IT MAKES US PART OF THE HEAVENLY CHOIR WHERE WE ENJOY GOD AND SING HIS PRAISES FOREVERMORE.

Firemen love to sing, and it's really heart stirring to hear several hundred firemen sing the “Firemen's Hymn or the words of “Eternal Father Strong to Save” The Book of Revelation speaks of the new song and the worship and praise that we Firemen will render for eternity. The voices will cry out, John the writer says, “Praise our God and all you, his servants.” The great multitude of believers will sing, “Hallelujah, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

A Roman governor of an Asian province wrote the emperor to describe the group of Christians he had found. The most striking thing he could say of them was of their life of joy and praise. “They meet at dawn,” he says, “to sing a hymn of praise unto Christ as unto God.” When the noted atheist, Robert Ingersoll, was buried, this notice was posted for his funeral: “There will be no singing.” That's appropriate, for apart from faith in Christ, what is there to sing about? There is no reason to sing when we die.

But if we are Christians, we can sing in life and in death. Jesus, the Bible says, brought life and immortality to light when he came into our world. He gave believers a song of joy and victory to sing forever.

The poet tells the story this way:

Before the song started, the world, broken-hearted,
Was dreamlessly passing the long, empty days.
Then a dark, lonely hillside was spangled with light,
And a song burst into the night!

A new Word was spoken, and chords that were broken
Wove gently together to make a new song.
It was more than a carol to greet the new morn--
For the source of all music was born.

He started the whole world singing a song.
The words and the music were there all along!
What the song had to say was that love found a way
To start the world singing a song.

That love is God's love for you and me in Christ. Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life." Through his life and death and resurrection, he makes this life available to us, but it is ours only if we turn from self and sin, believe in him and accept his rule over us, and then live for him. He said, "He who has the Son has life, but he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

There is something worse than dying physically. It is to die spiritually. It is to die in our sin without hope or a song. For as Paul tells us, "We know that God who raised the Lord Jesus to life will also raise us up with Jesus and take us together with you into his presence." _____ knows the full truth of that now.

So, we let Christ comfort us and we comfort one another. We sing the songs of the redeemed and we gladly exult, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain."

As the missionary, Richard Knill, lay dying he would sing hymns, for he found in them the comfort and assurance that he would need to cross the Jordan. Toward the end, he called to his daughter and said, "I cannot sing. Sing for me my favorite hymn." Thus, it was that she sang to him on his deathbed these words:

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside;
Death of death, and hell's destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side;
Songs of praises, songs of praises,
I will ever sing to thee...

_____ is now forever singing His praises in The Firemen's section of God's heavenly choir.

Joy In the Midst Of Sorrow

(A Death during the Christmas Season)

Scriptures: John 14:1-3, 18-19, 27; 15:11

By Chaplain Jim Van Houten

The word Gospel means "Good News." Christian faith is good news. The theme of Christmas is joy; the theme of the resurrection is also joy. Had there been no Christmas, no birth of Christ, there would have been no resurrection, and with no resurrection there would be little joy in life and certainly none in death. But Jesus changed all that. We have suffered a great loss at the death of our friend and brother Fireman, _____, but for Christians there is joy even in the midst of sorrow.

Just before his cross, Jesus said, "And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." It happened just that way for those early disciples. Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to the believers. Fear was cast out, faith filled their hearts with joy, and they lived in the joy of the assurance of the resurrection from then on.

People and circumstances change. Christ never changes. Death can physically separate us from the people we love. It can never separate us from Christ and from those who love Him. The Bible promises, "For neither death...nor anything else in all creation will separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans chapter 8

THE CHRISTIAN HAS A JOY THAT DOES NOT DEPEND ON THE EXTERNAL CONDITIONS OF LIFE, WHETHER SICKNESS OR HEALTH, POVERTY OR WEALTH, SUCCESS OR FAILURE.

At age ninety-three, Rose Kennedy was being interviewed by a magazine reporter. By this time, four of her nine children had died violently. Another daughter, Rosemary, was severely retarded all her life and would soon be gone.

Mrs. Kennedy had outlived her husband long enough to have seen his rather profligate and unscrupulous life told and retold in the press. She is an old lady, hit by tragedies again and again. The reporter asked about all this, and Rose Kennedy answered, slowly: "I have always believed that God never gives a cross to bear larger than we can carry. And I have always believed that no matter what, God wants us to be happy. He doesn't want us to be sad.

"Birds sing after a storm," she said, "Why shouldn't we?"

In the presence of death, it is not easy to express joy--at least not for the world to see. But those in Christ have an inward joy just the same.

After speaking of the resurrection of believers and the Heavenly home, Jesus says in John 15, "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you and your joy may be full." He speaks of "my joy."

His joy was a joy which poverty, suffering, disappointment, earthly failure and even death could not take away. And that's the joy he will give to all who trust him.

PART OF THAT JOY COMES FROM VICTORY OVER SIN. Jesus says a believer's joy will be full. Those who do not have their hope and trust in him can never have fullness of joy.

The Bible does not deny that there is something approaching happiness or joy, at least for a time, in a sinful life, a life lived apart from Christ. But a Christian can have a joy that never fails because it comes from One who never fails us. He promises that His joy will be full and complete. No wonder the Apostle James can say then, "Count it all joy when you suffer various trials." We know, humanly speaking,

that's unrealistic and foolish, but when Christ is our joy human wisdom is transcendent. Even in the face of illness, pain and death we can rejoice.

PART OF THAT JOY ALSO COMES FROM THE KNOWLEDGE THAT IMMANUEL HAS COME.

Immanuel, "God with us." We rejoice, knowing that sorrow is temporary. We rejoice in the strength He gives us to bear it.

The late pastor Martin Niemoller, a Jewish Christian, was one of few who survived Hitler's Dachau Prison in World War II. To his last day he was tormented by the sights he had seen of men and women trudging to their death and the smell of burning flesh. Years after his ordeal, he was interviewed by a Chicago radio station announcer who asked him how he kept his sanity during that time. "You can stand far more than you think," said Niemoller. "You are much stronger than you think you are if God is dwelling in your life."

That is a lesson that many Christians learn in the valley of the shadow of death. We can stand far more than we think we can when God is with us. We can rejoice from the knowledge that Christ is with us.

WE REJOICE, TOO, BECAUSE OF TOMORROW.

Jesus promised, "Your sorrow will be turned into joy." And he also said, "I am the resurrection and the light. He who believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

The death of our loved one in this Christmas season may seem to be an occasion to drain all joy from life, but not so if we believe in Immanuel and hear him as he says once again, "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy may be full."

The great 18th century Bible commentator Matthew Henry, anticipating that some would unduly mourn his passing, wrote these words of comfort and assurance: "Would you like to know where I am?"

I am at home in my Father's house, in the mansions prepared for me here. I am where I want to be--no longer on the stormy sea, but in God's safe, quiet harbor. My sowing time is done, and I am reaping; my joy is as the joy of harvest. Would you like to know how it is with me? I am made perfect in holiness.

Grace is swallowed up in glory. Would you like to know what I am doing? I see God, not as through a glass darkly, but face to face. I am engaged in the sweet enjoyment of my precious Redeemer. I am singing hallelujahs to Him who sits upon the throne, and I am constantly praising Him. Would you know what blessed company I keep? It is better than the best on earth. Here are the holy angels and the spirits of just men made perfect...I am with many of my old acquaintances with whom I worked and prayed, and who have come here before me. Lastly, would you know how long this will continue? It is a dawn that never fades! After millions and millions of ages, it will be as fresh as it is now. Therefore, weep not for me!"

Those are _____'s words to us. "God's victory over sin and the grave is won. Immanuel has come. God is with us. I am alive forever in God's new tomorrow. Therefore, weep not, but rejoice!"

Life Goes On

Ephesians 3: 14-21

(For a member who has suffered for years)

Chaplain Franklin Kowner and Chaplain Jim Van Houten

1. What do we say to each other on a day like today?

It's hard to know, isn't it?

We want to say the right things, the kind of things that'll help, the kind of words that'll show how much we care.

But most of us aren't very good at it, are we? At least, we don't feel like we are. Our tongues get tied up so easily. Sometimes we blurt out the wrong things, and we feel embarrassed. And sometimes the words just don't come at all. We stand there in silence.

Or we sit next to each other and maybe we cry a little bit or laugh about old times. But we feel uneasy. But that's okay, isn't it? In fact, sometimes the best things we can say at a time like this, are the things we say without words.

Illustration:

I remember the way it was for one little girl. Her friend Cindy was killed in a car accident. They used to play together every afternoon, she and Cindy. But now she didn't know what to do with herself. She felt so awful.

On the day after Cindy's funeral, the little girl was out in her back yard. She didn't really feel like playing though. It just wasn't the same, all by herself. She went over to Cindy's place and helped her mom for a while. Neither of them really felt like doing much so she just climbed up into her lap and helped her cry.

2. Maybe that's the best thing we can say today, too.

The language of tears.

Remember how it was for Jesus?

Remember when his friend Lazarus died, and Jesus came to the funeral, and we read what happened:

Jesus wept, it says. Jesus wept.

And with all of you today, that's one of the things we want to do. Because death hurts.

3. But still there are other things we'd like to say today, too.

We'd like to tell you how much we care. We'd like to talk together about how much _____ meant to us.

We'd like to open the old photo albums in our minds and tell the stories of the past of times at the fire house or at conventions, and the things we remember, and the little incidents that keep him alive in our hearts.

Those are the words we want to speak.

Those are the things we hope we'll be able to say.

And there's something more as well. We'd like to mention the promises of Scripture, we'd like to reaffirm the confidence we have in our God and Father.

And we'd like to talk about the hope we share in the resurrection of the dead. Somehow, we want those words to come out today too. And we hope you'll hear that from us, now, or perhaps later on at the fire house.

4. But maybe the very best thing we can say to you today is this:

Life goes on!

At first, that may not seem like much of anything to say:

Life goes on! After all, we've heard people say that in so many ways.

Sometimes they're so uncaring when they say it:

Ah! Well, life goes on.

Don't sit around crying over spilled milk!

Life goes on!

And we want to say to them:

No, it doesn't! Not for us, it doesn't!

Don't you see? Don't you know? Can't you feel it?

Life had stopped for us!

5. But there is hope found in the scriptures, these words of assurance tell us in a beautiful and tender way that, Life Goes On! Ephesians 3: 14 to 21 St Paul tells us that we are members of a special family. The family of God!

We are members of Gods family.

_____ is a member of that family too!

Not was but is right now! This moment!

This very instant! He's/she's a living member of that family!

He's/she's changed his/her address. He's/she's moved on to a new home,

He's/she's found his name on the door of that mansion that Jesus said he was preparing for each of us.

And life goes on!

That's the promise of God!

That's the meaning of his love!

That's the whole reason why Jesus came to this earth!

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life! (John 3:16)

We know what Jesus said when he stood at Lazarus' tomb:

I am the Resurrection and the Life!

Whoever believes in me, even though he dies, yet he shall live!

Life goes on!

This is a moment when you experience more deeply than ever the love of Jesus Christ.

And for our brother/sister _____ it goes on!

For our God has already begun in him, the work of resurrection life which is immeasurably more than we can imagine!

Listen to the words of an old Hymn:

A pilgrim was I and a-wanderin'

In the cold night of sin, I did roam

When Jesus the kind Shepherd found me,

And now I am on my way.

He restoreth my soul when I'm weary,
He giveth me strength day by day
He leads me beside the still waters,
He guards me each step of the way.

When I walk through that dark lonesome valley
My Savior will walk with me there,
And safely His great hand will lead me.
To the mansions He's gone to prepare.
May you know the truth of that today.
And may you hear the voice of Jesus saying: *Life goes on.*

Unfinished Business

Scriptures: Deuteronomy 34:1-8; Psalm 89:45a:

“You have cut short the days of his youth...”

By Chaplain Franklin Knower and Chaplain Jim Van Houten

1. “Unfinished Business.”

That is always one point on the agenda at our Fire Company meetings. Unfinished Business.”
Things we hadn't gotten around to doing yet. Things that took too long to finish in a week or a month.

Things that were more complex than we had hoped.
“Unfinished Business.”

2. And ever since our fire pagers brought us the news at our Friend _____ had died, we've all been thinking about the same thing: “Unfinished Business.”

He was too young to die! There were things that he left unresolved! I didn't get a chance to tell him.

And here we are today: all sitting around with troubled minds, and hearts full of unfinished business.

3. We all know that most things in life take a long time.

Rome wasn't built in a day! we say.

We admire the beauty of great cathedrals that generations of stone masons worked on. And we're fascinated by those tiny Japanese Bonsai trees, the ones that are pruned and shaped by fathers and sons and grandsons, till they're hundreds of years old, and they sit in stately maturity on a corner coffee table.

4. But still, in our personal lives, we don't like Unfinished Business.”

We're a little uncomfortable when we drop a project without completing it.

Finish what you start! We're told as children. At mealtime it's: Take all you want but eat all you take!

In school we hear: We're not going to buy you a trumpet, if don't learn to play it!

The coach says: I don't want quitters on my team!

If you're not planning to finish the season with me, then get out now! And we still believe that marriage is for life.

5. So here we are today.

We know that our brother/sister _____ was ready to meet his/her Maker.

We know that he/she worked hard and provided well for his/her family.

We know that he/she helped a lot of people, probably more than any one of us will ever realize.

But _____ is too young to die. And there were some things that he/she didn't finish.

We say today that we wish that _____ had another year! But _____ didn't have that year.

He/she didn't have _____ months of illness.

He/she didn't have _____ weeks in the hospital.

He/she didn't even have five last minutes for his/her family.

6. "Unfinished Business."

How do we finish it today?

How do we close this chapter in our lives in a way that will give us peace?

There are three things, I think, that we can do.

7. The first is this:

WE HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT EVERY LIFE IS UNFINISHED AT DEATH.

That's the tragedy of death. When God makes us, He makes us to live, to breathe, to experience the world around us.

Death is an enemy that cuts us off short, whether it be at 9 or 90.

Death always comes too soon.

If we just had another year of life, we could pay off the mortgage.

If we just had another month to live, we could finish that project we've been working on.

If we just had one more day, we could resolve that conflict in our lives!

If we just had a single hour, we could make one last phone call.

But Death comes too soon.

8. Think of Moses at the top of Mount Nebo. A hundred and twenty years old!

A long and full life:

- Trained in the royal courts of Egypt.
- Forty years of maturing in the quiet wilderness of Sinai.
- Supervising one of the grandest social and political experiments in all of history

But here he is on the mountaintop. Everything he's done for the past four decades, has been geared toward entering Palestine, the Promised Land" of God and His people.

He can see it all, right from here. He can almost throw a stone across the Jordan River; onto the soil he's loved in anticipation.

But here he dies. And here he's buried. And even if he had a full life, there's still something very incomplete about it.

“Unfinished Business.”

9. When we read that verse from Psalm 89, the same thing strikes us. The Kingdom of Israel was going strong!

The Ruler in Jerusalem was a fine young man, full of energy and enthusiasm! The future looked bright: Just think of where we'll be next year at this time!

And then the King died. And at his funeral, the people chanted this song: You have put an end to his splendor and cast his throne to the ground! You have cut short the days of his youth; you have covered him with a mantle of shame! (44-45)

“Unfinished Business.”

Death is always an intruder. There's always one more thing we could have said.

There's always one more thing we could have done.

We say today that our brother/sister _____ died too soon.

He/she left too much unfinished business behind him/her.

But we will too, even if we live to be a hundred and forty-five.

Any life that ends in death, is incomplete. And the obituary column of every newspaper could carry the heading:

“Unfinished Business.”

That's the first thing we have to remember today.

10. And the second thing is this:

GOD FORGIVES UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

Did you hear the words of Jesus that I read a little while ago:

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:28-29)

Why did Jesus come into this world? Why was he ever born?

He came to finish our unfinished business with God.

He came to forgive what we had left undone in our relationships with God and with each other.

Remember when Jesus quoted that proverb:

Greater love has no one than this: that a man lay down his life for his friends!

He lived those words. He died those words.

Even on the Cross, struggling with the pain, torn by the nails, he saw the soldiers below, gambling for his clothes, and he prayed:

Father, forgive them; they don't know what they're doing!

God forgives our unfinished business.

He's already done that for our brother/sister _____ in glory.

He's already doing that for us right now.

The file is marked "Unfinished Business," but God is stamping across it, in large letters of Jesus' blood, it is finished!"

And so, we can close the chapter, and rest in peace of our Savior.

Burial of Ashes

Part of a collection which may be downloaded from [here](#) from the [Agnus Dei](#) website

Preparation

The minister greets the people in these or other suitable words grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

Though we are dust and ashes, God has prepared for those who love him a heavenly dwelling place.

At his/her funeral we commended N into the hands of almighty God.

As we prepare to commit the remains of N to the earth, we entrust ourselves and all who love God to his loving care.

Reading

A reading from the first letter of Paul to the Corinthians

Someone will ask, 'How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?' No! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body.

So, it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in sorrow; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body; it is raised a spiritual body.

1 Corinthians 15.35-38, 42-44a

The Committal

As we committed the body of N to be cremated, with the same words we commit their ashes. Heavenly Father. We have entrusted our brother/sister N to God's mercy, and we now commit his/her mortal remains to the ground: earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust: in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our frail bodies that they may be conformed to his glorious body, who died, was buried, and rose again for us. To him be glory forever.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Savior taught us, so we pray

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen
Heavenly Father,
we thank you for all those whom we love but see no longer.
As we remember N in this place,
hold before us our beginning and our ending,
the dust from which we come
and the death to which we move,
with a firm hope in your eternal love and purposes for us,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Dismissal

May the infinite and glorious Trinity,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
direct our life in good works,
and after our journey through this world
grant us eternal rest with all the saints.
Amen.

May the love of God and the peace of Christ bless and console you
and gently wipe away every tear from your eye,
and May the Blessing of God Almighty
+Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Be upon you and remain with you this day and always.
Amen
Funeral as ended go in Peace.

Wake for Ex-Chief Charles “Chubby” Faillace Sr.

Rev. Robert H. Ruston, Chaplain, Ord., Somers VFD, WCVFA, and Bob Morrison, Chaplain WCVFA
New York State association of fire Chaplains

Family, friends, members of the fire services, friends of the Faillace family, Officers & members of the Somers Volunteer Fire Department, members of the Westchester County. Vol. Firemens’ Association, the Hudson Valley VFA and Royal Order of the Blue Vests, Westchester County Chief’s Association, Westchester County Parade Judge’s Association, the Putnam/No. Westchester Fire Police Association,

and many members of other departments, are gathered here this evening to offer our deepest condolences to Chubby's daughters and son, and, to say "goodbye" to Ex-Chief Charles "Chubby" Faillace.

Ex-Chief Faillace has answered the summons of Our Creator while a resident of The Firemen's Home at Hudson, NY, and it is with solemn thoughts that we assemble here to pay tribute and affection to a special friend and his memory.

We've gathered this evening to honor Chubby, an individual dedicated to his community and the Somers Fire Department, an individual who shared his love with his son and daughters, as well as the fire and emergency services throughout Westchester. Therefore, while we express our sorrow for Chubby's loss, we also offer our thanks for his untarnished life. The potential for living that Chubby expressed while among us, will be maintained in the presence of God. Therefore, we wish him Godspeed on his journey into the new life in His heavenly kingdom and God's Immortal Firehouse.

Chubby followed in his father's footsteps who was a volunteer firefighter. Chubby was a deeply loyal and faithful charter member of the Somers Vol. Fire Department, as is known by today, having served for more than 62 years. Plus, he was active in the department's ambulance service, and a scuba diver in the rescue team. In regard to the latter, one day he responded to an accident involving a car in the water. He dove in and unexpectedly rescued none other than his daughter, Kimme. He was dedicated to serving his organizations and his community in any time of need, and in every manner possible. In doing so, Charlie "Chubby" Faillace was a member of the Westchester County Volunteer Firemen's Association, serving as a director and then became its President. He was active in the Parade Judges Association, charter member of the Putnam/Northern Westchester Fire Police, and the Royal Order of the Blue Vests in the Hudson Valley VFA where he was a Life Member. Too, Chubb was a Life Member of FASNY. Chubby played an instrumental role in the Westchester Department of Emergency Services and the County's 911 system. He has always been there whenever someone in the community needed help, whether it was as a firefighter or just to help someone out building walls or drilling their wells.

His loyal membership, passion and commitment was well-known. Possibly this is a good reason he was an Honorary Member of the Putnam Valley and Mahopac fire departments, and always, with his characteristic bright smile, welcomed at Putnam Valley VFW meetings.

We rejoice in Chubby's unselfish spirit, his generosity, and devotion to all people. He stood forth a person of character, a beloved firefighter, a man held in high regard by all. No expression of ours can fill this vacant place held our hearts. We do, however, commend Chubby to the loving care of Our Creator, who "Doeth All Things Well."

We can no longer be of service to Chubby, who served the fire department and organizations he belonged to, but in living memory, let us resolve to render better service in His name.

One of the most difficult times in each of our lives is when we lose someone close to us. Too often, it is only then that we realize how much that individual meant to us. Our loss brings sadness into our lives. It is then that we must turn to our faith. We believe that life doesn't end at death. We believe that "life is merely changed, not taken away." Now, Ex-Chief Chubby is in a new world we do not know, enjoying being with one of his boys, Wayne.

Fellow firefighters, family, and friends...it was our Lord Jesus Christ himself who said, "Come to me, all who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest."

Let us pray then to the Lord that Chubby may rest in peaceful sleep from his labors, pain, and enter into the light of God's eternal rest:

*Receive, O Lord, your servant Charles Faillace Sr. who we return to You.
Wash him in the font of everlasting life and clothe him in his heavenly garment.
May he hear your words of invitation, "Come you blessed of my Father."
May he gaze upon you, Lord, face to face, and taste the blessedness of perfect rest.
May angels surround him, and saints welcome him in peace. Amen.*

Firefighters 23rd Psalm

The Lord is my chief he has chosen me to serve.
He leads me to still the fires raging around me.
He restores my soul to fight even when all seems lost.
He has prepared for me a place in life dedicated to service, honor, joy and fellowship.
He anoints my soul with courage in the presence of my enemy fire!
Yes, even though I walk through life.
In the shadow of death, I will fear no fire for he is with me.
His strength will comfort me and when life's final alarm sounds,
I will dwell in the station house of the Lord forever.
Amen!

A reading from the book of John 14:1-3:

Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.

Sleep oh dear Chubb and take your restful peace. We all loved you, but God loved you best and needs you now in his Immortal Firehouse. Watch over your family and keep your watchful eye on your friends in and throughout the fire and emergency services.

Please all join together to recite the words that Jesus, our Lord and Savior gave to us:

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.*

Lord, we implore You to grant mercy on your devoted servant, Charles Faillace Sr. Open the gates into Your heavenly home and firehouse in the sky. We ask the comfort of Your blessings upon Chubby's devoted family, particularly on his favorite dance partner, his daughter Kimmie, his daughter Barbara, his son Charlie, and his wife Tanya. May they be sustained by pleasant and loving memories, a living hope, and compassionate friends. Amen.

Eternal rest grant unto him O' Lord and let the perpetual light shine upon Charles "Chubby" Faillace Sr. May the souls of the faithfully departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. (Holy water may be sprinkled on body at this time).

At this time Resolutions will be presented. > > > [Somers, WCVFA, others]

Anyone wishing to share a memory or speak, please come forward. [Charlie]

We thank those who came out here tonight to honor Chubb, and to offer condolences to his family. The family and the Somers Volunteer Fire Department wish to invite you to his Funeral Service to be held tomorrow, here at the Joseph J. Smith Funeral Home commencing at 10:00 AM. It will be followed by a motorcade to the Ivandell Cemetery in Somers where Chubby will be laid to rest beside his dear friend, Ex-Chief John Bernal Sr.

This, ladies and gentlemen, ends our service. Kindly come forward, uniformed personnel first, to pay your last respects and then proceed to your cars.

Introduction at Wake

Chaplain Rev. Robert Ruston

Leader: We have gathered here to remember and honor one of our own, August J. Cardinale who has answered the summons of the Creator. He was a loyal and faithful member of the Somers Volunteer Fire Department, past Officer, and eventually became an Associate Member. It has been our privilege to know and work with __Augie__ in a manner unique to our society...the volunteer fire service. We have shared good times and difficult experiences in the service of protecting and preserving the lives and property of our neighbors.

August, or Augie as we fondly remember him, gave willingly of his time and talent for the safety and well-being our neighbors and community, which was not only in the best tradition of the fire service, but clearly a way in which he, at least in part, could work out the Lord's command to love one another and serve the public good. It is in this light that we offer our own "farewell" to our friend and past member Augie, firefighter, friend, public servant, and dearly beloved brother of Pamela, with whom we are proud to have served, and for whom we give thanks for the privilege of having his life touch many of ours. We can no longer be of service to Augie who served others so well, but in living memory let us here resolve to render better service and to build stronger camaraderie in Augie's name.

Ceremony:

Pamela, thank you for allowing your brother to share his leadership, time, and life with us in the Somers Volunteer Fire Department.

In addition to the volunteer fire service, he provided talent, friendship, and a quality of health care to the Town and its residents as a co-owner and Pharmacist of the Somers Pharmacy which he opened. His welcome to customers was always a cheerful one, and he was supportive of the local Chamber of Commerce activity as well. His favorite jeep always let us know when he was there. Augie's life encompassed generosity, tolerance, love, communication, observation and reflection.

We are gathered here tonight to celebrate his life...

[anyone wishing to share the life of August?]

Prayer:

Comfort us in our sorrows at the death of our brother Augie. Let our faith be our consolation, and eternal life our hope. We pray for his peace and comfort, and his reunion with his wife Mary. Now, let us now join together in prayer together as our Lord has taught us....

Lord's Prayer

Reading from Matthew 6: 30-34:

God gives such beauty to everything that grows in the fields, even though it is here today and thrown into a fire tomorrow. He will surely do even more for you! Don't worry and ask ourselves, "Will we have any clothes to wear?" Only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all of these. But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what God wants. Then the other things will be yours as well. Don't worry about tomorrow. It will take care of itself.

Firefighter's 23rd Psalm

The Lord is my chief, he has chosen me to serve.
He leads me to still the fires raging around me.
He restores my soul to fight even when all seems lost.
He has prepared for me a place in life dedicated to service, honor, joy and fellowship.
He anoints my soul with courage in the presence of my enemy fire!
Yes, even though I walk through life.
In the shadow of death, I will fear no fire for he is with me.
His strength will comfort me and when life's final alarm sounds,
I will dwell in the station house of the Lord forever.
Amen!

Benediction:

May the grace of God surround you; may the strength of God fill you, and may the love of God sustain you, this day and every day. Let us depart in peace with one another, and ever respectful of our brother Augie, and the memories of all departed Department members who have gone before us to be in Heaven. (Amen)

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let the perpetual light shine upon him. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Amen.

**Firematic Funeral Service for Ray Putten Vink - My
Closest Friend**

By Rev. Jim Van Houten

Introduction: Story about Dr. Charles Reilly, a country Doctor who helped everyone, had his office upstairs above the local feed store. One cold winter night the good Doctor was called out to help a lady in childbirth. The Child was delivered, and the mother was fine, but the Doctor was socked to the bone in the cold rain as he returned to his office.

There was no other Doctor's for miles and the cold he developed turned to pneumonia, the towns folk tried to help him, but their efforts were in vain. Doctor Reilly died, and the town was heartbroken, he needed to be honored!

A tomb stone was purchased, but what should they inscribe upon it? A Town meeting was held, and many ideas were proposed, at last a young man came in carrying the Doctor's sign, here are the perfect words, they read, Doctor Charles Reilly, "OFFICE UPSTAIRS"

This morning as we are gathered together to celebrate Ray's life, I'd like you all to remember that my friend Ray is not lying here this morning, for Ray's Soul, that God given part of him which will live forever, is with the Lord Jesus Christ, He is receiving his eternal reward... And the day will come when I see him, and be with him once again, in the courts of heaven.

There are Four thoughts which I'd like to share with you this morning as we remember the Special Person that Ray was to us all!

I. Rest

I first meant Ray on our first day of high school; we sat next to each other, Two Dutchman Van PuttenVink and Van Houten. Our national heritage was the same and we both played the trumpet, but those were not the things which led to our friendship.

Ray would leave at lunchtime every day; he would go home to care for his mother who had M/S. He would lift Ruth out of her wheelchair, care for her needs and then make her comfortable for the afternoon... after which he returned to school.

I realized that moment that Ray was different, in a good sense, He had real Character! A real work ethic.

Those were the days when we were never tired, we could be up all night, and go to work or school, and never miss a beat.

Ray was always figuring out ways that we could do more things and go more places. Time is short he'd say, let's not waste it.

Illustration:

Printed cards with my mother's name on them, From the desk of Mrs. Katherine Van Houten, Now each time she writes you a note rip it up and rewrite it on these cards, and then you sign it, they go into the file and if they check the signature, they will all match, We were on the go all the time.

After we graduated, I went to college and later on the seminary, Ray would pick me up every Friday night at King's College and bring me back on Sunday Night. We would work together all weekend, no time for rest!

As the years pasted Ray became active in the Totowa Boro Fire Department, in fact it was Ray who got me to join our department.

He joined the Masons and helped in all of their benevolent activities.

He joined the American Legion and enjoyed helping out a dinner and functions.

He was married, raising a family, working full time and still caring for his mom.
There wasn't much time for rest... as the years past!

When this illness came upon him, after the surgery, a great battle was being fought to recover....

Early Sunday morning the Lord said, Ray, come home to be with me, In my perfect place of REST...
A Place CALLED HEAVEN

We have the beautiful Words of Psalm 23 to give us the description of the place of Rest.

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD, I SHALL NOT WANT

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP IS DISCRIBED HERE

Illustration:

After high school I had an unplanned change in my life, I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior, It changed me completely from the inside out.

I shared this with Ray, and he also accepted Jesus as his savior, once we are HIS we are His forever.
No man can ever pluck them out of my hand.

READ THE REST VERSE 4 Valley of the Shadow of Death

Illustration:

World Trade Center South tower I was working with a search and rescue team. Each time the alarm sounded, we ran for cover, the remaining steel of the tower stood above us. Someone began quoting Psalm 23, as we came to verse 4, I thought, DEATH IS ONLY A SHADOW and shadows can't hurt you. We stopped running from then on, if the alarm sounded, we said, "It's only a shadow." Death is nothing to fear since the Lord is with us!

II. Reward

Lots of Rewards in this life:

- a. Rewards of a successful FISHING TRIP How Ray loved Fishing.
- b. Rewards of FRIENDSHIP Ray was my best friend for 44 years we tried to talk to each other every week or so.
- c. Rewards of being in the Fire Company Ray loved the Fire Service helping in the community. Loved serving his Country & loved our Flag! He loved his friends at the Legion.
- d. Reward of the Masons helping others
- e. GREATEST REWARD OUR FAMILY MARISSA you were very special to your dad. The day you were born he called me five times to tell me details about your birth. Since I have two daughters Ray would say, "Anyone can have boys, but to have daughters that's the best!!"

f. Reward of Heaven

John 14 In my father's house I remember coming to my Dads house at 2:00 A.M. in snowstorm. My friend and I were welcomed because it was My Father's house. So it is in heaven, we are all welcome into our Heavenly Fathers house whatever the hour might be.

Many mansions Ray always wanted to build a Windmill to live in. Last month we talked about life changes that he intended to make. Ray said will you help me build that Windmill; I told him you bet I still have the plans.

When I get to heaven, I expect to see Rays place, you can see a Windmill a long way away.

JOHN Chapter 14: Jesus said, I'm going to prepare a place for you, and if I go, then I will come again and receive you onto myself. That where I am, there you may be also.

III. Reunion

The Martin's always had a reunion, big family everyone gets together, Today Ray is with Dutch and Ruth

Ray and I would attend the annual dinner for our friend Louie Coppa, all old friends together, today Ray is with him.

Our Fishing Trips were Reunions loved to spend the time together.

We are gathered together, it's a Reunion a sad one but a reunion.

But when we get to heaven that reunion will be in better

In the book of I Thess. Chapter 4 we read, the day will come when the trumpet of the Lord will sound, and there will be the voice of the shouting of the Arch Angels. Then the dead will rise first, we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and, SO SHALL WE EVER BE WITH THE LORD

IV. Remembrances

- a. I remember traveling with Ray, trunk full of tools, stopping to help people along the way. He would never accept a dime, just loved helping others.
- b. I remember Ray as a friend who was at my side at a moment's notice, for 44 years of my life.
- c. I remember when Ray first met Marilyn. She came at the right time for he was suffering from the deepest hurt in his life. She lifted him from that depression and gave him a reason to go on.
- d. I remember Ray calling me when Marissa was born, when she was in pictures, when she graduated from High School, when she started college, and then graduated. When she started with court TV. And most recently he called to tell me about Brooke "I have two new Fishing and hunting partners he told me, Marissa and Brooke. He was so very proud!

- e. I remember years of encouragement from my friend, he would always be there especially in my darkest hours. And his words were always positive. They made a difference.

Let's all share our memories with each other today, and in so doing Ray will live on in our lives and in our Hearts until we are together once again.

While conducting Ray's committal service I wrote the words to The Placing of the Glove

Firematic Graveside Service for Past Chief Rick Penney

Rev. Jim Van Houten Chaplain Walden Fire Department

I said, I always like to begin a service sharing a story several years ago, I was in NYC waiting for a friend to pick me up, I was waiting in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral. There was a man standing on the sidewalk with a piece of stone in his hands as well as a hammer. He was chiseling away at the stone; he'd stop and look up into the sky for several minutes and then go back to work. My friend was late, so I watched this fellow for about 45 minutes. At last, I had to ask him what he was doing.

He laughed and told me he was a stone cutter and mason. He said, "you see, I'll shaping this piece of stone so that it will fit in up there" and he pointed to the top of the Cathedral.

I began thinking, "That's what God is doing in all of our lives." He's shaping us all down here, so that when He calls us home, we will fit in up there.

So, this morning I'd like to share some of the ways the Lord shaped Rick's life and made him a blessing to the Lord and to us all.

Now it's impossible for me to talk only about Rick, because he and Kathey were a partnership. Whatever Rick was doing, Kathy was at his side supporting him 100%. I believe the reason so very successful in all of Firematic endeavors and all that he did in his life, was because of her strength and support.

1. A Major Part of Rick's Life Was the Fire Department

Rick started coming to the fire house when he was 14 years old. I'm not sure if we called Rick and Chris Ryan explores or junior firemen, but they were there together every free moment they had. This was a wonderful time to join the fire department, the older guys welcomed the young people interested in learning the trade and taught them something new every week. I figured that because Rick's uncle Dennis was so involved that he just naturally developed leadership skills, which could be seen even at his young age.

Time seems to pass by so quickly, Rick went from being a junior fireman to a very able young firefighter. He joined the Fearless Hook & Ladder Company. I remember him training on our old Maxam, he could operate that ladder in his sleep. Very shortly after joining the Hooks, Rick became a second Lieutenant and then first lieutenant and later captain of his company. Rick loved taking courses and learning more skills in firefighting, I remember him telling me he had set his sights on becoming Chief, and a few years later he achieved that goal, being Chief of the Walden Fire Department is not easy, there were four separate companies, and all had their own ways of doing things.

But Rick's personality and the fact that he treated everyone with respect made him a natural at getting everyone to cooperate. We fought some heavy fire here in Walden while Rick was in command, whatever the circumstances Rick always remained calm.

Illustration:

I remember at Rick's parade the guys from Wallington came to join us, but after marching, well they really loved to party. While playing around with our old Maxim a pipe pole left on the ladder slid down when they raised the ladder and stuck in the one fellows' foot. Rick said, "Jim, take their chiefs car, do not let them drive no matter what, and bring them to Horton hospital to bandage his foot. For two hours they held wheelchair races in the hallways. They took all four of my company badges off my coat, put them on, and began chasing the nurses telling them they were chaplains of the Walden Fire Department. I called Rick with an SOS for help.

Rick arrived and in about fifteen minutes with his calm and low-key approach, we were all on our way home to Walden.

2. Now we had started Operation Dalmatian a few years before and the program began to grow, the problem was we as firefighters had no organizational skills. Rick called a planning meeting; he opened the meeting and turned it over to Kathey. In two years, we doubled the number of children on our list. The program became a great success and Rick remained a major supporter year after year.
3. After 9/11 I told Rick that a team from the Walden Fire Department was invited to help at ground zero, he said, "Jim I'm going with you," We were working on the pile of the south tower, but one of our main goals was to find Chris Ryan, Rick had promised Elaine that we would. It was at night, thousands of rescue workers on both piles, it was like finding a needle in a haystack, so I asked Father Joe Bayne for a prayer requesting Gods help. As we started past the pile of the north tower, we saw a firefighter crawling out of the rubble. Rick went over and reached down to give him a hand getting to his feet, it was Chris. We had a bit of a reunion right there.
That experience changed our lives forever!
4. Rick asked me if I'd be his Chaplain in a new endeavor which Kathey was helping him with. Rich wanted to become the President of the Orange County Volunteer Firemen Association. I said, "great, let's do it" That year we visited members in the hospital, shared in several funeral services as well as one wedding. He was preparing for the Memorial Service in September, and he wanted it to be perfect. Kathey took over and both planned the program and designed the bulletins. When the program was over Senator Bill Larkin came to the podium and said, "Rick, that was an amazing program." I heard Rick whispered to him, "Bill, Kathey did it all."
5. Rick's uncle Dennis Penney was one of our Fire Commissioners, and he had done an excellent job. So, Rick decided that would be his next challenge, he would follow in his uncle's footsteps. Once again, he was successful, doing a great job as commissioner and still remaining friends with all the firefighters.
6. Rick had been a member of the Hudson Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association for many years. We all loved going up to Lake George with our companies and our families and just enjoying the area. Before long Rick started moving up in the ranks until he became President of the Association and the 16 counties they represented, and once again he asked me to be his

Chaplain. We traveled to meetings, funerals, hospital visits and visits to the Fire Home in Hudson. Every time we were there, he told everyone that he brought me to the Home to pick out a room for me. Walden had just gotten their newest Ladder Truck, and it was there in Lake George for the parade, what an incredible weekend it was!

There are two benevolent Associations within the HVVFA, they are the blue vests and the red vests, both work on fund raisers for the Firemen's Home. Now Rick was President of the Royal Order of the Red Vests and within the red vests is an elite group called "The Royal Order of the Riff-Raff." Rick and I were inducted into this elite group by Jimmy Ryan, and I am their Chaplain as well. Rick arranged an amazing steak Bar-B-Que dinner for everyone, it was a great time together.

Of course, as fate would have it, we had a major structure fire here in Walden on Sunday night, while our new ladder truck was returning from the north country. Once again, our friends at the Coddendam Fire Department came to our rescue with their ladder truck.

7. Rick always loved Motorcycles, Harley Davidson Motorcycles to be exact, so he began a new adventure in the fire service, he started chapter #46 of The Red Steel M/C. Because Rick was Rick it wasn't long before he began riding with the Nam Knights and the Blue Knights M/C clubs. He found himself surrounded by friends and doing what he loved.
8. Rick loved helping people and so he approached Kathey with a new idea, "Let's start a Charity". With Kathey's support they began a food pantry in Bullville called, "Firefighters helping Friends." They worked together to provide food, clothing, sometimes funds. and always a hand of friendship to hundreds of folks living in our area. At Christmas time lots of gifts were given out as well. They made it a family affair with Ricky and Becca working right alongside them.
9. Rick worked for the Orange County Sheriff's Office where he held the rank of Lieutenant. Rick was in charge of the "gang unit" at the Orange County jail. The guys in his unit were some of the toughest people on the face of this earth. Most of the guards stayed away from them, but not Rick. He would visit with them, listen to their problems, help their families on the outside and helped get them jobs once they were released. There were many times that I went with Rick to drop off food, clothes and birthday gifts to the families of the guys in his unit. I am also a Chaplain with the Orange County Sheriff's Office and once a year they hold an awards ceremony honoring those who excelled in their work. Year after Year I was on the platform saluting and shaking Rick hand as he was honored with a certificate of Merit. always well deserved.

Illustration:

In Matthews gospel chapter 25 and verse 35 Jesus was talking to his disciples and he made an amazing statement, He said, When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat, and when I was thirsty, you gave me water, I was naked and you clothed Me, I was sick and you looked after Me, I was in prison, and you visited me. The disciples asked the Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, thirsty and we gave you drink, naked and we clothed you, sick and we looked after you, in prison and we visited you? And Jesus replied, for as much as you have done these things to the least of my people, you did them also to me.

Rick Penney covered all of these areas. I'm sure that the lord welcomed him home with the words well done my good and faithful servant, enter now into the joy of my rest.

Illustration:

Of all of Rick's accomplishments he was most proud of being a father to Ricky and Robert and to Becca and being Opa to his Grandchildren Veda, Richard III "Trace" and Rosalie. Rick told me that the best part of being a dad was that your family grows. When Ricky married Lillie, he gained another daughter and when Becca married Ryan, he gained another son. We shared some great weddings in this family, those were days of joy, laughter, and love. Those memories will be with you all for the rest of your lives. And in these sad times you have amazing pictures to lift your spirits.

I know that Rick is enjoying Special Rewards in Heaven
Here he had the reward of a special life's partner, Kathey
The Reward of having both his Dad and Mom with him
Reward of two sons and a son-in-law and a daughter and a daughter-in-law.
Three wonderful grandchildren
And a terrific Black Lab.
Now he has the reward of heaven, which is forever.

John 14

Let not your hearts be troubled, if you believe in God, then believe also in me. For in my Fathers house are many mansions, if it were not so I would have told you. I'm going to prepare a place you and if I go, I will come again and receive you onto myself. So that where I am you can be also.

We will all be together again in Heaven in the future, it will be a very special reunion. We will never again have to say good-bye. Rick has left us all with an amazing gift of memories. We will be telling stories about Rick for years and years to come.

One of the favorite passages of scripture for firefighters is found in the words of King David written in the Twenty Third. A few years ago, I wrote a new version of this Psalm just for the men and women in the fire service. I'd like to share it with you at this time.

New Psalm 23 For Firefighters

The Lord is my Fire Chief. He gives me everything I need. He makes me to be still and know his peace. As he leads me through dangerous conditions, He restores my passion to rescue and save. He gives me escapes from death for his name's sake.

Even though I crawl through the valley of smoke and heat, I will not fear collapses or flashovers, for you are with me.

Your wisdom and your steadfastness, they both comfort me. You have prepared miraculous protection for me in the presence of life-threatening circumstances.

You have anointed my hand lines, my efforts overflow with your blessings.

Surely your goodness and unfailing love are with me on all the calls of my days.

And I, having been tried through the fires, will one day live in the presence of my Lord, forever.

Amen

At this time, we will request the county to sound the last call for our brother Rick Penney

[Paggers sounded the last call]

The Walden Fire Horn sounded in honor of Ricks service the community.

In 1958 firefighter wrote a poem. Children were trapped in a structure fire. Alvin. W. "Smokey" Linn wrote "A Fireman's Prayer" after the call was over.

The firefighters could see the children in the windows but could not rescue them due to the iron bars that the apartment owner had installed. All they could do was try to contain the fire.

About one in the morning, Smokey found himself, after being treated at the hospital for smoke inhalation, sitting at the station's kitchen table putting into words the emotions inside of himself from that evening.

The words to The Fireman's Prayer are one man's prayer to his Lord and Savior. Smokey was a husband, father, grandfather, and a son who knew how precious and short life can be.

The "Fireman's Prayer" was originally published in a book called, "A Celebration of Poets" in 1958. The last copyright of the book was 1998. It is the family's desire that the credit for the Firemen's Prayer go to the author, A.W. Smokey Linn

The Firefighter's Prayer

By Alvin Linn

When I am called to duty, God
Wherever flames my 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 to save an older person from
The horror of that fate.

Enable me to be alert,
To hear the weakest shout,
And Quickly and efficiently,
Put the fire out.

I want to fill my calling
To give the best in me,
To guard my every neighbor and
Protect his property

And if, according to God's will,
I must answer deaths call,
Bless with your protecting hand
My family and my wife.

The Committal Service

Placing Of the Glove Service History

This was an old Navy tradition which began during World War I. All sailors were trained as firefighters, for a fire onboard ship placed everyone's life in danger. In the event that a sailor lost his life battling

the flames, he was honored before his burial at sea first by a salute and then by the placing of the gloves from the right hands of his honor guard upon his body. Their gloves went with him. It was a silent service for years but in 2005 I wrote words to complete this service of Honor.

[The Placing of The Glove Service]

Rick is honored for a life well lived.
Rick is honored for a race well run.
Rick is honored with a crown well deserved.

[Chaplain Closes in Prayer]

Prayer of St. Francis

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;*

*Where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master,
Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console.
To be understood, as to understand,
To be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal Life.*

Combined Memorial Service for A Fire Fighter and Police Officer

Robert June - Member of the Col. Bradley Hose Company #2
The Walden Fire Department
Rev. Jim Van Houten Chaplain

Department President: Brother Secretary, has the roll of the COL BRADLEY HOSE COMPANY #2 been called?

Department Secretary: The Roll has been called and all have answered except Brother Bob June

Sargent: Has the roll of the MONTGOMERY POLICE DEPARTMENT been called?

Sargent Answers: The roll has been called and all have answered except Police Officer Bob June

Chaplain: Bob has answered the summons of The Creator, and it is with solemn thoughts that we assemble here to pay tribute and affection to his memory. Bob was a loyal and faithful member of the Col. Bradley Hose COMPANY #2 as well as a Police Officer with the Town of Montgomery Police Department. He was dedicated to the protection and service of the Fire District of Walden and the Town of Montgomery in any time of need.

We rejoice in Bob's unselfish spirit and devotion to the welfare of all people. Bob stood forth a person of character, a beloved firefighter and Police Officer, a man held in high regard by all. No expression of ours can fill this vacant place held in the home and both the fire department and Police Department. We do, however, commend his wife Debbie, his children, grandchildren friends and loved ones to the loving care of our creator, who "Doeth All Things Well"

We can no longer be of service to Bob who served the fire district and Town of Montgomery so well. but in living memory, let us here resolve to render a better service in his name.

Chaplain: Almighty God, Father of all whose love and Mercy is limitless; we commend unto Thee, the soul of our brother Bob June. We thank you for the example given of the true spirit of greatness, which realized that it is nobler to serve than to be served. We pray that the causes which Bob served so well may ever inspire us; and when our turn comes to answer your summons, that we may hear you, as we hope and pray that Bob has heard, those gracious words, "Well done, my good and faithful servant, enter now into the joy of the Lord." To thy loving care, and gracious provision, we commend Bob's wife Debbie and his children, as well as his extended family in the WALDEN FIRE DEPARTMENT and the TOWN of MONTGOMERY POLICE DEPARTMENT O Lord, support each one of us until the shadows of life lengthen, and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and our work is done. Then in your infinite goodness, grant us a safe Lodging a Holy Rest, and Peace at last. Amen

Personal Thoughts

It was Bob's nature to protect every member of the community in which he lived. He began that mission in life working as a lifeguard, bandages on cut knees, save on bee stings and a watchful eye on all who were in the water.

At the age of 14 Bob joined the Walden Fire Department and the Col Bradley Hose Company #2 as a Junior Firemen. Once the Calling of the Fire Service gets in your blood, well, it never leaves. Bob remained an active firefighter for 50 years. I presented him with his 50-year badge last Tuesday Evening, two days before the Lord called him home. Did You Know that Fire Fighters have a Patron Saint? They do, his name is SAINT FLORIAN.

