



Additional Resources
WORSHIP



The
United
Reformed
Church

Worship from: the United Reformed Church
Additional Resources

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Contents

Introduction	2
Advent to Pentecost.....	3
Advent to Epiphany.....	4
Lent to Pentecost.....	25
<i>Advent to Pentecost index</i>	58
Exploring the year	60
<i>Exploring the year index</i>	90
Encircled by prayer	92
<i>Encircled by prayer index</i>	176
Other material	
A celebration of life	181
Creative decisions	183
Grieving, remembrance, thanksgiving	186
A service of thanksgiving for a person who has given their body for medical research	207
Elders and pastoral care.....	210
Elders and moments of worship	222
Prayers at times of ordination and induction.....	235
Times of celebration.....	237
To celebrate marriage	236
<i>Index</i>	249
Acknowledgements	252
Table of contents	253

Introduction

A rich and varied selection of material has been contributed by various writers, and we are delighted that their work is in this collection.

The supplementary material is set out in three sections:

Advent to Pentecost	3
with the sub-sections:	
Advent to Epiphany.....	4
Lent to Pentecost.....	25
Index	58
Exploring the year	60
Index	90
Encircled by prayer	92
with the sub-sections:	
Calls to worship	94
Offertory prayers	99
Prayers of approach and thanksgiving	100
Prayers of confession	115
Prayers of assurance.....	118
Prayers of commitment.....	121
Global voices	124
Faith.....	147
Celebrating the Lord's Supper	156
Blessings	173
Index	176

While Celebrating the Lord's Supper is a sub-section within Encircled by Prayer, there is also material for this sacrament within the individual sub-sections where this is relevant. For example, in the Advent sub-section there is a Eucharist Prayer for Advent.

There are poems relevant to the time of year, and these will provide a rich input for some situations. These can be a part of worship and, in many instances, a poem will enhance our understanding of a theme. After using a prayer or a creative item, people may feel encouraged to write a prayer/poem/litany which will be used in worship. This is to be encouraged and welcomed. Listen for opportunities whereby creativity may flow. Let worship in our own local situation develop from where we are and send out people into the world.

Geoffrey Duncan, 2003

Advent to Pentecost

Advent to Epiphany.....	4
Lent to Pentecost.....	25
Index of titles.....	58
Index of authors.....	59



Advent to Epiphany

Praise for God's power Luke 1:46-55

Let us sing the greatness of the Lord
and rejoice because God comes to save us.

All **Praise the Lord of hope.**

God has come down in blessing
to the one who is humble, a person unknown,
and through her is doing a great thing.

All **Praise the Lord of grace.**

God is the unchanging one
steadfast through all generations,
and now is present with power,
in the coming of the Christ.

All **Praise the Lord of birth and death.**

In God's coming
those are powerful
meet the eternal power
and know how small they are,
and those who are rich
meet the riches of grace
and know their poverty.

All **Yes, Lord, come in power.**

God who led Abraham
and called Moses to his service
and spoke through many prophets,
come near us in a baby
cradled in the womb of Mary.

All **to be a blessing for ever,
Jesus, our shepherd king.**

Bernard Thorogood

A moment of crisis has come,
a time of opportunity and challenge.
Over the centuries we knew this time would come,
a time when we must face reality.

All **Keep us true, O Lord.**

There were years of preparation,
hints of the glory to come;
generations saw glimpses of the light
and sought the path of God.

All **Keep us faithful, O Lord.**

But now it is a new day, a new era:
the last of the prophets is here to prepare the way
speak the word,
and challenge our hearts.

All **Make us ready, Lord.**

And so after a long night
dawn is coming
and the sunshine of God's truth
will burst through the clouds
to guide us home.

All **Let your light shine on us today.**

Bernard Thorogood

Hannah prayed

In the Temple Hannah prayed
and the tears of distress flowed
as she poured her heart out to God.

'Remember me,' she cried, 'don't forget me.'
Lord, remind us that you remember us,
that you knew us before we were formed in the womb,
and that you cherish us;
help us to rest in the secure gentleness of your love,
assured that you know us better than we know ourselves,
content that we are remembered.

In the Temple Hannah prayed
and the concerns of her heart
were laid at the throne of grace.

So let us bring to God the concerns of our hearts:

For peace and unity amongst the people of earth,
especially in Hannah's land,
that vision and generosity may vanquish fear and assertion.

For justice and equity for God's poor and put-upon ones,
that they may be allowed their share of the bounty of the earth,
and the scourges of hunger and disease be parried.

For the nurturing of hope in landscapes of concrete walkways
and urban impersonality
that strangers may be welcomed,
cultures valued for their rich diversity
and the language of the knife and broken bottle be exchanged
for self-respect and confident friendship.

For the hurts and sorrows which cramp and confine us,
and turn us into parodies of the people we could be
that God might hear us and set us free.

Lord, you speak in Advent songs
offering your melody of change and transformation,
a vision that things do not have to be as they are,
that we can be different
and the world dance to a different rhythm,
lions and lambs in stately gavotte together,
the cow and the bear joined in friendship
and a little child tending them.

No hurt, no harm on your holy mountain.
advent God, lead us to Bethlehem
that it might be so.

Amen.

David G Cornick

Seeing is believing Luke 2:29-32

Thank you, disarming God,
for you have shown me
that my work is done.

Today I have seen
and touched and blessed
the one who will bless us all.
What a joy to be your servant today!
So now I know fulfilment.

So may we see and touch
the gift of God
in every new life we meet,
each one a fresh word of grace.

Bernard Thorogood

God of dark and light

God of dark and light,
we praise you
for in the Spirit of Christ
you are with us, your presence surrounds us.

In the warm dark,
in the silence of solitude,
in the stillness of night,
even in the scent of fear,
you are with us, your presence surrounds us.

In the clear light,
in the sounds of laughter,
in the security of friends
even in the scorching heat
you are with us, your presence surrounds us.

In the advent time
in the recall of faults,
in the remembering of sins,
in the repenting of mistakes,
you are with us, your presence surrounds us.

In this holy place
in the hymns of praise,
in the hush of expectation,
in the host of saints,
you are with us, your presence surrounds us.

God of dark and light,
in you is welcome,
in you is forgiveness,
in you is new life,
you are with us, your presence surrounds us.
Amen.

Terry Oakley

Advent 1: Introduction to Communion Luke 12:35-48

Prayer

Lord Jesus,
prepare us for your coming.
Save us from the complacency
that can grow through familiarity with this great festival.
Save us from going through the same motions,
 the cherished traditions,
 the joyful celebrations
without seeing or understanding
the implications of your birth amongst us.

Here,
where bread and wine are set before us,
help us to know the full extent of what it meant
for you to take our flesh,
 to live our life,
 to suffer our fate.

Awaken us and our sleepy world.
We are not ready to receive you.
Our house is not in order,
 the naked are not all clothed,
 neither are the hungry all fed.
Many are still imprisoned
and the poor do not hear good news.

Then stir us, Good Lord,
so that we may greet you
as servants who cannot wait
for the time to come
when you will reign with justice,
 heal our conflicts,
 forgive our failures
and show us the way that leads to peace.
Amen.

Closing prayer

Lord Jesus,
you have warmed and welcomed us
at your table.
We came empty and you filled us,
hungry and you nourished us.
With new-found strength
and fresh determination,
help us now follow in your footsteps
and run the race of human life
until you bring us home victorious.
Amen.

Duncan Wilson

Bible Sunday Second Sunday in Advent

In the beginning, God, you spoke your word
and the universe came to be.
People saw you in the beauty of creation
and glimpsed your glory in the heavens.
After we had sinned and paradise was lost
you called your ransomed people to live by your law,
written on tablets of stone.
As the ages passed, storytellers, poets and prophets
told of your saving love
and longed for it to be written in the human heart.
When the time was ripe
you spoke your last and greatest Word
in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.
Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Through him the Holy Spirit
makes the Scriptures come alive
and he meets us in its words:
we have felt his healing touch,
walked with him on the lonely road to Calvary
and heard him speak his greatest work of love
from the silence of his death upon the Cross.
By the power of your redeeming grace
we proclaim him risen and ascended in our midst.

[We praise you for the gift of the Scriptures
in which we read how
the Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:
'This is my body which is broken for you.
Do this is remembrance of me.'
In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.
For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.']
Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

May your Spirit so move upon these gifts
that Christ is known to us in the breaking of the bread.
May he so touch our lives
that we become his witnesses today.
As we follow in his way,
treasuring his words of life,
may we be faithful in the service of his kingdom
to preach his Gospel in both word and deed,
until the whole world knows your love
and is made one in your eternal praise.

All **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

Advent 3 Isaiah 6

Opening Scripture Psalm 126 paraphrase

When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion
it was as if health came new to the people,
hearts filled with laughter,
voices sang aloud with joy.
'The Lord has done great things for us,'
the people said.
And they rejoiced.

Restore our fortunes, Lord,
like fresh springs rising in desert places,
that those who sow in tears
may reap with songs of joy,
bringing home the harvest of their labours.
Amen.

We can hardly wait, dear God.

Looking out upon a world
that is far too familiar with Isaiah's sorrows,
the mounting ashes of our failures
and the heavy heart of human suffering,
your coming cannot be too soon.
So pour out your Spirit now, today.
Bind up broken hearts
 and release the good word
 and the goodwill
 that we have held back too long.

Announce your clear intentions now.
Garland your sorry world with joy
and clothe it with
the splendour of your presence here.
Plant a new way of life
in which truth and justice stand rooted like a tree.

Make us into a new race of people
 who love justice,
 cherish their commitment to each other
 and are eager for your coming.
We can hardly wait.
Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Lord Jesus Christ,
 born for us in a stable,
 making your humble way into our lives,
we praise you for your tireless search for lost humanity.
Hold us we pray.
And so that we might serve you, and you alone,
 grant us your Spirit's wisdom
 to know and reject all that is evil and harmful,
 to turn only to you for our pleasure,
 and to spend ourselves for the sake of your kingdom
 and its peace.
Amen.

Duncan Wilson

Eucharistic prayer for Advent

based on Isaiah 40-55

God, our beginning and our end,
in whom we live and move and have our being,
we thank you for the gift of your presence
through the long night of our travails.
You led you people on their journey into freedom,
a pillar a cloud by day, a pillar of fire at night.
You spoke to them through the Law,
and when, like sheep, they went astray
you sought them and guided them home.
You comforted them in times of suffering
and called them to be a light to the nations.
Now you do a new thing in our midst:
the voice of the Baptist cries out in the wilderness
and the way is prepared for the coming of your Son.
Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Born in a stable of Mary
he comes to us in the form of a servant,
friend of the poor and forgotten,
to open eyes that are blind
and to lead the prisoners free.
He comes to preach good news of peace,
to establish justice in our midst.
to share our sorrows and be acquainted with our grief.
He comes to be despised and rejected,
to be wounded for our transgressions
and to bear our iniquities.
He is led like a lamb to the slaughter
bearing the sin of the world;
he is raised at the break of day,
and ascends to the heavenly places
that we may rise with him.
Through him the Holy Spirit comes
to bring us and all creation to new birth.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:
'This is my body which is broken for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'
In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.
For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.']
Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

May the Spirit come upon these gifts of bread and wine
that they may strengthen us on our journey
with the food of Christ's own presence.
May the Spirit so increase our faith and our commitment
that we may be Christ's servants in the world,
until he comes again
and all your purpose, Father, is accomplished,
in your eternal glory.

All Amen.

Colin Thompson

Christmas Eve

Of all the nights,
in each and every year.
This one is special
time seemingly stands still
remembering when,
 eternity collided with the present,
 this re-shaping history.
Life could never be the same again.
 years of patient expectation,
 prophesies in prose and poetry.
Realised at last.
God in human form.
 A sentimental story,
 just for children,
 some will say,
 tradition and myth mingled together.
 A folk tale that warms the heart.
Yet these avoid the truth
rob the revelation of its power.
The creator chose
to do things in such a way.

A plan of salvation
for this soiled earth,
he who measured our creation
with a surveyor's chain,
and positioned each star,
chose to be re-born,
as a helpless child
in a cattle crib
on that first Christmas night.

Each subsequent year we remember,
recalling the message that numbs the brain,
stirs the soul,
gladdens the heart
as we marvel at the magnitude of God's love.

Y Mochyn Daear

Christmas

We thank you God for the light of your grace
shining for us in Jesus.
In sharing our darkness
he has overcome the darkness.
In sharing his light
we have found our hope.
It is true!
You do not abandon us
Your Word is alive among us,
one of us.
We rejoice in your love,
here for good in Jesus,
and begin to live as your children
in your promised peace.

All **Amen.**

Peter Trow

This special night

Where are you Lord Jesus, on this special night?
Are you safe and warm in a Bethlehem manger?
Watched over by a loving mother.
Gazed on in awe by simple shepherds.
Worshipped by wise men from far away lands.
With a choir of angels to sing you to sleep.

Where are you Lord Jesus, on this special night?
Are you lonely, cold and afraid on some City street?
 Preyed upon by drug dealers.
 Moved on by those to whom you are an inconvenience.
 Despised by the wealthy in their comfortable homes.
 Deafened by the City's noise.

Where are you Lord Jesus, on this special night?
Are you lying in a hospital bed, frightened and in pain?
 Or lonely and sad in your own home.
 Waiting for that one person who will never come.
 Isolated and unnoticed by the busy people all around you.
 Longing for someone to break the lonely silence.

Where are you Lord Jesus, on this special night?
Are you hungry, thirsty and homeless?
 With no idea when you will next get a meal.
 Desperate for a drink of clean water.
 Waiting for a rich World to drop a few pence in the collection box.
 Too exhausted to cry out at the injustice.

Where are you Lord Jesus, on this special night?
Are you there in the workplace, stressed and anxious?
 Pressured to work longer and longer hours in a job you hate.
 Worried that you might lose your job.
 Where decisions are made based on profit and not people.
 Unheard and ignored by those around you.

You are here Lord Jesus, on this special night.
We see you in the face of the street child, the sick and lonely,
 You are the patient in the hospital bed,
 the grief-stricken neighbour we avoid speaking to.
 You are the stressed colleague at the next desk,
 our unemployed neighbour.

You are here Lord Jesus, on this special night.
Waiting for us to offer a helping hand, a friendly face, a shoulder to cry on.
 The recipient of our small change in the collecting box.
 May we always be ready Lord
 to see you in those around us,
 and to follow your example as we seek to care.

Dwell with us Lord Jesus, not just on this special night
 but through all our bright days and dark nights.

Amen.

Vivian Salter

Blood red

I stopped beside a holly bush
smothered with berries
scarce room for a pin
branches covered
leaves obscured
bright in the winter gloom

All **Blood red**

Gathered for decoration
trim up the church
hang the wreath on the door
links with the distant past
evergreen
tokens in mid-winter
holly berries bright

All **Blood red**

Not just borrowed
but made our own
remembering that holy birth
'the word made flesh'
true humanity on earth
life pulsating in human veins

All **Blood red**

Bethlehem was just the start
a long journey home
Nazareth to Calvary via Gethsemane
living life to the full
all too short
it ebbed away on the Hill

All **Blood red**

Yet put of winter gloom
comes a message of hope
a simple tale
with profound repercussions
not just for travelling scholars
but local labourers too
love that is their life blood

All **Life blood**

Y Mochyn Daear

Eucharistic prayer for Advent

Based on the Great O Antiphons

We thank you, God,
for your wisdom, that from the beginning
ordered the universe and shaped the earth.
We thank you that of old
you showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush
and revealed to him the law on Sinai.
We thank you for your promise spoken through the prophets
of the One who was to come,
to open doors long closed
to bring deliverance from slavery and death.
He is the king of all the nations
binding all in one;
his name shall be Immanuel, God with us,
for whose coming we prepare.
Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

When he appeared among us
he brought light and hope to all in darkness.
His judgments were all mercy
his power was shown in words and acts of love.
He welcomed sinners and outcasts
and made them glad with his presence.
But Satan entered into human hearts
and pursued him to the death.
We thank you that death could not hold him,
that he rose again, ascended into heaven,
and that he will come again
to establish for ever his kingdom of justice and peace.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:
'This is my body which is broken for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'
In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.
For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.']

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

We pray that you will send your Holy Spirit
upon these gifts of bread and wine,
that we may taste his death and resurrection
and serve him through our earthly journey.
May he dawn upon the darkness of our time;
may we be ready to receive him when he comes in glory
and you are all in all, one God in Trinity of love.

All **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

Eucharistic prayer for Christmas

Light in our darkness
Guide in our wandering
Friend in our loneliness,
one God of wisdom, power and love:
when the night was half spent
the all-powerful Word leapt from your royal throne
and came to dwell among us in great humility,
to seek and to save the lost.
Born of Mary, naked and poor,
he shone in our darkness
he revealed the way to the Father
befriending sinners, gently calling us to follow.

He is the longed-for Saviour,
in whom all human hope and longing finds fulfilment;
in whom all outcasts find welcome and shelter.
Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

For his kingdom of justice and peace
he gave up his life.
His love would not let us go
even in the darkest hour.
He was raised at break of day
and his light shines for ever in our midst, undimmed.
He is present with us in this sign of love
which he shared with his disciples
on the dark night of his Passion.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:
'This is my body which is broken for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'
In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.
For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.']
Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

May the fire of the Holy Spirit
come upon these gifts of bread and wine
that they may stay our hunger and our thirst
through his body and his blood.
May the power of that same Spirit
touch our dying loves and raise them to a flame
until the darkness is no more:
through him who was and is and is to be,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

God of surprises

God of surprises who is not locked up by our narrow
thinking or small ways, we pray
for small children waiting for big presents
especially for those whose parents are poor.

God of surprises changing the world we live in and calling us
to new ways of being, we pray
for families who do not enjoy being together
especially for homes where there is violence.

God of surprises born to be a man on the earth and calling
us to use the earth well, we pray
for those who put themselves at risk who chain themselves
to ships and lie on train tracks
we pray for the green warriors, for the challenging ones who
work with you but outside respectable society.

God of surprises,
surprise us at this season because we are used to you and
some are even faintly bored.
God who walked the earth we pray in your name.
Amen.

Lesley Charlton

Sting in the tail

There's always that sting in the tail with God.
Just when you think you've got it worked out,
 back he comes with something you hadn't thought of.
Something so blindingly obvious, but still you'd missed it –
 well, I'd missed it –
 and you're pulled up short
 and made to think again.

This Christmas thing, for example.
The carols seemed to say it all.
 'Joy to the World.'
 'Christians awake, salute the happy morn.'
And there's many more, of course.
So very – well, collective, somehow.

God reconciled with all sinners.
Christ came to save the world.
And of course that's right.
God did come to this world for everyone;
 his message is for all people, everywhere.

And somehow, I managed to lose myself in the crowd.
That word: 'Everyone' – such an all embracing term
And so comforting at times.
You don't have to think too much about it;
You know it's large, comprehensive – and that's it.

Perhaps it's a bit impersonal at times,
 but you know what it means;
 it takes in my neighbours, the people in the next road,
 everyone out there in the High Street,
 in the next town or city;
 we know it takes in other countries –
 across the channel, across the oceans,
 other cultures, other continents.
Yes – everyone.

And you think you've got it sussed.

Then God whispers in your ear; quietly, as he always does.
And you realise there's a bit you've missed.
Everyone includes 'me'.
God came for **me**.
Not just me, but I'm part of 'everyone'
And so God came for me.

And that's not always quite so cosy.
I can't hide under this 'everyone' blanket all the time.
The impersonal suddenly becomes very personal.
If God came in his love for all people,
 then he came in his love for me.
And how should I respond to that?
And how **do** I respond to that?

Perhaps I need to think **that** through a bit more.
Perhaps I need to thank God a bit more.
Perhaps I need to understand what 'God's love for me'
really means.
And to see the manger in a new light this Christmas time.

Brian Hudson

Eucharistic prayer for Epiphany

Creator who called light into being,
Light shining in our darkness,
Fire of transforming love:
we praise you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
for the beauty of your creation,
the cost of our redemption,
the power of your renewing love.
Your love is without limit,
your purpose knows no boundaries.
We thank you that you made the first of your covenants
made with Noah and every living thing;
that you called to yourself a people
to be a light for all the nations;
that you also called others who did not know you:
Rahab the harlot, who sheltered Israelites;
Ruth, a faithful stranger in Israel and mother of kings;
Cyrus the Babylonian Emperor,
whom you used to accomplish your will.
From out of your chosen people
and from those whom you were pleased to call
you raised up your Son to shine in our darkness,
whose showing forth we celebrate with joy.
Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

For he too loved outcasts and sinners:
he made streams of living water flow
for the woman of Samaria at the well;
he healed the daughter of a Canaanite woman
because he saw her faith was great.
Yet he was despised, rejected by his own:
evil powers pursued him to the death
and darkness covered the whole land.
But yours is a light no darkness can overcome:
the flame of your love burned bright on Calvary
to change death into everlasting life.

Our age-old sickness was healed
and of that healing this bread and wine is the sign.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:
'This is my body which is broken for you.
Do this is remembrance of me.'
In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.
For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.']

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

May the living flame of your love
transform these gifts of bread and wine
that they become for us the body and blood of Christ
and so nourish our lives
that we shine as light amid the dark places of the earth.
And when all your purpose is complete,
may all your scattered children come with joy
into the house of prayer for all the nations
and the whole creation join to sing your praise
through Jesus Christ and in the Spirit evermore,

All **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

Epiphany – A prayer of confession

Child of the promise to Mary
forgive our lack of hope and vision
and our failure to believe the good news you bring.

All Child of the annunciation
have mercy upon us.

Child for whom there was no room in the inn
forgive our judgment of others
our finding no room for them in our heart.

All Child of the stable and manger
have mercy upon us.

Child of poverty and humility
forgive our love of wealth and power
and the slavery in which they hold us.

All Child of the gift of gold
have mercy upon us.

Child of miracle and wonder
forgive our spoiling of the beauty of the world
and our failure to live holy lives.

All Child of the gift of frankincense
have mercy upon us.

Child of great sorrow to come
forgive our fear of pain, suffering and death
and the despair which tempts us and haunts us.

