

The Days Grow

Short

An Accidental Journal of September 11, 2001

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September 2002

Forward

It is now a year after the catastrophe of September 11, 2001. While everyone says life has been "changed forever," there is a reassuring return of the way things were, at least on a day-today basis. This volume tries to preserve the record of one community's experience through e-mail sent and received on and after September 11, 2001. Because it is church community, there are also contributions from clergy and friends from afar, as well as portions from memorial services and newspaper columns, with a final poetic portion sent in January, 2002.

In such a way, I hope to preserve in writing the sensation of those days, both as a memorial and a reminder. Memory plays false with all of us, and through our own written words, we can make sure that we do not lose track of what we thought and felt.

I believe email is overrated as a medium, but on September 11, it was the only reliable way to stay in touch, as telephone systems were spotty. It was also the only way to reach many people in a hurry. Most were trying to assure their friends they were all right. Some were trying to help and advise others. And a few were reporting their experiences, whether to share or just to unburden. Some of each are here.

For those who are not part of this particular congregation, it is a Unitarian Universalist community centered in Brooklyn Heights, a neighborhood in New York City that sits directly across the East River from lower Manhattan. We had front row seats to the disaster, watching everything about a half mile away in the very clear blue morning light. Many in the Heights and adjacent neighborhoods work there or even send their children to school there. So it is more than physical proximity that connects us.

Starting that afternoon, I sent a letter out to members and friends almost every day for a week. These became longer and longer, and are the longest portions in this account. Between them, often in response, came most of the other comments.

I hope that, despite editing for clarity and privacy, something of their immediacy remains as well as something enduring. May it

serve as an album of painful, poignant but also precious
recollection. If, in addition, it contains more, I am thankful.

W. Frederick Wooden

Summer 2002

Tuesday, September 11, 2001

(My first letter came out that evening, although an early and short version was sent in the afternoon. These two letters came in response to that early letter.)

11 Sep 2001

I'm at home in Brooklyn, watching the news on all the TV channels. This morning as I was getting ready for work, I heard on NPR local radio that there was an explosion at World Trade Center, then that FM station went off the air; I switched to the same broadcast on AM to hear more, and turned on the TV. I saw on TV when the second plane crashed, and "T" called, so I did get to talk to family. I watched for a while, called the office (I work in midtown Manhattan, not near World Trade), and said I'd wait awhile and then go into work. Things seemed to have calmed by 10:15, so I walked to the subway to go into Manhattan. The train came, and I rode four stops to Smith/9th Street, where the train goes above ground and World Trade is in view. At that stop, the conductor said that was as far as the train was going, and everybody was ordered to leave the station. I got to ground level, found a pay phone, called the office and was told not to come to work, and I walked home, about an hour's walk. At my apartment, a few miles away, I could see the smoke plumes, and there is ash in the air and smoke even in my neighborhood. A stranger on the street gave me a surgical mask—the smell is like burning rubber, even this far away. I finally got through on the telephone to talk to Mother a few minutes ago.

So for the rest of the day I'll be close to the television, but I'll walk to a diner for lunch and be around other people—the stories you hear on the street are fascinating, from eyewitnesses to "where I was." And I have one good friend who works at World Trade but not in the twin towers, so send good thoughts out to missing folks, and to the firefighters most in harm's way (I've seen flatbed trucks full of firefighters going to Manhattan).

There's an emergency call for blood donors; I'm eligible to donate again this Saturday. All NYC events are canceled today—no sports, no Broadway shows, and today's primary election is canceled. And whether this is domestic terrorism, an international group or sponsored by a foreign state, let's hope that reason prevails over emotion when retaliation is considered, that this doesn't start a massive war.

I'm safe, so thanks for your good thoughts, and now send them to those in greatest need.

Tim (Barger)

11 Sep 2001

As I write this, the World Trade Center has been bombed and lives have been lost. I watched the plane collide with the tower while watching television. From my rooftop I saw the subsequent explosions with my own eyes. One of my friends just called me, crying hysterically, because she watched the building where she worked, (7 WTC), collapse in a heap. My heart is heavy. I too worked at WTC. My mother did also. I still have friends who work there. It was one of my favorite places. Just last week I was hanging out at Border's, reading magazines, listening to CD's. I used to go to the Bar at "Windows On The World," and attend jazz concerts in the Plaza. Some of my favorite restaurants are on the concourse. We will never see those twin towers on our skyline again. Let us mourn it's loss and pray for the victims as well as for our city.

Eric (S. Spruiell)

Tuesday Evening Dispatch

It has been a day like no other. Still unwashed, I heard a loud sound this morning in my home office here in Brooklyn Heights. Thinking it was part of construction not far away I did not at first pursue it. Loud noises are not unprecedented in the Big City. But then I heard people shouting and the sound of feet running. I left my small office, which faces away from the Brooklyn waterfront, and went to my living room which has a sidelong view of lower Manhattan. Down on the street there were only a few people but they were heading toward the promenade that faces the city. I turned my head and saw the twin towers belching smoke and knew something horrid was happening.

At first I assumed a fire had broken out, and turned on the television to learn more. Only then I did I hear that an airplane had collided with it. I thought of the airplane that hit the Empire State Building after the war. But within moments I found out that it was not one but two aircraft.

My wife Wendy returned home, shaken by what she had seen. We sat down to watch the reports and watched the videotape of the second plane plowing into the tower. I remembered a scream I heard when the second explosion happened. It must have been the cry of someone who saw what happened. What a burden to bear.

And then we learned about the crash at the Pentagon. Speculation about terrorism turned to certainty, and the sense of dread leapt up in us.

The telephone rang and my office asked me if I knew. I told them we were watching even now. I hurried to take my shower and just as I was getting dressed I heard my wife cry out and hurried back to the living room as the television and living room window showed the south tower crumbling to the ground.

A cloud of dust rose like a storm, billowing slow and ominous, obscuring our view. I thought that this cloud of gray dust was moments ago one of the signatures of the city and in it were mingled the flecks and bits of actual people, their clothes and lives obliterated and now hurtling toward us. It was incomprehensible in scope, more shattering to the mind than any Hollywood staging.

I hastened to church, and my wife to the school our boys attend. Just after I arrived we heard the last rumble as the second tower fell. The cloud rushed again. All day long our eyes have burned. The smell of burnt debris permeates the neighborhood. My jacket was lightly covered with gray flecks as I leafleted the area for a prayer service we are hosting tonight.

I saw a friend standing on the street corner terrified. Her children attend school in lower Manhattan. Her husband was taking them. She and we do not know what will become of them. That her husband is named Farooqi is a silent fact we all know is very present as well.

At Plymouth Church, broadsides printed up to announce a prayer service for "the city" are scratched out to say instead: "the country." The front door is open, something never done any more. As I pass other houses of worship, their doors are open too.

There is little traffic. Along the streets people huddle by telephone booths, their cell phones not working. As the broadcast tower for many television and radio stations was on the North Tower, only one station is available, although the cable system is fine. So also is our DSL line. Old-fashioned wires are still going, unless they went through lower Manhattan.

The subways are down. People stand about aimless, unable to go anywhere or do anything. A tourist with map in hand is asking how to get back to Manhattan. We hear there is Long Island Railroad service and tell her how to get to the Flatbush Avenue station. It's directly under the Williamsburg Bank building, a tower in its own right – and I wonder about that.

There is uncertainty, but not panic. Not knowing what lies ahead, even if one can get home, makes for a subtle tension and a pervasive gloom of heart that echoes the gloom of the sky.

Back in my church office I am on the phone at every moment, finding parishioners, asking, telling, seeking. Slowly our members are found, or even call in themselves. How fortunate that at such times people think to call us, knowing we would care and tell others. My Episcopal colleague and staff are calling each and every member in their community.

Stories begin to circulate.

- One woman was late to work because she stopped to vote in the primary today. The disaster arrived before she did.

- Another is out of town altogether, and we all would like to join her in Indiana.

- Yet another is in Lenox Hill hospital with newborn twins. Irony and luck over and over.

- One escaped the Financial Center and made her way back on foot to claim her daughter at school.

- Another was out of the building when it fell and saw it all, scorching her mind.

Between phone calls I set up a prayer service that evening. I am not alone. In addition to mine and that which I saw at Plymouth, there is a service at the Episcopal Church and the Lutheran. I consult with the Lutheran pastor and suggest an interfaith service. We try to create one but we end up with separate services. I am fortunate though. My colleague from the conservative synagogue will share the service with me.

Somewhere in the middle of this I call parents and other family, assuring them of our well being. It is ironic that my sister and brother in law live almost as close to the Pentagon as we do to the WTC. My mother is not happy.

Also, I seem to be the only one with good telephone access to the city, and so we get calls for others and pass them along. My colleague, Hope, cannot get in from her home in Park Slope. Her daughter attends high school at 77th and Amsterdam. The former calls me first. I leave a message with our chaplain, Orlanda, who lives not far from there, about the daughter. The daughter calls and I tell her about the chaplain being close by. Then I call the mother. She is not home but her sister, the aunt, is. Relief all around.

Of all things, I must mail something, so I walk toward the main office. It is locked tight for security I presume. I leave my overdue bills in an outside box, wondering when they will be picked up. On the way back I see half burned papers in the street; they are mortgage tables and financial manuals. It is

shocking and yet perfectly sensible. And I, along with others from the office, pick some up and bring them back to place in our chalice; relics.

Mid-afternoon I go home to change clothes. I walk back toward the river, and the cloud of dust and smoke now obscure the entire lower skyline. To the north I can still see the bridge and midtown. The north wind now drives the plume of dust and smoke south, a strong orange color created from the sun behind it. North of lower Manhattan the sun is out, glinting off the NY Life building. Along the riverfront, I can see the blinking lights of emergency vehicles like a string of holiday lights. Except for the whoosh of some fighter jet patrolling now and then, it is completely silent. The churning column of smoke rises energetically, but we hear nothing.

I stay at home for a while, watching the news, learning nothing new. There is a weird economy of information. Everyone is desperate to find things out, but there is little actually known. So eager are people, including me, that we grasp anything and repeat it without even thinking. Rumors are everywhere, as poor information far outnumbers good.

I change into a suit and walk back from the riverfront, going against the current of people eager to see, to know. Along the way I buy a sandwich and soft drink for supper. I haven't eaten anything but a piece of homemade peach pie the secretary brought in first thing in the morning. Her husband made it from peaches grown in their backyard.

In the office I am compiling materials for the service. A local folk singer called and asked to sing. I said yes, coaching him to find something consoling and honest. I want something from both scriptural traditions, Bible and Qu'ran. I happen upon psalm 140: "Deliver me, Holy One, from evil ones; preserve me from the violent..." Then I find the 99th Sura which ends, "whosoever does an atom of good shall see it; and whosoever does an atom of evil shall see it also." In addition I find extracts from the reform liturgy for Tisha B'av, the day in memory of the destruction of the temple: "You shall rebuild the city," it says.

I eat my sandwich and watch the news in my office. Nothing new and yet everything. My family arrives. I print a little cheat sheet

and assemble my papers. The sanctuary is open and I sit down to play the piano, hymns, while people come in. Facing away I don't know how many are there, which is good as I have not played for months. Will the folk singer and the rabbi make it?

The folk singer arrives. One moment of relief. The rabbi arrives, in sweat clothes. I think it odd until I see he is wearing a firefighters coat and carrying a helmet. On his back it says Chaplain Potasnik. He has been there. I am amazed and grateful.

When I look around I see 150 or so, mostly strangers. Now is the time. All that is worth recalling is that Rabbi Potasnik brought the reality into the room with him, and with it the courage of those there. He told especially of the loss of Father Judge, a full time fire chaplain, and two other chiefs, caught in the collapse. And when he finished telling us this I asked everyone to pray and in that time to say out loud the names of those dear to them at this hour. The choking sobs were as loud as the names.

Finally, the folk singer, Dan, sang. He said he went up on his roof to think and finally chose a song, "Up Above My Head," which he played in a bluesy minor key, each verse ending with "There Must be a God Somewhere." We all sang and then the rabbi blessed us. It was not enough, but it was enough.

At the doorstep, the smell and dust were appalling. The wind has died down, and it all just hung in the air. I wished everyone well and blessed as many as seemed to need it. How odd to bless others when I am so in need of it myself. It is not my customary form and feels foreign, but this evening demanded it. A reporter from a local paper spoke with the rabbi and me for a few moments, and then it was over.

It was eight o'clock, and night had fallen. Dust and smoke could be seen by the light of the street lamps. We walked home in the silent streets, as though the air was muffling the sound of feet and life.

I am terrified, as terrorism intends. And I am enraged. Perhaps someday I shall be able to understand how someone else's rage could drive them to such wretched acts, but I cannot imagine it ever being right or good. Perhaps someday I shall be able to comprehend the corroding power of powerlessness and how it gives birth to violence, but I cannot imagine excusing calculated

butchery as political statement. I certainly cannot imagine taking a plane and its people hostage and using it as a bomb against other people, and thinking it heroic.

I also worry that the principles (if such a word can be used for those who do such things) that propel such an act, point ultimately toward genocide. A half-century after the holocaust, notwithstanding the injustices and mistakes made by the state of Israel, the alternative that impels such an act is another holocaust. And I fear that we are all now being asked to put our lives on the line to prevent that. Not even asked, simply put there without our choice or knowledge.

That's what happened to those on board the flights. It happened to those in the Trade Center. It happened to those who were killed in Pennsylvania and even those in the Pentagon. It may yet happen again.

Will it end? At this moment I don't know, and I dare not think about it as my rage at this moment is too large to understand. Instead, I shall have to find a way to live with it, because the alternative is even worse.

W. Frederick Wooden

Wednesday, September 12, 2001

Thank you for your letter. I hope that you will consider with great care what is to be said before children leave [worship] on Sunday. Many children at the pre-school age are being told of an accident of planes and the WTC, but we are wary of discussion at this point beyond comforting them that the police, fire dept., and adults are keeping them safe.

Robert (Thompson)

...I feel such a sense of confusion and uncertainty about the future now. The full horror of these events has not hit home, but is coming closer as I speak to people who were close to the incident. My heart breaks for all the shattered families. I question my own values – everyday life seems so trivial, yet I want to get on with everyday life because I do not want the terrorists to be victorious over my life or the life we lead in this country generally. Getting on with everyday life in the face of such a catastrophe, however, gives rise to feelings of guilt. Eventually we all have to tell ourselves that going to work and taking our kids to the playground is still important.

Noreen (Weiss)

... My thoughts are with you.

Clark Olsen (North Carolina)

P.S. My daughter in Atlanta just wrote of a friend in New York who normally works on the 102nd floor of one of the Twin Towers. Yesterday he happened to have a job interview elsewhere!

... I am heartened that you are providing solace to those in the community who have witnessed this tragedy, this holocaust. Without choice is how it happened, but we can and must choose

how we will respond to this vile act of cowardice. Time and Love will lead us there. At hand is the effort to save all who can be saved and make sure that ground zero in lower Manhattan is safe for life to resume its patterns, which it must. We may not be afraid. To honor those who lost their lives or their loved ones, we may not be afraid.

As life would have it, John was in Brooklyn that morning at his sister's. It took all morning to find our family members and know, thank God, that they were safe, even extended family, and one cousin who is a firefighter and whose HQ is in lower Manhattan.

We are most fortunate. And the miracle stories are piling up. I'll just give you one example: My sister Marion, the publishing gerontologist, made an appointment with a potential new client's family to meet Sept. 11 in a restaurant at the top of one of the towers. The night before she got caught in the rain visiting other clients and by the time she got home she was feeling feverish and called the client to postpone the breakfast meeting until Friday morning. "I never cancel appointments," she told me yesterday, "But for some unknown reason I simply felt I couldn't push myself on this one and reluctantly called to postpone the date." When she awoke the next morning, feeling tired but not ill, she turned on the TV and there were the burning towers. She is filled with mixed emotions, gratitude being foremost. She has no idea whether the clients had breakfast on Tuesday or not. She, like everyone else is waiting.