Let me tell you a little bit about him. He lived in the 2nd century A.D and was born into a Roman family and named Florian Von Lurch. He joined the Roman army and quickly rose in its ranks; he was known as a skilled warrior. He was made the Imperial Commander of Austria, and he was in charge of recruiting and training Fire Fighters for the Roman army. When the Emperor Deucalion ordered all Christians to be killed, he refused to obey the order. He was tortured for days, but still refused, in the end he was drowned. To this day Fire Fighters seem to feel his presence while fighting the most dangerous fires.

Fire Fighters have a special rendition of Psalm 23 with a Firematic flavor.

New Psalm 23

The Lord is my Fire Chief. He gives me everything I need. He makes me to be still and know his peace. As he leads me through dangerous conditions, He restores my passion to rescue and save. He gives me escapes from death for his name's sake. Even though I crawl through the valley of smoke and heat, I will not fear collapses or flash-over, for you are with me. Your wisdom and your steadfastness both comfort me. You have prepared miraculous protection for me in the presence of life-threatening circumstances. You have anointed my handlines, my efforts overflow with your blessings. Surely your goodness and unfailing love are with me on all the calls of my days. And I, having been tried through the fires, will one day live in the presence of my Lord, forever. Amen

That nature to protect every member of the community went beyond firefighting, Bob became a Police Officer with the Town of Montgomery Police Department. And once again that special calling just became a special part of Bob and he served for the past 30 years as a Police Officer protecting our community. Fire Fighters have a special Prayer which they love to share at times like this.
Chaplain:

The Firefighters Prayer

*When I am called to duty, God
Wherever flames my 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 to save an older person from
The horror of that fate.*

*Enable me to be alert,
To hear the weakest shout,
And quickly and efficiently,
Put the fire out.*

*And if, according to my fate,
I am called to Thee,
Please bless with your protecting hand
My friends and family.*

That nature to protect every member of the community went beyond firefighting, Bob became a Police Officer with the Town of Montgomery Police Department. And once again that special calling just became a special part of Bob and he served for the past 30 years as a Police Officer protecting our community. Bob was faithful in his duties, and I must add that in his 30 years of service he never pulled me over, but a few times he was thinking about it!

Police Officers have a Patron Saint as well, he is St. Michael.

Now, Saint Michael is special, for he is the only saint who is not a human. You see, Saint Michael is one of two arch Angels. He is the captain of God's heavenly army, and he battles the forces of evil all over the world. Michael is armed with a powerful two-edged sword, and it is he who will defeat Satan in the last great battle and cast him into the fires of hell for all eternity.

In the book of Daniel, he is praying for three days for God's help, Gabriel the second Arch Angel appears delayed by Satan, but Michael came with his sword and is holding off the enemy for him to come.

Police Officers tell me they feel his presence during times of great danger, and that it comforts them.

Police Officers have a rendition of Psalm 23 they love, just as the fire fighters do.

A Police Officers' Psalm

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. His comforting hand reduces fear to naught; He makes me walk through streets of crime, But He gives me courage and peace of mind. He leads me by still waters in the path I trod, And He says in Romans I'm a "minister of God"; He leads me in righteousness as He restores my soul. For His name's sake He keeps me whole. When I walk through death's valley, right up to the door, I will fear no evil, for He comforts me more; for a Thou art with me every step of the way, as thy rod and thy staff protect me each day. He prepares a table, especially for me, as I work daily among life's enemies; He gives me authority to uphold the law. And He anoints my position in the midst of it all. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me, each day of my life through eternity. AMEN.

And Police Officers have a Special Prayer which bring them comfort and peace as well.

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, 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 all those who trust me, And compassion for those who need me. And please, Lord, through it all, be at my side. Amen.

Chaplain:

Join Me in reciting the Lord's Prayer...

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those how trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever, Amen.

Chaplain:

[Poem]

*You can shed tears that he is gone.
Or you can smile because he has lived
You can close your eyes and pray that he will come back.
Or you can open your eyes and see all he's left.
Your heart can be empty because you can't see him,
Or you can be full of the love you shared.
You can turn your back on tomorrow and live Yesterday,
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of Yester
You can remember him and only that he's gone,
Or you can cherish his memory and let him live on.
You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back,
Or you can do what he'd want: smile, open your eyes, love and go on.*

Closing Prayer

Lord, we call upon You for strength and guidance,
Look kindly upon us in our needs today.
Teach us to always look to You for assistance, As our brother Bob did at each call. as our neighbors look to us.

Give us courage and enable us to pass this courage to others.
Make us studious and give us pride and joy in our work.
When the alarm or call comes in, calling us to duty, give us speed and efficiency.
As we travel with sirens on, ride with us through the streets of our villages, shielding us from danger.
On the fire scene or Police Emergency, may our officers and men always work as an Honorable, Courageous, and Victorious Team.

Walk with us through the terror of flame and explosion, be with us on dangerous calls involving armed people out of control or domestic calls where tension and danger await us...

May our hearts be always ready, should we be summoned before our Eternal Chief, in the midst of our labors.
As we work to help our neighbors in need, we dedicate our lives humbly to Your praise and glory.

In both joy and sorrow, we ask only that You may be pleased with our Service, and that when the Last Alarm or call is sounded for us, that we may receive our eternal assignment with You Forever.
AMEN

The Placing of The Glove Service

Today in honoring our friend Bob June the members of The Members of the WALDEN Fire Department have removed the glove from their right hand after saluting our brother and have placed it on the casket.

First of all, the Right hand is the symbol of our HAND of STRENGTH It stands as a reminder of the years of service we have spent working together as firefighters as we have aided those in need in our community.

Secondly, The Right Hand represents our HAND of FRIENDSHIP.

We in the fire service have a special brotherhood, a bond that ties us together. Even if we have seen this friend the day before, you will see us shaking hands in friendship.

And thirdly, the Right Hand is the HAND of HONOR.

This final salute does not end here at the grave side; by placing the glove on the casket that salute remains with our friend until we meet again in the Station House of Heaven as our Supreme Chief greets us with the words, "Well done my good and faithful servant, enter into my rest."

Honored for a life well lived
Honored for a Race well run
Honored with a crown well deserved

Benediction

A benediction prayer we make
A pause, a moment, let us take
And let us pray and let us say
A blessing in a "Thank you" way

To those who gave in sacrifice
Of courage without cost suffice
Of Fire's fought through wind and flame
A benediction to proclaim

Their lives a blessing to us now
In memory do our heads here bow
A solemn moment does it tell
They heard the call, that rang the bell

But we too shall hear the sound
That rings eternal and profound
The names recalled, the spouse, the son
The daughter, mother, parent, one

To hearts that bear the loss and grief
Our tribute and our prayers do speak
From those who live because of them
Remember always, now and then

Now may the Lord do bless and keep

All their names in heart so deep
God's smile upon us here today
And bless and keep us, this we pray

And may God's peace be on us all
In thanks to firefighter's call
And ring the bell with strong conviction
As we make this prayer in benediction.

Introduction to Celebration of Life Services

Whatever may happen after death, we know that our lives continue on in the memories of those who loved us, and whose lives we touched.

Memorial services are celebrations of life, at time to honor the loved one who has passed, and to affirm the bonds of community, memory and hope that sustain us in sorrow.

Memorial or celebration of life services bring healing most powerfully when they call to mind the full reality of the person who has died, treasuring the person's gifts, and honestly acknowledging their failings.

The leader of the service can create a narrative of the deceased's life by listening to stories that family members and close friends have to tell and weaving those stories and the themes they bring out into the eulogy.

However, it is also powerful to invite those in attendance to share their own stories, memorializing the person who has died in a very personal way.

Opening Words

Address

Readings

Memorial Readings for Specific Situations

When Death Comes for the Very Aged

There is, it seems, something tenderly appropriate in the death of the very aged. When the duties of life have all been done; when the sun touches the horizon; when the purple twilight falls upon the past, the present, and the future; when memory with dim eyes can no longer easily spell the blurred and faded records of the vanished days—then death comes like a strain of music. The road has been long, the journey difficult, and the traveler stops at the welcoming inn.

— *Robert Ingersoll*

When Death Comes Prematurely

Leaves should not fall in early summer. Winter should not follow on the heels of spring. Yet when they do, we can and must speak for life. For there is no answer to death but to live vigorously and

beautifully. We give respect and dignity to the one we mourn only when we respect and dignify life and move toward its richest fulfillment.

— Angus MacLean

The morning glory that blooms for an hour
Differs not at heart
From the giant pine that lives for a thousand years.
— Zen Proverb

When Death Comes by Suicide

We come here bearing our grief and perhaps feeling bruised by this death and what we might have done to prevent it. Remember that no single act of desperation can portray a life.

No matter how stalked by hurt, this life also had its moments of delight and happiness, caring and friendship, sharing and love. Let us be daring enough never to forget these.

Let us admit the deep truth that none of us carries enough concern for our brothers and sisters on this earth.

We try with our best resources, with what we can bring to bear, with what we can lavish out of self at the time. But sometimes it may not be enough, though our failures are not through callousness.

Self-death does not mean life denial, but it is the cry of despair for more life.

It is the refusal to crawl forever through the yawning caverns of pain and absurdity.

The battle may be long and arduous, leaving a personal sense of alienation after an epic conflict within the self. Whenever a death cuts across a life, we are left with a certain incompleteness.

We know that [she/he/they] leaves much unfinished, unfulfilled, unsaid. There are yet other things we wanted to share with [her/him/them], and [she/he/them] with us. But what has been must suffice.

What is and cannot be changed must be accepted. We are simply thankful that we could know and partake in the journey of life with [her/him], for it has enriched us all.

— *Peter Raible*

When Death Comes to a “Difficult” Person

And because [name of deceased] sometimes had a difficult time with life and others, this reading from Margaret Bruner:

“Say this of me, if something need be said,
when from this house of clay my soul has fled;
say that I tried,
but could not always keep the high resolve.
The road was very steep,
and often when I needed poise and strength I faltered on the last,
hard, mountainous length.
If I had foes, I have forgiven them,
but this is worthy of no diadem.
And if by some I was misunderstood,
to these I leave a wish that all good things may be their portion.

Know that for every wrong I did, I paid in agony.
In song I poured my heart's blood out to make amend.
I speak these words to kindred and friend.
Grant me compassion now that life has passed,
and pray my spirit finds peace at last."

When Death Comes to Someone the Service Leader Doesn't Know

I share with you the agony of your grief; the anguish of your heart
finds echo in my own. I know I cannot enter all you feel nor bear with you the burden of your pain; I
can but offer what my love does give: the strength of caring, the warmth of one who seeks to
understand the silent storm-swept barrenness of so great a loss.
This I do in quiet ways, that on your lonely path you may not walk alone.

— *Howard Thurman*

Invocation

O God of grace and glory, we gather humbly before you this day to remember our brothers. We thank
you for bringing them into our lives that we might know and love them as companions on our earthly
pilgrimage. In your boundless compassion, comfort us as we remember, as we mourn once more, and
as we celebrate lives well lived, yet too soon ended. Give us faith to see in death the gate to eternal life
so that in quiet confidence we may continue to run our course on earth until, by your call, we are
reunited with those who have gone before; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Miss Me - Poem by Albert Guest

Miss Me, But Let Me Go
When I come to the end of the road
And the sun has set for me,
I want no rites in a gloom-filled room,
Why cry for a soul set free!
Miss me a little - but not for long
And not with your head bowed low.
Remember the love that we once shared,
Miss me but let me go.
For this journey that we all must take
And each must go alone;
It's all a part of the Master's plan
A step on the road to home.
When you are lonely and sick at heart
Go to the friends we know,
And bury your sorrows in doing good deeds.
Miss me, but let me go.

A Celebration of Life Service

(Complete service including Illustrations)

Good morning. I want to welcome you today as we come together to celebrate the life of _____. On behalf of the family, I want to say thank you for so many things you have done to support them this week. And for this wonderful crowd here today the family is very grateful, and they appreciate so much your presence and your prayers.

I am reading today a Psalm that we are very familiar with. Psalm 23.

Prayer.

Heavenly father, if there is any need we have today it is for you to come and be with us. To be our great shepherd, the one who gently guides us the one who walks with us through every difficulty we face. We must turn to you today Lord because we really have no other place to go. We come today with broken hearts that need healing and many come to you with questions. I pray today for your comfort for this family. Help them to know how much you love all of us and how much you care for each of us. May they sense your presence more than ever before. We make our prayer today in Jesus' name. Amen.

Memorial Service Scriptures

Psalm 22/23 1st Corinthians 13:12 James 4:14

Message:

Today we find ourselves in the valley of death that the Psalmist talked about....it is a difficult place to be but as the Psalmist talks about it is also a place where we can experience the presence of God. These words were written down by the shepherd boy, David. Like all of us, David went through some difficult times. In the previous Psalm, Psalm 22 we hear David cry out to the Lord with words like these, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" We don't know exactly what he was going through, but we do know he was hurting. We know that he experienced grief in the loss of his son who was only 7 days old. So he was familiar with this valley of the shadow of death. When I think of the valley of the shadow of death, I always think of a setting like this or in a funeral home. But this valley is an actual place in the Holy Land/Israel. When people walked through that area as they were traveling, they would often be in danger for their lives. They could be robbed, beaten, or even murdered. We believe it was the same place where the story of the Good Samaritan took place. But David said that when he walked through that place, he was not afraid...because God was with him...his rod, his staff they comfort me. These were items of protection. God still gives that protection and help to us today. In fact, I believe that He is more present at times like this than perhaps any other time.

Pastor Friend Shared This Story:

About 20 years ago we were living in KY... I have 4 children. 3 boys, one girl. All grown now. And at the time this took place, Shelby, my little girl was about the same age you are now. We decided to take a family vacation there and see some of the State we had not seen. One of the places we went to was mammoth cave. We took a tour that lasted an hour or so. When we first went in the tour guide spoke to us and he told us that when we got to the heart of the cave that he would speak to us again. When we arrived there, he was standing there holding a candle. It was a small candle, but it provided enough light for us to be able to see. He told us to gather close together because the light was about to go out and that it would be very dark. He then blew the candle out and it was the single darkest place I had ever been. He said now hold your hand up in front of your face....I couldn't see a thing. My 2 youngest

children were 4 and 6 at the time...one was standing on 1 side of me and 1 on the other and my two older children were standing with my wife. When he blew out the candle the first thing I felt were 2 little hands that grabbed mine.

They were afraid. It was very dark and they were in a place they had never been before.

When we lose someone, we love, it is as though the lights go out. It is a very unfamiliar place. And often for days we cannot see clearly....we are in the dark....it is almost as though time stands still and we need a hand to hold on to. There is a certain denial that sets in because we just cannot believe it. And sometimes it takes a while before the darkness goes away. I can only imagine that you feel some of that same darkness here today.

Solomon, considered to be the wisest man in the OT wrote these words...

Ecclesiastes 3:1- 22

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:

[2] a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,
.....a time to tear down and a time to build, [4] a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn/grieve and a time to dance, [5] a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them.

The OT reminds us that there is a time for everything....as we read....a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them. Stones were used as markers in the Bible times. Boundary markers. A stone would be put into place and that told everyone it was your property. Some would even go out at night and move the stones.... move the boundaries so that they would have even more property. These stones were important.

Also, in the OT there was a time when Joshua was leading the people and they needed to cross the Jordan river. When they arrived there the river was in flood stage. Joshua set his foot into the water and the waters parted and they were able to cross. Joshua then told the people to take some stones and place them there on the dry ground to mark the place where God provided for them. These stones were used to mark important events in life. All of us have them. Today we stop to remember these markers in Keith's life.

- One of those markers, certainly the most important one in his life, was his family. He deeply loves his wife _____ and their children. They have been the focus of his life. Married for ___ years. And still very much in love.
- He is a very gifted individual. Many talents.
- He was very devoted to his work. His actual title was driver/engineer/firefighter/paramedic. Firefighters always have more than one job to do.

The Bible reminds us that for those who believe and place their faith in Him that we will have a home in heaven and will receive a new body. He assures us that in this home in heaven...

- There will be no more sickness.
- No more death no more funerals to attend.
- We will never grow tired or weary.
- No more hospitals.
- No more RX to fill.
- No more need for doctors.
- No more tears.

- No more darkness.

Chaplain This is Grief Counseling

Three Points: Time, Tears, Talking

Grief counselors will tell you that there are at least 3 things that we must do or pay attention to when we go through the valley of the shadow of death. Three things that can help us.

1. Time - doesn't usually happen quickly...the grief process takes time.....so don't try to rush it...sometimes a few months....sometimes a few years. It is different with each person.
2. Tears - when Jesus learned of the death of His friend Lazarus, the scripture tells us that Jesus wept. Tears are good.
3. Talk- share memories, stories, talk is therapeutic. So as you have occasions in the future, anniversaries, birthdays, do not be afraid to talk about _____.

Through the years, I have conducted funeral services for people of all ages...those who are much older and also for those who are much younger.one of the things that I have discovered is that regardless of age we are not ready to give them up.

We cannot help it, but we ask why things happen as they do. Paul the apostle said Anow we see thru a dark glass.....it's as though we are in a fog, not clear, but one day we will see face to face. He was saying it is not all clear now but one day it will be. One day the fog will clear.... The mist, the smoke will clear. There are things we simply do not understand right now but one day we will.

Most of the time when death comes, we don't expect it. We are surprised. We are completely caught off guard. We like to think our loved ones will live forever and that we will also.

But that is not what the Bible teaches. James tells us that our lives are like a vapor...a mist...like smoke.... here for a moment and then gone. And as we grow older, we all realize just how true that is. It goes rapidly. And so today we must find the strength to entrust these things to a God who is much bigger than us who loves us and will see us through.

Good Illustration:

Catherine Marshall in her book "Beyond Ourselves" tells the story of a friend of hers whose teenage son died of diabetes before insulin was discovered. Her son, Kenneth asked her one day, mommy, what does it feel like to die? Not knowing what to say she ran into the kitchen pretending to be doing something at the stove and she said Lord tell me what to tell my son. She said Kenneth you remember just a few years ago when you would play so hard that when you would come in you would fall into mama and daddy's bed. You didn't undress, you just fell asleep, but then the next morning you would wake up and you would find yourself in your own bed, in your own room, where you belong. That was because your father would come along with his strong arms and would lift you up and carry you to where you belong. She said...that is what death is like. And if we claim Him as our Savior, Our heavenly father comes along and he carries us to the room where we belong. In my father's house there are many mansions/rooms.

Firematic Illustration:

One night a house caught fire and a young boy was forced to flee to the roof of the house. The father stood on the ground below with his arms outstretched, calling to his son, "Jump! I'll catch you." He knew the boy had to jump to save his life. All the boy could see, however, was the flame, smoke, the fog, blackness. So, as you can imagine, the little boy was afraid to leave the roof. His father kept yelling: "Jump! I'll catch you. Jump. I'll catch you." But the boy shouted back, "Daddy, there's too much smoke, I can't see you."

The father replied, "But I can SEE YOU and that's all that matters." And the boy jumped to safety. I want to assure you today that God sees you. He sees your pain and He knows exactly where you are and He will never leave your side. I am so very sorry for your loss.

Would you pray with me?

Father we pause right now to thank you for the life of _____. We grieve today because he made OUR lives better. We hurt because we miss him already. So we look to you to ask for your help, your direction and your comfort. We ask for it in Jesus' name.

Benediction #1:

May the truth that makes us free, the hope that never dies, and the love that casts out fear, lead us forward together, till the dayspring breaks and the shadows flee away. The peace of God that passes all understanding, that peace which the world can neither give nor take away, abide with you to bless you, this day, and even forever more. Amen.

Benediction #2:

And now, may the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. And may God give you His peace in your going out and in your coming in, in your lying down and in your rising up, in your labor and in your leisure, in your laughter and in your tears... until you come to stand before God in that day in which there is no sunset and no dawning. Amen.

A Celebration of Life Service for A Departed Firemen

Scriptures, Prayers, Personal Thoughts and a Poem Which Can Be Used
Past Chief Rev. Jim Van Houten

Opening Prayer:

O God, who heals the broken in heart, and binds up their wounds, look in tender pity and compassion upon your servants whose joy has turned to mourning. Leave them not comfortless, but grant that they may be drawn closer to one another and to you by their common sorrow. Fill their souls with the light and comfort of you presence. Grant unto them such a vision of that life where in all mysteries shall be revealed, and all tears be wiped away, that they may be able to endure. Dwell with them and be their God, until the day breaks and the shadows flee.

We are gathered here on this occasion to pay our respects to a brother fireman who has answered his final call on this earth. He was a loyal member of this association. He stood forth as a real man, highly regarded by his brother firemen.

Scripture:

Let the words of the 23rd Psalm give comfort:

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want: He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still, waters; He restores my soul.

He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for you are with me.

Your rod and your staff 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 forever.

Scripture:

Ecclesiastes 3 NIV

A Time for Everything:

There is a season for everything: A time for every occupation under heaven ... a time for giving birth ... a time for dying ... a time for planting ... a time for uprooting what has been planted ... a time for laughter ... a time for mourning ... a time for dancing ... a time for loving ... a time for hating...What does man gain for the effort that he makes? I contemplate the tasks that God gives to mankind for labor. All that he does is apt for its time; but though he has permitted man to conserve time in its wholeness, man cannot comprehend the work of God from beginning to end. I know there is not happiness for man except in pleasure and enjoyment while he lives. And when man eats and drinks and finds happiness in his work this is a gift from God.

Prayer:

Let us pray...

Oh Lord, we implore you to grant this mercy to your departed servant that he who in his desire served his fellow man may not receive punishment for his misdeeds; so that as charity and love unite him with us on earth, your mercy may unite him with you in heaven. Amen.

Scripture:

Let us consider the words of Psalm 90:

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations, before the mountains were brought forth or ever you had formed the earth and the world.

From everlasting to everlasting you are God.

You turned man back to the dust and say "return back. O children of men".

For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.

You sweep men away: They are like a dream, like grass which is renewed in the morning; In the evening it fades and withers.

For we are consumed by your anger: By your wrath we are overwhelmed.

You have set our iniquities before you, our secret sins in the light of your countenance.

For all our days pass away under your wrath, our years come to end like a sigh.

Yet their span is but toil and trouble; They are soon gone and we fly away.

Who considers the power of your anger, and your wrath according to the fear of your?

So teach us to number our days, that we may get a heart of wisdom.

Return, Oh Lord, how long?

Have pity on your servants: Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

Make us glad as many days as you have afflicted us, and as many years as we have seen evil, let your work be manifested to your servants, and your glorious power to their children.

Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us and establish you the work of our hands upon us.

Scripture:

Our second scripture reading is taken from St. Matthew:

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory escorted by all the angels then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All the nations will be assembled before him, and he will separate men one from another as the shepherd separates sheep from goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right hand, "Come you whom my Father has blessed: take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me; sick and you visited me; in prison and you came to me". Then the virtuous will say to him in reply: "Lord, when did I see you hungry and feed you; thirsty and gave you drink?" "When did I see you a stranger and make you welcome; naked and clothe you; sick or in prison and go to see you"? and the king will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me".

Prayer:

Let us pray...

Oh God, who said as long as you did it for one of these, my children, you did it for me, grant a fitting reward to your fireman who has given his time and energy for the good of others. To him who gave up his rest at all hours of the day and night, grant eternal rest; To him who has answered his final alarm on earth, grant a place of refreshment, joy, and peace...Amen.

Firematic Thoughts:

Because of this man and other firemen, our lives are free: Because of them our families live: Because of them our homes are blessed. Let us not enshroud their memory with thoughts of sorrow. Tears or words of sympathy cannot bring them back the comfort of those loving hands. Only the solemn pride of service to others is theirs who live to remember.

Firemen and Friends, let us here pledge ourselves anew to united service, to consecrate and dedicate our work by a devotion to mutual helpfulness in the protection of those left behind.

Personal Thoughts to the Family:

And finally, to you, the family, the relatives; and the intimate friends, of our departed fireman, we realize how futile are mere words to express our deep and abiding sympathy in your loss. May you be consoled with our promise for continued devotion to firefighting and the protection of property and life of our fellow men. The words of the poem "The Abiding Love" are significant: It singeth low in every heart, we hear it each and all - a song of the kind, the brave, the sweet, who walk with us no more.

POEM The Abiding Love

Tis hard to take the burden up, when these have laid it down;
they brightened all the joy of life, they softened every frown;
But O, 'tis good to think of them, when we are troubled sore!

Thanks be to God that such have been, although they are no more.
More homelike seems the vast unknown since they have entered there;
to follow them were not so hard, wherever they may fare,
they cannot be where God is not, on any sea or shore:
Whate'er betides, thy love abides, our God, forever more.

Lord's Prayer:

And now, let us pray together the Lord's Prayer...

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory now and forever. Amen.

Closing Prayer:

Holy Father, in these moments of remembrance, lift our hearts and minds above the shadowy darkness of death to the light of your presence. We thank you for the life of our comrade now removed from our association. We are grateful for his devotion to a fireman's duty, for his dedication to the preservation of life and property, for the way he faced danger in his service to the community. We ask the comfort of your blessing upon his family. May they be sustained by pleasant memories, a living hope, compassionate friends, and the pride of duty well done. Grant them peace and freedom from fear. Finally, we pray for your guidance and strength for those who continue to battle the fiery foe. Grant safety to those who engage in the constant war against the destructive force of the flame and explosion. Keep them who devote themselves to the work of a fireman in your hands. So may men be free of the danger of fire... Amen.

Benediction:

The Blessing...

The Lord bless you and keep you, The Lord make his face to shine upon you and give you peace The Lord lift up the light of his presence upon you, Now and always...

Amen

Section VII – Sample Memorial Services

The following are complete memorial services for various state and county associations. They can be used as written or as an outline. The illustrations may also be helpful.

The Power and Promise of Peace

An Interfaith Service of Prayer and Remembrance

National City Christian Church, Washington DC - Thursday, May 27, 2004

Memorial Service for Soldiers Killed In The Iraq War

We placed this in our manual to as a guide which may be helpful if you were ever called upon to share in a service with several other religions and faith traditions. Those of us from the Jewish and Christian traditions can see where they might fit us in, as well as what we would be permitted to say. It's another tool in your toolbox. – Rev. Jim Van Houten

Lead us from unreality to reality;

*Lead us from darkness to light;
Lead us from death to life.
- Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (Hindu Scripture)*

Gathering Music

St Camillus Multicultural Choir
Tracy McDonnell, Director

Welcome

Rev. Dr. Alvin O. Jackson
Pastor, National City Christian Church, Washington DC

Preparation for Worship

Rev. William Sinkford
President, Unitarian Universalist Association

One: Let us pause in silence...

In the midst of clamor and confusion,
Hurries and worries, fear and frustration.
[Silence]

Many: We wait upon you, O God,

To feel your presence, to know your purpose,
To experience your power.
[Silence]

One: In quietness we wish

To listen to your voice, to think your thoughts,
To act your will.
[Silence]

Call to Prayer

Imam Ghayth Nur Kashif
Masjidush-Shura, Washington DC

God of Grace and God of Glory

Congregation

Words: Harry Emerson Fosdick (alt.)

God of grace and God of glory, on thy people pour thy power;
Crown thine ancient justice story, bring its bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, for the facing of this hour,
For the facing of this hour.

Cure thy children's warring madness; bend our pride to thy control;
Shame our wanton, selfish gladness, rich in things and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, lest we miss thy righteous goal.

Lest we miss thy righteous goal.

[Please stand, if able]

Save us from weak resignation to the evils we deplore;
Let the search for thy salvation be our glory evermore.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage, serving thee whom we adore,
Serving thee whom we adore.

Every Life Is Precious

A Call to Repentance: "Ashes, Stones, and Flowers"

Rabbi Arthur Waskow

Shalom Center, Philadelphia PA

Adapted from a litany by Rev. Patricia Pierce, pastor, Tabernacle United Church

(During the litany, and the times of silence that follow, representative names of US soldiers and Iraqi civilians who died in the Iraq war will be projected on a screen.)

Leader: For vibrant lives suddenly sacrificed, we lift up the ashes of our loss, O Source of Life.

Congregation: For the lives that continue, haunted forever by the pain of absence, we lift up the ashes of our remorse, O Wellspring of Compassion.

Leader: For the nightmare images of war forever seared into our memories, we lift up the ashes of our pain, O Breathing Spirit of the World.

Congregation: For the charred visions of peace and the dry taste of fear, we lift up the ashes of our grief, O Infinite.

Leader: For all the deaths that have been justified by turning the love of God or country into fanatical arrogance, we lift up the ashes of our shame, O God.

Congregation: As we cast these ashes into the troubled water of our times, Transforming One, hear our plea that by your power they will make fertile the soil of our future and by your mercy nourish the seeds of peace.

Representatives of families of soldiers will come forward and light candles.

Leader: For the ways humanity pursues violence rather than understanding, we lift up the stones of our anger, O Breathing Spirit of the World.

Congregation: For the ways we allow national, religious, and ethnic boundaries to circumscribe our compassion, we lift up the stones of our hardness, O Wellspring of Compassion.

Leader: For our addiction to weapons and the ways of militarism, we lift up the stones of our fear, O Source of Life.

Congregation: For the ways we cast blame and create enemies, we lift up the stones of our self-righteousness, O God.

Leader: As we cast these stones into the soothing water of your grace, Transforming One, hear our plea:

Congregation: Just as water wears away the hardest of stones, so too may the power of your compassion soften the hardness of our hearts and draw us into a future of justice and peace. Representatives of families of Iraqi civilians will come forward and light candles.

Leader: For sowing seeds of justice to blossom into harmony, we cast these flowers into the water, O Source of Peace.

Congregation: For seeing clearly the many rainbow colors of humanity and earth, we cast these flowers into the water, O Infinite.

Leader: For calling us to life beyond our grieving, we cast these flowers into the water, O Breathing Spirit of the World.

Congregation: As we cast these flowers into the life-giving water, Transforming One, hear our plea:

All: Just as water births life in a desert and gives hope to the wounded, so too may the power of your nurturing renew our commitment to peace.

"Amazing Grace" by St. Camillus Multicultural Choir

Prayer by Bishop Vicken Aykazian

Armenian Orthodox Church (Adapted from the Christian Orthodox Tradition)

O God of spirits and flesh, Who has trodden down death, destroying the power of the devil, bestowing life on Your world, to the souls of Your servants departed this life do You Yourself, O Lord, give rest in a place of light, in a place of green pasture, in a place of refreshment, from where pain and sorrow and mourning are fled away.

Give rest, O God, unto Your servants, and appoint for them a place in Paradise where the chorus of the Saints, O Lord, and the just will shine forth like stars. To Your servants that are sleeping now do You give rest, forgiveness, and mercy.

Everlasting be your memories, O our brothers and sisters, who are worthy of blessedness and eternal memory. Amen.

Acknowledging Our Grief

Reading from the Sacred Texts

Venerable M. Dhammasiri

President, Washington Buddhist Vihara

The Four Noble Truths

Buddhist Text from the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta

“Now this is the noble truth concerning suffering. Birth brings pain. Decay is painful. Disease is painful. Death is painful. Union with the unpleasant is painful. Separating from things pleasant is painful. Any craving that is unsatisfied, that too is painful. In brief, the five aggregates that spring from attachment, the conditions of individuality and their cause, are painful. This is the noble truth concerning suffering.

Now, this is the noble truth concerning the origin of suffering. Truly, it is thirst or craving, causing the renewal of existence, accompanied by sensual delight, seeking satisfaction now here, now there. That is to say, it is the craving for the gratification of the passions, or the craving for a future life, or the craving for success in this present life. This is the noble truth concerning the origin of suffering.

Now this, is the noble truth concerning the cessation of suffering. Truly it is the cessation, in which no passion remains, of this very thirst. It is the laying aside of, the getting rid of, the being free from, the harboring no longer of this thirst. This is the noble truth concerning the cessation of suffering.

Now this is the noble truth concerning the way that leads to the cessation of suffering. Truly it is this noble Eightfold Path: right views, right intentions, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is the noble truth concerning the way that leads to the cessation of suffering.

[Silence]

Guidance for Meditation

In this time of silence get in touch with your pain and suffering about the Iraq war. Your suffering may be deeply personal (as when a family member is injured or killed), or perhaps it is vicarious. How can this teaching help us to deal with our grief?”

How Can I Keep from Singing

My life flows on in endless song above earth's lamentation.
I hear the real, though far off hymn that hails the new creation.
Above the tumult and the strife, I hear the music ringing;
It sounds an echo in my soul, how can I keep from singing?

What through the tempest loudly roars, I hear the truth, it liveth.
What through the darkness round me close, songs in the night it giveth.
No storm can shake my inmost calm while to that rock I'm clinging.
Since love is lord of Heaven and earth how can I keep from singing?

When tyrants tremble, sick with fear, and hear their death-knell ringing,
When friends rejoice both far and near, how can I keep from singing?
In prison cell and dungeon vile our thoughts to them are winging.
When friends by shame are undefiled, how can I keep from singing?

Receiving Divine Comfort

Reading from the Sacred Texts

Chaplain Major Andrea M. Foster

Joint Forces Deputy State Chaplain, DC National Guard

Psalm 23 (NRSV)

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside 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.

[Silence]

Guidance for Meditation

The images of green pastures, still waters, and the protective rod and staff of the Good Shepherd have been comforting images to religious people across the centuries. The juxtaposition of these images with the images of the dust and heat of the Iraqi desert and the severe destruction visited upon Iraqi families and communities can be jarring. Use this meditative time to imagine a new reality, a new world of peace and justice, a place we all can “live in the house of the Lord” – a place of shalom (Peace) -- not only Iraqis, but Americans and all the people in the world can live “our whole lives long.”

The Power and Promise of Peace

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Come together. We can build a dream

Meant to ease the wounded soul.

Tell the stories that are hard to hear

So the broken can be whole.

For the children and the innocents,

Those who tremble in the night—

Can they ever learn to trust again?

Can we ever make it right?

And if a dove can fly, then our dream can soar.

We'll take back the night, study war no more.

Let's give peace a chance, all the people sing.

Come and join the dance. Let the dove take wing.

Anger colors all our history.
The wrongs are old. The pain is deep.
Then soldiers take their guns and march to war.
Death takes hold while justice sleeps.

Peace is calling us to change the plan.
This is the day. This is the hour.
To make a difference, we must take a stand,
Feel the promise and the power.

And if a dove can fly, then our dream can soar.
We shall overcome. What's the fighting for?
Let's give peace a chance, all the people sing.
Come and join the dance. Let the dove take wing.

[Instrumental]

Blessed, blessed are the peacemakers.
They shall be the chosen ones.
Release the dove. It may return again,
Or it may fly beyond the sun.

And if a dove can fly, then our dream can soar.
We'll tear down the walls, open every door.
Let's give peace a chance, all the people sing.
Come and join the dance. Let the dove take wing.

Moving Out to Become Peacemakers

Reading from the Sacred Text from the Christian Tradition

Jeanette Holt

Associate Director, Alliance of Baptists

(Matthew 5: 3-9, NRSV)

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

From the Islamic Tradition

Imam Ghayth Nur Kashif

A Prayer for Peace

Masjidush-Shura, Washington DC

Praise be to the Lord of the Universe who has created us and made us into tribes and nations,

That we may know each other, not that we may despise each other.
And trust God, for the Lord is the one that heareth and knoweth all things.
And the servant of God,
Most gracious are those who walk on the Earth in humility, and when we address them, we say
"peace."

From the Jewish Tradition

Rabbi Arthur Waskow
Micah 4:1, 3-4
Shalom Center, Philadelphia PA

In the days to come,
The Mount of Adonai's House shall stand firm above the hills.
The peoples shall gaze upon it with joy.
They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks,
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
nor ever again shall they train for war.
Then everyone shall sit under their own grapevine or fig tree
with no one to disturb them.

[Silence]

Guidance for Meditation

In the silence, listen to the prompting in your heart to become a peacemaker. In what specific ways might you engage in the important work of "beating swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks?" In the space below, list two or three specific commitments that you are willing to make today.

Call to Commitment

Rev. Dr. Bob Edgar
National Council of Churches of Christ
An Affirmation of Peace and Justice

All: I do believe in God, who is love and who has given the earth to all people, who heals us and frees us from all forms of oppression and for whom each life is precious. I believe in the community of faith, called to be for the agent of peace and justice. I believe in the Divine promise to destroy the power of evil and to establish justice and peace for all humankind.

Reader 1: I do not believe in the right of the strongest, or the force of arms, or the power of oppression.

Reader 2: I do believe in the struggle for human rights, in the solidarity of all people, in the power of non-violence.

Reader 1: I do not believe in racism, in the power that comes from wealth and privilege, or any established order that enslaves.

Reader 2: I do believe that all women and men are equally human; that order based on violence and injustice is not order.

Reader 1: I do not believe that war and hunger are inevitable, and that peace is unattainable.

Reader 2: I do believe in the beauty of simplicity, in love with open hands, in peace on earth.

All: I do not believe that suffering need be in vain, that death is the end, that the disfigurement of our world is what the Creator intended. But I dare to believe, always and in spite of everything, in the Divine power to transform and restore, fulfilling the promise of a new heaven and a new earth where justice and peace will flourish.

Following the Affirmation and during the Recessional, those who are able in the congregation will rise as an expression of their commitment to peacemaking and will walk forward, row by row, pick up a flower/s and recess to the outside front steps of the church. The final song of Commitment will be sung and Benediction pronounced outside the church.

Recessional:

“We Are Marching in the Light of God”
St. Camillus Multicultural Choir

Song of Commitment:

Prayer for Peace

Text: Based on a Navaho Indian prayer

Peace before us, peace behind us, peace under our feet.
Peace within us, peace over us, let all around us be peace.

Love before us, love behind us, love under our feet.
Love within us, love over us, let all around us be love.

Light before us, light behind us, light under our feet.
Light within us, light over us, let all around us be light.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia

Peace before us, peace behind us, peace under our feet.
Peace within us, peace over us, let all around us be peace.

Benediction

Rev. Dr. Thelma Chambers-Young
Vice President at-large, National Council of Churches of Christ

From Christian Scripture 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, NRSV)

“Love is patient; love is kind;
love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude.
It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful;
it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.

It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
Love never ends.”

Go in peace to love all beings.
Amen

Following the Benediction, we will take our flowers and place them in the middle of Thomas Circle creating a memorial to all who have died in Iraq.

We express our sincere gratitude to the:
Members of US military families
Iraqi families
Religious leaders who participated
All of you who attended
National City Christian Church

Answering The Call

Rev. Jim Van Houten
Chaplain Hudson Valley Volunteer Firemen’s Association

“Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for you?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” He said, “Go and serve this people:

A few years ago, a call came in that I remember very well. It was a cold night, with a wind gusting to about 30 miles per hour. It was 2:30 in the morning. I was sound asleep. The pager woke me up with the announcement that a CO detector was sounding on Walnut Street.

I just laid there for a minute or so contemplating the thought of going out into the cold, but I got up anyway and got dressed, as I left the house, I grabbed several batteries so that I could replace the worn-out ones in that detector.

I was joined by two other firefighters, and we waited for a driver, as we waited the call was sounded again. At last, I saw a car coming, it was Mike, he looked very unhappy. The frost was so thick on my windshield that I broke to ice scrapers, my hands are so cold I can hardly move my fingers. He started engine 236 and I called out that we were responding. Jim, did you bring the extra batteries? Yep, I’ve got them in my coat. Why do these things always malfunction on the coldest nights? I’m not sure Mike, it must be the devil just trying to ruin a good night’s sleep. As we approached the house Mike said in a serious voice, Rev. this is the house my daughter just rented. We entered with air packs on, our equipment showed a very high level of carbon monoxide, their furnace was running, and the chimney was clogged.

Had we not responded they would have died that night. Since then, I have never complained about getting up on a cold night for a CO detector sounding. In Isaiah chapter 6 verse 8 we hear the voice of the Lord asking, “Who will go, who can I send?”

Illustration:

I believe that the Lord uses First Responder to help Him meet the needs of people in trouble.

- The Knights of ST. John during the crusades felt that it was their God Given duty to help save their fellow knights from the firebombs of naphtha. They were awarded the Maltase Cross for their heroism.
 - So, God continues to call upon us in the fire service and he asks, “Who will answer the call” Who is willing to be used by me?
 - God says, “I see people in trouble, I hear prayers for help.” Who is willing to go for me?
- I. There are times when we answer his call, and it costs us emotionally. Not all calls are the same. In some our hearts are broken. In others our spirits are scared because of emotional trauma. Calls which involve children seem to be the hardest. I guess it’s because we picture our own kids.

Illustration:

Debbie Jansson answered such a call one day last year... as an EMT for Cuba New Mexico, Debbie was one of the first responders called out to what she described as a horrible accident.

A 16-month-old girl had been run over by her father in his pickup truck. “It was one of those things. She had just started walking. Dad thought she was with Mom, Mom thought she was with Dad,” Debbie said. When they arrived at the home, she realized she knew the family. Sixteen months prior, Debbie had responded to the 911 call when the mother was in labor. But at this call it became obvious that the child was dead. Debbie promised her mother she wouldn’t let go of the baby. “I held the hand of that little girl for four hours waiting for the Office of the Medical Examiner to arrive,” she said.

With six years on the job, Debbie knew she was going to need some help dealing with the emotional trauma and aftermath of the call. So, with her free hand, she called the fire department chaplain. Unfortunately, she was out of range of cell service and unreachable.

Debbie then called Valencia County Fire Department’s senior chaplain, David Madara, a firefighter she’d worked with many times during her volunteer shifts for the Fire District.

Dave is a Methodist Pastor; he was about to begin a service at his church. He turned the service over to the Deacons and responded to her call, and the Lord’s, Dave drove two hours to be with her.

Emotionally we leave a piece of our selves at an accident scene like that.

There are times when we would rather not allow that type of trauma to affect us. But when it does, it’s a great time to call upon a fellow Chaplain for some Spiritual comfort.

- II. There are other calls that the Lord requests us to respond to where there may be conflicts.

In the bible the prophet Jonah was called to Nineveh to bring Gods message.

He hated the people there; they were the enemies of his people. So, he went in the other direction. But God caused a great storm, and the ship Jonah was on almost sank.

Jonah was thrown overboard and swelled by a whale, which brought him back to Nineveh. He got there the hard way.

So today we will have calls which might not be politically correct.

Illustration:

A few months ago, one of our young firefighters was in an accident and he was under the influence. The driver of the other car was a friend of his from high school, and sadly he died as a result of the crash. As Chaplain I went to see this young fellow at the hospital to offer prayers for his full recovery from the surgery which he needed

I knew that once this young fellow came out of surgery that a judge would be coming to the hospital to arraign him. So, the next day I headed to the hospital to be with him.

I was there when the judge arrived, and he asked if I had come that day as the Department Chaplain? I told the judge No, that I come the night before as the Chaplain; however, I came today as a fellow firefighter and as his friend. I wanted him to know that a friend still cared about him in our department.

I explained to the judge that the Greeks had a custom, at a trial before a person was sentenced a friend of good character would come and stand with this person to give them moral support. That person was called a pariclite, and I was just following that old custom.

There were some in the community who were critical of me for going, and some from the department shared their feelings. But the person most angered was my daughter, the boy who died was her friend.

I told them all that if I had made the same mistake, I know that I'd sure like to have a friend there! When the Lord calls me to go, I will always answer.

- III. There are times when that call comes when we least expect it, but God is calling all the same!
We may be off duty, out of our district when the Lord calls us to help someone in need.
The Lord doesn't care about districts, He looks for willing hearts.

Illustration:

Tawny Nelson is a single mother of four absolutely beautiful little girls. They are 9, 5, 2, and 6 weeks. And things have been particularly rough since her ex left her.
She Shared this Story with Me...

"My truck had a flat I constantly had to air up, she said
The driver side window motor died.
And it needed a new alternator belt.
The truck was a mess. And she didn't drive anywhere unless she had to. Well, she said, the other day I desperately needed to go to the store. When she got out of the store it was far after dark. And POURING rain.

She loaded her kids and groceries into the truck.
Tried to crank it..... Nothing. No click. Nothing.

One of her girls had accidentally left a light on.
Her battery was dead. Her phone was also disconnected. She had no family to speak of and was on her own. She got out and opened my hood to be sure my battery hadn't come loose. Nope.

She must have asked more than twenty people in the course of the next two hours for a jump.
They all ignored Her. Not even a no. Just acted like she didn't exist...

Her newborn SCREAMING, her two-year-old crying she was hungry, and her oldest desperately trying to help.

Then she said, I got a knock on the passenger window.

An older gentleman (he was 74) with a cane and a bad limp was on the other side of that knock. She opened the door.

He handed her a plate of chicken strips and biscuits from the deli and a bottle of water and a bottle of milk.

“Feed those babies and yourself young lady.

I have a tow truck on the way and my wife will be here shortly to take y'all home.”

Sure, enough, his wife arrived followed by the tow truck.

All of us and our truck were taken home.

The next morning the old gentleman returned to her house with a mechanic who replaced my battery and alternator and fixed my window.

The elderly gentleman then left and did not return.

When she asked what she owed the mechanic and if she could make payments, he smiled telling her the older man had paid for all of it. He said that the only payment he wanted was for her to never give up and to keep being an amazing mom.

The tow truck driver said, his name is Fred, he is the past Chief of the Volunteer fire Department, he just loves to help people in trouble

He revived her faith when she was falling apart, and he wouldn't even take a hug.

He was just glad to answer God's Call.

IV. The Day will come when we all will be called Home to be with the Lord.

On Tuesday I was in Albany to take part as Chief Chaplain in the adding of names of Firefighters who have died in the line of duty to the Wall of Remembrance.

This year there were 118 names. 114 of them were FDNY firefighters who have died of cancer related illnesses as a result of serving at Ground Zero.

There were 343 taken home on 9/11 and in these past 16 years since another 114 were taken. And sadly, there are so many others who are sick and dying.

We pledged as a Nation that we would never forget their sacrifice, but we had no service of remembrance in our Village on 9/11

How sad!

But this is a call which we all will receive someday and it's a call which we will all have to respond to.

But because Jesus Christ God's Son 2000 years ago heard the call, "Who will go to save a lost world? Jesus said, "I'll go, send ME!

He answered the Call for all of us when he died on the cross for the sins of the world, He has given all who accept him the opportunity to spend eternity with Him in the courts of heaven.

By accepting him as our Savior we are guaranteed that we will hear those wonderful words, "Well done my good and faithful servant, enter now into the joy of my rest." Amen

Going The Extra Mile

Memorial Service Message: Matt. 5:41

Rev. Jim Van Houten

Chief Chaplain Hudson Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association

At 7:30 in the morning of May 25th, 2006, Dan Mazur and his two friends were about to realize their life's dream. They stood just 1000 feet from the summit of Mount Everest. Climbers call the area above 2600 feet "The Death Zone" its oxygen starved, bitter cold, and blizzards occur without warning. The landscape is dotted by crosses for climbers who have perished in the past. Just ten days before a British climber died of exposure, sadly while forty other climbers passed him by.

Dan said that as they moved towards the summit, his eye caught sight of a flash of color, a bit of yellow fabric on an upper ridge. As they climbed closer, they saw that it was a person, a man perched on an outcropping, with a sheer 8000-foot drop in front of him. His gloves were off, his chest bare. Oxygen deprivation causes the brain to swell, and the person hallucinates. This poor fellow had no idea where he was.

Dan and his friends asked the man his name. The fellow replied, "my name is Lincoln Hall" They were shocked for only 12 hours before they heard the news that Lincoln Hall had died on the mountain and was left by his climbing team. Despite spending the night in subzero temperatures, oxygen thin air, Lincoln Hall was alive. They were face to face with a miracle.

Now came the hardest call they had ever made; do they abandon their dream to reach the summit or help him?

