Blessing a home lost in the fire

Opening

God is our refuge and our strength,

A very present help in trouble.

Collect

God of mercy, grant us the sweetness of your presence. In our grief, grant us your comfort. In our confusion and worry, grant us your peace. We pray because of Jesus, who had nowhere to lay his head. **Amen**.

**Psalm 46**

 1 God is our refuge and strength, \*

 a very present help in trouble.

2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved, \*

and though the mountains be toppled into the depths of the sea;

 3 Though its waters rage and foam, \*

and though the mountains tremble at its tumult.

 4 The LORD of hosts is with us; \*

the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

 5 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, \*

 the holy habitation of the Most High.

 6 God is in the midst of her; she shall not be overthrown; \*

God shall help her at the break of day.

7 The nations make much ado, and the kingdoms are shaken; \*

 God has spoken, and the earth shall melt away.

 8 The LORD of hosts is with us; \*

 the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

*If pictures of the house are available, place them on the altar/table or pass them around.*

We thank you, God, for the home in which we lived.

We remember the entryway and the threshold, where friends and family were welcomed, and through which we entered into each new day.

We remember the living room where we gathered; we are thankful for every moment of laughter, for every rich conversation, for every welcomed visitor.

We remember the table, where we ate together, planned vacations, paid bills. We are grateful that Christ was always our guest.

We remember the kitchen, where so much of our lives happened. We thank you for every meal it produced; for cookies baked, holiday meals prepared, school lunches assembled; for our favorite meals and our brave experiments.

We remember the bedrooms where we rested, or laid awake; where love was made, where children slept, where we felt safe and loved.

We remember our workshops, our sewing rooms, our offices, our garages full of Christmas decorations. We are grateful for the places where we worked and played and learned.

*A moment of silence is kept.*

Help us as we remember, Holy One; help us to remember that the gifts of every celebration, every holiday, and every average day are still with us.

Bless the ending of this season when this was our home.

Grant us strength as we turn toward what is next.

As you gave manna in the wilderness to your pilgrim people,

feed us with the bread of heaven as we travel in a new land.

We pray because of Jesus, our brother and friend. **Amen.**

Optional rite for ashes

*If ashes from the home are available, consider scooping some into a container,*

*maybe something beautiful*.

A prayer for ashes

O God, from the ashes of what was, build in us the confidence that you are always our home. From the ashes of what was, send us toward what is next, in the sure and certain hope that you go before us.

We claim these ashes as a memory and a blessing from our home, a sign of all our joy and strength, to carry with us as we traverse the valley of the shadow of death.

May your Easter light draw us forward. **Amen.**