All Child of the gift of myrrh
have mercy upon us.

Child of poverty and persecution
forgive our complicity in systems which crush others
and condemn the innocent to death.

All Child of the wrath of Herod
have mercy upon us.

Child with nowhere to lay your head
forgive our indifference to the homeless
and to the plight of refugees.

All Child of the flight into Egypt
have mercy upon us.

Colin Thompson

Epiphany

The star was there in the sky for all to see –
but not everyone saw it.
Just those men with open and enquiring minds.

A bit like the shepherds –
only a few heard the message of the angels
and came to see the baby in the crib.

The rest of the world got on with its work,
unaware, blind to the immensity of what was happening.

Save us, Lord, from being so busy
that we don't see the star in the sky,
that we don't hear the angels bringing your message.

Forgive us when we miss the immensity of your incarnation.

Open our eyes to the truth and reality of what your birth means,
not just as a December treat, soon to be forgotten,
but as a guiding light for the months of the new year
and as a message to lead us, all the days of our life.

Brian Hudson

Lent to Pentecost

An opening prayer

Lord God, your commitment to us is clear:
We see it in the life of Jesus.
Your commitment to us is complete:
We see it in the crucifixion of Jesus.

Our commitment to you is often mixed:
What do we want for ourselves?
What shall we give to you?
With what measure of love shall we serve you?

Help us now, in this time of Lent,
to walk with Jesus on his Calvary journey,
that our commitment may be clear
and our love complete.

Duncan Tuck

Hold us tight Lord

Take us Lord, to the end of the road.
Take us Lord, to the cross.
Lead us Lord, to the centre of our being.
Lead us Lord, where things fall apart
where people are denied life.

Hold us tight Lord, as we cry out for peace.
Hold us tight Lord and shoulder our burden at your cross.

Vaughan Jones

During Lent

Opening Scripture: Psalm 40

Patiently I waited for the Lord;
who bent down to me and listened to my cry.

All **God raised me out of the miry pit,
out of the mud and clay;**

The Most High set my feet upon rock
and gave me a firm footing.

All **On my lips the Eternal One put a new song,
a song of praise to our God.**

**Happy are those
who put their trust in the Lord.
Amen.**

Prayer of approach

With what great heart, dear God,
do you love the world.
We are the people you made,
yours is the earth we walk
and all the good things we have
come from you.

All **You are not only the origin of our life
but the source of our strength and hope.
We are glad to meet you here
where heaven and earth combine
in this bread and wine
to spell out your purpose and your love
in Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.**

Prayer

Again you come, dear Lord,
the table is set,
the bread is baked,
the wine is poured,
and you await your friends.

Brief silence.

All **But all is not right with us,
we feel it and cannot escape it.
We know we are not invited
because we are worthy
but because you are gracious.
Nonetheless,
we wish we were more ready to meet with you.**

Frustrations accumulate,
differences go unresolved
and our best intentions come to nothing.

All **Called to take up our cross
we have barely picked up our feet.
We wonder how can you find pleasure
in our company?**

And yet you do.

All **So set a table in our hearts,
 and call it acceptance.
Spread a cloth
 and call it forgiveness.
Come and sit with us, Lord,
 where we are,
 as you always do.
Amen.**

A prayer after Communion

Bread is broken,
 and his love revealed,
Wine is poured,
 and the promise sealed.
Hands reach out,
 and lives are filled,
Hope is born
 and conflict stilled.
Christ who entered sin and death
 is now our life, our very breath.

Duncan Wilson

Eucharistic prayer for Lent

All Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal:
 Have mercy upon us.

In the beginning your Spirit moved across waste and void
and you formed a world of wonderful beauty out of nothing.
You called forth life in many forms;
you looked on all that you had made
and saw that it was good.
Yet we could not bear to live in harmony with your will.
We spoiled the beauty of creation;
we lost the peace you gave us,
and still we pollute and we destroy.

All Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal:
 Have mercy upon us.

Out of this lawless world you called a people to be your light;
you fed them in their wanderings and gave to them your Law.
Many prophets called them to repentance;
few were those who heard them
and walked the paths of justice and of peace.

All Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal:
 Have mercy upon us.

Finally you sent your own beloved Son.
His was a birth both poor and humble,
yet earth rejoiced and heaven sang.
Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Before he began his great work of healing
your Spirit led him into the wilderness
where he was tempted as we are, yet without sin.
Faithfully he walked the way of his Cross;
lovingly opened his arms in death to reconcile both earth
and heaven.
Yet he was rejected and despised.
Even his disciples fled in that dark hour;
only faithful women saw him give up his life.

All **Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal:
Have mercy upon us.**

Yet in your infinite mercy he was given to us
to bear and to heal the sin of the world,
to rise from the darkness of death
and to flood the world with light and hope.
In him the wastelands of our earth and of our hearts
grow fresh and green and break forth into song:
for he has broken the hold of sin and death
and the gates of paradise stand open before us.

All **Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal:
Have mercy upon us.**

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:
'This is my body which is broken for you.
Do this is remembrance of me.'
In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.
For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.']
Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

May the Spirit who moved across the waste and void
descend upon these gifts of bread and wine
that they may be for us the fruits of his Passion,
his body and his blood, given for the life of the world.
May your power be made perfect in our weakness;
may your purpose be accomplished through us,
until the pain and hurt of all creation
finds healing through the wounded Christ:

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal:

All **Have mercy upon us.**

Colin Thompson

Passion Sunday

Opening Scripture: Psalm 130

Lord, out of the depths have we called unto you,

All **Lord, hear our cry.**

If you, Lord, kept account of sins,

All **who could stand?**

But with you is forgiveness,

All **So that you may be revered.**

We wait for you more eagerly
than sentinels wait for the morning.

All **For in you is love unfailing,
and great is your power
to set us free from our sins.**

Prayer

Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-4

Dear Lord,
battlefields are not the only graveyards
where the eternal struggles between good and evil
have been fought.

All **Human hearts are also heavy
with the dead weight of failure,
of loves denied and hopes dashed to pieces.**

The bright mornings of human goodwill,
raising our spirits,
too often give way
to dark nights of fears and doubts
that drain our confidence and sap our strength.

All **Sometimes, all that remains
are remains, the shambles of our lives.**

But faced with such devastation
we reach out with Ezekiel
to touch the eternal promise
that you will make all things new.

All **This is our faith**

Broken families, failed relationships,
hard work come to nothing:
– an endless variety of hard knocks
do not prevent your grace
from loving new life into being.

All **This is our hope**

Out of the fragments of the past, dear Lord,
build anew your temple within us
and take the sobs and sighs of grief or regret
and make of them the first breaths
of our re-creation.

All **This is our prayer,
for you are the bringer of life.
Amen.**

Duncan Wilson

Palm Sunday

Scripture: Isaiah 42 paraphrased

The servant whom God upholds is coming,
the chosen one in whom God delights.

All **On him God's Spirit firmly rests,
by him God's justice will be done.**

He will not shout or raise his voice.

All **He will not falter or be crushed.**

In him God's holy arm is bared.

All **Through him God's sure salvation comes.**

Then let the watchers shout for joy
and let the desert places sing!

All

Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a

Gracious and patient God.
it can be hard to bear rejection at any time
but especially so
when we are trying to give our best to others.
Like your Servant,
 we have sought to console the weary
 with a timely word –
and in a busy world,
 to follow the Maker's instructions,
 to sharpen our ears to your voice,
and to shrug off life's knocks, if we can, with a smile.

Today we rejoice in the final journey
of the Prince of hard knocks,
the Servant King –
 who bore so patiently
 his fragile and short-lived popularity,
 the unpredictability of his followers
 and the lonely walk towards our salvation.
Teach us, therefore, with him,
to lift our eyes
to that greater purpose
you cherish for all humanity
compared to which
all present discomfort with our fractious world
fades into insignificance.

May there be no halting to lick our wounds,
rather, forgetting what lies behind,
may we press towards the goal of his eternal kingdom.

Ride on,
carpenter King,
uneasy in your majesty.
Open your heart to the people's welcome
and ride your donkey
through their brief glimpse of glory.

All **And show us,
who dip our palms in homage
the things that honour peace,
as mounted in humility,
you proclaim the reign of God.**

Enter our world
of strutting armies and commercial empires
and cure our addiction
to worldly notions of power and glory.

All **Come,
cry over our cities,
the endless trail of refugees,
the tragic list of human atrocities,
the raping of our silent planet
until your pathway of peace
makes headway in our stony hearts
and stirs our stale assumptions.**

Then may your kingdom Come – **not ours;**
and your will be done – **not ours;**
for yours is the power and glory – **not ours.**

All **And may our hosannas
no longer sound the hollow note
of those who join in the singing
but not the striving.
But with sincerity and truth
may the gates of our hearts be open
to receive you,
our humble, patient, servant king.**

A meditation

Make no sound, gentle beast,
but firmly place your hooves
on what becomes,
even as you pass,
ground made more holy
by your precious burden.
Even the stones
(he says so himself)
are bursting to shout 'hosanna!'

For this is not a day
for keeping praise
locked up
in the dungeon
of our despair.

Then let it out –
all that longing
for one, just One Chosen,
to take hold of the reins
of our weary existence;
someone worth following
who tells no lies
but lives the truth so well
that he will even die

to plant its seed
in our little plot of hope and love.
Go gently, then,
towards his Jerusalem
and our salvation.

Duncan Wilson

Good Friday

Father, forgive them, they know not what they do

A long night.
Interrogations.
Anger mocking.
The cup is there, waiting to be drunk.
Brutality and expediency are taking their course.
Now is the time for hiding,
for counting the cost of denial,
Being numbered amongst the betrayers.

Such love, such sacrifice.
A love that is willing to be broken,
shattered, eliminated,
whilst we fade away into the night of Jerusalem,
too scared by the cost of discipleship
too afraid to take the ultimate risk of giving all into God's hands.

We have not changed Lord.
On countless Good Fridays
we have wielded the hammer,
driven in the nails and pushed down the crown of thorns.
The evidence is all around –
the jagged edges of broken relationships,
the distended bellies of the starving,
the holes in the ozone layer.

Praise be to God
that you have not changed Lord,
on countless Good Fridays
you let our sins nail you to cruel, unyielding crosses,
your love unbreaking,
powerful beyond our imagining
in powerlessness.

And from your love flows forgiveness
and new opportunity

Lord, we confess our sins,
and we crave your forgiveness

Hear the words of Jesus:
– Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.

David G Cornick

Good Friday 1

Opening Scripture: Romans 4

It was while we were still helpless that,
at the appointed time,
Christ died for us whilst we were sinners
and that is proof of God's love towards us.

And so, since we have been made right
by Christ's sacrificial death,
we shall all the more certainly be saved through him.

We exult in God
through our Lord Jesus

for he has won our reconciliation.

How many times, dear Lord,
you must have wished for blessed solitude –
from the daily demands of people hungry for hope,
 anxious for healing or reassurance –
 a crust, a touch, a word from God.
And then the constant surveillance
 of hostile eyes and ears
 and the nagging drip
 of disapproval.

What wouldn't you give, just now,
for one friendly, familiar face or voice!

You expected it would come to this
 and in the Garden it is finally settled.
Among the olives
 you have wrapped your love
 around the fragments of humanity,
 the discards and disasters,
 and borne the gross weight
 of history's damned, appalling record.

This is your cup.
It will cost you everything.
But we cannot ask it not to do.
Our life is hidden in your death,
our hope in your despair.
In the very moment
when you feel you are forsaken, poured out,
generations are graced into life.

Duncan Wilson

Good Friday 2

Opening Scripture: John 12 paraphrased

Jesus said:
in very truth I tell you,
unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies,
it remains a solitary seed and nothing more;
but if it dies, it bears a rich harvest.

Whoever loves himself is lost,
but he who disregards himself in this world
will be kept safe for eternal life.
If anyone would serve me, they must follow me;
where I am is where my servant will be.

Now my soul is in turmoil and what am I to say?
'Father save me from this hour?'
No, it was for this very purpose that I came to this hour.

Now is the hour of judgement for this world;
now shall the prince of this world be driven out.
And when I am lifted up from the earth
I shall draw everyone to myself.

This he said to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

2 Corinthians 5

For anyone united to Christ,
there is a new creation:
the old order has gone,
the new order has already begun.

God was in Christ
reconciling the world to himself
no longer holding our misdeeds against us.

Christ was innocent of sin, and yet God made him one
with the sinfulness of humanity

so that in him
we might be made one
with the righteousness of God.

1. We gather to worship, O God,
under the shadow of the cross,
sign of human shame and symbol of divine grace.
Like Jesus, we would follow faithfully
the way you set before us;
like Jesus we would die to self and live for you.
Here we offer you our worship and our lives.
May your name, so often derided by our world,
and sometimes dishonoured by our own actions,
be praised throughout your church
as we open ourselves to your love and mercy;
through Jesus our Lord. Amen.

2. At the foot of the cross
we gather, dear God,
to witness again
the dying of your Son,
our friend,
our saviour,
Jesus.

We came also to bear witness
how his suffering and death
touch and change us,
save and redeem us.

Beyond words of explanation
we know
that he is here, upon the cross,
on account of his love for us
and people everywhere.

Therefore
we are not here as voyeurs
of some grotesque drama,
nor mourners come too early for the wake,
but suppliants of his mercy
with hearts grieving,
yet more grateful
than prayers can express.

This, then, is our simple offering,
that we keep faith,
so far as we may,
and watch with him,
even over him
for your sake.
Amen.

Duncan Wilson

Good Friday – Evening

Scripture: Ephesians 1 and 2 paraphrased

Blessed be the God and Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Before the foundation of the world
he chose us in Christ to be his people,
to be full of love.

In Christ our release is secured
and our sins forgiven
through the shedding of his blood.
In the richness of his grace
God has lavished on us
all wisdom and insight.

God has made known his secret purpose,
that the universe,
everything in heaven and on earth,
might be made one in Christ.
In our natural condition
we lay under the condemnation of God.
But God, rich in mercy,
and because of his great love towards us,
brought us to life with Christ
when we were dead because of our sins;
It is by grace we are saved.

Prayer

We gather, dear God, as evening falls
to recount the events of this day
and to keep a vigil over our dying Lord.

We come to bear witness
to One whose whole life
was lived in the light of your truth and love.
We come, if we may, to keep faith with him
in his loneliest hour, to show our thankfulness,
and to mark his self-less sacrifice. Amen.

Duncan Wilson

Lord my heart sings

Lord my heart sings,
like the blackbird,
feathered flautist,
serenading the snowdrops,
heralding the spring.

Lord my soul leaps
like a hare,
bounding across the fields.
Bursting with energy,
heralding the spring.

Lord my spirit soars,
like a bird, high above,
descending to gather twigs,
build a nest,
heralding the spring.

Lord my hearts sinks,
plummeting into black despair,
caught in a severe late frost,
confronted with a sealed tomb,
winter with no hope of spring.

Lord, bird song proclaims your victory,
light floods the garden,
revealing an empty grave,
Christ is risen!
My heart sings.

Risen Lord, you sprang forth,
strode out,
into all the world,
meeting people on their own patch,
my soul leaps.

Living Lord, we are uplifted!
filled with joy and hope
legacy of your costly victory,
gaining direct access to God.
My spirit soars.

Lord my heart sings,
a glorious Easter anthem,
proclaiming Christ is risen,
happiness surges within me,
Lord, I will never stop singing.

Y Mochyn Daear

Easter morning

Wow!
Amazing,
stupendous,
incredible,
remarkable,
startling,
marvellous,
wonderful,
glorious,
splendid,
superb,
astounding,
astonishing,
stunning,
fantastic,
extraordinary.
Jesus Christ is risen!
Hallelujah!

Nigel Warner

Easter day

Creative God,
you turn the shadow of death
 into the brightness of a new morning
 lift our hearts and minds
 with the hope and joy
 of the Easter Gospel;
you transform the suffering of earth
 into the wholeness of heaven
 heal our brokenness and division
 with the peace and love
 of the Easter Gospel;
you transpose the injustice of society
 into the pattern of friendship
 change our selfishness and suspicion
 with the truth and trust
 of the Easter Gospel.
Jesus,
 no longer sealed by stone in death
 but revealed as Redeemer of life,
 you live in us!

Jesus,
no longer mocked as misguided Messiah
but celebrated as cosmic Christ,
you live in us!

Jesus,
no longer banished as a has-been
but transformed into today's truth,
you live in us!

Holy Spirit, breath of life,
re-awaken us to powers of good;
renew us in practices of forgiveness;
refresh us for patterns of praise.

This is the day that God has made.

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Alleluia!

Amen.

Terry Oakley

An Easter prayer

From old wood new life grows.
From death sprouts forth the buds of spring.
And from you, Lord of our hearts,
come all that we need to be your people.
In love you draw us to you.
In grace you offer a way through our sin.
In weakness you show the power of sacrifice.
And here we give ourselves afresh.
We recognise your hold on our lives,
not because you are stronger, or hold all the aces,
but because your love, which knows no end,
nailed you to the cross – for us.
In gratitude, we give you our praise.
We say again – you are our Lord.
We give ourselves to you.
Take us and use us,
for your glory.
Amen.

Duncan Tuck

The risen Christ in everyday life

Can it be you, Lord?
The way the sun,
filtering through the leaves
strikes the muddy pool
and makes it gleam,
as if it were clear and clean –
 Can it be you, Lord, doing the same with me?

Can it be you, Lord?
The flicker of recognition
in a stranger's face
that quickens to a smile
as though finding a friend
but not being sure –
 Can it be you, Lord, doing the same with me?

Can it be you, Lord?
The morning paper
dropping through the letter box
a world of misery and deception
in pages of faces
looking up at me,
but surely not in hope ? –
 Can it be you, Lord, doing the same with me?

Can it be you, Lord?
In every moment of the day
a nudge of wondering
if you also pass this way,
not like a ghost, all cold and fear,
but like fresh air, bright light,
warm hand, familiar voice –

It must be you, Lord, coming this way with me.

Duncan Wilson

Easter 4

Reading: John 10:1-11

Prayer: Good Shepherd Jesus

Good Shepherd Jesus,
inwardly, we hunger and thirst
but most of the time
no-one suspects we do.
Surrounded by people, even family,
we can still feel isolated, undervalued, even unloved.
We hunger for recognition, intimacy, assurance –
we thirst for absent joy.

Can you, will you, nourish and refresh us,
Good Shepherd Jesus?
Can you, will you, love and cherish us?

We hunger also for peace and for truth.
Our world sets before us a diet of deceptions,
plying us with a thin gruel of empty attractions
and unpalatable attitudes
that neither fill nor feed our spirits,
while daily strife and violent conflict
are meat and drink to a whole generation
of child soldiers and refugees.

Can you, will you, nourish and refresh us,
Good Shepherd Jesus?
Can you, will you, lead us in the paths of truth and peace?

Good Shepherd Jesus,
you lead us and feed us,
you call our names,
you guard our door,
you come between us and evil,
you lay down your life.

We recognise and welcome your voice.
Help us then to follow you,
to reject all impostors and to keep faith with you.
Amen.

Prayers for other people

Lord Jesus Christ,
who, in the image of the Good Shepherd
revealed not only your love
but also your responsibility for all humankind,
we would be good shepherds too.

As we have received all creation as a gift from you
and as you have made us brothers and sisters
to one another,
may we watch with you over those people
who are least able to protect themselves.

Make us ready to challenge exploitation and abuse
wherever we find it
and to stand with those who feel powerless
against commercial interest and political greed.

Make us sensitive also
to those whose lives stand to be ruined
by personal experiences of rejection or failure.

In our relationships with others help us to imitate
your gentleness and mercy with us.

Amen.

Duncan Wilson

Easter 5

Opening Scripture: Psalm 31 paraphrased

In you, Lord, is our refuge;
you do not expose us to shame
but by your power you save us,
you bend and hear us
and hasten to our rescue:
You lead and guide
where evil will not ensnare us
and, therefore, in you we put our trust
and your face shines upon your servants
with unfailing love.
Amen.

The Gospel: John 14:1-14 'Put your fears to rest'

We do worry, dear Lord,
especially about fending for ourselves
when the guidance and confidence
of leaders we have come to depend upon,
is no longer near at hand.
For some it may be the loss of a mother or a son,
for others, a friend or a teacher.
Like your disciples,
we are uncertain about the future,
our own abilities and strengths
and how to make the right decisions.

Therefore, we are glad of your assurance
that you will not leave us bereft,
also that you will send your own spirit,
whose power and gifts are endless,
to be our encourager.

It does not seem possible that any one of us
might do greater things than you
yet we see from history how great have been the deeds
of those who put their trust in you.

Therefore, our prayer is
that we may hold nothing back,
but learn to take you at your word,
and expect you to work wonders even through us.

Help us to test our desires and motives
so that we may want only
that which honours your name
and serves your loving purpose for our world.

May we not shrink back when we realise
what it may cost for our hopes, and your will,
to become a reality.
Amen.

Prayers for peace

Lord Jesus,
sometimes we feel that the world is falling apart.
Perhaps every generation has thought the same.
We see the breakdown of family ties,
the gradual erosion of community,
and poor people cast adrift
by a world more wealthy than ever before.
But your life and teaching strike a different note
that calls for building each other up.

Help us find ways to do this.

Give us grace

to discover you in both friend and stranger,
to accept other people with open hand and heart,
to be ready to share whatever we have.

Help us to say and do

whatever will give people greater confidence in you
and help them realise how much you care.

Help us make fast with bonds of peace

the unity which your Spirit gives.

Amen.

Duncan Wilson

Easter 6

Prayer

As so often happens, dear Lord
you come to us when least expected,
when we are busy and preoccupied
and least inclined to turn to you.

It makes us wonder
at the depth of your thoughtfulness,
your anticipation of our moods.

God of surprises,
come near when least expected
and make ordinary moments bright.

As to Peter and Thomas, and all their friends,
so to us you come

with every dawn and breakfast table.

You spread the feast of your love and goodness before us
and the failure of our labours melts away.

Just when we are looking back at wasted effort,
or facing the day empty handed,
you turn disappointment into anticipation.
Tired or discouraged,
your companionship transforms us.
 God of surprises,
 show us how good can come
 even from 'lost causes'.