Stephan and Natascha called to tell us that Vienna mourns our losses our tragedy. Stephan is trying to track down friends. Sarah knows people who work in the financial district and several in the tower. She called yesterday, distraught. We are waiting.

Elsie and Eli were mesmerized when I called them. Pessimistic about the future. I did what I could to brighten up their prospects. A pall had settled on the city they said.

That was yesterday and we have an obligation to return to what is normal knowing that we can never be innocent again. But we will be, and especially New Yorkers, strong and united and face whatever our tomorrows bring.

Even from the relative safety of Milford...we are with you in our hearts and souls.

Love, Loretta (Anagnost, Milford NY)

Just wanted to let you know that we are all okay. It took a long time to get Abigail and Danny home, but we're all safe. I spent the day speaking with very upset students, matching up extra beds with those who couldn't get home, and working with the staff of the business school on how to deal with the next several days. We have roughly 50 part-time and executive MBA students who worked in the WTC. We know at least four of them are okay because we saw them, traumatized, concerned about their colleagues, and in one case covered in plaster from the building collapsing behind him. They walked here from downtown this morning (the campus is at Washington Square in Greenwich Village) after being evacuated and NYU felt like the first safe haven. It will be a while before we know how many students we lost, how many of their spouses, etc., etc.

We are arranging to have our advising staffs trained in how to respond to students who have lost classmates, family members, and (possibly, we don't know anything yet for sure) professors and hope to have someone here tomorrow to speak to students about it. NYU immediately set up counseling centers in a number of locations and emergency shelters. By the end of the day yesterday, most students and staff could finally go home, but we have dorms in the Wall St. area which students couldn't go back to yet or didn't want to. Staff and students who had long walks home before subway service was largely restored gathered in groups to walk, as there was some fear for safety on the streets. Since emergency services were concentrated downtown, there was concern among some that protection on the rest of the city's streets won't be sufficient to discourage opportunists. It is truly beyond comprehension.

So many in the NYU community saw the planes fly into the towers or saw them fall to the ground. And even those who missed it just had to look south any time yesterday to see a huge cloud of smoke rising from the fires. I'm sure your view of the skyline has been altered in a deeply disturbing way as well.

There used to be a nicely framed view of the towers down LaGuardia Place, around the corner from both our apartment and my office, and many of my colleagues had a view of them from their living room windows. Now there is nothing. It's the first true sense I've ever had of what it might have been like for the people of Berlin, Warsaw, London, etc. to see their cities physically and dramatically changed by hatred.

Love, Kim (Corfman)

Date: Wed, 12 Sep 2001 11:55:57 -0400

Fred

Have you heard of anyone getting hurt in our congregation. I'm home downtown is closed. I witnessed most of the bombing and collapse. Walked home with thousands of other across the Manhattan bridge. What's the Unitarian way of dealing with this kind of thing?..

Robert (Brackbill)

Subject: RE: Still here

Date: Wed, 12 Sep 2001 08:33:07 -0400

Fred,

Thank you for this report. Our thoughts and prayers are with you and the people you serve. I have been on the phone and e-mail with a number of our colleagues, all of whom are doing vital work to help people (including themselves) sort this out. Please let me know if there is anything we here can do to be of help.

Best wishes,

David (Hubner, colleague)

Subject: Re: Still Here

Date: Wed, 12 Sep 2001 16:47:48 EDT

Oh, Fred dear.

Such good ministry and so needed. I got stuck in Washington from whence I was to return yesterday but arrived this afternoon by van. That was a weird place to be - in a hotel four blocks from The White House. Big security detail!

Love to you and Wendy,

Denny (Davidoff, former Moderator of the UUA)

Subject: RE: Still Here

Date: Wed, 12 Sep 2001 17:50:18 -0400

Fred:

As a 50,000 mile per year flyer, I have been able to easily imagine myself in any of those four planes. I have been afraid, and reflecting on my fear. I've been pissed off, and reflecting about just how useless that is. I have been beyond words and therefore, pretty non communicative for over 24 hours. So I'm grateful for your ministry there in the rubble, and personally thankful for your words, which somehow have prodded me to communicate.

I'll keep you and Wendy on my prayer list.

Gini Courter (friend, and UUA Trustee from Michigan)

Subject: Expression of sympathy from Czech Unitarians

Date: Wed, 12 Sep 2001 11:31:18 +0200

Our dear American friends,

We were extremely shocked at the news of the terrorist attack against your country yesterday that led to a tragedy of thousands of innocent victims and their families.

We strongly condemn this cruel attack against civil inhabitants with the aim to assail your land, our civilization and freedom.

You have our deepest sympathy in your sorrow; our thoughts and our hearts are with you. On behalf of all Czech Unitarians,

Sincerely yours, Helena Sislerova
Secretary General, The Religious Society of Czech Unitarians

Date: Wed, 12 Sep 2001 13:20:56 EDT

Subject: Prayers

Dear Fred:

My prayers are with you at this difficult time, and I know as a religious leader you will be asked to shoulder difficult burdens now. May God give you strength and insight at this horrific time.

Yesterday I forked up a pint of red at Montefiore Hospital, and I was pleased to see the line grow to a waiting time of 3 hours or so, so many people responding to the need. I see on the news today that dry clothing, especially shoes and socks, are needed by the emergency workers. My suggestion to those of us fortunate enough to have been far away from this tragedy can contribute for now in these ways, in addition to our prayers.

Sara Buechner (friend, and concert pianist)

Date: Wed, 12 Sep 2001

Dear Reverend Wooden:

It is my understanding that yours is the closest UU society to the incredible tragedy that occurred in New York on Tuesday. I am sure that many members of congregation were directly affected by these events. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your congregation at this time.

Like many UU congregations throughout the US and Canada, our church had a special memorial and prayer service Wednesday evening. At this service we had a special offering to help those affected by this tragedy. We will do a second passing of the plate at our regular service this coming Sunday for the same purpose.

Does your congregation or any other congregation in the New York City area have a financial need related to the recent

incredible tragedies? Is the UU Service Committee in any way involved in helping? (If the answer to both these questions is "no", we will send the monies to the Red Cross.)

Thanks for any information you might have. Since other UU congregations might be doing something similar to ours, I will share this information via the UU Leaders list serve.

Blessings, Nancy Fordyce,
Board Secretary, UU Church of Spartanburg, SC

12 Sep 2001

Dear Fred,

For me, your note brings home more than anything else I have read, seen or heard so far the horror of what happened yesterday.

Until now, I had not made the connection between the dust cloud that enveloped Lower Manhattan and those who died in a cloud of flaming jet fuel. And I did not realize – though I suppose I should have – that the dust reached our beloved neighborhood.

I still find unbelievable the notion that the towers – where my family and I celebrated my getting my master's degree in 1978 with our one and only dinner at Windows on the World and where I went more times than I can remember to buy tickets at the half-price ticket stand or go to the observation deck – are gone.

I had a love-hate relationship with the towers, which went up when I was in high school. I thought they were boxy and gauche when compared with the art deco magnificence of the Empire State Building or the Chrysler Building. But as the years passed, they became part of the landscape. Driving up from Delaware, where I went to college, or points south, the towers were always the first sign that you were almost home and brought a smile.

We've been in London just six weeks, and don't have a television yet. So, when I got home last night, Diane, Jay and I went out in search of a pub or other locale that might have one showing news. We needed the electronic hearth. We couldn't find one. So

went to the U.S. Embassy where we talked to two stunned young men from Queens who were traveling through Europe and not sure how they were going to get back to the States, much less New York. One of the London cops guarding the embassy listened sympathetically.

We found flowers already piled against a tree near the embassy, some with condolence messages. Diane teared up when she read one that said, "For all the New York Yanks from all your Cockney friends."

We then noticed a small group of Americans and a few sympathetic Britons holding a candlelight vigil directly in front of the embassy. We joined them. One handed Jay, Diane and me candles, and we lit ours from their tapers. It turned out that two of the seven or eight people there – more showed up as the night progressed – were flight attendants. They looked tense and shell-shocked.

We learned that the embassy had been evacuated earlier and that the only U.S. personnel there were Marines. We never saw any. Just London police. I found this somehow disconcerting, that even the Marines had to hide (Intellectually, I know it was probably a standard security measure. But the symbolism bothered me.).

We stayed about an hour, then left because we had jobs or school to wake up to the next day.

I have no absolutely no doubt that New York and New Yorkers will endure and surmount this terrible tragedy. And I like to think that, along with the memorial that must be built, we will some day erect another great skyscraper at the World Trade Center site as a way of telling the world that New York's spirit cannot and will not be conquered.

Our thoughts remain very much with you,

Best, Jonathan (Oatis, London UK)

Wednesday Evening Dispatch

I go to the gym anyway. So does rabbi Potasnik, and we ponder together as we go through our usual routines. He and I agree to get together again for his Friday evening service, Erev Shabbat, the last before the New Year.

On my way home, I realize we need to buy a newspaper, this being very likely a momentous edition. Still sweaty and ill dressed I head up the street to where our two remaining paper stands are. There is a long line at one, so I go to the other, a small bodega on the ground floor beneath a brownstone restaurant. Both are operated by immigrant Muslims. Some years before one of them taught me a few phrases in Arabic, so I say Salaam Aleykum to the manager, and offer my hand. He takes it with a large smile.

I pause at the promenade that overlooks the river and skyline. It is still silent, the only noise being the quiet but abundant voices and feet of those come to watch. The mayor has told those who can to stay home. Subways are very limited. Safety anywhere in Manhattan is still uncertain. But the weather is fine. Had it not been for our calamity, these would have been labeled perfect days. In the perfect south wind, though, the cloud now spreads due north, taking the dust and smell up through Greenwich Village and the west side.

School is cancelled. Yesterday, my wife Wendy was there through the day, offering to house students who may be stranded. Fortunately, all were able to get home. But today everyone is home. The sense of urgency remains but also a sense of stillness. There is everything to do and nothing to do. I read the paper, and learn more about the buildings and how they were damaged. First reports said they collapsed after an explosion at the base, but now that has been dismissed. The damage of the collisions was all that was required.

On the television last night and today, politicians are beginning to rev up their rhetoric, the too familiar phrases and cadences of power and leverage already audible in their

comments. I cannot listen to them, and turn down the sound when they sing God Bless America on the Capitol Steps.

I find myself uneasy with the patriotic emphasis. I know that in the cockpits of the planes the hijackers said Allahu Akhbar as they drove their human loaded missiles into the undefended towers. How different is it to sing and wave? Acts committed for a higher cause always have in them the potential for evil. Where does one cross the line that separates defense from assault, resolve and revenge, righteous indignation from self-righteous zeal?

Though it is only a rumor, my wife has heard that at a local public school a little Muslim girl in a headscarf was reviled by other parents coming to claim their children. How does that differ from the hatred of those who killed thousands? After a day of hot clear anger I am beginning to think about that anger. Is anyone else? Not think about how to apply it, how to use it, but about its meaning.

In my email are many messages: from colleagues in service, from friends asking if we are ok, from congregations asking to help, even distant co-religionists sending love and care. There are also touching requests and comments from my parishioners, perhaps unable to telephone or unable to speak without losing composure, asking me profound questions. Many are in response to a letter I sent the day before, the first day's account. The depth of their circumstances is striking. This is what I am here to do. I am glad, but also feel a fatigue, a mental and emotional and spiritual fatigue as the weight of these souls I care about becomes apparent to me.

In my office I phone a colleague, older Presbyterian pastor, and as I wait for his return call he appears in my office. He was stuck upstate yesterday, and could only get as far as a relative in New Jersey. I ask where he is finding strength, as I am feeling the fatigue deeply today. He tells me of arriving at his daughter's house last night and being enveloped by his grandson and playing with him and sleeping in his room with him. My youngest is a little older and more frightened. My wife and I are working to remain confident for him and even our 17 year old.

We chat about a larger interfaith service on that same promenade Sunday afternoon. We agree it's a good idea and begin to work on it. I am convinced that we must show a major interfaith effort here, where we have no less than 2 mosques, 3 synagogues, Greek, Maronite, 2 Catholic and 7 Protestant communities. As the least potent partner, I am most eager to work collaboratively. This may occupy most of my day.

But there are still members and friends to be found. I retrieve a message from the woman who was so distraught by seeing the building fall. She asks about a one-time member whose phone number she does not know. I have it, call and find she and her fiancé well. I am glad to leave a happy message on the first woman's machine. A man who was downtown and fled the destruction is in the office today. He is telling us about what he saw. It occurs to me that perhaps we ought to set aside some time to let people share their stories, especially with others who were in the same place. And not just our own. So I set up a time after worship on the coming Sunday to allow people to come together and share.

My in house colleague arrives. It is good to have someone I am not the boss of. Suddenly, with no direct reason, I am weeping. I apologize, being male I suppose, and knowing it is my least lovely face. The weight of need and loss and uncertainty has penetrated. I would rather be in Kansas, Toto.

People seem to be responding in one of two general ways. The majority want to do something. There is thus a frenzy of activity, but only occasionally connected to reality. People want to give blood, send food, collect money but where to give it and send it seems to change almost hourly. I cannot find reputable information, as phones are not reliable. But I have people asking us to tell them. By the time we find out the need has passed or the information is out of date. Two women want to come and make sandwiches and send them, but the person who was going to find out its at lunch. He does not return after and so I do not know what he found out. the women wanted to do something this afternoon, but it's now nearly 2:00 and I have no one to find these things out.

The other sort, myself included, are assaulted by thoughts that won't come clear. So we tend to want to think, ponder, to

find our way. This makes me well suited to professional ministry in general, but I feel a growing and shameful sense of inadequacy and I cannot focus on tasks. On normal days I cannot keep all the balls in the air, and now there are plates and balls and knives and flaming torches to juggle.

I find my energies draining away so rapidly that my instinct is to withdraw. Perhaps those who have something, a particular focused thing, endure better as they can put everything out of their minds and do that. but even now I am aware of the newsletter that needs to be published, the reception I need to postpone, the sermon that must be written.

In the middle of it all I have to plan for Sunday, which while far from the practical help people need, is still important. I realize that dependability is exactly what's missing in life, and gaining that, even in the rhythm of the week and habits of the heart (to coin a phrase) is part of what gives strength.

I was not to preach this week, but that has changed. And what to say? I choose a phrase from Dylan Thomas as my title: "Rage, Rage, Against the Dying of the Light."

Thursday, September 13, 2001

Date: Thu, 13 Sep 2001 10:50:02 -0400

Fred -

Thanks for sending a copy of your words re Tuesday. Right on. What a time. I am truly glad that you are there!

Don (McKinney)

13 September 2001

Will there be a Muslim cleric in one or more of the services you are holding? I have friends who are Muslim and respect the faith. I know that this attack is not about being Muslim and would like to know what I can do to help express solidarity with those of the Muslim faith and recognize our fellow Americans who are Muslims as fellow American who believe in America and don't believe in these acts. I think it is important for people to know at this time that an attack on America is an attack on all of us of all faiths.

Michael (D. D. White)

13 Sep 2001

Got an announcement over the intercom: "ATTENTION: There is no cause for alarm in this building. The smoke that people seem to see coming from the McGraw-Hill Building [next door] is actually the exhaust fan from a restaurant." Some of us are kind of jumpy, I guess. Me, I'm fairly drained by now, and ready for a long nap. I don't suppose there are closing credits to this ...

