

LEADER: O Christ in Whom
Our Lives are Hidden,
PEOPLE: **fix now our hope**
in that which alone might sustain it.

O Christ in Whom
Our Treasures are Secure,
fix now our hope in you.
In light of all that was so suddenly lost,
O Lord, in light of all we had gathered
but could not keep,
comfort us.

Our nerves are frayed, O God. Our sense
of place and permanence is shaken,
so be to us a foundation.

We were shaped by this place,
and by the living of our lives in it,
by conversations and labors and studies,
by meals prepared and shared,
by love incarnated in a thousand small
actions that became as permanent a part of this
structure as any nail or wire or plank of wood.

Our home was to us like a handprint of
heaven. It was our haven, and now we are
displaced, and faced with the task of great
labors—not to move forward in this life,
but merely to rebuild and restore
what has been lost.

Have mercy, Lord Christ.

What we have lost here, are the artifacts
of our journey in this world, the very things
that reminded us of your grace expressed
in love and friendship, and in shared experience.
It is for these reasons we grieve the loss

A LITURGY
FOR THOSE WHO
SUFFER LOSS FROM

Fire, Flood, or Storm

Copyright © 2017
by Douglas McKelvey

of our home and its contents—we grieve them for what they had come to signify in our stories, for they were charged with such meaning and memory, and woven with so much that is eternal.

O Father, we have suffered a hard loss, and one that we cannot endure alone. May we emerge in the months to come—even in our frailty—stronger than before, more deeply rooted in you, and more wrapped in the necessary arms of community. Give us humility to receive that which we need and cannot repay, when it is offered by others.

We thank you for the presence of friends who would share this burden of grief simply by showing up in the midst of it, and grieving with us.

We thank you for small mercies and kindnesses extended. For the grace of thoughtfulness translated into the tiny details of life. For beauty. O Lord, let us not lose sight in our grief, of all that is yet bursting with beauty in this world.

Let us not lose sight of the truth that we live in the midst of an unfolding story of redemption, and that even this loss of ours will have its counterpoint at the great restoration.

MY FLESH AND MY HEART
MAY FAIL, BUT GOD IS
THE STRENGTH OF MY
HEART AND MY PORTION
FOREVER.
PSALM 73:26

Indeed, for anything spared and salvaged, we give you thanks. Let us see that even in disaster, there is grace still at work, for you know the limits of our hearts.

**Be with us now as we sift and clean,
as we slog merely to reclaim**

**some fraction of that which we
once took for granted.**

Be with us as we navigate the countless
details that must be tended and
decisions that must be made
between now and the time that we
begin to feel normal again.

**Be with us as we slowly recover
from the shock of sudden loss,
enough to begin to imagine what the
restoration of our home might mean,
for to build again a thing that we know
might easily be lost, must be an act of faith.
Let our rebuilding be a
declaration that a day will come when
all good things are permanent, when
disaster and decay will have no place,
when dwellings will stand forever, and
when no more lives will be disrupted by
death, tragedy, reversal, or loss.**

So by that eternal vision, shape our vision
for what this temporary home might become
in its repair, O Lord, that in that process
of planning and rebuilding we might also
streamline our lives for stewardship, for service,
and for hospitality in the years ahead.

But those are all tasks for tomorrow.
**We do not even know yet today the full
measure of what we have lost.**

Today is for mourning. So let us grieve together
as those who know the world is broken,
but who yet hold hope of its restoration.

A MOMENT OF SILENCE IS OBSERVED. THEN ANY
WHO WISH TO SPEAK ALOUD THEIR SPECIFIC
EXPRESSIONS OF GRIEF MAY DO SO.

THE LEADER THEN CONTINUES WITH THESE WORDS READ BY ALL:

**Comfort us, O Lord,
in the wake of what has overtaken us.
Shield us, O Lord, from the hurts
we cannot bear.
Shelter us, O Lord,
in the fortress of your love.**

Shepherd us, O Lord, as we wake each
new morning, faced with the burdens of a
hard pilgrimage we would not have chosen.
But as this is now our path, let us walk it in faith,
and let us walk it bravely, knowing
that you go always before us.

Amen.