Do they turn their backs on years of preparation, months of struggle and thousands of dollars in expenses to try to rescue this stranger? The decent was already treacherous, and the odds for disaster were greatly increased carrying the weight of a dying man.

Let me ask you a question. If you were there, what would you have done?

Well Dan and his two friends didn't hesitate for even a moment. You see Lincoln Hall had been found by three climbers who were dedicated Volunteer Firemen in their hometowns, three men who had spent a lifetime of putting others first. They picked up Lincoln and headed for the based camp to save his life.

Lincoln Hall survived the trip down Mount Everest, thanks to Dan and his friends, he lived to be reunited with his wife and two sons in New Zealand. A TELEVISION REPORTOR ASKED Lincoln's wife what she thought of the rescuers, men who had surrendered their summit and their dream, to save her husband's life. After several moments and with tear filled eyes, she said, "Volunteer firemen are

amazing human beings. The world needs more people like them, for they were willing to go that EXTRA MILE for someone else.”

I. This Morning I'd like to talk to you about going the extra mile. For the Fire Service has always been the society of Second Milers.

There is an interesting passage of scripture found in Matthew 5: 41 which says, “And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two.”

At the time this was written Israel was occupied territory. It was controlled by the Roman Empire. The Romans had a law that greatly embittered the people.

By law a Roman soldier could compel anyone to carry his weapons, or his knapsack, or any burden that he had, one mile. It didn't matter whether the person was working in his field or on his way to the synagogue to worship, the Roman soldier had the right to conscript this man and force him to carry his burden.

Everyone had marked off one mile from his house and had memorized the exact distance. Whenever a boy or man was compelled to go that mile, he would walk that mile down to the very foot, put that burden down, and with a bitter look on his face make the point “not one foot more.”

But the Lord encourages us to go the extra mile, and to do it gladly. To reach beyond what is the expected minimum, and do more for others, and do it with a smile.

I believe that there is a tremendous difference between “Becoming a Firefighter” and Being a Firefighter”

In becoming a firefighter, we train, attend classes with top notch instructors. We are provided with the best protective turn out gear... we are well equipped.

At a working structure fire, everyone wants to be on a hose line, everyone wants to be interior, and it seems like most everyone wants to carry a radio.

But when it comes to repacking a ¼ mile of 5-inch hose, not everyone fights to be first in line... right!

Not everyone will step forward to be a Second Miler. That second mile comes from the HEART of the person, wearing the turn out gear.

The second mile firefighters can be overlooked for awards... and they are still faithfully active.

They can lose in an election, and they are still faithfully active.

They can make mistakes and be criticized by everyone in the department, from the chief on down.... And they are still faithfully active.

As the years pass, their health can be affected, but they are still faithfully active.

That's what it means, “BEING A FIREFIGHTER” for you will be doing things with all of your heart, all of your soul and all of your might.

People who are willing to give up their own dream of Mt. Everest, to help someone else.

II. You Are a Second Mile Firefighter.

A few years ago, at a large Grocery Store a young lady, with three small children were in line with a cart of groceries, the line was long behind her, and the clerk was becoming impatient. She swiped her welfare card for the 5th time, and it was rejected. "Sorry young lady, it says the card is not activated." The fellow behind her shouted out, "if you got a job and stop having kids you wouldn't need a welfare card!!!!" Several people laughed. The girl began to cry; she left the groceries on the counter and ran out.

A few minutes later a young fellow came in looking for her he wanted to give her a ride home. "She ran out crying "the clerk said, this fellow made fun of her not having a job and having kids on welfare.

He said, "Jenny is 20 years old; she is a member of our fire company. The children are not hers; they are her brother's. He was killed in Iraq five months ago; her sister-in-law suffered a massive stroke last month. So, Jenny quit college and is raising the kids. The county gave her that card for food, but this is the 3rd time she tried to use it, and it doesn't work."

A fellow in the line pushed his way forward; "did you say that she was a Firefighter? ... So am I, put these groceries on my charge card. Wow, what a wonderful young lady. I'd like to do more to help her. I'm an ex-chief of my department." He then said, excuse me to the clerk as he reached for the PA microphone.

"Friends he said," we have a small emergency at register # 7, If you are a firefighter could you please come to this register in the front of the store." Within seconds 6 men and 2 ladies came running. He told them the story; we need to do something for her and the kids.

By this time the manager was there, and he took the mic and announced to the store the need this girl had. People came forward and donated food, the firefighters filled cart after cart. Over \$1500.00 dollars worth of food was given.

One firefighter called his chief and requested their Company van to transport the food, but they would need a qualified driver. His chief said, of course it can be used, "I'll leave work; drive and I'll meet you at the store."

Two other fire companies were called and within 20 minutes they called back with the news that they were donating a freezer that would be delivered to her house.

Those 6 fire companies have adopted Jenny and those three children, and for the past four years have made sure that their needs were meant.

There is something wonderful about a firefighter who goes beyond and above what is asked for, or required, or expected, just as a habit of life.

It's great to see so many Second Milers in the Fire Service. Isn't It?

WE SPEAK ABOUT LEADERSHIP IN THE FIRE SERVICE

It's hard to be a leader if you're not a second miler.

III. It's hard to inspire others, if all you do are the minimum requirements.

Illustration:

This country we live in is a result of a man and women going the second mile. Shortly after the battles ended the American Revolution, but before the peace had been negotiated, George Washington was with his troops in Newburgh, New York. But they began to grow very restless because they hadn't been paid. Washington had begged the Continental Congress to do what they said they would do and pay the soldiers, but they refused.

Well, some of the officers began to organize a rebellion. They talked about marching on Philadelphia, which was at that time the seat of the reigning national government and overthrowing that government and letting the army rule the nation.

With the fate of America in the balance, George Washington made a surprise appearance before these officers. After praising them for their service and thanking them for their sacrifice, he pulled from his pocket a copy of a speech that he wished to read.

He fumbled with a paper and finally reached for a set of reading glasses—glasses those men had never seen him wear before. Washington made this simple statement: “I have already grown grey in the service of my country, and now I am going blind.”

Historian, Richard Norton Smith, wrote: “Instantly rebellion melted into tears. It was a galvanizing moment, and the rebellion...” and the rebellion was put down because they had seen before them a second miler.

IV. Every chance you get, go the second mile.

DO UNTO OTHERS AS YOU WOULD HAVE THEM TO DO UNTO YOU

Do you remember the passage that tells us if we do something to the least of God’s children, that he will take care of us?

I believe that if we are second milers for others that God will go the second mile for us.

Illustration:

Hairbrush Experience of Beth Moore at The Airport

April 20, 2005, at the Airport in Knoxville, waiting to board the plane, Beth Moore had her Bible on her lap and was very intent upon what she was doing. A stewardess came in pushing a wheelchair, with an old man sitting in it. Stunned, she tried to keep from staring, but he was such a strange sight. Humped over in a wheelchair, he was skin and bones, dressed in clothes that obviously fit when he was at least Sixty pounds heavier. His knees protruded from his trousers, and his shoulders looked like the coat hanger was still in his shirt. His hands looked like tangled masses of veins and bones. The strangest part about him was his hair and nails. Stringy, gray hair hung well over his shoulders and down part of his back. His fingernails were long and clean but strangely out of place on an old man.

All the while, her heart was growing more and more overwhelmed with feeling for him.

Then she heard it... “I want you to brush his hair.”

The words were so clear, her heart leaped into her throat, and her thoughts spun like a top.

Again, as clearly as she had ever heard an audible word, God seemed to write this statement across the wall of her mind. "I want you to go brush his hair."

She looked up at God and said "I don't have a hairbrush. It's in my suitcase on the plane. How am I supposed to brush his hair without a hairbrush?"

But God said again, "go brush his hair."

She knelt down in front of the man and asked, "Sir, may I have the pleasure of brushing your hair?"

He looked back at her and said, "What did you say?"

"May I have the pleasure of brushing your hair?"

To which he responded in volume ten, "Little lady, if you expect me to hear you, you're going to have to talk louder than that."

At this point, she took a deep breath and blurted out, "SIR, MAY I HAVE THE PLEASURE OF BRUSHING YOUR HAIR?"

Every eye in the place stared right at her. He said, "If you really want to."

God pressed on her heart until she could utter the words, "Yes, sir, I would be pleased. But I have one little problem. I don't have a hairbrush."

"I have one in my bag," he responded.

She went around to the back of that wheelchair and got it out of his bag. She stood up and started brushing the old man's hair. It was perfectly clean, but it was tangled and matted. She didn't do many things well, but she had to admit that she had notable experience untangling knotted hair, mothering two little girls.

His hair was finally as soft and smooth as an infant.

She slipped the brush back in the bag and went around the chair to face him. "Where are you going today?", Beth asked him.

"I'm going to see my wife he said, 'You see, the problem is, I haven't seen my bride in months. We have been married for 64 years. I've had open-heart surgery, and she's been too ill to come see me. The guys from my fire company are bringing her to the airport to meet me. I was just sitting here thinking to myself, "what a mess I must be for my bride." I was just sitting here talking to God and I asked him if it would be possible for someone to volunteer to help me look a bit better."

Only God knows how often He allows us to be part of a divine moment when we're completely unaware of the significance.

Beth still had a few minutes, and as she gathered her things to board, the airline hostess returned from the corridor, tears streaming down her cheeks. She said, "That old man's sitting on the plane, thanking God that he sent someone who would go that extra mile."

When I sent out this story by email, I got a reply from a friend in Ohio the next day. Rev.... his name is Joe Sherman, and he is a 52 year member of our company.

We can all learn something about God today.

If you have been a Second Miler for others, God will go the Second mile for you!!!

If you are willing to put aside your Mount Everest Dreams to go to the aid of a perfect, then God will reward you a hundred times over.

I would like to challenge all of you to be Second Milers in your Fire Companies here in the Hudson Valley.

The Names of our Departed Brothers which were read today are the names of Second Milers, let's continue in their tradition.

And Remember

"Life isn't about how to survive the storm, but how to dance in the rain!"

He Will Give His Angels Charge over Us

Hudson Valley Firemen's Association Memorial Services 2008

Rev. Jim Van Houten Chaplain

Text: Psalm 91: 11 "For He will give his angels charge over you, to keep you safe in all of yours ways"

Introduction: I will never forget the feelings of anger that I felt when I first arrived at ground zero on September 12, 2001.

I realized I needed God's help if I was to minister for Him. So, I went into St Paul's Church to pray. There was No Electric, the church was completely dark, except for a red candle burning on the alter. I made my way up there to pray, I poured out my heart to the Lord. Out of know where, in the darkness I felt a hand on my shoulder, it was a fellow fireman. I wasn't alone; there were about 20 others in the church.

We prayed together! And I asked for God's peace and strength for all of us. We were ready to leave the church to begin our rescue efforts when we heard the beautiful sound of a lady singing, Amazing Grace, it brought such a sense of peace to my soul, I was lifted spiritually, I was ready to minister in any way that the Lord wanted me too. As we left the church one of the firemen turned on his hand light, I could hear the singing clearly, but there was no lady there, just her voice! The two firemen with me said, "she has a beautiful voice doesn't she chaplain?" You see, those who worked there saw some of the worst sights, but they also saw and felt the miracles that only God can perform. I simply answered, "Yes, she does.

As we are gathered here for our Memorial Service this year, as we remember those whom the Lord has called home to be with him, I'd like you all to know that God has given his angels charge over all of you.

In our work in the fire service, his angels are there to assist us in our efforts. They are present in times of danger to assist us, in fact verse 12 tells us," In their hands they will hold you up."

- I. I know matter how strong we think we are, there are times when we need extra strength, especially at a fire or accident scene where there is the loss of life.

We dread the thought of a line of duty death; it's on the mind of nearly every fire chief and line officer at a working structure fire.

If you hear on your radio the code 5-5 firefighter down, it makes your heart stand still.

We are reminded that our work is dangerous, even with all of the training we receive, fire can be an assume enemy.

There are perils which are unseen, hidden in the structure, weaknesses in the building that have been covered over.

Since a fire doubles in size every 30 seconds, we always face the question, "How long has it been burning before it was called in?"

I begin every day with a prayer for the safety of every fire fighter in Hudson Valley, and I ask for the Lord's protection as well as his guidance.

I ask for the Lord to send his angels to be with you, to meet your every need.

You may not see them, but you can be sure that they have fought many a fire right by your side. But there are times when they let you know that they are there.

Illustration:

At about 5:45 A.M. on Friday April 6th, 2007, we were called to a working structure fire in Walden. Upon arriving it appeared that everyone was out safely, and the fire was contained to the basement. All of that changed when a call came from the interior team saying they had a man down. Despite all of the efforts of the firefighters and paramedics, we suffered the loss of one of our brightest teenagers, Joey Savage. As chaplain I went to minister to his family and went with them to the hospital to be with Joey. They wanted to be alone with him, and requested that I remain in the hall, which of course I did. I was praying for God's special strength for them, as they walked to the room. Suddenly, the security guard and I saw a man walking behind them in the hallway; he had his arms stretched out with his hands on their shoulders.

As they walked into the room, he turned to us and smiled, he nodded to us that all was alright, and joined them in the room. After the family had left, we checked the room; there was no sign of this stranger. The security guard said, Rev. Jim was that an angel. Yes, it was, I believe he was sent as an answer to the hundreds of prayers being offered for that family at that time.

- II. God can use many different means to help us.

This great Psalm continues in verse 15 to tell us that we can call on the Lord and that he will answer us.

I know when I'm in need, I love the fact that I can call on the Lord, 24/7 and he is there for you and me.

Our prayers are effective anytime we offer them; in fact, I believe that the Lord is listening to the prayers of firefighters, perhaps even a little bit more than the prayers of others.

For the next words of this Psalm are, “I will be with you in times of trouble.”

Illustration:

I was reading a story told by a retired captain named Gary Shehan. They arrived at a working structure fire, late one night, flames were showing from the main floor and heavy smoke filled the structure. Gary and his partner attacked the flames, while his friend Rick with his partner began a search of the second floor. As Rick searched, he became disorientated as to which way led out. He crawled along the walls. Feeling his way, looking for the exit. Suddenly he heard the alarm on his air pack go off. Time was running short, after another three minutes of searching, Rick began to get scared, thoughts of not seeing his family again passed through his mind. He began to pray, like he had never prayed before, Lord please get me out of here! Just then Rick’s hand felt a hose line lying on the floor, he began to follow it; the first coupling, it told him he was crawling in the right direction. With his air pack empty, he reached the door to safety. He told Gary what had happened, and how he wanted to give a big hug to the guys who laid that line to the second floor. They searched everywhere, but no one had laid that line to the upper story.

Some bystanders reported they saw three firefighters grab an inch and a half off of one of the engines and run in through the back door and up the back stairs, but no one saw them leave.

You can call on Him in a time of trouble and He will answer you.

III. Angels come in many different Forms.

Perhaps some of you are saying, I’ve never seen an Angel, or not that you know of at least.

Others perhaps are saying, at this time in our convention we will be remembering and honoring some of our members who the Lord has called home.

Question?

Did the words of this Psalm apply to them? Did he really give his angels charge over them, were they really with them in their time of trouble?

Did the Lord send his angels to be with them in their last moments?

Yes, I believe He did, there are different forms of Angels, but the Lord will use whatever means he wishes to meet our needs.

Illustration:

An Old Man & His Dog

Ruth Nelson and her husband are firefighters in Oregon where Ruth grew up. Firefighting was in their blood because, both Ruth and her husband Dick’s dads were Volunteer firemen as well.

Ruth’s dad had been a lumberjack in Washington and Oregon. He had enjoyed being outdoors and had reveled in pitting his strength against the forces of nature as well as fighting fires. He had entered grueling lumberjack competitions and had placed often. The shelves in his house were filled with trophies that attested to his prowess.

Four days after his sixty-seventh birthday, he had a heart attack. An ambulance took him to the hospital while a paramedic administered CPR to keep blood and oxygen flowing. At the hospital, her dad was rushed into an operating room. He was lucky; he survived. But something inside her dad died. His zest for life was gone. He obstinately refused to follow the doctor's orders. Suggestions and offers of help were turned aside with sarcasm and insults. The number of visitors thinned, even from the fire company. He was left alone in his anger.

He moved in with Ruth and Dick, but despite all of their efforts they could not reach him. It was no fun living in that house. That's when someone from the fire house told them about an article they had read," attitudes of people had improved dramatically when they were given responsibility for a dog. "

Ruth drove to the animal shelter that afternoon.

Each Kennel contained five to seven dogs. Long-haired dogs, curly-haired dogs, black dogs, spotted dogs all jumped up, trying to reach her. As Ruth neared the last pen a dog in the shadows of the far corner struggled to his feet, walked to the front of the run and sat down. It was a pointer, one of the dog world's aristocrats. Years had etched his face and muzzle with shades of gray.

His hipbones jutted out in lopsided triangles. But it was his eyes that caught and held my attention. Calm and clear, they beheld unwaveringly.

Ruth pointed to the dog. "Can you tell me about him?" The officer looked, and then shook his head in puzzlement.

"He's a funny one. Appeared out of nowhere and sat in front of the gate. We brought him in, figuring someone would be right down to claim him. That was two weeks ago, and we've heard nothing. His time is up tomorrow."

She looked at the pointer again. The calm brown eyes awaited my decision. "I'll take him," When Ruth reached the house, she honked the horn twice. Her Dad shuffled onto the front porch. "Ta-da! Look what I got for you, Dad!" she said excitedly. Ruth's Dad looked, and then wrinkled his face in disgust. "If I had wanted a dog, I would have gotten one. And I would have picked out a better specimen than that bag of bones.

Suddenly the pointer pulled free from her grasp. He wobbled toward her dad and sat down in front of him. Then slowly, carefully, he raised his paw.

Ruth's dad's lower jaw trembled as he stared at the uplifted paw. Confusion replaced the anger in his eyes. The pointer waited patiently. Then her dad was on his knees hugging the animal. It was the beginning of a warm and intimate friendship. Her Dad named the pointer Cheyenne. Together he and Cheyenne explored the community and visited the fire house every day. Her dad would sweep up every morning on his daily rounds.

They spent long hours walking down dusty lanes. They spent reflective moments on the banks of streams, angling for trout. They even started to attend Sunday services together, Her Dad sitting in a pew and Cheyenne lying quietly at his feet. No one in the church minded.

Her Dad and Cheyenne were inseparable throughout the next three years. His bitterness faded, and he and Cheyenne made many friends everywhere Then late one night she was startled to feel Cheyenne's cold nose burrowing through our bed covers. He had never before come into their bedroom at night.

She woke up her husband Dick and ran to her father's room. Her Dad lay in his bed, his face Serene. But his spirit had left quietly sometime during the night.

Two days later her shock and grief deepened when she discovered Cheyenne lying dead beside her dad's bed. She wrapped his still form up in the rag rug he had slept on.

Some of the young members of the fire department came in the morning and buried Cheyenne near their favorite fishing hole, they silently thanked the dog for the help he had given in restoring this old firemen's peace of mind.

The morning of Her Dad's funeral the church was full, everyone from the fire company was there plus so many friends her dad and Cheyenne had made over those three years. The pastor, who serves as their Fire Chaplain began his eulogy. It was a tribute to both Ruth's Dad and the dog that had changed his life. And then the pastor turned to Hebrews 13:2. "Be not forgetful to entertain heavenly stranger's unawares."

"The Chaplain said he often thanked God for sending that angel in the form of a dog, to help his old friend!

Cheyenne's unexpected appearance at the animal shelter...

his calm acceptance and complete devotion to Ruth's father...And the proximity of their deaths was proof to them that the Lord had intervened.

Everyone knew that God had answered their prayers after all.

Life is too short for drama & petty things, so laugh hard, love truly and forgive quickly.

Live While You Are Alive.

Tell the people in your life and in your department that you love that you love and care about them, at every opportunity.

Forgive those now who made you cry or got you angry. For you might not get a second chance. Amen.

A Place of Refuge

Psalm 46

Hudson Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association

Rev. Jim Van Houten Chaplain

On the morning of September 11th, 2001, Firefighter Mickey Kross responded to the North Tower with his unit. Kross, a lieutenant was assigned to a firehouse on E. 29th St., he was part of a unit sent to the 24th floor with orders from his commander to quickly vacate the building. They had just received the news of the collapse of the South Tower at 9:58 a.m.

Stopping to assist an injured woman on the 23rd floor, Kross and his men had carried her to the fourth floor of Stairwell B when suddenly the walls started violently shaking. What followed over the next 10 seconds, Kross recalled, was a deafening roar, as the 110-story office tower rained 250,000 tons of steel and slabs of concrete. He said it was like a 100-mile-per-hour hurricane, he pulled his

knees tight up under his chin in a fetal position, in anticipation for what must have seemed like certain death.

Mickey began to pray like he had never prayed before asking the Lord to save both he and his men. What followed the thunderous roar of the plummeting skyscraper was not death, but instead there was a silence “quite unlike he had ever heard. One of the firefighters with him said “It was as if God had reached out and placed his hands around them and protected them from harm.

For the next 10 minutes Kross and his friends were entombed in the debris, but he finally managed to push the rubble off himself and started yelling out for the other members of his unit, he was surprised to hear the voices from other firefighters, an additional 11 in all. It was truly a miracle for along with these firefighters several employees from offices in the building had also survived, including the woman he was helping down. Her name was Josephine Harris, and she became known as the “Angel of Stairwell B.” The Lord had saved them all from certain death.

Although trapped for three hours and in virtual darkness, a sudden shift in the wind inside the smoldering crater revealed a shaft of light coming through directly overhead. Using twisted steel and burning debris for support, Kross and his men climbed to the gap and from there made their way to a Fire Department command post, where he discovered that he and his men had been listed as missing.

Years before 9/11 David wrote these words in Psalm 46. He said, “God is our Refuge and our Strength, He is a present help in times of trouble.” “This morning I’d like to focus our attention on this verse of scripture for I have seen this promise of God directed over and over again both to myself as well as too my fellow firefighters.

I. God is our refuge.

It’s wonderful to always have the Lord as our place of refuge.

- Things can change in our lives so very quickly. The day can start out just fine, but in only an hour all that can change.
- Family problems can be overwhelming; none of us is exempt from them. We pray that our kids will make all the right choices, but they don’t always do the right thing. When they don’t it’s great to have the Lord as a refuge.
- Seems like no one’s job is totally secure these days. Most of us are living from paycheck to paycheck.... The worry can be a heavy load to bear. Good to have a refuge.
- Some of you may be dealing with the pain caused by the loss of your life’s partner. That’s when we will all need a place of refuge. God promises to always be there for us.
- When health problems come our way, if they haven’t, believe me they will. It’s wonderful to have the Lord as our refuge.

Illustration:

In February my brother was up from Florida for my mother’s funeral, he had just found out he had glaucoma, and he was on my case to be checked. So, I set up an appointment, the doctor could not believe I wasn’t in great pain, I was having an acute attack, the pressure in both my eyes was causing great damage to my optic nerves. If I had waited a week or two more, I would have lost my eyesight. Wow, God is so good; he got me there in time. I’m still battling to keep the pressure very low... but I’m in God’s good hands and I know that he will bring me through this. It’s wonderful to have refuge in the Lord.

- It’s wonderful to have the Lord as our refuge at a fire scene. We have no idea what dangers the next call may bring. We can go for days without a serious call, and then it hits the fan... Yes, we train and train so we will be ready for the unexpected, but there are some circumstances that are beyond our control.

Illustration:

Last December 24th my friends from the West Webster fire department responded to an early morning call of a car fire. None of the first responders realized that it was a trap; a deranged man had set his car and his house on fire and was waiting to ambush them. As the four firefighters approached the fire, he began shooting from about 30 yards away, they never really had a chance to protect themselves. Mike and Thomasa were killed almost instantly, and Joe Hofsetter and Ted Scardino were badly wounded. Ted was shot in the left shoulder and the bullet entered his lung.

He crawled under the engine for refuge, his was the voice you heard on the 9/11 tape. Joe was shot in the hip and was bleeding badly.

The shooter continued firing at them. Somehow Joe dragged himself to the engine and pulled himself up into the cab. Not realizing that Ted was under the engine he tried to drive away. Ted's place of refuge was gone; he was left wounded and totally exposed to the gunfire. He called for help, and he prayed for help and the Lord protected him from being it again. The Lord sent a police officer to the scene; he engaged the shooter in a gun battle and chased him down to the beach, where he shot himself to death. It was a long time before help would come, 7 houses burned because they were afraid to approach the scene. But the Lord was with Ted and Joe and they both survived.

Ted had found a place of refuge, the engine, but it was moveable. The Lord tells us he is our place of refuge, and he is Unmovable.

II. This verse goes on to tell us that the Lord is our Strength.

- There are times in our lives that we pray for different types of strength.
- Some circumstances require physical strength.

Illustration:

I remember stopping to help at an MVA on the Long Island Expressway several years ago and watched as four ladies rolled a car off of a child.... Extra physical strength.

- Some Circumstances require Emotional strength.
When children are involved in accidents or fires.
- Some circumstances require Spiritual Strength.

Illustration:

One of my chaplain friends arrived at the scene of a motorcycle accident the driver was DOA. When he looked at the boys ID, he realized it was his own son.... Spiritual, God given strength.

- There are times when we require all three, Physical, emotional and spiritual strength.

Illustration:

On May 3rd, 2012, a 23-year-old soldier named Taylor Morris was on patrol in Afghanistan when he stepped on an IED. In an instant his life was forever changed. With both arms and legs missing, bleeding profusely, he ordered the medics away until the site could be cleared of two other IED's. He was transported to Walter Reed hospital where he was reunited with his girlfriend Kelly. She said, "I prayed for God to give me all the strength that I needed so that I could help Taylor". Over the next several weeks she seldom left his side. As the wounds healed, she asked if she could take him home and bring him back and forth for rehab. Kelly carried Taylor on her back from his home to the hospital. He amazed the doctors with his progress... all because of Kelly.

As the months went by, he was fitted with artificial arms and legs, and it was Kelly who helped him learn to use them. Taylor was awarded the Bronze Star for valor, he said, "if I had hands I would pin it on Kelly, for she is the brave one."

They have purchased a log cabin together and plan on being married in the near future. Kelly said, "I asked God for strength, and he provided me with more than I needed." She is an amazing person of faith don't you think, a person of deep character... And oh yes one more thing... She is a volunteer firefighter.

III. Lastly God is a present help in times of trouble.

Once again, we all realize that there are different times of trouble, which we can all face.

- When the names of our friends who have been called home are read, we are all touched by their loss. We recall the hours that we have spent together over the years, both at past conventions as well as friendships in the fire service.
- Many of you visited them in the hospital or at their homes, and perhaps you offered a prayer on their behalf.
- Our prayers are a great help to them in their time of sickness and trouble.
- But there is another type of trouble which we face, but we seldom talk about it, It's TROUBLE LIKING SOME PEOPLE.
- They might do things which irritate us, maybe their mannerisms bother us. Whatever it is, it's hard for us to get past it. Whether it's in the firehouse or the workplace, we find it to be a battle.
- Well, the Lord can make a difference even in these times of trouble. And he may amaze you that with his help we can not only tolerate these folks, but we can become good friends with them.

Illustration:

Let me tell you about a friend of mine named Barbara Thompson. She is a retired teacher and both she and her husband are Volunteer firefighters. When Barbara stood in front of her 5th grade class on the very first day of school, she looked at her students and said that she loved them all the same. However, that was impossible, because there in the front row, slumped in his seat, was a little boy named Teddy Stoddard. Barbara had watched Teddy the year before and noticed that he did not play well with the other children; that his clothes were messy and that he constantly needed a bath. She was hoping that he would not be in her class. But there he was! His grades

It got to the point where Mrs. Thompson would actually take delight in marking his papers with a broad red pen, making bold X's and then putting a big "F" at the top of his papers.

At the school where Mrs. Thompson taught, she was required to review each child's past records and she put Teddy's off until last. However, when she reviewed his file, she was in for a surprise.

Teddy's first grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is a bright child with a ready laugh. He does his work neatly and has good manners... he is a joy to be around..."

His second-grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is an excellent student, well-liked by his classmates, but he is troubled because his mother has a terminal illness and life at home must be a struggle."

His third-grade teacher wrote, "His mother's death has been hard on him. He tries to do his best, but his father doesn't show much interest and his home life will soon affect him if some steps aren't taken."

Teddy's fourth grade teacher wrote, "Teddy is withdrawn and doesn't show much interest in school. He doesn't have many friends and he sometimes sleeps in class."

By now, Mrs. Thompson realized the problem and she was ashamed of herself. She felt even worse when her students brought her Christmas presents, wrapped in beautiful ribbons and bright paper, except for Teddy's. His present was clumsily wrapped in the heavy, brown paper that he got from a grocery bag. Mrs. Thompson took pains to open it in the middle of the other presents. Some of the children started to laugh when she found a rhinestone bracelet with some of the stones missing, and a bottle that was one-quarter full of perfume. But she stifled the children's laughter when she exclaimed how pretty the bracelet was, putting it on, and dabbing some of the perfume on her wrist. Teddy Stoddard stayed after school that day just long enough to say, "Mrs. Thompson, today you smelled just like my mom used to." After the children left, she cried for at least an hour.

On that very day, she quit teaching reading, writing and arithmetic. Instead, she began to teach children. Mrs. Thompson paid particular attention to Teddy. As she worked with him, his mind seemed to come alive. The more she encouraged him, the faster he responded. By the end of the year, Teddy had become one of the smartest children in the class and, despite her lie that she would love all the children the same, Teddy became one of her "teacher's pets.."

A year later, she found a note under her door, from Teddy, telling her that she was still the best teacher he ever had in his whole life.

Six years went by before she got another note from Teddy. He then wrote that he had finished high school, third in his class, and she was still the best teacher he ever had in life.

Four years after that, she got another letter, saying that while things had been tough at times, he'd stayed in school, had stuck with it, and would soon graduate from college with the highest of honors. He assured Mrs. Thompson that she was still the best and favorite teacher he had ever had in his whole life.

Then four more years passed and yet another letter came. This time he explained that after he got his bachelor's degree, he decided to go a little further. The letter explained that she was still the best and favorite teacher he ever had. But now his name was a little longer.... The letter was signed, Theodore F. Stoddard, MD.

The story does not end there. You see, there was yet another letter that spring. Teddy said he had met this girl and was going to be married. He explained that his father had died a couple of years ago and he was wondering if Mrs. Thompson might agree to sit at the wedding in the place that was usually reserved for the mother of the groom.

Of course, Mrs. Thompson did. And guess what? She wore that bracelet, the one with several rhinestones missing. Moreover, she made sure she was wearing the perfume that Teddy remembered his mother wearing on their last Christmas together.

They hugged each other, and Dr. Stoddard whispered in Mrs. Thompson's ear, "Thank you Mrs. Thompson for believing in me. Thank you so much for making me feel important and showing me that I could make a difference."

Mrs. Thompson, with tears in her eyes, whispered back.

She said, "Teddy, you have it all wrong. You were the one who taught me that I could make a difference. I didn't know how to teach until I met you."

(For you that don't know, Teddy Stoddard is the Dr. at Iowa Methodist Hospital in Des Moines that has the Stoddard Cancer Wing.)

A Time to Remember

Revelation 7: 9-17

Hudson Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association

Rev. Jim Van Houten Chaplain

In 1836 and unknown volunteer firemen had responded to an early morning structure fire, he had entered the building where he found a small child asleep in a burning bedroom. He carried her to safety outside the house; there he stood holding her in his arm, while he searched the scene for her parents.

A reporter saw him and made a famous sketch, it was carried in all of the newspapers across America, Coast to Coast.

In 1848 the renowned sculptor Robert Launitz was commissioned to create a statue that would honor Volunteer Firemen who had died in the Line of Duty as well as those who served. Using that sketch as his model he created a White Marble statue of the Firemen holding a small child. It was erected in the Greenwood Cemetery in New York City, where it remains today.

When the Civil War was over our country set out to honor its hero's, and soon across America Volunteer Firemen were being honored by their communities. That haunting picture of the lone firemen holding a small child still remains in the hearts and minds of America Not far from this famous stature in Calvary in Cemetery is the grave of Charles Keegan, a Brooklyn firefighter killed in the line of duty while fighting a blaze at Locust Point (caused by a lightning strike at the Sone and Fleming Kings County Oil Refinery on 9/15/1882).

Explosions associated with the blaze claimed the life of Charles Keegan and fellow firefighter Stuart Deane both suffered grisly deaths, according to the [New York Times account](#). A stature of a lone firemen stands above his head stone.

Both these statures embody the spirit of the brotherhood which we share together in the Fire Service. So, it is fitting that we gather here today at the Hudson Valley Volunteer Firefighters Convention to pause and remember the names of those friends, whom we have served with, those who have been called home to be with the Lord.

- I. **We need to remember the debt we owe to others.**

Because of their service in the years past, our communities have been kept safe.

Looking back over their years of service we recall the many calls which they answered, the list of structure fires they fought, the major accidents scenes they were at, the hours of personal time they donated during their years of service.

Included in this history, we recall the good times we spent together, the parades we marched in. The conventions we attended together. The wet downs we participated in. And perhaps the many mugs of beer we all use to enjoy, wow, remember those days.

Scripture:

In Revelation chapter 7 and verse 16 it tells us about our friends that have been called home.

“Never again will they hunger, never again will they be thirsty, the sun will not beat down upon them and never again will they feel the scorching heat at a fire scene.”

We honor the memory today of those who have served. And It is Important that we honor them!!

Our Heritage:

Honoring those who have served is part of our heritage. But in many departments, it’s becoming a lost tradition.

The Brotherhood which we all once knew and loved seems to be slipping away.

At Firematic Funeral Services we seem to see fewer and fewer Firefighters in attendance.

But there are ways with which we can Honor our friends and maintain this Brotherhood.

Illustration:

A few years ago, the Montgomery Fire Department lost one of their Life Members. To honor Roger their station house was draped with black bunting, The Mutual firefighters lined the front of the station house standing at attention in their bunker gear. A large wooden cross stood outside with Roger’s gear upon it.

Two ladder trucks one on either side of the street supported a large American flag; the funeral procession was to pass under it on the way to the cemetery. Rogers family came first in two limos, they parked in front of the Station House. Next came the hearse led by a lone piper playing Amazing Grace on the pipes.

Marching in perfect step were the pallbearers, Rogers closest friends all in class A uniforms, 8 of them 4 on each side flanking the hearse.

At a prearranged signal all 8 reached inside their coats and produced a large cigar which they placed in their mouths as they passed by the family in perfect order.

You see Roger was a cigar smoker, this was a personal touch which they included... believe me Rogers’s family has never forgotten this personal honor. It gave them the strength they needed to get through the difficult hours which were ahead.

It is right and proper that we Honor our friends, and we need to do it in a personal way.

But it is equally important to Honor our friends who have been called home in the years following their passing.

All too often we seem to forget our deceased members and forget totally about their families.

That should never happen! A family may grieve for years to come; we need to be aware of their feelings.

Illustration:

On June 17, 2001, members of Rescue 4 were called to the scene of a structure fire in Queens. It was Father's Day and before the call most of the dads had called home and talked to their kids.... Most had plans to do things with the family when their shift was over. The fire burned out of control fueled by the contents of this hardware store, the Long Island General Supply Company. Harry Ford and John Downing were standing outside the building when the walls collapsed on them, and Brian Fahey was inside when the first-floor caved in. It was a terrible loss which left 8 children Fatherless.

On Sunday I was at Hunter Mountain, the Taste of Country Concert. While standing in line a young fellow came over and said, "Are you Rev Jim? I said I was. You were at my dad's funeral. I remembered that it was 13 years on Sunday... a sad anniversary to remember. He said he wanted to come there that night to hear Hank Williams Jr. he was a favorite of my dad's. During the concert I went and got two mugs of beer and we drank them in his memory.

We need to honor those from our companies who are called home... and remember them for years to come!

Wouldn't it be great if all of the candidates taking firefighter One would learn the names and the personal history of the notable members of our departments.

It would help keep the brotherhood alive!

II. Verse 17 tells us that the Lord will "Lead them to springs of Living Water

This verse was proven to be true for two firefighters fighting a wildfire in Colorado outside of Ridgeway in 2009.

Ed one of the firefighters' hunts Elk with us, we will be together on a hunt this September. Ed told me about this incident. The dry conditions had led to a wildfire started by a campfire at a camp site which was not extinguished. Ed and another young firefighter were working together clearing brush to form a fire break when the wind changed direction and a wall of flame came towards them, they ran for their lives. The smoke was blinding them, and the heat was becoming unbearable.

Ed said that they were both praying asking God to send them some type of help. Suddenly they both fell into an Elk wallow, there was a spring, the Elk love to lie in these wet areas and roll around, their body weight makes a pit, and this one was filled with water from the spring. They took a deep breath and went under the water, the fire passed over them.

They were saved by a Spring of Living Water.

But notice the one mentioned in Revelation is a bit different,

First, it's in heaven, a place for our friends called home to find eternal rest.

And secondly it is a place of eternal safety, not just a temporary place of rescue.

In Revelation 7: 17 it concludes with these words, "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

I believe one of the most difficult parts of a funeral service for me as a chaplain are the tears of a firefighter's children, those tears being shed for the loss of their dad.

Each October we attend the Fallen Firefighters Memorial at the plaza in Albany, and the tears still touch me. Time doesn't seem to dry tears; in fact, sometimes it takes years to get them to flow.

Illustration:

Recently I visited the 9/11 museum with a group of 100 chaplains. We were at the reflection pool outside; the names of the 343 firefighters as well as the other victims are on plaques surrounding the pool. I came across the name of Ron E. Henderson, a friend of mine lost that day.

I remembered my daughter Katherine calling me on my cell phone to tell me she was with Darron Ron's son at Valley Central H. S. "Dad she said, they can't find his dad, if you see him, please tell him to call home."

Ron's name was on the missing list, and we were just beginning to realize that we were not going to find some of these brothers.

I recalled that while working on the pile of the South Tower that we had not shed any tears, there was great sadness but no tears. I recalled the guys I was working with from Walden, Rick Penny our new President... Rick do you remember there were no tears.

Then I remembered why! The dust, the powdered concrete from the buildings, it clogged the tear ducts and made your eyes so dry that we couldn't cry.

It kept us from grieving for our friends.

I ran my fingers over Ron's name and out of know where the tears started to flow. I realized that was the first time I really was mourning for my friend.

I found the names of the other 28 friends that I had lost there and as I touched their names the tears came.

It was a great way to honor them and to say a special prayer for each of them.

But Rev. 7: 17 tells us that in heaven, "God will wipe away all tears from our eyes" for there will no longer be sorrow there.

So please remember that today as we honor those from our association who the Lord has called home that they are at perfect peace. All tears and sadness gone. And the day will come in the future when we will be together once again.

Amen.

Protecting The Little Ones

Matthew 18: 10 to 14

Hudson Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association 2011

Rev. Jim Van Houten Chaplain

In 1836 and unknown volunteer firemen had responded to an early morning structure fire, he had entered the building where he found a small child asleep in a burning bedroom. He carried her to safety outside the house; there he stood holding her in his arm, while he searched the scene for her

parents. A reporter saw him and made a famous sketch, it was carried in all of the newspapers, and this picture captured the hearts of the people.

In 1848 the renowned sculptor Robert Lantz was commissioned to create a statue that would honor Volunteer Firemen who had died in the Line of Duty as well as those who served. Using that sketch as his model he created a White Marble statue of the Firemen holding a small child. It was erected in the Greenwood Cemetery in New York City, where it remains today. From that time on statues of this firemen were erected all across America. To this day when folks are asked "What does a Volunteer Firemen do?" They answer comes back, "They save the lives of children."

I. The Preciousness of Children

Children are precious to us as Firemen, and they are precious to God.

What is the first thought that comes to mind concerning children? Their Safety!

God has entrusted us with their care, and so as firefighters, we do everything we can to protect them.

I remember the tot finder stickers that we gave out years ago to identify the bedroom windows where children were sleeping.

- a. We go to the schools to teach fire prevention.
- b. We teach them to Stop, Drop, Cover and Roll, in case their clothes were to catch on fire.
- c. We teach them how to cover the bottom of the door to keep smoke out.
- d. How to feel heat with the back of their hand before opening the door.
- e. We teach them not to play in the Kitchen, and never near the stove. We want to keep them safe.
- f. We tell them about smoke alarms, what they sound like, what to do when they hear it go off. How the batteries need to be changed once a year and how the batteries should never be taken out and used in toys!
- g. We teach them to wear a bicycle helmet when riding their bikes.

Because they are a precious gift of life, they are special to us and to the Lord, so we need to take care of them.

Listen to the words of Matthew 18: 10 "See that you do not overlook the care of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven."

As firefighters we are the Lord's guardians of his children. Our training, dedication and quick response, and yes, at times our willingness to risk our lives; have saved many a child from certain death.

Illustration:

On August 16, 1987 a Northwest Airlines flight #255 a DC-9 was taking off from Detroit when because of pilot error, it crashed onto a local highway, killing 156 people. A lady from Tampa Arizona named Paula Cichan and her 4-year-old daughter Cecelia were on board. Cecelia was the only person who survived the crash. At first firefighters thought she had been in one of the cars on the highway, but later investigation showed her name on the passenger list. Cecelia had suffered some burns and was unconscious in the hospital for three days following the crash. When she regained consciousness, she told them the story. Paula, Cecelia's mother was a firefighter. When the plane veered left and struck a light pole, Paula unbuckled her seat belt, and got on her knees in front of Cecelia. She wrapped her arms around her body to protect her. She whispered to her daughter, "Don't be afraid, honey, God and I will take care of you." Paula's own body acted as a human shield to protect her daughter.

Because of Paula's training, she didn't hesitate to react. Cecelia was saved because of a firefighter's love and a mother's love.

We are guardians of the children the Lord has entrusted us with.

II. **Their Angels always behold the face of God.**

In this verse it seems to be referring to “Guardian Angels Angel’s sent just to take care of Children, what a wonderful thought

In Psalm 91 we are told in verses 9 to 12 that the Lord will give His angels charge over us to keep us from harm and danger.

That’s a great comfort to us as Firefighters, Divine help when we need it.

Over in the book of Hebrews it speaks about Ministering Angels.

Illustration:

I have a friend named Bob Moffat, he is a firefighter and Chaplain in Ohio. He told me this story. Years ago, his mother was taking him to church on a snowy Icy Sunday Morning. This was before the age of car seats; remember those wicker baskets they carried babies in? Well, he was in one of those on the back seat of the car. A car traveling in the other direction lost control and crashed into his mother; their car went off the road and overturned. The firemen and Police arrived, and his mother was taken to the hospital unconscious.

She awakened two days later and asked how is my baby, my little boy? Both the firemen and police returned to the scene to search for him, not much hope, two days of freezing temperatures’, it was still snowing making it hard to see. But at the accident scene rescue workers heard dogs barking, in the woods nearby. There they found little Bobby, very hungry, still wrapped in his blanket, and just fine.

There were two very large dogs guarding him, they had been lying on both sides of him keeping him warm sheltering him with their bodies. He was taken to the hospital and reunited with his mother. He said the strange thing was that no one had ever seen the dogs before that day, and no one could find them after the rescue.

Bob said, I’m a miracle, God sent his angels to take care of me. Now as a firefighter and chaplain I’m taking care of the Lord’s children here in Ohio.

I believe that the Lord wants to use us a Firefighter to serve with his angels to help protect children.

I believe that the training that we are receiving, the information at the seminars and courses we attend are helping to equip us all to be better Guardians of God’s Children.

For a firefighter to save his or her own child I believe is the accomplishment of a lifetime. Wouldn’t you agree?

Illustration:

Christmas was a very busy time at our house this year, hardly even a moment to spare to spend with each other. My wife Dawn and daughter Katherine helped with the other ladies from our firehouse to take on Operation Dalmatian, this is a combined effort of our local churches, businesses and the Walden Fire Department to provide Christmas gifts to needy children in our Village. We delivered gifts on our fire trucks to about 300 kids with an average cost of \$50 dollars per child. That’s a Christmas shopping list of about \$15,000.00.

I finished delivering the last of the gifts at 4:00 on the afternoon of Christmas Eve. Dawn insisted that we leave a number of toys for both boys and girls at the firehouse just in case we got a last-minute call. It must have been the Lord speaking to her heart for we sure did need them. At 6:07 Christmas

morning the Walden Fire Department was called to the scene of a working structure fire, mutual aid was called for within three minutes on the second alarm. The Treiland family home on Decker Drive was a five-year-old structure, and with new construction holding in the heat, we found the structure fully involved, fire coming out of every window in the home when the first engines arrived at 6:18 A.M. The Treiland family had moved to our village five years ago from Long Island, Michael had served as a fireman with FDNY, he recently retired and Wendy is a teacher at the Walden Elementary School.

We are not sure exactly what awakened Wendy, it could well have been the angel of the Lord, she smelled just a whiff of smoke, but not enough to set off the smoke alarms. She woke Michael up and he went to investigate. The fire had begun in the front porch ceiling, the fire investigators were focusing their attention on a faulty light socket to which the Christmas lights were connected. Michael told Wendy to get the children out of the house, they called for Wendy's father who was staying with them that evening and told him to get out of the house as well. Michael ran outside and to the front of the house with a garden hose, but by this time the fire had covered the entire porch ceiling. He told me that even if he had a 2 ½ in his hands the fire was so far advanced that all he would have been able to do was chase the fire.

His training and experience in reading a fire came into play at this time, and it helped to save the lives of his family.

The fire was rolling down from the ceiling and had already heated the front windows that orange color, he realized they were about to blow. And he could look through the window and see his family still inside. Wendy and the kids were trying to get her dad to leave the house. Here is when a second miracle took place, he said it was like the hand of God reached out and kept the glass from breaking, God gave them extra seconds which saved their lives, for once the glass blew out the fire would sweep across the inside of the first floor.

He screamed, get out Get out Get out Now! As they did the windows gave way, the first floor was engulfed in flames and within two minutes the fire filled the second floor as well. Although the family escaped with only seconds to spare, sadly their dog Sammy and their cat perished in the fire. Their home was a total loss for both the first and second floors burned through and whatever personal memories they had were lost.

Dawn and I have an apartment over our three-car garage in front of our house which was vacant, I called Dawn from the scene and she and the girls went to work cleaning it and decorated it for Christmas so that the family could have a place to stay, a motel room on Christmas just didn't seem right. The gifts remaining from Operation Dalmatian at the fire house were wrapped by our ladies and set under the tree in the apartment.

Now I mentioned that Mutual Aid was called, and our neighboring Departments responded and fought the fire with us. When the fire was out all returned home except for our neighbors in the Coldenham Fire Department, they returned to quarters but did not return home. Instead, they spent the rest of Christmas afternoon planning a special visit for later that evening.

Some of the ladies worked at Wal-Mart, they contacted their manager and shared the news about the fire, the Newburgh store was opened, and Wal-Mart donated \$200 worth of toys to the family. That was a fine gesture, but it didn't compare with what the Fire Company did. There were special toys which the kids had asked for, they were under the tree that morning, but all were lost.

The Coldenham Fire Company replaced them, and then purchased additional clothing and personal items for the entire family. They are outstanding, amazing neighbors who have raised the standard of Mutual Aid to its highest level. I am honored to serve with my friend Rev. Brian Randazo, as one of their chaplains.

On Christmas night at about 6:18 the same time we had responded that morning, the Walden and Coldenham Fire Departments returned to our farm where the family was staying. The same engines that had fought the fire in the morning now parked on the road in front of the apartment, shutting down the road in true Firematic Style. They raised their light towers and lit up the farm. It must have looked a bit like the scene on the hillside outside of Bethlehem 2000 years ago where the angels appeared to the shepherds.

More than 70 fire fighters unloaded boxes of Christmas gifts, clothes and boxes of food and headed to the apartment. Leading this small army was Santa, in the ecumenical spirit of the season; Santa's helper was played by one of our Jewish fire fighters.