When, therefore,
we encounter others in our daily lives
who are heavy with things gone wrong
or at odds with the world,
put something in our hands or our hearts,
or in our conversations,
that may give to them what you have given us –
your unconditional acceptance,
 the assurance of your love,
 and real purpose for the future.
 God of surprises,
 Show us that we always have something to give
 though it may take some finding.

Amen.

Duncan Wilson

Eucharistic prayer for Easter

[Responsive passages from the 'Exultet'](#)

Living God, out of chaos and darkness
your creative word called light into being
and life in all its fulness.
Though in the garden we chose to disobey you
and death entered our world
you are the bringer of life from the places of death.
You saved Noah and his family from the Flood
and passed over the children of Israel
when death struck the firstborn of Egypt.
You led your people out
from slavery in Egypt and exile in Babylon.
You saved Jonah from the belly of the whale
and Daniel from the lions' den.
By your power Sarah and Hannah brought forth sons
and Ruth the stranger became the mother of kings.

All Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels!
Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendour!
Christ has conquered! Jesus Christ our King is risen!
Glory fills you! Darkness vanishes for ever!
Rejoice, O Mother Church!
The risen Saviour shines upon you!
Let this place resound with joy,
echoing the mighty song of all God's people!

Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!

Born on a dark night,
during his life on earth
the light of your Son's presence
brought hope to the lost
and healing to the sick.
He preached good news to the poor
and ate with sinners.
For this he was pursued to the death.
[For this, the Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it
and said:
'This is my body which is broken for you.
Do this is remembrance of me.'
In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.
For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.']

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

We praise you that the darkness could not hold him
for he was raised at dawn
to bring new life to the world.

All **By his power sin is purged,
innocence restored to the fallen,
joy to the mourners;
hatred is vanquished, tyranny laid low;
harmony reigns, heaven and earth are united
and humanity is reconciled with God.
The Morning Star has risen, never again to set.**

His light is become our light; his Spirit is ours;
may our lives shine with the radiance of his glory
and this bread and wine lead us to the feasting of the Kingdom,
where we shall be raised up to see him face to face,
in the glory of the blessed Trinity, through all ages.

All **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

Pentecost

Pentecost

Lord, we come with expectancy on this Pentecost Sunday when we remember how the Holy Spirit first came to the disciples filling them with power and courage. We praise you for the strength and purpose given to them that day to tell others about you. Fill us too Lord as we worship this morning and may we too be given the strength and courage to witness for you in our world.

Jennifer Martin

Spirit of love, joy, peace

Use the Taizé chant 'Ubi Caritas' as a sung response to each prayer

Spirit of Love, you pour out your life into young and old,
we pray for all those who are vulnerable, marginalised,
and abused because of their age.
May your love inspire our love in our community
so that all are included.

All **Ubi Caritas**

Spirit of joy, you pour our your energy into the poor and oppressed,
we pray for all those who are exploited, downtrodden,
and made slaves because of our economy.
May your joy of freedom drive our work for justice
so that all are liberated

All **Ubi Caritas**

Spirit of peace, you pour out your comfort into all who are in conflict,
we pray for all those who are caught up in war, violence
and estranged because of hostility.
May your peace lead us towards reconciliation,
so that all are living in unity.

All Ubi Caritas

Terry Oakley

Peace-making Christ

Jesus said to them 'Peace be with you.'

Peace making Christ,
our world is racked with violence and disquiet.
The politics of terror and calculated response
leave behind rivers of broken lives and tormented consciences.
The pressures of living gather like storm clouds
and sometimes they break and batter and bruise us,
driving us to the very edge.

We come open-handed,
eager for your gift of peace,
ready to be enfolded in your Father's blessing,
longing to see the universe from the perspective of your love
and know in the depths of our souls
that you are Lord
and that all shall be well.
And every manner of thing be well.

Lord, give us the gift of peace.

Jesus said to them, 'As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.'

Commissioning Christ,
uncertainty reigns.
There is no centre any longer.
People turn this way and that,
seeking a fulfilment which always eludes them,
their laughter tinged with sadness,
their success haunted by hollowness.

The world needs your Word,
for in it lies the Truth
that all life is woven from your Father's love,
and that meaning is to be found in returning to him
and living lovingly.

So we pray for your Church,
the bearers of your commission.
We give thanks for this place
where your word has been spoken and heard
your comfort received and your challenge heeded.
We ask that you will send us out again
to be bearers of your love and heralds of your Word
that the world may hear and rejoice.

Lord commission us anew.

'He breathed on them, and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

Pentecostal Christ,
the task seems overwhelming,
our resources so slender
just as once it did in Jerusalem,
the world hustling and bustling,
speaking every language but yours.

Then the breath of your Spirit
transformed weakness into strength,
forging the world's hope from the crucible of despair,
reversing Babel
with good news which each heard in their own language.

Touch us with Pentecostal fire,
breathe your Spirit into our lives.

David G Cornick

Transforming Spirit

Gentle breath of God,
whispering comfort to our ears,
bringing messages of hope and healing,
speaking truth and building confidence
come and inspire us now.

Strong wind of God, blowing love through the nations of earth,
challenging injustice and confronting violence
stirring change and bringing liberation,
come and move us now.

Hurricane of God,
sweeping purposefully across the universe,
overturning deceit and hate,
removing hunger and poverty,
eradicating inequality,
come and change us now.

Terry Oakley

Blessed be you Spirit of God

Blessed be you Spirit of God
for you inspire us, you renew our life
you restore our faith and revive our love.

Blessed be you Breath of God
for you inspire us, you remove our selfishness
you relieve our stuffiness and redeem our situation.

Blessed be you Wind of God
for you inspire us, you redirect our priorities
you recharge our enthusiasm and refill our hopes.

Blessed be you, Spirit of God,
for you rouse, refresh, reinvigorate us.

Amen.

Terry Oakley

Come, Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, come air, wind and breath of God,
fill us with new life, waken us to unexpected possibilities,
speak to us your Word of Good News.

Whisper tenderly forgiveness, blow away cobwebs of fear,
inspire our songs of faith.

Come, Holy Spirit, come air, wind and breath of God,
in the name of Jesus we meet
and call for you to be present with us.

Amen.

Terry Oakley

Come, breath of God

Come, Breath of God inspire us,
remove our selfishness, relieve our stuffiness,
relax our worry.

Come, Wind of God disturb us,
redirect our priorities, recharge our enthusiasm,
refill our hopes.

Come, Spirit of God purify us,
renew our life, restore our faith,
revive our love.

Spirit of God, rest, refresh and rouse us.

When we are frightened, holding our breath,
give us confidence to face our fears.
When we are complacent, careless, apathetic,
shake us up, challenge us to care.
When we are selfish, greedy, hateful,
lead us to remorse and repentance.

Here and now, we acknowledge our need for courage.
Here and now, we ask to be awake to injustice.
Here and now, we confess our sin
and promise renewed commitment in love.
Creative, forgiving, holy God forgive us
and empower us with your Spirit.
Amen.

Terry Oakley

Kairos: Mark 13:33

Suddenly it arrived,
like a violent wind.
Rattling the windows.
Tongues of fire resting on each.
Words are inadequate
to describe this momentous moment.

Spot on. Impeccable timing.
Being in the right place.
At the precise moment.
Anxious awaiting the promised gift.
United in a common purpose.
Resolved to serve.

Even more amazing,
was the resultant change.
In the gathered few.
No longer afraid.
Unlock the door,
got out into the world.

No longer tongue tied.
Speak out boldly.
Proclaim the truth.
To those who want to hear
good news for every one
the Risen Christ is Lord.

Y Mochyn Daear

God –
All **Your love surrounds us**
Christ –
All **Your peace enfolds us**
Spirit –
All **Your breath awakens us**

Vaughan Jones

God, Christ, Spirit

God,
fire – setting us ablaze
sap – flowing through our veins
ground – rooting us to the earth

Christ,
truth – planting truth within
word – encouraging our speech
heart – awakening us to love

Spirit,
cord – linking us to the stars and to the earth
breath – harmonising our breathing
guide – pointing us to God

Worship with us – God, Christ and Spirit,
unifying us each with the other
and each to all that is beyond our knowing.
Amen.

Vaughan Jones

Eucharistic prayer for Trinity Sunday

Trinity of power, wisdom and love,
God from all eternity, present in every passing moment,
we give you thanks for the wonders of creation
and for the story of your constant love.
With Moses before the burning bush
words fail us in your presence.
With Naomi we have been in exile, knowing hunger and loss;
with Ruth we have come home, but as strangers to your law.
With Isaiah in the temple, we cannot bear the vision of your holiness
and long for your fire to burn away our sin.
Knowing our need and hearing our cry
you came to embrace our humanity
and in the longed-for Christ
tasted deep of our joys and sorrows.

Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Yet we drove him out from among us,
and he whose dying words were of forgiveness
was made the victim of our sin.
From the silence and darkness of death he rose;
his victory is ours by faith,
proclaimed and shared in this, the harvest of his sacrifice.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it
and said:

‘This is my body which is broken for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.’
In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:
‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.
For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.’]

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Come, Creator God: renew the face of the earth.
Come, eternal Word of the Father: remake us in your likeness.
Come, Holy Spirit: transform these gifts and our lives
that here on earth we may sing the songs of the new creation
and in heaven see your glory,
one God, for ever and ever.

All **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

Eucharistic prayer for the transfiguration

We praise you, almighty God,
Creator, Redeemer, Giver of life.
that amid the shadows of our journey you make yourself known.
You brought order and beauty out of primeval chaos;
you gave a child of promise to Abraham and Sarah;
you summoned Moses from the burning bush to fight injustice
and in cloud and darkness revealed your will on Sinai.
Hannah and Manoah saw you in ascending flame,
your name too wonderful to speak.
Elijah knew you in a still, small voice;
you called Isaiah when the temple shook
and touched his lips with fire.
He heard the seraphim calling as they flew,
and we too join their song of praise:
Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Blessed was that hour when the Dayspring from on high
dawned upon us, full of grace and truth.
We praise you that your Son was born of Love
to dwell among us;
for the beauty of his parables and his acts of healing power.
Truly his words and deeds shone in our midst,
signs of a love which sought us when we were far from home.
On the mountain his disciples saw his glory for a moment
as he spoke with Moses and Elijah,
yet they could not understand.
Soon they forsook him and fled,
when he was led out to die.
But he came to stand among them in his risen power
and was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.
Now he is ascended to reign on high
and pours out his gifts upon us through his Spirit.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it
and said:
'This is my body which is broken for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.
For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.']

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

May his sorrows and his victory go with us
through all our darkness and our doubt,
and transfigure them with the glory of his presence.
May we know Christ in the breaking of this bread
and in the sharing of this wine,
that we may receive him crucified and risen
in the fruits which earth has given and human hands have made.
And, at the last, may we behold him with unclouded eyes
in the new Jerusalem, city of everlasting light,
where with you, Father, and the Holy Spirit,
he reigns throughout the ages.

All **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

Strong Spirit wind

Strong Spirit Wind
blow through all creation,
fill the world with love's transforming power.
Bright Spirit Fire
rest upon your people,
touch each of us with warmth and light.
Translate our weak words
so that all may hear and understand
the Good News of Jesus Christ.
Enthuse the Church
with courage and excitement,
so that people may be challenged and amazed
By your intoxicating joy.
Come, Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Peter Trow

Index of titles

Advent to Epiphany

Advent 1 – Introduction to Communion	8
Advent 3.....	10
Bible Sunday.....	9
Blood red	16
Christmas.....	14
Christmas Eve	13
Epiphany	24
Epiphany – A prayer of confession	23
Eucharistic prayer for Advent.....	12
Eucharistic prayer for Advent (based on the Great O Antiphons).....	17
Eucharistic prayer for Christmas.....	18
Eucharistic prayer for Epiphany.....	21
Fulfilment	5
God of dark and light	7
God of surprises	19
Hannah prayed	5
Praise for God's power	4
Seeing is believing.....	7
Sting in the tail	20
This special night.....	14

Lent to Pentecost

Blessed be you, Spirit of God	52
Come breath of God	52
Come Holy Spirit.....	52
During Lent	25
Easter 3 – Risen Christ in everyday life.....	42
Easter 4 – Good Shepherd Jesus.....	43
Easter 5	44
Easter 6	46
Easter day.....	40
Easter morning	40
Easter prayer, An	41
Eucharistic prayer for Easter	47
Eucharistic prayer for Lent.....	27
Eucharistic prayer for the Transfiguration	56
Eucharistic prayer for Trinity Sunday	54

Father, forgive them, they know not what they do	33
God, Christ, Spirit	54
Good Friday 1	34
Good Friday 2	36
Good Friday – Evening	38
Hold us tight Lord.....	25
Lord my heart sings	39
Kairos.....	53
Opening prayer, An	25
Palm Sunday	30
Passion Sunday.....	29
Peace-making Christ	50
Pentecost.....	49
Prayers for other people	44
Spirit of love, joy, peace	49
Strong Spirit Wind.....	57
Transforming Spirit.....	51
Trinity	54

Index of authors

Advent to Epiphany Lent to Pentecost

Lesley Charlton	19
David G Cornick	5-6, 33-34, 50-51
Y Mochyn Daear	13-14, 16, 39, 53
Brian Hudson	20-21, 24
Vaughan Jones	25, 54
Jennifer Martin	49
Terry Oakley	7-8, 40-41, 49-50, 51-53
Vivian Salter	14-15
Colin Thompson	9-10, 12-13, 17-19, 21-23, 27-29, 47-49, 54-57
Bernard Thorogood	4-5, 7
Peter Trow	14, 57
Duncan Tuck	25, 41
Nigel Warner	40
Duncan Wilson	8-9, 10-11, 25-27, 29-33, 34-38, 42-47

Exploring the year

Exploring the Year.....	61
Index of titles.....	90
Index of authors	91



First Sunday in the New Year Matthew 28:20

Lord Jesus, as we come to worship you on the first Sunday in this new year, we remember your promise that you will be with us wherever we go. Help us really believe that promise deep down in our hearts so that our daily lives may be a confident outworking of your abiding presence with us. Bless us now as we worship, and may that worship be sweet and your presence here a precious reality to each soul.

Thank you Lord
Amen.

Jennifer Martin

For beginning a New Year

Come now to our God,
the living one,
the Alpha and Omega.
Come to the God of all beginnings
and endings.
At this new year,
come to the God of January
and December.
Come and follow,
that we may walk in God's footsteps
through every month
and every season.
Come and give our love
afresh.

Duncan Tuck

Holocaust Memorial Day

Lord God, in a world of shallow pleasures,
you are the one true joy.
In a world of darkness, you are the one true light.
In a world of pain, you are the one true healer.

And so we come to you now,
with our prayers for your world,
for this place and for our friends
and place into your hands
both our joys and our laughter
and our concerns and our tears.

Lord, we stand baffled as we see those parts of the world
where hatred builds on hatred
and there is little sign of reconciliation.

We remember those situations
where children are again in the frontline of historic
prejudices and injustices.

We remember enmity between particular nations
where the continuing tit-for-tat retaliations
seem to spiral increasingly out of control.

On this Holocaust Memorial Day, these issues seem more poignant,
and we are aware of just how little progress we have really made
since those dark days of the last world war.

We pray for all victims, and the perpetrators, of genocide
and other forms of institutional hatred,
killing and discrimination.

Lord, we pray for peace in those and all places –
but for the true peace that comes only when our
relationships are right with you.

But in asking for peace, we recognise our own stubbornness at times,
and must confess that we are not always ready to forgive
and to build anew,
to turn the other cheek and seek a new way.

In the dark areas of the world, may your shining light bring
new hope and new love.

We pray for our country,
recognising that it is not always a just society in which we live –
that we can so easily find arguments for doing things
in ways that are convenient to us as individuals or as groups,
rather than doing those things which are right.

When we jump in to put our point of view,
help us to pause, and to search and to listen for the
words that you would say.

We pray for this church, and those churches in this area.
We ask for vision to help us determine what you want us to be doing,
and for enthusiasm in carrying out that work.

[At this point, it may be appropriate to pray for specific local needs and for the
local congregation.]

Lord, we have brought you these prayers
for those dark places of the world
and for the dark times in our lives.

Remind us, Lord, that you are with us in the darkness.
When the shades of night seem long, and we cannot clearly
see the way ahead,
 then we feel your hand in our hand, taking us forward
 one step at a time.
When there are tears in our eyes, and we cannot form the
words in our hearts
 then we hear your voice saying: Don't be afraid. I am here.

Allelulia. Praise be to You, Living and eternal Lord.

All Amen.

Brian Hudson

Eucharistic prayer for Mothering Sunday

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Based on Julian of Norwich and Hosea 11

We praise you, blessed Trinity:
your great power, our Father;
your deep wisdom, our Mother;
your great love, our Lord.
In the beginning your Spirit brooded over the waters
and brought forth all created things.
As a mother you loved your people Israel
and called your children out of Egypt.
You taught them to walk in your way,
you took them in your arms,
bent down to them and fed them.
When they went astray you did not let loose your anger:
compassion grew warm within you,
for you are God and not a mortal,
the Holy One in our midst.
Through Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel,
through Ruth and Hannah,
you brought to birth children of promise,
to be patriarchs, priests and prophets.
To accomplish your loving purpose,
Elizabeth bore John the Baptist, last of the prophets,
and Mary bore Jesus, our Brother in being,
our Mother in mercy, our Saviour from evil.
Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

As a hen gathers her chicks,
so he longed to gather his children to himself,
and wept over Jerusalem, because our hearts were hard.
We praise you that through his sacrificial death
and by his rising from the grave
we are reborn to grow
into the liberty and splendour of the children of God.
In his mercy he restores us;
in this bread and wine
he joins us to his Passion, death and resurrection.
[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it
and said:
'This is my body which is broken for you.
Do this is remembrance of me.'
In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.
For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.']
Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Remembering the work and passion of our Saviour Christ
and pleading his sacrifice made once for all,
we set forth this bread and cup
that by the coming of the Holy Spirit
our beloved Mother Jesus may feed us with himself,
granting us by faith to glimpse the Godhead
and to taste of heavenly joy.
May he who like a mother brought us into being
and from whom flows the motherhood of grace
bring to birth in us new works of love,
to the glory of the blessed Trinity,
whose love is over all that has been made,
world without end.

All **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

Mothering Sunday – Introduction to a Eucharist prayer

And here we come, this Mothering Sunday,
to celebrate the one
who gives flesh to what love
is really all about.

We invite you to lay down your worries,
your pre-occupations, and your fears,
and to come to share at this table –
where God lays out his love for us all.

Here, in bread and wine are the elements of passion,
the signs of love that knows no end.

Here is the invitation to come to God
And to speak your own 'Yes' in response.

Duncan Tuck

[The words of institution should be read here.](#)

Mothering Sunday – Eucharist prayer

God whose love is greater than a mother's for her children,
we thank you for this gift of bread – feed us.

God whose care is greater than a father's for his family,
we praise you for this wine – quench our thirst.

God who, in Jesus, reveals love walking with us through the darkest valleys,
we give our money in thanks – sustain us.

God whose strength upholds us when we are down,
we give our lives into your own strong hands – protect us.

Bless this moment of sharing together,
that our eating and our drinking may be more than bodily food,
but may refresh our hearts and minds
and bind us together as one body, caring and sharing.

Send your spirit down upon what we do here,
and enter our hearts,
so that this bread and wine may truly become for us
the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Then we may feast in joy for all you have done,
and work to be one body in anticipation
of what you will do with us, together.
Amen.

Duncan Tuck

Eucharistic prayer for May Day/work

All our work and joy, Creator God, is to sing your praise
for the six days on which you laboured
and for this, the sabbath day of rest and resurrection.
Your glory speaks to us in all creation:
the sun and rain calling life from bare earth
the greening of the hedgerows in the spring
the coming of swallows, the blossom on the apple-tree.
Yet the world you made is spoiled by sin and suffering:
we make war against each other
and in greed for selfish gain
plunder and pollute the gifts with which you bless us.
Through long years you toiled to call your people
to a way of righteousness and peace.
You led us to freedom when we were burdened in Egypt
you gave us the Law and prophets
when we could not find the way.
But your greatest work was yet to come.
You took upon yourself the glory and the shame of our humanity
when Jesus your Son was born of Mary.
All his work to him was joy
though he knew our weariness and sorrow.
He left the workshop of the carpenter
and, as teacher, healer, friend of sinners,
called those who heard him to share in his labours.
In his last and greatest work
through wood and nails he wrought us our salvation,
enduring the Cross for the joy that was set before him.
Risen from the dead, he fills all creation with hope
ascended in glory, he raises all things to the Father;
through him the life-giving Spirit
makes marvellous the common, and drudgery divine.
Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

So, remembering the work and passion of our Saviour Christ
we celebrate him crucified and risen
in bread and wine which earth has given
and human hands have made.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:

'This is my body which is broken for you.

Do this is remembrance of me.'

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:

'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.']

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Send down the Holy Spirit upon us and upon creation's fruit that we may find healing in the broken bread and peace through the shedding of his blood.

May we, his fellow-workers here,

be refashioned by his grace

that all his work may be fulfilled

and all things sing your praise,

one God, Trinity of love.

All **Amen.**

God of all creation

For environmental issues or One World Week

God of all creation,

in your teeming and orderly world,

we have disturbed the balance –

the rich forcing the poor to wreck environments;

the ripping and spoiling of your creation

in order that we may have convenience,

comfort and abundance.

Help us to care –

to share in the renewing of hearts, of lives, of landscape.

As we come to worship a God who gives everything for us,

help us to leave behind our own selfishness.

Help us to restore and see restored what has been destroyed,

even if it means inconvenience for us.

Help us to work and pray and live

for the life you wish to give all this earth. In Jesus' name.

Duncan Tuck

True Inclusivity

Within the context of Communion

Dear God,
we confess that sometimes
we give in to what are often irrational fears.
Strange people and places
can make us feel anxious and edgy.
We are hesitant to welcome others
into what we regard as our own space.
Almost without knowing it,
we establish safe and familiar territories
and hedge them round with self-justification.