Tim (Barger)

13 Sep 2001

Thank you for your words—of wisdom and honesty. They brought tears to my eyes, which is just what I needed.

Regards to you and your family, Frank (Marchese)

Thu, 13 Sep 2001

I just made a list of people whom I know who worked in the WTC and checked it against the list of survivors posted on the Internet. Two names that I did not see on the survivors list were Karen (I do not know whether she worked in the WTC, but her firm had a large office there) and Alice. I remember that you said on Tuesday evening that as far as you knew no one from our congregation was missing. Please let me know

Allen (Kone)

13 Sep 2001

The tragic events of this past week, particularly in New York City, have caused us to speak of you several times, and lo and behold, an e-mail address appears on our computers today!

I will be brief for this message, as I'm sure that you are overwhelmed with the work of providing support to your congregation and the community at large during this disaster. Our hearts go out to all of you. We hope that you and your boys are safe, feeling strong in your mission to comfort, and able to meet the needs of your community. If there is any way that we can be of service to you... please let us know.

I look forward to writing again soon, feeling overwhelmed by the nature of these troubles and yet calmed by the knowledge that you are there, I'm sure, at work in the trenches, providing loving support to all in need.

We send big hugs to you. Take care.

With Love, Mary (Castro Aten, Newton Massachusetts)

Thu, 13 Sep 2001

In these terrible times, your words give sweet solace. My love and thoughts are with you and all my NY friends.

Angela (Smith, Austin Texas)

13 Sep 2001

Fred... what a week. I read your letter at one of our midweek services. May read a section of this one on Sunday. What a terrible terrible week. Found a good poem by Kumin for Sunday. Some good verses from Ekah, Lamentations. And a selection from Mohammed's last sermon that will help. Whew.

Blessings on your work at the front. Even those of us here in Ohio mostly know people or at least people who are related to people who died in that building. Our altar will have pictures on Sunday festooning across it, of the dead or presumed dead.

Love, Mark (Belletini, colleague in Columbus Ohio)

Thursday Evening Dispatch

[To our friends across the US:] Thanks so very much for the good cheer and offer of support. ... If it's any consolation to you all, we are about as helpless as you feel. Getting in and out [of the city] is virtually useless. There are police stationed outside synagogues and I suppose mosques. Many streets are closed to traffic. Twice in the last two days we have been asked to clear streets for fear of a bomb (neither of which proved true), the most recent right outside my office. Things are still very narrowly focused on survival and safety. Not that we sense any danger particularly, but the city is very tense about it.

Fresh smoke rose this morning as one of the latent fires came to life. It did not last long, but there is still something ominous about it. Even so, there is calm. People who cannot or need not go to work, don't. Many want to help, but there is little to do, as the needs are being met for the present. Keep an eye and ear open next week, when the dreary work of shoveling the bodies becomes more routine and the nation slowly turns to living again, as it should.

But this is when the misery will begin to eat away. Even now, I feel my stress coming out as impatience and impertinence. Maybe I am different, but it seems others are short tempered as well. How much of this is rage turned inward, helplessness flailing about, fear with no place to put it?

Smoke continues to rise, as smoldering fires continue to burn, even flaring up. A fresh fire sent new black smoke into the sky before 9, though there was no news of anything dire. The cloud trails up along Manhattan from south to north since a warm front sent in southerly breezes early Wednesday. This morning the authorities were chasing someone from New Jersey into Staten Island, essentially locking the island up (easy being an island, I suppose).

Here in Brooklyn Heights we, like everyone else, are still counting the missing. In our interfaith community we have found but few who have perished so far. The greatest loss has been

eight firefighters from our neighborhood station, which was among the first on the scene after the explosions and thus among those in the buildings when they collapsed. Another station a few blocks away also lost several that first day.

Several in my congregation witnessed it all, seeing the airplanes hit the buildings, watching the towers collapse. More than half a dozen work in the complex, but owing to pure luck and it being primary election day, those most likely to have been killed were not there when the catastrophe struck. This morning the list of the missing was about 3,700. By afternoon the number was 4,700.

I am busy organizing an interfaith service for those who died, to be held on the promenade, a long wide cliff walk that opens to lower Manhattan. You have all been there in film or TV. It's the view of the Brooklyn Bridge and with downtown, and the twin towers. This has been a place where people have congregated these past two days. They want to see what is missing, to take it in, to take photos, to be somewhere. Along with that, though, comes the rubber-necking element that is simply curiosity. With so many people stuck here and unable to work, we have a perpetual summer crowd, leaving pizza crusts and French-fries on the street. The restaurants are doing immense amounts of business.

Life is on hold, like a holiday, but I sense a restlessness to resume life as well. There is a certain captivity we are beginning to feel: physical to be sure, unable to leave; but also emotional, as these events have overwhelmed everything and taken our lives out of their patterns and rhythms; we shall be glad when we can plan the day again.

Oh to be able to deal with the hangnails of life instead. Right now the two people dealing with cancer are on the periphery, as are the twins born in the city on Friday and unable to come home yet. A woman reminded me on the phone that the marginal and neglected, such as the homeless and single elderly, are even less visible right now and even more vulnerable.

Events eclipse the smaller but no less momentous moments of individual lives. I feel sorrow for those who died Tuesday in hospitals and nursing homes, and those who perish

this week for less dramatic reasons but whose families are no less bereft.

People say that this reminds you of what is really important, and it does. But should not everyone have the luxury of worrying about their own lives? To be boring and pedestrian may be the greatest gift we enjoy. So enjoy it, and have another boring day on us. The sun is warm and the wind is sweet. The playground, with a view of lower Manhattan and its smoldering sad skyline, was full of children yesterday. They played and laughed.

And a little child shall lead.

W. F. Wooden

Friday, September 14, 2001

Sept 14 2001

It's been a hell of a week. Kathleen and the kids finally got down to the Jersey shore, and I'm joining them tomorrow.

We just put out our special crisis edition, as my newspapers cover ground zero of the attacks. Following is the editorial just written for our edition tomorrow. I include another article that I wrote earlier today after traipsing around the war zone for four hours in the middle of the night. (See what I do when Kathleen's not in town!)

Cici, Noah and KK are happy and safe, but want to come back home. Hope everything is well. Keep up the creative ferment!

John (Sutter, editor, the Villager, NYC)

Editorial, The Villager, September 14, 2001

Out of destruction New Yorkers pull together to survive

It all seems unreal. A bad dream, a horrific nightmare. How could something like this happen, and in New York? Jumbo jets hurtling out of the sky at low altitude, piloted by hijacker terrorists, slamming into Lower Manhattan's World Trade Center.

Was it an accident, we wondered at first. We got queasy looking at the huge gaping black hole in Tower 1. But when the second jet hit and we saw the orange fireball, we knew in our gut what it was: a terrorist attack the likes of which could only be imagined in some suspense novel or disaster movie.

As people jumped from the top of Tower 1, as Tower 2 disintegrated in a mushroom cloud of dust, as Tower 1 wobbled and went down in a heap, there was screaming, panic, confusion and terror. The Hudson Park bikeway/walkway, usually the scene of jogging and roller-skating, became an escape way for thousands fleeing the danger. The thing many of us had feared in the back of our minds had become a reality; a terrorist attack on New York City. But, somehow, we never could have imagined it this bad.

As the Towers continued to smolder and smaller but still huge buildings buckled or caught fire, some commented on the strange sense of calm, almost lack of emotion many seemed to exude. Why wasn't there more anger, they wondered. Perhaps it's because only a few days after the worst terror attack in U.S. history and in world history, it may not have fully sunk in yet. It's still too surreal - the word everyone uses to describe it.

The huge cloud of smoke visible for miles hung over Downtown as the burning went on and on. While the direct hit was on the Trade Center, the rest of Lower Manhattan could have just as well been the target. Gateway Plaza suffered physical damage and was evacuated. Battery Park City was evacuated. Independence Plaza was partly evacuated. Tribeca residents were simply left reeling.

Nearby schools were closed over safety fears and because of the air quality. Downtown was a war zone.

But out of the destruction, there's been much to inspire. First and foremost has been the brave rescue efforts of our local firefighters and police officers. Many Downtown fire companies in the first response wave are missing. Though chances seem slim, there's still hope they'll be found. They are heroes who gave their lives in an effort to save others. Deserving immense credit, Mayor Giuliani has been strong in handling this awful tragedy.

And ordinary New Yorkers have pulled together. There were vigils in Washington Sq. and Union Sq. People volunteered without thinking twice: offering to give blood, giving food and clothes or helping out in any other way needed. In fact, there was such an outpouring that there were actually too many volunteers. Sticking together will help us overcome this.

New York - and America - was violated Tuesday morning, and in a way, we'll never be the same. But like they say, "Only in New York." The Mayor has said that we will rebuild and come back stronger. He's right. It may take us awhile to find our footing, but don't bet against us coming back stronger.

Feature Article: "Into the Rubble, Sept. 13, midnight to 4 a.m."

By John W. Sutter

I followed the midnight shift last night of a group of search and rescue volunteers, marching down the West Side Highway, past the Embassy Suites Hotel (empty, dirty, but no broken glass) to our first stop, a huge lit area containing several hundred workers at Vesey St. and 9A. The mud was thick, and "nuclear fallout" debris half a foot deep everywhere. Crane operators and welders were crawling over the North Bridge that previously spanned Route 9A connecting the U.S. Courthouse and World Trade Center north tower with the World Financial Center's Winter Garden. North Bridge was down on its side, twisted and rolled over, blocking the entire road. It was being cut, and dismantled.

The windows of the 3 W.F.C. building facing east were out. Teams of worker ants were heading east on Vesey St., into the heart of the smoking carcass of W.T.C. North Tower, Tower 1. I passed the restaurants on the ground floor of the Embassy Suites Hotel, dark, filthy, closed. Walking toward the water on Vesey, I encountered yet a higher level of police security and barricades. The word is that Mayor Giuliani's new bunker is in Stuyvesant High School.

The moveable morgue is on Vesey St., a large refrigerator truck where bodies, already bagged in thick orange plastic bags, are received. Five were piled inside at 1 a.m. There were barricades around the truck, a police presence, and several health workers in medical protection outfits. There were other like trucks parked further east on Vesey St.

We walked into the American Express building, where rescue support efforts were stretched out everywhere. Ten workers were asleep on cots in an area labeled "rest area." Tables were heaped with sandwiches, bottled water, clean gloves and masks. Despite the extraordinary number of relief, police, fire, rescue, crime, construction, health outfits and agencies intermingled, the food is for anyone and everyone who's hungry.

The walk through the Winter Garden recalled nothing of the dozens of times I've hung out there with my kids. This time, no lights, no stage – even the trees seemed twisted. But the huge glass atrium was intact, a huge relief, although not comforting to walk under. I sped up, walking with a group of firemen past the stores – one of whose doors was open – and

out into South End Ave. A few feet beyond the blue Roy Lichtenstein metal sculpture, near the park were two crushed fire emergency vehicles, towed there after the collapse. Next to them was a huge Uncle Ben's hot dinner truck, with a young woman who caught my attention, saying, "hungry?" Gateway Plaza was in far worse shape than I had thought. Its eastern windows were out. South End Ave. was a muddy construction thoroughfare. I said to myself, my, it's going to be some time before Battery Park City residents get home.

I walked left on Liberty, down towards the highway where another huge amphitheater of action was underway under bright lighting with construction machinery, huge flatbed trucks, and over 400 workers, 300 of which were standing around at any given moment. I had heard it said that there were maybe too many nonessential rescue workers at this stage of danger and it sure looked that way to me.

The South Bridge was intact, although all windows were blown out. The W.T.C. Marriott was standing, but was a blackened hulk, clearly unredeemable. It was still smoldering with an occasional flame bursting from the top. Looming five stories over the Marriott was the carcass of a part of 2 W.T.C., the South Tower, eerily aglow in the flood lights, dust and smoke. It was obviously unstable, but the workers said that if it fell it would probably fall east, away from the workers underneath. Let's hope so.

In this corner of the relief effort construction equipment was moving everywhere in extraordinary close proximity to hoards of safety workers. Everywhere you walked you had to do a complete 360 turn because back-up beeps were coming at you from usually more than one direction. With so many agencies clearly no one was in a centralized position of control.

In front and on the side of the Marriott were heaps of rubble stories high. A few workers were tying the white steel outside girders of the fallen towers and hoisting them onto flatbeds. In front, bobcats were scooping up rubble, and depositing it at the foot of five or six firemen with rakes. The firemen would then rake the stuff searching for body parts or other artifacts. Someone stood by with the omnipresent body bag. A D.O.T. worker told me that from 11 p.m. to 2:15 a.m.

13 bodies were pulled out in this area. Everyone's unsaid but deepest yearning – to find someone alive – was not realized last night at Liberty and Route 9A.

On the way home I had to check out Borders Bookstore, to see if it was still standing. My five-year-old daughter loves Borders, where she has gone for a hundred Tuesday story times. To Cici, we've presented this whole tragedy as the big fire that the firefighters finally put out. But she hears lots of things and can smell our thoughts, along with the acrid air. For her the tragedy finally hit home when she asked if Borders was standing. I said I thought it had come down, and that's when she broke. "No Daddy, no!" she cried. "I saw Borders through the smoke, and it's still there." So I had to see.

It was a long hike to circumvent the fallen 7 W.T.C., and my eyes and lungs were aching. When I finally rounded the corner at Broadway and Vesey, my spirits took flight. There it was, Borders, still standing! She was right. Then I looked at the charred stories on top of Borders, clearly burnt to hell. The whole structure would probably have to be razed.

Fri, 14 Sep 2001 06:06:48 +0000

Dear friends and family,

I have gotten many requests for a status report...thanks for your concern, and here it is.

I am fine. My girlfriend Elyse and I live in the West Village below 14th street and are thus in the section of NYC that is still closed to all but residents. 1&1/2 blocks away is St Vincent's Hospital which is the city's primary medical center receiving victims...at heightened readiness but tragically, heartbreakingly inactive.

I traveled, for the first time today, above 14th street to the upper west side and knew I'd landed in another zone entirely. An everyday joviality and a usual looseness were easily evident as soon as I'd exited the subway...attitudes that are not seen down in our neighborhood right now. It relieved me in a small way to find myself surrounded by relative normalcy, but it also concerned me. I don't mean to suggest that below 14th street

we are hanging our heads in a constant state of mourning. On the contrary, there is life, there is a brightened friendliness, there is a contagious positivity and an active hope...but there is none of the backslapping laughter, no giddy leaps of joy, no purring lovers oblivious to their surroundings...all of which I did see uptown and all which would seem grossly inappropriate downtown.

And, yeah, I joined in by the end of my dinnertime visit. It felt good to let go for a bit. But I just thought that it was worth relating, as someone who's now spent time on both sides of the line, that for those of us living close enough that the burning buildings and the smoke and the emergency readiness are actual and not just TV images, the physical reality of these tragic occurrences is still unfolding and very much with us.

Not to say don't live and laugh and love...simply a message to urge gratitude and a continued awareness of the moment to moment sobriety of spirit that occupies the streets of lower Manhattan.

Please remember prayer, each in his own way.

To all of us, Jeb (Brown)

14 Sep 2001

Sara:

Please forward this to your list of RE parents.

Thanks, k(ay Aler-Maida)

"Dear friends:

"We have received many requests for information about how to talk to children about the terrible events of the past few days. The Child Witness to Violence Project has developed the attached guidelines as a way to provide guidance for some of those questions.

"We hope they are useful. Please feel free to pass them along or use them in any way that fits your needs.