As we entered the apartment the children were so excited. Little Erin who is 7, ran to Santa and hugged him and said, "Oh Santa, I didn't think you would know where to find me, I was praying that you would come" Santa got choked up and couldn't say even Ho, Ho Ho. There wasn't a dry eye among any of us!

It was the brotherhood between us firefighters and the true spirit of Christmas that brought us together, that special bond that makes us all a family in the good times and the bad times.

Caring for each other and the caring especially for children is truly the symbol of a firefighter. Tony Trapani past chief from the Coldenham Fire Department shared these thoughts with the family. "This morning was one of the worst memories you could ever have of a Christmas; you lost your home, those gifts under the tree, your dog Sammy and your new kitten. But tonight, we wanted to conclude your Christmas with some wonderful memories.

Kids your dad has been helping to save folks from fires for years, and even this morning he used his skill and training to get you out safely. Your Mom has worked as a teacher; she too has spent her life helping other people. Tonight, as members of our local fire departments we just wanted to give something back to you Michael and Wendy as our firematic brother and sister your family."

On Christmas Morning the Lord had sent his Guardian Angels to save those children. I'm sure they awakened Wendy. God then used Michael's training to get them out safely. And then the Lord used the dedicated men and women from Walden and Coldenham to care for the Treiland Family

We are the guardians of His Children Listen to the next part of this passage.

"If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, won't he leave the ninety and nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And when he finds it, I tell you the truth, he will be happier about that one little one than about the ninety and nine that were safe."

My friends, as firefighters we need to be out there looking for ways to assist the Lord in caring for his little Ones. For if we do, He will richly bless us all.

III. God in heaven is not willing that any of these Little Ones will be Lost.

One of the problems I see facing the Volunteer Fire Service today is the yards and yards of regulations. Remember the days that we used to have fun. The days when we would do silly, sometimes childlike things, and that laugh about them for the next 30 years.

When I hear stories about the Fire Service that sound like the Old Days, I get excited, they stir my soul. I'd like to close with such a story, how a fire department came to the aid of one of the Lord's Little Ones.

Illustration:

Am I a Fireman Now?

In Phoenix, Arizona, a 26-year-old mother stared down at her 6-year-old son, who was dying of terminal leukemia.

Although her heart was filled with sadness, she also had a strong feeling of determination. Like any parent, she wanted her son to grow up and fulfill all his dreams. Now that was no longer possible. The leukemia would see to that.

But she still wanted her son's dream to come true. She took her son's hand and asked, 'Billy, did you ever think about what you wanted to be once you grew up? Did you ever dream and wish what you would do with your life?' Mommy, 'I always wanted to be a fireman when I grew up.' Mom smiled back and said, 'Let's see if we can make your wish come true.'

Later that day she went to her local fire Department in Phoenix, Arizona, where she met Fireman Bob, who had a heart as big as Phoenix. She explained her son's final wish and asked if it might be possible to give her 6-year-old son a ride around the block on a fire engine.

Fireman Bob said, 'Look, we can do better than that. If you'll have your son ready at seven o'clock Wednesday morning, we'll make him an honorary Fireman for the whole day. He can come down to the fire station, eat with us, go out on all the fire calls, the whole nine yards!

And if you'll give us his sizes, we'll get a real fire uniform for him, with a real fire hat - not a toy one with the emblem of the Phoenix Fire Department on it, a yellow slicker like we wear and rubber boots.' 'They're all manufactured right here in Phoenix, so we can get them fast.'

Three days later Fireman Bob picked up Billy, dressed him in his uniform and escorted him from his hospital bed to the waiting hook and ladder truck. Billy got to sit on the back of the truck and help steer it back to the fire station. He was in heaven. There were three fire calls in Phoenix that day and Billy got to go out on all three calls. He rode in the different fire engines, the Paramedic's van, and even the fire chief's car. He was also videotaped for the local news program.

Having his dream come true, with all the love and attention that was lavished upon him, so deeply touched Billy that he lived three months longer than any doctor thought possible.

One night all of his vital signs began to drop dramatically and the head nurse, who believed in the hospice concept - that no one should die alone, began to call the family members to the hospital. Then she remembered the day Billy had spent as a Fireman, so she called the Fire Chief and asked if it would be possible to send a fireman in uniform to the hospital to be with Billy as he made his transition. The chief replied, 'We can do better than that. We'll be there in five minutes. Will you please do me a favor?

When you hear the sirens screaming and see the lights flashing, will you announce over the PA system that there is not a fire?

'It's the department coming to see one of its finest members one more time. And will you open the window to his room?

About five minutes later a hook and ladder truck arrived at the hospital and extended its ladder up to Billy's third floor open window ---- 16 fire-fighters climbed up the ladder into Billy's room! With his mother's permission, they hugged him and held him and told him how much they loved him. With his dying breath, Billy looked up at the fire chief and said, 'Chief am I really a fireman now?' 'Billy, you are, and the Head Chief, Jesus, is holding your hand,' the chief said. With those words, Billy smiled and said, 'I know, He's been holding my hand all day, and the angels have been singing.' He closed his eyes one last time.

My Friends, as we remember those from our ranks who have been called home to be with the Lord, let's remember the way they were greeted when they arrived in God's Station House.

"Well done my good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of my rest, and thank you for caring for my little ones". Amen

Staying Connected

Message by Rev. Jim Van Houten

Memorial services Hudson Valley Firemen's Association 2007

Introduction: Fire fighter from South Jersey back in the middle 1960's At Island Beach State Park. A young man was out swimming, got caught in a rip tide current, was being pulled out to sea. This young firefighter was a strong swimmer, I think that I can get to him before it's too late he told them, but it will take all of the energy that I have, I will never be able to pull him to safety. But if you tie this rope around my waist, you can pull us back to shore once I reach him.

As he swam with all of his might the people on the shore cheered him on, at times he would disappear in the waves and for long seconds long sighs could be heard, but he'd appear again still swimming, and the cheers would go up from the crowd. Some people knelt on the sand and prayed; others were spotters the rest were a great cheering section. At last, he reached the drowning man, and he waved his arm as the signal to pull them both to safety.

It was only at that moment that the crowd discovered a horrifying fact, the rope was gone, no ware to be found. As they were watching, cheering, and even praying, no one ever watched that coil of rope, it uncoiled until the end of the rope was pulled out to sea. That sad August afternoon of 1964 both that brave rescuer and the helpless victim drown, because the crowd failed to keep them connected.

The passage I'd like to share with you this morning comes from the book of Ecclesiastes chapter 4 and verse 12. It was written by King Solomon several thousand years ago. Listen to these words:

A cord of three strains cannot be broken Eccl. 4:12

I. The First Cord is we see is Ourselves

Two questions?

Are we happy with ourselves?

Do we believe in ourselves?

If we don't feel that we have a true value, then it affects our self-image. Some of our older members may have some doubts as to whether they are still needed.

- In the Fire Service we have seen many changes
 - A need for better and more expensive Equipment.
 - Better radios for communication.
 - Better protective Gear
 - Thermo Imaging Cameras
 - And the need for more and more training, classes and education

Illustration:

It's hard for some of our younger members to imagine how fires were fought in the past. Responding in the middle of winter in an engine with an open cab. Four fire fighters getting their boots on hanging on for dear life, on the rear step of that engine. No one had a radio, high or low band, the chief yelled instructions. No Scott packs, you wet your handkerchief an

You covered your nose and mouth and went in to search for victims.
And believe it or not, people were rescued, and fires were extinguished.

But whether you're a young member or a seasoned veteran, one thing remains the same, it's important to believe in yourself, if you're going to be effective as a fire fighter!

For by believing in yourself, BEING CONNECTED to your inner Spirit, that can make all the difference.

When we speak about RETENTION OF FIRE FIGHTERS in our companies, we are talking about keeping those members, young and old Connected to that inner love that we have for responding to help our neighbors, whatever be the problem and whatever be the hour.

Connected to Ourselves

Illustration:

Last Thanksgiving Day an editorial in an Ohio newspaper told of a school teacher who asked her class of first graders to draw a picture of something they were thankful for.

She thought of how little these children from poor neighborhoods actually had to be thankful for, but she knew that most of them would draw pictures of turkeys or tables with food. The teacher was taken back with the picture Douglas handed in.

It was a simple childishly drawn hand.

But whose hand? The class was captivated by the abstract image. "I think it must be the hand of God that brings us food," said one child. "A farmer" said another, "because he grows the turkeys."

Finally, when the others were at work, the teacher bent over little Douglas's desk and asked whose hand it was. Douglas who has Downs syndrome said, "It's Firemen Joe's hand, Teacher," he mumbled. Joe has been a volunteer fireman for the past 67 years, he just turned 91. Joe's wife died 3 years ago, and Joe was going through another round of Chemotherapy. But he still tries to stay active. Joe goes to their Station One every day to sweep up and answer the phone.

He had seen little Douglas afraid to enter the school ground, so he walked over and encouraged the little guy. Come on, take my hand and we will walk in there together. Every day he meets Joe at the fire station, and they walk the rest of the way together.

We sometimes forget that the only hands God has are our hands.

A hand stretched out in love to “one of the least of these” is a hand that reflects a thankful heart.

“Serving in our communities, liberates the soul of a person”. When we help others, we are saved from the greed and the insensitivity that captures the soul of the ungrateful person.

Stay connected to your inner self in the fire service!

II. **Connected to our Fire Departments.**

We often speak of the Brotherhood, that special bond which ties us all together in the fire Service.

It's that cord of three strains, that I'm speaking about this morning, it is unbreakable.

Illustration:

Yesterday my daughter came into my study, looked at me and said, dad, I've been crying, what happened? I told her I'd just received news of the 9 firefighters killed in the line of duty in Charleston, SC. I've been thinking about their families and my heart is sad. She understood, and she said, “It's that Brotherhood, right? I said, yes, It's that Brotherhood!”

We can differ on so many things!

We might have real personal issues with each other. But when a need arises... a fellow firefighter or their family is in trouble... than that bond can be both seen and felt.

When there's a fire or an accident to respond to, we put aside all of our problems, and we work together and that really a good thing!

Jesus said that the two greatest commandments were:

1. To love the Lord your God with all of your heart your soul and your might.
2. And your neighbor as yourself.

So, I challenge you today, to allow this special cord of three strains to bind us all together at this convention.

For that Brotherhood that special Bond should have no limits.

Illustration:

In December of 1988, just a few days before Christmas, I received a call that my brother's brother-in-law was missing on Flight 103. Elia was my best friend in high school and his sister had meant my brother through our friendship. Desperate for information I called Scotland Yard in Lockerbie, the place of the crash occurred. I spoke to a wonderful sergeant, who confirmed our worst fears, Elia was onboard the aircraft, and there were no survivors. I told him that I was a fire chaplain in Walden, New York, and that when the body was found, I would identify my friend. I told him I was praying for their fire Chief, and I faxed him several prayers to share with his company.

An hour later I received a call from Lockerby, it was their Brigade Commander (Fire Chief) calling to see if he could be of help to our family. He had just lost 5 houses in his village, and there were at least thirteen confirmed deaths of his neighbors, his fire fighters were assisting in the recovery of the bodies of those onboard the plane, and he called to see if our family was OK. And that his prayers were with us.

A few months later Elia family received a package, it was his cloths that had been found, they were carefully washed and folded by the ladies from the local church and were packaged and sent to us by the Lockerie Fire Department.

You see, our Fire Departments may be separated by an ocean, but we are connected, bond together by that cord of three strains.

III. The Third Strand is the Lord.

The Lord wants to be part of our lives every day.

He has promised that He would be with us Always, even to the end of the World.

His Spirit can be both seen and felt in our lives, if we allow him into our hearts.

Illustration:

Listen to this story from Women's Day magazine about a young mother named Karen. Karen and her Husband are Volunteer Firefighters in their community and the 3-old son, Michael, prepare for a new sibling. They found out that the new baby was going be a girl, and day after day, night after night, Michael sang to his sister in mommy's tummy. He was building a bond of love with his little sister before he even met her.

The pregnancy progressed normally for Karen, an active member of the Panther Creek United Methodist Church and fire company in Morristown, Tennessee.!

In time, the labor pains came. Soon it was every five minutes, every three, every minute. But serious complications arose during delivery and Karen found herself in hours of labor. Would a C-section be required? Finally, after a long struggle, Michael's little sister was born. But she was in very serious condition.

With a siren howling in the night, the ambulance rushed the infant to the neonatal intensive care unit at St. Mary's Hospital, Knoxville, Tennessee. The days inched by. The little girl got worse. The pediatrician had to tell the parents there is very little hope. Be prepared for the worst. Karen and her husband contacted a local cemetery about a burial plot. They had fixed up a special room in their house for their new baby but now they found themselves having to plan a funeral. Michael, however, kept begging his parents to let him see his sister.

"I want to sing to her, he kept saying.

Week two in intensive care looked as if a funeral would come before the week was over.

Michael kept nagging about singing to his sister, but kids are never allowed in Intensive Care. Karen decided to take Michael whether they liked it or not. If he didn't see his sister right then, he may never

see her alive. She dressed him in an oversized scrub suit and marched him into ICU. I looked like a walking laundry basket.

The head nurse recognized him as a child and bellowed, "Get that kid out of here now. No children are allowed." The mother and firefighter rose up strong in Karen, and the usually mild-mannered lady glared steel-eyed right into the head nurse's face, her lips a firm line. "He is not leaving until he sings to his sister" she stated. Then Karen towed Michael to his sister's crib side.

He gazed at the tiny infant losing the battle to live. After a moment, he began to sing. In the pure-hearted voice of a 3-year-old, Michael sang: "You are my sunshine, my only sunshine, you make me happy when skies are gray." Instantly the baby girl seemed to respond. The pulse rate began to calm down and become steady.

"Keep on singing, Michael," encouraged Karen with tears in her eyes. "You never know, dear, how much I love you, please don't take my sunshine away."

As Michael sang to his sister, the baby's ragged, strained breathing became as smooth as a kitten's purr. "Keep on singing, sweetheart." "The other night, dear, as I lay sleeping, I dreamed I held you in my arms". Michael's little sister began to relax as rest, healing rest, seemed to sweep over her. "Keep on singing, Michael." Tears had now conquered the face of the bossy head nurse. Karen glowed. "You are my sunshine, my only sunshine. Please don't take my sunshine away..."
The next day...the very next day...the little girl was well enough to go home.

Woman's Day Magazine called it The Miracle of a Brother's Song. The medical staff just called it a miracle. Karen called it a miracle of God's love.

I'll call it the 3rd strand of the cord, the Lord Himself, who binds us all together.

Stay Connected my Friends. The Lord will bind us together.
Amen

To Everything there is a Season

Memorial Service Hudson Valley Firemen's Association

Rev. Jim Van Houten Chaplain

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-9

Tim Stackpole loved being a firefighter, but his family was his top priority. He just enjoyed being with his wife and kids every day.

Tim Stackpole was passionate about his job. While fighting a four-alarm fire at a Brooklyn rowhouse in the summer of 1998, he heard that a woman was trapped inside. Without hesitation, he and two colleagues did what firemen do: they ran into the flames to save someone.

While the three firefighters were inside, the floor collapsed without warning. "My whole body was trapped up to my neck," Tim Stackpole said. "The fire was still roaring all around us ... I remember the

excruciating pain in my ankles, burned to the bone. And I remember just praying to God: Just let me die bravely.”

Stackpole and his colleagues, Lt. James Blackmore and Capt. Scott LaPiedra, were trapped in the fire for almost a half-hour.

“I had this tremendous sadness that he wasn't going to see his children again, growing up, walking down the aisle,” he said.

Thirty-four of his colleagues put their own lives at risk to save the three men. They got them out, but Blackmore died at the scene. Stackpole and LaPiedra were rushed into ambulances with terrible burns.

Firefighter Michael Brady rode with Stackpole. “In that moment, he was still Timmy,” Brady recalled. “He was still comforting the EMT, who were shocked with what was going on, and cheering them on:

'Thank you, brother. Thank you for helping me.' His zeal could never be squashed.”

The Will to Walk

Stackpole was taken to the New York Weill Cornell Burn Center. With burns over 30 percent of his body, he was near death for many days. At best, his wife thought he would never walk again.

“The pain he suffered was incredible,” Tera said. When doctors attempted to get Tim back on his feet, he fainted from the pain.

After 66 days, Timmy limped out of the hospital to a hero's welcome, returning to work soon afterward. Though he could have retired from the department and gotten a pension, Tim chose not to.

“It was his life, his calling,” said his wife. “He couldn't not do it. This is what he felt God wanted him to do with his life.

This morning I'd like to share with you a few thoughts from the words of Solomon recorded in Ecc. the third chapter. You might recall, if you're a child of the 1960s the song sung by the Birds entitled Turn, Turn, Turn, the words came straight from the bible.

These words are for every person, in every place, and in every circumstance. God has appointed the times and seasons, the events of all of our lives, the happy and the sad, the easy and the difficult.

On one hand this might bring worry to our hearts yet at the same time it can bring hope because we know the God is in control.

I.) In the Season of our Youth

As Young Firefighters, do you remember the excitement of responding to those first calls? Running to make the engine as it was pulling away, lights on and the siren sounding. Your heart was pounding as one of the old guys pulled you up onto the rear step.

Those were the days when you never got tired!

Illustration:

The competitions, bed races, running at top speed pushing that bed, and we never got tired. Youth, life was good. Of course, God was in control.

a. Always Ready for Action

Illustration:

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. Sunday, May 20,2018

Charlotte Chapin, 10, fell headfirst into a fire pit, with her hands and head inside the steel drum and her waist touching the side, during a father-and-daughter campout at Newport Dunes, according to the OCFA.

A young Volunteer firefighter named Mike Heddles grabbed a bottle of water, wrapped the girl up in a towel and warned the other girls and their fathers not to put ice on the burns. "We want to cool burns with clean water, and we never want ice," Mike said, it's the only way to treat burn victims. "Keep the patient warm and get medical assistance immediately. Charlotte was being treated at the Orange County Burn Center at Orange County Global Medical Center.

She suffered first- and second-degree burns to her hip, ribs and wrist, and singed her hair, but thanks to Firefighter Mike's quick action she is going to be fine.
God was still in control!

b. God has a purpose for us each day.

The scriptures tell us, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God and are called according to his purpose."

But there are many times when we might have a hard time understanding that purpose.

Illustration:

Barbara was a volunteer firefighter having a busy day, it was September 24,2000. She responded to a call, despite her schedule, false alarm. Waste of time she thought. Returning home got into the wrong lane of traffic, missed her exit and ended up on the Golden Gate bridge.

But God was in Control.

Seasons of Depression:

At that same moment in time a young man named Kevin Hine age 19, had taken the bus to the bridge, in his depression he had walked to the middle and was climbing over the rail. (Bob Ruston had this young man speak at a seminar on Suicide) Kevin said that he was hoping that someone would stop him, but instead a lady did stop and was yelling telling him to jump, don't be a coward... so he did!

But the second he let go of the rail he prayed that God would save him. Firefighter Barbara saw him jump, her brother is Capt. of the Coast Guard rescue boat stationed by the bridge...She called him on speed dial, he was just tying the boat up within 15 seconds the boat was responding, and she directed her brother right to him.

Now Kevin had survived the fall he was on the surface, praying but unable to stay afloat. At that moment sea lions came from out of the blue and held him up. The coast guard boat rescued him, and he was air vac to a hospital. Kevin is one of 36 jumpers to live and only one of 6 who is not paralyzed.

Kevin travels as a special speaker to high school all over America speaking to kids about suicide, he is now a volunteer firefighter, and he speaks to Firefighters as well. God was in control in his season of Great Depression.

II.) God is with us in Seasons of Illness

We all feel that our lives will never change, yet things change around us every day. Our health seems perfect, but then we get that news from the doctor, things don't look good. But even in seasons of illness God is still in control.

Illustration:

At a structure fire in Walden Craig one of our Captains suffered a heart attack. His daughter and son are fighting the same fire. His son gave him CPR. Raced to the hospital coded a second time in the Ambulance.

Placed in induced coma lowered body temperature for three days.

Craig awakened completely fine, when I arrived, he was walking around waiting to go home. God was in Control.

Seasons of Great Illness.

FDNY probationary fire fighter William McCue age 19 was admitted to the hospital with the flu, while there he contracted a septic infection, then pneumonia in both lungs, he went into a coma. As the infection spread the doctors told the family to save Bill's life, they needed to amputate one hand at the wrist, later the fingers of other hand at the knuckles, and later they amputated both feet, there is still server damage to one leg. He began to improve, first he turned off the ventilator and finally home. I saw him at the hospital, he was in wonderful spirits, thanking God for saving his life. God was in Control and gave him the courage to go on living.

III.) In the Season of our Death

Solomon tells us in all of the seasons of our lives there will be a time when our earthly journey will end.

It's the full circle of life and he speaks about it because he wants to prepare us for that moment.

The oldest written book in the bible is the book of Job, Solomon had read it and it says:

Job 19:25-27 New International Version (NIV)

*I know that my redeemer lives,
and that in the end he will stand on the earth.
And after my skin has been destroyed,
yet in my flesh I will see God;
I myself will see him
with my own eyes—I, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!*

Even at the Time of our Death God is in Control.

This morning, we read the names of our friends who were called home this past year, they were all special.

One name was that of one of our Chaplains, Bob Greifeld's.

For many years Bob would call me and ask what my topic would be for this Memorial Service and what verses of scripture I'd be using.

Bob didn't like computers, he used his trusty Typewriter, never an email, Bob spoke to you in person or directly on the phone.

Bob served as Chaplain for Essex, Saratoga, Warren, and Washington counties. He always had a smile and kind words.

As Bob's health began to fail, I asked him if there might be a favorite passage of scripture we would like mentioned after the Lord called him home.

Yes, the words of John 3: 16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whoso ever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life."

Bob was ready for the moment when the Lord called him home. But I will miss him deeply for years to come.

Let's make sure that we are all ready for that final season in our lives.

God is in Control, Jesus died for our sins, and by accepting him as our Savior he will turn that season of death into a season of eternal life.

Amen

A Race Well Run

Hudson Valley Volunteer Firemen's Association

Rev. Jim Van Houten Chaplain

During the late 1970's the summer Olympic games were held in Montreal Canada. The news reporters were talking before the 26-mile marathon about a young African runner who would be representing his country, he endured great hardships to get to the Olympics, but was not expected to even place.

Shortly after the run began, the runners were making their way through the streets of the city when a car ran a stop sign, and this young runner was hit and knocked to the ground. Too bad after all his training that he was not even able to run the race the reporters said! But the reporters were wrong, this young man refused to quit, for hours he could be seen dragging his injured body along the course. Medical aid was offered, but he refused.

It was late in the evening when this young runner arrived at the stadium, once inside he had one lap to run around the track, to reach the finish line and complete the race. As he entered the stadium you could see that his strength was gone, he fell to his knees and although he was trying with all his might to get up, the pain was too great. All of a sudden, a great cheer could be heard. The races were over for the day, yet people stayed to welcome this fellow and cheer him home. About 25,000 people stood to their feet and shouted words of encouragement.

He found the strength, got to his feet, and finished that last lap, he completed the race! No one could remember who won the gold, silver or bronze medals that Day, the hero of the day was this young man, who against all odds completed the race.

As we gather here today at this conference, once again the names of many of our friends and brother firemen have been read, an honor roll of those who have completed their race and who have been called home to be with the Lord.

So, as we remember them this morning, I'd like to share the words of the Apostle Paul, written in 2 Timothy chapter 4 and verses 7 & 8 with you.

I. A Life Well Lived "I have fought the good fight."

In the Old Testament we read that one day, King David was visibly shaken and sad to hear a close friend, Abner, a loyal commander of his army, and a distinguished hero had been killed.

When King David recovered from his shock he turned to his servants and said: "Do you know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel?" 2 Sam.3:38

Words are poor tools in this hour to express the thoughts which we feel within our hearts with the passing of our loved ones and friends.

The gap is always wide between our love and our words, our feelings and our speech but in a simple way let us reflect upon a few of the blessings which this hour brings to our hearts and minds.

God has given to us two special gifts for moments like this.

- a. One gift is memory, that quality which enables us to look back over happy scenes and pleasant memories of yesterday.
- b. The other gift is hope, the vision to know that the shining sun is behind the heavy clouds of sorrow and loss which hang over us.

What a blessing a memory is! How thankful we are today that we can look back upon a few of the blessings which our loved ones and friends have brought to our lives! Memories of past conferences, past parades, fire scenes of the past. Times spent together in our company rooms. It's not only fitting, but it's also important to mention their names, not just our three friends who died in the line of duty, we certainly do honor them this morning. But we need to remember all of our friends for at the mention of their names, a flood of memories are released.

Illustration:

In 1964 I joined the Volunteer Fire Department in New Jersey With a close friend of mine named David Neudenburg. Dave enlisted in the army and served in Viet Nam; He was killed in October of 1968 while rescuing a wounded friend. Because his death was caused by an explosion there were no remains sent home. When I first went to the Viet Nam Memorial his name was not in the book.

This was later corrected by Joel Cook founder of the MIA-POW organization. I returned to visit the Wall 4 years ago. Just seeing his name released tears which I'd been carrying for years. And with this a flood of memories began to pour into my heart and mind, before leaving I said a prayer and then placed our old Fire Company patch below the stone panel where his name is recorded.

A life well lived might be a long life it may be a short life, but it's a life filled with memories which can be passed on to others.

II. A Race Well Run "I have finished the course."

It has been said: "Faith grows a Believer, life proves a Believer, suffering confirms a Believer, and death crowns a Believer."

Our loved ones and friends who suffered so patiently, fought so valiantly have finished their course.

Their lingering illnesses were able to inflict suffering and pain upon their earthly bodies, but the illness could never touch their courageous spirits.

While they were afflicted, they were not crushed.

While they were perplexed, they were not driven to despair.

While Sickness may have struck them down, they were not defeated.

Our dwelling place here is only temporary.

The words of Jesus tell us in John 14 that “In our heavenly Father’s house are many mansions, places prepared for each and every one of us.”

We are not only the sons and daughters of men and women, but we are also the children of God.

Our race here may not be a perfect one, it might be even filled by mistakes--- I know that my race of life has not been perfect.

But notice what the scriptures say is important—It’s finishing the Race. And with God’s help we not only are able to finish, but we also finish it in style.

Illustration:

When I started my college career, I planned to be a football coach, I loved the game. Once upon a time I was very fast on my feet and I had good hands, I loved to play the position of wide receiver. But God had other plans for me!

One of my roommates went on to coach a high school team in Waverly, Ohio. He related this story to me. There was a young man named Jake Porter, Jake loved sports and was a member of the Football, basketball, wrestling and Track teams. He was never late for practice, never missed a game---- But Jake also never played! You see Jake had Downs Syndrome... he was on the team, but never played.

It was the Thanksgiving game and Jake was in his senior year and his coach wanted Jake to at least have a few seconds in the game,

If Waverly was way ahead, and they were the best team in the conference, Jake was to go into the game with only a few seconds left, he would get the ball and knee down as time expired, grounding the ball.

Well, Waverly was ahead 42 to 21 and so with 5 seconds remaining the coach called a time out. He went out to talk to my friend who was the coach of Waverly, they seemed to be disagreeing, my friend wanted Jake to score a touchdown, so the Referees joined in on the conference.

At last, the game was ready to continue, Jake was sent onto the field. The ball was snapped and then handed to Jake, who was ready to ground the ball, but instead his teammates shouted Run Jake, Run with the ball.

Well Jake did run, but he went in the wrong direction, but one of the referees stopped him, turned him around and sent him in the right direction. Jake ran as fast as he could directly in the entire Waverly team, but instead of tackling Jake the linemen opened up a lane and ran next to Jake, they cheered him on. Twice Jake tripped, but members of both teams helped him regain his balance. Jake scored his first and only touchdown, it was the highlight of his life!

All the Cheerleaders ran onto the field and cheered Jake, who was being carried on the shoulders of the members of both teams.

My friends in the race of life, I know that I’m like Jake Porter, there’s been time I was running in the wrong direction. But the Lord Jesus stepped in to turn me around. There’s been a time when the angels cleared the way for me and kept me from falling.

Psalm. 91 tells us “He will give his angels charge over us, lest we trip and fall over the stones of life.”

With God’s help we finish the Race.

A Crown Well Desired “In the Future there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness”

We all like rewards, but all rewards we receive in this world are left here when we leave.

But this reward is given in Heaven. I’m not sure if these crowns look like fire helmets or not. But there given to all those who finish the race with the Lord.

We have honored our friends here today, by the reading of their names, the placing of the flowers and by the tolling of the bell.

Yet, in our heart of hearts perhaps we wish we could more.

When we enter heaven, we will be greeted with the words “well done my good and faithful servant enter now into the joy of my rest.”

And the crown which we will receive, I believe it will be shaped more like a fire helmet.

I close with A Firemen’s prayer which is different from The Firemen’s prayer.

A Fireman’s Prayer

Lord, we call upon You today for strength and guidance,

Look kindly upon us in our needs today.

Teach us to always look to you for assistance,

as our neighbors look to us.

Give us courage and enable us to pass this courage to others.

Make us studious and give us pride and joy in our work.

When the alarm sounds, calling us to duty, give us speed and efficiency.

As we travel with sirens on, ride with us through the streets of our villages, shield us from danger. On the fire scene, may our officers and men always work as an Honorable, Courageous, and Victorious Team.

Walk with us through the terror of flame and explosion.

May our hearts be always ready, should we be summoned before our Eternal Chief, in the midst of our labors.

As we work to help our neighbors in need, we dedicate our lives humbly to your praise and glory.

In both joy and sorrow, we ask only that you may be pleased with our Service, and that when the Last Alarm has sounded for us, that we may receive our eternal assignment with you forever.

AMEN

Is Your Life Fireproof?

By Rev. Jim Van Houten

Isaiah 43:2

(Hudson Valley Vol. Firemen’s convention 2010)

In October of 2007 a group of 12 Orange County Firefighters, were fighting a fast-moving brush fire in Southern California. They were attempting to stop the flames before they could reach a small mountain community. They were working in waist high brush when the wind suddenly picked up and changed direction, the flames were coming right toward them. As they ran for their lives, but it became evident that they were not going to make the safety of the highway, which was nearby. Their battle for life was caught on camera as photographer Karen Anderson captured their struggle on film. Her film showed them trapped on a ridge, it showed all 12 dropped to the ground, and seconds later the flames, which were rising 20 feet to 30 feet in the air, over ran them. They disappeared under a wall of flame. Karen Anderson, filming this live broadcast, could be heard crying, she was saying, Oh God No! God, please, not all 12 of them!

As the smoke cleared, she began to cry out once again. “Oh God yes, I can see movement, Oh God, Thank You, some of them made it” With her camera rolling, one by one they stood up, all 12 of them. They began to walk toward the highway. Later at the first aid station Karen caught up to them, she was so emotional she could hardly talk in the interview. She began by saying, “I was praying for you guys.” They responded like typical firefighters, Thanks, we are all OK. We will be heading back to the fire line in a few minutes!

How could you live through that heat and flame Karen asked? Firefighter Brett Cowdell told her what happened.

When we realized that we were cut off and as the fire closed in, we dropped to the ground, deployed our shelters, these foil like pup tents, jumped inside, scoped a place for our faces in the ground, and the fire passed over us. “The firefighters said, thank you for your prayers, The Lord was really with us, just like he promised!” With tears flowing down her face she asked, “What do you mean, like He promised?” Some of these firefighters took off their helmets and showed her the pictures of their wives and kids inside, but there was a passage of scripture written, from Isaiah 43: verse 2, “When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and the rivers, they will not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame burn you.”

What an amazing passage of scripture, and what a wonderful promise for us firefighters. Now these firefighters had trained for just such an emergency, they had practiced deploying their shelters dozens of times, but never under these life and death conditions. This was clearly a case where Training and Prayer went hand in hand.

In 2007 the Santiago fire lasted for 19 days, it burned over 500,000 acres, the Santa Ana winds which drove the fire reached 85 MPH. 1500 homes destroyed, 9 people lost their lives and 85 people were injured, 61 of them were firefighters. But not one firefighter lost their life! They were claiming this promise.

Since I have claimed this passage personally, as a fire chaplain I have begun each morning praying for the men and women in the fire service all across our nation, I especially focus on those serving here in the Hudson Valley and I close my day with the same prayers. The prophet Isaiah tells us that it’s possible to face the flames and the floods with the Lord’s divine help, and we will be protected.

Now this passage tells us that we are protected in several other areas of our lives. This morning I’d like to look at just a few of them.

I. Protected While Passing Through The Waters

Since we are not always fighting fires or participating in rescues it’s wonderful to know that the Lord will be with us in other times of testing. When I think about passing through waters, I think about the waters of troubles.

Our lives can be turned upside down so very quickly.

In this age of rapid communication, we learn about events which are affecting personal friends in the Fire Service very quickly. Friends out of work, perhaps the business they worked at is closing. Friends having problems with their children, many times its problems with drugs that are tearing their family apart.

Perhaps these waters include problems in our Fire Companies.

It’s amazing how quickly personal problems can arise and how much damage they can do. Or perhaps these waters include news from our doctor informing us about medical problems which we need to face. In all of these areas it’s wonderful to know that the Lord has promised to be with us. And just as he protected those 12 firefighters in that wildfire, so he will be with you and me.

Illustration:

On April 24th while taking my fit test at our fire house I found that the pain I'd been living with in my neck from a truck accident in 2007 had really increased. I knew there was something really wrong inside! I got an MRI and went to see a surgeon, but the day of my appointment I was feeling a lot better, I was ready to cancel out, but one of my chaplain friends insisted I go. The doctor looked at the MRI and said, Jim you need surgery right away, the signal from your spinal cord is being affected, I want to operate next Monday.

Wow, spinal surgery, they would make the incision in my throat, they would remove the damaged disk, put in a piece of cadaver bone and then fuse it together with a titanium plate and 4 screws. I began to get worried. When I looked at the procedure on the internet, I got really worried.

However, after praying about it I could see that the Lord had been working behind the scenes to get me the help I needed! On the 24th of May I was outside the operating room door, as I waited to go in, I was praying. The nurses brought another patient into the waiting area and placed his bed right next to mine. God is so cool; he doesn't just meet our needs he always does more. There next to me was my friend Joe Kelly.

What are the chances of the Second Vice President of FASNY and a member of the FASNY chaplains committee being next to each other, both awaiting surgery.

It was great to shake Joe's hand, firefighters have the best handshakes. We wished each other well. As I was wheeled in for my surgery I was praying for Joe. As I did, I was suddenly filled with a sense of God's peace.

We both passed through the waters of surgery, and we are both doing fine.

II. Passing Through The River, It Will Not Overflow You!

Our members are receiving more and more training, giving us the skills necessary to rescue people trapped in rivers and other fast-moving waters.

This training in cold water rescue and swift water rescue prepares our people with the skills they will need as they place themselves in harm's way as they work to save the lives of others.

Once again, it's wonderful to know that the Lord will be with us as we attempt these rescues.

Now when the Lord gave this promise so many years ago in Isaiah 43 verse 2, yet few theologians would have thought that a Volunteer Firemen would have really put this promise of God so completely to the test!

Illustration:

On Sept.11, 1996 24-year-old women crashed her car into the guard rail of the Tappan Zee bridge, she got out and without hesitation jump from the bridge. Firefighter Daniel Santos, a 21-year-old member of the Spring Valley Fire Department got out of his pickup truck, he looked over the edge and saw the women flowing on the surface 130 feet below him.

He had always wondered if he would ever have the courage to jump from that bridge to save someone, that day was the test. He took off his shoes, told others to call 911, he prayed for Gods help, closed his eyes and jumped the 130 feet to the river below.

He said, "It felt like I was hit by a truck, as he landed on his right side. He could not move his right arm and the impact had knocked the wind out of him. He started swimming to the young women, as he reached her a rescue boat from the marina got there and both were pulled onboard. Dan suffered a collapsed lung, a broken rib and had lots of bruises, but remarkably all his injuries were minor. Dan visited the young lady in the hospital, and she was also doing well.

If Dan is here today, he will tell you, "The Rivers will not overflow you."
If I were to ever fall off the Tappan Zee bridge, I hope that Dan will be around.

III. **There Are Other Fires Which We Pass Through, "The fires of life-threatening illnesses."**

We all have memories of fighting one of those working structures fires, perhaps as part of the interior team, where we came a little too close to serious injury.

In some cases, the threat of death was definitely present.

But for the most part as time passes and age creeps up upon us our firematic duties switch to fire ground. Although, directing traffic as fire police can be the most dangerous position on the fire scene. Right! But there are others Fires which threaten us and these fire storms can be ones of serious health problems. When we hear the word cancer, that's when we begin to pray for that storm to pass over us.

Illustration:

I have a good friend of mine who is a Volunteer Firefighter from Western PA. Two years ago, in December he and his wife, she is also a firefighter, were in New York City, he was a patient at Sloan Kettering cancer center. He had finished several months of chemo treatments and was there to be reevaluated. The nurse told him his tests were inconclusive, the doctor asked to have them done again, he wanted to meet with them personally the next day.

His heart sank, this is never good news. They stayed over and other night and were to attend this meeting the next afternoon.

After a sleepless night they were just out walking in the city the next morning, just killing time, even though it was unseasonably cold.

They came across a little boy, about 9-years-old, he was standing in front of a shoe store, barefooted, peering through the window, and shivering with cold. My friend has three kids, and seeing this boy in real need really touched him. He said to his wife, we need to help him, "You talk to him and see what we can do".

His wife approached the young boy and said, 'My, but you're in such deep thought staring in that window!' What are you thinking about?

The little boy said, oh hi lady, 'I was just asking God to give me a pair of shoes, I don't care which ones. You see my feet are really, really cold.

With this my friend got all choked up, that can happen to us firefighter from time to time, and he said to his wife, "Here's the credit card, get him whatever ones he wants!"

His wife took him by the hand, and they went into the store, she and asked the clerk to get half a dozen pairs of socks for the boy. She asked the salesman if he could give her a basin of water and a towel, those little feet were really dirty. He quickly brought them to her. She took the little fellow to the back part of the store, where she knelt down, and washed his little feet, and dried them with the towel.

By this time, the clerk had returned with the socks. Placing a pair upon the boy's feet, she asked about the brown shoes in the window. The salesman measured his feet and returned with them, a perfect fit. They purchased the shoes for him.

His wife took the remaining pairs of socks and gave them to him. She patted him on the head and said, 'Now how does that feel? I think you will be more comfortable now.'

As my friend and his wife turned to leave the store, the astonished little boy ran after them, caught her by the hand, and looking up into her face, with tears in his eyes, asked her. 'Lady,

Are you God's wife?' She said, no I'm not God's wife, we are just a couple of firefighters that the Lord sent to help you." That afternoon they meant with the doctor at Sloan Kettering, they were both expecting the worst.

Instead, the doctor said, it's amazing, I ran the tests a second time just to be sure, there is no trace of the cancer, it's completely gone. God must have answered your prayers, He does that sometimes! They both thanked the doctor and said, "Yes, we know God answers prayers in many different ways." When we pass through the fires of life-threatening illness God will be with us!

Let me ask you a question this morning. Is Your Life Fireproof? Have you ever claimed this verse personally?

Today as we gather here, we are remembering friends who have passed on into the presence of the Lord during this past year. As we mention their names, we all need to remind ourselves that someday we will all pass through that same valley. But death, just like the fire the water and the rivers will not harm us, for the Lord will never leave us or forsake us, we can claim these promises.

Amen

There Are Other Worlds to Sing In

Orange County Volunteer Firemen's Association Memorial Service

Rev. Jim Van Houten Chaplain

I have always loved hearing the stories of how some of my fellow firefighters became involved in the fire service.

I have a friend from the west coast named Paul Keel who is a retired chief of a fire Department in a small town outside of Seattle, where he served as a volunteer fireman for the past 67 years. This is his Story!

He lived in a small town in the Pacific Northwest as a child. He was just a little boy when his family became the proud owners of one of the first telephones in the neighborhood. It was one of those wooden boxes attached to the wall with the shiny receiver hanging on the side of the box and the mouthpiece attached to the front. Young Paul listened with fascination as his mom and dad used the phone and he discovered that somewhere inside the wonderful device called a telephone lived an amazing person.

Her name was "Information Please" and there was nothing she did not know. Information Please could supply anybody's number and the correct time!

Paul's first personal experience with "Information Please" came one day when he was home alone, and he whacked his finger with a hammer. The pain was terrible, and he didn't know what to do and then he thought of the telephone. Quickly, he pulled a footstool up to the phone, climbed up, unhooked the receiver, held it to his ear and said: "Information Please" into the mouthpiece.

There was a click or two and then a small clear voice spoke: "Information." "I hurt my finger," Paul wailed into the phone. "Isn't your mother home?" "Nobody's home but me," Paul cried. "Are you bleeding?" "No," Paul said. "I hit my finger with the hammer, and it hurts."

“Can you open your icebox?” “Yes.” “Then go get some ice and hold it to your finger.” Paul did and it helped a lot.

After that Paul called “Information Please for everything.

She helped him with his geography and his math. She taught him how to spell the word “fix.” She told him what to feed his pet chipmunk.

Turning Point

One day he smelled smoke in the house, he called Information please, he told the lady what was happening.

Paul, get out of the house right now, stand by the barn, don’t go into the house for any reason. The fire Department will be there in a few minutes. Within ten minutes Paul heard the siren; and there up the lane came the fire truck, a 1928 American La France open cab. A lady was driving, three men were on the back step putting on gear, and one fellow was up on the hose bed, gearing up.

They put out the fire very quickly, but Paul’s pet canary died in the fire, they carried out the cage. Paul was heartbroken! The lady who drove the Fire Truck came over to console him. He recognized her voice; she was the Information Please lady.

She explained that she was the telephone operator, that her name was Sarah and that both she and her husband were firefighters, her husband was the chief of the department. She helped him bury the canary, she said a little prayer as the other firemen stood by, and then she told him, “Paul, remember there are other worlds to sing in. There is a place called heaven.”

That day Paul made two decisions:

One he wanted to go to heaven:

Sarah, the Telephone operator, Information Please lady, and firefighter was also the company chaplain. She shared John 3:16 with Paul, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believed in Him, would not perish, but have everlasting life.” Paul accepted the Lord that day!

The second decision Paul made that day was he wanted to be a Firefighter, for Sarah shared the reason she and her husband fought fires. It was another passage from John’s gospel chapter fifteen, verse #13 Jesus said” Greater love has no man then this, that a person lay down or risk their life for a friend.

Today I'd like to share some thoughts about the Sacrifice that anyone of us in the Fire Service can be called upon to make ... the giving of our lives.... There is No Greater Sacrifice...

The apostle Paul writes about such devotion and sacrifice as he reflects on the words which John wrote, but then adds some other thoughts found in Romans chapter 5 and verses 7 & 8.

- I. Paul begins by saying “For hardly, for a self-righteous person will one die.”
When we answer a call, we really don’t know exactly who we will find in trouble.
It could be someone we like, are close friends with!
Or it could be someone we really don’t like, maybe we can’t stand them, perhaps we consider them an enemy.

Illustration:

The pilots of the life flight helicopters are not told the nature of the call; they are only told the location. For if they were told they were responding to a child, in a life and death emergency, they might take to many chances.

Maybe it’s best that we don’t know all of the details!

So, St Paul says, If you had the chance to think it over, and you knew that the person you were risking your life for, was a self- righteous person that not many people liked, there would be few that would risk their lives to save them.

Be that's the difference in the fire service, we would risk our lives anyway.

Illustration:

One of my friends is a chief in PA, he told me of a dramatic rescue he witnessed, at a Working structure fire, call from interior, firefighter down, portion of second floor collapsed he had fallen into the burning first floor.

They mentioned his name, "Chief, its Harry."

A firefighter standing next to the chief put his mask on, and ran to the back door of the structure, kicked in the door, ran through the flames and seconds later, was seen pulling Harry out the door to safety.

Not a second to spare.

Now Harry, was having an affair with this firefighter's wife, he had broken up this family, these men had not spoken in over a year. Why would he do that?

Because our brotherhood, our calling our compassion is far more important than if we like the person.

It's just like the Lord, we hurt him, sin against him, but when we fall into the fires of life, he is there, he kicks down the doors which trap us, and pulls us to safety.

My friend Father Mychal Judge had written a prayer, which he was famous for: Listen to These Words!

"Lord, take me where you want me to go.
Let me meet who you want me to meet.
Tell, me what you want me to say.
And keep me out of your way!"

- II. Paul speaks again in verse 7: "Though for a good person some would even dare to die."
When the person who is in danger is a close friend, it would be hard to hold us back.

If the person in trouble was a good person, well like by everyone, as firefighters, as a group we would try anything to save them.

Knowing the person and liking them, being friends with them, would be an even greater incentive to save them.

Illustration:

In Kentucky there was a mine collapse, The fire department was called as they were in the mine shaft looking for victims. There was a second collapse and three of the department officers were trapped. Firefighters came from all over the area. They dug for seven hours, picked and

shoveled and dug with bear hands, and rescued their three friends. There was no shortage of volunteers. In fact, guys were begging to get into the mine shaft, to help.

For a good person, many would be willing to risk their lives.

- III. Paul goes on to say, "But God demonstrates his own love to us, In that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
- a. We are reminded that Christ set the perfect example for us to follow; He was willing to give his life for everyone!
 - b. The Lord reminds us that there are other worlds to sing in.
 - c. That he has prepared a place for all who believe in him in the courts of heaven.

John 14 tells us, "Let not your hearts be troubled, If you believe in God, Then believe also in Me, For in my Father's house are many Mansions, if it were not so I would have told you,

I'm going to prepare a place for you, and If I go, I will come again and receive you onto myself, that where I am, you can be also."

It's God's personal promise as our Senior Chief.

So, this evening as we remember and celebrate the lives of our friends who have been called home to be with the Lord.

We have this great promise, because of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the cross, we are going to see and be with our friends in the future in the courts of heaven.

Illustration:

I'd like to close with the poem.

Meet Me in the Stairwell

It was written by a friend of mine named Paul Leggett; he wrote it on Sept 12th, 2001, following the attack on our country.

You say that you will never forget where you were when you heard the news on September 11th, 2001, and neither will I.

I was on the 100th floor in a smoke-filled room with a man who called his wife to say "goodbye" I held his fingers steady as he dialed the phone. I gave him the peace to say, "Honey, I'm not going to make it, but it's OK... I'm ready to go!

I was with his wife when he called as she fed breakfast to their children. I held her up as she tried to understand his words and realized that he was not coming home that night.

I was in the stairwell of the 23rd floor when women cried out to me for help. "I have been knocking on your heart's door for 50 years! I Said, Of course I will show you the way home... Only believe in me now."

I was at the base of the building with a Priest and Fire Chaplain named Father Mike, ministering to the injured Firefighters and devastated souls.

I took him home to tend my flock and his flock in Heaven. He heard my voice and answered!

I was on all four of those planes, in every seat, and with every prayer. I was with the crew as they were overtaken. I was in the hearts of believers there, comforting and assuring them that their faith saved them.

I was in Texas, Kansas, and London. I was standing next to you when you heard the terrible news. Did you sense me there?

I want you to know that I saw every face. I knew every name---- though not all knew me. Some met me for the first time on the 86th floor.

Some sought me with their last breath. Some couldn't hear me calling to them through the smoke and the flames; "Come to Me... This Way... Take

My hand." Some chose, for the final time to ignore Me. BUT I WAS THERE!

I did not place you in the tower that day, you may not know why, but I do. However, if you were there in that explosive moment of time would you have reached for me?