We know it will not do.
We know it goes against your nature.
Your love crosses all boundaries to gather all peoples
and makes no distinctions –
and neither should ours.
We seek your help.

We hear you invite us to your table
and to share your broken bread
and we find that everyone is given a place
and none are turned away.
Your love is not choosy, nor hesitant, nor forced.
Your love is open, gracious, accepting.
Sometimes ours is not.
And therefore, in our world,
classes and clubs divide
and what you made to be one human family
is torn by fear and greed.

As we come to your table, therefore,
help us reclaim those yearnings
for a kingdom where all are welcome and wanted,
affirmed and embraced,
even as Jesus stretched out his arms for us.
Amen.

Duncan Wilson

Praise the Lord for Harvest

Based on Psalm 65:5b-11a

Praise the Eternal One!
People on land and sea, trust in the Most High.
Our God calms the roar of the seas,
and softens the turmoil of the peoples.
So shout of the things God has done!
Stand in awe of God's deeds.
Echo God's name in every corner of this world.
Behold God's gentle care for this land –
the richness and fertility;
the streams filling with life-giving water;
the abundance of swelling crops.
This is God's doing.
Without the blessing of rain our fields would be iron.
We would have nothing but the dust of bitter drought,
and the taste of tears too dry to shed.
What a rich harvest is the goodness of God.

Duncan Tuck

Based on Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23

We will praise the Most High, because of God's goodness.
We will praise the Eternal One, because of God's love.
We will tell of all God has done here among us.
We will tell of God's grace in the heavens above.
Yet we will not forget what the Most High is desiring,
for God loves us no matter how badly we live,
and calls us to leave behind all of our idols,
to strive to be those that the Most High loves to be with.

Duncan Tuck

The earth moves through the seasons

The earth moves through the seasons to fruitful maturity.
The lambs fatten the wheat swells and the fruit ripens.
We too grow and learn and find joy as we mature.
Creating God, you too enjoy the fulfilment of your purpose.

But, there are floods and droughts, disease and decay.
There are painful and hurtful experiences,
so we look forward with both trembling expectation
and a terrifying fear to the unknown future.

We are glad that there is growth and joy and satisfaction.
We pray for help and courage to face the disappointments.
We trust that you will be there sharing our sadnesses
and that all in the end will be well.

Your kindness and forgiveness go with us
through the valleys and the mountain tops.
For you are the faithful God, the one who is with us
we know you through Jesus Christ our friend and guide.
We praise you in the name and spirit of Jesus.
Amen.

Terry Oakley

Harvest thanksgiving

Praise from Scripture: Psalm 104 paraphrase

Lord you are great!
You make springs flow down the valleys,
streams between the hills,
giving drink to the wild animals
and river banks for birds to nest,
singing in the trees.

From your storehouse in the sky
you water the mountains
and saturate the earth,
greening the grass for the cattle,
swelling the grain,
bringing bread to sustain our strength,
wine to gladden our hearts
and oil to make our faces shine.

All your creatures look to you in hope –

you open your hand
and we are filled with good things.

Prayer

How good and right it is,
to give you thanks, our God.

All **The sights and scents of harvest
remind us of the wonder of growth.**

Rain and sunshine combine
to bring the best from your creation.

All **Here, in blossom and fruitfulness,
shine all the colours of the rainbow.**

Your promise never fails.

All **Creation tells the everlasting story
of your goodness towards us.**

It is written in your handiwork
and whispered on the breeze.

All **And we are part of it,
called to shape the future,
to care for the earth,
and to share with one another.**

Therefore,
give us grace to do all that is Christlike
so that we may bear fruit in daily acts of goodness
and reap the harvest of our souls.

Amen.

Duncan Wilson

Communion for Harvest

Praise from Scripture: Psalm 19

The heavens proclaim God's glory,
their dome God's handicraft:
day to the following day,
night to night
tell God's story.

No speech, no word,
no voice is heard.
Yet their music sounds across the world,
announcing themselves to remotest peoples!

The sun pitches its tent in the sea,
happy as a bridegroom,
exulting like a runner,
eager to win the race!

Rising from one end of the heavens
the sun travels to the other,
completing a circuit
and all are blessed by its rays.
Amen.

Prayer of approach

God of earth and heaven,
warmth of heart
and fire of love,
bring us into the shining sun of your presence
and banish all coldness from our thoughts.

As autumn steals the last of summer's lingering glory
and our eyes adjust to the fading of this day
we rejoice to see the table set with bread and wine
and to hear again your generous words of welcome.

But our broken world contends with
the harsh realities of war and deprivation
and millions of people, young and old,
are left out in the cold, unblessed, unwanted.

Therefore, we would have you
fling open the doors of your kingdom
and lay such a table upon this earth,
from which none shall be turned away.

May hands that hold your bread and take your cup
find how to hold you also in friend or stranger.
May voices that hymn your praise and stammer in prayer
find courage to press home your truth and justice.

Let some glimmer, some early promise
of the 'sun of righteousness', of Christ our Lord,
be evident, even in the conduct of our daily lives,
and in our modest acts of faithfulness.

Then may your rising
be seen and understood in this and every generation.

Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Dear Lord Jesus,
ever constant and generous
in all your dealings with us,
you have fed and filled us,
we who came empty to your table,
with much more than bread and wine.

May we who have seen again
your grace at work,
and who know how grandly your love intends
to hold and heal all things,
give ourselves joyfully to all that declares
your saving purpose for our world.

Amen.

Duncan Wilson

A Sunday in the early Autumn

Lord God, we thank you for the fruitfulness of early Autumn. We praise you for all the food our fertile fields and gardens produce. This morning, Lord, we come to worship you, so that our souls too may be fruitful and the glorious Christian virtues of love, joy, peace, kindness, patience, goodness and self-control might begin to grow and bear fruit in our lives. Here, in the garden of your church, may your children feel your loving touch upon them.

For your Son's sake

Amen.

Jennifer Martin

Breads of the world

(Suitable for One World Week and other occasions
celebrating our shared humanity)

Note: a representative sample may be chosen from the various breads; others may be added, with appropriate words. The sharing of the bread may take place in a service of Holy Communion, or at the end of the service (following Orthodox custom).

Jesus said: 'I am the bread of life.' The breads which we offer are symbols of our shared human community and of our diversity within the family of God.

We offer this UNLEAVENED BREAD, which calls to mind exiles and refugees, who, like the Jewish people, have had to leave their homes and flee their homelands. Let this bread represent all women, children and men who have had to flee their homelands and seek a new life elsewhere. Let it represent, as the unleavened bread of Passover does, the journey from slavery to freedom.

We offer this RYE BREAD, staple food of those who labour in much of Eastern Europe. Let it represent all those who struggle to feed themselves and their families, the poor, the unemployed, the over-worked, as a sign of hope.

We offer this CORN TORTILLA in remembrance of all those in Latin America who have struggled for human justice and dignity. Let it represent their coming liberation.

We offer this IRISH SODA BREAD in remembrance of all who have been divided by ancient loyalties and who have suffered in civil strife. Let it represent the hope of peace which still shines in Northern Ireland, and wherever communities are in conflict.

We offer these RICE CAKES, made from the staple food of people in Asian countries. Let them represent the rich and varied cultures of those lands, and be a joyful sign that the peoples of the east and the west have so much to give one another.

We offer these OATCAKES, the food of northern lands. Let them represent all those for whom harshness of climate and terrain make life a constant struggle, and be a sign of work justly rewarded.

We offer this SHORTBREAD, which brings to mind children. Let it represent young lives and all those who care for them into the next generation, and let its richness and sweetness be a sign of Sabbath rest.

We offer this ORGANIC WHOLEMEAL BREAD. Let it represent the bounty of the earth and our responsibility towards the natural world, and let it be a sign of wholeness for one world.

We offer breads from many lands as we pray for all the world's people and places, in the name of the One who took bread, broke it and said: 'Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you.'

All **Amen.**

From Claremont United Church of Christ (Congregational),
Claremont, California adapted by Colin Thompson

Eucharistic prayer for One World Week

We praise you, God of many names:
one God in Trinity,
community of power, wisdom, love.
In the beginning you created all worlds
and gave us this one world to be our home.
You blessed us with dreams of paradise
when nature and humanity lived in perfect harmony;
you inspired us with visions of unity,
when all the world spoke with one voice.
Yet in our foolishness we preferred our own ways:
we forfeited your paradise and spoiled the earth,
filling it with violence and corruption.
We were scattered and became many nations
speaking different tongues, cherishing different goals.

So you called one people, to be a light to all the nations,
revealed to them the Law
and spoke to them through the prophets;
but the burden was too great.

To turn us from our hardness of heart
you sent your only Son, born of Mary,
who heard your call and humbly did your will.
Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Through his living witness to your truth,
his unjust death on our behalf
his rising from the dead to break the power of evil
you gave the human race a new beginning,
entered through the waters of baptism by the Holy Spirit.
Through this same Spirit you called into one Church
peoples and nations of many tongues
to be a sign of unity and hope for a divided world.

To your Church you gave this thanksgiving meal
in which your people share one bread, one cup,
following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ
[who, the night he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it
and said:

‘This is my body which is broken for you.

Do this is remembrance of me.’

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:

‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.’]

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Lord, we bring before you this sacrifice of love
made to reconcile all things in heaven and on earth
through Christ your Son, our Saviour.
Send down your Spirit on this bread and wine
that we may receive them for our healing
and for the healing of the nations.

So unite us in the Spirit
that our life together may build one Church
to be a living sign of justice and peace
until all things in heaven and on earth
are reconciled to you,
through Jesus Christ, in whom all are at one
in the fellowship of the Father and the Spirit.

All **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

Eucharistic prayer for All Saints

Lord, we praise you that the story of your grace
is full of names, women and men with many failings,
surprised by your call, transformed by your love.

Today we remember them with thanks:

Abraham our father, who was your friend,
the laughter of Sarah, the faithfulness of Ruth,
Moses the liberator and law-giver,
David the king, the poet and musician,
who saw from afar the One who was to come.

So when the time was ripe,
you sent Jesus your Son, our great High Priest,
who in the days of his flesh
learned obedience in the school of suffering
and who, sharing our weakness,
sympathizes with us in our struggles.

He befriended sinners and ate with outcasts;
people came to him burdened and sick
and he made them free and whole.

Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

In this his supper of love
he befriends us time and time again
and takes us with him on his memorable journey
from Cross to Resurrection, from loss to gain.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:

'This is my body which is broken for you.

Do this is remembrance of me.'

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:

'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.']

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Lord, we offer you these gifts:

Send your Spirit down upon them

that they may be the food and drink of our salvation.

Let your Spirit touch our lives

that we may be conformed to Christ

and follow in the steps of all his faithful friends

of many times and places.

Sanctify your Church, that it may live

as the company of the redeemed,

and bring us at the last to where the saints in light

are one in your eternal presence

lost in wonder, love and praise.

Colin Thompson

A litany for All Saints Day

With an endless procession of God's people, surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, we worship God:

**All With martyr saints whom the flame did not deter,
with scholar saints whose legacy is lasting insight,
with servant saints who lived for others:**

With militant saints whose spirits won on the field of battle,

with eccentric saints who danced before God,

with slow-witted saints who showed the wisdom of God:

**All With artist saints who painted and sculpted
and sang the colours and contours and melodies of the Kingdom,
with royal saints whose rule reflected the rule of God,
with weeping saints whose holy sorrow comforts us:**

With blithe saints whose laughter lifts us,
with irascible saints who drive us to distraction –
and to God – with humble, anonymous saints,
who have no memorial but whose name lives for ever:

All **With holy women and holy men whose lives show
forth the wholeness of God, with holy children
who teach us the wonder and joy of life:**

With this unlikely fellowship, who make human the depth
and riches and power and grace of life before God,
we celebrate the gift of life and the call to faith:

All **Bring us with your saints to glory everlasting.**

From Claremont United Church of Christ (Congregational),
Claremont, California, adapted by Colin Thompson

True Saints

As many as the leaves
golden in autumn
blowing along the streets
are your saints.

As precious as bales
gathered in the barns
or stored at the field side
are your saints.

As strong as the rocks
graining the hillsides
or forming the river bed
are your saints.

As widespread as frost
glazing the meadows
and coating the branches
are your saints.

As strange as it seems
grace makes possible
that me and my neighbour
are your saints.

Terry Oakley

God of all Saints and Martyrs

God of all the saints and martyrs
who called your people
to walk together the path of freedom,
gathering as a community of believers,
surrounded by the great cloud of witnesses,
the communion of loved ones,
friends,
leaders,
teachers,
our forebears in faith;
we approach you
Great Ancestor of our ancestors
in worship and in love,
praying that we might once more
draw from the well of your inspiration
and be renewed in your presence.

Amen.

Vaughan Jones

Autumn

As the nights draw in, and we pull the curtains a little earlier each evening,
we pray that, as we get older, we do not draw the curtains of our mind as well.
Lord, open our eyes to new experiences and new examples of your love and
presence in the world. And may we ever continue to praise you for these new
insights.

Amen.

Brian Hudson

Remembrance Sunday 1

Opening: Psalm 33 paraphrase

All **Let the whole world acknowledge its Creator.
For God spoke and everything came into being,
God commanded, and there it stood.**

The Most High frustrates the purposes of the nations
All **but God's own purpose stands for ever.**
Happy is the nation whose God is the Eternal One,
All **the people God chooses to serve.**

No sovereign is saved by a great army,
All **no warrior is delivered by great strength.**
God's eyes are turned to those who fear the Most High,
All **to those who set their hope on God's unfailing love.**

We wait eagerly for the Eternal One
All **who alone is our help and our shield. Amen.**

Around and within us, dear God,
stir the tender emotions
of people who regret the past
with all its pain and loss
whilst looking to the future
with yearning for peace
and the healing of the nations.

Our greatest fear
is that we learn too little of the past,
and fail to deal with
those tendencies in our human nature
which lead us, either by folly or fear,
towards inevitable conflict
and mutual destruction.

'The good that we will,
we do not do.
The evil we would not do,
that we do.'

Open our hearts, we pray
in a true spirit of confession and self examination
lest we exalt the courage and sacrifice of others
without measuring the expense of our own commitment
to justice, freedom, and peace.
Set before us the example of One
who came and gave everything
that we might have life in all its fullness.

'He was despised and held of no account,
an object from which people avert their eyes,
yet he bore our afflictions
and by his wounds we are healed.'
Therefore, save, forgive and heal us dear Christ.
Amen.

Prayer for peace

God of justice, encircle our earth
with your demand for integrity and openness,
for fairness and sharing

All **and call the nations to live in harmony.**

Prince of Peace, heal your divided world
of its warring madness.
Still our fears and calm our stormy confrontations.

All **and call the nations to live in harmony.**

Spirit of reconciliation, breathe your fertile influence
on all creation and help us find the common ground
where forgiveness may flourish and flower in new friendship

All **and call the nations to live in harmony.**

Holy Trinity of Hope and Love and Joy,
let your desire for justice, peace and reconciliation
mark every encounter with you and with our neighbour

All **that in your presence and to your glory,
the nations may learn to live in harmony.
Amen.**

Duncan Wilson

Remembrance Sunday 2

Opening Scripture: Psalm 46

God is our refuge and strength,
a timely help in trouble;
so we are not afraid though the earth shakes
and the mountains move in the depths of the sea.

Nations are in tumult, kingdoms are overturned;
when God thunders, the earth melts.
The God of Hosts is with us,
the God of Jacob and Leah is our fortress.

Come, see what the Most High has done,
the astounding deeds wrought on the earth;
The Eternal One breaks the bow, snaps the spear.
The God of Hosts is with us,
the God of Jacob and Leah is our fortress.
Amen.

Reading: Isaiah 25:1-9

Generation after generation,
dear God,
has lifted its hands and voice to you
in search of peace –
for a world in chaos,
afame with anger,
and torn by hatred.

And thus we come on behalf of our generation.

The horrors of war
are no longer distant or hidden.
We watch the terror unfolding, the smoke rising,
the stricken bodies falling, the earth exploding.
Fear and sorrow well up within us
in equal measure.

With deep sighs approaching despair,
we watch the march of death
across the fields where people laboured in hope of harvest,
and through their towns now turned to rubble.
We sense the breaking of your heart,
the unfinished grieving of Gethsemane.

Brief silence

And we recognise that war is no accident.
We have allowed evil the upper hand.
Just grievances go unheeded,
resentments fester
and indifference clouds
the wisdom and love that would save us.
Forgive us for wanting peace without working for it,
for mistaking talk of sacrifice for the real thing.
Come, Lord, mend and remake us
and show us the way that leads to true peace.
Amen.

Duncan Wilson

Remembrance Sunday 3

Sing

**All Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God's holy name.
Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.**

It is God who forgives all your guilt,
Who heals every one of your ills,
Who redeems your life from the grave,
Who crowns you with love and compassion.

The Lord is compassion and love,
The Lord is patient and rich in mercy.
God does not treat us according to our sins,
Nor repay us according to our faults.

As parents have compassion on their children,
The Lord has mercy on those who revere him;
For God knows of what we are made,
And remembers that we are dust.

(Taizé)

So we remember

All those who died in and from this country and those who died from the countries of the Commonwealth, allies and former enemies, the people of Nagasaki and Hiroshima during the two World Wars;
Those who died in the wars that followed – Korea, Vietnam and too many others;
Those who died in the Genocides of African Slavery in the Caribbean and the Americas, the Holocaust, the Congo, Cambodia, East Timor, Rwanda, and too many others; Those who died in the fight to end apartheid in Namibia, South Africa and too many others;
Those who died in the 'Dirty Wars' of repression – in Chile, in Colombia, Peru, Brazil, the Philippines and too many other countries;
Those who died in countries close to the heart of people in this community – Ireland, Chile, Rwanda, Colombia, and in Bethnal Green itself.

We remember

Those we knew
Those who were brave
Those who were afraid
Those who mourn and grieve
Those who carry the memory of war in their souls
Those whose scars refuse to heal.

Silence

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord.

All **Let light perpetual shine upon them.**

May they rest in peace.

All **And rise in glory.**

Sing

God gives peace like a river,
Peace like a river,
God gives peace like a river
In my soul.

God gives hope, hope forever,
Hope, hope forever,
God gives hope, hope forever
For my soul.

God gives life, life forever,
Life, life forever,
God gives life, life forever
To us all.

Let's bring peace like a river,
Peace like a river,
Let's bring peace like a river
To the world.

God of the heavens,
creator of sun and stars
nothing is beyond your power.

Saviour of the downtrodden,
crucified by principalities and power,
nothing can separate us from your love.

Spirit of reconciliation and truth,
awakening the conscience of the just,
nothing is outside your redemptive love.

Embrace the people of this earth with the refreshment of forgiveness
and the wholeness of your new life.

All **Amen.**

Vaughan Jones

Prayers of intercession for Remembrance Sunday

The guns bang; the shells explode; the air is thick with dust and debris.

The terrorist, or is it freedom fighter, decides that this is the day they will die and pauses to say goodbye to their home and walks out to trigger oblivion.

The leaders of governments worry and plan, power as a tool, power as a burden. People wanting to do what is right.

Lazy people wanting to be led by the crowd. Ignorant people following those who forcefully lead.

The soldier prepares.

The politician plans.

Give them all the desire to do what is right. Not what is quick, nor what is easy, nor what the loudest and most powerful voices shout for, but for what is right in your sight.

We wait.

We shout for blood, we do not give them time to debate and explore the issue from the other point of view. We shout that they should be left to it and nothing should rock our boat. We have a narrow circle of interest and assume that our concerns are yours, O God.

We allow our government to bully and insist on valuing life in this country above that in other places.

All are your children

Really, do you really mean that, do you?

The bomber, the corrupt politician they are yours?

We pray for peace.

We pray for justice.

We pray for peace in homes and hearts not based on complacency but on love and respectful relationships.

We pray for the peace of knowing and doing your will.

In the name of Jesus the Prince of Peace.

Lesley Charlton

Colours for remembering

Following each stanza, a large red petal is attached to a display board to form, first, a red poppy.

Red is for Anger – anger in the face of injustice, anger that will not stand by and let another person suffer, anger that says that something is wrong and must be stopped, anger that goes beyond our own selfish concerns to care for others. Red is for anger.

Red is for Love – love which is strong and passionate, not sickly and sentimental, love which knows no limits and encompasses family, friend, neighbour and stranger, love which doesn't count the cost of loving, love which God has for each one of us. Red is for love.

Red is for Sacrifice – sacrifice by the few for the sake of the many, sacrifice for us living today and children yet to be born, sacrifice born not just from duty but from love, sacrifice seen in Jesus for the sake of the world. Red is for sacrifice.

Red is for War – war which cuts short life, war which devastates families and communities, war which destroys the earth God gave us to care for, war which continues in the world today. Red is for war.

Red is for anger, love, sacrifice and war. Red is the colour of remembering the past, lest we forget the true horror of war. On this day we remember and we commit ourselves to ensuring war does not happen again. Other colours help us to look to the future and a vision of a more caring and just world.

After each stanza, a slightly smaller petal of the appropriate colour is added to make a second smaller and multi-coloured flower. The colours used are those found on the Olympic flag and are associated with goodwill across the human family.

Blue is for Life – life giving water, sweet and refreshing, without which nothing can survive for more than a few days. Life is God's most precious gift to us, life is full of relationships and promise, opportunities and experience. In our living we share in the lives of others and in the very life of God. Blue is for life.

Green is for Hope – new shoots, pushing through the earth, buds blossoming into flowers, fruit forming, growing and swelling, ready for harvesting. Hope encourages us to dream dreams and make the impossible a reality, hope breeds excitement and energy, new ideas and enthusiasm. In our hoping we share a vision for a better world where God is central to all we do. Green is for hope.

Black is for Silence – in the depths of the earth, where no light can penetrate rocks and earth, and no sound travels from the surface above, the silence crashes in on our ears. In silence we are still and allow ourselves space to think

and reflect, in the silence we can be ourselves and not what others expect us to be. In the silence we discover ourselves, made in God's image, made to live in God's image. Black is for silence.