"Betsy McAlister Groves
Child Witness to Violence Project
Boston, MA 02140
617-414-4244

"Talking with Young Children about the Terrorist Attacks

"The events of the past days are overwhelming and incomprehensible for all. Parents have faced the additional task of deciding what to tell their children and how to tell them in a way that provides the necessary information but is not too scary for them. This is not easy because we as adults do not have all the answers, and many of us are frightened and worried about this terrible disaster.

"We at Boston Medical Center's Child Witness to Violence Project have received many questions about the best ways to talk to children about these events and we have put together this information in order to give parents such guidance. These guidelines are focused on children eight and younger, although many of the principles apply to older children. They come from our experience working with young children who witness community and domestic violence and from our understanding of child development. In our work, we have learned a great deal about how young children think about violence and how we, as adults can help them cope with the fears and anxieties that often come as a result of exposure to traumatic violence.

"Your relationship with your child as a parent or caregiver is the most important ingredient of help that you provide. Your ability to hear your child's worries, to accept them and to provide comfort is the foundation of any discussion about a scary event. If you as a parent or caregiver are able to keep the communication open and be available for your child, you have laid the foundation for providing the best support possible.

"It is important to remember that young children communicate their thoughts and worries in more ways than by verbal expression. Children may draw pictures or use dramatic play or storytelling to tell us their thoughts. We can help by making sure that children are given multiple ways to communicate and that we are sensitive to reading cues from these different expressions.

"All families are different. Families cope with stress in many ways, using strengths that are drawn from religious or spiritual beliefs, traditions and relationships. There is no set recipe of words to use..

Fri, 14 Sep 2001 13:42:35 +0000 (GMT)

Fred,

A friend pushed a book of philosophy on me this past weekend, and I keep coming back to this quote in it: "Gradually, man has become a fantastic animal that has to fulfill one more condition of existence than any other animal: man /has/ to believe, to know, from time to time /why/ he exists; his race cannot flourish without a periodic trust in life-without faith in /reason in life/. And again and again the human race will decree from time to time: 'There is something at which it is absolutely forbidden to laugh.'" -Nietzsche

After this tragedy, I think one of the weights on everyone is not just whatever way this act has touched them, but the weight of expectation of how one should look and act in the face of such tragedy. I cannot go to the playground by the Promenade and hang upside down at this time, even if that might make more of a difference, because that feels like an unholy act at this time. What do you do when you're walking down the street in your neighborhood and you're walking on the ash? It's on your car, it's in your throat and in your eyes—a black baptism. Nothing you do feels appropriate. And that's maddening. The terrorists did not just change the tangible aspects of New York everyday life—the skyline, the subway schedule, the lives erased—but they

have in some sense poisoned every act here, by redefining holiness and unholiness themselves.

Every body or severed limb deposited into one of those 30,000 bags becomes another reason to feel forced inward. For you are forbidden to laugh at such loss, which becomes like a short-term god, a fire-and-smoke god, with various rules about how you can say his name, and whether you can look in his face, and what's a clean thought in his presence and what's blasphemy.

He even—and this niggles me now—says you shouldn't write or talk about it, because it smacks of self-importance, silly self-impressing word games, and there's always a greater loss just down the street that should use the words instead. My tongue's taken away from me enough already.

We have altogether too many gods anyway. In the name of one, some fools did this. In the name of another, other fools threaten to bomb mosques, and will do who knows what else. Many gods, many fools.

Life does go on, and must in fact, to steal a little bit of their victory. But it's foolish to think it can be the same. My wife and I just last night went to see a movie to just get away from the television, yet as we walked back (twin towers no longer the only slice of Manhattan visible from our neighborhood), talk turned to if we should keep trying to have children, or just to adopt. That's how shaken my wife was after seeing the crash, and I was after she disappeared into the subways and streets for two hours afterward.

It reminds me of those days and then weeks and months after Jennifer left, looking around inside with a sense that something that was there before was gone. That tiny act of intimate violence took away my illusions of romanticism, which in the end was a good thing, for it let me see well enough to glimpse a few of my mistakes, and finally see my wife. And now this larger act of public violence takes my illusions of God—so tenuous before anyway, like a borrowed shirt. Maybe also, ultimately, for the best, but they, too, are missed.

I can't even be angry. Or even sad. I don't really know anything, but I think what I have experienced in my short life tells me this: grief and depression are never about too much

emotion, though with the tears and howling sometimes it seems that way. They're about too little. So much was taken from everyone.

-kyle downey

Fri, 14 Sep 2001

Your words, as usual, are poignant and revealing. You provide a unique window on the human experience in general, and specifically here, a tragic event of "war."

We cannot imagine the catastrophe you all have experienced up there. But, like Americans who once were smug in their security and luxury, we are reminded of our humanity, our vulnerability, and of our interconnectedness in global affairs.

We must pause today to remember all victims of violence in this "war" - a four-year-old infant Palestinian girl shot dead by American weaponry in Palestine; a teenager killed by a bomb in a Tel Aviv nightspot; and those workers in the World Trade Center killed by airplane bombers. Each of these civilians, as untold others in the history of war, have found their mortality in the broader context of political struggle. I/We would be remiss today if we did not include the hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians who were destroyed by American nuclear bombs in 1948: the first true nuclear holocaust. For any of these civilians, it was not their choice. I wonder if the ends justified the means.

Keep up the good work.

Marc Murr (Austin, TX)

Fri, 14 Sep 2001

Dear Fred,

Thanks so much for your narratives and for your ministry there. I was in DC on the hill when the buildings were evacuated on Tuesday, so had the smallest touch of personal fear as the building occupants dispersed. I don't need to tell you that this tragedy will be with us for months, nor that the national response

is very likely to raise other issues for us. The need for ministry will be intense.

Blessings, Bill (Sinkford, President of the UUA, Boston, MA)

Fri, 14 Sep 2001 11:03:34 -0400

I keep remembering wonderful thoughts about my visits to WTC ... sitting by the fountain on hot summer days eating lunch bought from the farmers market ... going to the 110th floor to see the magnificent view ... celebrating the end of tax season with the accountants I worked for at Windows on the World ... and a dinner with a friend who was a concierge there around 20 years ago. Most memorable right now is Philippe Petit. He had strung a cable across the two buildings and did what he does best ... tightrope walking. I cant seem to find a photograph of this on the net though.

Anyone have a picture of this? I would love to pass this around.

Adele Foley

Fri, 14 Sep 2001

Dear Fred:

I have never had the pleasure of meeting you in person, but have "met you" via email, thanks to 2 pieces you wrote that were forwarded to me by our mutual friend Alfred Kohler, the resident philosopher of Brooklyn Heights. I read with interest your remembrances of Robert J. Lurtsema, who I met as a fellow fan of the Revels, and your recent profound correspondence about what happened on Tuesday (which I forwarded to clergy and friends). I appreciated your view from the Heights – five minutes from Wall Street as Bob Side, a former Heights Press columnist used to write in his column of the same name. (Bob was a leader in the Heights peace movement, he died of a heart attack in the pool at the St. George Health Club nearly 2 decades ago.) I know Rabbi Potasnik, saw him on Montague Street when I visited this past June, we introduced our young sons to each other.

I lived in the Heights for more than a decade, then moved to Massachusetts after marrying a fellow from Danvers in October 1991. (You and I seem to have passed each other with regional moves.) I was an active member of St. Ann and the Holy Trinity parish when Bill Persell was Rector (before the major conflicts ensued); lived right around the corner from your parish on Henry Street (across the street from the major Heights landmark, the D'agostino's!) I am devastated by what has happened, but comforted by the good will and speedy response of citizens worldwide. I am especially comforted to hear from you what is happening in my beloved Brooklyn. (I still feel more like a Brooklynite than a New Englander, even though I grew up in New Jersey.)

Thank you for your beautiful words, both written and spoken, that offer the leadership and comfort we all need now more than ever. I am signing off, listening to NPR replaying the changing of the Guard in London yesterday, weeping as I hear the so-moving strains of our national anthem being played by the British. Please know that my thoughts and prayers are with all of you. I will be sure to come to a service and say hello next time my little red-head Cameron and I are in the Heights.

Peace, Deborah (Gardner Walker, Co-Convener, North Shore Deanery, Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts)

Date: Thu, 13 Sep 2001 13:02:39 EDT

Fred: thank you. My love and prayers are with you all.

Shalom Silvia (Behrend, colleague in Salt Lake City)

Fri, 14 Sep 2001

Dear Fred: New Yorkers in general and you in particular are constantly in our thoughts. Thanks for keeping us informed with your front seat, if not front-line, reports. In truth all New Yorkers are front-liners, whether or not you are actually in the immediate disaster site. We are "holding you in the light," as our Quaker friends say. I hope that the pastor and his family are finding some

R&R from time-to-time, and some pastoral care. The magnitude of this brutal butchery will consume you, too, if you do not find times and ways to get away from it emotionally.

..Nan joins me in sending our love and our concern to you and yours. I know this is an enormous challenge to help your sons come to terms with the devastation and the insecurity and meaninglessly it brings into their lives.

With our love,

Jim (& Nan Hobart, colleagues in Chicago)

Date: Fri, 14 Sep 2001 15:38:37 +0800

Fred, thanks for the message.

Melanie (Summerfield Lee)

Date: Fri, 14 Sep 2001 13:56:16 -0400

(from member Steve Knowlton)

Wooden, my friend, This from Karen (his wife):

"I don't have Fred's e-mail address, but if he wants to gauge the mood of the city, he should get on an A or F train into the city. People are making eye contact, but very nervous about being jammed in and having to stop repeatedly - the train started using its horn at one point, and everybody froze. It's like being in a funeral cortege. But I was thinking - I expect most of those people could have used the transportation problems as an excuse to stay home.

Karen Freeman

Science Section, New York Times"

Date: Fri, 14 Sep 2001 13:54:29 -0400

Subject: Fw: Movin' Along the Healing Path

Dear Family, Friends, and People of Good Will,

This week each of us probably in some way rode the emotional "pain-anguish-despair-(possible) revenge" roller coaster. Reaching for the big picture, embracing our human family, exercising compassion, being one at peace with self and others either was not on your personal preference plate or was challenged and difficult to maintain.

On a personal note, the ride has ended for me. Now I'm ready to pickup the pieces, gather my wits, and walk the healin' path. The AlterNet.org articles I share with you today in this email have helped me to resurface my life perspective and my world view...

Bernette (Carway-Spruiell)

Date: Fri, 14 Sep 2001

Oh, Fred,

Our hearts go out to you, your congregation, neighborhood and New York City. We shall keep you all in our hearts.

Faithfully, Dianne Arakawa & family (colleague)

Fri 14 September

(The following is a message from the uncle and aunt of a member, both of whom we met and dined with while visiting Naples the previous February.)

Caro Fred,

Ho mandato la tua lettera hai miei zii. Ecco la sua risposta. Ti abbraccio a te, Wendy, Aaron and Stephen forte forte. Con amore.

Sara (Aprea Alcoff)

— Original Message —

From: Prof. Gennaro Luongo

To: maremio

Sent: Thursday, September 13, 2001 8:56 AM

Cara Rosaria,

ho sentito da Cristina che hai telefonato e hai parlato a lungo. Credo che sia difficile per voi spiegare ciò che è successo ai vostri bambini: chissà quale spavento hanno provato e quale impressione riporteranno in futuro. Un abbraccio affettuoso da tutti noi. Ho saputo di Anthony: spero che si riprenda dallo shock che deve aver provato: certo si può considerare un miracolato. Ringraziamo Dio!

Abbiamo letto con attenzione la lettera di Fred, piena di pensieri profondi. Non ho il suo E mail, ma ti prego di dirgli che lo ricordiamo con Wendy e i figli con viva amicizia e che sentiamo profondamente i vostri stessi sentimenti. Il Signore ci dia forza e speranza.

Cordialmente zio Gennaro

Friday Evening Dispatch

(I sent no dispatch on Friday, as I attended Sabbath services with Rabbi Potasnik and his congregation. Instead, I reconstruct some events that happened along the way that have not been noted before.)

On Tuesday afternoon, as part of planning the interfaith service, I called the director of the Brooklyn Heights Association, who I hoped would help ease the way to holding a service on the Promenade. They have connections to the police, parks people and others we clergy don't. She instantly grasped the notion and agreed to co-sponsor it with the Clergy Association. She also also provided two other essential parts: getting a portable sound system and connecting me to the Arab American Family Support Center.

I called them right away, looking for their director. Through her I was referred to a Jordanian American woman who was truly excited to hear about our project. Not personally, of course, as we do not know of each other, but she was grateful to hear from non Muslim religious leaders for "reaching out," as they say now. There was an audible tension in her voice, as in Ms Jacir's that reflected their own dread of what possibly lay ahead. She agreed with the service and promised to recruit an imam for it, and I promised to come to the office of the Center to leave written material for them to translate and spread through the community. Our agenda's were different, as we were reaching out and they were hunkering down.

On Thursday the defensiveness was palpable as I knocked on the door to be let inside. I had to telephone up from the doorstep first, as they were afraid of assault from the street.

Inside was exactly what I expected, and not. It was a social service office, with reception and waiting, and many cubicles and conference areas. What else would it be, some Ellis Island room of trembling immigrants? What I did not expect, or know to expect, was the absence of English, the presence of so many hejabs, and the sidelong looks. That part could have been

at some Ellis Island and I the face of the powerful and unconvinced authority. My few words of Arabic were real help, softening faces and suggesting some knowledge and a respect.

Raayah met me, hejab over knit top and bluejeans. Unlike the recent immigrants she had grown up in Brooklyn, her English having all the indigenous nasal depth that comes with Brooklynese. She also walked and moved like an American, notwithstanding her garb. In a cubicle we compared notes and I left her with the English posters she would translate. I in turn took Arabic posters that announced where Arabs and Muslims could find help. At least I believe so.

Back on Tuesday evening I heard from a local woman who wanted me to take part in a candlelight vigil on the promenade. She was organizing it spontaneously and wanted my colleagues and me to promote it. This sent up red flags, as I did not know her and was unlikely to send people to the telephones to promote an event sponsored by someone I did not know. The possibility of confusion seemed high.

For these reasons, and for my own distaste for candlelight vigils in general, I declined. I am embarrassed to admit I do not like candlelight vigils, because they are so common and so automatic obvious. They are the visual form of the phrase "changed forever," which is said almost every fifteen minutes by some news reporter attempting to sound deep.

Still, what harm is there in candle light vigils, really? An action without cause, that it gives us "something to do," seems insufficient. What was the meaning, the message, the intent of carrying and leaving the candle? Candle lighting as a protest, as an established ritual, that I understand.

And yet, not only did they proceed, they came back on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. People left their candles on the sidewalks so that the Promenade became a great votive rack, with "Ladies of Guadalupe" and yahrzeit candles and all sorts of tokens like them lining the cast iron fence like a miniature throng lining a street waiting for a parade to pass.

As the days became weeks, other mementos arrived, so that bunches of flowers were stuck into the fence, and notes tied to it. Posters and pictures and other devotional gifts made the

whole four tenths of a mile a gauntlet of grief. It was, by its size and variety, very touching.

There are times when my station as a close observer to the human condition, one who both witnesses and studies the riddle of humanity, makes me feel oddly distant. Where others can simply react, feel and follow and I am called to act, think and lead. It is a role that oddly sets me and those like me slightly apart so that the forces and feelings that move most people do not move me as much or at all.

I suppose in retrospect that the candles and everything else are effectively gravestones. They try to keep the dead alive, even as a nameless horde; somewhat as few know the names of those who died at Auschwitz but their enormity makes us determined to remember.

