Today we have come together to reflect upon and remember a series of events that changed forever the heart and face of our nation.

This is the 10th anniversary of the coordinated attacks by al-Qaeda on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the plane crash in a field in rural Pennsylvania believed to have been targeting the White House or the Capitol building. In this senseless tragedy, more than 2,800 lost their lives, including 343 firefighters, 60 police officers, and eight emergency medical technicians and paramedics.
• In her book, *You Learn by Living*, Eleanor Roosevelt said:

   “You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, ‘I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.’”

• The United States lost more than buildings on September 11, 2001, we lost our loved ones, and we lost an innocence and naivety that we were immune from the dangers and atrocities that have long been visited upon many parts of the world.

• Even though the ashes and rubble were intended to tarnish the strength of the American people, our impermeable collective spirit was not and will never be destroyed.

• It did not destroy us because we are a generous people who have overcome great odds to become not only the world’s leading super power, but also the world’s greatest humanitarian.
• It did not destroy our spirit because, even in our darkest hour, we put our trust in God and hold steadfast to the belief that the sun will rise in the morning.

• It did not destroy our spirit because we are One Nation Under God, a united people of many faiths, ethnicities, and from many places, who pull together to take care of each other in great moments of need.

• And, it did not destroy our collective spirit because we have raised the strongest, best trained, and most courageous military and public safety professionals, who risk their lives each and every day to protect the freedoms we all enjoy.

• There is no greater example of this courage than the men and women who make huge sacrifices for our safety here at home each and everyday. Look around us at the military officers, public safety personnel and first responders who have joined us here this morning. They stand guard each and every day for the freedom too many take for granted. Let us honor them with a round of applause.
• Among the first responders who have joined us today is firefighter Doug Harms, who led a team effort to bring home to DeKalb County a piece of the World Trade Center Towers that were destroyed in the attack. We thank him and his team members for both the vision and the willingness to act.

• The precious piece of metal in front of us was designed by Harms, and artist and former U. S. Marine Curtis James Miller. It is a fitting memorial monument that will remain here in front of our public safety headquarters.

• So, as we reflect and meditate during this program and keep in our minds and hearts the blessings and freedoms we enjoy each and every day, let us direct our actions toward those things that build community, that build understanding, that build trust, and that build tolerance in the world.

• Let us remember that there are members of this community, and many communities throughout this nation, who are still recovering from devastating losses of loved ones during 9-11.
• Let us be ever mindful of the precious obligation life brings to serve and love our neighbor, to honor those who protect us, and hold dear the freedoms we cherish and possess.

• And, let us ever be mindful of the trust we place in The Eternal One. For our afflictions, which are momentary, are working in us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are unseen are eternal.

• This is the Occasion that brings us together on this Day, at this Hour.