Gold is for Warmth – warm rays of sunshine on your back, relaxing tired muscles, easing away aches and pains. Warmth floods our bodies making us feel safe and secure, warmth reassures us that we are loved, valued and cherished. As we feel the warmth shared between family and friends, we experience the warmth of God enfolding us each day of our lives. Gold is for warmth.

After this stanza, a white circle is added to the centre of the flower, binding all the petals together.

White is for Peace – the quiet fall of a snowflake, each individual flake seemingly insignificant, yet before long a blanket of perfection covers the ground, so thick that unless you look closely you can't see the tiny flakes which make it up. Peace begins with the tiny acts of individuals but can become an avalanche for change in our world, peace is not the absence of anything but demands action and commitment. Living in peace with ourselves, our neighbours, and our world, we live in peace with God, whose peace is greater than our understanding. White is for peace.

Red, Blue, Green, Black, Gold and White – colours which unite the people of the world, colours which help us to remember and look to the future, colours which remind us that we are people of faith who travel with God.

Lindsey Sanderson

World AIDS day

The lighting of the first candle

For all those people and countries affected by AIDS

Welcome

Invocation

Anxious, passionate, overwhelmed, determined;

All **We come seeking hope and wholeness.**

Angry, diligent, confused, enmeshed;

All **We come seeking hope and wholeness.**

Joyful, cynical, practical, faithful;

All **We come seeking hope and wholeness.**

The lighting of the second candle

For all people caring for people affected by HIV/AIDS

A reflection

The lighting of the third candle

For all people who have died of HIV related causes

A reflection

The lighting of the fourth candle

For Justice

A reflection

The lighting of the fifth candle

To shine into the darkness of stigma

A reflection

The Eucharist

Everyone is very welcome to receive the Eucharist. If you would rather receive a blessing remain standing holding the order of service. If you do not wish to receive the Eucharist please sit.

We hope you will feel free to do what you wish.

The enormity of the realities and complexity of the issues related to people living with HIV and AIDS confronts us with the realities and complexities of our human community. God is speaking to us in this moment, inviting us to open our eyes and to turn with hope to the promise of new life.

We confess our complacency in the face of this global pandemic;
Our ignorance and fear that breed discrimination and stigma;
Our part in the blame and hatred that isolate people and destroy life;
Our inaction and avoidance that contribute to life-threatening silences.

Let us live out God's light in our struggles, hopes and dreams for justice.

The peace

Peace and new life be always with you.

All

And also with you

(we greet each other with peace)

Communion may be celebrated

Post Eucharistic prayer

Thank you life-giving God,
For feeding us and so clothing us in your grace.
Send us out as people of Christ,
Seeking justice, restoration and freedom.
Amen.

Silence and stillness

The lighting of the sixth candle

For hope and restoration

A reflection

The blessing

Charity Hamilton

Winter

Lord God, in these cold days,
when the frosty air freezes our breath
and chills our bones,
may we know ever more deeply the warmth of your love.

May we recognise it in the welcome of this fellowship,
the kindness of friends or neighbours
the excited laughter of young children
and the beauty of nature, stark and shorn against a winter sky.

Let it unfreeze our hearts,
invigorate our worship,
and direct our daily living.

In Christ's name.

Brian Hudson

Index of titles

Exploring the year

Autumn	79
All are your children	85
Based on Psalm 106.....	69
Breads of the world.....	73
Colours for remembering	86
Communion for Harvest.....	71
Earth moves through the seasons, The.....	69
Eucharistic prayer for All Saints	76
Eucharistic prayer for May Day/work	66
Eucharistic prayer for Mothering Sunday.....	63
Eucharistic prayer for One World Week.....	74
First Sunday in the New Year	61
For beginning a New Year	61
God of all creation.....	67
God of all Saints and Martyrs	79
Harvest thanksgiving	70
Holocaust Memorial Day.....	61
Litany for All Saints Day, A.....	77
Mothering Sunday – Introduction to a Eucharist prayer.....	65
Mothering Sunday – Eucharist prayer	65
Praise the Lord for Harvest.....	69
Prayer of approach	72
Prayer of Communion.....	72
Prayer for peace	81
Prayers of intercession for Remembrance Sunday	85
Remembrance Sunday 1	79
Remembrance Sunday 2	81
Remembrance Sunday 3	83
Sunday in the early Autumn, A.....	73
True Inclusivity	68
True Saints.....	78
Winter	90
World AIDS day.....	87

Index of authors

Exploring the year

Lesley Charlton	85
Charity Hamilton	87-89
Brian Hudson	61-63, 79, 89
Vaughan Jones	79, 84-85
Jennifer Martin	61, 73
Terry Oakley	69-70, 78
Lindsey Sanderson	86-87
Colin Thompson	63-64, 73-78
Duncan Tuck	61, 65, 67, 69
Duncan Wilson	68, 70-73, 81-82

Encircled by prayer

Calls to worship	93
Offertory prayers	98
Prayers of approach and thanksgiving	99
Prayers of confession	113
Prayers of assurance	116
Prayers of commitment	119
Global voices	122
Faith	145
Celebrating the Lord's supper	154
Blessings	171
Index of titles	176
Index of authors	180



Calls to worship

Every family

Come, let's worship God.
God who is mystery,
God who is not contained by any one religious system
God who is certainly not contained by our minds and hearts.

Come, let's worship God
God who wills dignity for every family, every person.
God who lies at the heart of each life and speaks to the depth of each heart.
God who is constant adventure,
Constant movement
Constant presence!

Come let's worship God
Let's be filled with awe, wonder and that profound grace
Seen in Jesus, the carpenter.
The Holy Child.

John LI Humphreys

Christ is our Lord

Christ is our Lord
Christ is our King
alive, though crucified,
seated, on the throne of grace,
present with us now.
Christ is our servant,
Christ is our beloved.

Vaughan Jones

Lord, our loving God

Lord, our loving God,
whose ways are mysterious
and yet whose love is deep and tender;
you provide for all our needs.
Make yourself known to us as we worship you now:
give us words to praise you,
hearts to love you and minds to know you.
Help us to offer all to you,
and to know your mysterious presence with us
as we gather in your name.

Duncan Tuck

Coming near to God

Come near to God and he will come near to you (James 4:8)

Lord God, we come to worship you (this morning/evening) with your command to draw near to you ringing in our ears. It sounds so obvious, Lord, so simple, but we find it so difficult. A thousand trivial things get in the way, such as our appetites, the television, our hobbies, or even the tickle we have in the small of our back. Help us this morning, Lord, to forget all these, and to bring you our whole attention so that we can hear you speaking to us. And when we have heard, help us to obey.

Amen.

Jennifer Martin

Seeking the lost sheep

Then the good shepherd calls his friends and neighbours together and says to them, 'I am so happy I have found my sheep. Let us celebrate.' (Luke 15:6)

We are so grateful Lord God (this morning/evening) that you never abandon us to our wilfulness and our stupidity. Many times, Lord, we deserve to be left in the messes we have created for ourselves. But you gently come to seek us and, like the good shepherd, disentangle us from the bramble patches into which we have fallen and set us on our feet again. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts that you never give up on us.

Amen.

Jennifer Martin

A deep awareness of each other

Lord Jesus, we come to you this morning not as individuals, but as your whole people to worship you. Help us to be aware of each other as an unbroken circle stretching right round this church. May we in spirit, hands joined, look to you, the centre of our circle, and feel your love pulsing through us to reach out to our neighbours about us. Help us to worship you today not selfishly and individually, but with a deep awareness of each other.

Amen.

Jennifer Martin

Gathered on this Holy ground

We are gathered on this holy ground –
to drink from the Wellspring of eternal life
to be inspired by the Spirit's passion
to be shaped into a new community in Christ.

We are here, because God is here –

to listen, to speak,

to challenge, to guide,

to comfort, to surprise;

to take us by the hand and tell us 'I love you'

Let us sing to God!

Carolyn Smyth

Come from many places

We are God's people
come from many places
to this dear place.
We come as we are
bringing with us memories and longings
disappointments and achievements
doubt and faith.
Let us offer all these to God
through Christ Jesus
who is our peace and strength and hope.
Let us worship God.

Carolyn Smyth

Open our hearts

We open our hearts to receive God's welcome
All **We open our hands to greet one another.**
We open our lives to God's invitation
All **To live in love and freedom.**

Jan Berry

Come to celebrate God's world-wide people

Come from your homes,
places of tension and relaxation,
of squabbles and arguments, of games and laughter.
Come to celebrate God's world-wide family.

Come from your places of work,
leaving behind deadlines and pressures
the tedium of creativity of daily tasks.
Come to celebrate God's world-wide work.

Come to join this community of faith,
In this place of prayer and praise,
struggling to witness and serve,
Come to celebrate God's world-wide people.

*Note: this could be interspersed with the singing of the Wild Goose song
'Come all you people'.*

Jan Berry

The spirit of each person is mysterious.
The spirit of every child, woman and man is precious.
Each spirit, each soul-life offers a glimpse beyond the surface
towards the depths of the Divine.

And now before God, as in music, art, dance and
architecture, in dawn, sunset and star-lit night,
we wonder at all that is holy, special and deep mystery.

We come to worship God, to be raised by the risen Christ
towards a fullness of life that celebrates the spirit of the people.

We are here, God is here. Let's journey in worship towards
what God calls us to be drawing all spirits together towards
his oneness.

John LI Humphreys

For resting in God

Let us worship God:
God who comes with us as we walk the streets to this place;
God who is already here, because of those we meet
and because of the years of faithful worship;
God who is in love with each and every one of us
and who continually calls us to share in the life of Jesus;
God who says, 'Come to me all who are heavy laden and
I will give you rest.'

Worship God.

So I call you to rest, relax,
kick off your shoes, find your comfort,
And we will seek God together.

Duncan Tuck

For healing and rest

Come now, to this quiet place,
to this centre of calm in a busy world.
Come now, to your God.
Come now, to the God
who knows your every thought,
and yet cares.
Come now, to the God
who has heard your every cry,
and has suffered your hard hearts,
and yet cares.
Come now, to the God
of energy and calm;
now, to the God
who walks with you
and bids you rest.
Come now,
and find the healing you need.
Come and find God;
for God calls you.

Duncan Tuck

Offertory prayers

Abundant gifts

Dear God

You are not just generous but extravagant, and we cannot put a price on the abundant gifts we receive from you like love, faith, truth and hope. Their value cannot be measured in money – they are what makes life worth living and we thank you for them. And while these gifts are not for sale, nor for trading – they are for sharing; so with the inspiration and courage of the Holy Spirit, help us to share them with others.

Amen.

Carolyn Smyth

Loving God

Loving God

You are more generous to us than we can grasp
because you breathe new life into us.
You sent Jesus to show us how to live it to the full.
This offering is one way we can thank you;
help us to find others ways,
this coming week,
as we go about our daily lives.

Amen.

Carolyn Smyth

Prayers of approach and thanksgiving

We're a mixed bag!

We're a mixed bag of people!

From different places, with myriad concerns and preoccupations.
Some of us have worked all night; some of us are just waking!
There's happiness here, and there are all sorts of painful
experiences here, too.

There's one thing we have in common

Somehow we're drawn, yes there's habit and routine and discipline
But more there's the sense we must look beyond
Beyond ourselves, beyond our business, beyond our tight-knit community

There's all the depth of human love, of human grief, of human hope, here.

This binds us together, because it points us beyond ourselves.

We come because in our smallness, we glimpse a world
which is magnificent

We glimpse into the breadth, and length, height and depth
into the Divine bursting into and out of human life.

John LI Humphreys

An invocation

Glorious and gracious God,
you are with us,
and call us into your presence.

We lift our hearts in response to your love;
we raise our songs in praise of your goodness;
we offer our adoration in response to your holiness.

Summon us, voice of God
with words of challenge and power
calling us to courageous discipleship
and urgent witness.

All **Speak, Lord your servant is listening.**

Speak to us, breath of God,
with forgiveness for the many occasions
we have hidden behind weakness
belittling your power
and denying your presence.

All **Speak, Lord your servant is listening.**

Amen.

Terry Oakley

Presence

We come into your presence,
to be aware of you with us.
You are always aware of us,
always sensitive to our needs and joys.
You invite us to be with you,
to have a place near you.
Your presence is joy, light, comfort,
your nearness is holy, awesome, wonder.

In the play of sunlight through rainbows,
in the sounds of music and laughter,
in the touch of friends and loved ones,
in the sweet perfume of blossom,
in the taste of bread and wine,
your presence is known.

But also in the warm dark,
in the silence,
in the solitude,
in the scent of fear,
in the sourness of tears,
you are with us,
your presence surrounds us.

As we come before you,
we realise our faults,
we remember our sins,
we feel remorse for our selfishness,
we repent and feel ashamed.

You welcome us,
you greet us with a smile,
you forgive and renew,
you give us new hope, new life.
You love us into your presence.
We bless and thank you.
We praise and adore you.
We enjoy being with you,
and with each other, in the name, the spirit and the
presence of Jesus.
Amen.

Terry Oakley

Be present

We call on the purpose of God to enfold us now.
God, be present in our activity and our stillness.
We call on the presence of God to be with us now.
God, be present in our gathering and in our parting.
We call on the power of God to meet us now.
God, be present in our thinking and our speaking.

Faithful God, you are loyal to your people always,
forgive our betrayals of you and of each other.
Covenant God, you remember your people always,
forgive our forgetfulness of you and of the poor and the broken.
Active God, you love your people always,
forgive our failure to do your will and to cherish creation.

Living God, be present in power to fulfil your purpose
In the name and Spirit of Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

Amen.

Terry Oakley

God is God

We receive God's love, God's grace, and God's mercy;
but that is not why we worship.
We come to see friends, those known and yet met;
but that is not why we worship.
We come to sing songs and hear music together;
but still, that is not why we worship.
Nor do we worship to earn forgiveness and love;
these are free to all who ask.
We worship because God is God,
no other reason is needed.
Hear our worship, loving Lord,
and accept our gifts however we offer them,

Amen.

Nigel Warner

In God is life

In God is life,
Created life, Moulded life, Real life.
In Christ is life,
Abundant life, Forgiven life, Real life.
In the Spirit is life,
Vibrant life, New life, Real life.
Come, open yourself to receive life.
Life in all its fullness.
The gift of God to all who accept.
Receive the Real life of God,
through Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Nigel Warner

God of new beginnings

God of new beginnings,
we give thanks for a new start for us with you today
we give thanks for a new start for relationships at home,
we give thanks for a new start for the poor of the world.

God of forgiveness
we give thanks for the Good News we hear in Jesus Christ
the Gospel of mercy for all who have done wrong;
we give thanks for the hope of a new millennium,
a time to create peace and justice for all,
we give thanks for the joy we find in the Church
a community of love and support for all.

God of missions
we give thanks for your promise of new life
we give thanks for your purpose of justice
we give thanks for the power to make all things new.
in the name and the spirit of Jesus we pray.
Amen.

Terry Oakley

God of time

God of time,
We thank you for the moments of sunrise and sunset,
with their brilliant colours of promise.
We thank you for moments of stillness
when we know peace and tranquillity
We thank you for moments of joy and laughter
with their sense of shared hope.
We thank you for moments of truth
when we know wonder and awe.
We thank you for moments of sadness
with tears shed for love.
Help us to find in each moment
your promised gift of life abundant
and your presence with us now.

Terry Oakley

God who is...

God who is love,
before time, beyond time
you are the ground of reality;
everything belongs to you,
all things are intended to express love;
your whole being is love.

God who is life,
on earth and beyond earth,
you are the source of meaning;
in darkness and death you are a light,
in doubt and despair you are a friend;
your whole being is life.

God who is truth,
in words and beyond words,
you are the fountain of hope;
justice and peace are your promise,
faith and love are your way,
your whole being is truth.

Terry Oakley

Praise the God of new things

God puts a new song into our mouth,
are we willing to sing it?
God puts and new heart into our bodies,
are we willing to use it?
The love of God empowers and enthuses,
are we willing to accept the gift?
Let us praise the God of new things,
whose gifts are abundant and whose faithfulness is great.

Amen.

Nigel Warner

Be our new life

God of creation
mystery
and the holy place
draw us to yourself

God of the Word
incarnate
spoken
enacted
be our strength

God of love
forgiveness
and the power of tenderness
be our new life

Amen.

Alasdair Pratt

Hold us today

Hold us today.
Make us aware of your loving arms, under and around us.
Tease out our tense muscles, our secret thoughts,
our stubborn minds.
Help us to trust you through and through.
May we be honest in our worship
allowing the people we are to push through
all the layers of pretence we paint over the top.
And may we allow you
to strip away all that is unloving,
dishonouring or hurtful
that we may grow in you
as we should.

Duncan Tuck

Offering the best

We give thanks for

artists, saints, heroes and heroines,
and ordinary folk who are the salt of the earth.

We pray for

those under pressure to succeed and
for those who feel they have failed,
for those whose guilt is not washed away by mercy,
and for those without faith or hope for the future.

We give thanks for

economists, entrepreneurs, enthusiasts for work,
for politicians, the press, and media stars,
for dreamers, visionaries, prophets;

We pray for

the earth, the polluted seas, the blackened beaches,
the blasted earth, the choking air,
the oil-coated birds.

We give thanks for

carers, teachers and ministers,
for parents, grandparents and god-parents,
for peace-makers, be-frienders and go-betweens.

We pray for

those families who want food,
for those with a cardboard box that want a house,
for those with benefit that want independence,
for those with skills who want work.

Amen.

Terry Oakley

How wonderful

How wonderful it is to see the beauty of the earth,
and to know the love of the creative God.

How wonderful it is to hear the sound of truth
and to understand the word of the faithful God.

How wonderful it is to touch the hand of a friend
and to feel the presence of the healing God.

How wonderful it is to smell the perfume of joy
and to offer thanksgiving to the generous God.

How wonderful it is to taste the bread of life
and to sit at table with the welcoming God.

We give thanks and praise for the abilities we enjoy
and for the opportunities to help one another.

We give thanks and praise for the confidence we have
and for the challenges to learn from one another.

We give thanks and praise for the examples we see
and for the people who have shown us the way.

God, forgive us when we have been selfish.
Help us to seek forgiveness from those we have hurt.
Help us to forgive when others say sorry to us.
Help us to forgive ourselves and to move on
with confidence in your love.

Terry Oakley

One-in-three God

Father God who is our life, be with us.
Christ who is our guide, walk with us.
Spirit who is our strength, uphold us.
One-in-three God, sharing each moment,
bless and hallow this worship,
cleanse and mould our hearts,
that we may praise you alone,
because of who you are,
and for opening our eyes to see.

Duncan Tuck

Great big beautiful God

Great big beautiful God –
we are so glad to be here
with you and with each other
celebrating our life together as your people.

[In a moment of silence we tell you the things
we want to give praise and thanks for today](#)

Thank you for this breathtaking, fragile world we live in
and for the possibility of responding to you through it –
in wonder – and intimacy
in humility – and delight.

Thank you that the world is full of difference,
where people

 experience you differently

 worship you differently

 serve you differently.

Help us not to use their differences as excuses to build walls that separate,
but rather to use them to see the world
as a kaleidoscope of colours and patterns,
where everyone is linked to their neighbours,
bound together by your strong love

Great big beautiful God
Jesus lived among us demonstrating your love for all people
but especially the ones

who have low expectations of themselves
whom nobody bothers with
who never get a job that pays enough,
or a home to call their own,
or a task that gives them delight
or a special person to love.

If we know someone like that, let us see them through your eyes;
give us the compassion and the conviction to say to them
'you are worth it',

Just as, when we doubt whether we are worth it,

Christ says to us: I came so that you might have life in all its fullness.

Great big beautiful God, thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Amen.

Carolyn Smyth

Holy risk-taker

Holy risk-taker, wonderful God,
You create us out of your deep, exuberant love
And in great hope.

More than that, you make us in your own image;
We are humbled and enlivened by your faith in us.
Praise to your Name beyond all names.

But as we struggle to discover and perfect your image in ourselves
we struggle too to be rid of burdens which get in the way:

burdens of guilt, fear, despair,
burdens of anger, resentment, prejudice

Jesus Christ, perfection of God's image;
as both judge and friend,
we acknowledge our burdens to you,
hiding none
because you already know them.

Silence

Forgive us where we have wrongly burdened others
help us to forgive those who have wrongly burdened us.
Release us from all that harms us;
help us to turn again – and again
from selfishness to selflessness
so that we grow in wisdom and maturity
towards the day when we become
perfect bearers of God's image.

Amen.

Carolyn Smyth

We are here because you called

Creating God,
Fashioner of a universe so vast that mathematics can scarcely comprehend it,
yet so delicately small that physicists can barely imagine it,
we adore you.

Redeeming God,
Leading your people from the oppression of Egypt,
Offering new possibilities in Babylon
Laying bare the structures of sin on Golgotha
and inviting us to the new life of the third day,
we adore you.

Sustaining God,
Provider of manna,
Giver of dreams to the old and visions to the young,
Reconciler of Babel's diversity
by the gift of the Spirit,
we adore you.

We are here because you called, and we followed.
We are here so that you may make us what you would have us to be.
So we pray, loving God,
take us in our brokenness and bewilderment,
and in our excitement and anticipation.
Accept our hopes, quell our fears,
and make us one in Christ Jesus,
for he it is who invites us to feast on bread and wine,
his life,
the world's salvation.

Amen.

David G Cornick

Come, let us return to God

Come, let us return to God,
singing songs of love
wonderful and true.

Come, let us turn to God
lamenting our sin
sharing our sorrow and shame.

Come, let us turn to our neighbours
confessing our wrong
seeking forgiveness and offering peace.
Come, let us turn ourselves
away from pride and envy
towards humility and service

Holy God, maker of all, have mercy on us.
Jesus Christ, Servant of the poor, have mercy on us.
Holy Spirit, breath of life, have mercy on us.
May God forgive us, Christ renew us,
and the Spirit enable us to grow in love.

Turn again, O God, and give us life;
that your people may rejoice in you.
Create in me a clean heart, O God;
and renew a right spirit within me.
Give us again the joy of your help;
With your Spirit of freedom sustain us.

Amen.