But Brooklyn is not Auschwitz or a shrine. And the crowds that came to look were here for the usual gruesome curiosity that slows traffic passing an accident. More sympathetically, those who came wanted to see with their own eyes the place that was the WTC. The smoke was all that remained. And though people did talk, it was mostly silent. Still, they brought ice cream cones and pizza and left their debris just as casually as ever, so that greasy waxed paper blew up against the candles, and ice cream and soda splotches on the sidewalk made shoes sticky.

I went to the rabbi's congregation on Friday evening. He observed that he hadn't seen such a crowd outside of High Holy Days (which begin this week). Members here and from other churches were well sprinkled. This time I was one of three visiting clergy, along with a state assemblyperson and the police inspector for our precinct. Two families there were those with sons trapped within.

Rabbi Potasnik is the one who was there on the 11th, and came to my service in his fire coat and pants. He is informal and even casual by nature, such that the service looks improvised. It is not, but clearly the occasion and his personality make for a spontaneous quality. Some community members are there, from my church but also from others, and for many it is their first visit to a synagogue in some time, maybe first ever.

The fanatic nature of the assault is now clear to everyone, and the Jewish community is feeling both frightened and angry. Rabbi does not articulate this but I hear it from neighbors and friends in the area. There is sometimes a tone of "I told you," or "Now do you understand?"

Saturday, September 15

A true Sabbath, spent at home, being with family and preparing for Sunday. Nonetheless, some messages arrived.

Date: Sat, 15 Sep 2001

... What a sorrowful week compounded by feeling so helpless .
Harking back to my high school days I wanted to go out and buy a war bond or something , I think about all of you every day and want to reach out physically and touch all of you.

Love, Mom

Date: Sat, 15 Sep 2001

What's good Fred, how has every thing been going over the past week? Due to this tragic event on 911. I hope you and the family are physically and mentally OK, and may God look over all in the church, and the tragedies of the WTC, and Pentagon. I have been sadly inspired to perform a poem; to help heal the souls in church and families and victims of 911.

love as one, Malcolm Spruiell

Date: Sat, 15 Sep 2001

Dear Fred,

Thanks for the very good postcard from the edge. I will quote from it tomorrow, and put it on the bulletin board for folks to read.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

Love, Barbara (Pescan - Co Minister, Unitarian Universalist Church, Evanston IL)

Sunday, September 16

Sunday morning: We had a full house, close to 400 in attendance. Other congregations had the same experience. Though the liturgy itself was the same, the content was different.

For example, instead of flowers we created an 'altar' from the half-burned papers that wafted down on us Tuesday morning, resting on a tallis, flanked by a Qu'ran and cross. Knowing many would wish to light a candle, we set them on our side aisle chapel along with an open blank book for people to use throughout the service. They did.

We sang "How Can I Keep from Singing" whose last verse, "When tyrants tremble as they hear the bells of freedom ringing..." seemed to catch our hearts exactly.

As children were with us, we sang another song in that portion, "This Little Light," and the song's image, because of the candles so many are lighting everywhere, came back several times through the day.

The readings were a portion from the Sharei T'filah, the prayers for Tish'a Be'Av, which reads: "Give us insight, Holy One, to understand your ways and consecrate our hearts... From our sins redeem us with forgiveness; from pain and sorrow keep us far; Bestow upon us your earth's abundance, and gather our exiles from the earth's four corners. To those who stray, bring correction; upon the lawless place your hand. Let the righteous rejoice in the building of your city... (may it be, in our own day and in our own lives")

and we read responsively the words of the Lincoln School students that describe peace. We sang "Hashiveinu," whose character is a lament and whose text asks to return, as in Tshuvah, repent.

Then I had to preach.

"It sounded like a construction accident to me, as I sat in the little office at home. But when I heard pedestrians talking and feet running, I went to my living room

windows and looked out. The twin towers were spewing smoke, both of them.

"By 10:30 it was all over. It's hard to believe but by then both towers, with all their inhabitants, were a mountain of smoking rubble. The cloud they created was upon us. We walked through the dust of 5000 lives all day Tuesday.

"Like an earthquake there were after shocks as other buildings shook and fell through the day. But the principal horror was over. It was not a nuclear bomb, but it affected us like one: the burst of blinding terror that caught us by surprise, the shock wave of what was happening knocking us from our feet, and the windstorm (a literal and figurative storm cloud) hurtling shredded fragments of our world at us.

"Some called it a blessing and some luck, but whatever the word, we were spared direct loss. No one among us died there, yet. But many of us lost someone we knew, often someone we knew well. Some, you brave sad souls, took the force of it all, fleeing, hiding, ducking, and finally staggering home covered with dust and horror, your minds made into mental and emotional wreckage. Some were stopped before they arrived, saved by voting or missed buses or just chance, but often you were front row witnesses to the mind boggling destruction, the events a retina burn on the memory. Most were spared this, but not the shock that our world, our front yard, our city and home, had been dismembered. Even if we did not know someone who was lost there, we knew someone who did.

"Parenthetically, and I do not know the exact numbers, but in one day we, this city, our city, sustained more civilian loss than Northern Ireland, or Israel and Palestine, have endured in a generation. In one morning, more died than perished at Pearl Harbor and Iwo Jima. Whatever else may be true, no one can say we do not understand.

"And yet in another way I truly do not understand. I know something I did not before, namely the experience

of being assaulted by fear. That's what terrorism is, after all. I know that now, but I do not understand what it means. Indeed, one of the products of terrorism is to rip away a person's sense of understanding, to pulverize one's most basic assumptions, namely: that I and my home will be here at the end of the day.

"Once I grasped how terrified I was, my response to that was rage. When I realized this was a calculated effort, not a random act, I was enraged in a whole new way. As one person told me a day or two later, "if any one of them had been physically present in that moment I would have been eager to tear him limb from limb."

"Rage is what this sermon is about. My rage, but also yours, and what this rage means. For if there is a core to this experience, it is not fear but rage. Tuesday was the day when rage exploded in us, burning our minds, and taking our hearts hostage. As a bright light can blind us, so the rage blinded us to every other feeling, bleaching them white.

"On Wednesday I woke up exhausted. The day before had been a blizzard of activity, internal and external. Wednesday would be no different, save that, like a hurricane, the winds now swirled about a silent core that was the smoking pyre across the river. Many, some of you, were eager to do something, if only so as not to have sit and feel helpless rage. The energies released by rage demand action, fight or flight. There was no one to fight, and no place to flee, so people busied themselves in things they hoped were important.

"Nick Titakis came in to church to help out. Michelle Ascione called to find out how to send food. I began organizing an interfaith service we are holding this evening. I received e-mail throughout the day, sharing, asking, wondering. It was very busy. But at the same time it felt as if we were hand wringing, our activities more to keep our own minds sane than actually mitigate the tragedy. We all knew we were disconnected from the pandemonium across the river. How hard to be so close, and yet as distant and dependent as any Californian

watching the news. The stimuli kept coming, but the means to react did not. Wednesday was the day of frustrated rage, when people began to feel shame or guilt, which is rage turned inward.

"By Thursday plans were being made. Services, vigils, projects, efforts. A shanty-town of responses popped up everywhere, with information on what was needed and where to send it. We began to rebuild, at least a little, going back to school or work, putting out the trash, doing laundry. Was it denial or defiance, or maybe both, but rage now became determination. For some it was and is to find the missing before they die. For others it is to reclaim their lives from fear. For others it is to overcome and prevail against an enemy. Thursday was the day of calculated rage, when we sought and found something that we could focus on and make the object of our efforts.

"This, also, is when the unity of rage begins to dissolve. We haven't said it, but we are divided in how we act upon our rage. For some, the desire for national retaliation is central to their anger. But for me, in contrast, this is an affront to humanity as much if not more than nation. Citizens of over thirty nations died, of all faiths. To chant U-S-A, as though it were a football game bothers me, as do the patriotic songs in houses of worship and the blending of vengeance with justice.

"By Friday I was beginning to change. Rage no longer claimed my whole spirit. Fear came back, as I realized the intricate and complex forces that set the terrorists in motion. Not their plans but the forces of history that allowed them to fuel their own rage to such an extent. And doubt crept in as I realized how difficult it would be to protect ourselves from any one that determined. As Larry Stevens-Miles said back on Tuesday, it is amazing that it took this long for such a horror to take place. That's how deep and difficult the world is.

"And as rage turned to fear and to doubt, anger came back in a new resentment for the power of fanaticism and zealotry. Not just those who destroyed the twin towers,

but their cousin Timothy McVeigh, and who knows who else out there whose blinding rage has forged a leaden heart of hate willing to plunge some part of the world into misery for a higher cause. I was angry now at them all: Al Qaeda, PLO, Hamas, but also Tamil Tigers, Real IRA, Aryan Nations, and the unknown groups out there trying to purge the world of evil in the name of their gods. Because of them, freedom and justice are less possible for everyone. Friday was the day the rage at one became a rage at something in general. And with that an awareness that the threat to me and mine, the world, was like the threat of AIDS: pervasive, insidious, uncontrolled and ubiquitous.

"Saturday, and a glimmer of strength. I have succeeded in creating an interfaith memorial service for this evening, with the eager participation of our Islamic community as well as our Jewish and Christian communities. I hear from a Yemeni Muslim, a young woman who grew up here and sounds like and thinks like a Brooklynite. I feel a hint of that vision I celebrate in America. And as I write the sermon I anticipate an afternoon meeting with officials of the Arab American community who will take part in this evening's service. For the first time in five days I feel a new anger, a rage against those who would extinguish an idea because they say it is wrong.

"It is indignation, the anger of being denied the right to full humanity. On Saturday, the Jewish Sabbath, between the holy days of Islam and Christianity, I am indignant that others would steal the lives of my neighbors and my humanity, reduce them and us to objects of hate and heresy. Action is called for, yes, but it to protect the humanity of the world from the inhuman zealotry of those who would deny it. Retribution is not the object, indeed it would merely part of their distorted world-view merely to retaliate. No, whatever force is applied must protect the world, a world that is as close as these streets.

"Part of that may well be hard and harsh and dangerous. I am not naïve. But let's not be fooled into thinking force alone will prevail. It cannot defeat them any more than it

can defeat us. Of equal if not greater strength is the character of our society, from neighborhood to nation. In that tower died citizens from the world as well as the city.

"They are few. We are many. In this city are more Jews than in Tel Aviv, and more Muslims than in Gaza. This evening members of a dozen faith communities will gather as one community and belie the claims of those who kill.

"This is our strength. It may not seem so, for it cannot kill and cannot threaten. Our strength is not pointed like a knife or shot like a bullet. It cannot win a single battle.

"But it cannot be defeated. How is this? Do you remember Mount. St. Helens when it exploded some years ago. It obliterated square miles of forest in moments. A scorched, ruing earth smoldered for months. But within days, in tiny crevices and corners, seeds grew. Tiny flowers, small and fragile, almost unseen, took root. And after them, ferns. Then insects and vines. None of these could withstand a volcano alone; each could be squashed in a second. But together, in time, they turned this desert into a garden.

"That is our strength as a community, a city, and a nation. We are the grass and the flowers, creeping slowly, softly, without threat or violence, but surely and persistently. I saw it as early as Wednesday down the street, beside the promenade where the clouds of wretched smoke rose day and night. There, in sight of the worst evil to fall on this city in a single day, children played. The playground was full of children. Laughing, running, giggling and shouting, they are the first flowers, blooming in the crevices of our broken hearts, bringing life back to our scorched home. After them we shall come, grass and tree, bird and insect, until the lifeless land is filled again with color and fragrance, laughter and tears.

"Let us rage against the dying of the light. But let our rage be to live, and live abundantly. Flower in the desert. This is the only power we have. But it is the greatest power on earth.

Late that afternoon we held the interfaith service on the promenade. I have been in touch with the Arab American Community since Wednesday when I went there to invite them to take part in the interfaith service, as mentioned before. I went to join their march, meeting several Imams as we waited for things to start. There were also lots of press people there, not only local but foreign. I was interviewed by Japanese reporters as well as those in New York.

Halfway there I left the march to get to the Promenade faster and set up for the service. True to the promise, Judy Stanton had a sound system waiting for us, donated by a local business for the occasion. Colleagues were already there along with two musicians, including Jennifer Chapin (the daughter of Harry and a local resident who also happened to have taught my son music at a local school).

When the marchers arrived the crowd tripled in size. The long but narrow passageway was quite full, people pressing in upon each other. The police were abundant and helpful. Over the heads of those there we could see banners and signs with political messages; not what we planned or wanted but which had come along with the march. The organizers also asked me to include some Afghan women in the program. It is crowded, confusing, loud, and almost frightening with the rumblings of protest alongside those who came to worship.

After adjusting our plans, I took the microphone and said,

"Welcome. How good it is and how strengthening to be together. I am Dr. Frederick Wooden, Senior Minister of the First Unitarian Society in Brooklyn. Beside me are my sisters and brothers in ministry, Christian, Jewish, Muslim and more. We are here to lead Brooklyn in prayer on our doorstep, the famous Esplanade."

"We live on the doorstep of America. The whole world is before us. And in a sense we are that world. In our midst are people from every continent and culture, every faith and family. We are America. And so, we come to this, our doorstep, to give honor, pay tribute, and find strength. Through words of faith and memories of goodness we come

to bless those who perished, pray for those missing, and make plain to the world our eternal devotion to that dream and hope for which so many we forced to die.

We, the clergy of Brooklyn Heights, Muslim, Jewish, Christian and more, are here as one body to pray and proclaim the sorrow we share, the hope we seek, and the faith above all particular faiths that make us one people, one nation, and one world.

Then we heard a Sura from the Qur'an, recited, which is to say chanted, and then translated by an Arab Lutheran Minister who joined the march. The Reform Rabbi then sounded his Shofar, explaining before that not only was it close to the new year, but sounding it in times of danger was once of its historic purposes. Then he lifted the three foot long horn to his lips and made a sound very like the voice of the Imam a moment ago.

We sang a song, the timing bad because it took so long for those in the back to hear.

Then each clergy person made very brief remarks and offered a prayer, Catholic and Protestant and Jewish. The Afghan women then spoke, more on their political plight, but with passion and intensity.

I then acknowledged the presence of politicians, including our Congressional Representative, but did not invite them to speak. The task and obligation of concluding I gave to myself:

"I now ask us to for just one more moment. Look out on the wounded horizon. On this beautiful evening it is good to capture the bitter and the sweet, to remember it vividly and tell our children and our grandchildren. Know that you were here. And as we look, in silence, I invite you to speak aloud the names of those affected by this past week. Those perished, those missing, those dear to you for whatever reason, and place their names in the air for all the hear and cherish

(silence)

"It is evening, the end of the sixth day. For several nights now, as the sun set, people across the city have lit candles in honor and memory, visible signs of our loss and struggle. But

I tell you this must change. We shall light our lights, but from now on light them as promises not memories.

"This is the doorstep of America. And there, out in the harbor, is the real symbol of America. As mighty as the towers were, they did not represent our true dream. She does. Her light is not one of sorrow or anger, one of loss or despair; it is the light of hope.

"This evening, resolve that yours shall be a light of promise. Make your life a beacon to the world, as she does, offering hope and haven to the world. This, finally, is the greatest blessing we can offer; that upon this dreadful hill of pain we shall build a new city, shining forth, from the souls of her people, the light of true peace and justice for all."

Then we sang "God Bless America," a song I have never loved and have felt uneasy with all week as its imperative triumphal meaning is the one we hear, not the subjunctive prayerful one.

People began to disperse, reporters working to the front to interview along with those unhappy with the political aspects. They were few, but it was painful to know that some were angry and chastised other clergy and me for allowing it. There was no choice, as the marchers came with their own concerns and the Afghan women were added as a last minute request. But it did leave a sour taste in the mouth even so.