September 11th was not the end of the journey for you. But someday your journey will end. And I will be there for you as well.

"SEEK ME NOW WHY I CAN BE FOUND." Then, at any moment, you know that you are ready to go."

I will be in the stairwell of your final moments.

Signed: GOD

Amen, Close in Prayer

No Greater Sacrifice

By Rev. Jim Van Houten

Chaplain Hudson Valley Firemen's Association

Romans 5: 7 & 8

Introduction: Story about the elderly mountain climber and guide on the Matter Horn, who was called upon to go up onto the mountain during a fierce storm to rescue a group of novice climbers. He fought his way up for hours and at last reached them and brought them safely home. But he was told there was still two more missing, the storm had intensified, and the temperature had dropped even lower... But he went after them anyway.

He did not return this time and search teams brought his body down a few days later, he had frozen to death in the bitter temperatures. He was buried at the base of the mountain and a stone was placed there with his name and the dates of his birth and death... but no one could agree on the proper epitaph. His close friend Sir Edmond Hilary came to the sight and said inscribe these words "Jacob Coberly", dates of birth & death and then these words "He Died Climbing."

He had given his life in an effort to save others.

He Died Climbing in an effort to reach others who needed to be rescued. These words have inspired hundreds of rescue workers who have visited the site over the years.

He fulfilled the words of John gospel chapter 15: and verse 13 where Jesus said " Greater love has no man then this, that a person lay down or risk their life for a friend.

This morning I'd like to share some thoughts about the Greatest Sacrifice that anyone can make... the giving of their lives.... No Greater Sacrifice...

The apostle Paul writes about such devotion and sacrifice in Romans chapter 5 and verses 7 & 8.

- I. Paul begins by saying "For hardly, for a self-righteous person will one die."
 - a. Self- Righteous people can be difficult to be around.
 - b. Some of them can really get on your nerves, can't they?
 - c. Some of you are thinking about someone right now that fits this group of people.
 - d. You would rescue them... but you'd have to think about it first.
 - e. You know.... Sometimes we clergy fit into this group.

Illustration:

Billy Graham told a story about a meeting at a church, which had several speakers, everyone was limited in time. But the first speaker got up and went on and on and on in a self-righteous monotone voice. The Moderator attempted to get his attention several times at last he took the gavel and tossed it at the fellow attempting to hit him on the shoulder to get his attention. But he missed and the gavel went over the speaker and into the audience and it struck a lady in the head as she was sitting in the front row, and it knocked her out.

The mediator left the platform to assist her and with the help of two paramedics they revived her. As she opened her eyes she said, "Please hit me again, I can still hear him."

- f. You know chaplains don't have to be that way; we don't need to be self-righteous. Jesus didn't act in a self-righteous way, and we don't need to either.
- g. I'd like to tell you about a friend of mine who as a chaplain showed everyone that we can:
Follow the example of Jesus Christ our supreme chief.
And not be stuffy about it.

Illustration:

My friend's name was Father Mychal Judge, he was a Franciscan priest and he served as a Chaplain in the New York City Fire Department.

Father Mike would go for walks, and he'd get lost, because all day long, especially while he walked, he would be in prayer for people he knew. He would walk along just talking away to the Lord... Father Mike prayed for everyone!!!

In the last hour of his life, he could be seen praying for the firemen and the victims who were dying. On September the 11th.

When the attack occurred, I knew that Mychal was going to be there and that it was very serious, little did I realize the extreme magnitude of the situation? Mychal was giving last rights to a fellow fireman, when the Lord called him home to be with him.

No Greater Sacrifice... He gave his life for others. Mychal had written a prayer, which he was famous for: Listen To These Words!

"Lord, take me where you want me to go.

Let me meet who you want me to meet.

Tell, me what you want me to say.

And keep me out of your way!"

- II. Paul speaks again in verse 7: "Though for a good person some would even dare to die."
 - a. Our country has changed completely over this past year.
 - b. We were a nation void of Hero's and Heroine's; we had been forced to look up to Sports Figures and Movie Stars...And they let our young people down time after time.
 - c. When we speak about a Hero or Heroine some people become uncomfortable, YOU SEE IT RAISES THE QUESTION WHAT WOULD THEY BE WILLING TO DIE FOR, AND IN MANY CASES THE ANSWER IS NOTHING OR NOBODY

Illustration:

Last August the actor Paul Newman was asked if he was a Hero, no he said, Did he know any Hero's... he thought for a while and then said, "QUOTE" "I guess my dog Harry is a hero, he's happy most of the time and has never bitten a single person"

- d. Well on September 11th that all changed, we saw one of the greatest displays of courage in our nation's history.
- e. We witnessed men calling their wives and families to say goodbye before entering those twin towers.
- f. There were Catholic firemen requesting last rights and Protestant fireman requesting a prayer of faith before they went in to rescue as many lives as possible... many of the men and women of the Fire Department, Police Department and Emergency Service Workers knew that they were not going to be coming out.... But they went in anyway.

YES, FOR GOOD PEOPLE THERE ARE THOSE WHO WOULD EVEN DARE TO DIE AND YES, THEY ALL DIED CLIMBING All 343 of them!

Illustration:

On September 14th we found a New Testament which belonged to one of the Fireman in the rubble of the South Tower at ground zero. It was folded open to Psalm 23; there was the heavy smuggled imprint of a firemen gloved finger on the page. Yes, there were those who entered the building, their faith in the Lord, lifted by the prayers of their comrades and they went to save the lives of others. I was able to get this New Testament back to his widow.

- g. America now looks upon the Men and Women in our Fire Departments, both volunteer as well as Professional with a new sense of Honor and pride... We need to continue to serve them with dedication and pride.

Illustration:

On the evening of September 14th, I had been offering a prayer at St Paul's Church, I was walking in the cemetery when I noticed a man coming around the corner from the Millennium Hotel. A fireman was asleep on a couple of chairs in that small ally. His helmet was on his stomach and his dust mask was on his chin. This fellow stopped and quietly walked up to him. Now I thought he was going to pick his pockets, and I was ready to yell.

Instead, he took the dust mask ever so carefully off his chin and placed it over his mouth. He then went back around the front of the Hotel. He returned again about 5 minutes later with an old blanket, he shook it out, and carefully covered this fireman. He stepped back, he snapped to attention and saluted him, he must have been an ex-marine. After the salute he disappeared into the night.

We all need to be sure we set a Good Example!

III. Paul goes on to say, "But God demonstrates his own love to us, In that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

We are reminded that Christ set the perfect example for us to follow; He was willing to give his life for everyone!

- a. And just as all these Firemen Died Climbing to save others, so it was that Jesus died on a cross, after climbing that hill outside of Jerusalem 2000 years ago. He died for all of our sins.
- b. 2,000 years later the people of the world still look up to Him because of the way he conducted himself. We need to set a good example to others to follow as well.
- c. We all need a strong faith that will help us to serve our communities in even a greater way.
- d. So that if we are ever called upon to put our lives on the line, we will be able to do so without hesitation, realizing that our Faith in Christ will see us through.

Illustration:

I'd like to close with this poem.

Meet Me in the Stairwell

It was written by a friend of mine named Paul Leggett; he wrote it on Sept 12th, 2001, following the attack on our country.

You say that you will never forget where you were when you heard the news on September 11th, 2001, neither will I.

I was on the 100th floor in a smoke-filled room with a man who called his wife to say "goodbye" I held his fingers steady as he dialed the phone. I gave him the peace to say, "Honey, I'm not going to make it, but it's OK... I'm ready to go!

I was with his wife when he called as she fed breakfast to their children. I held her up as she tried to understand his words and realized that he was not coming home that night.

I was in the stairwell of the 23rd floor when women cried out to me for help. "I have been knocking on your heart's door for 50 years! I Said, Of course I will show you the way home... Only believe in me now."

I was at the base of the building with a Priest and Fire Chaplain named Father Mike, ministering to the injured Firefighters and devastated souls.

I took him home to tend my flock and his flock in Heaven. He heard my voice and answered!

I was on all four of those planes, in every seat, and with every prayer. I was with the crew as they were overtaken. I was in the hearts of believers there, comforting and assuring them that their faith saved them.

I was in Texas, Kansas, and London. I was standing next to you when you heard the terrible news. Did you sense me there?

I want you to know that I saw every face. I knew every name---- though not all knew me. Some met me
for the first time on the 86th floor.
Some sought me with their last breath. Some couldn't hear me calling to them through the smoke and
the flames; "Come to Me... This Way... Take
My hand." Some chose, for the final time to ignore Me. BUT I WAS THERE!
I did not place you in the tower that day, you may not know why, but I do. However, if you were there
in that explosive moment of time would you have reached for me?
September 11th was not the end of the journey for you. But someday your journey will end. And I will
be there for you as well.
"SEEK ME NOW WHY I CAN BE FOUND." Then, at any moment, you know that you are ready to go."
I will be in the stairwell of your final moments.
Signed: GOD

Section VIII – September 11th

Articles From Ground Zero

9/11 This is Additional space for a future article

Section VIII – September 11th

Articles From Ground Zero

The Ministry of Presence

Rev. Robert H. Ruston, Regional Director - NYSAFC

For chaplains, the ministry of presence is among the most important skills we learn. We may find all our exegetical and expositional skills painfully under-utilized in chaplaincy. All those classes in seminary were important to obtain a degree. All that Bible knowledge may assist our personal piety. However, very little of that will come out in the chaplain's greatest moments of effectiveness; those being, when people need the chaplain to simply be with them - cry with them, eat with them, drink with them, laugh with them, work with them, run with them, stand with them in the rain or crawl with them in the sand. The pulpit is replaced by a seat on Engine One, or the deck railing on the a frigate.

The “ministry of presence” calls the minister (or chaplain in my case) to communicate the great truth of the Incarnation by demonstrating the proximity of God through their presence with those needing grace.

The Canadian Department of Military Defense defines the Ministry of Presence as, “being available to, and known by, the soldier, being available for a comforting chat, developing a relationship with the members of the unit, and participation in unit life. [This ministry] makes the chaplaincy an outward and visible sign of the church who cares and consoles. The Chaplain, ordained or not, is one who walks with and beside his colleagues regardless of religious faith. Just being there is an important role that assists to establish the importance of your role as a Chaplain.

The Lingering Effects of the 911 Tragedy

The Secret List 8-14-2016-0800 Hours

www.FireFighterCloseCalls.com

Billy G

Chief Billy Goldfeder (BillyG) shares the following update as to the lingering effects of the 911 tragedy...

More than 5,400 Ground Zero Firefighters, EMT's, Police Officers and others near the fallen Twin Towers have come down with 9/11-linked cancers, a grim tally that has tripled in the past 2 ½ years. As of June 30, 2016 - 5,441 people enrolled in the WTC Health Program have been diagnosed with 6,378 separate cancers, with some struck by more than one type, officials said. That's up from 1,822 victims in January 2014.

“You see an alarming increase,” said Dr. Michael Crane, medical director of the WTC Health Program at Mount Sinai Hospital.

“It's been steady for at least the last year and a half - we're seeing new people here being certified for cancer 10 to 15 times week. That's every week. “Crane told The New York Post.

The program now monitors more than 48,000 cops, hardhats, volunteer firefighters, utility workers and others who toiled at Ground Zero. The FDNY has its own 9/11 health program with 16,000 members. In all, at least 1,140 have died, officials said.

The feds have listed more than 50 types of cancer believed to be related to the toxic smoke and dust of 9/11. Those afflicted may seek payments from the 9/11 –Victim Compensation Fund.

Veteran FDNY Firefighter Ray Pfeifer, 58, has advanced kidney cancer that has spread through his body. Pfeifer told The Post. “I've had 15 years with my kids after 9/11, and I'm still here with Stage 4 cancer.”

Ray has undergone 11 surgeries, including kidney removal, hip, femur and knee replacement and radiation for a brain tumor.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, Ray had the day off and was golfing with buddies when the planes hit. He rushed downtown to join the frantic dig for survivors and stayed nine days straight, sleeping on a rig. All 12 of his fellow Bravest assigned to Engine 40/Ladder 35 on the Upper West Side were among the 343 firefighters killed when the towers collapsed. Pfeifer stayed eight months to search for remains.

Take Care. Be Careful. Pass It On.

911 Memorial

Rev. Cannon Samuel P. Lundy Regional Director

There are certain things that have been already written, by another, that any attempt to alter them, to improve them, to meddle with them, is counterproductive. I am thinking of “The Lord’s Prayer”, “The Pledge of Allegiance”, or maybe “Mary had a little lamb”. Singing “Happy Birthday” to your four-year-old grandchild is in no way diminished by the fact that you sang it last year when they were three years old. The words of Sir Winston Churchill as he encouraged a besieged Great Britain to “Keep Calm and Carry On” are timeless, they cannot be improved.

As a preacher, reading someone else’s material, tends to put a whole congregation asleep, fast. Today I will take that risk. If I shared them with you before, please listen again with new ears, to an edited version of a homily, delivered, at a mass for fire fighters, at a fire station, in NYC on September 10th, 2011. The day before... it is timeless in its message.

You do what God has called you to do. You get on that rig; you go out and you do the job. No matter how big the call, no matter how small, you have no idea of what God is calling you to do, but God needs you. God needs us to keep supporting each other, to be kind to each other, to love each other. .

We love this job, we all do. What a blessing it is! It’s a difficult, difficult job, but God calls you to do it, and indeed, He gives you a love for it so a difficult job will be well done.

Isn't God wonderful? Isn't he good to you, to each one of you, and to me? Turn to God each day -- put your faith, your trust, your hope and your life in his hands. He'll take care of you, and you'll have a good life. And this firehouse will be a great blessing to this neighborhood and to this city. Amen

These were the words of Fr. Mychal Judge + As most of you know he died the next morning during the 911 attack, performing his duties as a FDNY chaplain to the very end. May we all have God's grace to serve our fellow man... until the very end!

A century and a half earlier, another martyr at the altar of freedom, perhaps our greatest President, Abraham Lincoln, spoke words that can easily be adapted to our current situation:

"We have come here today to remember a great struggle, a great struggle between good and evil." A struggle that I sadly have come to believe is not over.

It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate this day. The brave men and women who responded, who struggled, and who died on that hot September morning in Lower Manhattan, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract.

It is for us the living, therefore, to dedicate ourselves, to the tasks that are before us, that we might likewise respond, however and whenever we are called, that this nation, the United States of American, might not perish from this earth.

So, as September 11, 2001, joins Pearl Harbor Day, December 7th, 1941; both now remembered by us as "Dates of Infamy" in our nation's calendar, we prayerfully remember our law enforcement officers, our emergency medical, personnel, and our firefighters, and those in the armed services, in saying, "God Bless America"!

Remembering September 11, 2001

8:46 AM: American Airlines Flight 11 from Logan International Airport in Boston, Massachusetts, to Los Angeles International Airport crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center

9:03 AM: United Airlines Flight 175 from Logan International Airport in Boston, Massachusetts to Los Angeles International Airport crashes in the South Tower of the World Trade Center

9:37 AM: American Airlines Flight 77 was the third flight hijacked as part of the September 11, 2001, attacks, and it was deliberately crashed into the Pentagon. The scheduled U.S. domestic flight from Washington Dulles International Airport, near Washington, D.C., to Los Angeles International Airport

9:59 AM: The South Tower collapses.

10:03 AM: United Airlines Flight 93 was a scheduled flight from Newark International Airport, in Newark, New Jersey, to San Francisco International Airport. The fourth plane crashed into a field near Shanksville in rural Somerset County, Pennsylvania, after some of its passengers and flight crew attempted to retake control of the plane, which the hijackers had redirected toward Washington, D.C.

10:28 AM: The North Tower collapses. When the north tower collapsed, debris heavily damaged the nearby 7 World Trade Center building. Its structural integrity was further compromised by fires, and the building collapsed later that day at 5:20 PM.

9/11 Casualties

- 2,604 Died at the World Trade Center
- 88 Flight 11 as it hit the North Tower
- 59 Flight 175 as it hit the South Tower
- 125 Died in the Pentagon
- 59 Flight 77 as it hit the Pentagon.
- 40 Flight 93 as it crashed in the Pennsylvania Field

We gather here today to honor the memory of the lives lost on September 11th, 2001.

There were those from law enforcement killed on 9/11:

- 23 NYPD officers
- 37 Port Authority police officers

The tragedy of September 11th took the lives of those from our armed services and since then those serving in the United States military have fought for our freedom from terrorism and many have given the ultimate sacrifice.

There were 343 FDNY Firefighters and Medical Service's personnel killed on 9/11.

In the midst of death, we remember and honor the thousands of lives lost on September 11th, 2001. We honor their memory, and we thank God for their lives.

The Last Homily of Father Mychal Judge

September 10, 2001

FDNY Engine 73, Ladder 42, Bronx, NY

Good morning, everyone.

May the grace of God the Father, peace of God the Son, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

We come to this house this morning to celebrate renewal, rejuvenation, new life. We come to thank God for the blessings over all the years - the good work that's been done here and especially the last few days. We can never thank God enough for the reality of the lives we have. So, standing in His presence this morning, and truly this is a chapel, let us pause for a moment, perhaps close our eyes, and thank God for some special blessings in our individual lives.

Let us pray.

Thank you, Lord, for life. Thank you for love. Thank you for goodness. Thank you for work. Thank you for family. Thank you for friends. Thank you for every gift because we know that every gift comes from You, and without You, we have and are nothing. So, as we celebrate this day in thanksgiving to You, keep our hearts and minds open. Let us enjoy each other's company, and most of all, let us be conscious of Your presence in our lives and in a special way in the lives of all those who have gone before us. And Father we make our prayer, as always, in Jesus' name who lives with You forever and ever.

That's the way it is. Good days. And bad days. Up days. Down days. Sad days. Happy days. But never a boring day on this job. You do what God has called you to do. You show up. You put one foot in front of another. You get on the rig, and you go out and you do the job - which is a mystery. And a surprise. You have no idea when you get on that rig. No matter how big the call. No matter how small. You have no idea what God is calling you to. But he needs you. He needs me. He needs all of us.

The retirees - He needs your prayers. He needs your stopping by occasionally to give strength and support and to tell the stories of the old days. We need the house and to those of you that are working now, keep going. Keep supporting each other. Be kind to each other. Love each other. Work together and do what you did the other night and the weeks and the months and the years before and from this house, God's blessings go forth in this community. It's fantastic!

What great people. We love the job. We all do. What a blessing that is. A difficult, difficult job and God calls you to it. And then He gives you a love for it so that a difficult job will be well done. Isn't He a wonderful God? Isn't He good to you? To each one of you? And to me! Turn to Him each day. Put your faith and your trust and your hope and your life in His hands, and He'll take care of you, and you'll have a good life.

And this house will be a great, great blessing to this neighborhood and to this city. Amen.

Two Unchangeable Symbols

Rev. Jim Van Houten

Hudson Valley Convention Wallkill New York

Following the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11th, 2001, three New York City firefighters, led by Dan McWilliams, removed an American Flag from a yacht docked nearby, and raised it over the remains of those twin towers. As they were raising it, a photographer named Bob Ivry snapped their picture. Within hours it was picked up by the wire services and was on the front page of almost every newspaper in America. Overnight the flag became famous and was destined to take its place alongside Francis Scott Key's Star - Spangled Banner and the flag raised over Iwo Jima. Both famous flags stood as a symbol of sacrifice and triumph. The Ground Zero flag had touched the hearts of millions and stood as an emblem of the loss and heroism of that horrible day.

This flag was taken into battle a few months later; it was raised over several of our war ships off the coast of Afghanistan. It was returned to the states in March of 2002, and it began its tour of our country, being raised over firehouses and police stations. Wherever it was displayed, it brought with it a sense of pride. At last, it was returned to its original owners to be raised over their yacht one last time, after which its owners donated it to the Smithsonian Institute.

However, as it was about to be raised: they discovered that this wasn't their flag! The flag which had flown over their yacht measured 3 feet by 5 feet and the flag returned to them measured 5 feet by 8 feet.

The flag returned to them had been signed by mayor Rudolph Giuliani and many other dignitaries who visited the site less than two weeks following the attack. But someone had switched the flags within the first few days. The original flag has been stolen and perhaps will never be recovered. A Symbol held in such high esteem has been tarnished and changed.

(The original flag was returned in 2014 and is now in the 9/11 museum)

We as Firefighters have two Symbols that have never been changed or stolen.

1. Centuries ago, a group of Crusaders, known as the Knights of St. John, felt called into service to save the lives of many of their comrades in arms. The Saracens were using a new weapon; glass bombs filled with naphtha which were thrown at the advancing knights, once saturated with the liquid, a torch was used to ignite the naphtha. Hundreds of knights were burned alive; so, the knights of St. John risked their lives to save their brothers from this painful fiery death. These men became our first firemen, risking their own lives to save the lives of others.

The efforts of these brave men were recognized by the other crusaders and each hero was awarded a badge of honor; a cross like the one fireman wear today. The Knights of St. John were from the island of Malta and so this badge of honor became known as the Maltese Cross.

For centuries it has remained unchanged!

It still stands as a symbol of protection, and the person wearing it still stands ready to lay down their lives for their fellow man.

We are here this morning to remember our Firematic Brothers who have been called home to be with the Lord. While they were with us, they all proudly wore this famous symbol, The Maltese Cross. Firemen like unchangeable symbols!

2. We in the fire service have another unchangeable symbol; it's the bible, God's Holy word. It provides us with the guidance to direct the course of our lives and the wisdom and understanding to overcome whatever problems we may face.

It's an unchangeable book telling us about the unchangeable Love of an unchangeable God.

As a fireman, that gives me a sense of both peace and security. And as a chaplain, I will be praying that as you read God's Word, that He will lead you to the passages that will bring both joy and blessing into your lives.

Remember it's a symbol that you can always count on!

Words Of Protection:

In Isaiah chapter 43 and verse two, which reads, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze."

I find it very comforting to know that the Lord goes with us as firefighters on every call, in some calls we see His hand and in others it's not as obvious. BUT HE IS ALWAYS THERE!

Words Of Comfort and Peace:

New Psalm 23 For Firefighters

The Lord is my Fire Chief. He gives me everything I need. He makes me to be still and know his peace. As he leads me through dangerous conditions, He restores my passion to rescue and save. He gives me escapes from death for his name's sake.

Even though I crawl through the valley of smoke and heat, I will not fear collapses or flash-overs, for you are with me.

Your wisdom and your steadfastness both comfort me. You have prepared miraculous protection for me in the presence of life-threatening circumstances.

You have anointed my handlines, my efforts overflow with your blessings.

Surely your goodness and unfailing love are with me on all the calls of my days. And I will dwell in the Station House of My Lord Forever.

Our Brothers, whose names were recalled this morning, we will see again in the courts of heaven.

The Angel of the Lord at Ground Zero

By Rev. Jim Van Houten & Director Frank Knower

This amazing story was told to us by Frank's close friend Fred Sims, Fred was the Superintendent of the Sunday School at Frank's church. The events of the story occurred on 9/11 but were not shared with anyone until two years later. Here is what happened.

With both towers hit the morning of September 11th, 2001, one of the major concerns was electrical power. Inside all of the world trade center buildings there were substation and hundreds of transmission and feeder lines which fed all of lower Manhattan. One of Con Ed's top engineers was killed shutting down lines when the North Tower collapsed, so they knew the work was dangerous.

At 4:15 p.m. Fred Sims another Con Ed engineer was sent to WTC 7 because FNDY had contacted them saying they feared the building was in danger of collapsing. The building had burned with such heat that the steel frame was compromised. Fred and three firefighters entered the basement where he cut off power to Battery Park and Park Place, but he left the transmission lines open to feed Beekman Hospital. However, before they could finish their work the building shook and collapsed at 5:20 p.m., trapping them beneath tons of debris.

Fred and his friends lay in the dark choking on the dust and struggling to free themselves. Fred said, "I started praying I thanked God that I was alive and prayed for someone to rescue us." It seemed like an eternity, but it was only about fifteen minutes, when a fourth firefighter with his helmet light on came towards us. He helped Fred up to his feet and asked Fred if he was alright. Fred said yes. This firefighter said, "I've come to get you all out safely. Fred grabs hold of this rope and hand it to the other guys, hold on and I'll lead you out." They crawled under and over steel I beams, through narrow passageways between huge pieces of concrete, at times this firefighter literally pulled them through. After about an hour they reached the street level where they were helped to their feet by this firefighter. Fred said, "We cleared the dust and dirt from our eyes while coughing out the concrete dust in our throats and then turned to thank the guy who rescued us." He was gone, nowhere in sight, he just disappeared right in front of us. We looked for the rope we were holding, and it was gone as well. Fred went on to say, "None of us spoke a word, we all walked away in silence, each offering a prayer of thanks to the Lord."

It was after midnight when Fred arrived home in Rockland County and because he had lost his cell phone, he had no way to contact his wife to tell her he was alright. As he came into his house his wife was not worried at all, his supper was ready, and she was watching the news on TV. Fred began to explain that he would have called but he lost his cell phone. She said, "Yes, I know, and I was worried sick, all I was doing was praying. And then your friend called to set my mind at ease. When I heard that wonderful calming voice say, hello Mary, well all my fears just left me. He said Fred is fine, I was just with him, he will be home late, but please don't worry.

Mary went on to say, he said you lost your cell phone he will leave it at Con Ed headquarters." Fred told us, "He felt so humbled and so undeserving to be rescued in such a mighty way, when so many others were lost that day. So, he simply never told anyone in his family or anyone else what happened to him and his friends. He just poured out his heart to the Lord privately thanking Him for His Divine love and protection.

Fred's son joined the City of New York Fire Department a few months later and has served as an FDNY firefighter ever since. As the first anniversary of 9/11 approached those three firefighters who were with Fred asked his son if his dad had ever said who that forth firemen was. Fred Jr. told them his father had never mentioned this, but he would ask him about what happened.

Since his family now knew about the divine rescue Fred began to share his thoughts and the details, He is convinced that this forth firemen was the Angel of the Lord. Fred believes as both Frank and I do that the Angel of the Lord was seen by and saved several thousand people on 9/11 however, He was recognized by very few.

Fred was presented with a white Deputy Chiefs helmet, non-command statis. They said, "We know it wasn't you who saved us, it was the Lord". We would like to honor Him as our Chief and we would like you to accept it on His behalf.

Psalm 34:7

For the angel of the LORD is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him. ... The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him and delivers them.

Father Joe Bayne OFM At Ground Zero

By Rev. Jim Van Houten Vice Chair FASNY Chaplains Committee

It was Sunday night September 16th, 2001, and major changes were taking place at ground zero. First our efforts had changed from rescue to recovery and secondly the National Guard had taken over which resulted in total confusion. They began by Issuing colored tags, which they changed after every shift. Hundreds of FDNY firefighters were turned away which left the recovery efforts under manned.

The only bright spot in our day was the news that a restaurant boat had arrived and that chefs from all over the city were on board to cook for the police and firefighters. We were making our way from the debris of the South Tower and were heading for the North tower and the waterfront. We took a short cut through the basement of one of the buildings still standing. While passing through this basement we found a priest wearing turnout gear and holding a bible.

I recognized him right way, it was Father Joe Bayne Chaplain of the Buffalo Fire Department and the Erie County Emergency Services. I introduced him to my team and then we asked him for a favor. We told him that we were on a mission to find a firefighter from Rescue #3. We told him that we had searched for two days, but with no success. His mother walks over a mile to attend Mass three times a day where she has been praying for her son Chris. She asked us to please find him and to have him call home. My team told him it's like looking for a nettle in a haystack, we need some divine help. Father Joe got us together like a football team in a huddle, we put our arms around each other, and he began to pray. He asked the Lord for a miracle that we would locate Chris. He concluded with these words. "Lord led these men to their friend by your divine guidance, in the Name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit Amen. We thanked him, gave him a hug and went on our way.

As we were walking along the wreckage of the North Tower, we saw a lone firefighter crawling beneath the fallen I beams, all we could see was his helmet light. We made our way into the pile and helped him to his feet. It was our friend Chris Ryan; we had a bit of a reunion right there. Chris was trying to find his way out of the pile when he saw our lights.

It was like we were guided to each other, by the Hand of God. I ran back to tell Father Joe, but they had moved him someplace else.

On Tuesday afternoon May 2nd, 2017, I was together with Father Joe at our conference at the Niagara Reserve Air Force Base. I asked him if he remembered praying with a group of firefighters in a basement at ground zero. He said, "Yes, I do, I have no idea who they were, and I have often wondered if they ever found their friend." He then asked how I knew about him offering a special prayer. When I told him it was me, he couldn't believe it. I guess I looked a lot different not covered in that gray dust. When I told him how his prayer was answered, how we were led to Chris, he bowed his head, and with a tear in his eye, he thanked the Lord.

I am eternally grateful that God brought us together in that basement of a building which later collapsed, at ground zero.

God's Counselor at Ground Zero

Chief Rev. Jim Van Houten

It was about 9:00 on Thursday morning September 12th when an elderly ladies arrived outside the Millennium Hotel across the street from St. Paul's Chapel. She unloaded the cart she was pulling and set up a card table and two chairs. She placed a tablecloth on the table and two thermoses of tea as well as her sign which read Counseling.

I watched throughout that day as a steady stream of firemen sat with her, had tea and deep conversation which ended with a big hug, and they returned to the pile. About 4:00 P.M. one of the Walden firefighters on my team came and requested that I get him out of there, he was simply overwhelmed. I suggested that he go to talk with that lady for she was surely helping others. After a forty-five-minute session he headed back to the dump truck he was driving and worked for the next seven days.

I saw her packing up at about 7:00 P.M. so I headed down to meet her in person. I thanked her for her help and then asked, "where did you get your training", you must be a clinical phycologist. She

said, my name is Madeline. She laughed and said training you must be kidding me chaplain. The only training I've ever had was as a hairdresser, but I'm a wife, a mother, and a grandmother, how's that for training!

I told her that she was amazing, that I had watched as she helped one fireman after another, and that one was a member of my team, she said, all men are really little boys' underneath. Because of this talking to mom always seems to help. And having a cup of tea in the middle of this mess helps to bring a sense of order and control into these tragic circumstances. She said I listen to their worries, their fears, and the pain of loss which they are all feeling. After all their brothers are buried under those piles. It's painful for them to even think about tomorrow.

Madeline said I was born in Germany in 1929. In 1942 I was taken with my entire family to a concentration camp, she showed me the number tattoo on her arm. I tell these firemen my story, I had to make a choice in 1945 as the sole survivor of my family to go on with life. I stopped asking why these things had happened and I stopped questioning God. I allowed God to take my hand and to lead me out of those ashes and on to a new tomorrow. I chose to allow the sun to rise again in my life and not to set. I'm telling these firemen to get back to work, not by yourselves but with God holding you up with his divine strength. The souls of your friends are already with the Lord, let Him use you to help to free their bodies from these piles of debris.

I humbly thanked her for her service and offered a prayer that the Lord would bless her in all of her tomorrows. She responded by giving me one of those great hugs. She was, indeed, God's Counselor sent by Him to meet the needs of so many hurting firefighters at ground zero.

Father Mychal Judge Joining the New York State association of Fire Chaplains

By Chief Rev. Jim Van Houten

In 1986 Father Judge moved from West Milford New Jersey to Saint Frances of Assisi Church in Manhattan where he served until his death on September 11, 2001. In February of 1992 he was appointed as the Catholic Chaplain with FDNY, and a new ministry opened before him. He often referred to this as a Divine Appointment for in this new ministry he found his greatest fulfillment. He loved being a Fire Chaplain.

Most people don't realize that FDNY Chaplains receive no training in firefighting or firematic protocol, Father Mychal learned a great deal from the members of rescue Three, which was across the street from St Frances Church. On July 17, 1996, he was called to the scene of the crash of flight 800, and he found himself completely overwhelmed. In a crash involving that much speed and impact the bodies of the victims are no longer separated, they are impaled together. Family members coming to the scene, children looking for parents. The bodies of the victims were placed in a tractor trailer which was parked on the street, blood was running out of the back of the truck and down along the curb. Someone brought a group of Sea Scouts to the scene as a barge came up to the pier with bodies and parts fully exposed, they were hysterical. In desperation Father Judge reached out to a friend from seminary, Father Greg Brennen who was Chief Chaplain of our Association.

Chief Chaplain Brennen responded to the scene and worked side by side with Father Mychal. Father Brennen was an interior fire fighter as was as an assistant chief of his department. The prayers

and services from our chaplain's manual became a treasured resource which Father Mychal used until his death on 9/11. I know that Chief Chaplain Brennen filled out an application and paid the dues for Father Mychal because I was there working with them. I later joined this Association in 1998. Following his death in the North Tower on 9/11 it was Father Mychal's twin sister who told reporters about her brother's membership in our Association. Our Past Chief Chaplain Barrie Lyn Foster read this account and inquired about us. She joined and has not only served as one of our Past Chiefs, she has also served as our treasurer and our executive secretary. I'm sure that Father Judge is smiling from heaven knowing that his membership brought such a qualified person into our Association.

Father Mychal Judge

Mychal Judge was born Robert Emmett Judge on May 11, 1933, in Brooklyn, New York, the son of immigrants from County Leitrim, Ireland, and the firstborn of a pair of fraternal twins. His twin sister Dymrna was born two days later. Judge was baptized in St. Paul's Church in Brooklyn on June 4. They and their older sister Erin grew up during the Great Depression.

From the ages of three to six, he watched his father suffer and die of mastoiditis, a slow and painful illness of the skull and inner ear. To earn income following his father's death, Judge shined shoes at New York Penn Station and would visit St. Francis of Assisi Church, located across the street. Seeing the Franciscan friars there, he later said, "I realized that I didn't care for material things... I knew then that I wanted to be a friar."

Career:

After spending his freshman year at the St. Francis Preparatory School in Brooklyn, where he studied under the Franciscan Brothers of Brooklyn, in 1948, at the age of 15, Judge began the formation process to enter the Order of Friars Minor. He transferred to St. Joseph's Seraphic Seminary in Callicoon, New York, the minor seminary of the Holy Name Province of the Order. After graduation, he enrolled at St. Bonaventure University in Olean, New York. In 1954 he was admitted to the novitiate of the Province in Paterson, New Jersey. After completing that year of formation, he received the religious habit and professed his first vows as a member of the Order. At that time, he was given the religious name of Fallon Michael. (He later dropped 'Fallon' and changed 'Michael' to the Gaelic form, Mychal). He resumed his college studies at St. Bonaventure University, where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1957. He professed his solemn vows as a full member of the Order in 1958. Following this, he did his theological studies at Holy Name College Seminary in Washington, D.C.. Upon completing these studies in 1961, he was ordained a priest.

After his ordination, Judge was assigned to the Shrine of St. Anthony in Boston, Massachusetts. Following his assignment there, he served in various parishes served by the Franciscans: St. Joseph Parish in East Rutherford, New Jersey, Sacred Heart Parish in Rochelle Park, New Jersey, Holy Cross Parish in the Bronx and St. Joseph Parish in West Milford, New Jersey. For three years he served as assistant to the President of Siena College, operated by the Franciscans in Loudonville, New York. In 1986 he was assigned to St. Francis of Assisi Church in Manhattan, where he had first come to know the friars. He lived and worked there until his death. Around 1971, Judge developed alcoholism, although he never showed obvious signs. In 1978, with the support of Alcoholics Anonymous, he became sober and continued to share his personal story of alcoholism to help others facing addiction.

In 1992, Judge was appointed a chaplain to the New York City Fire Department. As chaplain, he offered encouragement and prayers at fires, rescues, and hospitals, and counseled firemen and their families, often working 16-hour days. "His whole ministry was about love. Mychal loved the fire department, and they loved him." He was a member of AFSCME Local 299 (District Council 37). Judge was also well known in the city for ministering to the homeless, the hungry, recovering alcoholics, people with AIDS, the sick, injured, and grieving, immigrants, gays and lesbians and those alienated by the Church and society. For example, Judge once gave the winter coat off his back to a homeless woman in the street, later saying, "She needed it more than me." When he anointed a man who was dying of AIDS, the man asked him, "Do you think God hates me?" Judge just picked him up, kissed him, and silently rocked him in his arms.

Even before his death, many considered Judge to be a living saint for his extraordinary works of charity and his deep spirituality.

While praying, he would sometimes "become so lost in God, as if lost in a trance, that he'd be shocked to find several hours had passed." Judge's former spiritual director, former Jesuit John J. McNeill, observed that Judge achieved an "extraordinary degree of union with the divine. We knew we were dealing with someone directly in line with God."

September 11 Attacks:

On September 11, 2001, upon learning that the World Trade Center had been hit by the first of two jetliners, Judge rushed to the site. He was met by Rudolph Giuliani, the Mayor of New York City, who asked him to pray for the city and its victims. Judge prayed over some bodies lying on the streets, then entered the lobby of the World Trade Center North Tower, where an emergency command post had been organized. There he continued offering aid and prayers for the rescuers, the injured and the dead.

When the South Tower collapsed at 9:59 am, debris went flying through the North Tower lobby, killing many inside, including Judge. At the moment he was struck in the head and killed, Judge was repeatedly praying aloud, "Jesus, please end this right now! God, please end this!", according to Judge's biographer and New York Daily News columnist Michael Daly.

Shortly after his death, an NYPD lieutenant found Judge's body. He and two firemen, a FDNY emergency medical technician detailed to the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), and one civilian bystander then carried Judge's body out of the North Tower. This event was captured in the documentary film 9/11, shot by Jules and Gedeon Naudet. Shannon Stapleton, a photographer from Reuters, photographed Judge's body being carried out of the rubble by the five men. It became one of the most famous images related to 9/11. The Philadelphia Weekly reported that the photograph is "considered an American Pietà." Judge's body was laid before the altar of St. Peter's Catholic Church before being taken to the medical examiner.

Mychal Judge was designated as "Victim 0001" and thereby recognized as the first official victim of the attacks. Although others had been killed before him, including the crews, passengers, and hijackers of the first three planes, and occupants of the towers and the Pentagon, Judge was the first certified fatality because his was the first body to be recovered and taken to the medical examiner. Judge's body was formally identified by NYPD Detective Steven McDonald, a long-time friend. The New York Medical Examiner found that Judge died of "blunt force trauma to the head".

Mourning and Honors



FDNY Memorial - Engine 1, Ladder 24 (142 W. 31st Street)

3,000 people attended Judge's funeral Mass on September 15, 2001, at St. Francis of Assisi Church, which was presided over by Cardinal Edward Egan, the then Archbishop of New York. Former President Bill Clinton, who attended the funeral, said that Judge's death was a "special loss. We should lift his life up as an example of what has to prevail. We have to be more like Father Mike than the people who killed him."

Judge was buried in the friars' plot at Holy Sepulchre Cemetery in Totowa, New Jersey. On October 11, 2001, Brendan Fay organized a "Month's Mind Memorial" in Good Shepherd Chapel, General Theological Seminary, New York. It was an evening of prayer, stories, traditional Irish music, and personal testimonials about Judge.

There have been calls within the Roman Catholic Church to canonize Judge. While there is no indication that Rome is seriously considering this, several churches independent of Rome, most notably the Orthodox-Catholic Church of America, have declared him a saint. Some Catholic leaders recognize Judge as a de facto saint. There have been claims of miraculous healings through prayers to Judge. Evidence of miracles is required for canonization in the Catholic Church.



Fr. Mychal Judge
May 11, 1933 - September 11, 2001

Lord, take me where you want me to go,
Let me meet who you want me to meet,
Tell me what you want me to say and

Keep me out of your way!

Judge's fire helmet was presented to Pope John Paul II. France awarded him the Légion d'honneur. Some members of the United States Congress have nominated him for the Congressional Gold Medal as well as the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

In 2002, the City of New York renamed the portion of West 31st Street on which the friary where he lived is located as "Father Mychal F. Judge Street" and christened a commuter ferry, the Father Mychal Judge. In the same year, the United States Congress passed The Mychal Judge Police and Fire Chaplains Public Safety Officers Benefit Act into law. The law extended federal death benefits to chaplains of police and fire departments. It also marked the first time the federal government extended equal benefits for same-sex couples by allowing the domestic partners of public safety officers killed in the line of duty to collect a federal death benefit.

The New York Press Club instituted The Rev. Mychal Judge Heart of New York Award, which is presented annually for the news story or series that is most complimentary of New York City. A campaign has been started in East Rutherford, New Jersey, to have a statue of Judge erected in its Memorial Park. Alvernia University, a private independent college in the Franciscan tradition in Reading, Pennsylvania, named a new residence hall in honor of Judge.

The Father Mychal Judge Memorial in the village of Keshcarrigan, County Leitrim, Ireland, was dedicated in 2005 on donated land which had belonged to Judge's ancestors. People from the village and surrounding area celebrate his life every year on the 9/11 anniversary. In 2006, a documentary film, Saint of 9/11, directed by Glenn Holsten, co-produced by Brendan Fay and narrated by Sir Ian McKellen, was released.

Larry Kirwan, leader of the Irish American band Black 47, wrote a tribute song entitled "Mychal" in honor of Judge that appeared on the band's 2004 album New York Town. The Father Mychal Judge Walk of Remembrance takes place every year in New York on the Sunday before the 9/11 anniversary. It begins with a Mass at St. Francis Church on West 31st Street, then proceeds to the site of Ground Zero, retracing Judge's final journey and praying along the way. Every September 11, there is a Mass in memory of Judge in Boston, attended by many who lost family members on 9/11.

At the National 9/11 Memorial, Judge is memorialized at the South Pool, on Panel S-18, where other first responders are located. In 2015, a statue was dedicated to Judge at St. Joseph's Park in East Rutherford, New Jersey, across the street from St. Joseph's Parish where he served for several years.

The Great 9/11 Boat Rescue

By Rev. Jim Van Houten Chief Chaplain

On May 26th, 1940, thousands of British and French soldiers were stranded on the beaches of Dunkirk. Their destruction was certain, only a miracle could save them. Sir Winston Churchill called for a National Day of Prayer, God sent fog to give the troops cover and calm on the English Channel so boats could begin a rescue attempt. In 9 days, 700 boats of all sizes made trip after trip and what historians called the greatest boat rescue in history took place. In those 9 days 339,000 soldiers were saved and the certain destruction of England was prevented.

Eighteen years ago, I was sent to accompany the men of the Walden DPW with five new 5-ton dump trucks along with a technical rescue team from the Walden fire department to ground zero. We arrived two hours after the second tower fell. Visibility was poor due to the choking cloud of dust which covered all of lower Manhattan. We were assigned the task of clearing West Street so that rescue teams could access the pile of the South Tower.

It was there that we saw several hundred people crowded together in Battery Park where the tours leave for the Statue of Liberty. These folks were scared, many had narrowly escaped one of the five buildings of the World Trade Center. A sense of panic began to set in as they realized that they were trapped with nowhere to go.

The trains and subways were shut down, airports closed, the tunnels and bridges were locked down and heavily guarded. Now these hundreds of people were crowded along the water's edge, some clinging to the sea walls. As the Coast Guard arrived, they found a few people in the Hudson River trying to swim to safety; others were cramming into boats, over filling them, some were ready to capsize. Suddenly I heard this message on my fire radio, *"May Day, May Day, this is Coast Guard command for New York Harbor, I repeat, this is a May Day call for help to all Maritime Captains, urgent we need your help for an amphibious evacuation. Report to Battery Park."*

Within 15 minutes we saw the boats begin to arrive, Tugboats ferry boats, fishing boats, pleasure boats. There were boats coming from every direction! The Coast Guard took control of the rescue, checked and making sure the boats were safe, and they made sure that there was an orderly loading of each vessel. One of my friends Captain Andy told me he saw four businessmen lifting and elderly lady in a wheelchair over the railing and onto his boat, followed by three other businessmen lifting her German shepherd guide dog onto his tug. That day everyone was helping each other, and everyone became a First Responder.

We began to realize that because Manhattan is an island this was the only way for people working that day to return to their homes and families. More and more people came, and the boats were filled again and again. At the end of that day fourteen years ago over 500,000 people were boat lifted from Manhattan to safety. Not one person drowned nor was injured being transported and it was accomplished in just 9 hours, not 9 days. It became the Largest Amphibious Rescue Evacuation in History.

Only in America could this occur, aren't you proud to be an American, I know that I am. None of the captains were paid, they donated all of the fuel as well as their time on that fateful 9/11 day. As Chief Chaplain I was honored to become part of the greatest rescue team ever assembled. I found it humbling to serve as a representative of the Lord who gave me the strength, I needed to minister for Him at Ground Zero.

The 9/11 Story of Lt. Col. Brian Birdwell

Lt. Col. Birdwell related his story to Chief Chaplain Rev. Jim Van Houten

On September 11, 2001, American Airline flight 77 had been hijacked. The terrorists crashed the Boeing 757 into the Pentagon at 9:37 A.M.

The section of the Pentagon where the plane struck was still under construction. Only a few people were in this section at the time of the attack, Lt. Colonel Brian Birdwell was one of them. The following is Brian and his wife Mel's story which they shared with New York State Chief Chaplain Rev. Jim Van Houten on the eight Anniversary of 9/11, at the Rockland County Fire Training Center. Brian was just returning from the men's room and was walking down the corridor and was directly in the path of the hijacked Boeing 757 plane.

George Washington said," The worth of one's character is measured by the trials of adversity." This attack did not produce character in Brian and his wife Mel, it revealed the character which God had given them. The passage of scripture which the Lord gave them to carry them through these trials was 1st Peter 5:10, "After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to his Glory, eternal, glory in Christ, will perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you."

Brian had stepped out of the men's room on the 2nd floor and started down corridor #4 towards the outermost ring of the E ring of the Pentagon. It was 9:37 A.M. Brian took 7 or 8 steps and was in front of the elevators when Bang, a deafening explosion occurred. Brian had spent 10 years as an artillery officer and was very familiar with load explosions and other noises of war. This was loader- a resonance of medal slamming through concrete- scraping, like high pitched thunder.

Everything happened in a nano second. Yet, Brian said it seemed like slow motion. Immediately, it was pitch dark, like being thrown into a dark deep cave. Brian remembers hearing a load whoosh blasting toward him, fire exploding from the elevator and surrounding him. Tossing him to the floor. The walls shook, he could see nothing but a ring of yellow around him. He realized then that He Was on fire! The heat was so intense that the polyester pants of his uniform melted to his legs. His arms, back, legs, face and hair were alight with flame. Thick smoke engulfed him threatening to suffocate him as he gasped for air. Brian's mind registered a distinct odor and taste. Jet fuel!

Brian said it seemed like eternity there on the floor, but it was probably only 5 or 10 seconds! He forced his eyes open and tried to get to his feet, but his body wouldn't cooperate. If he didn't escape, he would surely die. Brian had been trained to never give up, but at this time he said, Lord, if this is the end for me, if this is the way that I am to go home to be with you, then it's OK.

At this same time Brian's wife Mel, and their 12-year-old son Matt were completing a home school project when the phone rang- "Mel-a plane just smashed into the World Trade Center! "They watched the second plane fly into the other tower. Deeply saddened, Mel turned off the TV and they got back to home schooling. A second call-Is your TV on? -No? - The Pentagon was just hit!" The picture on the set was showing flames shooting out of a gaping hole. Mel said her mind battled between staying calm and going hysterical. She called her best friend and said, "I'm sure that we are in big trouble."

Back at the Pentagon, Brian had stopped moving, "This is the end, he said" Fire and pain seared through his body. He lay wondering when his soul would depart from his body and what it would feel like?" As he focused on eternity, he was enveloped by an absolute silence, absolute peace. He was separated from everything; God was in that place with him- it was just God and Brian. While the pain was excruciating, he felt indescribable peace. While it may have taken no more than two minutes, it felt like hours. Brian started to think, "OK Lord, come on, let's get on with this thing. What are we waiting for, I'm ready!"