Terry Oakley

Thank you loving God

We thank you, loving God
For our families who care for us,
Who give us food and money,
Hugs when we need them,
And welcoming places for parties and friends.
All **Thank you loving God, for all that helps us
To feel we belong in your world.**

We thank you, loving God,
For the homes we live in,
For comfortable beds, teddy bears and computers,
And places where we can relax and be ourselves.
All **Thank you, loving God for all that helps us
To feel we belong in your world.**

We thank you, loving God,
For the friends we enjoy being with,
Who share their things with us,
People we can turn to when we need help.
All **Thank you, loving God, for all that helps us
To feel we belong in your world.**

We thank you, loving God,
For the fun of being part of a crowd,
The atmosphere of a football match or concert,
For the excitement of having people who feel the same way
all around us.

All **Thank you, loving God, for all that helps us
To feel we belong in your world.**

Amen.

Jan Berry

In peace let us pray to the Lord

(A peace candle may be lit)

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

All **Lord have mercy**
For peace from on high and for our salvation,
Let us pray to the Lord.

All **Lord have mercy**
For the peace of the whole world,
And for the welfare of the Church of God,
And for its unity, let us pray to the Lord.

All **Lord have mercy.**
For this holy house
And for all those who enter here in faith,
Let us pray to the Lord.

All **Lord have mercy.**
Help, save, comfort and defend us, gracious Lord.

All **Amen.**

Liturgy of John Chrysostom. adpt.

God of every day

God of light and power
God of weakness and darkness

God who can and God who makes
God who knows of failure and corruption

God of peace and justice.
God of the troubled and oppressed

God of the calm and strength
God of defeat and confusion

God of the noise and the singing
we come to worship you
God of today yesterday and tomorrow
Now today we worship you

God who has formed each of us with our abilities and failings with our passions and weaknesses we take this time to listen to reflect to think. We know that we have done wrong things. We have failed to go beyond the right to do the best. We have been narrow in our circle of love and care Forgive us. Jesus has come to bring us life in all its fullness. Our sins are forgiven in his name. Amen.

Lesley Charlton

To be here as our whole selves

Let us make sure that we are here as our whole selves. Lord, if we think there are parts of our lives that you know nothing of, forgive us. If there are parts of ourselves that we pretend do not exist, disabuse us of any idea that you would be ignorant.

If we think that there was anyway that anything we have done would mean that we were excluded from your presence, forgive us. Lord as your people in all our imperfections we come.

God of love we know that you forgive us.
God of justice we know you demand more from us.
God of kindness we know you would guide us.
Thank you.

God we have met you this week.
In the shout for help and the offer of an extended palm.
In the whisper of comfort and the wise printed word.
In the breathtaking sunset and the sunlight on a puddle.
We your ordinary people have lives touched with eternity.
We praise you for your interest in us and your greatness far beyond us.
God our saviour, peace to you.
God our creator, gratitude to you.
God our empowerer, thanks to you, we pray.

In the name of Jesus who allowed us to see you we pray.

Lesley Charlton

Jesus we come to worship you

God who in Jesus has worked for a week and then stopped to worship, do you know how we feel? We have many things that we could be doing, yet here we are. Here to reflect, to listen to your word, to be encouraged by you and challenge by your greatness

God who in Jesus lived in a family and had many close relationships,
we have hurt other peoples' feelings this week.
They annoyed us, were mean to us and they took us for granted.
Forgive us for any wrong that we have done.

God who in Jesus has been taught, we thank you for the things that we
learned this week. In places of learning and from other places.
A wise saying, a quiet idea, a familiar thought suddenly with new power,
thank you.

God who is like us in Jesus we come to worship you.
God who is different from us as creator and spirit we come
to worship you.
Still own minds, open our hearts and thoughts.
For Jesus sake.

Amen.

Lesley Charlton

God with us

God, in the noise of this week when the children were
crying and the demands would never stop you were God.
When people were giving us a hard time and even our
friends did not seem to want to know us.
In the emptiness of the last few days when we felt isolated
and abandoned thinking that nobody loved us and nobody
wanted to be with us, you were the God of love.
In the last week when it was all rush and push and
appointment and appointment, you were the peace.
You were the balance.
When what happened was not right and we shouted,
'it's so unfair' you were the justice and the mercy.

Thank you that even though we might have thought we were alone
you were with us.

God we know that we have been given the tools we need for order
and balance in life and we have decided that we can do a much
better job on our own, thank you very much.
Forgive us.

God, we have been told that you are always there, that you have
come on the earth in Jesus but we have not taken the time to see you.
Open our eyes and ears to you present here now.
In Jesus name we pray.

Amen.

Lesley Charlton

Prayers of confession

Prayer of confession

In the presence of the Holy Spirit, we pray.
Through the grace of Jesus Christ, we pray.
To God, our creator and our redeemer, we pray.

Knowing that we are weak, we pray.
Conscious of our sins, we pray.
Alert to God's abundant love, we pray.

All **O God,
Hear our regret,
Remove our guilt,
Carry the weight of our care.**

**As we repent of our sins,
O God, renew us with your grace.**

Amen.

Vaughan Jones

Confession 1

We confess our sins,
God of grace,
whatever they are.
If we got what we deserved we would really be in trouble,
but Jesus got what we deserved.
We are truly sorry for all our sins,
those seen and those unseen.
Those deliberate and those inadvertent.
The sins against others and ourselves.
All signs of our weakness,
and all, in truth, committed against you.
For these sins Christ died.
Forgive us Lord, and help us to accept your forgiveness,
and to live in the freedom it gives.

Amen.

Nigel Warner

Confession 2

We confess guilt, Lord.
Guilt for the things we have done
and said
and thought
and that are yet to be forgiven.
Guilt for the things we have done
and said
and thought
and from which we have already been forgiven.
Free us from guilt, we pray,
and set our feet upon your path of freedom.

Amen.

Nigel Warner

Forgive us for the wasted moment

Forgive us,
for the wasted moment
spent selfishly or just filling time;
for the hurtful moments
caused by our words or actions;
for the thoughtless moments
lacking in love;
for the destructive moments
when we let our anger rip;
for the missed moments
frozen by hesitation and doubt.
Help us now and every moment
to try to live as Jesus lived,
fully present, fully human, full of love.

Amen.

Terry Oakley

In steady pilgrimage

How complex life is,
Always we face challenges that seem beyond us.

We are caught in a web of relationships
Which too often become sterile,
Or irritating
Or just a formality.

We face work which is demanding
Too often with impatience
And little joy
Watching the clock.

We hear the cries of a broken world,
Too often with despair
Or a sense of futility
As though we can do nothing to help.

And so we seem to ourselves
Shallow people
Just ticking over the calendar
And not going anywhere.

That is not what you created us to be.

Grant us the spirit of hope infusing our lives,
So that what we have been
May not determine what we shall become.
In Christ, may we draw closer to you
In steady pilgrimage.

Bernard Thorogood

Living the life of faith

Loving Lord,
we try so hard to live the life of faith,
and yet we are told time and again
that we could do it better.
Encourage us, we pray, where we have got it right;
so that we can continue to live for you.
Encourage us also where we have not got it right;
so that we might better live for you.
We pray that our life of faith
through worship, prayer, and mission
will show other people the great love you have for them.
Make us into lamps of your love,
and our church into the lamp stand that allows the light to be seen.

Amen.

Nigel Warner

Prayers of assurance

God, lover of all

God, lover of all,
We come to you in our vulnerability,
Our desperate hopes and fragile new beginnings,

All **Touch us with your Spirit's tenderness and make us whole.**

God, lover of all,
We come to you with our sense of relationships broken and damaged,
Our disjointed efforts to mend what is torn and restore trust

All **Touch us with your Spirit's harmony and make us whole.**

God, lover of all,
We come to you with our awareness of poverty and division
Our broken attempts to repair community

All **Touch us with your Spirit's healing and make us whole.**

God, lover of all,
We come to you with our knowledge of oppression and abuse,
Our struggles against prejudice and exclusion,

All **Touch us with your Spirit's justice and make us whole.**

Jan Berry

Assurance of forgiveness

God, we praise you for your love
For the assurance of your forgiveness,
And the promise of wholeness.

Amen.

Jan Berry

Forgiveness 1

Why do you forgive my sin, O Lord,
when I will only do it again.
I do not know.
I do not understand how you can forgive and forget.
But I accept the gift with gratefulness.
For your forgiving grace and love,
I thank you precious God,

Amen.

Nigel Warner

Forgiveness 2

You are free.
The grace of God through Jesus makes you free.
Accept the grace of God.
Your sins are forgiven.
You are free.

Amen.

Nigel Warner

Forgive us

Forgive us, you who created us to live in freedom,
for we have not only allowed others to be oppressed,
but have ourselves preferred the familiar walls of the prison
to the adventure of breaking out into a new life.

Forgive us, you who released us to be a new people,
for we have colluded with a system which exploits and dehumanises,
kept silence when we should have spoken out,
stood by when we should have intervened.

Forgive us, you who have come to be one with us,
for we have rejected the strangers,
excluded by our words and customs,
and failed to recognise and welcome you.

Encourage us to take up our duty
to denounce everything that opposes justice and destroys peace.
Enable us to take up our duty
to break with systems that favour special interests rather than the common good.
Enliven us with hope and faith and love
to liberate the Church from its captivity to wealth,
to be a poor Church.

Terry Oakley

Variations of forgiveness

Heavenly God,
forgive us ... our trespasses
the times we have gone wrong,
failed in what we promised,
missed the goal, fallen short of the best,
drifted away from the course we should have followed.

Forgive us ... our sins
the hurt we have caused,
the hate we have shown, the harm we have carried out,

Forgive us ... our debts
for the love we have received,
for the opportunities we have been given,
for the beauty we have experienced,
for the freedom we have enjoyed.

God forgive us, Christ renew us and
Spirit of God enable us to grow in love.
Help us to forgive others,
their trespasses against us,
their sins against us,
their debts against us,
So may we live in peace,
with you and with your neighbours.
In the name and the Spirit of Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

Terry Oakley

Absolution

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance,
that Christ Jesus came in to the world to save sinners.

1 Timothy 21:15

Let us all, with St Paul, truly acknowledge this in our hearts and believe in
Christ. Thus, in His name, I proclaim unto you the forgiveness of all your sins,
and declare you to be loosed of them on earth, that you be loosed of them also
in heaven, in eternity.

Amen.

Martin Bucer's 1539 Liturgy

Prayers of commitment

Trinity of love

Creator, sustainer and giver of life, you have loved us from the beginning, honoured us beyond our deserving, called us your family and made us part of your Great Church which is in heaven and on earth. As we have remembered and given thanks for the pilgrimage of the past, so now we bring to you our present and our future.

Christ, king and head of the Church yet proclaiming a revolutionary kingdom, liberating all people from the shackles of inhumanity, you elevate the powerless, exalt the humble, love the unlovable and accept the unacceptable. We bring to you our continuing sense of the Church's mission relayed to us through the ages but, by you, made new for each generation.

Spirit of wisdom and truth, who soothes and disturbs us, moves and inspires us, you have empowered people in every age and challenged your Church to live the good news and to proclaim the kingdom in the present tense. We bring to you the dreams we are daring to dream, the hopes we are building now and the actions we are planning.

Trinity of love,

To proclaim the good news of the kingdom
All **We commit to you our worship and our life**

To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
All **We commit to you our faith and fellowship**

To respond to human need by loving service
All **We commit to you our buildings,
equipment, funds and energies**

To seek to transform unjust structures of society
All **We commit to you our courage and
our compassion**

To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, to sustain and
renew the life of the earth
All **We commit to you our vigilance and our vision**

God, who transformed the cross into a victory and built your
church on the weak and powerless
All **Keep us faithful to our calling,
equip us for your service,
guide us on our pilgrimage
and welcome us into
your future.**

Amen.

Alan Paterson

Bless our children

Bless our children, loving Lord,
that as they leave for their classes
they will draw closer to you,
and that we will not be held back from your love
by their absence.

Amen.

'Let the children come to me,' spoke our Lord.
Draw them to you through their classes, O Lord,
so that the whole family of God might be enriched.

Amen.

Give us life, O Lord,
as these children have life.
Life in all abundance.
And teach them in their time together,
drawing them to you.

Amen.

Nigel Warner

Living God you challenge us

[A covenant prayer for an all-age congregation](#)

There is the Leader with the congregation divided into two groups of children and adults

Leader Living God, you challenge us.

All **You call us each by name.**

Leader Your challenge reaches us:

'Who will go for us?'

Children 1 **Living God, we are too young and too shy;**

Adults 1 **Living God, we are too old, too fearful;**

All **But still you send us out.**

Children 2 **Out to our schools, to learn, to play;**

Adults 2 **Out to our labours, to work, to talk;**

All **Out to our families, our friends, to mix with others.**

Children 1 **You send us out with fun and energy;**

Adults 1 **You send us out with experience and hope;**

All **You send us out with love and joy.**

Children 2 **You send us out to cheer people up and collect for Blue Peter;**

Adults 2 **You send us to visit housebound people and recycle glass bottles;**

Children 1 **To make friends with new children at school and teach grandparents to use computers;**

Adults 1 **To listen to worried parents and sign justice petitions;**

All

Living God

We bring to you

Ourselves;

Women and men,

Boys and Girls.

Our life stories, some short, some long.

Our gifts – those we know and

those we have yet to discover.

Our skills – those we have learned and

those we have yet to learn.

We give them to all to you.

Use us.

Leader Living God, you challenge us.

All

You call us each by name.

Leader

Your challenge reaches us:

‘Who will go for us?’

All

Here am I. Send me.

The Worship Group, Trinity Church
(United Reformed/Methodist, Bedlington, Northumberland)

Global voices

For intercessions

Tomorrow is God's agenda

There are so many things happening:
Places to be, people to see!
And how the people rush, rush, rush on pavement and road,
in shop and in pub.

Sometimes we're torn between this place and that,
between this group and that.
Life is more complicated than ever it was.
Text and email, mobile phone and the rest,
is it easier to be in touch?
Was life simpler when people stayed in their community,
and knew their place?

But that has never been true.
Changes were afoot from the earliest stories of the Bible:
Abraham leaving home at a ripe old age,
Moses often on the move, half the time scarred and
certainly harassed!
Amos, Micah, Jeremiah and the rest.

Jesus and then Peter and Paul, the travelling church,
the mission.
Not pursued by God but chasing God!
How simple it is to long for the old days,
good or not you knew where you were;
or at least that's how it feels now!

God's agenda lies not in the past.
He shapes it through the past towards tomorrow.
God's agenda is a gift from the future;
giving imagination, a sense of adventure,
of making all things new.
God isn't finished. God can't finish.
God, too is yet to be in the coming of a kingdom of justice and peace,
God becomes as we create community, and break down barriers,
and celebrate the common roots of humanity in the God at the heart.

God isn't finished, because we're torn.
God will be finished and dwell among us as we make the
newness of heaven and earth.
God is becoming as people and communities risk being more complete.

John LI Humphreys

Towards a new creation

When we hear the voices of self-doubt,
telling us we are worthless,
that we are weak and can do nothing
and change is beyond our grasp:

All **God, who has made us in your image
give us the power of your Spirit to learn and grow,
and to work with you towards a new creation.**

When the vulnerable are exploited,
And the trust of the innocent betrayed.
When the strong seem invincible
And the weak have nowhere to turn:

All **God, who sides with the poor
give us the power of your Spirit to resist evil
and to work with you towards a new creation.**

In a world crying out for peace,
Where conflicts seem hardened into steel
Where war and poverty uproot families and homes,
And those seeking refuge are treated as criminals:

All **God, who made the world to be one,
give us the power of your Spirit to struggle for justice,
and to work with you towards a new creation.**

In a church that is afraid of difference,
And sets up barriers against the outside,
Where people are fearful of change,
Clinging to outworn ways:

All **God, who calls us to be your people,
give us the power of your Spirit to witness for you,
and to work with you towards a new creation.**

Amen.

Jan Berry

The glory is yours

The glory is yours, God, Creator,
life breather,
giver of such a good creation,
full of beauty, sustaining our life.
We give thanks to you,
for our life, our relationships, our loves and our hope,
for your image obscured but still visible in humankind.

The glory is yours, God, Renewer,
making all things new.
We give thanks to you for the living promise of New Jerusalem,
for new heaven and new earth,
for relationships recreated,
for the broken mended and tears wiped away.

The glory is yours, God, in Jesus Christ,
crucified and raised.
We give thanks to you for new life already begun,
for the promise alive and your image made clear,
for all that is, now being changed by love's victory.

Peter Trow

May we live by grace

As God's creation, the world bears the marks of God.
Here we think of the world as a body, a child of God.

Ploughing a field we scratch the skin of God;
Polluting a river we stain the blood of God;
Exterminate a species and we break God's finger;
Build bigger cities and we load God's back;
Oppress the poor and we beat God's children.

Creator God, may we love the world,
your amazing gift to us,
for we meet you in all creation.
Help our eyes to see you in the mountains,
our ears to hear your voice in the waves,
and our hearts to respect your gift.

In Christ we know that we are one family
in the house of the world.
May we live, by grace, as your children.

Bernard Thorogood

Small in terms of the world

God, each of us is small

even the fattest and most muscled of us.

We are not among the important people in the world.

We pray for the leaders of countries and big companies,
people who have lots of power and responsibilities

For people who think that all there is, is to get more and more things.

We pray for those who are small,

for those who are small in the terms of the world, hungry people,
poor people, homeless people and children.

God, each of us is big even the weediest and skinniest of us.

We are big in the sight of those people who love us.

We are big in your sight.

We pray for those people who have nobody who loves them
and ask that you would make us more loving.

And we thank you for your loving us and we pray that the
life we live may be worthy of that love and how far you have
gone to show your love.

Thank you God that it is OK to be small with you and we do
not have to pretend and we do not have to grab attention.

We pray in Jesus name

Lesley Charlton

Peace in our communities

The uniform is a cause for fear and derision.
Expectations about bias abound.
Ordinary men and women doing their job are turned into
operatives of the state.

Let us hold up before God those who are involved in keeping
law and order in our town/city
Those who are concerned with letting the weakest be
protected and the vulnerable secure.
May our police work without prejudice and in the context
not of what is easiest or quickest but the bigger picture.

We pray for those who feel they have not been treated fairly.
For all those who have made mistakes that they may have
the maturity and courage to admit it and that we may allow
them a second chance.

The smartphone is offered for sale for £30. It fell off the back of a lorry.
Silence is kept when the shouting is heard through the wall
and the mysterious bruises appear next day.
'Nobody will ever know' becomes the basis of morality.

We pray for ourselves aware that we too are responsible for
keeping the peace in our society. We get the justice that we
work for, that we resource.
May we be wise citizens able to see the picture beyond me
and mine to think of us and the needs of others.
We pray in Jesus name

Lesley Charlton

Come with peace

Powerful God of the nations
do not come this day in anger
but with grace:
do not come this day with judgment
but with peace.

Our need is great.
Your anger is just.
Your judgment is true.

Forgive the wrongs of the nations
and heal your people.
Have mercy, Lord. Have mercy.

Amen.

Vaughan Jones

Respond to love and care

The songs of our world call us to respond to your love and care.

To respond to your love for all.

What music shall we sing? What music shall we offer?

The drum beats out a strong rhythm.

The boom boom boom speaks of marching, pacing, going forward and going to war.

For those who fight; for those who wait to fight.

All

The tune is in the air the melody clear and catchy every one sings along

For those whose lifestyle is easy, pleasing, causing envy

May there be substance rather than all life being froth

May there be generosity from those who have food, stability, love and peace in their land.

The notes jar; there is no order and rhythm no tune and no pacing for those whose lives demand attention for the wrong reason.

The ones who cannot manage, those in debt, those who are disruptive neighbours, those who cannot cope as parents, those who will never be able to work for they do not have the skills or the discipline.

The music from a different place a different age sounds from a different country, yuk don't mention country.

Lord there are so many differences how are we to live together.

How are we live together as your people on the earth?

Then there will be the songs of heaven.

Tunes that angels sing.

For those on the earth who can hear them. The dying.

Those who they will leave behind.

Lord we would sing your songs for ever

We say our prayers in Jesus name

Amen.

Lesley Charlton

Commitment for Life

Heavenly Father, when we have our worrying times and concerns enable us to think of people living in the developing countries where their hardships and worries are so much greater than ours. Help us to work for world-wide justice especially where water supplies are needed to give better health; where impoverished land needs to be nourished so that farmers can grow food for themselves and the markets. Help us to work for debt relief and to encourage our supermarkets to promote Fairtrade goods so that life can be improved for everyone.

Amen.

Pamela Pavitt

God of Justice

God of Justice, we pray for our world where trade is unfairly balanced against so many people.
We know that some people live in luxury while others struggle to exist and work hard to scratch a living.
Help us to think each time we turn on a tap to run pure water that other people walk mile upon mile to collect a bucket of water which is polluted. Lord, help us to campaign for clean water for all people.
We pray that international organisations may learn to seek your standards of justice and influence the world with their actions.
Help us. Lord God to seek justice at all times and wherever and whenever we have the opportunity.

Pamela Pavitt

All are welcome

Our notice board says 'all are welcome',
Of course, we're a friendly church,
we'd not like it if anyone said otherwise!

Are we?
Our Bible says all are created in the image of God
We say, 'Lovely to see you.'

And yet, and yet we prejudge.

Is that man, introducing his partner Peter, welcome?
Is that single woman with her daughter welcome?
He's just come from prison, and he expects a welcome?
And that refugee, who is so lost?
And that group of youths, just hanging around the door?

All are welcome, including us with our prejudice and partiality!
Thanks be to God whose nature is welcome.

John LI Humphreys

The songs of our world

The songs of our world call us to respond to your love and care.
To respond to your love for all.
What music shall we sing? What music shall we offer?
The drum beats out a strong rhythm.
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going to war.
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neighbours, those who cannot cope as parents, those who will never be able
to work for they do not have the skills or the discipline.

The music from a different place a different age sounds from a different country,
yuk don't mention country.
Lord there are so many differences how are we to live together.
How are we live together as your people on the earth?

Then there will be the songs of heaven.
Tunes that angels sing.
For those on the earth who can hear them. The dying.
Those who they will leave behind.