Date: Sun, 16 Sep 2001

Dear Fred,

I bring a greeting and a hug from a former member of your church, "Nona" who joined us this morning. We were overflowing, as I imagined your church must have been, too. I can't imagine how it must be to be where you are, looking across the river at a time like this. Be strong, you are needed. God bless you.

Yours, John Corrado (colleague in Grosse Pointe, Michigan)

Date: Sun, 16 Sep 2001

Fred,

I am a new friend to the congregation, moving up here from Virginia in the beginning of August.

I wanted to thank you for your sermon today. I wasn't really expecting anything to 'help' but your words truly helped me. I would like to share those words with my friends from the Southeastern Unitarian Universalist Summer Institute (SUUSI). If your sermon is in a format that is easily 'email-able', I would greatly appreciate it if you could send those words my way.

Again, thank you.

Mina Greenfield

Date: Sun, 16 Sep 2001 20:19:03 +0200

Subject: Re: loro paroli via Rosaria

Caro Fred e Wendy,

siamo stati vicini al vostro dolore. In questi giorni ammiriamo anche vostro coraggio e vostra solidarietà sociale e il vostro amore di patria.

Cordialmente

Gennaro e Cristina Luongo

Monday Sept. 17th

Dear Reverend Wooden,

I read your message posted on the UUA site. Thank you for those descriptive and comforting words.

Good wishes from Prague,

Wendy (Schwarz - US Unitarian Universalist in Europe, whom we met in Prague the previous March during sabbatical travels).

Date: Mon, 17 Sep 2001

Hi Fred -

I got a copy of your letter after the attack on Tuesday by way of my son in law. He is not a UU but is working at Unirondack and so he receives several UU lists. He also is a former firefighter and as such is having a very difficult time with these events. Being nearly alone in the northern New York woods didn't help, but your letter did. Thanks for being there for people you will probably never even know...

Take care. I hope things get better.

Fondly, Marge (Link - friend and Unitarian Universalist 1)

Date: Mon, 17 Sep 2001

Hello.

My husband and children attended your service yesterday and I was unable to attend, having a commitment at another house of worship.

They were quite moved by the service, the songs, readings, children's story, and sermon. I was wondering if it is possible to get a text of the sermon so I can read it and I have been talking with some other parents and my own parents, who would also like to read it.

I am so glad that they came. I have attended some services in the past, one of the more memorable ones was a Martin Luther King Day service.

I appreciate your help and service.

Jane Barber

Date: Mon, 17 Sep 2001

Thanks, Fred. I just read your words. We've been preoccupied at All Souls too, as you may guess.

You have taken it all in from your vantage point of the horror. You have been there through your interfaith services and your pastoral presence. I hope someone is ministering to the minister there.

Amazingly, we seem to have lost none of the members of All Souls in a direct way, but so many know many who are lost. I just had lunch with an old friend and her son, who had a female friend aboard the flight from Boston that hit the South Tower. My daughter, Sarah, who lives in Park Slope, has a friend/neighbor who worked for Cantor Fitzgerald and is among the missing and presumed dead. Yet I know of a young woman, an indirect friend of family, who made it to safety from the 105th floor of the South Tower. Miracles abound. Courage soars...

Be well. Be nurtured as you too nurture.

Love and a big hug,

Jan Carlsson-Bull (Colleague)

Date: Mon, 17 Sep 2001

Dear Fred:

As I told you following the service yesterday, both Ann and I felt that we had a very appropriate and really beautiful Sunday morning worship service. You, Orlanda, Hope and all those who planned and carried out this service should be thanked and congratulated. We (like so many other houses of worship) had

such a full house because people (members, friends, neighbors, et al.) look to us to serve their needs. While I certainly cannot speak for all 400 in attendance, I feel that we succeeded. Without doubt, we made many friends yesterday (as well as on Tuesday evening).

You and I cannot predict what next Sunday (or the future Sundays) will be like, but, without any doubt, the spiritual need will continue for some time. There has been a change in our society and greater attendance at weekly worship services may become a manifestation of part of that change..

Sincerely yours,

Allen J. Kone

Date: Mon, 17 Sep 2001

Dear Fred,

Hope you are having a wonderful easy day off at home. Somehow I doubt it. Hope that the work is feeling yours to do, that you're manifesting God's love to thousands, that your congregation is a shining beacon to all. Don't doubt it a bit.

Love, Meg (Riley, colleague and director of the UUA Washington Office)

Date: Mon, 17 Sep 2001

Hi Fred,

I hope things are a little easier today...that seems to be the case here. Denny sent me copies of your two messages sent out last week. They were very powerful. I loved being on your mailing list last year. Is it possible my name could be added back?

Thanks and be well,

Diane (Olsen - Moderator of the UUA)

Tuesday, September 18th

Date: Tue, 18 Sep 2001

Fred:

A writing which has been with me for nearly sixty years is "Last Testament," the last chapter in Lewis Mumford's "Faith for Living," an interventionist tract published in 1940 or 1941.

Mumford began with, "I have made no attempt to trim this argument to meet the needs of those who do not know that a thousand years separates 1930 from 1940. They are hopeless."

The words echo in the corridors of my memory whenever there is a defining event. Never more than last week.

Thank you for what you have done and written. Denny and I miss you.

Faithfully, Jerry (Davidoff)

Date: Tue, 18 Sep 2001

Rev. Frederick Wooden,

Thank you for sharing on the UUA Web.

Jack Berman

Allen Avenue Unitarian Universalist Church

Portland, Maine 04103

Date: Tue, 18 Sep 2001

Dear Fred,

I'm sorry not to have been with you, Orlanda, Hope and the rest of the congregation last Sunday. We need each other right now.....We attended services at the White Plains Community Unitarian. Rev. Carol does a wonderful job. Fortunately we have experienced no direct loss (other than the obvious ones...and America being force fed it's rite of passage from adolescence to adulthood one fine Sept. morning, New York as well).

My "first UU family" will always be First Unitarian in Brooklyn, I miss you guys! Ron is playing the jazz service Sept. 30 and I'm planning to sing with the choir that day. See you then...Love and prayers to Wendy, Stephen and Aaron

Nancy Kennedy

Tuesday Dispatch

Artificial as they are, milestones like weeks and months and years have an effect. It was a week ago, just a week ago. How many other weeks pass by without any mark on the memory? I have looked back on old date books and read entries that mean nothing: meetings I can't recall and tasks I don't remember. The same amount of time has passed as then, but not the same amount of life.

I thought of this at our staff meeting on Monday, realizing that a week before we were absorbed in the usual litter of chore and deadline, a newsletter to be printed and meetings to be attended. Both staff meetings were about the same, and I both welcomed and lamented that. I am about spent when it comes to words. This account, rewriting the newsletter entirely, four worship services, and constant conversation have exhausted my reservoir of wisdom.

At 8:48 Tuesday morning I am at home, cutting my work-out short to be there at that time. We aren't doing anything, but it did seem wrong to be on the treadmill at that moment so I go home. We watch the President stand on the lawn. The screen says "moment of silence" which makes me laugh sardonically. I think of the long pauses other nations observed last week. Do they need a TV screen to tell them what they are doing, seeing, feeling, thinking?

But it does seem that after that moment things are different a bit. It is Rosh ha Shanah, and that fact lifts me. The legend of the new year and the open book and the week of making amends with neighbors strikes me as precisely right. It is a new year. And everything that was is different now. And I also realize this is what America is about, too. Newness, second chances, the open future, that's what we're about.

After a hasty visit to the office I am off to a Prayer Vigil being held near Crown Heights, a part of Brooklyn where African-Americans and Caribbean-Americans are the majority community. I am there because a couple from my church are active in the Chamber of Commerce and they want me to offer a prayer here.

At Medgar Evers College I am seated with other dignities in the front row, my colleague Hope Johnson to my right and a former chancellor of the Board of Education to my left. The program is long, presenting religious and community leaders to pray and reflect, along with musical selections. I am most eager to hear Dr. Gardner C. Taylor, one of the pre-eminent preachers of the last half-century and now nearing ninety years old. But I am not relaxed as I am to pray over this congregation of people I do not know and whose common culture is not mine. I want my hosts to be glad and proud.

During the program I am struck again and again by the devotion of this community to the nation. Many who speak were in the armed services as young men. All speak of defending freedom, their own as well as the nation's. There is no lack of awareness that the promise of the nation has not come true equally for all, and that many in the room have struggled with a country that has been reluctant to embrace them as equals. But the idea of America is as alive for them as much if not more than most citizens.

And in this city that in the last three years has been struggling with the use of police power, there is a rousing round of applause for them and an eager exhortation for those there to express our thanks by saying so to officers and going to the precincts and showing support. And they meant their own precincts and officers, not just those near the crash site.

Having seen a lot of boosterism and stadium-style cheering for America in the last two or three days, this expression of love of country and community is a jolt of hope for me. I hear it when Dr. Taylor preaches.

He takes his text from Chronicles, about the day when Solomon dedicated the temple by an act of solemn humility, of atonement for its sins. Many in the audience murmur the words along with him, so familiar are they. His point is that at the zenith of worldly power, Israel bows in humility before God. This, he teaches, means power must be wed to humility. That is the key to greatness. Power without humility oppresses and reaps hatred. Humility without power cannot speak truth to falsehood or resist evil when it appears. That is the task before us.

To meet that task, he says, those who have been on the margins of society have a leadership role to play, showing the country the danger of reprisal and the complexity of addressing those who hate. "You cannot bomb hatred," he says to loud applause.

It is short, simple, undramatic, and clear. Everyone after affirms that he said it all. That does not stop most from adding to it, especially the politicians. We are all quite ready for the blessing from an imam so we can find a late lunch.

Back in my office the e-mail and telephone messages are several. The one that stands out is from a colleague in Massachusetts who has come down as a fire chaplain. I try to get in touch but the hotel has no one registered to her name. I am annoyed, because I wish to thank her. Indeed, I am envious a little, as I have not been across the river yet. Several local colleagues have been. To see and touch more fully and then to account that for my congregation I believe is important. I have no illusions about helping the effort, but I want an opportunity to connect people to the place, touching the remote and frightful center of what is for most only an idea and an image.

Later in the evening, as my son Stephen and I leave for his karate class, we encounter a procession of sorts from the Orthodox Synagogue down the street. The young rabbi and I are acquainted and we greet one another, "L'shanah tovah!" ['to a good year!'] They are all on their way down to the riverside to do taschlik, the ritual casting of crumbs on water as a symbol of emptying debris from the old year and starting new. Rabbi Raskin says, "It is a new year, and we should have lunch soon." Our handshake is long and strong.

On the way home we meet Rabbi Lippe, another younger colleague, and we share the sidewalk a few blocks as we consider the new year. Both of us are grateful on a warm night that no one close to us or our congregations was among the lost. But we both know that the new year will be less innocent than the old one. I tell him my resolution for the new year, to blend one custom into another, is to greet everyone as though I mean it. From now on, I will say, "How are you and yours?" And I will really ask, not just say it.

*We embrace lightly, the second day of the new year now arrived
with the vanished sun, and walk home along familiar streets
swelled with casual walkers and late diners and people like us
who have to buy a few things from the food store on the way
home to bed.*

September 19th & Beyond

Date: Wed, 19 Sep 2001 13:53:03 +0200

Dear Rev. Wooden,

Let me introduce myself, I am the Prague Unitarian and during your recent visit to Prague I was ill and we could not meet.

Yesterday evening I've read your Postcard from the Edge on the web site of UUA and was very moved reading your stories. I am sure we'll find the way to share them. I'd like to assure you that not only Czech Unitarians, but as well many Czechs are in their thoughts with you.

With affection from Prague

Iva Kocmanova

(I received many forwarded poems, comments and other quotations that circulated so widely that often I received the same ones from separate correspondents. Below are some.)

Date: Fri, 21 Sep 2001 10:27:49 -0500

(Forwarded from a friend)

"Dear Family and Friends,

"I had a very dear friend question my faith in God right after the terrorist attack on America. His question was simply put, "Where is your God today?"

"He was very hurt, as all Americans were, so I tried not to react defensively. Since that moment I have prayed and grieved over the disastrous events. However, I believe I have the answer. I know where my God was the morning of September 11, 2001!

"He was very busy.

"First of all, he was trying to discourage anyone from taking this flight. Those four flights together held over 1000 passengers, and there were only 266 aboard.

"He was on 4 commercial flights giving terrified passengers the ability to stay calm. Not one of the family members who was called by a loved one on one of the high-jacked planes said that passengers were screaming in the background. On one of the flights He was giving strength to passengers to try to overtake the high-jackers.

"He was busy trying to create obstacles for employees at the World Trade Center. After all, only around 20,000 were at the towers when the first jet hit. Since the buildings hold over 50,000 workers, this was a miracle in itself. How many of the people who were employed at the WTC told the media that they were late for work or they had traffic delays.

"He was holding up two 110 story buildings so that 2/3 of the workers could get out. I was so amazed that the top of the towers didn't topple when the jets impacted.

"Although this is without a doubt the worst thing I have seen in my life, I can see God's miracles in every bit of it. I can't imagine going through such a difficult time and not believing in God. Life would be hopeless."

"Pass it on..."

(via Donna Kadanka, Texas)

[to the] Rev. Fred Wooden and the people of The First Congregational Society

Blessings on you and your needed ministry, especially at this time Our prayers and love are with you.

Margot Campbell Gross

Our heartfelt prayers are with you

John Marsh

Ministers

First Unitarian Universalist Church
San Francisco, California

Dear all:

My beloved Brooklyn apartment looked west and every morning I took my coffee to the big window to check the weather in Jersey and admire the lower Manhattan skyline. Thank God I didn't have to stand there and watch the explosions happen.

I just wanted to reach out from Atlanta and tell you all how sorry I am and how much **Tex (Ratcliff)** and I think of you. I just hope no one from First U was killed You are all my beloveds.

Sincerely,

Nancy Jacobsen

[A beautiful, hand-drawn card, signed by members of the congregation, said]

"Dear Friends,

We, the members of the Unitarian Universalist United Fellowship of St. Petersburg, Florida, send this card to let you know our thoughts and love are with you."

{A long letter from Istvan Kovacs, pastor of the Unitarian Church in Szepszentgyorg, Transylvania, our partner congregation there}

My dear colleague Fred, our dear brothers and sisters:

It is a month since the terrible tragedy happened and a bit late but hopefully not too late I am writing to tell you that we, your Transylvanian partners in faith are here, near you with all our compassion and prayers. I still can not believe that the beautiful skyline seen from Brooklyn Heights is not the same anymore...And probably our lives are not the same anymore...

On 16-th of september we held a service with 400 people commemorating those lost in the tragedy and expressing our solidarity with all of you on these terrible days. We thought especially of you, our partners in Brooklyn

thinking that there may have been even members of your congregation among the lost. We lit candles and many members expressed their thoughts and compassion.

When I read your "Four weeks from New York" I was revealed to learn that somehow the tragedy avoided directly the members of your Congregation. Even reading your weeks I could feel the terrible atmosphere which you experienced and also admire the integrity of a person knowing his duty.

When it happened I was in our new church building with some building specialists talking about the continuation of the interior of the church to be dedicated next month. My father called me and we ran to the TV screen there live on the CNN how the second plane hit the WTC. When we visited you I was on the top of the WTC, I knew the streets where the towers collapsed, I knew people who could be in those buildings...

This wasn't simply a tragic news about some buildings and people somewhere on the other side of the world but were my buildings, my New York, my people suffering there. And several thousand miles away from those ruins they are my ruins.

I remember saying to Agnes my wife that a new era is just beginning in front of our eyes, that probably this is the real beginning of the third millennium.