Suddenly God began to work in a mighty way! Brian felt something trickle down the left side of his face, it passed his eye and ran down his cheek. It was a small stream. It wasn't warm, so he knew it wasn't blood. It was cold. IT WAS WATER. Somehow, Brian had landed under one of the working sprinkler system pipes, and it began dousing the fire that was consuming him. It was a miracle, for the only reason there was water in the pipe was because they were being tested that day. God is so good!

With the touch of the water, everything changed. Brian's courage was renewed, and he began to try again. He felt re-oriented. The fire that had surrounded him was out. OK, he said I'm not dead yet. Now I need to get medical attention- and quickly. His lungs had been burned, for he had inhaled aerosolized jet fuel. He tried to suck in oxygen but was unable to fill his lungs. Help arrived; the Lord sent six officers who attempted to pick Brian up. He recognized them, but they didn't recognize him.

As they lifted Brian off the floor he screamed in pain. He said, "Please don't touch me, the pain is incredible." Shreds of skin were falling off of Brian's bloody fingers. His arms all the way up to his arm pits, felt like hot dogs left on the grill to long. The outside began to flake off. Brian cried out, "Please call Mel," but they still didn't know who he was. Brian began to tremble severely; he was in deep shock. Another miracle took place as Brian was waiting to be removed from the building. A lady ran down the stairs, passed by him, and then returned. My name is Natalie, I would like to pray with you, would that be alright? Brian said, yes please pray I need God's help.

Natalie helped to calm Brian while the others were working to get him ready to evacuate. After Natalie had passed by me, she had run to her office and grabbed her bible from her desk, she began reading to Brian. Natalie then called Brian's wife Mel, told her about Brian's injuries and prayed with her. Later she read Psalm 91 to Brian and a wonderful peace came over him.

Brian was taken out of the Pentagon on a golf cart to a waiting Ambulance to transport him to the hospital. They just dropped him off and ran back to get others, but Brian was left in the heat of the sun, helpless. Another lady came by and shielded him from the sun, what a blessing to get relief from the sun beating down on his already cooked face.

When Brian finally arrived at the hospital the trauma nurses realized that Brian needed to be transferred to a burn unit right away. A second-degree burn continues to burn and can turn into a third degree burn if left untreated. Brian needed to be medevacked to a hospital which specialized in burn trauma cases, but all airports were closed. The FAA was contacted, and the air space was opened only for his flight to that hospital. Mel arrived at the hospital just before Brian was airlifted out. He was so swollen that he was not recognizable. They prayed together before his flight.

Mel arrived at the new hospital before Brian because his flight was delayed for clearance. She asked if Lt. Col. Brian Birdwell was there yet? The clerk at the desk said they had no one by that name and that they were not expecting anyone else. Mel asked him to please look harder! The clerk realized that Mel was about to become hysterical, and he did look again. Sorry, there's nobody! Mel said, "He's coming by helicopter, he's on his way! The clerk told Mel to please calm down. Mel took control, I'm not calming down, now find my husband. They finally did find Brian and allowed Mel to go inside the hospital.

Once again God was at work. Another couple was there whose daughter was also injured in the Pentagon.

They asked Mel if her husband was there as well. They asked if she would like to join them with the hospital chaplain in prayer in the hospital chapel. Mel said she felt so loved when they did that. They latched onto her as if she was one of their own family. There in the chapel were 20 members of their family as well as their pastor. Each time they prayed they asked Mel to join them, and they all prayed for Brian as well.

Mel said, "having people lifting up a total stranger before the Lord is the most comforting, wonderful feeling a person in need can have.

Mel was told by a nurse that Walter Reed Hospital, wanted to talk with her. She was afraid Walter Reed was going to handle this in a typical military fashion. Either give him some Motrin and he'll get better or OK he's done, next person. It's as if he was a throw away soldier. She made up her mind that was not going to happen to Brian, so she didn't call them back.

A little while later since she didn't call them, they faxed papers to her to sign so that they could medically retire Brian. She thought, "I'm not going to sign papers for his retirement! Then it hit her, they think that he is going to die.

Mel called the General who had filled out the papers and he told Mel that Brian's death was imminent within the next 72 hours. Mel said I knew he was a General, but he wasn't God. And she believed that her God could do anything-even heal Brian. Soon Mel began to learn more about Brian's injuries, the doctors were saying his chance of survival were 60/40 or maybe 65/35. She needed to speak to the chief surgeon in charge, she prayed for wisdom. Instantly the Lord said to her heart, "Don't Sign the Papers."

A plane crashes into your building and you're the one who has to pay the price with your career? What kind of motivation to get well would it be if Brian was forced to retire? Soon after this Mel found out that Brian's Doctor had not notified anyone that his death was imminent.

Brian spent many hours in the tank to debride him, then further debridement and excruciating. This was to keep him from exploding. They cut where the most fluid has gathered. Pulmonary edema became a life-threatening problem. Brian also had an inhalation injury where his lungs were burned. He had great trouble processing oxygen. His 4th degree burns went thru every layer of skin and reaches the muscle tissue, and his 5th degree burns went all the way to the bone.

At 7:30 A.M. on September 13th the Secret Service called on behalf of the President, asking permission to visit Col. Birdwell. To Mel it was mind boggling that the President would ask permission to visit them.

Mrs. Bush arrived first and after some small talk, she said, I brought someone to see you Col. Birdwell. It was President Bush. The President said as he approached Brian's hospital bed, "Col. Birdwell", and the President snapped to attention, and saluted Brian. Mel could not believe what she was seeing, the Commander and Chief subordinating himself to Brian, a junior officer, he was showing such tremendous respect to both of us. As the President dropped his salute, he saw Brian trying to raise his arm to return the salute. All we could see was the bright red muscle, no skin remaining on his arm.

The President stood with huge tears in his eyes, he saluted again and held his salute while Brian trying desperately and in agony, returned it. President Bush asked, “May I pray for you and your family? He then led us in a heartfelt prayer.

Several days later a General came to visit Brian and briefed both Brian and Mel on the damage to the Pentagon. Al Queda terrorists hijacked an American Air Lines plane flight 77. When the plane struck there was enough force for the tail of the plane to thrust itself through the aircraft and cockpit, then continue traveling through most of the Pentagon. It was traveling at more than 350 miles an hour, and sadly there were 64 passengers on board.

The ten thousand gallons of jet fuel ignited on impact, and the fire reached 1450 degrees. Mel said God sent her a real peace about the entire situation. She said, “I know that my God is sovereign, and that Brian is His.” She realized that Brian was only on loan to her, that he really belonged to God. As she read a Psalm that morning, she kept going back to the verse that reminded her that the Lord is our rock and our fortress. It’s wonderful that during these times of testing we can crawl into His everlasting arms and find His perfect rest.

The pain of the explosion was minor compared to the pain Brian was now experiencing, the scrubbing, the infections, the grafts, nothing took away the pain completely. Brian began to pray for the time he would be in surgery, because he would be knocked out for a few hours. The waiting for his body to heal went very slowly.

Curing the infection was a slow process as well. In fact, the doctors had to resort to a different treatment. Brian approved it, but Mel said it blew her mind. The doctors said. “we are going to use maggots, on purpose.” The maggots ate the dead tissue and left the living tissue completely alone. Mel said she lived a life of fear. Fear something would happen to her, leaving their son ostensibly alone. She would often ask God, “why do I allow fear to rein in my heart?” “God, please don’t let fear control my mind.” Mel said, “everyday she had to give up her own control, and trust that God would work in Brian’s life.

Mel would search the scriptures that dealt with fear. The 23rd Psalm became a favorite. In verse 4 it says, “Even thou I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.” Did you know that the original groundbreaking for the Pentagon was on September 11, 1941?

Brian and Mel had a lot of time to think. The Lord had a miraculous way of fixing their problems. Brian said, first I knew I was going to die, suffocating under the weight of three pains— physical, emotional, and spiritual. But God was working on his behalf. He went from thinking that he was dying, to knowing that he could survive. In those same minutes of chaos, panic, and terror, the Lord put those things at rest in his heart.

Brian and Mel have realized as they look back over their ordeal, that there were three things that brought Brian through: his faith in God, a supportive spouse, and a sense of humor. He believed the words of Proverbs 17: 22 “A joyful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit dries up the bones.” Brian has never considered himself to be a victim. For he is a survivor! He said, yes, I have been victimized by the evil decisions of others, but with God’s help I have been able to rise above it.

On the first floor of the Pentagon is a chapel with a permanent memorial to all the innocent men, women and children who died in the attack on the Pentagon. A total of 184, not counting the terrorists.

The chaplain at Georgetown Hospital said to Brian, "When I was with you in the emergency room, you changed my life. When I was in your presence, I could feel the presence of God." When people ask Brian, was it worth it, going through all the pain, he tells them he has learned a lesson about God's sovereignty. For it has deepened his faith and his relationship with God, and it has given him the opportunity to share Christ boldly.

Lt Col. Brian Birdwell had been awarded the Bronze Star during the Gulf War in 1998. Having survived burns over 60% of his body at the Pentagon he was awarded the Purple Heart. Upon his retirement from the office of Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management in July of 2004, Brian was awarded the Legion of Merit. In April of 2004 the Sept. of the Army recognized Mel's 17 plus years of service to the Army Family by presenting her with the Outstanding Civilian Service Medal.

After retirement from the Army Brian and Mel founded The Face the Fire Ministry, a nonprofit foundation which serves critical burn survivors as well as our wounded service men and women. Brian and Mel have authored a book, *Refined by Fire: A Family's Triumph of Love and Faith*, the story of their life-changing ordeal.¹

In 2010 Brian ran as a candidate for Senate representing the State of Texas. He was elected and is still serving today. The Birdwell's have a son, Matthew Birdwell, who is a student at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. They attend Lakeside Baptist Church in Granbury.

God's Specially Chosen Man on 9/11

Rev. Jim Van Houten Chief Chaplain

I may have seen this amazing man at work following the attack on 9/11 but it wasn't until July of 2003 that I got to know him. Our meeting didn't occur in Lower Manhattan, but instead miles away in the Adirondacks. This is the story of Doctor Jeffrey Burkes, one of the great heroes of 9/11.

Our family has a summer home in Speculator just outside of Camp of the woods a Christian family resort. Whenever I'm there I would attend the chapel service devotions with my dad. While walking to the chapel that morning my dad told me that one of the directors of the camp wanted me to do a seminar on my work on 9/11 with a Dr. Burkes. I told my dad I wasn't interested; I was trying to forget the 128 days I had spent working at ground zero. But as fate would have it as we existed the chapel we walked right into his friend with the doctor.

Wow was this man intense; he began to interrogate me. So, you were there, do you have pictures to prove it, who were you with, how long were you there and what kind of pass did you have, if you were there at all. I had reached out my hand as we were introduced, but now I withdrew it, I changed my tone and replied to the following: I went with the Walden Police and Fire Departments, I had a chaplain's pass, I took a lot of pictures during the 128 days that I served mostly on the pile of the south tower, later the pit. He said, yes you were there let's do that seminar together. I walked away as quickly as I could and told my dad that Dr Burkes was a nice fellow, but I'm not interested.

That afternoon it rained, so instead of sailing like I had planned, I was making bird houses in my dad's garage. The peaceful atmosphere was interrupted by my dad's voice, come in Dr. Burkes Jim's in the garage, he would love to go to your place, I was stuck. The good doctor asked if I had any pictures with me, I said no, but again my dad chimed in, no problem I've got copies of all of your disks, stuck again.

Off we went to his place in Camp of the woods where his computer was already set up and there were some folks already there to view his pictures. He said he called them Burkes timeline which began on September 11th, 2001, when he first responded. Soon the pictures became more graphic as I looked at picture after picture of victims who had fallen from the towers. After about twenty I politely excused myself and started to walk home. Doctor Burkes followed me and asked if I found the pictures upsetting. At that moment I heard the voice of God saying, "Jim this man needs you, he needs your help." I stopped and took his hand and said, doctor those victims could not be placed in a regular body bag, for every bone in their bodies was broken.

They were placed in very heavy bags and then they were placed in the refrigerated tractor trailers which were used as a temporary morgue. Am I correct? He said yes that's right. I said to the doctor I was part of a team who placed some of them in those heavy bags. I don't need to see them; they will be in my mind forever. Doc, from the moment we meant this morning I feel like you're interrogating me, why?

At that moment we both knew that the Lord had brought us together for His divine purpose. He began to tell me his story. He was a very successful dentist with practices in Manhattan and New Jersey. He was the chief of forensic dentistry for the New York City medical examiner's office, he was faced with the remains of 2,749 people ---victims of the worse act of mass murder in American history. He led a team of 450 forensic dentists from around the world and they were assigned to identify the victims from the 21,817 human remains pulled from the rubble. He said, this has consumed me for the past 22 months. It's affected my entire life, it's hard to focus on my practice, my wife and kids hardly know me, I know that God has a purpose for me in all of this, but I don't know what it is!

Doctor Burkes said I have sought out people especially clergy who said they were there, only to find out they were near it, or there for a few hours but never really worked on the piles. So, I began to interrogate people before they disappoint me again. Please tell me what God's purpose for my life is. I began to pray for the Lord's answer for I knew that God had brought us together for this reason.

I asked him Doc, how many people did you identify with your team? Over 1000 victims. I said Doc, we both know that of the 2,749 victims that only 288 bodies were found intact right. I attended many funerals and the widows, and the families all knew that there were only a few remains in that casket, could you really tell them for sure that that was their loved one? Yes, he said, absolutely 100% We started to contact families that day and I saw the warmest most compassionate Christian man reach out and touch the hearts of those hurting families giving them a sense of closer.

We have an amazing God who moves in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform. That afternoon God sent healing to both Doctor Jeffrey Burkes and to chaplain Jim Van Houten. The next afternoon Dawn and I were out walking, and Doctor Burkes wife stopped us, she gave me a hug and said, "thanks for giving my husband back to me". Dawn laughed and said, "yesterday the Lord gave us both our husbands back again." Doctor Burkes has continued to contact families, giving them support and closer. He is an amazing Christian man, and he was chosen by God to serve at ground zero.

A Sign of God's Presence on 9/11

Rev. Jim Van Houten Past Chief Chaplain

On the morning of September 11th, 2001, about the time the North Tower of the trade Center collapsed an urgent call was placed to the Governor's office. Emergency Services realized the only way into the debris fields of both towers was to enter from West Street. Large loaders would pile the stranded cars on top of each other to clear a pathway into what became known as ground zero. Smaller 5-ton dump trucks were needed, lots of them, they were large enough to haul a load and small enough to maneuver around the tons of concrete and steel eye beams. The son of the Governor's secretary was the head of our DPW in Walden, and we had just gotten five new trucks. So, with less than an hour's notice, we were heading for the city. I went as the police Chaplain and drove the police car as an escort.

As night fell and the Hugh generators provided light, the magnitude of the disaster became overwhelming. I felt an anger growing inside myself, as we were told to expect a death toll of about 20,000 people. I was also questioning myself, for just a year before I had gotten over post-traumatic stress disorder.

I looked across the pile of the south tower and I could see a small church. I said, "Lord if you want me here, well there is no way for me to do it on my own. Please be with me and give me a sign that will give me assurance." So, I went into St Paul's Church to pray. No electric, the church was completely dark, except for a red candle burning on the altar. What was amazing was that there was no damage to the church, not even one of the stained-glass windows were even cracked. It was as if the hands of God had surrounded the building and protected it from all harm.

I made my way to the front of the church using the candle as my guide until I reached the front altar area. I stood there and prayed, pouring out my heart out to the Lord. I told him about my anger, and if I do not get rid of it, I'd never be able to help anyone. And Lord, what about the PTSD, will it return. Now I am praying out loud and being by myself I wasn't embarrassed at all. Suddenly in the darkness I felt a hand on my shoulder, no it was not the hand of God, it was a fellow firefighter from FDNY. I was not alone, in fact there were about 20 other firefighters in the church. They were sleeping on the pews. Well, we all prayed together! They said they loved my prayer; it was just the same way they were feeling. They said, do you really think you will get a sign, you know the one you asked for? Well, we talked together for a while and then decided to go back to the pile and begin our rescue attempts once again. We all kneeled on the chapel floor, held hands and I prayed that the Lord would use us to accomplish His work on those piles.

As we were leaving a lady began to sing, she had a wonderful voice, clear as crystal. She sang "Amazing Grace", it's one of my favorite hymns, it touched all of our hearts. I felt a deep sense of peace come over me, the anger, which was overwhelming me, It was gone. I felt an inner strength which I had never experienced before welling up inside me. We all felt the presence of God there with us. As the firemen turned on their helmet lights the small chapel was illuminated. The voice continued, but there was no one visible singing the hymn.

One of the firefighters with me said, Well Reverend, I guess you got your sign, that's the first time that an angel has sung for us. God must have great plans for us all. I said a silent prayer and we began our rescue and recovery efforts. We all knew we were called to be there!

Blessed Assurance at Ground Zero

Rev. Jim Van Houten Past Chief Chaplain

While working on the pile of the south Tower with my team, one of my guys found a small book buried in the debris. Since we were digging with our hands and filling 5-gallon buckets, any personal items were put aside for safe keeping.

They called me over and asked, what is this, is it Important and what could I tell them about it. I said it's a New Testament and Psalms, it was given to a firefighter by the Gideon Bible Society. The front cover is missing with the owner's names, but since the remaining cover is maroon in color, it was given by a Gideon to a personal friend. Since the pages were well used this firefighter carried it with him all the time and it was well read.

As I looked at it more carefully, I noticed that the book of Psalms which is included in the back of the New Testament was open to Psalm 23.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.

He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will 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 runs over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.

There in the middle of the Psalm was the unmistakable thumb print of a fireman's glove. It was directly over verse 4, Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil. I said this firefighter had this in his hand, reading it when the Tower collapsed. They were amazed and said, "What a way to go to heaven." But they wondered if he was still feeling a fear of death.

As I looked it over a bit more, I noticed a well-used page in the book of Romans, which more than answered their question. Next to these two verses was written, "Favorite verses."

Romans 8: 38-39

38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

He had complete assurance of where he would be spending eternity, in the house of the Lord.

Later that day we found the missing front cover which contained his name. The New Testament was returned to his wife and children.

9/11 Changed the People Of New York

Rev. Jim Van Houten

Here are just a few examples.

1. After leaving St. Paul's church I was spotted by one of the FDNY Battalion Chiefs. I guess that I stood out because I was wearing my class A uniform and so was he. The chief welcomed me and said that they needed all the spiritual help they could get. He asked if I would pray with him, asking God to give him strength. After we prayed together, he told me that the great unknown was just how many victims were killed that morning. At that point many were predicting as many as 20,000 people killed or missing.

He asked if I would pray with his men, I was glad to. He called a group together and said the chaplain is going to pray for all of us. Soon a group of about 50 gathered around me. Well, like most Baptist's I said, "Let's Pray Together." There was a lot of movement as all 50 got on their knees in the five or six inches of dust and ash for my prayer. From that time on, when we prayed, we got on our knees before the Lord.

They told me I needed a helmet if I was going to stay, all were surprised when I told them I was a firefighter as well as a chaplain, and that I had my turnout gear in my truck. I worked the piles in turn out gear from that time on.

2. The West Side Highway was closed to all but emergency traffic. There were hundreds of people standing there waiting to welcome First Responders. They had purchased dust masks, eye drops, gloves, Vicks vapor rub for the smell, they all wanted to help.

It was an amazing feeling to be cheered on by hundreds of people, grateful for your help. I was reminded of the verse that we are surrounded by a great cloud of witness, it was truly inspiring.

3. I was on the pile of the South Tower, it was at night, but the entire area was lit so that we could work in shifts 24 hours a day. I saw a fireman, who had taken some chairs out of the Millennium Hotel and was asleep. His dust mask was on his chin, he must have been exhausted. A man walked by and stopped; I thought that this fellow might rob the guy while he was asleep. Instead, he carefully placed the mask over his mouth and nose, without waking him. He went into the burned hotel and returned with a blanket, which he covered this firefighter carefully with. He then stepped back, stood at attention, and saluted this sleeping hero. He then quietly walked away into the night.
4. I was returning to ground zero from Pace College where we had established a temporary morgue when I saw two very elderly ladies struggling with a 40-pound bag of dog food. A TV station had said they needed dog food for the rescue and cadaver dogs. These two sisters, one 92 and her older sister 95 were lugging this bag in a small shopping cart with a broken wheel from up town. I was driving a chief's car, so I stopped and offered to take it to ground zero for them. "Not a chance" they said, we are taking bag there ourselves. Well, I offered them a ride in a fire vehicle. They smiled and asked if I would drive with the red lights and siren on. Of course, let me help you

both in. I radioed ahead and told the command that we were coming, lights and siren we arrived. They were given a hero's welcome. Every firefighter hugged them. They got to meet the fire dogs working at the scene. They had lunch with us at the Red Cross tent and when they were finished, we drove them home, once again with lights and sirens.

A Firemen Down at Ground Zero

Rev. Jim van Houten Past Chief Chaplain

Working the piles could be exhausting because of the heat, fires burned for weeks beneath the rubble. Wearing turnout gear and a helmet didn't make it any easier. Most of the time we didn't break for lunch, instead we had peanut & jelly sandwiches in our pockets, and we ate while digging through the debris.

That afternoon I was suddenly being called, we need the chaplain up here quick, we have a fireman down.

I climbed over the I beams and reached the top. There a group of firemen were gathered around the victim, all deeply concerned. There in the dirt lay a large black lab, one of the rescue dogs named Buck. We think it's his heart they said, he just collapsed. Chaplain, do you know any prayers for dogs?

I sure do, I told them, I pray for my own dogs every time they are sick or get hurt. So, I knelt down and began to pray for Buck. I had learned something from Father Hugh, that fire dogs like Holy water, so I began to anoint him. He opened his eyes and began to lick the water; everyone began to cheer. They called for a stretcher and carefully carried Buck down to a waiting ambulance. He was raced to the nearest animal hospital.

Several hours later we heard cheers from the bottom of the pile, and soon the news reached the top, Buck was fine, just overheated and dehydrated, the Vet said he would be back after a day of rest.

Great prayer chaplain, way to go! It was almost impossible to cry because of the dust in our eyes, but every firefighter on our team was wiping their eyes. God is Good all the Time!

The Question of Suicide on 9/11

Rev. Jim Van Houten Past Chief Chaplain

Beginning on the 12th of September 2001 family members began to gather outside of Ground Zero looking for or hoping to get news about their missing loved ones. The news on the 11th showed a photo of "The Falling Man, and many were wondering if he was their loved one. Sadly, there were some in the crowd who felt that it was necessary to pass judgement upon those who "Jumped" rather than to burn to death. They, and some of the media, were stating that they were cowards and that they took the easy way out. They stated that the souls of these folks were lost for all eternity because they had committed suicide.

I can't begin to tell you the pain and horror which they placed into the hearts and minds of those family members searching for loved ones. Since I was wearing a white chaplain's helmet, they

turned to me and pleaded for an answer God is good, for before I began to pray for help, my memory brought to mind material I had read in the 1990's.

Pope John Paul II had made changes in the thinking of the Catholic Church on the theological topic of Suicide. This is what he said." Grave psychological disturbances, anguish, or grave fear of hardship, suffering, or torture can diminish the responsibility of the one committing suicide.

That being said, I stopped the voices of the accuser's by saying, Yesterday, everyone who died in these Towers, on those planes and in the pentagon, who were not one of the 19 terrorists. WERE MURDERED! Not one of those wonderful Americans came to work yesterday wanting to or expecting to die. They were all First Responders; they were all Hero's trying to help others as well as themselves to live another day.

Within three days things were changed in the New York City Coroner's Office, there is no reference to Jumpers, it refers officially to those who Fell from the buildings. That Day, I decided to make a study of what happened in those Towers when those two planes hit.

Of the 2,606 who dies at the World trade Center, at least 1,356 were in the North Tower. There are three reasons for that: 1.) First it was the first building to be hit, it gave many in the South Tower time to escape.2.) Windows on the World had 100 guests and 70 staff that day,3.) No one above the impact zone had a chance of surviving. The temperature rose to between 800 and 1000 degrees. In the South tower, whereas they had more time, the 911 operators told many to shelter in place and wait for the firemen to come for them. The media choose not to show those falling to their deaths. The photos shown came from amateurs, they were horrifying to the families.

The floors became so hot that people were standing on desks, the smoke was so thick you couldn't see. If you got to a window, you could breathe, but when the smoke from below began to rise, it choked you. I viewed the bodies of some who fell. Before you ask, no you would not recognize any of them. We lost a family member on flight 103, he fell from 33,000 feet and landed in a pasture, I could visually identify him. They fell about 1,300 feet, it took 10 seconds, they landed on concrete. It's unforgiving. However, I looked at their hands, on many their hands were burned, they simply could not hold on any longer. One man tried to climb down, several ladies tried using drapes and table clothes as parachutes, which didn't work. Some went together, hoping one would survive.

If what they experienced in those towers that day doesn't meet the standard of torture which Pope John Paul II described, I don't know what does.

None of us knows the time of our deaths or what circumstances will bring about our passing, but by faith in Christ we can be ready. I shared the words of John 3:16 with those families searching for loved ones at ground zero:

For God so loved the world
That He gave His only begotten Son
That whosoever believeth in Him
Should not perish, but have everlasting life

I shared the pain that those families were feeling with a friend of mine, he's good with words, and using that skill he wrote the Poem "Meet me in the Stairwell"

“Meet Me in The Stairwell”

You say that you will never forget where you were when you heard the news on September 11th, 2001, and neither will I.

I was on the 100th floor in a smoke-filled room with a man who called his wife to say “goodbye” I held his fingers steady as he dialed the phone. I gave him the peace to say, “Honey, I'm not going to make it, but it's OK... I'm ready to go!

I was with his wife when he called as she fed breakfast to their children. I held her up as she tried to understand his words and realized that he was not coming home that night.

I was in the stairwell of the 23rd floor when a women cried out to me for help. “I have been knocking on your heart's door for 50 years! I Said, Of course I will show you the way home... Only believe in me now.”

I was at the base of the building with a Priest named Father Mike, ministering to the injured and devastated souls. I took him home to tend my flock and his flock in Heaven. He heard my voice and answered!

I was on all four of those planes, in every seat, and with every prayer. I was with the crew as they were overtaken. I was in the hearts of believers there, comforting and assuring them that their faith saved them.

I was in Texas, Kansas, and London. I was standing next to you when you heard the terrible news. Did you sense me there?

I want you to know that I saw every face. I knew every name----though not all knew me. Some met me for the first time on the 86th floor.

Some sought me with their last breath. Some couldn't hear me calling to them through the smoke and the flames; “Come to Me... This Way... Take My hand.” Some chose, for the final time to ignore Me. BUT I WAS THERE!

I did not place you in the tower that day, you may not know why, but I do. However, if you were there in that explosive moment of time, would you have reached for me?

September 11th was not the end of the journey for you. But someday your journey will end. And I will be there for you as well. “SEEK ME NOW WHY I CAN BE FOUND.” Then, at any moment, you know that you are ready to go.”

I will be in the stairwell of your final moments.

Signed: GOD

When Towers Fall and People Perish

Luke 13:1-9

Once in every lifetime something happens on the world stage, which shapes the course of human events. That event occurred 20 years ago on the morning of Sept 11th. Consider for a moment what was set in motion by the terrorist attacks of that day:

- Our Nation's capital was attacked.
- Over 3000 people lost their lives.
- The Manhattan skyline was irrevocably changed.
- The financial trade center for 150 nations was completely destroyed.
- The world's economy was greatly tested.
- We waged a war against the Taliban in Afghanistan. Thousands of lives lost.
- And a long-standing almost invisible war is still being fought for years to come around the world.

That's the big picture and it says nothing of the tens of thousands of people here and abroad whose lives were changed.

Try to calculate the human toll emotionally and spiritually and you cannot. Only God can weigh such matters.

But we try in feeble ways to understand. Events like these raise fundamental questions.

Why is there so much evil in the world?

Why do innocent people suffer?

I even saw an article in the secular press titled: "Where was God on September 11, 2001?"

I am struck by how universal these questions are.

They are as old as Job and are asked by the wisest people among us.

So, let's look at the text in Luke 13 in which two events were the talk of the town in Jesus' day.

Apparently, a tower in the city of Siloam collapsed killing 18 people. The second event, Pilate publicly executed some Jews visiting Jerusalem. This was done inside the temple as they worshiped and so this had a rather sensational quality to it.

With these two events in mind the disciples approach Jesus and ask him an age-old question: Why did this happen?

So, what do we do when towers fall, and people perish? I would like to offer the following as a way of dealing with disasters:

I.) First Mourn the Loss.

In Time magazine there were two pictures of the Manhattan skyline. On the first page is a large photo of the two towers on fire. As you turn the page you are confronted by another photo taken this summer before 9/11 from the same location. The towers of course are Standing.

Flipping the pages back and forth you experience all over again just how incomprehensible the loss is.

As I see it, we are still mourning as a nation. It's too soon and the events are still too fresh for us to move on.

It has only been 20 years since the work of clearing away the debris of the World Trade Center ended. We still need time to mourn the loss.

We all mourn in different ways.

And the pain is greater the closer we are to the loss.

Luke 13 offers a chilling look at how Jesus might address the issue of this national disaster.

Now don't misunderstand me; I am not saying that this text in anyway predicts or foreshadows the events of 9-11.

I am simply saying that here we have a tragic national event in the life of Israel during Jesus' time. It is a headline event discussed by everyone within the nation of Israel.

There are actually two events.

One of the events appears to be an accidental collapse of a structure at a building site that killed 18 people

and the other was a military operation against civilians ordered by Pontius Pilate. That event seems to be politically if not religiously motivated.

There are major differences between what happened then in Jerusalem and what happened 20 years ago in New York but there is something to be gleaned from this text.

Let's take a look.

You are well aware that Israel, during the time of Jesus, had been conquered by Rome.

Rome's presence was a constant reminder that they were a nation under siege.

The people learned to live with this but there remained a great tension, a religious underground had actually emerged to fight for freedom.

Pilate, Rome's representative, was despised. And it is apparent from this text that Pilate ruled in a ruthless manner.

Some people, who we do not know, come to Jesus to discuss an incident in the Temple. Pilate, angered by something that occurred in Galilee, decided to make an example of a group of Galilean Jews who were visiting the capitol of Jerusalem.

He ordered his soldiers to go into the temple in the middle of the day, while there were thousands of people worshipping there and execute them. This was done to send the Jews a message: If you do not keep your region under control, you will suffer the consequences of Rome's might.

It was a strong reminder of the suffering the Jews endured under Rome.

Our nation mourns the week of September the 11th.

September for me had always been a magical time. It meant the end of summer, starting a new school year. Anticipating the coming fall with its comfortable weather and beauty. Setting our schedules for the next 9 months.

Harvest season and productive times. 9-11 has taken some of that away and I mourn that loss.

I can understand the loss Israel must have felt.

Pilate struck the nation at the center of its religious and economic life, the Temple. It was a persuasive political message.

Every time a Jew entered the temple to worship, he would be reminded that even on the sacred soil of the Temple you are not safe. And that is something to mourn.

And mourn we must.

That is the first way we deal with it.

II.) But at some point, we must move beyond the sadness, and we must acknowledge the pain.

This is the second step in dealing with a disaster. It is also the most difficult.

I was reading an article this week about the life of Lisa Beamer. You will remember that she is the wife of Todd Beamer the man who said Let's Roll on flight 93 that crashed in Pennsylvania. The article pointed out how she has had to conduct herself as a hero by day and battle anxiety and an incalculable sense of loss by night.

She said her downstairs closet was crammed with things she never wanted to own, letters and postcards, songs and poems from strangers, and homemade "Let's Roll" mementos.

Two veterans even sent her their purple hearts. Lisa calls the storage space her "surreal closet." Upstairs in her bedroom is the "real Todd" closet, where his clothes still hang, where she can still smell his presence.

Any of us who has lost a loved one can identify with Mrs. Beamer.

But coping with the pain is complicated when the death seems unnecessary or when death comes to those who are young.

I think Jesus was moved by the death of the Centurion's daughter and Lazarus for this very reason.

And I find it telling that Jesus added to their question. He talked about the temple incident but then he added another.

He said, what about those eighteen construction workers who died when their building caved in on them? Do you think they deserved their fate? This tells me one thing. Jesus was willing to confront the pains we experience in life.

And no matter the circumstance, whether it was terror carried out by the Roman authority or an accidental tragedy, people died, and Jesus was willing to face the situation head on.

In both cases he said none of these people were any worse or any better than you or me. They met their death and that's trouble enough without blaming it on their sins or their parent's sins as if God is snuffing out life based on sins.

Jesus says no. God does not act this way and you should not think that way.

Let me ask you. Why complicate the pain by asking foolish questions? I have never understood this.

It was painful to watch as that second plane steered its way into the second tower.

It was painful to watch 200,000 Tons of steel collapse when you knew...you knew....

Media companies to this day will not play certain video footage taken on that day. It is just too painful to watch.

On this 20th anniversary of 9-11 I believe we are just beginning to confront the pain.

First, we must mourn the loss.

Second, we must acknowledge the pain.

III.) And third we must look to the future.

It is guilt that keeps us from doing this!

We feel we are betraying those we love when we go back to our daily routine.

We feel worse when we catch ourselves laughing or enjoying ourselves again.

I know that many of you felt that life would never be the same again after watching those terrorist attacks. I felt that way as well.

But most of our lives are filled with the same kinds of things today, as they were the last summer before 9/11.

That is one of the great things about our Lord. He does not leave us at the cross. He takes us to the open tomb.

He makes us to share in the power of his resurrection.

The cross may loom large on the hill and the tomb is dark but Sunday's coming'.

Standing at the cross it's hard to see the dawn, but on September 11th some of us chose to look to that future.

In the rubble of the World Trade center when those three firemen raised the flag of the United States on that tilted pole, we witnessed hope in the midst of ashes. Before the dust had settled those brave firemen were already looking to the future.

This is not easy to do. But our faith requires it of us.

We cannot let death even death on a large-scale blind us to the Resurrection.

That is the message to everyone who goes through a tragedy.

The answer is simple.

Jesus is saying that life is uncertain.

You, me, anyone here at any time, could die at the hands of some mad man or in some accident.

So, change your life for the better.

While you have the chance right now, change your life. Look to your future. What do you want your life to stand for if you were to die right now?

Tragedies should wake us from the deep sleep of complacency.

9-11 did that for our nation for a while but I fear we are dozing off again.

Question: What do we do when Towers fall, and people perish?

Answer: Jesus' words were, "Low I am with you always."

Benediction 9/11

Rev. Jim Van Houten

A Benediction prayer we make.
A blessing now in memory take
And let us pray and let us say.
A blessing in a "Thank you" way.

To those who gave in sacrifice
Of courage without cost suffice
Of Fire's fought through wind and flame
A benediction to proclaim.

Twenty-one years now past, but we recall.
That fateful day when they would fall.
The towers felled by planes would part.
And leave us only broken hearts.

But from the ashes would arise
A better yet determined pride.
To quench the fires and the pain
With freedoms torch that would sustain

Because of those who went that day
To save a life, themselves to stay
Determined yet to save one more.
From tower's heights of many floors

They stayed that day to not return.
To children, spouses who would learn.
Of loss but heroes who would be
Forever in our hearts to see.

To hearts that bear the loss and grief
Our tribute and our prayers do speak
From those who live because of them

Remember always, now and then.

And may the Lord do bless and keep.

All their names in heart so deep
God's smile upon their names today
To climb the ladder heaven's way.

So, ring the bell, God's peace to all.

In thanks to First Responders call.

Amen

Chaplain, Please Help Me, I Need Absolution

Rev. Jim Van Houten

Past Chief Chaplain

On that fateful day, 9/11 members of the Village of Walden were honored to become part of the greatest rescue team ever assembled in the history of America. We found it humbling to serve as your representatives as the Lord gave us all the strength, we needed to minister for Him at Ground Zero, beginning just two hours after the second tower collapsed.

As a chaplain of the Walden Police and Fire Departments I was privileged to listen to many of the stories told to me by people who survived that day. There was a lady who was waiting at the barricade hoping to speak to a chaplain or minister. She saw the cross on my helmet and began calling to me. "Please Help Me, I need Absolution, I need to tell God I am sorry." I brought her inside the barricade, and we found a place to talk. She told me her story:

The morning of the 11th she had a business presentation which would launch her career. She prepared for this moment for weeks, so that everything would be perfect. She bought new clothes, new shoes, everything matched. She got a new briefcase, very professional, with her initials on it. But then things began to get complicated. Her mother lived in Montclair New Jersey and was taken to the hospital on the 7th, emergency surgery, she did well, but was being sent home on the 10th. She was the only one to bring her home and care for her. Well, mom was doing well so she stayed overnight in Jersey and headed for her office early on the 11th. She hit every red light in north Jersey and school buses besides. She got to the tunnel and an accident happened right in front of her, she was trapped in traffic, she was starting to panic. She raced from the tunnel to her parking garage, new guy at the gate, just taking his time, wishing everyone a wonderful day, she almost ran him over! She was running from her car to the elevator when one of the heels of her new shoes broke. She ran back to the car, through the shoes in the trunk, put on flats and raced to the elevator. At last, on Church Street, late but maybe she could still pull it off, it was 8:37. Just then the latch on the new briefcase opened and her papers flew all over Church Street. She said, "As I picked them up, I was so mad I was cursing God." It wasn't fair, all I had worked for, just gone.

She said, "As I was still looking up to the heavens, still screaming at God, when I saw flight 11 crash into the North Tower directly into the 95 floors, where my office was, it was 8:46 A.M. Everyone in the office were killed instantly. Chaplain, how can I say I'm sorry, and please forgive me."

I explained to her that the Lord knows our hearts, He already knows that you're sorry and He has already forgiven you completely. I told her that the Lord must have some special work for her to do, for all morning long she was racing to certain death, yet God was placing one obstacle after another in front of her to save her life. I told her about God's amazing love for everyone, Love, so deep that He sent his Son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. I told her that God is in the forgiveness

business, and if we accept His Son Jesus as our Savior that we are given the gift of life everlasting. I shared John 3:16 with her, "For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that Whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

After we prayed together, I said, "Now drive back to Jersey and take good care of your mom. Be sure to tell her Thank You, for God used her and her surgery to save your life yesterday morning and this morning He saved your soul." She hugged me and headed home.

A Wonderful Patriot At 9/11

Rev. Jim Van Houten
Past Chief Chaplain

Although it has been twenty-two years since the attack on Sept. 11, 2001 the memories of that day and the days which followed are still as fresh in my mind as though they just happened. I'd like to share one of these memories with you, perhaps you might like to share it with others.

I had responded to the World Trade Center late morning on the 11th and worked with our team in rescue operations that week. I returned home on Saturday, preached on Sunday, and returned to ground zero Sunday afternoon. The National guard had taken over and there was a long wait to get our tags so that we could enter the piles. We were assigned recovery operations on the pile of the south tower. We were joined by an elderly guy named Bill, I thought he was a retired FDNY firefighter. We worked a fourteen-hour shift together. In the morning, we were heading to a restaurant boat docked at the pier, we were told that Robert De Niro and his friends had arranged it. Chefs from all over were volunteering to cook for those working the piles. We told Bill to join us.

Bill said he couldn't because if he left the pile, they would not let him return, the National Guard would not give him tags. I said, of course they will, your FDNY retired, right? He said no, I'm not. He pointed to a pin he was wearing, "Do you see this?" It was a Marine Corp pin.

Then he told us his story. Bill said he had lied about his age and had joined the Marines when he was 17, he said, "I was at Pearl Harbor when we were attacked." He said he had never fired a machine gun, but he learned how to that day. He said on 9/11 I told my wife I was there when my country was first attacked and this is the second time, so I'm going there to help out once again. I told Bill not to worry, we will get you tags, just come with us. We went to the command tent where an FDNY captain was working at a table. He saw me coming and without looking up he asked what I wanted. I told him that my Friend Bill was a chaplain's assistant and he needed tags. The captain laughed and said, sorry chaplain but Bill really doesn't look like your assistant.

I told him that Bill had joined the Marines and was at Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941, and that he had come to help his country after this second attack. The captain stopped writing, looked up and said, "You were at Pearl Harbor?" Bill quietly said, "Yes I was". The captain and the other two officers jumped to their feet and snapped to attention saluting Bill. The captain said, Thank You Sir for your service! Chaplain, your friend Bill looks more like your assistant every minute, I will get him tags. Bill worked with us for the next two days before returning home to Long Island. I stayed in touch with Bill for the next five years. When his wife called me to tell me of his passing, I attended his funeral. 9/11 brought out the very best in our country and it allowed me to get know this wonderful patriot.

God Sends an Iconic Symbol of Hope At Ground Zero

Rev. Jim Van Houten
Past Chief Chaplain

On 9/11 with the collapse of the North Tower the largest rescue and recovery operation in human history began. The spearhead was to approach the 16-acre debris field from West Street, clear a foothold large enough to move in heavy equipment and to allow FDNY access to begin fighting the fires in the remaining buildings.

Hundreds of police officers and firefighters converged at the site, they were joined there by countless retired members of both departments and hundreds of volunteer firemen from New York State and New Jersey. They were joined by hundreds of Medical Technicians and Doctors from all over the city. Rescue and cadaver dogs with their handlers arrived and countless more were being flown in.

As the grim mission began the focus of all involved was finding survivors, combing the piles looking for signs of life. The smoke and the dust made it almost impossible to see, the dust caked your eyes and coated your throat.

Thousands of survivors were crowding the sea walls of Battery Park, they were trapped with no means of escape. We heard on our radios a May Day call for help by the Coast Guard Harbor Command requesting all captains and maritime workers to report to the battery park pier. Hundreds of boats were arriving and in the course of the next nine hours the boats lifted over 500,000 people to safety.

By late morning the pain of this loss was beginning to take its toll on the rescue workers. Everyone was asking "How many made it out" is anyone finding survivors in the rubble". A deep sense of despair was gripping our hearts as we desperately searched for some sign of hope. We were all calling on the Lord for His help and we asked that He show us a sign that his presence was there with us.

In the darkest moment, God stepped in. I heard some of the firefighters say, "Look, Look, guys it's the old Harvey. Thank you, Lord! You used that old fireboat to get us through many major disasters in the past and you sent her here today to help us get through this one. She was a visible sign of massive firefighting victories in New York harbor over the years. Just the sight of her lifted them from disheartenment to a sense of peace.

She was named the day her construction began in 1931. For the year before 1930 a famous fireboat pilot was killed in the line of duty fighting a massive ship fire. To honor the memory of this brave man she was given his name, "The John J, Harvey" Her design was to set a new standard in fireboat construction. She was the first fireboat built powered by five internal combustion engines, replacing the old steam driven vessels.

She was to be the largest, fastest fire fighting machine of her time. With gas engines (replaced by diesel engines in 1957) she could pump and maneuver simultaneously. She could reach speeds of over 20 knots or 28 to 30 mph. She had four LeCourtenay centrifuge pumps rated for over 18,000 gpm. That's the equivalent to 20 engines pumping at a five-alarm fire. The Harvey has 8 deck pipes, two manifolds that 24 3 1/2 lines could be connected to as well as a third manifold for 10 2 1/2 and 10 1 1/2.

I guess what she did with all of this equipment is what inspired us. One of her First was a five-alarm fire at the Cunard Line pier 54 at West 14th street in May of 1932. She extinguished the blaze and saved two other piers. In 1942 she worked at the fire that destroyed the French lines Normandie, the grandest ocean liner ever built.

But it was a fire in 1943 that won the hearts of firefighters. A raging fire onboard the ammunition ship El Estero placed all of Manhattan in harm's way. The heat was so great it was almost impossible to get near the ship. It was determined that the only way to prevent the ship from exploding was to sink her as she was tied to the pier. Harvey, with all 8 of her deck guns engaged, pulled up beside the burning vessel and poured 18,000 gallons of water a minute onto the burning ship. She was joined by Fire Fighter I and together they pumped for hours. At last, the ship sank, and the emergency was over. Had the El Estero exploded it is estimated that it would have been the largest non-nuclear man-made explosion in history and would have resulted in catastrophic damage to lower Manhattan, New Jersey across the Hudson and Brooklyn, with a large loss of life. She fought hundreds of other fires over the next 6 decades in her years of service. She was decommissioned in 1994.

The Harvey was saved from the scrap yard by a dedicated group of volunteers and restored as an operational museum and education center, offering free public trips in New York Harbor. Her new owners had arrived volunteering to help with the boat lift. We watched as 150 people jumped on board and she transported them to safety. FDNY command contacted her by radio with one question "Are your pumps working?" The answer was "yes". So, on September 11, 2001 The Harvey was recalled to service by FDNY command and reactivated as Marine Company 2 fighting the fires alongside the FDNY Fireboats Firefighter and John D, McKean.

Her pumps worked fine, but her deck guns were not needed, they needed those two manifolds to connect 3 ½ lines to.

One problem, the forward deck gun would not shut off completely. I said before that there were a lot of retired FDNY firefighters there volunteering. Well, one had served as the engineer on the Harvey. Out of nowhere he jumped onboard, with a few tools opened the deck gun, stuffed a two-liter soda bottle into it and bolted it shut, the leak was gone. What are the chances that old Harvey would be there and what are the chances that her old engineer would respond that day and be able to make the repair. It's called a God moment and we saw lots of them at ground zero.

The Harvey pumped water supplying thousands of gallons to fight the fires for the next 80 hours, until the water mains were restored, and the hydrants could be used again. But seeing her at the pier working with us remained an inspiration for us all for the weeks which were to follow as we carried her in our hearts. Every time we thought of the Harvey we said, "God sent her."

Section IX – Published Chaplain's Articles

Chaplain's Corner

Don't be Weary from Doing Good

Reverend James A. Van Houten

I was recently thinking about the problem that all volunteer fire departments seem to be facing-recruitment and retention. During my years as a firefighter and Chaplain, I have seen fine men and women dedicated, highly skilled, and trained people-suddenly leave the fire service. Some have left without an explanation, while others have shared their reasons with me.

Some of the cases have been health related-at times there have been problems at home with their spouse or children. Some are carrying the emotional pain and sadness that they experienced at a tragic accident or fire scene. Sometimes it's been the accumulated losses that have taken place over the course of several years. But far too often I'm told of harsh words, perhaps spoken in haste or anger within their own departments, that have wounded their spirits. It's unfortunate that misunderstandings can act like a wedge that pushes even good friends apart. Still others have told me that it's a problem of pride-if they can't be an interior firefighter any longer because of age or the health problems that can impose limitations on us all, then they will no longer fight fires or be part of the department.

Whenever the pressures of my own life have closed in on me, I have found the words of a song that have always helped me through. They are not words of a church hymn, but instead are words of a song written by Paul Simon in the 1960s called "The Boxer." It's a story of a young fellow who goes to New York City seeking his fortune, but instead becomes discouraged and defeated, and is ready to leave. In the last verse of the song, he sees a boxer. The words in that verse are:

*In the clearing stands a boxer,
And a fighter by his trade
And he carries the reminders
Of ev'ry glove that laid him down
Or cut him till he cried out
In his anger and his shame,
"I am leaving, I am leaving."
But the fighter still remains.*

The fighter still remains! That picture of the boxer getting to his feet after the blows of life have knocked him down, and remaining, continuing the fight, I find to be inspiring. So, if you are reading this article and you were thinking about dropping out or giving up, please give it another try. If you thought that you were no longer needed, please continue to stay involved. Everyone is valuable and special in the firematic family.

