



Memorial Day: A Time to Remember. A Time for Care.

“One has indeed personally to come under the shadow of war to feel fully its oppression; but as the years go by it seems now often forgotten that to be caught in youth by 1914 was no less hideous an experience than to be involved in 1939 and the following years. By 1918 all but one of my close friends were dead.”
- J.R.R. Tolkien (1892 – 1973)

Memorial Day weekend represents more than just a holiday on the calendar. It is a time set aside to remember people. It is time set aside to remember those who fell in the service of our country and it is time set aside to care for those left behind: fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, friends and loved ones. Across the nation, many will take time out of their day to honor those who have fallen while fighting in the service of their country at places like Valley Forge, the trenches at Argonne, the hills of Cuba, the beaches at Normandy, Okinawa, Korea, Vietnam, Beirut, in the streets of Mogadishu, Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq. While for some it will be patriotic, for many others it will be deeply personal.

The Presbyterian Federal Chaplaincies has over 120 chaplains serving in the military and Veteran’s Administration hospitals and many have either *“...personally come under the shadow of war and have fully felt its oppression”* or are ministering within a broader community where that reality is an indelible part of their life journey. While it will be a day for remembrance, as chaplains it is more importantly a time to share a prayer, offer a shoulder to cry on, to counsel, or to walk in silence, but never alone. And hopefully, become an indelible support in a time of remembering. While some of us will never know or fully understand the sacrifices made when a father, mother, son or daughter are sent off to war, there are many who will. And they will need communities of care, support and compassion. And that is the church. And that is why we take time to remember on this Memorial Day.

Psalm 34:18 “The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.”

Let us pray: “Eternal and living God, surely your goodness and your mercies have followed us all the days of our lives. On this Memorial Day we pause to remember that our blessings, liberties, and rights have been secured at great sacrifice to others. Loving Lord, we ask you to console and strengthen those who mourn the loss of their loved ones. May this Memorial Day be a time to remember the grief of our loss and turn our eyes forward seeking the fruit of your peace ahead. Amen”



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