Lord we would sing your songs for ever
We say our prayers in Jesus name

Lesley Charlton

Jesus who meets our hungers

Jesus, who meets our hungers – we would be fed by you

Jesus, able to meet everyone's hungers – we all would be fed by you

Empty, alone, hungry, desolate

For those facing the darkness of death, their own or of someone they love

For those isolated because of geography or social factors

For those who are empty, for food, for contact

For those who are broken

Full, included, fed, satisfied

For those who have things and believe that through them they have all the answers

For those who are smothered by friends and family, unable to be themselves and who long to be alone

For those who grow the food we eat, around the world, in the UK, those who bring it to our shops and those who sell it to us

For those in danger of becoming complacent

Jesus who meets our hungers – we would be fed by you

Jesus able to meet everyone's hungers – we all would be fed by you

We pray in your name.

Lesley Charlton

Can the world get better?

The savages rounded up their prisoners and beat them to death.

Ancient history?

Medieval tragedy?

Far away and long ago?

No, it was there on television last night.

It is today's world, my world.

But what wonderful progress

in our hospitals, fighting diseases,

in our transport, ease of travel,

in our homes, comfort and cleanliness,

in our country, freedom and peace.

Why do we go on hurting one another
and smashing so much that is precious
and polluting air and sea?
Is the world getting wiser
or more peaceful
or more just?

It is hard for me to understand, God of the ages.
Take my small life
and let it be on the side of peace
and justice and healing
Jesus, don't let me forget
the power of One.

Bernard Thorogood

The face of God

In Jesus we see the face of God
Not in my face, not in your face
My face and your face always have a mask
The smile, the frown, the politeness, the pre-occupation
Our masks mask the face of God
Our masks mask the freedom of God
Our masks mask the love and grace of God
In Jesus we see the face of God
And Jesus saw beyond the mask

Jesus saw the face of God in
the hungry,
the thirsty,
the stranger,
the naked,
the sick,
the prisoner
Jesus saw that the least of these sisters and brothers, too,
mask the face of God.

let's look at each other – let's look for the face of God
let's not even pretend God stops here.

We commit ourselves to look for the face of God in each and all.

John LI Humphreys

God's invitation to all

Lord Jesus,
in your life and death
you suffered so much injustice at the hands of others,
and yet you faced it and challenged it wherever you found it.
From those with leprosy and disability,
to the tax collectors and prostitutes,
you offered them all a way out of their situations
into the freedom and fullness of your love.
Help us to do as you do,
forgiving and restoring,
inviting and loving,
all in the love of God
through the power of the Holy Spirit

All **Amen.**

Nigel Warner

Images of God

Use a number of different voices

We are free to speak of God in so many ways
For some, there is an objective being standing separate from us
For others, there is the intimacy of the God within, expressed differently in
various cultures and periods in history.

The God who is vengeful
The God who is embracing
The God who is inclusive
The God who is judgmental
The God who is never deterred

There's the image I like
There's the image I don't like

And there're the images the other people don't like

Not for me the old man in the sky, not the young Victorian blue eyed figure that
has never seen, let alone come from The Holy Land.

Not for me the notion of Job, the God who tests and plays games
that in any person we'd detest.

Not for me the notion of God who plays doctor with people's minor ailments
and forgets the epidemics of HIV and Aids

Not for me the God who magically makes a problem dissolve and forgets
to lift even a metaphorical finger for the hungry and thirsty of the world.

Let's get free from childish images of God.

Let's be brave about who we see, and how we see God

Let's admit there is no three-decker universe where we're caught in the middle.

Let's celebrate the God who is in the nature of human life.
Let's celebrate the divine which is human life
Let's rejoice in beauty to appreciate possibility
Let's celebrate the mystery of love!

John L I Humphreys
(amended 2019)

Prayers for hope

God our Saviour,
We pray for those without hope that they, hearing your good news,
may be set free from their despair.

Silence

We pray that the Church will faithfully present the Gospel
in word and in action so all may be saved.

We pray for those who, with their hope dashed,
feel bereft, abandoned and betrayed.

Silence

We pray that the Church will stand in solidarity with the suffering,
working for justice and peace.

We pray for those who, beginning to hope,
dare to dream that tomorrow might be different.

Silence

We pray that the Church will encourage and empower them,
teach and nurture them in faith.

We pray for those who working in hope
towards a better future face opposition and oppression.

Silence

We pray that the church
will prefer to opt for them, even to the extent of sacrificial giving.

We pray for those who are at last enjoying some of life's fulness,
who are full of thanks and praise.

Silence

We pray that the Church
rejoicing with them may continue to seek justice and peace for all.

We pray for those who are poor, sick, homeless, lonely,
imprisoned, oppressed and powerless.

Silence

May your love reach them and may the Church stand with them.
So that all may come to give thanks to you, and rejoice with one another.
Amen.

Terry Oakley

The body of Christ

That's us, the church!
How gross it is.
No longer lithe and supple,
Full of energy,
Now twisted and deformed,
Lethargic in the extreme.

Once I dreamed
As all young men do
Of a vibrant renewed Church.
United yet not uniform.
Exhibiting its rich diversity
In all aspects of life.

Can we break free
From the 'straight jacket'; of tradition.
Remove ritual's noose
That would choke
Any out reach of the spirit,
Beyond the enmeshing structures.

Uniting together with one mission,
Affirming all we hold in common,
Spelling out the differences,
Respecting each other in love,
Acknowledging our ignorance
About each other and our faith.

If we are unfit
Our bodies suffer
Likewise with the Church.
Shed the weighty burden
Of out-moded structures and customs
Adopt a healthy spiritual diet.

As Christ's human body
Was broken and scarred,
So the Church bears signs
Of conflict and dissent.
Yet healing is possible
Gained through his timeless victory.

Y Mochyn Daear

Lord, we pray for the Church
Christians facing persecution and physical danger
Churches that are an interest group of sections of society
providing no voice for the voiceless and complacency in abundance
Churches that are made up of exclusive groups with no room
for the newcomer, no space for the person who is not exactly like us

Lord, we pray for the world for which Christ died.
People facing persecution and physical danger
People with no voice and those who feel excluded from society
and those who have chosen to opt out.
We pray for peace

For those who are on the edges because of poverty or illness
or because they are close to death.
For those who are on the edge because it would be too
difficult to include them, we would have to change the ways
we do things, have to communicate in different way change
our buildings and thinking
Those we keep out because it is easier for us.

Those we keep out because their enthusiasm and certainty is
difficult for us to live with.

Those we keep out because their questioning undermines our faith.

Lord, we pray for those we love.

We pray for ourselves.

Build your Church, Lord. Begin with me.

Lesley Charlton

The calling of the Church

Loving Lord,
you have called us to follow you as disciples,
in our life together and as individuals,
through worship, prayer and mission.
Be with us as we seek to live this call.
Give us the strength and enthusiasm to live the life you have called us to live.
Help us as we seek to care for and nurture people,
as we challenge areas of injustice that we find,
and as we seek to serve you in our service of other people.
In all that we speak, think, and say,
be with us Lord.
So that the people we meet and serve will not see us,
but will see you in us.
We do all that we do for you,
Holy and life-giving Lord.
Your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven

Amen.

Nigel Warner

Deeper discipleship

Master,
teach us to be your disciples,
to follow you through thick and thin,
never to deny that we know you,
and always to point other people towards you.
I just want to say Thank You
for these wonderful horizons,
for all the technical wonders
of miniature circuitry
and optic cable and satellite link.
Thank you for an unlimited future.

As you care for and nurture your people,
help us to do the same as your disciples.
Show us how we might draw others
into a closer relationship with you,
so that they might be strengthened
and transformed into your likeness,
as we ourselves desire to be strengthened and transformed.
Through the love of others,
bring us to understand what it is to be truly loved by you,
our Saviour and Lord,
and to be filled with your Holy Spirit

Amen.

Nigel Warner

Relationships

There are people, as you know, God, who are married and wish that they were single. People who feel that they have the wrong partner. People who have changed and their partner has not. People who have stayed the same and their partner has altered.

We hold them up before you.

There are people, God, as you know, who are single and wish they were married. People who said no, when they should have said yes, people who have never met the right one, or never recognised that one. People who have made a vow that they now regret.

We hold them up to you now.

Those whose marriages are close to collapse. Those who left the heart of their partner years ago and now will leave their home. Those who are coming to terms with their new singleness, some with relish, some with pain.

People who have been divorced for years.

People who are happily married.

People who are happily single.

Today there are people, as you know, God, trying to decide whether to commit to a particular person or whether to run away. May they go the right way.

Amen.

Lesley Charlton

Now is the time

Now is the time.

Do it now.

Lord there are some running out of time.

Terminally ill.

Those who strain the patience of the people who care for them.

Those who have the debt collector and the red letters.

Those who feel that their job is for young people and the press of the years is beginning to tell so they worry, 'what should they do next?'

Time, time, there is so much time

Those who feel time is heavy on their hands who wonder about your use of their time

Those confined to bed. Those waiting to fight.

Those waiting to give birth, waiting to conceive.

Those who cannot find work.
Cannot find a role, who are in a strange country and they do
not know how it all works.

Lord take our time.
We know that we waste it doing things that are not ours to do and
over-stretching ourselves and not giving the time to the things that matter to you.

Let us rest in your company and walk at your pace.

Lesley Charlton

Compassion

God, you created the world for freedom,
forgive the abuse of power
and our collusion with the waste of human life.
We pray for the hungry,
the sick
and the dying.
In your mercy protect them,
and through them awaken us
to your compassion
and to their need.
Amen.

Vaughan Jones

Draw new people to you

Living God,
we gather together as a church,
as a community of believers,
because we have the common belief that you love us.
You love all people, Lord.
That is why you sent your Son to die for all people.
We thank you that we know this.
Help us to help others to know this.
We pray that you will,
through us as your tools,
show the people that we meet and live amongst
that this truth is for them too.
Draw new people to you, Lord God,
so that they might receive the freedom that you give.
Use us we pray,
in Jesus name,
and by the power of the Holy Spirit

Amen.

Nigel Warner

Meeting new people

Everything around me says that appearances matter.

The photos, the models, the film stars, the ads.
All say what you look like is the key to success.
If your hair is just so, and your skin is a peach,
and your suit is the colour that's right for today.
You can spend on a nose job or develop your bust,
it's as though life is a beauty and fashion parade.

But it's false, it's a con.

What is on the outside is never the key
to the heart and the mind and the spirit,
that is the real person, the real me.
It's not the outside that counts when the chips are down
and we face a disaster.
Then it's the courage and the steadiness
that will lift us up on our feet again.
It's not the outside that counts
when we are sick and need good nursing.
It's not the hair style that matters
when we want to be forgiven.

So, God as you don't judge by the outside,
may I never be trapped that way,
but be able to meet everyone
of all races and ages and faces
and clothing and accents
as people with hearts and minds
that take time to understand.
And may that be how people see me.

Bernard Thorogood

People matter most

I love the screen.
All the games we can play
that flash and storm and chatter;
all the pictures I can make
and all the messages I can receive.
Here I am at the centre
with all the world at my fingertips

And at the screen there's no complaining,
no one comments on my manners,
or tells me to get a haircut.
for it is my own kingdom
where I can do more than my parents
who are so clumsy at the keyboard.

But remind me, God of wonders,
that, behind all the screens
people matter most.

Bernard Thorogood

Sir, we would see Jesus

Sir, we would see Jesus.
So enquired the Greeks.
Andrew heard them.
Took them to meet his Lord.
There they could talk.
Because Jesus was home in Galilee.

Sir, we would see Jesus.
So enquired eager worshippers,
But he was not to be found
In hymns, music or prayers.
Absent from the sermon,
Because Jesus has gone to Galilee.

Sir, we would see Jesus.
So enquired a newly ordained minister,
Seeking him in committees,
Enmeshed in denominational structures.
Striving to witness to an absent Christ,
Because Jesus has gone to Galilee.

Sir, we would see Jesus.
Where can he be found?
Why do we fail?
Have we missed the clue?
Directions are clear enough.
He's gone before us to Galilee.

Sir, we would see Jesus.
Our task is to engage with Him,
Reveal the Lord of life who is present
In the modern work place,
Confirming our intrinsic worth,
Christ who dwells in Our Galilee.

Y Mochyn Daear

Journeying God

Journeying God,
we ask for you to be with all those at risk when travelling –
those who fly, sail, ride or walk.
We pray especially for refugees and those fleeing war,
hunger or persecution.
We pray for those who offer hospitality, relief, food and shelter,
those who are good Samaritans, friendly neighbours and
welcoming communities.
God journey with all who need you.

Renewing God,
we ask for you to be with all those who begin something new this week,
a new term, a new job, a new friendship, a new responsibility.
We pray especially for those taking up positions of power and authority in
governments around the world.
We pray for those who are faced with redundancy, the death of someone
in the family or a friend or with an ending.
God renew all who hope in you.

Listening God,
we ask for you to be with all those who are worried and afraid.
We pray especially for those with no one to turn to, no one who cares,
no one who will help.
We pray for those who are prepared to listen, to share the problem,
to stand in solidarity.
God listen to all who call to you.

God be with us, renew us, listen to us
And help us to work with you to answer these prayers,
In the name and Spirit of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Terry Oakley.

Praising God with senses

God of all,
we gaze with wonder at the world.
We hear the beauty of the songs of birds and whales.
We smell the perfumes of the flowers and the tang of the sea.
We touch the softness of wool, the velvet of redwood bark.
We taste the succulent fruits and crunchy nuts.
We speak with people from all over the world and send our greetings into space.
We know that there are people in need, including ourselves.
We mourn the loss of some species of the variety of life on earth.

But above all,
we praise you and your purpose of love in all things,
we offer our sorrow and remorse
for what we have done to break the unity of what is;
we ask for forgiveness
and the faith to try again
to live in the way that is acceptable to you,
loving to our neighbours
and gentle with the earth.
in the name and Spirit of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Terry Oakley

A countryside patchwork

Thank you, Creator God, for colours.
Thank you, for the shades and tones of our countryside ...
the red of poppies in a field of grain;
the yellow of rape set in its own field
the brown of a ploughed field
the lush greens of well-watered meadows
the mixture of green and brown in the woodland;
the myriad colours of wild flowers.
Thank you for the patchwork of colours
and for the gift of eyesight
to enjoy this bounty of nature.

Pamela Pavitt

Somerset sunset

Looking upwards
What do I see?
Clouds like grey cotton wool
Strung across the sky.
A scrambled sun is dropping,
Glowing orange and red
Like molten iron
Poured across the heavens
With controlled precision
Issuing from a primeval furnace.
By He/She who fashioned creation.
The Lord our God.

What will the morning bring
A dry sunny day?
Change from rain and cold,
Can the country dwellers
Read the signs?
Give the farmers a chance
Make some late hay,
Tend the arable crops,
Redress the balance,
Weather folk make an informed forecast
Only the creator knows.
The Lord our God.

Sunset gives a clue
To something greater
Than tomorrow's weather.
A glimpse of the power
Released at creation
Fashioning sand shaping
Hills, moors and valleys
Festooned with rivers and streams
Across the Wyvern county
Just one small piece
in the jigsaw puzzle designed by
The Lord our God.

Y Mochyn Daear

Prayers before a meeting

Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.

Rest, rest, we have not got time to rest.
There is so much to do.
There are papers and discussions and plans.

Come and rest
Rest, rest, we cannot rest
There is mission and vision and purpose
There is decline in numbers and balancing the budget
Don't you know, God, how desperate the situation is?

God who spoke and the world was.
God who turned on the lights and blew the waters apart.
God of order and the rhythm of life
We live in your presence.
Rushing through our days busy getting on doing your will,
so busy that we do not have time to work out what it is.
We who live hurtling towards death, you are all around us.

We are your people, we wait upon you.

We are your sinful people, we confess.

The God of justice is also the God of mercy
who has come among us in Jesus.
Receive your forgiveness and hear again
the call to come and follow.
In Jesus name.

Lesley Charlton

Faith

I believe

I believe that God, who is Love
is at the heart of the world.
I believe that we are meant by God
to live a life of love,
sharing God's gifts,
caring for the world.
I believe that Jesus is God living with us,
showing God's way of loving
in a human life.
I believe that Jesus shows me
that although I do wrong things
I am still accepted and loved by God.
I believe that Jesus died to show this truth
to me and all the world
I believe that Jesus rose from death,
by God's power,
to show that love is stronger than hate,
and life is stronger than death.
I believe that God's Spirit is alive now,
calling me and everyone
to join the people who follow Jesus,
to carry on his work,
and make the world
as God wants it to be.
So I give myself to God.

Trinity Church (United Reformed/Methodist,
Bedlington, Northumberland)

An affirmation

we believe in God – the Shorthand

Shorthand for justice and love
Shorthand for dignity and compassion
Shorthand for humanity's deep spiritual yearning
Shorthand for courage, beauty, and extra miles

the Shorthand of parent-language, of creator-language
speaking of the divine permeating all life.

the Shorthand of son-language
speaking of the intimacy of this God
the human-being-Jesus expressing love and grace,
beyond imagining

the Shorthand of spirit-language
speaking of the on-going desire
to reach for tomorrow's day
to be the doers of beauty and the tellers of good.

(Ask the congregation to add some other words for which the word 'God'
is 'Shorthand')

John LI Humphreys

A litany of faith

In the drone of bees in the heather
And the drone of distant chainsaws in the forest
All **God bides with creation.**

In the clicking of grasshoppers in the high pastures
And the clicking of keyboards in the office
All **God bides with creation.**

In the teeming life of an ants' nest
And the teeming chaos of the city
All **God bides with creation.**

In the theatre of a livestock mart
And the drama of the courtroom
All **God bides with the people.**

In the high tops of Torridon
And the tower blocks of Motherwell
In the concrete canyons on the city's edge
And the ghost towns and wastelands of decaying industries
All **God bides with the people.**

In the spreading deserts of Africa
And the drowning islands of the Pacific
In the world's shanty-towns and disputed territories
In the hospital wards and in the battlefields
In the wars of oppression and the wars of liberation
All **God bides with the people.**

In prison cells and stock exchanges
In power stations and chain stores
In Zimbabwe and Kabul, Sudan and Cyprus
In Ramallah and Colombia, Kashmir and Beijing
In Manhattan and Westray, Sri Lanka and Eriskay
In Easterhouse and Harlem

All **God bides with the people.**

In the cycles of the seasons
In the buzz of insects
In the whine of windscreen wipers
In the chugging of dump-trucks
In the howl of sirens
In the beep of bar-code readers
As in the song of birds and the rhythm of the rains
Creation still pulses today.

All **And wherever people are, while the earth remains,
The Creator still watches over with a parent's love.**

**With the stricken and the broken,
the Christ still bleeds, still cries;
And opens new possibilities of reconciliation.**

**The Spirit still sows seeds of hope, challenges hearts,
Paints visions of justice,
And ignites dreams of a new heaven and a new earth.**

Alan Paterson

A children's creed

I believe in God, who made the world and who made me.
God loves me as a perfect parent, and I am God's child.

I believe in Jesus Christ, who loved me so much that he died for me,
but rose again to beat death. He shows me how to live my life, happy and full,
wherever I am. And forgives me the things I do wrong if I say sorry in my heart.

I believe in the Holy Spirit. The power of God in my life, guiding my life and
filling my heart with love.

I believe in myself, I am God's child, always loved as I am.

I believe in others, and I must treat them as I want to be treated,
because they are God's children too.

I believe in Life.
The great gift of God, to be lived to the full as Jesus taught.

Amen.

Nigel Warner

Those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

All **I will say to the Lord**
'He is my refuge and my fortress
My God, in him I will trust.'

Surely he shall deliver you from the snare of the poacher
He shall cover you with his feathers.

All **And under his wings you shall take refuge;**
His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,
Nor of the arrow that flies at you.

All **Because you have made the Lord your refuge,**
Even the Most High your dwelling place.

No evil shall befall you,
Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling.

All **For he shall give his angels charge over you**
To keep you in all your ways.

God our Mother,
Living Water,
River of Mercy,
Source of Life,
In whom we live
and move
and have our being,
Who quenches our thirst,
Refreshes our weariness
Bathes
and washes
and cleanses
Our wounds
You are always a fountain of life,
and for the world a river of hope
Springing up in the midst
Of the deserts of despair.

Where there is fear God, you can bring hope,

All **From Fear to Hope**
From Darkness to Light

All **From Fear to Hope**
From Despair to Vision

All **From Fear to Hope**
From Anger to Acceptance

- All* **From Fear to Hope**
From Sadness to Determination
- All* **From Fear to Hope**
From Illness to Well-being
- All* **From Fear to Hope**
From Ignorance to Understanding
- All* **From Fear to Hope**
From Poverty to Fullness
- All* **From Fear to Hope**
From Brokenness to Unity
- All* **From Fear to Hope**
From Violence to Safety
- All* **From Fear to Hope**
From Loss to Restoration

For you God bridge the gap from fear to hope.

Reading

The silent peace with candles

The Eucharist

Communion may be celebrated

Music

Blessing

May the everlasting Father himself take you
In his own generous clasp
In his own generous arm
May the everlasting Father shield you
East and West wherever you go.
Amen.

Charity Hamilton

In love you...

In love you freely created,
you expressed yourself in light and dark,
day and night, sea and land, in a multitude of life.
You gave us your image to reflect your glory;
you filled us with your goodness to love one another;
you honoured us with responsibility to care for your creation.

Silence

In hope you freely acted
you released us from slavery and oppression,
fear and guilt, helplessness and hopelessness, imprisonment to sin.

You gave us a name, a land, a future, a purpose;
you raised us when we had fallen to stand with dignity;
you led us when we were lost to bring us home.

Silence

In faith you came to us,
you chose us to be your people,
called us, sent us, gave us your message, made us partners in your mission.
You lived with us when we did not know you to be our neighbour;
you stood with us when we were alone, to be our friend;
you died for us when we rejected you, to be our Saviour.

Terry Oakley

Confidence in God Romans 8:35-39

What can separate us from the love of Christ?

Can affliction or hardship?