If you know of someone who has not been around the firehouse lately, give him (or her) a call or visit him and tell him that he is missed. Reach out that hand of friendship and heal those wounds that harsh words might have caused. As Chaplains, we are always available to listen to whatever is heavy on your hearts, and we are always ready to help lift your spirits by the power of prayer. Let me share the words of another writer. Not Paul Simon, but the apostle Paul. These words are found in the Bible in Galatians 6, verses 9 and 10: *"Let us not grow weary or get tired while doing good, for in due season we shall reap our reward, if we do not lose heart. So, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, especially those who are of the household of faith."*

I believe what St. Paul is saying, especially to those who are members of the FASNY family. May the Lord richly bless you all as you continue to serve him in the fire service.

"Thanking" About Thanksgiving

Reverend James A. Van Houten

Whenever we sense that someone has done something nice for us, we want to find some way to say thanks.

There was a wonderful quote in the October 3, 1994, issue of Newsweek magazine. It was right after American troops were sent into the desperate island nation of Haiti. A marine corporal serving in Haiti, James Applegate, is quoted as saying, "The hardest part of this mission is keeping them from hugging you."

Isn't that a tremendous testimony? Ordinary Haitian people needed some way of saying, "thank you." That is why you and I are thinking about the Thanksgiving Season ... to say "thank you" to God for all the blessings in our lives.

Here are some things that I've noticed about being thankful, it doesn't mean this has been a perfect year. For some people in the FASNY family, it has been a difficult year, but that doesn't mean we are not thankful. Some of you have been battered in one way or another this past year. Disappointments at work, at home, in the quietness of your own heart. Life has not treated you gently, but even in the midst of the tempest, we give thanks.

I read in our local paper about a young father who is dying of cancer and returned home from the hospital to see his children off to school last time. I was humbled by his words, "I'm so grateful for all I have, I thank God every day for all he has done for me."

In fact, some of us have discovered that the difficult moments of life have been God has been the most real to us.

It is amazing how often in life a low moment becomes a "grow moment" We thought it was the worst thing that could happen to us. We thought we would die, but we didn't. We hung in there. We fought the good fight and today we look back and see that was a turning point in our life - a turning point that made us what we are today. It doesn't always happen, of course, but it is more apt to happen if, along the way, we hold onto our faith in God. Faith helps us get through the floodwaters until our feet touch solid ground again.

Jesus says in the gospels, "Look at the birds of the air. They do not sow, neither do they gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?"

The truth of the matter is that God has created a bountiful world that is sufficient to the needs of all. And God is involved in that world. God sees even the smallest sparrow fall from the sky. We are the crown jewel of God's creation. Jesus assures us that God will meet our needs. We are never beyond God's love and God's care. I'd like to share this list of blessings that I've found in my life this year:

I am thankful...

- For my teenager who is complaining about doing dishes because that means she is at home and not on the streets.
- For the taxes that I pay because it means that I am employed.
- For the mess I have to clean after a party because it means that I have been surrounded by friends.
- For my fire uniform that fits a little too snug because it means I have enough to eat.
- For a lawn that needs mowing, windows that need cleaning, and gutters that need fixing, because it means I have a home.
- For all the complaints I hear about our government because it means that we have freedom of speech.
- For the parking spot I find at the far end of the parking lot because it means I am capable of walking and that I have been blessed with transportation. For my huge heating bill because it means that my family is warm.

- For weariness and aching muscles at the end of the day because it means I have been productive. For my fire pager that goes off in the early morning hours because it means that I am alive, and God is giving me a chance to help someone in need!
- Finally, I am thankful for Jesus who taught us that we have a loving Heavenly Father who is mindful of our every need and who will see us through every dark hour.
- In his name we offer thanks. Amen.

Freedom and Responsibility

Rev. James A. Van Houten Past Chief

Our country began its fight for independence with the shots fired at Lexington and Concord in April 1775. Just over a year later in July of 1776, as our Congress was issuing the official Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia, the British army of more than 30,000 was landing on Staten Island. Under the command of General Howe, they quickly seized control of New York. Washington's army was pushed across the Hudson in battle after battle, then into New Jersey in an effort to just survive. Washington led the Continental Army as it retreated across the Delaware River in Pennsylvania. With the grip of winter taking its toll on our troops, General Washington crossed the Delaware on December 25, 1776 - Christmas night - and captured Trenton. He later defeated the British regulars at the Battle of Princeton. American morale was high and men were volunteering for military service every day. But now it's a year later. Close your eyes and picture the winter of 1777. It's a dark time in our war for freedom. British General Howe had moved his troops of approximately 20,000 men by ship up the Chesapeake Bay toward Philadelphia and, although Congress has already fled the city, Washington is forced to meet Howe's forces in a fixed battle. Washington is outnumbered and the British troops are unbeaten in fixed warfare. Washington and the Continental Army are defeated at the Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777, and again at Germantown on October 4, 1777. Philadelphia has been captured.

General George Washington took his remaining troops, numbering approximately 11,000, and retreated to Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. It was there that they were to endure the greatest hardships of our war for independence. During the winter months of 1777 and 1778, more than 2,500 men died from typhus, dysentery, or pneumonia.

It's now early March of 1778. General Washington has sent letter after letter requesting aid from Congress, but none has arrived. The morale of the troops is at an all-time low. Only the efforts of Baron Frederick Wilhelm von Steuben, a Prussian officer who volunteered his services to the American cause, have restored discipline and some morale to our countrymen. But the food supplies are gone. Unless a miracle occurs, the Continental Army will be disbanded. General Washington calls upon his troops to join him in a day of prayer and everyone calls upon the Lord for His divine help and intervention. The General reads Psalm 23 to the troops and pauses on the words, "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies." "This is it men. We need food. Pray that the Lord will provide it for us!"

The next morning a report came to Washington that the shad, the fish that spawns in the fresh waters of our rivers and then returns to the sea to live out their lives, have returned about two months early. They are in the river in great numbers and the nets are full. The troops are fed and our army survives. The prayers of George Washington and his army have been heard. The prayers and support of God's people has always been a powerful weapon - an unseen force - keeping freedom alive in our country. When we as a nation have called upon the Lord requesting a miracle, He has always responded, providing for our spiritual as well as our physical needs. Because of

the gift of freedom that has been given to us, we have a responsibility to both support and pray for our country and our soldiers who are defending us.

This year, as we celebrate our country's birthday on the 4th of July, I hope that we will all spend a few moments in prayer requesting God's protection for all of our troops, wherever they are serving. Our country needs to remember that it's the soldier, not the reporter, who gives you the freedom of the press. It's the soldier, not the poet, who gives you freedom of speech. It's the soldier, not the campus organizer, who allows you to demonstrate.

It's the soldier who salutes the flag, serves the flag, and whose coffin is draped with the flag if he is called upon to lay down his life for our country.

Lord, hold our troops in Your loving hands. Protect them as they protect our families and us. Bless them and their families because of the selfless acts of heroism they perform for us in our time of need. Press close to them the hope of coming home safely in the near future.

In Your name we pray, amen.

Let Us Remember

Reverend Robert J. Winterkorn

Many times, during the year, we, as fire Chaplains, are vividly reminded of those who have gone before us as firefighters, EMS people, fire police and other emergency services personnel. We recall Memorial Day, 4th of July, September 11, 2001, and Veterans Day, just to name a few. We also have our upcoming Firemen's Association of the State of New York Convention at Alexandria Bay, during which we will have a memorial service to honor the lives of our dedicated members who died in the service of their communities during the past year. We have all these reminders, yet do they make even a small dent in our everyday lives? Maybe if we gave a thought to the word "volunteer," the picture may become clearer.

For these and many more reasons, we gather for memorial services in the hopes that one day our service to people and community will be remembered and celebrated. We must remember that memorial services are not just to celebrate the lives of those who have gone before but are equally important for us who must still endure the slings of the unappreciative individuals, who still must try to solve to the best of our ability the problems of our day until our final moment comes and we hear the call from God "Come Home. Welcome, good and faithful servant. Enter the joy of the Lord."

V for victory. Victory over the spirit of our world which says we are too busy, victory over the thought that it takes too much time from our families, victory over the spirit that says don't volunteer for anything or they will grab you for everything.

O for the others. Besides the good that we feel inside, we must not forget that we volunteer for others.

L is for love of neighbor. This is not the Hollywood variety of love; it is the real sincere, caring, appreciation for the needs of others kind of love.

U is for undying. I once had a Chief who said to us as rookies, "you only volunteer once." It's that initial commitment that kicks in each time the siren or pager calls us out to someone's need.

N is for neighbor. And who is my neighbor? Not just the people next door but even those who are the complainers and the unappreciative ones who have the idea that our services are owed to them because they are in the community or fire district.

T for our tired bodies that want to stay in bed when the call comes and we have just began to rest, often after a hard day's work.

E for the enthusiasm, which motivates us in this sometimes-thankless work of helping others.

E for the enjoyment that comes to others and us in our laughing time at the firehouse or at parties when our camaraderie shows best.

R for rest and retirement, which come at the end of our service, and we can look back with pride and satisfaction on what we have accomplished and our hope for the future that others will take up the challenge and carry on this most important work.

We are Never Alone

Father Hugh J. Connaghan

The sound was unusual for me - one I just wasn't familiar with in a car. After years of always driving older cars, I thought I knew pretty well all the various sounds a car gave off - the specific sound of a water pump about to give up, tappet sounds, valves that need adjusting, the very definitive pinging noises as an engine overheats, the humping sound of an out of balance driveshaft, the distinctive sound of metal against metal, a worn connecting rod against the crankshaft - but this was a much different sound ... a much softer sound. It was rhythmic and seemingly had a melody. Worse yet, I really didn't know where it was coming from. Then, after many, many seconds, I realized it was coming from the passenger's seat - from the cell phone that a person gave me as I was about to leave. Since I never had one, they said it would be a good idea to take it along.

After answering the phone, I realized that that little handheld gadget could pick up sound waves sent by another little handheld gadget a couple thousand miles away. I talked with them easily and heard them clearly. And I felt very deeply the awesomeness of that very simple truth - the wonderful laws that made it possible. With it came the confirmation of the conviction that only an all-powerful, personal, and loving being could bring that experience about. We call Him God. He does it by His various laws that man is slowly, but surely, discerning. Man has a long way to go. As I drove along, I found myself thinking about other truths. Driving hour after hour by oneself makes for a mind that wanders near and far and can become guessing and very serious. Just letting my thoughts ponder the phone experience brought me to the realization that not only is God present to us through the fact of our phone system, but He also shows Himself to be always present in various ways at different times. But the big fact is, He is always present to us - He actually surrounds us and we never seem to realize it or even think of it.

Take note of how we retire at night for some recuperating sleep. We fall fast asleep and become unconscious, yet our life goes on. We're not telling ourselves to breathe in and out, we're not knowingly making those 16 turns that science tells us we make through a night's sleep. We ourselves are not renewing our bodily strength, and the blood continues to flow through the 90,000 miles of blood vessels in the human body. And we are not doing one little thing to bring all this about. But somebody is doing all these things for us. In this case, it has to be my Maker, God. Even thinking about all these things makes one realize that the thoughts they are thinking can't be put in boxes or filing cabinets. They are spiritual. They do not have a body of matter to exist in. And if the

person produces them, then the person must be spiritual and that makes the person a creature of spirit we call God. So, as long as we are thinking, God has to be present. He is usually exceedingly quiet - He seldom makes His presence known openly, except when He decides to have a couple of nice thunderstorms in the late afternoon after a hot, sultry day. This is when He shows His presence by His power through His laws of nature expressing themselves. And yet, how often after a storm does He show us that He is still very much our friend by ending His powerful storm with the beauty and softness of a rainbow.

We learn that the essence of God is love. Forgiveness, selflessness, humility, thoughtfulness - all these are a part of the expression of love. Any thinking person will find his life filled with these expressions of love from his friends, family, coworkers, and God. Yes, God surrounds us with His presence, essence, and power.

How do You Spell Relief? C·H·A·P·L·A·I·N

Father Hugh J. Connaghan

Life is a fleeting moment in the vastness of eternity," so wrote the poet. "Life is for living and enjoying," so said another. Very wise men. And death is the culmination of this wonderful thing called life.

A Chaplain's association is usually made up of many different people professing different faiths with their own personal beliefs for the faith they profess. As everyone probably realizes, fire Chaplains can be lay (not ordained), be of any denomination, ordained as a protestant minister or as a Catholic priest, or permanent deacon. The whole purpose of the Chaplain is to help in the salvation of souls - to help bring men, women, and children here on earth closer to God and, then from here, to their eternal happiness in his presence. Life is a very simple experience. We come into the world totally helpless, we live for a few years, and then our maker, who originally put us on earth, takes us home.

Between birth and death, we fill in the time with growing up, going to school, getting a job, getting married, and raising new life, or contributing to society in some way as single people or celibate clergy. Some of us become doctors, therapists, teachers, or maybe paper makers or bakers, while others choose the business world. From all of these many vocations come those who want to help their fellow men by becoming fire fighters or Chaplains to firefighters. Being a Chaplain - and what he does in the fire service - was very well explained in the article "Firefighting and Brimstone ... What Exactly Does an FASNY Chaplain Do?" in the April 2002 issue of "The Volunteer Firefighter." It was an exceedingly informative article written by Chief Chaplain Wayne Jagow of FASNY.

As mentioned earlier, there are several different kinds of Chaplains in the fire service. Their each and every purpose is the salvation of souls through a sincere effort to give those in their care a blessed and joyful life free of coercion, worries, and hurts. They have the ability to realize their only purpose of their being here on earth is to die, death being the gate through which we attain the end for which God made us - the possession of eternal happiness in the presence of God for all eternity. By having a trouble-free, stressless, and joyous life here and now on the face of this earth, our chances of having peace and joy for all eternity greatly increase. This is where the Chaplain comes in, as so well described in last month's article.

May I say it again? Life is really simple. The human elements can be confusing and, again, that is when the Chaplain is necessary.

Psychology and psychiatry are relatively new medical sciences. Our present Chaplains are trying to stay abreast of these new sources of knowledge because one state of mind determines so much of to what degree of joy we are going to have in our lives. Hence, each Chaplain receives training in the science of stress management, emotional control, and certain disciplines. This training is to strengthen

the Chaplain in those areas that might be robbing a person of the joy of being and of living, to which people have a divine right.

Being a catholic priest, I appreciate very deeply the philosophy of death, the approach to our final moments on earth, the judgement that follows - all taught clearly and specifically by the Catholic Church and other denominations. Our maker created us in such a way that only selflessness, concern for others, and the genuine sense of self-sacrifice for them, are the only actions that will make a human being deeply happy. Such is the experience of a fire Chaplain and we'd be honored if you would consider joining our ranks. As you finish reading this, may the choicest of God's blessings be on you abundantly now and forever.

Our maker created us in such a way that only selflessness, concern for others, and the genuine sense of self-sacrifice for them, are the only actions that will make a human being deeply happy.

Christmas - No Greater Love Than This

Father Hugh J. Connaghan

It really is a terrible experience to go through - devastating to the spirit and, for some, mentally paralyzing. Over time past, some, or even many, of us may have suffered this experience. There is another incident that is sometimes a continuation of this initial experience, but this continuing experience penetrates more deeply into the spirit of a person and is definitely more physically punishing.

The first experience is the situation of being unjustly accused of something one would not even think of doing. This is bad enough, but when that first incident of accusation continues into the second - the condemnation to physical punishment for something one has not done - that becomes the essence of human mental suffering. And if this state is eventually followed by severe physical punishment leading to death, we have the makings of a suffering that is most difficult to ever imagine or realize.

It is one thing when an innocent person has suffered these experiences through no choice of their own against their will, but now, consider the case of an innocent who chooses, deliberately to live through the whole realm of pain from the beginning of the first experience to the culmination in severe suffering and death, for the benefit of someone else. What a tremendous act of selflessness that would be! Only a powerfully good motive could provide the strength to accomplish such a course of action. Only genuine love could be that motive.

That being said, we now have what would be a totally different description of Christmas. To simplify things a bit, the story "The Birds" might be helpful (see below).

The last thought expressed in the story is a powerful one. By his becoming a sparrow, the man felt certain he could lead the flock of sparrows to the warmth and shelter of the barn. Likewise, at the first Christmas, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, knew that He had to take on a human body in order to make up for and lead the entire human race back to their Creator and Heaven.

Sorrowfully, the man in the story didn't believe in Christmas simply because he didn't realize that a God had to take on a human body and for this reason -and it's a simple reason - easily understood. Almighty God created the world. He created the first human beings. Adam was first and then God brought a companion for him: the woman Eve. God gave perfect happiness to the man and woman, but He also tested them and they failed the test. They sinned against the almighty, infinite God who created them. Not only Adam and Eve, but also all their progeny after them, for all time, suffer the effects of that first sin. Their offense was against an infinite God!

Because of this, since they were mere finite, limited creatures, only someone who was infinite could make up for their offense, so al-mighty God, in the form of His Son, Jesus Christ, took on a human body and nature. He was conceived by the power of God the Holy Ghost in the womb of a woman, Mary, chosen by God the Father. Mary gave birth to a child in Bethlehem and this child is the God-Man, Jesus Christ. He has two distinctive natures - as God, he possessed a perfect Divine nature; as a finite, limited human being, He was able to suffer and atone for sin and, as an infinite God, all His actions were of infinite value.

Christmas is a tremendous act of love on the part of God toward us, His creatures. Imagine, for a personal salvation of each one of us, almighty God humbled Himself to the point of being placed in the womb of one of His creatures, Mary, and for nine months lay nestled helplessly in her as she traveled to Bethlehem. There he was born in a stable and placed in a manger. All the angels in heaven announced his birth. For onto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord.

The Birds

*It wasn't that he didn't like Christmas,
He enjoyed the holiday fun.
All the bright colors and sudden good will,
And the children's happy suspense.
But he couldn't believe in Christmas,
In the incarnation I mean.
God living a man-life like his? What for?
It just didn't make sense to him.
He sat by the fire,
Warm in his home,
On Christmas Eve, alone.
The family gone off to midnight Mass!
He heard a thump at the window,
And then another.
Some mischievous boy out for fun he thought!
He went to the window to chase him with a glance.
But found no boy,
But a sparrow flock!
Lured by the light and sight of warmth
Had tried to come through his window.
They huddled now in the snow
With no place to go,
And he felt compassion for them.
He put on his boots and jacket and scarf
And went out to open the garage
To give them shelter.
But they did not come.
So he turned on the light
But they would not come.
He went and got bread
And threw it manna-like upon the snow,
A path to follow
But they would not come.*

*He tried to herd them in
Shouting and waving his arms
But they would not come.
I'm scaring them, he thought.
I'm so big compared to them -
And different.
If, but for a moment, I could be a sparrow ...
I could lead them through the door,
I could lead them ... through ... the ... door.*

Dealing with a Sudden Death

Franklin H Knowler, Jr.

Unless you experience it yourself, no one can tell you exactly how you will feel when that dark day enters your life.

How you react to the sudden death of one of your firefighters will depend mostly on how you are prepared to function beginning now until the day the firefighter is laid to rest. And it won't stop there.

I don't care if you're the Chief officer at the scene or a probie, new to the roller coaster way a firefighter lives, you will be replaying in your mind the events of the day. Did you do enough? Is what you did what should have been done?

Fortunately, the emergency services have a method to immediately handle this type of critical incident stress, but right now we need to be sure we're meeting the needs of the victim's family in this line-of-duty death.

At FASNY's 132nd Annual Convention, Chaplain's Committee Chairman Reverend Wayne Jagow and FASNY Second Vice President Thomas J. Cuff, Jr. (chairman of the committee that wrote the procedural guide for LODD for the National Volunteer Fire Council) presented a forum covering some preparations for a line-of-duty death.

Reverend Jagow began the session with a brief outline of checklists to follow as the incident continues, including extensive pre-plans, information - including vital statistics - to be kept confidential at the station, a yearly review of the confidential records, and many other records. Copies of the confidential information forms were distributed to everyone in attendance. This paperwork need not be completely filled out, just the information that pertains to that individual. The outline also included the notification team (with those who should be included), hospital team, family liaison team, logistics team, public information officer, wake and funeral team, and probably the most important in the long run, the benefits team.

Cuff then directed his attention to the two largest potential channels: The New York State Volunteer Firefighters' Benefit Law and the Public Safety Officers' Benefit Program and included updates to both laws. He stressed that it is better to have people who will be familiar with the paperwork because when the time comes, speed and correctness will be paramount.

Exclusions are covered and important. When communicating with the benefit programs listed above, be direct.

When the topic of heart attacks was raised, the question of routine or non-routine stress was brought up. Up until now, there were very few heart attack payments made. However, new methods of measuring stress are currently in place.

Another point of discussion centered on what the line-of-duty firefighter was doing at the time of his or her death. Was it something he was assigned to do or authorized to do, or something else? It could make a difference.

This space allotted for this column is much too small to relate all the information that was covered. Write to FASNY and ask for the paperwork on Benefits and Confidential Records that was handed out at the Chaplain's forum on LODD. Don't wait. Supplies are limited.

If Tomorrow Never Comes

Written by Christopher Flatley Submitted by Franklin Knower

If tomorrow never comes. 11 Those words are more than just the title of a Garth Brooks song. They should be used as a guide for life. Firefighting is a dangerous profession. Firefighters will get hurt and sometimes killed in the line of duty. It may be morbid to discuss, but it would be naive to believe that it could never happen ... or just never happen to you. We are all going to die someday, but you can make a difficult situation easier for your family. You need to be prepared. There are several things you can do yourself and with the department to ensure that this difficult situation is made as easy as possible.

Does your department have emergency notification cards? A card like this is used only for serious injury or death. If you have them, when were they updated? Is the information still accurate? Whose name is on them? Who will be contacted? Do you want someone calling your home with bad news? That will happen if the only number is your home phone. Consider a close family friend, someone who would be able to go to your home and bring your family to the hospital if that was what was needed. Or perhaps someone who would accompany officers of the department to your house if the worst happened. Choose this person wisely. Discuss with them what exactly you're asking them to do. Be sure they understand.

In the event you are seriously injured and unable to speak, do you have any specific instructions for medical care? If there are any religious or cultural beliefs against blood transfusions, or your wish is that no extraordinary means be used to prolong your life, these need to be clearly addressed beforehand.

The first step in department pre-planning for a serious accident or a line-of-duty death is the section of the pre-plan called the "confidential information packet." FASNY's Chaplains Committee presented the packet at the FASNY seminar this past August. Chaplain Franklin Knower, member of this committee, took the pamphlet to several firehouses in Rockland County and one of them was my volunteer firehouse. After listening to Frank and reviewing the pamphlet, I offered him this article to support the pre-plan package.
-Chris Flatley

What if tomorrow never came? How would those you leave behind be able to cope? The obvious concern is mainly financial one-insurance, banking, and so forth. Insurance beneficiaries are important. The insurance company will pay out to the primary beneficiary unless they are unable to collect. This is not the time to find out that the policy you had for years has an old girlfriend listed as the beneficiary and you are now married with two children.

Who handles the money, you or your spouse? Do you both take part in the bill paying? It is important to ensure that essential bills are paid in a timely manner. I used the word spouse, for it may be the husband of a female firefighter who has to deal with this situation.

Following a firefighter's death, it is not only the family of the firefighter that grieves, but also the extended family in the department and the community. Does your area have a stress debriefing team? Are counseling services available? Does your department know how to arrange for them? Is there a fee involved? These are questions that should be answered before the services are needed.

Does your department have a funeral protocol? If not, you should develop one. It could eliminate a potentially embarrassing situation with the grieving family. Know what resources you can offer and should offer and know what is beyond your capability. The members are very well intentioned at this emotional time, so remember that what is offered to one should be offered to all, unless you have a strong protocol that spells out what each will receive based on status, rank, active, retired, etc. There have been several good articles on the subject, or you can find departments that have a written policy and adapt it to your needs. Look to the State associations- they are an excellent resource. A good policy can be written before names and personalities get involved.

The song asks the question, "Is the love I gave her in the past going to be enough to last if tomorrow never comes?" We all know just how precious life is and that any time we go to work or answer the alarm, it could be our last. This is the unspoken reality. This is why we live life to the fullest. We are involved in our communities and help our neighbors. We get involved in our children's schools and sports activities. I hope each of us can answer with an unequivocal "yes." Stay safe!

Thanksgiving All Year 'Round

Franklin H Knower, Jr.

Four members of the Chaplains Committee (including myself) were among the group of 90 fire Chaplains from around the State known as the New York State Association of Fire Chaplains' The group met recently for their annual conference in Smithtown, Long Island.

The first morning of the conference, the group was escorted to ground zero in Manhattan and gathered by the transplanted iron cross that had originally, miraculously landed straight up and down in the middle of the rubble. It was moved to the edge of the scene where flowers and pictures have been placed. It was beside this cross that formal and silent prayer were offered for all those lost as well as their survivors. Chills ran up most of our spines.

The scene is now mostly a large cavity. Some of the Chaplains were there for the first time, others had been there to aid and assist in the early rescue efforts' Those who only saw the destruction on television or photos on the printed page were now able to achieve greater insight into the tragedy as they observed this massive hole in the ground.

It may seem strange but to some, the earlier scenes of the tumbling buildings are not their lasting thoughts. Their most vivid thoughts are visions of people running up streets being covered by the cloud of finely ground concrete and debris present in the air everywhere. Smoke and flying debris covered even the above-mentioned cross for several days after the collapse, only to be seen when gusts of wind cleared it off. People, not buildings, are their lasting thoughts.

Our trip also included a visit to firehouse 1010, which now is a resting place for the firefighters on duty and a place for immediate first aid and a change of outer clothing. Its location is adjacent to the site and, when the first alarm banged in, the first responders were provided with a harrowing view of the north tower in flames high above the ground.

It is the imagined look on their faces that remains in one's mind. Images from photographs now have a real place of origin. We now have a better idea of how it actually looked for those responding day after day, trying to comprehend what happened and why.

The firefighters knew only one thing - they had to continue. In the beginning, civilians were on the scene handing out bottles of water, clean clothes, snacks, and kind words. Their support was greatly appreciated. Firefighters from all over soon began to arrive. Why? Their reasons were different. Firefighters have a common bond that links them together' FDNY and NYS AFC Chaplain Fr. John Delendick, who was thrust into service with the death of FDNY Chaplain

Mychael Judge, said to us that the common bond of firefighters is generosity, commitment, and compassion.

These strong feelings are shared by all firefighters. Chaplain Delendick also said "Imagine going into a burning building. It is like Jesus climbing the hill of Calvary. It is firefighters climbing the hill of their Resurrection." The drive behind generosity, commitment and compassion brought all the firefighters together into this hell and is further evidence of their inability to leave anyone behind. If they can't bring them out alive, they must still bring them out, which is more for the family and friends, and is the same discipline prevalent in the military.

Every firefighter is taught how to bring the fire to a conclusion. It is a challenge they hate to lose. America has not seen a challenge like the twin towers in its history. All firefighters feel the need to be there, if only a few were fortunate enough to help.

The loss of Father Judge was devastating to the firefighters and everyone that knew him. Our 1st Deputy Chaplain Deacon Ed Belia provided us a bookmark containing a prayer Father Judge had written when he was the FDNY Chaplain. It reads:

*Lord, take me where you want me to go;
Let me meet who you want me to meet;
Tell me what you want me to say
and
Keep me out of your way.*

CBS aired a special recounting the activities of that historic day that showed Father Mychael in the lobby, and his lips were moving.

He was talking to God out loud. He was fond of doing this as it helped him through difficult situations. Very soon after this clip took place, he was seen being carried out, having lost his life doing what he did best. The Father was also known as a very humble and unique person.

Mrs. Rhonda O'Callahan, a mother of two very young children, was also one of our speakers in the afternoon. Her husband Dan was a Lieutenant, in class studying for the captain's exam. The class was cancelled, and he was lost at the scene. Her months of waiting had finally ended when his body was found. Sadly, she learned that news on CNN. His fire company sent a car to bring her to the piles, but no chaplain from FDNY ever came to her home. I believe our visit with her, 100 chaplains praying, gave her a real sense of closer. Dan's brother Bill was a member of Rev. Jim Van Houten's church.

With Snow Comes Solitude

Reverend Wilbert T. Bradley

We on Long Island have experienced a more difficult winter than usual. In fact, snow was falling as I looked out the parsonage window just before writing this. I have spent several hours over several days watching the snow add more and more inches. Everything - tree branches, bushes, driveways, roads - was covered with the white powder. It was so peaceful and beautiful. I was amazed by the work of God's creative hands.

If I were a painter, I could have tried to sketch the scene on canvas. Yet it could not be as good as the real beauty that reflected through the lens of my eyes. It was so beautiful. In this quiet time, God and I occupied this space alone. Nothing was distracting me. God alone listened to my voice. From the depths of my soul, I was able to feel God next to me listening to my songs of praise and prayers of thanksgiving. I was truly grateful for the opportunity of taking spiritual time, a time of prayer and spiritual renewal. "Solitude is the garden for our hearts, which yearn for love," says Henri Nouwen.

Through this exercise we learn that we are connected with other fellows, and physical space and creatures. We come to understand better about our spiritual lives and nature that surround us. The solitude provides for us to find promises of divine order that often are hidden mysteriously in the created nature. More importantly we come to know better who God is and what God does in our daily lives. Through this precious time and discipline, we find spiritual renewal and discernment as to how God will continue to lead us in the firematic service through FASNY.

Even though these moments last only a short time, we are able to immerse ourselves in divine grace and the beauty of surrounding nature. Keep, as I will, returning to private time with God more often. Being alone with God and yearning for strength will make us all better persons. Depend upon God and He will give you the strength that you need.

This article was submitted by Reverend Wilbert T Bradley and developed by the FASNY Chaplains Committee.

Thanksgiving All Year 'Round

Father Bernard D. Granger

One of the most highly overlooked or ignored elements of religious practice is “Thanksgiving” or expression of gratitude for all of God's blessings/gifts.

We're quick to ask for our needs or desires (healing, courage, strength, patience, personal relationships, food, clothing, shelter, etc.), however, many or most times, after we have received the blessings we requested, we turn our thoughts to the next requests.

We're great on the “gimmies” but not so great on the “thankees.” Grateful persons, persons who express their thankfulness, are happier people.

So here's a challenge: Begin to pray prayers of thanksgiving each night with your bedtime prayers. Review your day and give God thanks for all blessings.

Over a short period, this process will become a habit and will improve not only your lifestyle but also your life.

Try it - you'll like it!

***We're great on the
“gimmies”
but not so great on the
“thankees”***

“Thanking” About Thanksgiving

Reverend Wayne F. Jagow

The Holiday Season is a time for reflection for me because I want to hold onto the gift of past memories.

One Christmas that gives me a sense of peace (for many years I couldn't understand why this memory would give me so much serenity) happened when I was given my first “erector set.” I saw the huge red box of metal strips, nuts, and bolts with a real electric motor, and I felt I could build the world because, after all, the instruction sheet said I could!

My dad suggested we start out small and follow the assembly instructions for a drawbridge that would actually go up and down. Because, don't forget, I had that real electric motor and it could shift forward and reverse!

That Christmas Eve, I began to put the bridge together. I really wasn't making any progress, so my dad stepped in to help. Before I knew it, I was handing him the parts and he had become the builder of my bridge. Mom went to bed but dad and I were determined to make that bridge, even if it had now become our bridge.

My eyes grew heavy and the next thing I knew dad was waking me up. With a big grin, and great delight showing on his face, he said, "Plug in the motor, son, the bridge is yours." It went up, it went down, and dad and I went to sleep happy in knowing that we had created part of the world. We were at peace.

Years went by and my father died. It was now my turn as dad. I bought my son a train set and put it together so he could travel around the world. But for now, he would have to settle for around the Christmas tree because that was all the track I could afford. The New York Central Engine was just about the most powerful looking piece of machinery I'd ever seen, and the red caboose was a classic. I became really upset when my son showed no interest in playing with his train. This was his train and he had to know that I wouldn't play with his train (well, not all that much). I was happy to step aside so he could be the engineer. My wife reminded me in her gentle way that maybe I should wait until Andy got a little older. At 1 1/2 months, his interests were sleeping, eating, being changed, and eating! I played with his train that Christmas.

And there was Peace.

Our daughter came next, and she was a Christmas baby. I had learned my lesson and waited for a couple of Christmas's to pass before we did our dad and daughter thing. I bought her a large dollhouse with hundreds of pieces to put together. It was going to be her "mansion." Bethany was laughing and giggling as she and the Cabbage Patch doll helped with the walls and the roof. It became quiet - there I was with my labor of love, and there she was with her dolly, sleeping in the box that had contained the doll house.

We were at Peace.

In retrospect, I realize my memory was not about the erector set, the train, or the dollhouse. It was about my dad and time spent with him. It was about my son and time spent with him. It was about my daughter and time spent with her. It was about time together with my wife and family, celebrating joy, happiness, and especially peace.

Whatever your religious tradition is, be sure you take the time to hold on to the moments you have together, and you will experience peace.

As a Christian, this time of year gives me real peace because of the birth of our Savior. The Prophet Isaiah wrote in Chapter Nine, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called wonderful counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

The song "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear" was written by Edmund Hamilton Sears. One of the verses reads:

"It came upon a midnight clear That glorious song of old
From angels bending near the earth, To touch their harps of gold.
*"Peace on the Earth," goodwill to men, from heaven's all gracious King
The world in solemn stillness lays To hear the angels sing."*

May the precious moment of Peace be to all the FASNY family during this special holiday season.

The Real Story is About People

Reverend Wayne F. Jagow

As we prepare activities and our minds for this year's Memorial Service at the FASNY 2002 Convention in Cheektowaga, our thoughts return to Ground Zero and September 11, 2001.

As the New York State Association of Fire Chaplains visited this sacred place in April 2002, our thoughts returned to observations that were shared with us by Rev. John Delendic, New York City Fire Department Chaplain. He related how he was disturbed on the Friday after September 11 when President Bush and church leaders went to Ground Zero. He realized that people were taking pictures of the rubble and debris, but that was not the real picture.

After further reflection, he discovered that rather it was the story of people - people who died, people who worked in the buildings, and people who rescued so many. That fact is often forgotten. It's a story of people such as the New York City fire Chief who died in the collapse of the Twin Towers, or the New York City fire man who had been injured in a previous fire. After extensive therapy he returned to duty and was subsequently killed in the collapse of the South Tower. Or Father Mychal Judge - the Chaplain who also died while giving last anointing to a victim.

So the whole story of the World Trade Center disaster was about people - people who wanted to help - the workers who needed their prayers, love, and support.

What was it that created a common bond between workers, firefighters, and medical people? They were people. Fire departments can teach people how to put out fires, how to rescue people, but the individual must learn to be compassionate, generous, and committed. That's what makes a firefighter. On September 11, they showed these qualities by giving their lives. When Jesus climbed the Hill of Calvary, He saved many. When these men climbed the steps of the world Trade Center, they saved many. They were, and remain, our heroes. So let us remember our people, our heroes, at our Memorial Service.

- Submitted by Rev. Robert Winterkorn

Snowflakes? In This Heat?

Reverend Wayne F. Jagow

I am in my air-conditioned office preparing to leave and face another day of 95-degree weather. My thoughts are drifting off to Lake Placid and the FASNY Convention later this month.

**This is not a glory job, and care
should be taken in a Chaplain's
appointment or selection.**

When I think of Essex County and the beautiful northern area of our State, I cool down because I remember the winter Olympics with all the snow, ice, and cold winter weather, which is in sharp contrast to the days of heat and humidity we are enduring in western New York, as well as all across New York State.

I have decided to make this Chaplain's message not a "fire and brimstone" story, but the "Parable of the Snow-flake." Each snowflake is different in shape and size ... no two are alike, yet they are all crystal formations. Sometimes we miss the individual flakes and really don't pay too much attention to them unless it is the first snow of the season and we try to catch a flake on our tongue.

When snowflakes join forces and are coupled with wind and cold, they get noticed. This past winter, storms blew in from Lake Ontario and I had drifts of snow four and five feet high (those little snowflakes didn't look so cute then). I had a sore back that could attest to the fact that those light little flakes make for a mighty load when they decide to come together. Our lives changed when we had "snow days" and the little snowflake controlled us. It became a powerful force in our lives.

The point of the parable is very simple and very obvious, especially to an organization that comes together on a yearly basis to conduct business and set a direction for itself as it completes its mission. All the unique areas and individuals of firefighting come together in one place and we become a force to be dealt with through our legislation and training in New York State.

Remember that we have a singleness of purpose-to protect life and property-so if things get too hot at the Convention, chill out!

Fire Chaplains ... Who? What? Why?

Reverend Wayne F. Jagow

Line officers and civil officers of fire companies and departments are constantly asking these questions. It's sad to say that most of the fault must lie with us Chaplains for not making known our needs or letting people know who we are.

First of all, a Chaplain is a layperson or ordained member of the community who is of any faith persuasion, who is either appointed or elected as a member of a fire company or department. Chaplains may be either male or female in order to serve a fire company, department or auxiliary. Chaplains to other branches of the fire service (ambulance, rescue squad, etc.) are also welcome to become members of the NYS Association of Fire Chaplains Inc.

A fire Chaplain can also be the right hand of the Chief or incident commander at a fire scene. Having no other responsibilities at a fire scene, he or she can be the eyes and ears of the Chief and can assist the safety officer by just being there. The training of fire Chaplains is very important so that he or she does not become a hindrance rather than a help at the fire scene.

Figuring out where a Chaplain fits in the incident command system will be an interesting challenge to fire officers in the future. So far, to the best of my knowledge, the Chaplain has been left out of consideration. And yet, the Chaplain can be a very helpful person by not getting in the way at the scene. Many times he or she may even see dangerous situations developing before the incident commander does, and can discreetly make the commander aware of any dangers. The Chaplain is part of the resources sector of incident command at the scene and should be treated as such.

A Chaplain can have other responsibilities, such as visiting sick and injured members and being of assistance to grieving families in the event of a member's death or, God forbid, a line of duty death. This is not a glory job, and care should be taken in a Chaplain's appointment or selection.

Today is the Tomorrow We Put Things Off Until Yesterday

God created mankind with the ability to "put off." Most of us take advantage of that inborn capacity to delay or postpone things we consider inconvenient or unnecessary to do today or right now. i.e. replacing batteries in smoke detectors, getting rid of the junk in the basement, teaching children to exit the home in case of a fire, or hanging the new fire extinguisher in a convenient place and showing adults its location. Is everyone in your family familiar with the Heimlich maneuver? Does anyone stack newspapers near the fireplace or stove? Do you make periodic fire prevention inspections of your home?

Putting off until tomorrow the things you could do today could be costly in terms of preserving and protecting the lives and property entrusted to you.

Don't put off until tomorrow what you know you should do today.

Bernard D. Granger FASNY Chaplains Committee

Hopefully these thoughts will help those who may be thinking of seeking the appointment or selection of a fire Chaplain. For more information, our address is:

New York State Association of Fire Chaplains, Inc. Executive Secretary
PO Box 35

Spencerport, NY 14559-0035

or visit us on the Web at www.nysafc.org.

This article was submitted by Robert Winterkorn and developed by the FASNY Fire Chiefs Committee.

Thoughts of Love

Father Daniel J. Bitsko

Websters Unabridged Dictionary defines love in many different ways. Love may be a strong affection for, or attachment or devotion to, a person, persons, or a cause. Love may also be a strong liking for or interest in something.

In our lives, we are influenced by many forms of love. Love of God is important to many because of God's benevolent concern for us ... a concern that has witnessed itself to many because He so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son to live among us and save us from our sins. There is love of family, which involves our strong affection for our parents, siblings, and relatives. We do anything to demonstrate our love for family members. Along with love of family is our love of friends. This love is the brotherhood and sisterhood we feel for each other. Love of country is still another love that evokes strong emotions. Many sacrifices are made by individuals in order to show this love. Some sacrifice their very lives in defense of the freedom we hold so true and dear to our hearts.

There are many other loves some of us hold dear; for example, the love a volunteer firefighter or emergency medical service worker has for the task he performs at the fire department or ambulance corps. What would cause such a person to answer a call for someone who is ill at home or involved in an auto accident, or has a heart attack or other type of medical emergency? These calls are answered at every hour of the day in all kinds of circumstances and weather conditions. What motivates you to volunteer your help? Could it be love for our neighbor or any other human being? What would make a person leave one's family during a meal or leave one's warm bed on a cold winter night or any other comfortable situation to help put out a fire at another person's home or business? Why leave the warmth and safety of home for a dangerous and difficult task, fighting a fire that may cause serious injury or even loss of life? Could it be love of our neighbor that motivates us to protect his property and his life?

As a firefighter or emergency medical service worker, one does many dangerous deeds every day. If we do this without love, what meaning does it have?

Sacred writing gives us very interesting insight on the excellence of the gift of love. We read:

"If I give everything, I have to feed the poor and hand over my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind, love is not jealous, it does not put on airs, it is not snobbish. Love is never rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not prone to anger; neither does it brood over injustices. Love does not rejoice in what is wrong but rejoices with the truth. There is no limit to love's forbearance, to its trust, its hope, its power to endure. Love never fails."

This, above all, should be the reason why we volunteer in our calling as a firefighter and/or emergency medical service personnel.

May God love you as you serve His people...in love.

Memorial Day Message

Reverend Wayne F. Jagow

“Gratitude” is a wonderful word that many times gets lost in the “busyness” of our lives. As Americans we have reason to be filled with gratitude at all times; gratitude to God who gave us the opportunity to come to this land and to live in freedom, gratitude to our founding fathers who set forth those principles that constitute our creed, and gratitude to the generations who have followed and defended us. This should inspire and encourage in Americans a sense of civic duty and responsibility far greater than loyalty to state or ancestry.

The history of more than 200 years shows the difference loyalty to principled beliefs can make. America has sought throughout history to share its bounty and wealth with the poor. It has rescued the suffering because of a devotion to human dignity.

Peace doesn't always come peacefully. We need to take time to give thanks to God and pledge anew to do our duty out of gratitude to Him and to our founding fathers.

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote a majestic poem entitled "A Nation's Strength" that I would like to share with the FASNY family.

A Nation's Strength

Ralph Waldo Emerson

*What makes a nation's pillars high
And its foundations strong?
What makes it mighty to defy
The foes that 'round it throng?
It is not gold. Its kingdoms grand
Go down in battle shock;
Its shafts are laid on sinking sand,
Not on abiding rock.
Is it the sword? Ask the red dust
Of empires passed away;
The blood has turned their stones to rust,
Their glory to decay.
And is it pride? Ah, that bright crown
Has seemed to nations sweet;
But God has struck its luster down
In ashes at his feet.
Not gold but only men can make
A people great and strong;
Men who for truth and honor's sake
Stand fast and suffer long.
Brave men who work while others sleep,
Who dare while others fly -
They build a nation's pillars deep
And lift them to the sky.*

Firefighting and Brimstone

What Exactly does a FASNY Chaplain Do?

Reverend Wayne F. Jagow

It has been more than six months since September 11, 2001 - a day now etched in history. Families lost fathers, mothers, and children. Co-workers and friends were suddenly gone - buried amid the rubble. Just as the senseless attacks destroyed lives and buildings, they also threatened our feelings of faith and security.

Our very spirit came under attack and was shaken. All of this has put a greater demand on the fire department Chaplain and brought their role to the public's attention. Rev. Mychal Judge, for example, was following his call as Chaplain - ministering to his fellow firefighters at their moment of greatest need - when his end came. When administering last rites to a dying firefighter - with his hat removed as he offered prayer - Chaplain Judge was killed by flying debris even before the Trade Center collapsed. He died as he lived - serving God as he served others.

The Fire Department Chaplain is a key individual in the fire service, and all too often is not fully utilized. The Chaplain is responsible for the spiritual, moral and ethical life of all firefighters in the department to which he or she is appointed. No matter whether they are ordained or lay (non-ordained), they have certain duties.

The Chaplain's responsibilities are many. At the fire scene the Chaplain observes the activities of all firefighters, watching specifically for approaching fatigue or undue stress. In case of injury to a firefighter, the Chaplain is available to administer comfort, concern, and prayer, in accordance with the religious background of the firefighter. If deemed appropriate, the Chaplain would:

- Contact the firefighter's pastor or rabbi
- Contact the firefighter's family,
- Accompany the firefighter to the hospital

The Chaplain never issues commands as far as firefighting is concerned, but can recommend to the proper officer that, in good judgment, a firefighter should be removed because of fatigue, stress or hyperactivity.

The Chaplain becomes involved with the families affected by the fire by:

- Keeping the distraught from entering the fire scene
- Offering spiritual comfort
- Contacting the families pastor or rabbi
- Putting the family in touch with the Red Cross and/or the Salvation Army.

After the Fire

In the event of the death of a firefighter or any person at the foreground, the Chaplain is available to assist in debriefing those firefighters who are having internal or external difficulty handling the death or painful suffering.

The Chaplain may be invited by the officers involved to participate in a critique of the fire.

The Chaplain is available for private counseling, as requested.

At Other Times

The Chaplain is available to all firefighters for personal conversation or counseling, if requested by the firefighter. All of this communication is confidential.

As a result of the counseling, the Chaplain may refer the firefighter to their own clergy or other professional personnel (psychologist, psychiatrist, or other mental health worker). Obviously, this is not an independent action, but is handled through the chain of command.

The Chaplain counsels the firefighters family, if requested.

The Chaplain plans for memorial, dedication, or church services, to which the firefighters are invited. If no clergy is available or involved, the Chaplain can officiate at weddings, baptisms, or funerals involving firefighters (as allowed by law).

The Chaplain and Rescue Scenes

If the crew Chief decides a Chaplain is needed at the scene, the Chaplain will respond to assist by:

- Calming a spouse, family member, or interfering neighbor who is affecting the work of the rescue personnel
- Contacting appropriate clergy
- Accompanying relative(s) to the local hospital and contacting the hospital Chaplain on arrival
- Being available to rescue personnel for debriefing following a severe trauma event.

The Chaplain is available to all department personnel as a listener, confidant, and friend. The Chaplain takes no sides, but ministers to all. The Chaplain may be assigned additional duties at the fire scene according to one's experience and skills.

All of the above requires dedication from the Chaplain, cooperation and permission from the Chief, common sense, and a love of God and the fire service.

Father Judge as just one example of those who are "caring for the caretakers."

The Firemen's Association of the State of New York, through its Chaplain's Committee, is committed to providing "Excellence in Service" and is working with all Fire Departments in the state so that all will have a full time chaplain.

Help Save a Fire Department

FASNY Chaplains' Committee Rev. Leon Bouell

The Gordon Heights Fire District and Fire Department-New York State's first and only black fire district and fire department-is experiencing an ongoing campaign by the residents of one of their new community housing complexes, Fair Way Woods, to dissolve the fire district and fire department because of high fire taxes. Their goal is for the Gordon Heights Fire District to be serviced by the surrounding fire departments, preferably the Yaphank Fire Department.

It is very difficult to believe that after 59 years and the long history of the Gordon Heights community, new residents who don't have a clue and don't care about the best interest of the community-a community who, out of desperation, fought to organize a fire department and became a fire district in 1947-are determined to have the district and department dissolved.

There has always been an uphill battle to keep and maintain this establishment. They have become well known, with a Public Protection Classification Rating of class 3 using the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule conducted by Insurance Services Office, Inc. The members of the Gordon Heights Department solicit your support and brotherhood to keep this fire department and fire district from being dissolved.

I pause at this time of desperate need for brotherly support and understanding to reflect on the support that was given to Gideon in his time of need.

By the simplest means, character is often tested. Those who, in times of peril, were intent upon supplying their own wants were not the men to be trusted in an emergency. The Lord has no place in His work for the indolent and self-indulgent. The men of His choice were the few who would not permit their own wants to delay them in the discharge of duty. The 300 chosen men not only possessed courage and self-control, but they were men of faith. They had not defiled themselves. God directed them, and through them He worked deliverance for Israel. Success does not depend upon numbers. God can deliver by few as well as by many. He is honored-not so much by the great numbers as by the character of those who serve Him.

