

In the hearts of our youth

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It was a sad event what happened that day, that made so many people go away. And it kindled almost all the way down, and still 500 lives have not been found.

And Lord, be our children's mentor - help us teach them right from wrong. And help us, Lord, to still hold strong.

The above was part of a poem written by then eighth grader Kristin Way in 2002 in response to what happened on September 11, 2001. In the hearts of our youth lies the future of our nation. I was impressed with her and other youth as we all came together and remembered.

People from all backgrounds, from all races, from all political affiliations, from all different churches – young and old, rich and poor – came together to remember those who had fallen; and to honor the firefighters, police, emergency service and military personnel who served and continue to serve in situations of need in our communities and nation. It was a time when the spirit of patriotism was alive and flowing as thanked God and remembered these special people.

But what happens when we stop remembering what once was important to us? If we stop remembering or stop sharing what we remember, then future generations might be uninformed of significant things that shaped our lives and theirs.

When Captain Peterson's Clewiston High School Criminal Justice Class talked about what happened in September of 2001, several of the students commented that they were in the fifth grade at the time, and all they remembered were that several buildings went down. How soon we forget when we don't continue to pass on remembrances over the years.

The students undertook as a class project to research the event of the September 11th tragedy. They were visibly moved by the videos they watched, but more questions arose as to why we stopped remembering or honoring all of the emergency service personnel today like we did in the first years following the attack. Good question.

In response, the class decided to put on a program to remember and to honor our emergency service personnel on September 11 of this year. I was privileged to attend this special program honoring these "heroes" last week. More touching than the moving presentation based on the 31 words of the pledge of allegiance and the recognition of our firefighters, law enforcement, and emergency service people was the heart and the spirit of these young people. In the hearts of our youth lies the future of our nation. With these youth and others like them, we have a hope and a future.

Something else that is important to remember and pass on to future generations is our faith. How soon we forget when we don't take time to remember or to share with those around us. Jesus Himself gave us some practices to do "in remembrance of Him". If we stop doing things in remembrance or sharing our beliefs, then future generations might be uninformed of significant things that shaped our lives and could affect theirs. When we do things in remembrance, we bring to the front burner thoughts and memories of something or someone important, and that importance is imprinted on the minds and hearts of our youth and children. In the hearts of our youth lies the future of our nation. Today, tomorrow, and always, may God be in their hearts. Today, tomorrow, and always, may God bless America in our future generations.