God we lift our hearts to you in sadness and disbelief over the catastrophe in Japan. We see the strength and unrelenting devastation from the earthquake and tsunamis, and we have no words, no frame of reference for the magnitude of destruction and grief being experienced countless people in Japan. We fervently pray for deliverance for those still in peril, continued protection for survivors, and for your strength and help in the lives of rescuers and especially workers and engineers for the nuclear power plants. We also lift our concern and prayers for the reverberations which will come from this disaster. Economic concerns, health concerns, preservation of the weak, and preservation of our climate are just a few of the issues for which we pray.

We repent that it takes a tragedy so large to expand our minds and our prayers beyond our immediate concerns. You assure us that we should pray without ceasing, that we should ask and knock and you will surely answer. We are better at understanding your instructions for prayer when thinking about our personal needs and smaller community, but we are weak in praying for global concerns. Help us to assertively think about the world around us by remembering that the world consists of individual people who are created in your image as well. Help us to remember that, despite cultural and religious differences, we are all created to love and care about each other, and that all humans feel the pain of loss and suffering.

And so, as we begin this season of Lent, we consciously place ourselves next to you, Mighty God in prayer. We remove from our lives self-centered concerns, and willingly open our hearts to receiving the compassion and love for our world which we ought to always carry with us. We ask for the ability to experience sacrifice and love for others as a privilege and not a burden. We ask for the desire to turn away from the things which do not square with your intention for us.

Through our close relationships, through our friendships, through our business decisions, and through our social responsibilities, help us to adopt your vision of love, compassion, and salvation. Help us to model the truth of the good news of your gospel privately and publically so that we can live with integrity in your name.