The Israelites were stationed on the brow of a hill overlooking the valley where the hosts of invaders, who were too many to be numbered, lay encamped. Gideon trembled as the thought of the conflict that he had to face the next day, but the Lord spoke to him in the night and reassured him. Recognizing the voice of God speaking to him, he went to the few men under his command and said, "Arise; for the Lord has delivered into your hand the host of Midian."

By divine direction, a plan of attack was suggested to him, which he immediately set out to execute. The sleeping army was suddenly aroused. Believing themselves at the mercy of an overwhelming force, the Midianites were pain stricken. With wild cries of alarm, they fled for their lives and, mistaking their own companions for their enemies, they slew one another. As news of the victory spread, thousands of the men of Israel came and joined in pursuit of their fleeing enemies. The Midianites were making their way of escape toward Jordan, beyond the river, but Gideon sent messengers ahead to the tribe of Ephraim, rousing its people to intercept the fugitives at the southern fords as Gideon pursued, captured, and slew two princes and 15,000 men of the opposing army.

In this single defeat, not fewer than 120,000 invaders perished. The power of the Midianites was broken so that they were never again able to make war upon Israel. The tidings spread swiftly far and wide that Israel's Goad had again fought for His people. No words can describe the terror of the surrounding nations when they learned what simple means had prevailed against the power of a bold, warlike people.

My encouragement and prayers for our community of faith are to hold fast to God's redeeming love.

Those who, in times of peril, were intent upon supplying their own wants were not the men to be trusted in an emergency.

The Rekindled Spirit

Article by FASNY Chaplain Barrie-Lyn Foster



We talk a lot about health, mainly because it is important. I was told as a child to eat my vegetables and vividly remember exactly which ones I did not want to eat! Turnips were a food I detested, even the smell. My grandmother was amazing - she mashed cooked turnips with carrots and created a lovely white and orange dish she called "caturnips" that I devoured with just a bit of salt, pepper and butter. It was several years before I realized exactly how I had been hoodwinked and yet, I still stay away from turnips.

We too may have been hoodwinked if we think good health is a simple, easy thing. It is more than being physically able to meet the demands of the emergency work we do. Strong minds are important too, along with our sincere dedication to help our neighbors. It is hard physical, emotional, mental and spiritual work.

Good health can rightly be called “wholeness”. We can be whole in in our diets, whole in our physical strength, whole in our relationships, our finances, our spirituality and, of course, our mental health. Science is making exciting new discoveries on how our 'gut health' affects numerous functions in our bodies. Eat wisely!

The prescription? More whole foods, less processed items think Mediterranean diet. Good balance in quantities of carbs and protein. Wise portioning, enough water, regular prayer/ meditation, adequate exercise and sleep, less alcohol, sugar and stress. Taking your prescribed medications is essential too.

The challenge? This simple solution takes hard work, determination and some amazing help from above. We live in a stress filled world and help people on their worst days. We carry some of that stress after difficult calls. Add to that a poor diet, interrupted sleep and addictive habits and we are setting ourselves up for difficulty - and not being well prepared – to face our next call. We all need a healthy balance to draw from as life ebbs and flows. It is very important work for each of us to-do.

Over the years I have found that the better prepared we are, the less we are surprised. There will always be the unusual and the unexpected. If we are prepared physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually we can handle it much better, especially if we were previously not aware or mindful at all.

We wouldn't typically send any of our engines on a call with an empty water tank. The trucks all need fuel and equipment that works perfectly when needed. Supplies need to be stocked up, both in the EMS compartment and in the bags. The air bottles need to be full, so we check our SCBA's frequently.

Preparation of water, fuel, supplies and air - all need to be in tip top shape in our bodies as well as our apparatus. Our brains need to be clear and functioning. Our muscles need to be ready to go to work with lifting, stretching and endurance for the long haul.

The same is true spiritually. Exploring and practicing your faith can be a great help to better handle the many situations we face. Keep healthy by reading scripture, praying and having some quiet meditation time just to ponder. Let the Lord fill your spirit with strength of character, wisdom and compassion. Then get back to the very important work of loving your neighbor by serving them, with your whole and balanced self.

On my next trip to the grocery store I'm going to buy turnips and put in the hard work of recreating Grandma's concoction. What seemed an impossible task, now seems simple to face. I just must do the honest work and end this refusal to eat turnips once and for all. Lord, help us all to bravely face our own challenges.

Article by Thomas With



Years ago in the emergency services world, if you mentioned word “suicide” among a group of firefighters, you must have been talking about an incident that you responded to with law enforcement. Or it was a resident that committed suicide within your fire district and members knew the person.

The conversation would have centered on: “what a tragedy, if he had only talked to someone, if only he had sought help from someone.” That someone, back then, was usually a priest, a rabbi or a minister in the local community.

Then slowly, over the years, the words “mental health” entered into our fire service conversations and lately the abbreviation EAP (Employee Assistance Program) has been discussed at fire department membership meetings.

In the two previous “Rekindled Spirit” columns, we read that “We are in difficult times” and “What we do is stressful ... “which focuses the problem areas that we all are subjected to every day in the fire service.

The white paper study, the Ruderman White Paper on Mental Health and Suicide of First Responders, examines a number of factors contributing to mental health issues and what leads to their elevated rate of suicide. One study included in the white paper found that on average, police officers witness 188 'critical incidents' during their careers. This exposure to trauma can lead to several forms of mental illness. For example, PTSD and depression rates among firefighters and police officers have been found to be as much as five times higher than the rates within the civilian population, which causes these first responders to commit suicide at a considerably higher rate (firefighters: 18/100,000; police officers: 17/100,000; general population 13/100,000). Even when suicide does not occur, untreated mental illness can lead to poor physical health and impaired decision-making.” (The Ruderman Family Foundation, 2017)

The Ruderman White Paper on Mental Health and Suicide of First Responders” looks at contributing factors to mental health issues among first responders.

Some of the Key Findings:

- Researchers believe *only* 40 percent of firefighter suicides are reported, which would bring 2017 firefighter suicides closer to 250.
- Law enforcement officers witness or are subject to 188 “critical incidents” during their career on average. Examples listed include being beaten, mistakes that kill others, injured/dead children, being taken hostage and making death notifications.
- Research also shows high numbers of other hazardous behaviors among firefighters such as binge drinking and other “self-medicating” activities.
- Out of 18,000 law enforcement agencies, only 3-5 percent have suicide prevention training programs.” (*The InfoGram*, May 3, 2018, EMR-ISAC)

The past gave us a “brave and tough attitude” to have as a firefighter. “You can handle it!”, “It's all in a day's work!”, are remarks that today are harmful to those who may be on the edge of hopelessness and not have any thoughts of getting the help they most certainly need!

To some people, it is the everyday challenges in life that can push them over the edge, leaving hope non-existent. Firefighters and their fire departments need to act in a collaborative effort to begin the discussion of mental health and suicide as a major concern. This is an issue that can face anyone one of us, anytime, any day! Let's turn hopelessness into hope!

First Responders: One Happy Family

By Bill Michatek



We know that police, fire and EMS work together for a common cause: to protect lives and property. We are responding to a basic call to “love our neighbor as ourselves.”

We are a disciplined group having gone through basic training - boot camp, as the military calls it. We proudly work toward our goal of being qualified to stand among the finest. We need one another for our very safety. There are not supposed to be any lone rangers among us. It's a group effort for all of us on the team. We have chief officers and can be called to task.

We chaplains try to keep alive the comfort of God's presence and his commandment of love in firefighting. In wartime, the saying was “there are no atheists in the foxholes!” Our common prayer from the Psalms could be, “Be with us Lord when we are in trouble.”

There are tough calls out there. Our training disciplines us to understand our enemy fire and how to act in different situations. There are so many hazards out there that we can't just go and put the wet stuff on the red stuff as in the past. Health and safety top out our priorities along with practice, aka drills.

As volunteers, we never really know who our crew will be until we hop in the vehicle. That's why we strive to be a happy family and welcome all. You never know who will be protecting your backside.

I think it is important for first responders to get to know one another. There are traditional gatherings we have regularly. Try to attend. Exclusive groups or cliques can destroy our unity. We are all family. I think of the lad in “Boys Town” carrying his brother saying, “He ain't heavy, he's my brother.”

Enough for today's preaching. I've enjoyed my avocation of chaplain and firefighting these many years and am happy to share these thoughts with you. Enjoy the holy days of Easter and Passover coming up. God be with you all.

Article by Ken Palmer

Past Chief of the New York State Association of Fire Chaplains



It is a quiet morning here in central New York. The sun is shining and it promises to be a comfortable day for this time of year.

Now yesterday, that was something else! I belong to a small volunteer fire department with about 34 members. To the west, we have a career department and a volunteer department. To the east, we have a career department and another volunteer department. We are bound together with a successful mutual aid system which started around 1950.

Over the last couple years, we have been working on and have started a box alarm system. While not all the local departments are signed on yet, we are making progress. The bottom line is that we are not alone and are there to support each other.

Now, back to yesterday. I had just filled my cereal bowl when the tones went off. Our department was called to stand by in the station of the Herkimer Fire Department as they were already fighting a fire in an old bar and grill. They had already called two career departments and a volunteer department for assistance. We responded to their station and had just gotten out of the engine when they called us to stretch an LDH line from a hydrant to their truck. We placed our engine so we could move as needed and prepared to help where needed.

A short time later, we were called to respond to a truck fire in a building about a mile away. We responded and called our station to send a tanker as this was outside the village. It seemed like we were alone with a small crew to attack the fire which had advanced to include the structure. We were not.

There was a call sent out for additional tankers and manpower. Very shortly, the second department was there with the first tanker which we tied into for water. Their engine arrived and a pond was set up for water supply. One of the career departments at the first fire was released and responded with an engine and manpower and began to assist with the structure fire. We were no longer alone.

The structure was metal inside and out and it was very difficult trying to find the path of the fire. About this time the second career department was released from the first fire and arrived with their truck. The truck was set up to ventilate the metal roof and, where possible, to extinguish the fire. Efforts were progressing on the inside, cutting through the interior metal walls and ceilings reaching the hot spots and insulation. This all happened without a hitch, and we returned to quarters to clean up ... not! This was a tough struggle within the command system. We serve together, we train in our own departments and also together when possible, working to create a qualified team when needed for ourselves.

Article by Rev. Leon VanWie

Chief Chaplain for the New York State Association of Fire Chaplains



There are many well-known Bible characters that even the non-believer would be familiar with - Adam, Eve, Moses, etc. Moreover, there are so many lesser-known individuals, with names like Uzzah. There are six different Uzzahs in the scriptures. In 2 Samuel, it tells of Abinadab's sons, Uzzah and Ahio, who were helping to move the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. The Ark was a box that was about 4 feet long, 2.5 feet deep and 2.5 feet wide and was a central symbol of God's presence with His people. Because it held such a special place in the Jewish faith, no one except special Levitical people were allowed to touch it. Uzzah was helping move the box. The Ark was on a cart being pulled by oxen. The oxen stumbled, and the Ark began to fall to the ground.

Here is the story in 2 Samuel 6:3-7...

They placed the Chest of God (Ark of the Covenant) on a brand-new oxcart and removed it from Abinadab's house on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, Abinadab's sons, were driving the new cart loaded with the Chest of God, Ahio in the lead and Uzzah alongside the Chest. David and the whole company of

Israel were in the parade, singing at the top of their lungs and playing mandolins, harps, tambourines, castanets, and cymbals. When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, the oxen stumbled, so Uzzah reached out and grabbed the Chest of God. GOD blazed in anger against Uzzah and struck him hard because he had profaned the Chest. Uzzah died on the spot, right alongside the Chest.

Uzzah did what he thought was right! Yes, there was a law forbidding anyone from touching the Ark who was not a Levite (and Uzzah was not). However, what would have happened to the box had it fallen on the ground? In all likelihood, it would have been destroyed.

I have been thinking about the times I have done what I thought was best in the fire service, only to find out it was wrong. Line officers have shared with me their frustrations, disappointments and sadness that what they did seemed so right at the time but did not turn out as they had planned.

Uzzah made a split-second decision that he thought would prevent the Ark from crashing to the ground. I wonder if he considered the consequences. Maybe, maybe not, but he did what he thought was right as we all have so many times.

- Maybe it was the decision you made as a line officer that you thought was the right one at the time;
- Maybe you said something to a young firefighter in the hopes of helping them become a better firefighter;
- Maybe it was a comment you made at a fire company meeting that you thought would help the department;
- Maybe it was a judgment call about where and how to ventilate.

In each of these cases, you thought you were doing the right thing - just like Uzzah. And there are even those times when everyone agreed it was the right thing to do. Then, there were those times when you ended up like Uzzah. We know hindsight is always 20/20 and I hope we all can learn from our mistakes. It is always difficult when we do the best we can and things do not turn out as we wish.

I have found these three quotes helpful:

- "Forgive yourself for not knowing what you didn't know before you learned it." ~ Maya Angelo
- "You can't keep blaming yourself. Just blame yourself once and move on." ~ Homer Simpson
- "Realize you are a human. And you make mistakes. And you can't control everything. You need to understand that you are doing the best you can. Don't blame yourself once again. You're trying. And that's enough." ~ Anonymous

Article by William Mayo



Question: What is a chaplain? What do chaplains do? Answer: A chaplain is essentially a spiritual representative often attached to a secular institution.

Chaplains may or may not be certified, have a theological education, or be ordained or commissioned by a particular denomination, though many are. While chaplaincy has traditionally been

associated with representatives of the Christian faith, the term is now used for representative of any faith. Some chaplains are expected to represent multiple faiths, acting as a sort of neutral spiritual resource.

Chaplains are expected to serve the spiritual and emotional needs of others. Some chaplains perform wedding or funeral ceremonies, administer communion, deliver spiritual messages, offer prayer at public meetings and fire department functions and provide regular counseling. Other chaplains meet the need of the moment, usually through listening and prayer. Chaplains may also function as advocate Hospital chaplains, for example, may make requests of a nurse to help meet a particular patient's needs.

Military chaplains may provide for marriage enrichment retreats.

Chaplains work in many environments. Most commonly, chaplains are attached to fire departments, the military, to hospitals, to law enforcement, to political bodies (such as the United States Congress and Senate), to sports teams and to educational institutions. Some corporations, music groups and even households (historically the nobility, and now certain monarchs), may also employ chaplains.

The New York State Association of Fire Chaplains, Inc. is available to all members of the fire and EMS service in New York. We have chaplain members that serve all around the State for many reasons. We help with Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) after a major incident or member death and we are able to refer people for professional help and guidance.

Article by Rev. Canon Samuel P. Lundy



The Holy Scripture (Book of Hebrews and Psalm 8) would tell us that humankind was created by God, just a little less than angels. We are also reminded that we have dominion over the other creatures of the forest.

Folks smarter than you and me about these matters, the folks with the bestowed Ph.D:s, would tell us that our domination over all else on earth perhaps has more to do with our hands and their unique formation than our brains. I understand it is the "opposable thumb" that gives us the superior advantage and we are the only species so endowed by our Creator.

All of us should take a quick look at our hands. The title of this column is "These Holy Hands: Contemplate with me, for a moment, what is the transformable act that makes these regular old hands into "Holy Hands?"

The obvious answer is in how we use them. Do we use them for degradation and the pursuit of the meaningless? Or do we use them for the uplifting of our brothers and sisters in our brief walk-through life? Mr. Webster, in his dictionary, would give us several synonyms for the word "holy" such as sacred, hallowed or divine. For those of us who would claim the title firefighter, there is another that I like better. It is the word "consecrated" which means devoted or dedicated.

From the very day you made your first hose connection, helped to raise a ladder or struggled under the weight of an old Indian backpack pump (whether that was half a century ago or within the confines of last-years BEFO class), your hands have indeed become holy hands.

At my ordination as a priest, the imparting of holy oil by a bishop turned my hands holy. By your own actions, self-taken, your hands have received a consecration no less valid in His sight and in the esteem and thankfulness of your neighbors.

The action required of your holy hands is made no easier by this spiritual anointing. While you may know the joy of using those hands to present a newborn to its anxious mother, you surely shall know the sadness of interlocking your hands with those of a spouse while you know the events occurring in the very next room **will** not have a happy conclusion.

In the world of health care and medical practice, it has long been felt that a very undefinable "something" occurs when we touch someone else. The practices of physical therapy, osteopathy and chiropractic rely heavily upon human touch.

Should that surprise us? What mother or father among us has not calmed a vexing child with a simple caressing gesture. Strolling lovers in the park do not march as marionettes, fore and aft. They move side by side, reaching out as one heart entwined with another, connected by loving hands.

I must tell you the inspiration for this column on holy hands came from a pinning ceremony I was asked to speak to some newly certified EMTs. After the ceremony was over, I believed I had fully convinced myself that they would never perceive their own hands in the same manner again. I guess I was right. A young, newly minted, male EMT came up to me in anguish. He looked squarely at me and said, "You're a lovely man, Father, but my girlfriend is also in this class and I can say that you have totally screwed up my hands for our next date!"

In the 16th century, the thoughts of women were not given much credence. They were believed to be silly creatures of shallow intellect, not worthy of spending time and money to educate. If they could keep house, bear children and rear those children not much more was expected of them. Into this world of male supremacy, a woman the world now reveres as a great theologian and intellect was born: Saint Teresa of Avila. Her words of great counsel are numerous. The ones I would like to share with you this morning was so often quoted by President John F. Kennedy that they are often mistaken as his own.

Quoting from St. Teresa:

"Christ has no body now on earth but yours, no hands but yours.

Yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion looks out upon the hurting world. Yours are the feet with which Christ goes about doing good. Yours are the hands with which Christ blesses all people."

You see my friends, in my opinion, our God is not the God of smoke and mirrors a la Harry Potter. He is the God of being the good neighbor and, I am here to tell you, he has appointed you and your hands to be that good neighbor!

As with the young EMT I mentioned a moment ago, how and where we used our hands in his holy service does require a bit of discretion. It is my practice to quickly raise my right hand while driving and make the sign of the cross as a blessing to approaching fire, emergency service and peace officer vehicles.

It's Time for A Change of Focus

Article by FASNY Chaplain Barrie-Lyn Foster



It's time for a change of focus. Do you remember this saying? "The definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over again and expect different results."

We cannot go back to the way it always was, for this is a new time. We have all been changed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We had time to reflect on ourselves and what we really find important. Many people chose family over jobs, putting that priority back up where it belongs. The "great resignation" showed us that people are no longer willing to stick with their occupation just for the paycheck. They want to be happy.

Some even chose lower paying jobs, ones they enjoyed. Others sought positions closer to home or demanded less overtime. Time became the new currency and evaluation tool, establishing itself high in our priorities.

Ironically, one thing we in the fire service do not always like is change. We often feel we know what we are doing and then another law, rule or unfunded mandate comes along. Yet, we have the needed experience to adjust to this. Training courses have changed. They have become much more extensive (rightly so) and take much longer to complete. If time is such a strong priority now, that means we need to change. Kudos to the departments, training providers and state/national agencies for using the internet to deliver up-to-date and accurate information in a more efficient format! It is an amazing and valuable step forward.

Training formats aren't the only thing that has changed. People also want to be treated with respect and equality. Bullying and sexism are out. Some have found voting with their feet easier than ever when a comfortable and safe firehouse atmosphere does not yet exist. But it can! We call that hope and we can to put it into action.

How can we fix all these issues? Not all training can be done online. We will always need hands-on practice with patients, fire hoses, axes and pumps. The list is so very long, and it may seem an impossible fix. However, the Lord so many of us serve is more than able to fix the impossible and help us all grow as more caring human beings through change.

Our calling as servants is to treat one another well, to love our neighbor as yourself, to care for the poor, the stranger, the orphan and the widow.

In God's economy there is no hierarchy or pecking order. We are all equals. Let's remember that and treat one another with kindness both on and off the fireground.

Being valued and knowing you have something to contribute are more powerful than we may have recognized. If there are those you rub elbows with who annoy you (or you plain old dislike), be deliberately respectful in your speech and behavior. It changes you into a better person and, over time, it becomes a valuable habit.

The Prophet said it best so many years ago: *He has shown you, O mortal what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.* (Micah 6:8)

Love one another. It works. It may very well be the best choice you can make to keep members from voting with their feet and walking out the door.

Article by Rev. Barrie-Lyn Foster



Years ago, the answer was "I want to help people" when asked why I wanted to be a firefighter. Never in my wildest dreams did I imagine that would include serving with the members and leaders of FASNY. Following in the footsteps of the Rev. Wayne Jagow is both an honor and a privilege.

It was with the help and encouragement of many along the way who "put my feet" to this path. A quick conversation here, a longer one there, some guidance and the occasional warning. I am so thankful for the good advice I was given.

We have each had the opportunity to give such nuggets of gold to those we meet in our daily interactions. It is a privilege to give good PR, leave a good impression with both Johnny Q. Public and Mrs. Smith, as well as with all of our brothers and sisters in emergency services.

Will kindness and speaking up always be seen that way? Unfortunately, no.

We might be misunderstood, but we must keep on being positive and telling the truth. Our motives might be misread, but our hearts can be in it 100 percent to do the right thing, for the right reason. It is the Lord who helps us work out those details, and we can sleep good at night after a heartfelt discussion with Him.

We are here to serve, here to help. It is a privilege to be in emergency services, not a right. It is an honor to help those on their very worst day. It is something we must never forget: our attitude can be our most amazing asset.

Every call, from a false alarm to "the big one," is a unique opportunity to be thankful that you are wired to do what you do. Not everyone can. It is a special gift to be mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually strong enough to fulfill this calling.

Listen to the good advice offered, take it in, then give good advice to those you meet, for we truly need each other. Nuggets of truth like "You can learn something at every single call" are invaluable.

Those standing by your side are also gifted. Let us acknowledge it is a privilege to work with them and learn from one another's experiences. In that way, we can strengthen one another and our ability to perform as a team is multiplied exponentially. We are limited when operating alone, but together we can grow strong as we utilize our different strengths.

You will be amazed at how daring to have an attitude of gratitude can simply transform your life and the life of your department.

All is Calm

Fr. Bill Michateck Past Chief Chaplain, FASNY Chaplain's Committee

Holiday greetings to all of you in FASNY land. I am writing this message as I am preparing to send out my own Christmas greetings to friends from afar. Did you know that there are over 25 different religious holidays every December? There are even more if you include international holidays. This end time of year has been a popular time for many diverse faiths, as they reflect on the "Mystery of Light" in these dark days. The ancient pagans offered gifts to the sun god that he might start his engine to make the days longer and not have them go into darkness. We now offer greetings of peace and joy for a troubled world as we look forward to the New Year. We have been enlightened by God! I chose the Title, "All is Calm," from the hymn "Silent Night," looking upon the call of First Responders to bring calm to chaotic scenes and stabilize them. A cry of relief goes out on our arrival: "They're Here!" We enjoy that sense of helping our neighbors, but we must be careful in our high-risk job. In my Webster town, we will never forget December 24, 2012, when two West Webster members were tragically killed, and two others more seriously injured. Their initial call reported a car fire, however, as the first engine arrived the call changed to a structure fire. These first responders had no idea that the fires were set by a deranged man, who was waiting in a concealed position, with a rifle, to ambush

them as they began to fight the flames. The two wounded firefighters took cover under the engine, where the suspect continued to fire at them. A member of the Sheriff 's department returned fire and put an end to the incident. We are healing, but the loss is always there, and our respect grows for those we lost.

In my many years, I have noticed a lot of change, especially the many advances made in safety. I think of improved gear for the responder, training, vehicle design, building codes, suppression systems and cancer prevention. But with all these advancements please remember that PERSONAL ALERTNESS is Prime!

Enjoy these Holy Days with your families and your departments. When you get ready to ring the bell of departure at a call, smile and enjoy that truly: "All is Calm, All is Bright," as you have helped a neighbor. May God go with you.

Hay, Padre - I Need Some Help!

Rev. Canon Samuel P. Lundy Regional Director

I recently took a panicked telephone call from a neighboring training officer., "Can you fill an hour of training on Saturday. My presenter got per-empted.' The always agreeable side of my bipolar personality responded. "Sure, happy to help." Putting the phone down, the not so happy-sappy side of my personality replied, "Good Move, Chap. You've got no idea what you're going to talk about, do you?" Well actually I did.

It had been my good luck to attend a very well-done class by on, "Professionalism in the Fire Service, "in the Syracuse area just recently. It was a message that needed to be heard by volunteers in my area. Being a very rural, expansive area. I knew that the likelihood of that occurring was pretty slim. The lecture was four hours in length and well done with graphics and sound. I had an hour with no time or ability to be creative. Did I mention showtime was a day and a half away?

I want to make it clear that I did not plagiarize the material from the presentation. I had even failed to take notes. What I did do, immediately was to send an email to FASNY chaplain Barrie-Lyn Foster and NYSAFC Leon Van Wie, explaining my situation and asking for quick thoughts that I can expand on. Both replies shortly.

Due to some mental aberration a year ago, my brain now dictates faster than my right hand can write. I have the shortest sermons in town! My thoughts come flowing out at 3 o'clock in the morning when there is nobody to catch them. My little dog, MAXX2, was in canine shorthand class when he departed. When I suggested Mr. Cat pick up the ball and continue the class, he gave me the cat equivalent of the finger. Cats tend to be like that.

By lunchtime on Friday, I had eight yellow pages of short bursts of genius interspersed with single words that were totally unintelligible and seemed not to be connected to any rational thoughts of mine or anyone else's.

At this point I was tired; my brain and Mr. Cat was tired of my inattentiveness. It's time for a break, pouring a lovely glass of cheap white wine, placing the "naptime-go away" sign on the door, I retired to the horizontal state. At 3:45 pm the obligatory call from goggle reminded me that there was a distinct possibility that my listing would lapse, brought me to action once again.

For an oral presentation, I have found that using short incomplete sentences simply as thought reminders work well for me. If you read a complete sentence, you have to lose eye contact ever-so briefly with your audience and it's tough to reconnect at times. You know your material, the reminders just kept the presentation flowing in a recognizable form getting you where you need to go.

With the computer's help, I condensed the eight pages of foolscap down to two pages large font quips. Moving to the correct height kitchen island in front of the mirror, timer ticking, I read through my notes. Wow. To my great delight I had an hour's worth of material. How many presentations have you been to where the presenter simply reads along the words appearing on the screen in front of you? When you do not have graphics you must interact with the class at all times-mov around a bit, vary your voice volume, make gestures, engage, engage. Be happy to be with them, and they will be happy to be with you.

Bring some training aids, do some show and tell. I had a tee shirt made up with some silly irreverent comment on it and wore it under my collar and rabat, wiping off the rabat (say rebay) at the appropriate time to elicit laughter from all. Once you have them with you all you have to do is keep them. Be honest, refresher classes can be boring. But they don't have to be. Be the presenter folks want to hear.

When you get the call, "hey, I need some help," respond with enthusiasm. Accept the challenge make it "their" best class and it will be "your" best class. Quoting the country western performer of a decade ago Radney Foster, "Everybody Wins!"

When Tragedy Knocks on our Door

Rev. Jim Van Houten Past Chief Chaplain, FASNY Chaplain's Committee

In the 45 years that I have served as a firefighter and chaplain I have answered hundreds of calls, many of them emergencies where folks were in trouble. We respond without hesitation to total strangers, we arrive with millions of dollars of equipment, dozens of dedicated firefighters and we ask for nothing in return. What holds this dedicated team together is an unseen bond called, "Brotherhood"

I'd like to share with you exactly what I found when our family became the victims of a tragedy and how that "brotherhood" helped me to deal with a great sense of loss.

It was December 21,1988, I had responded to a kitchen fire at about 9:00 P.M., I then helped my father-in-law deliver a calf in our dairy barn and had gone to bed shortly before midnight. I was awakened at about 3:00 A.M. by a phone call from my brother, with the news that my sisters-in-law brother Elia may have been on Pan Am flight 103, which was reported missing over Lockerbie Scotland.

I dressed quickly and drove an hour to his home in North Jersey to be with his wife and children. When I arrived, I found them desperately attempting to discover credible information regarding his flight. I assigned his oldest daughter to one telephone in the house and asked her to remain on the line to Pan Am, she was on hold for four hours listening to music, they never answered our call.

I used the second line in the house to call my contacts with the FBI at Stewart airport, the FDNY and the control tower at Kennedy airport. All reported the same thing, the plane appeared to have blown up at 33,000 feet, reports of fires on the ground in Lockerbie, no one knew how many people were on board or who they were. At about 8:00 A.M CBS reported that people in the State Department were warned about a threat and many changed flights, our hopes were raised, perhaps he was one of them.

As the hours past I was willing to try anything, so I called and asked for an overseas operator. The Lord sent me to the right person for this wonderful lady named Millie, she tried call after call for almost an hour with no avail. Finally, she said, let me try to connect you to the police station in Lockerbie, Scotland Yard is setting up an office there. There, in Lockerbie, in what I later learned was a war zone, my call was answered by police sergeant Ian Mc Dowell an eighteen-year veteran to the force.

The Sergeant began to explain in a most compassionate way, that there were 259 people on board the plane, all indications were that it was a bomb and sadly there were no survivors. I told the sergeant that as a firefighter and chaplain and that I had helped at the crash sites of several small planes in our area. He said this was far worse, for there were bodies scattered all over this small village.

The Sergeant said, our chaplain just came in, perhaps he should be the one to share this sad news with your friend's wife. His name is Cannon Patrick Keegan's; I'll put the phone on speaker. Father Pat began by telling us that at about 7:00 P.M. the evening before he and his mother were invited to a home four houses away for supper. As they were leaving their home the windows were blown out, the lights went dark for the main fuselage of the plane had fallen on those four homes, killing the 11 people who lived there, all members of his church.

He wanted to call her minister so she would have a spiritual comforter with her, she told Father Pat that I was a minister and fire chaplain. He then told her that Elia was on board the plane and that no one survived.

He said I want you to know that every person's body that is recovered I will treat as a member of my own family. Father Pat has become a lifelong friend. This amazing man with no formal training as a Chaplain, became the spiritual leader for both the Police and the Fire Department that day.

Father Pat and I spoke for a while, and I prayed for him that the Lord would give him the strength, the right words and the ministry of God's divine presence. I asked Father Pat about their Fire Chief, what is his name, how is he doing? I knew that he and his firefighters were finding and tagging the dead, but because it was a crime scene, they could not be removed. I got a fax number for Scotland yard and sent prayers for Father Pat to use and special prayers for their Fire Chief and his men. Before saying goodbye, I prayed with Sergeant McDowell and asked the Lord's Blessing upon he and his police officers as well. I spent the next several hours comforting Elia's children and his wife.

Five hours later they said there was an overseas call for me from Lockerbie. It was Fire Master (Chief) J. Barry Stiff calling me, as a fellow firefighter, to make sure that I and my family were OK. He spoke of the brotherhood which we shared, the glue that holds us together. In the midst of a mass casualty situation, 11 of his neighbors killed on the ground and the bodies of 259 victims on the plane in the yards and streets of his village still to be identified, and still he took the time to call me.

He thanked me for my prayers for both he and his family as well as the firefighters working with him. But he wanted me to know that he shared the pain I was feeling over the loss of my friend Elia. The miles between us did not separate the Bond of Brotherhood.

We spoke for a few minutes about the task which was ahead for he and his men and again I prayed that the Lord would give them the needed strength. His phone call and the Brotherhood that we shared gave me the extra strength I needed to deal with my own personal grief and to give spiritual encouragement not only to Elia's family but to seven other families from our area who lost their children on Pan Am flight 103.

I'd like you all to know that if Tragedy were to knock on your door, that the strength of the Lord and the Bond of Brotherhood will help you through it.

Isaiah 43:2: When you pass through the water, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

Take Good Care of Yourself

The Rev. Canon Samuel P. Lundy Regional Director

Button up your overcoat, sounds like good maternal advice that has been aimed in our direction for our entire lifetime. For my generation, "Button Up your overcoat," has been a popular song first made famous by Ruth Edding in the 1930s and continued by a diverse group of songsters from BING Crosby to Nancy Sinatra. The next line directed towards us is, "Take good care of yourself, for you belong to me!" that is the line this ties to this article.

Rare is the unfortunate man or woman, I would think, that doesn't have some connection with another individual or hosts of individuals. In this realm, we immediately think of family: spouses, siblings, children, cousins...ah yes, the whole lot of them. We used to have a little Irish ditty extolling the family, virtuous or otherwise. I have forgotten most of it, but the little title was something like, "The dirty Lundy's Down our block."

My point is simply that we are important to someone, if only our cat. It is an omnidirectional connection. We have the duty to reciprocate that love and that care by our behavior, our self-behavior. The dangers of the Ruth Edding area were things like drinking too much homemade gin and platinum blonde women with bleached hair...still not bad advice, I would guess.

Firefighters and emergency responders are not normal people, or at least not average people. That should be no surprise to you. If you're reading this, you're one of them! We all belong to a primary department or unit, and all of the organizations that spin off from that initial membership, boards of directors, county meetings, fire police groups, mandated training, local and state committee meetings- it never ends. "Ge and Ha" may be the oldest words in the English language. "Whoa" is not a bad one to use from time to time.

In addition to all this administrative field-plowing, we have the actual alarms or calls for responders that hit us at any time and all the time. As the field of candidates lessens, we who remain consciously or unconsciously pick up the load. Good men who should have faded into the exempt company some years ago now carry the load during the daytime hours. What department is not now recycling chief officers or that the thought of the secretary or treasurer needing to be replaced brings panic to the unit.

Flashover is a pretty speculator fireground event. Yet, I suspect burnout may be the more insidious one for the rank-and-file firefighter or emergency services worker, while maternal hovering is lovely, we need to learn to button up our overcoats, figurative speaking. We must put ourselves in charge of our own good mental health. For those so addicted and inclined, I can see where the social and physical effort of playing golf might be an excellent stress reducer (providing one doesn't play too seriously) Is it possible a department could pay greens fees for members achieving a certain level of participation? It might be a lot cheaper than having a paid department in the decade in front of us.

I remind young firefighters, when I have the opportunity to speak at class graduations, that "Your daughter will only graduate from kindergarten once. Miss it and you have missed it forever." While we love the fire service, there is more to life than the fire service. St. Benedict, in the famous "rule" which governed monastic houses for centuries encouraged us to have a balance in our lives. Work, relaxation, and prayer- still not a prescription.

When we take care of ourselves, we are better able to take care of those we love, and equally important to be able to take care of those who depend so heavily upon us. "Take Good Care of Yourself," you belong to

The Effects of Covid on The Fire Service

Mr. Tom With Chief Chaplain

We all have been presented with many new challenges to face since February of 2020. There have been items that have tested our mind and our spirit, sometimes leading to questioning our faith in the Lord. Volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel have had their families turned upside down. This is due to children learning from home via electronic meeting platforms, along with the parents working from their home. Scheduling activities has become essential to trying to maintain a healthy atmosphere for all family members.

When a single parent is trying to juggle computer schedules for school class time, work time via electronic meeting platforms, and breakfast, lunch and dinner, you are bound to run into feeling that it is too much to handle! Depression and thoughts of suicide lurk around you as you can never get ahead! Your world has turned upside down and you have no control over the virus!

What I have presented above to you is in addition to all those items that in the past have pushed us to our limits. Suicide has been increasing for all firefighters before COVID 19 came along. Add Covid 19 and volunteer firefighters around you may lose perspective on what really matters in life. You have a lot on your mind. Your ability to perform your tasks on the fireground may become clouded, decisions may become unattainable. Your safety and the safety of others at an incident may be at risk.

Yes, all the basic conditions that I have mentioned in previous paragraphs are not new. We as fire chaplains work to keep ourselves well informed on those social and economic changes. That can affect volunteer firefighters across the state. At the New York state association of fire chaplains April 2019 Annual Conference, we were able to participate in presentations to inform and guide us when we are "out in that field." I was able to secure four speakers that gave the Chaplain participants a broader perspective in the areas of stress, depression, and suicide two of the speakers had great topics for us to assist our members in the volunteer fire service. They were "Traumatic Stress: The Responder and the family" and "Suicide and Suicide prevention." As a fire chaplain you really have to learn to listen to your members. Once you have taken the time to hear a member's circumstances, you can provide direction and assistance and present some of the items to follow, especially with COVID 19 still among us.

Some Great Advice

- Exercising, even a short walk will help you clear your mind and help you focus.
- Regular communications with your family and friends particularly those in your fire house.
- Create a flexible schedule for you and your family to follow.
- Set up a routine for you and your family's activities. Work and learning areas should be set up for you and your family.
- If you feel that everything is getting too much to handle, connect with your primary care physician. He or she can assess you with what help and assistance you may need and direct you towards that specialist.

Communication seems to be the key to getting through much that we are challenged with every day. But, our lack of regular meetings, drills, training sessions, seminars, etc., do not allow us to regularly communicate with one another, even just to share in laughter! This March through September seemed to have flown right by us. Our seasonal dose of spring meetings and seminars were absent. We all have grown accustomed to each month providing perspective on the upcoming months. We have been so used to certain events, like fire services, conventions, fire department, fish fries, pancake breakfasts, outings etc. that now the seasons seemingly come quickly upon us. Hence, the need to communicate even more, so that voids we experience can be filled and help us all to do our future planning.

Please stay safe, stay well in all the work you do for your community through the volunteer fire service!
God Bless You All!

Perhaps Love is a Better Way

Mr. William Mayo Past Chief Chaplain

Recently I heard my rabbi speak, He started by telling a story of a man who was walking down the street who came upon another man who said to the first, "You are ugly." The first man responded by saying, "Why are you telling me this-aren't we all made from the same maker?"

My Rabbi continued by stating and discussing the fact that a recent study found that 20% of the people in New York state either don't know about the Holocaust or don't even believe that it happened. There has been a push to create a curriculum that would teach students the importance of this information. Currently, there are many groups of people who want their race, religion, ethnic background or sexual orientation to have a curriculum informing the world about who they are.

Perhaps love is a better way to address the division we seem to find all around us. The well-known rabbi, Harold Kushner (best known for his book when bad things happen to good people) wrote the following poem. It is more relevant now than ever:

A Prayer for the World

Let the rain come and wash away the ancient grudges,
the bitter hatred held and nurtured over generations.
Let the rain wash away the memory of the hurt, the neglect.
Then let the sun come out and fill the sky with rainbows.
Let the warmth of the sun heal us wherever we are broken.
Let it burn away the fog so that we can see each other clearly.
Let the warmth and brightness of the sun melt our selfishness.
So that we can share the joys and feel the sorrows of our neighbors.
And let the light of the sun be so strong that we will see all people as our neighbors.

Manners Cost You Nothing

Rev. Barrie-Lyn Foster Past Chief Chaplain, FASNY Chaplain

FOR JUST ONCE, IT IS ALL ABOUT YOU.

You are taught to give. You really love to give, serve and do for others. Once in a while, it is very healthy to check in on yourself.

We dare not be victims. We choose how to respond to the world around us. That choice has brought us to the fire service and all the many ways we can serve. Even when face to face with difficult and stressful situations, we have the choice in how we respond.

We bravely chose to jump in the rig and go to the scene not yet knowing all the details. While the adrenaline may surge, the concern for others, desire to help, and the thrill of it all motivates us.

What we cannot choose is how people will react to us. People are often having one of their worst days before we arrive. We can choose to be aware that interpersonal reactions can be anywhere from slightly stressed to way off the charts. That awareness is up to us. It is all about you.

Recently our department went to medical call for a dear and kind patient who had fallen. They were the politest patients I had ever met in more than 20 years of responding. As we chatted while waiting for an ambulance, we discovered we knew one of their children. Proud of how they raised their

children “old School” they shared a short slogan that really stuck with me,” Manners cost you Nothing.”

Their kind response while in pain certainly alleviated a great deal of stress in the room. Their politeness was highly contagious. We shook hands, introduced one another by name, and said things like, “It’s nice to meet you.” Isn’t it amazing that this has become so unusual? Here is where you come in.

When we bring our own stress to the scene, we are not bringing calm. If we bring our manners, politeness, and kindness, we can turn a stressful situation in the right direction. It is more than being just professional, it is being a good steward of the gifts of service the Lord has given to you,

Proverbs is a book in the bible full of wisdom. Verse 27 of chapter three reads like this:” Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do so.” We can share our good manners. It will cost nothing- and it will be quite contagious.

Use Frequently for Best Results

Rev. Barrie-Lyn Foster Past Chief Chaplain, FASNY Chaplain

We all have experienced many seasons of change in the emergency services. With each season comes a new emphasis and new growth. Physical health and fitness are vitally important for us to be our best as first responders. Awareness of cancer-causing carcinogens, both during and after fire, and hazmat incidents has taken us to a new level of gear cleanness. Updated safety features (buddy breathing low air alarms) on our air packs have constantly improved over the years.

We have prompted peer counseling in our departments. Improvements and changes have enhanced how Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) teams support the mental health of our firefighters. Leadership training has emphasized the social implications of good behavioral health. Situational awareness has taught us the “fight, flight or freeze” model for recognizing our own behavior and that of our brother and sister firefighters. We have grown one experience at a time, being concerned for the “whole person” physically, mentally, and behaviorally, is part of what makes firefighters such a strong family.

During tough times we can run out of physical strength. That is when the adrenaline keeps us going. When the calls have been too many or too difficult, our mental health may need some time to reboot so it automatically switches our brain setting to numb- in order to process things later. What about when things are too difficult spiritually and we don’t have answers? It is perfectly normal to be upset or disillusioned with life’s unfairness. I’ve struggled with this on more than one occasion, especially when things have not turned out the way I thought was best, you know what I mean-the difficulty of an MVA where a drunk driver kills an entire family, a senseless accident resulting in the death of a department member; or cancer takes a loved one., there are days when we might feel prayers are ignored or worse yet, we feel God is angry with us. Seasons exist when our spiritual health hits rock bottom. We may find ourselves completely exhausted and feel empty.

We all know the symptoms of stress. We also know that it is better to drink some water, talk to a friend, take a long walk, and have a good nap in order to recoup. Yet, there is one ancient powerful weapon available to our personal arsenal as strong responders. This vintage tool gives us strength beyond our abilities. Er are talking supernatural stuff here (OK, maybe superhero words better for you, that is all good)!

In whatever form you worship, simply ask: Lord, help. Try it. Talk to the Lord wherever you are, however, you believe and ask for wisdom. You may discover your spiritual strength is stronger than you realize. Surprise! You just added good spiritual health to your first responder toolbox. Use frequently for the best results.

The Ministry of the Fire Chaplain

Rev. Tom Flander Regional Director

As I sit here writing this Article, I realize how blessed I am to be both a Captain as well as the Chaplain of my Fire Department. I'm not sure if this article will be of help to the chaplain of your department and officers, I guess it will depend on just what their view of a fire chaplain is. I hope that my words will bring encouragement to them helping them to step out of the box they are comfortable in and continue to grow in their areas of service to God and to humanity.

I love life, I love to serve the Lord, for it is through this service that I find great pleasure and my community is blessed as well. I have served the EMS and Fire Services since the 1990s. In everything that I personally do, I try to put in a 100% effort. That is the type of person that I am.

I had already been serving as a pastor in my community for a number of years and was also serving as a volunteer in our village fire department. However, the village of Fonda's mayor and board decided to dissolve the 139-year-old fire company and work with the commissioners of the Town of Mohawk to take over the fire service. Since I was not ready to quit my calling as a firefighter and chaplain, I saw this instead as an opportunity to serve the Lord and apply his word in a larger area. I was thinking outside the box!

Because of certain legalities, I was required to reapply to the Town of Mohawk Fire Department to join their group. The Town of Mohawk Fire Department is nestled in a quiet area in Central New York State. It borders on the Mohawk River and the Erie Canal, it's a farming community in the Adirondack mountains. The Fulton- Montgomery County Community College is our neighbor. The Mohawk Fire Department has about 40 firefighters in membership. And they are highly respected. Since they had never had a Chaplain before, I applied requesting to be their first one. They graciously accepted me as their chaplain.

As I started this new ministry, I was relying on the words of John's gospel Chapter 15 verse 13, "Greater love that no man then this, that a man lay down his life for his friends". I keep a copy of this verse in my helmet. I believe that the men and women in my fire district are my family and my friends. I also believe that as first responders we should be ready to give our lives, if necessary to save the life of someone else.

I view the chaplain as an onion with many layers, layers that will be unfolded as the season wills. As a chaplain in my district, I have set goals for myself:

1. To gain the chiefs respect and to enjoy my chaplain's role.
2. Not to be judgmental as a chaplain
3. To be an efficient role model for my department.
4. To be someone who is easy to approach, someone easy to be around, to be a person who is trusted and can be confided in.

I believe this begins by how we relate to the members of our departments, we need to build trust. One of the ways I do this is to take the same courses they are taking; this helps me relate to them at fire scenes.

Secondly it allows the members to just be who they are. Matthew's gospel tells us not to stand in judgement of others. Its not in the job description of a chaplain.

Third I let the members see the real me, my mistakes and all. I laugh with them and cry with them and when it's time for work, well, I work right alongside them. I'm not afraid to get my hands dirty.

Fourth I am there as their spiritual adviser, to help them in any time of need. I am there for them whether they believe in God or not. Fifth I take care of myself, for if I don't, I will be of no use to others.

Every time we gather or get together at a fire scene, they all bring new opportunities to the table. I joined the Critical Incident stress management CISM team of Montgomery County and what a difference this has made for me. To be able to have the tools to cope with the things that we see in the fire service and how it feels to be able to help other first responders deal with a crisis in their lives. I see many young people joining the department for the glory of wearing the T shirt. It isn't until they come across that scene (you know what I am talking about) that forever changes them as first responders. It doesn't just affect the "newbies" stress also affects the most seasoned firefighters.

Recently, our department was hit by a crisis no one could have foreseen. Within a few months of each other, two of our longstanding active firefighters were diagnosed with cancer and both succumbed to the disease quickly. Both these men were older wiser sages, mentors to each and everyone. They were mentors to me. But more than that they were father figures. They knew how to light up a room when the mood was too serious. They were the ones who would get things done. This is still a struggle and a void for me and my family.

Like I said, I am very fortunate to be part of a department that respects me and the role of a chaplain. So, as all the members of our departments remember, we are not invincible. We need the members of departments just as much as they need us. It's a two-way street.

To all of you who are struggling in the fire service with critical incident stress management in your departments, I want to tell you drugs and alcohol are not the answer, please don't keep it in. find someone to talk with so the healing process can begin in you, so that you will be able to continue to be a first responders that God called you to be. Again, the words of John 15:13 "Greater love that no man then this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Do We Remember

Rev. Victoria Dichian FASNY Chaplain's Committee

I recently attended a wedding and the merging of two families. After the vows and before the celebration began, this Irish couple wanted to remember those family members who had already gone home to be with their God. They asked me to do the honor and we selected a poem written by two rabbis called "

Thinking afterwards, I thought about how some of the words of the poem could apply to the fire service.

Do we remember those individuals who had the foresight to see the need to establish a fire company/ department in an area where there were new developments?

Do we remember those property owners who donated land and/or money for the building of a station or the purchase of needed equipment?

Do we remember those who did the fund raising to help to furnish that station or pay for that station?

Do we remember those individuals who taught us the right ways to respond to emergencies and how to avoid the wrong ways?

Do we remember those who thought of ways or invented tools to make our jobs easier?

Do we remember those who started county, sectional and state organizations so that the fire service could learn from each other?

And most of all do we remember to pass this history on to the next generation of firefighters so that they too can remember?

In closing, I would like to quote the last line of said poem; "So long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us, as we remember them."