On that Sunday I pricked about the words of Jesus: "Love your enemies!" trying to explore what can be done for justice in these days of terrible pain? Is it possible to love your enemies who butchered thousands of innocent lives? Though difficult, the answer is yes and this is the only possible alternative in the third millennium. I know that is difficult to say this when you are within the events, when you have losses and you are full of pain but again: this is the only alternative!

I am proud to see how Unitarians had the integrity to react to these situations.

Besides the scenes of destruction which surrounds you in New York let me tell you a bit of good news by letting

you know that with our common effort our Unitarian church in Sepsiszentgyörgy is near completion and in 18 of November it will be dedicated. In this building is built the support of your Church and your members. So please let them know that the willingness to build, to create is stronger than the evil forces of destruction and if we are close enough to each other to put our shoulders together we will succeed.

I am writing this to invite you to the dedication of the church building and to come and meet our people.

If other members would like to join they are all welcomed. Please let Douglas Eads know the good news and the invitation.

We work day and night on this last period because there are still a lot to do but we hope to make it.

I think that if you could come this would give a new impetus to our partnership in the future.

In this era when fundamentalism is a real threat- not only on non-christian side- I think that our liberal message is vital for the third millennium and we must put together our strength. You helped us both spiritually and materially to build our church. We may not have the material means to help you to rebuild the destroyed buildings, but we have the love and solidarity to help you rebuild the hope !

In love and faith,

Istvan Kovacs and 3500 Unitarians from Sepsiszentgyörgy

PS. If you can come or others let me know

Subject: Subject: poem from Brooklyn

Date: Wed, 3 Oct 2001 09:10:41 EDT

"Thousands of blossoms, red, brown, white, yellow, black
scattered on ground made tender by their falling.

"This human body, more fragile than the dew drops on the
countless tips of morning grass."

"My wailing voice is the bright September wind and in the dark
night, silence speaks:

"I will die only when love dies and you will not let love die."

Bonnie Myotai Treace, Sensei

Fire Lotus Temple, Zen Mountain Monastery

Brooklyn (via Pat Bernstein)

Subject: for the 9/11 file—from a grieving friend in CT

Date: Thu, 4 Oct 2001 09:12:00 EDT

To Create an Enemy

Sam Keen

Start with an empty canvas
Sketch in broad outline the forms of
men, women, and children.

Dip into the unconscious well of your own
disowned darkness with a wide brush and
stain the strangers with the sinister hue
of the shadow.

Trace onto the face of the enemy the greed,
hatred, carelessness you dare not claim
as your own.

Obscure the sweet individuality of each face.
Erase all hints of the myriad loves, hopes,

fears that play through the kaleidoscope of every finite heart.

Twist the smile until it forms the downward arc of cruelty.

Strip flesh from bone until only the abstract skeleton of death remains.

Exaggerate each feature until man is metamorphasized into beast, vermin, insect.

Fill in the background with malignant figures from ancient nightmares—devils, demons, mymidons of evil.

When your icon of the enemy is complete you will be able to kill without guilt, slaughter without shame.

The thing you destroy will have become merely an enemy of God, an impediment to the sacred dialectic of history.

- from Faces of the Enemy

Date: Fri, 28 Sep 2001

(via Frank Marchese)

On Monday we e-mailed jokes

On Tuesday we did not

On Monday we thought that we were secure

On Tuesday we learned better

On Monday we were talking about heroes as being athletes

On Tuesday we relearned who our heroes are

On Monday we were irritated that our rebate checks had not arrived

On Tuesday we gave money away to people we had never met

On Monday there were people fighting against praying in schools

On Tuesday you would have been hard pressed to find a school where someone was not praying

On Monday people argued with their kids about picking up their room

On Tuesday the same people could not get home fast enough to hug their kids

On Monday people were upset that they had to wait 6 minutes in a fast food drive through line

On Tuesday people didn't care about waiting up to 6 hours to give blood for the dying

On Monday we waved our flags signifying our cultural diversity
On Tuesday we waved only the American flag

On Monday there were people trying to separate each other by race, sex, color and creed

On Tuesday they were all holding hands

On Monday we were men or women, black or white, old or young, rich or poor, gay or straight, Christian or non Christian.

On Tuesday we were Americans

On Monday politicians argued about budget surpluses

On Tuesday grief stricken they sang 'God Bless America'

On Monday the President was going to Florida to read to children

On Tuesday he returned to Washington to protect our children

On Monday we had families

On Tuesday we had orphans

On Monday people went to work as usual

On Tuesday they died

On Monday people were fighting the 10 commandments on government property

On Tuesday the same people all said 'God help us all' while thinking 'Thou shall not kill'

It is sadly ironic how it takes horrific events to place things into perspective, but it has. The lessons learned this week, the things we have taken for granted, the things that have been forgotten or overlooked, hopefully will never be forgotten again.

Date: Sun, 30 Sep 2001

Dear friends & family—

I'm waiting to go with a friend of mine to the Javits Center, trying to get FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Association) credentials in addition to our week-by-week chaplain clearance to go to Ground Zero again. It's annoying to have to go through so much red tape, though I understand the heightened need for security. While waiting for Rosemary's phone call, I thought I'd share with you the words I shared this morning with our congregation during our worship services—not as the sermon, but as a meditation before the anthem.

We all need the thoughts and words of one another as we find ourselves in a newly defined extended family that crosses the borders of at least 80 nations. We're all struggling with the chaotic flux of our individual and collective feelings and how to mould strategy that is maximally effective while inflicting the least possible destruction of life. How we act will define us for years to come—

Peace when peace is hard to find, Jan

Reflections

Jan Carlsson-Bull

Unitarian Church of All Souls

September 30, 2001

Chris, Kevin, Maria, Howard, Josh, Jim, Bob, Shayna, Rosemary, Preston, Katrina, Paulo, Craig, Pela, Richard. I could go on with these names. Each gives rise to yet another story in the surreal montage of this horror. Some are among the lost, the dead - Josh Piver, a 24-year-old trader for Cantor Fitzgerald; he lived upstairs from my daughter, Sarah, in Park Slope. They listened to Beatles music and shared an occasional beer with no inkling - no inkling. Then there's Richard Allen. I had walked up to one of many firemen at Ground Zero the other night, put my hand on his shoulder: "How ya doing? It must be tough to be here day after day." "Yeah," he said, "it is." And then, "Reverend, please pray for my cousin, Richard Allen. He was a fireman too; he's in there."

I learned so much from Bob Ossner, a tall strawberry-blond fire chaplain from Chicago, a rescue diver, a mortician, and a minister who unabashedly describes himself as fundamentalist Protestant. Bob was down at Ground Zero for well over a week. His full smile and his big bearhugs cut through any stereotypes I might have brought to our meeting. "Anything that's found that says a life was here - anything," he says, "is a blessing. It's closure for one more family." And we pray around that discovery, in an arms-over-shoulders huddle, we pray.

It's ground that has been defiled and ground that is sacred space. It's testament to humanity at the apex of our possibility for evil and humanity at the apex of our possibility for good. Those names that I named include the firemen I met, the policemen, the crane operators, the asbestos technicians, the structural engineers, the sanitation workers and FBI agents and yes, the chaplain's colleagues from across the park and across the country. All are there because it's sacred space now, and resurrection is the order of the day.

Walking back toward St. Paul's Chapel a few hours after sunrise, I spotted a crew of sanitation workers. I walked up to them and thanked them for the work they were doing. "It really feels good to hear that," they said. One fellow looked at me with a tired smile. "Clean souls rest easy, Reverend. Clean souls rest easy."

How to respond as a person and a nation? There's anger, deep anger. There's a natural and understandable drive to retaliate, to bomb them all to hell whoever the "them" is, and if innocent people die too, well so be it. The anger is beyond real. I struggle with it—how not to wreak havoc on a people already decimated by wrenching oppression. A few mornings ago, my husband Dan and I were talking about this, about our struggle with anger and what to do with it, how to route out the terrorist network, even it's possible to do so. Suddenly a passage from the New Testament flashed into my memory. It's Jesus' charge to his disciples as reported in the Book of Matthew. He names them one by one and then says to them: "I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."

Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. I recoil in horror and grief at what has happened here in New York City, for the thousands who have perished, for the many more thousands whose lives are rent asunder by personal loss and a bleak economic outlook - many of you included. I recoil in horror and grief at what happened in Washington, DC and in the countryside of Pennsylvania.

On Saturdays Dan teaches karate to children. Last week, one of the youngsters, an eight-year-old boy whom I will call Jonathan, was acting out, annoying other youngsters, not paying attention. etc. Dan went over to him and bent down: "What's going on, Jonathan?" The reply: "I'm tired and bored." Dan tested: "Too much TV last night?" Jonathan's reply: "Nope."

Dan persisted: "What is it then, Jonathan." "I'm afraid," said the child. "I'm afraid that bad people will fly a plane into my house." Dan was jolted, but he spoke deliberately and from the heart in response, "Jonathan, I personally guarantee you that no bad people will fly a plane into your house."

In the wastes of Afghanistan, in the shadow of the Taliban, there's an eight-year-old Jonathan. What kind of promise can we make to this child?

How do we own that spectrum linking the good and evil of our own humanity? How do we stare into the funeral pyre that is the rubble of Ground Zero, avoid acts that could recycle this horror, while forging internationally supported anti-terrorist strategy? We grieve, we reel, we fume, and we consider.

May the God that embraces us all be with us. May the wisdom of the serpent and the harmlessness of the dove course through our souls and infuse our public policy. May we live the balance of our own precious days with mindfulness, compassion, and gratitude for each sunrise. May we open wide the doors of our hearts, the hearts of our minds, and the windows of this world to that great and precious gift of loving and being loved. And may Richard Allen and all who are with him rest in peace. Amen.

(Jan Carlsson-Bull)

Date: Mon, 1 Oct 2001

Dear Rev. Wooden,

Thank you very much for sharing your journal entries on the UUA website. You and your family, colleagues, congregation, and neighbors are in my heart and thoughts.

Barbara Schonborn, Westford, Massachusetts (25 miles northwest of Boston)

Member, First Parish in Bedford, UU

Date: Tue, 02 Oct 2001

Dear Fred,

I just read your comments on the UUA site. Thank you. So far it is the only UU expression that I can connect to. Perhaps because I remember so well your sermon at First UU Phila. Some years ago (finding hope in a humanist orientation). Do you have a copy you could share ?

I have to go to work now but will send along some further thoughts later.

Shalom, Salaam, Bob Throne (colleague)

(I write a local newspaper column, the following, from early October 2001, was the first since September 11th.)

I have not written for some time, most notably the last month, and you may be wondering why. For six months I was traveling, much of it overseas, taking life in, not putting words out. I learned much, most of which I have yet to understand.

Then, just as I was about to start in again, the city exploded. And that set off a whole new series of thoughts and ponderings that I could not understand much less express. For a while I could not think of anything to say. And then I could not think of anything not to say. In an extreme time, extreme thoughts are inevitable. But as one who believes extremes are rarely healthy, I waited until the pendulum of my mind began to swing less rapidly and I could contemplate what it all means. Then, only then, could I add to the conversation.

I have good news. The good news is that a calamity such as we have known forces everyone to think deeply and spiritually. Much as a death in the family makes us question our faith and forces us to ask the tough questions about life and death, this travesty has forced the nation, especially the city, to ask those same questions, not only as individuals but as a community. This is good news, because from such crises of faith wisdom grows. In fact, wisdom seems to require struggle. Much as certain pine trees can only germinate in the heat of a forest fire, so some wisdom can only grow in the fire of loss and fear. This is not to say it will grow, but it can.

And this is my point. The opportunity for spiritual and moral wisdom is only that, an opportunity. It remains to see whether we have the courage to continue down a difficult path toward wisdom, or whether we shall draw back or turn aside. The latter are easier, and very tempting, for they promise an end to what bothers us, be it anger or doubt or sorrow or regret. But I believe such solutions essentially defer the problem to another day. If we do not rise to the spiritual challenge now, another crisis will come along, probably in the world we hand to our children and grandchildren, and they will have to ponder the

death of thousands, or more. They will have to bear the fear and doubt.

The Sunday before the attack I went to the work of the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, an early 20th century German poet. In a small volume of letters sent to a younger poet he counseled him on dealing with difficulty, saying "Be patient with all the is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves."

The questions we are dealing with are not temporary. They are perpetual. Why do the innocent suffer and wicked prosper? What is good, what is evil? How do I know what is right and true? What is the answer to violence? Is there an end to suffering? There are many more.

These questions have been around since humans first began to think. From them rose the idea of God, the hope of salvation, the very idea of justice. These questions are the seeds of all knowledge. Every time we have faced them in earnest, the human condition has been improved. If we respond to our current loss by only punishing, exacting revenge, or even bringing the criminals to justice, the questions will not engaged. We will stop thinking about them, but they will remain there, waiting for a future moment.

We have been given a hard and dreadful opportunity to think deeply as individuals and as a species. Will we have the courage of patience? Think of your children, and theirs. That will give us the strength we need.

Date: Mon, 15 Oct 2001

1) Thanks for the text of your sermon. I missed service Sunday. Not for any really good reason. Basically with driving 100 miles per day to work and doing the balancing act that I have always done, always feeling like I am just one small step from total chaos and disaster, in the middle of the busiest time of year for Compensation Managers (all major compensation decisions: salary, bonus, stock, get made between now and January in nearly all corporations.) yadda, yadda, yadda...

But in reading it, I got at least a portion of the effect. Not all of it, because in hearing it live, I am sure I would have

"cried my eyes out", an effect your sermons have often had on me.

Fred, you are doing what we need. Thank you for that. I myself am not up to it right now. I am "too far behind my eyeballs" these days. In survival mode, just trying to keep it together. So, I deeply appreciate those who can add something to the healing that is so needed.

God Bless you for your ability to see clearly and pass it along to us.

I especially needed this week's dispatch. Thanks alot.
Carin (Boyer)

Date: Tue, 16 Oct 2001

Your suggestion to use a nom to plume broke through some kind of barrier. In a way you could say I did not write this, and I still have a writer's block; someone else did, so doing it's less threatening.

lungfish hymn

Lungfish lunges up
shatters watertop mirrorwall,
gaps.

First pidgin prayer,
in lungfish words:

a prayer for lungs that work,
a valediction against drowning
in lightyears of sky,
where no tidepool rims
can versify his hymns;
born John the Unbaptist
in his scale-shirt,
longing, waiting,
ear to sinning stones
once water washed.

October 15, 2001

- (nom de plume)

Date: Tue, 16 Oct 2001 00:25:49 +0800

Fred, I have to tell you, I hope you are right (re your sermon). I am discouraged from thinking people who are so divergent on basic assumptions can ever get to common ground. We don't all see sorrow and grief the same way. Our psychology is someone else's garbage, at least from what I can see, and as long as they (meaning the people who bombed the WTC) want to attack me, and do attack me, I want to pre-empt them in the most effective and least morally repugnant way I can. (Not that I think the US is blameless: a host of foreign policy insults and neglects are our badge. Still, not everybody needs those kinds of excuses to kill, so I think those scruples are more for my sake than they are for anybody else's except for the people who have them with me.)... I love what you quoted in the sermon. Oh, I feel so sad.

Melanie (Summerfield Lee)

Date: Wed, 17 Oct 2001 09:50:36 EDT

Subject: rumors

(forwarded from a friend, and the first printable humor to come out)

'In a message dated 10/15/0...

"Don't go to the bathroom on October 28th. CIA intelligence reports that a major plot is planned for that day. Anyone who takes a poop on the 28th will be bitten on the ass by an alligator. Reports indicate that organized groups of alligators are planning to rise up into unsuspecting American's toilet bowls and bite them when they are doing their dirty business.

I usually don't send emails like this, but I got this information from a reliable source. It came from a friend of a friend whose cousin is dating this girl whose brother knows this guy whose wife knows this lady whose husband buys hot-dogs from this guy who knows a shoeshine guy who shines the shoes of a mailroom worker who has a friend who's drug dealer sells drugs to another mailroom worker who works in the CIA building. He apparently overheard two guys talking in the bathroom about alligators and

came to the conclusion that we are going to be attacked. So it must be true

Date: Tue, 23 Oct 2001 10:25:14 -0400

Subject: Oct 14 sermon

Hi Fred:

I am at work right now and finally read your Oct 14 sermon and wanted to let you know my reaction to it. I was at a support group meeting last night for women recently diagnosed with breast cancer. For all of us, the experience of cancer and the Trade Center attack are intertwined. One woman had surgery on the morning of Sept 11 and her mother and sister were stuck in an airport hundreds of miles away and unable to get to her for weeks. Another was visiting her lawyer in the Trade Center to make out a will and made her first escape from death that day.

Your words, "We cannot choose our trials, but we can choose how we will respond" struck me deeply. This philosophy has been my guide for dealing with the cancer and it is getting me through it as gracefully as possible.

It has helped me choose good medical professionals and make good treatment decisions. It is also making it easier for family and friends to deal with me through this. I am trying not to be angry, but to get as much out of this experience as I can. Early on, Dale said that this will make us better people. I didn't buy it when he said it (a few days after the diagnosis), but I can see that he was right. I was not given the choice of whether I wanted this experience, but I am choosing every day how to handle it. If I have to go through it, I might as well try to come out ahead in the end, in terms of spiritual growth, more caring relationships, and, hopefully, better health.

So thank you for those good words. I will bring them to the support group next week.

Myra (Addington)

(The following is an extended response to a telephone interview with a PBS Producer, who called to get background and the like for a project. It is one of two or three such conversations I had over the weeks, but the only one I wrote down.)

11 October 2001

One Month to the day

Ms Segall,

It is very hard to respond to your request. Not because I haven't questioned my faith or spoken with others who have, but because questioning my faith is a normal part of my life. Asking why evil persists, whether God exists, or other such questions does not require an enormous calamity. I have buried two sons, infants both, and other children. I have watched illness ravage bodies and minds. Scarcely a week goes by that some injustice or tragedy does not enter my life somehow and I must ask again whether I can believe. Doubt and uncertainty are part of true faith.

The hardest part of this past month for me has been my inability to comfort those who seek it when they ask me to soothe their doubts and answer their questions. In truth I have to resist my inclination to say, "Grow up; this is what real religion is about." Most are not ready for this kind of spiritual reality therapy. The best I can do is hope to lead them a step closer to it. So I listen a lot, and comment a little.

A man with two young children is paralyzed by fear. He finds his mind obsessing about chemical and biological attacks, believing that September 11 was only the first act, and now with reprisals under way there will be more and soon. He can't stop thinking about it. It fills his dreams and guides his daily decisions as he takes the bus instead of the train, and contemplates moving away entirely.

A single woman is asking what September 11th means in the larger sense. We talk about whether it is simply an act of evil or is it also a lesson? She senses that there is some truth to their anger, and is worried that unless we understand that there will be other cataclysms of anger. She also feels a little guilty that when

it all happened she did not leap in and help out but rather hung back.

A newly married young man tells me that the meaning of life seems to have vanished. The symbols of faith and nation are now mocking, hollow, and repellent. How could there be any meaning in symbols when such acts take place? How could one hope for peace or justice or even life when a few men can erase so many so easily?

I felt the same as each of these, and others. I am questioning again, and doubting again. But as I said, this is normal for me. "Agonies are one of my change of garments," said Walt Whitman. And yet, there is a doubt behind the doubt this time, a question so potent I can barely whisper it.

I have believed, across all my valleys and mountains, that every experience in life can teach us about life. As death awaits us all, and evil and good are still at work in the world, the purpose of life is not to win or even to survive but to learn. We can pass that knowledge on, as our ancestors did. Today, we are repulsed by slavery and child abuse and other things that were normal in ages past. Perhaps tomorrow we shall be repulsed by racism and cruelty and hunger.

That belief has sustained me for most of my adult life. But this experience, the assault of September 11th, makes me wonder if there are experiences we cannot learn from, whose magnitude of horror or cruelty are so thorough that they drive us backward not forward. These days I cannot tell if September 11th was itself so evil that it is a fragment of Milton's "darkness visible," or whether it was so horrifying that we cannot face it and learn. In either case, we are burdened.

Ironically, I am, finding faith these days in Dachau. Last March, while on sabbatical, I spent a morning there, a crisp bright morning. It was as sad and as mournful a place as I have ever been. In the center of it there is a broad parade ground between the administration building and barracks filled with small white stones. Parade is a euphemism, as it was the place where prisoners were assembled daily and often kept standing for hours as punishment. It was as simple and as brutal a torture as there

can be. And I shook my head, tears around my eyes, at the ingenuity of human hatred.

But then, as the sun broke again and again on me, and the sweet smell of spring could not be held back by the wire and concrete, I remembered: this chapter is over. And from that immense horror, one many fold greater than what has happened to us, came life and hope.

We learned from Dachau. Perhaps not enough, but we learned something. And the world is better than that, even if only a very little. I never expected to find faith in a concentration camp. Perhaps I shall find a little more in the rubble of the World Trade Center. That's what I am believing for now. And believing in believing is a good place to be.

W. F. Wooden

(This is the next newspaper column I submitted)

A woman came into my office struggling with her feelings. She worked in the World Trade Center. We spoke for some time, but what struck me was something she mentioned early on. On her way to her new office, she noticed that the security guard in the lobby was asleep.

"How could he be asleep?" she asked angrily. Once in her new office, she found her coworkers acting as if nothing had changed. They too were asleep, so to speak.

The catastrophe of September 11 changed us. We all say this and think we know this, but in reality most are asleep. It is both larger than we think and smaller, something that the nation and the world cannot avoid, and yet something that can only be grasped in each individual mind and soul.

It is a spiritual crisis. What I mean by this is not a conflict between religions, or a conflict about theology, although those may be true. What I mean by a spiritual crisis is that a basic assumption we humans share is suddenly in question, namely that we, and our homes, will be there at the end of the day.

It is no longer possible to live as though tomorrow is given. When even the most reliable places are attacked and destroyed, we know that no place is safe. And without that belief, we cannot do much at all. The measure of developed and undeveloped societies is roughly the amount of time the former need not devote and the latter must devote to staying alive. In a sense, we have been bombed back to the Stone Age, for survival was the only thing such people could think much about and now so are we.

Of course, we are not in the Stone Age as everything we had on September 10th is still at hand. My cable is fine, my email is happy, the bills are still arriving, and I have hot water every day. But because of the attack, our minds and souls have been awakened to something we have been able to ignore for literally generations: that the day is not given any one.

My visitor understood this, and she was outraged that those around her did not seem to share it. I suspect some did, but were unable or unwilling to say it. Call it denial or avoidance, but for many, pretending we are safe is the only way to survive right now. But this is not a long-term strategy. At some point we have to wake up and face the terror in our hearts.

Facing that inner terror, really facing it, is the spiritual challenge. To face and explore this awakened fear is to reconsider the things we have believed in the past and ask if they are still pertinent and valid. Maybe you believed God would reward the just and punish the wicked. How does that work when good people are pulverized not by accident but by design? Perhaps you think there is an allotted time for our lives and when it's up, it's over. But that makes fate or God the author of evil. These and other beliefs that worked well enough before, may not work as well now.

Ironically, a catastrophe almost 2000 years ago occasioned a great spiritual crisis that essentially created modern Judaism and Christianity. The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. That event shook Judaism and Christianity to the core, forcing them both to reconsider their most basic beliefs.

It remains to be seen what our event will do to our spiritual values. But be assured, it shall. What is unknown is whether we shall have the courage to wake up and deal with the challenges forthrightly, or choose to sleep as long as possible and hope they will go away. If we do the former, there is a chance we can find real wisdom and insight for our common future. If we do the latter, we are sure only of another catastrophe for our grandchildren's grandchildren.

The choice, it seems to me, is obvious. Wake up and deal with it. Struggle if we must in our souls, but do not put off to another generation something we have the responsibility and opportunity to do now.

Memorial Services

(I was honored, and finally felt of value, when I was approached to conduct two memorial services for victims of the assault. Both were younger married men, working in the financial service industry. One was prominent within his company and one was not. The first service was attended by hundreds, the second by less than two dozen. In substance, though, both were almost identical. Below is one of those services, but much of the material was used in both, which strikes me as appropriate.)

"We are made of dust, and the world is also made of dust," said Mohammed Iqbal. Across trackless time and endless miles this truth is clear. But never was it supposed to be so brutally clear. Even now, when the wind is right, we can smell the dust of death and destruction, the scent of that day. Even now, when the wind is right, the eyes can burn as the dust of five thousand lives rises and swirls in the lovely autumn sky.

Hard is the truth of dust; that in the end we all shall be blown like the wind, our lives crumbled into numberless fragments of forgetting. What of the faces, the names, the stories and deeds? Were those we loved mere shadows on the wall of eternal night? When all is gone from hand and eye, is there anything left, anything real?

Out of the day and night (writes Shelley)
A joy has taken flight;
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more, Oh, Never more!

Pilgrims on the sorrowful path of grief, these are the questions in our aching hearts, as we contemplate the terrible fact of death. They are doubly borne when death is harsh and unjust, a tool in the hand of rage. And, truthfully, no word can heal the wound or silence the inward cry. Even the Compassionate One is silent before such sorrow.

Then why speak at all? Not to disperse the pain of loss, but to proclaim the life we knew. [This man] lived, and each moment of that life was real. It is as real now as it was a month ago. For once said or done, its mark is left, and the universe is not the same.

To honor the fingerprint of this dust upon this planet, we come to pay homage. To redeem our broken hearts from despair, we come to comfort one another. To show that love is larger than life, we come to weep and laugh. To show our gratitude for this life, and this love, we come to pray and revere.

Readings and Prayer

At such times the poverty of our hearts yearns for wisdom and so we seek it in the words of ancient writings, heartfelt words of prayer and yearning.

"By the light of day and the fall of night, your Lord has not forsaken you," says the 93rd Sura of the Qu'ran. "Did he not find you an orphan and give you shelter? Did he not find you in error and guide you? Did he not find you poor and enrich you?"

"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?" says psalm 139, "or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in the grave, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the seas; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, surely the darkness that cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are alike to thee.

These ancient words are among many to strengthen the heart in troubled times. For in truth, the path we walk is a universal one, as all who live will die and all who love will know grief. There is a strange comfort in the caravan of human grief, as William Cullen Bryant knew:

“Yet not to thine eternal resting – place
Shalt thou retire alone, (he wrote) nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world – with kings,
The powerful of the earth – the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre.”

Death from a distance is mild and wise. But how shall we find that distance, even if we wanted it? For now, the raw immediate fact is most present, raging with injustice and heartbroken at the theft. The words of Winston Hugh Auden, who lived near here, writes of this:

We are lived by powers we pretend to understand;
They arrange our loves; it is they who direct at the end,
The enemy bullet, the sickness, or even our hand.

It is their tomorrow hangs over the earth of the living
And all that we wish for our friends: but existence is believing
We know for whom we mourn and who is grieving.

Time alone, they say, can give you peace. But not as most would think. Emily Dickinson put it: “They say that time assuages – Time never did assuage– An actual suffering strengthens As sinews do, with age.”

Grief is a trial of the heart. It tears down the familiar and comfortable leaving only most barren truths to shelter us. It is a storm, "love storms in our hearts," says Mohammed Iqbal, and he asks "Whence comes that storm? The journey of love is a very long journey." And grief, I tell you, is part of that journey.

This hour is a station on the journey, a pilgrimage place, where we pause and ask directions, seek shelter, and rest a while before setting off again, to "search and search again without losing hope," says

Iqbal.

Prayer:

Remembrances

A colleague of mine once wrote, "what can be said of death – except that nothing can be said... but of our death, of them we have much to say." Against the encroaching anonymity of eternity we demand a moment's pause to weigh and hold the real weight of this life, this man... I am the least qualified to speak of him and so I shall not except to say it was an honor to know him in absence. [His widow] painted for me a picture through word and story of a man driven by life, driven to learn and live and love, to, in the words of Henry David Thoreau "learn what life has to teach and not, when I come to die, discover that I have not lived." He goes on, "I do not to live what is not life, living is so dear. Nor do I wish to practice resignation, unless it is quite necessary."

... There is so much to say ...(and here words particular to the deceased were shared.)

...The measure of a good man is that even his flaws are beloved, and such I heard this morning. The small and sometimes silly things are curiously what carry the most vivid power..

Such is a life that no matter how much we learn there is more, and so much of it new and unexpected. Because I did not know him, and he was not a publicly religious man, I cannot venture to speak

but as one with good intuitions about such things, I think these words from Mohammed Iqbal may speak for his faith.

"To worship God is nothing other than to serve the people. It does not need rosaries, prayer carpets or robes. All peoples are members of the same body, created from one essence. If fate brings suffering to one member. The others cannot stay at rest. Prayer

Music

Closing Readings

"Some have left and others are about to leave (says a Sanskrit passage), so why should we be sorry that we too must go? And yet our hearts are sad that on this mighty road the friends we meet can set no place to meet again."

The time we have is drawing to an end, and this too is a grief, for it means another step away from Michael's life. But I have something to give you. Notice that when you meet and talk and think of him you will find yourself glad, and that for an instance, it is just as if he were still alive. He is. The deeds of a life do endure, for they are in you. Everything that was [this man] continues even now. "How our hearts warmed as we spoke of him," the disciples said as they remembered Jesus.

Your hearts will warm too, and here is the mystery of even that. If you could sit down and tell every story in every detail you would be here longer than he ever lived. Our lives are larger than we know, spreading outward in time and place long after we have died.

The moments of our life are ripples of life and love that move outward to a shore unseen. They meet and blend and amplify and make the tide of life's sea, bending and swaying to the music of a divine mind, the singing of the world.

Music

Blessing

"I shall lose my earthly dwelling-place," (writes Jorge Carrera Andrade)

and find myself once more mother-naked.

The stars, the fishes, will climb again the course of their inverted skies.

All that is color, bird, or name,

will become once more a scant fistful of night,

and over the spoil of ciphers and feathers

and love's body, compounded of fruit and of music,

we fall at last, like dream or shadow,

the unremembering dust.

Sadly, we now part, motes of dust in a vast galaxy of being. As [he] gave himself to the dust and air, so we give ourselves back to the world. Tenderly, reverently we take our leave, knowing that his spirit dwells in our hearts and his works abide in our lives and grow yet green and good upon the earth.

[The final word of this anthology is from Jack Carles, who some time later sent these verses which seem appropriate to be last.

W. Frederick Wooden]

Final Words

Cathedral Space

Faint smoke now rises to an empty skyline
Replacing the splendor of the once ungainly towers
That became a symbol of the city.

For the first time I see the value of free form architecture
As it might fill the void, created by the destruction of this symbol
And sense the thousands of lives snuffed by the gossamer strands of
fate.

I see towers rising above a cathedral space,
Evidence of humankind's optimism
Despite the chaos of the universe.

Now the symbol is a void
Destruction born of mad rage
Lives choked by the gossamer strands of fate

Appear in the lingering smoke
And in the smoke towers also rise,
Above cathedral space.

Evidence of optimism
In the face of the chaos of the universe.