All **No, never!**

Can persecution, hunger, nakedness,
peril or sword?

All **No, never!**

Can bullets and bombs
or weaknesses or old age?

All **No, never!**

In all such trials we are given
a victory in Christ.

We are convinced
that there is nothing in death or life,
in the great powers that shape human society
in the world we know or the world of the future,
nothing whatever,
can separate us from the love of God
which we know in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Bernard Thorogood

Our prayer for you Ephesians 3:14-21

We pray to the Father,
our Father and yours,
that he may be strength and staying power
in your lives, through the Spirit,
so that you may have steady faith
rooted deep in your hearts.

And may the Spirit
hold you in fellowship
with the universal Church,
so that you experience
the immense length to which God's love goes,
the breadth of that love for all people,
the height of God's joy in all faithful obedience,
and the depth of God's suffering with us.

Then you will surely know
the reality of the God we worship.

We worship God,
the one beyond all calculation,
whose living word
speaks in the Church
and in all loving human lives for ever.
To God be the glory.

Bernard Thorogood

A new vision Revelation 21 and 22

A new day of creation
God's blessed seventh day,
is surely coming.

All is made fresh and bright,
earth and sky shine.
The city is laid
like a great tapestry on the ground.
God's city with gleaming walls
has gates always open
so all may go in freely.

You cannot see a temple there,
for prayers and praises
fill every part.
The city is the temple of the spirit.
People from every nation
find it is a home for them.

And from the heart of the city
flows the river of good water,
 living water,
 healing water,
so no-one need be thirsty ever again.

Wonderful God, may we see this vision too
and live this vision
in the community of faith.

Bernard Thorogood

To touch and to heal

Lord Jesus, you reached out to touch and to heal.
Praise to your Holy Name.
For those who need healing.
Ill, unhappy, bereaved.

Lord Jesus, you reached out to heal.
For those who feel the lack human of human touch,
marriages where intimacy died years ago,
people who seek more.

Lord, your touch healed and restored.
We pray for those who have been abused,
for those who are the victims of violence.

Lord, our prayers are not just for individuals
but communities as well.
Where there is bloodshed and neglect.
Where some have too much and others not enough.

Lord, touch each one of us and may we receive your healing.
In Jesus name we pray.

Lesley Charlton

The laying on of hands

Come Spirit Come,
come with love;
come with compassionate healing powers;
descend now;
transform weakness into strength;
doubt into searching;
failure into resurrection;
come Spirit come;
call, renew,
strengthen your servant
surround and protect with love.

In the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Vaughan Jones

Look forward

Look back, not with regret at missed opportunities,
but with thankfulness for what has been.

Look forward, not with fear at what may or may not come,
but with excitement at the possibilities.

And be grateful for what is today.

Brian Hudson

Celebrating the Lord's Supper

Invitation to the Lord's table

This is the Lord's table.
It does not belong to you, you are a guest here.
It does not belong to us, we are guests here.

This is the Lord's table.
You are a cherished guest here.
We are all cherished guests here.

This is the Lord's table.
You are a person for whom Jesus gave his life.

Guest of God, you are welcome at the table.

Lesley Charlton

Eucharistic prayer for creation

Father, we praise you that when all things began
you brought order out of chaos through your Word
and formed a universe of wonderful beauty
in which the earth, our home, is but a fragment.
We praise you that in your goodness you created
light and darkness, sun, moon and stars,
sea and land, creatures great and small,
and that you set us in a garden full of trees and fruit
to live in harmony with you and all creation.
Your love did not desert us when we tasted the forbidden fruit,
when we forfeited paradise for a wasteland
in which brother murders brother
and the beauty all around us is despoiled.
For in the days of Noah you brought all living things to safety
through the Flood
and in the rainbow made your first covenant of grace
with every living creature.
You called to yourself a people, born in slavery,
to witness to your light and set your Law in human hearts.
You gave us a land of milk and honey,
but when you looked for justice you saw bloodshed,
for righteousness, you heard a cry.
We would not listen to your prophets when they sang of
One to come:
now we have beheld his glory, by whom the worlds were made.
Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

He opened our eyes to the wonder around us
and through him the birds of the air and the lilies of the field
preached to us of Love.
Yet he was made a cause of stumbling:
when he was lifted up,
iron from the earth nailed him to the wood of a tree
and he offered up his lifeblood for the sins of the world.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:
'This is my body which is broken for you.
Do this is remembrance of me.'
In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.
For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.']

Though all save the women deserted him,
fearful and amazed his disciples met him
in a garden and by the lakeside, for death could not cut him down.
Risen and ascended, he brought back hope from the dead,
life and glory from the place of destruction.
We have seen and heard and touched the Word of life:
his is the sacrifice we plead: this is the mystery of faith:
Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

May the Spirit who moved across the waste and void
and who comes in wind and fire
descend upon these harvest gifts of bread and wine
and so fill our lives that they become for us
the fruits of his Passion, his body and his blood,
given for the healing of the nations and the life of the world;
and, when all things are complete according to your will,
may your whole creation sing for joy in your eternal presence,
one God throughout all ages, the Trinity of love.

All **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

Eucharistic prayer for love

Holy and blessed are you, gracious and merciful God:
you loved the world so much that you gave your only Son
to bring us life abundant and lead us to eternal life.
He was with you in the beginning
when your Spirit brooded over the waters
and brought forth into life all that has being.
You bound yourself to Israel, to be your bride,
but she was unfaithful to her Beloved
and would not keep the Law or heed the Prophets.
So in love you sent your Son, born of woman:
in love he came, forgiving sins, healing hurt,
opening doors long closed, warming hearts long cold.
By John he was baptized in water
and in his own lifeblood, for our sins.
Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

For love was all his Passion; love drove him to the Cross.
In that hour of darkness Love strove with death
and shone and could not be extinguished.
In love for us he rose, a bright Sun,
to banish fear and burn away all evil;
he ascended to the Father that we might rise with him.
In love the Holy Spirit called the Church to be his Bride and we are now bade
welcome to the feast of love.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:
'This is my body which is broken for you.
Do this is remembrance of me.'
In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.
For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.']
Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Remembering therefore all his works of love
we pray that the Holy Spirit will come down in power
to transform the common into the divine –
this bread his body and this wine his blood.
Accept us as we seek to be his lovers in and for the world.
Join us with his lovers of all times
[special names may be added]
and with Mary his mother, full of grace,
that we may be one in the unending joys of heaven
through the Beloved Christ,
in whom are reconciled all things in earth and heaven.

Colin Thompson

Eucharistic prayer for the excluded

God of all compassion and grace
we bless you for the gift of creation:
for the beauties of our earth
and all the wonder of the universe.
We bless you for your gift of forgiveness
through the long ages of our human sin.
We bless you for your power to reconcile your children,
haunted, like Jacob and Esau, by bitter memories
so that they embrace as friends.
We bless you for those, like Naomi and Ruth,
who found the bond of love
across barriers of race and faith and culture,
Above all we bless you for the One
who taught us to forgive without end,
to love our enemies
and to pray for those who persecute us.
We bless you that through him you chose the folly of the Cross
to confound the wisdom of the world.
Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Because his judgments were all of love and mercy
because he kept company with outcasts and sinners
the righteous pursued him to an unjust death.
Yet even in that hour of darkness
he prayed for our forgiveness.

In rising from the place of death
in ascending to the heavens
in sending forth his Spirit on his people
he brought to us the victory
over hatred and oppression.
Here in our midst he is with us still.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:
'This is my body which is broken for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'
In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:
'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.
For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.']
Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Therefore we pray
that through sharing in his death and resurrection
we may know his power made perfect in our weakness.
May his broken body and his blood poured out
be a sign of healing for the nations,
and may your Son, once tortured and despised
free us from all hatred and oppression
and bring us to the kingdom of his justice
where all his children shall be free
to sing the new song of your saving love
through endless ages.

All **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

Eucharistic prayer

Based on 'En una noche oscura' ('On a dark night')
by St John of the Cross (1542-91)

God, our way, our truth, our life:
we bless you that you call us from the prisons of the self
to travel onward through the dark night.
Your ways are far beyond our understanding,
yet you shine within us,
more brightly than the midday sun.
We bless you for the journey of faith:
of old you led your people
in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.
Through the long night of our fears and doubts
you travel with us;
you gently call us onward
to taste the joys you have prepared for us.
In your Son you walked our earthly way,
drank deep of our tears and laughter,
and passed through the chill waters of death.
Yet still the bright flame of your love shone forth:
when you were raised, night was turned to day
and we awoke to a new dawning of your love.
Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth
we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

All

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest!**

Hear us as we set before you this thanksgiving meal,
a foretaste of the joys of heaven.
Unite us in the Spirit with the Beloved Christ
through these gifts of bread and wine,
the food of pilgrims and the bread of angels.
May they refresh us through the darkness
and be to us the bearers of his light.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed
took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:
'This is my body which is broken for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'
In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying:

'This cup is the new covenant in my blood.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.
For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup,
you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.']
Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

In joyful union with him
may we embrace our world with love,
bring his healing to its pain,
the kiss of his compassion to its hurt.
Lead us when our earthly journey is completed
to him whom now we know by faith,
that we may rest within his close embrace
all searching and all longing past,
in the eternal communion of your love,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

Order for Communion at which children are present

Invitation

This is the joyful feast of the people of God.
Men and women and all God's Children,
Come from the East and the West,
From the North and the South,
And gather about Christ's table.
This table is for all Christians
Who wish to know the presence of Christ,
And to share in the community of God's people.

Communion prayer

Caring God, you made this world in love,
and you filled it with good things.
You made us so that we could know you,
and you called us your family.
Through the leaders and prophets and priests of ancient Israel,
you said how we should live.
Your loving word became flesh for us,
in the infant Jesus, the Suffering Servant, the Crucified Christ.
Because Christ Jesus lives,
and still gives himself to others,
a new kind of life has been given to us,
free from selfishness, from the fear of death, and free to help
in your loving work.

Your Holy Spirit calms us, and excites us,
stirs us up and makes us strong.
We remember all the people around the world
and down through hundreds of years
who shared in this supper,
who knew Christ was there
and had their fears and worries lifted.
And so we thank you that we can join them all
in Jesus' feast.
As we eat and drink, help us to know you,
in us, beside us, and around us and tell us we are welcome.
Amen.

The bread

On the night in which he was delivered into the hands of his enemies, Jesus took bread, and when he had thanked God for it, he broke it and said: 'This is my body, which is for you, so eat this and every time you eat it, remember me.'

The wine

In the same way, at the end of the meal, Jesus took the cup and said: 'This is my blood, it stands for a new way of being close to God that will happen because of my death, so drink this and every time you drink it, remember me.'

Prayer

You called us to this feast, Christ Jesus,
and you are the feast itself.
We thank you for feeding our hearts and minds,
today and every day,
joining us to your great Church
that is in Heaven and on Earth.

Holy Spirit, you have helped us
to remember Jesus on Earth and to know
he is risen and with us now.
Help us tomorrow to remember him,
when we are angry or happy, laughing or crying,
and to welcome him into our whole life
as he welcomes us.

Loving Father send us from this place
assured that we are forgiven, accepted and loved,
Send us with your light in our eyes
your peace in our hearts,
and knowing that nothing can ever separate us
from your love in Christ Jesus our lord.

Amen.

Alan Paterson

Communion

Let this service be conducted informally.

Let there be a circle of people around the table. If the service is to be held in a room with pews, people should at least be close to each other. One loaf (or roll of bread) and common cup(s) are appropriate.

This service assumes there has been the reading and proclamation of/ reflection on the Scriptures.

Be flexible about the order in which elements of worship are introduced. Be conscious of sights, sounds, touch, smells and taste which will also contribute to the atmosphere of worship.

'Voice' indicates a single speaker, preferably not the same person throughout.

Gathering around the table

Voice So many people are invited here, drawn here because there is friendship, welcome and belonging here. We are invited because we are the focus of love which is Divine. God is within each, and because God is within each, God surrounds each. Our breath is the Spirit of the Holy.

In silence, hear each other, hear God's breath.

Invite silent prayer: *Who is the neighbour I find it difficult to imagine at this table?*

Voice Let's welcome each other to this gathering place. May God help us overcome any sense of our own worth rejecting the worth of another.

All **There can be no one unwelcome. We have no right, authority or desire to turn anyone away!**
We give each other a sign of welcome and a touch of peace.

The people gathered share the peace or say the grace to each other.

Voice We don't come because we have the right to be here. We come because we're wanted here. We want each other and sense the wanting of God. How we are, how we feel towards one another, is a glimpse of God's feeling towards us seen in Jesus.

It is a divine, embracing and limitless act of community to discover we are each and all drawn to eat, drink and accept love here.

Deep community

Voice At the heart of the Jewish faith lies the ancient understanding of the Hebrew people that they were rescued from harsh slavery by a God who listened to their plight. Moses and Joshua led them to the Promised Land. It was God.

When Jesus sat for what we call the Last Supper with the women and men who were his closest companions and friends, they thought on Moses and Joshua. And at the Passover of the Last Supper the land of Palestine was occupied. There was no freedom in the Promised Land. Some expected a fantastic release from this occupation.

Voice Jesus talks about the meal as life. It is a meal to celebrate life. Jesus speaks about giving himself because life is so important. This is not to persuade God that life is important. Jesus knew that God already showed that as he sprung out of almost everything and everyone that Jesus saw! The sower, the mustard seed, the farmer, the servant and the unjust steward, were for Jesus stories about God.

The prostitute, the poor, the untouchable, the foreigner and so many more who were the least of his sisters and brothers and in whom Jesus found it so obvious to look for what God is like.

Voice This meal is cruel. We know life has cruel, painful and distorting moments. Crucifixion is close. There is a highly charged emotion. How intimately Jesus offers his friends food. Through generations of welcome and rescue from isolation and destitution food has been a constant symbol of the good host and acceptance.

Voice We know too that life is meant for living to the fullest possible measure. This means that the richness of life is expressed very differently by each of us. We are different people; we grew differently. The depth of community, the prophetic nature of our community is that God who is at the centre of our being speaks through each person to be met more fully by our being together. The meal is one in which we receive the welcome of God, the trust of God and the commitment of God. This meal is the example of how the whole of human life can be.

Breaking bread

Voice Words of institution: 1 Corinthians 12

Voice These are not words to make us cower. They are the down-to-earth giving of one individual to another, the giving of God to you. The invitation is open; the purpose is to make us look at each other and at the world with love, hope and faith.

Bread is a basic commodity for life. Food is vital. Jesus spoke of himself as food, not physical food but nourishing commitment of God.

There is hope. Life becomes richer. Our communities become more just. People are embraced. Here and now, in this sharing, the divine welcome, the community of God has already begun.

Look at this bread and wine. This is a wonderfully divine moment. To receive is to say God's yes to each person. There are no exclusion zones around this table. There are no requirements other than to want to say 'yes' to the divine invitation, and celebrate the life of Jesus.

Leader Mysterious God, deep at the centre of each of us, reaching out from each, enable us to be a gathering in which there is a genuine demonstration of community, as you sought community amongst the rough gathering of Hebrew slaves walking to an unknown and sometimes frightening future. As they saw your being in and with them because of manna and sustenance on their journey, so too, let us see that the bread and wine on this table are signs for us that the journey is with you, for you and in you.

As we share bread, we remember the fact that in Jesus we are shocked by the power of your love for all human beings.

As we drink this wine we remember that you, holy, mysterious God are not remote, not 'out there' like some strange alien. We remember Jesus' life, Jesus' death and the experience of Jesus' being as the visible likeness of the invisible divinity at the heart of every child, woman and man in the richness of our diversity.

All **The Holy God within us demands that we speak well to and of each other. The Holy God around us in our communities of work, rest and play celebrates the kaleidoscope of humanity. This wonderful God speaks well, blesses, rejoices in each and looks for that shalom, that peace with justice where we can each rejoice because of the other and rejoice because we are each embraced.**

Voice I take this bread to be food for life. I take it to share its life with my communities.

All **We take this bread because the God in Jesus is the God in us.**

The bread is passed on from one to another, or distributed as appropriate to the room, and its furnishings (similarly the distribution and the wine). Explain how this is to be done so that all feel comfortable.

Voice I take this wine, symbol of blood, the life which rushes through all life. It is the life of Jesus.

All **We take this wine because the God in Jesus is the God in us**

Silence

Voice Let's look at each other.
What does God see?
The present, future and hope of humanity!

All **Let's go and be
a people of grace
a people of hope
a people of justice
a people of love**
**A people for the world.
A people for God.
Let's go!**

John LI Humphreys

Communion prayers

Prayer of confession

Loving God,
we are ill at ease in your presence
unless we can be assured
that the faults we carry with us are truly forgiven.
We have become too familiar with them
and too easily excuse them
as not being grievous or significant.
But now we see
that they stand between us and you and each other
and we regret the harm they do.
Therefore, again, we beg forgiveness
and ask you, for your sake, to mend us. Amen.

Prayer of approach

Lord Jesus,
whose table this is,
you make clear how much you want
to share fellowship with us.
But it seems remarkable
that you should still seek our company
when our friendship and loyalty
are so often in doubt.

Open our hearts to welcome you
with gratitude
that is as great and deep
as your grace and mercy towards us.
Look upon us gathered here,
the flock you still shepherd
and for which you laid down your life. Amen.

Duncan Wilson

Prayer after Communion

We have received God's food,
bread that is life for the spirit
and wine that marks a new covenant.

Glory be to God the Father

We have received Christ in our hands,
his self-sacrifice, his obedience,
his living presence with us now.

Glory be to God the Son

We have been touched by the Spirit,
making holy what is ordinary,
and renewing us in our journey of faith.

Glory be to God the Spirit

Here we have joined all who follow Jesus,
across all divisions of race, language, politics,
across all generations,
to be part of the worshipping church of God.

as it was, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.
Amen.

Bernard Thorogood

The heartbeat of God based on Ezekiel 11:19-20

To be used as a meditative part during a Eucharist

(Sound of a slow drum beat)

Listen to the heartbeat of God.
Remember that God is with you, close by,
close enough for you to hear the heartbeat of love
that courses through the universe.
Close enough to you.
So close that, at times,
you could almost imagine it is your own heartbeat.
Know that God's heart beats with care and compassion for you –
despite your faults, your mistakes,
your insecurities and failures.
Know that God is concerned about you.

(Drum beat and tempo grow faster, louder)

Now know that God's heart beat strongly within Jesus,
that our Communion here is more than just a remembering of the past.
Instead it is God's heart there for you in the bread.
It is God's passion there for you in the wine.
And you are called to take up this bread and wine –
allowing God to become so much a part of your life
that your own heart beats like God's;
your own blood flows with the life and joy of God;
your own body is given in compassion
as part of God's self-giving to the world.

(Change to slow drum beat)

Listen to the heart beat.
Listen.
Hear God calling you.

Duncan Tuck

Whose are the hands of God?

Oh come let us sing to the Lord!
Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation.

All **Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving;
Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.**

For the Lord is the great God,
And the great king above all gods.

All **In His hand are the deep places of the earth;
The heights of the hills in His hands also.**

The sea is His, for He made it,
And His hands formed the dry land.

All **Oh come let us worship and bow down;
Let us kneel before the Lord our maker,
For He is our God,**

And we are the people of His pasture,
And the sheep of His hand.

Music

Reading: Matthew 25:37-40

God of the least of these,
All **We come to you
to offer our selves
as praise to you.**

God of the least of these,
All **The bodies you formed
with your hands,
are offerings to you.**

God of the least of these,
All **Where there is suffering, sickness and despair,
may our hands
restore and heal.**

God of the least of these,
All **God of the least of us,
Help us to know your hands
All Help us to be your hands.**

Amen.

Reading: Luke 8:37-38

Music

A reflection

Music

The Eucharist

Blessing

May you be anointed with love,
And may you anoint with love.
May you weep,
And may you dry tears,
May you feel the hand of God,
And may you be the hand of God.

Amen.

Charity Hamilton

God of all things,
God in all things,
God in nothing,
Maker of everything,
Lover of everything,
Cleanser of everything,
Eyes see everything,
Hands touch everything,

Thank you.

For the light of the day
And all things in it
For the darkness of night
And the covering it offers

For the bride of Christ
And the nourishment she offers
For the purity of your love
And the heart of compassion

All **God of all things,
God in all things,
Thank you.**

Your eyes have seen everything
All **But we have been too proud to weep.**

Your hands touch everything
All **But we have been too afraid
to reach out in love.**

Your heart has ached
All **But we have become empty of compassion**

Forgive the things that hurt and make hurt
That we may have
All **Eyes that weep for the world
Hands that reach out with your love,
Hearts that pulse with compassion.**

**God of all things,
God in all things,
Thank you.**

Psalm of praise

And he delivers them

Reading: free choice

Music

A reflection

Music

Silence

Some things to think about ...

Whose eyes will weep for the poor ... ?
Whose hands will reach out in love ... ?
Whose heart will break for the broken ... ?
Now these eyes will weep for the poor.
These hands will reach out in love.
This heart will break for the broken.
My hands will reach out in love.

The peace

Eucharist

Blessing

May the God of all things
Bless you in your brokenness that you may reach out,
Bless you in your shame that you may be compassionate,
Bless you as the outcast,
Bless you with his touch.
Amen.

Charity Hamilton

Blessings

As we leave this place

As we leave this place
let us go into the world
with love in our hearts:
 love for God
 love for our neighbour
 love for ourselves;
may that love bring goodness and kindness
to all we meet
and may God –
Maker, Saviour and Comforter –
bless us as we go
now and forever.

Amen.

Carolyn Smyth

Receive gladly

The blessing of God
Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Be with you.
Receive gladly God's blessing
And let it spill over into the lives of those you meet.

Amen.

Carolyn Smyth

Rejoice in the living God

Go on your way rejoicing in the living God;
And the blessing of God,
Creator, Redeemer and Spirit,
Be with you all.

Amen.

Jan Berry

Ever-loving God

Living God, the source of all life
All **prompt us into new beginnings**
Ever-present God, travelling alongside us
All **guide us to walk in your way.**
Ever-loving God, surrounding us with care
All **help us to detect your presence.**
In the name of Christ.
Amen.

Jan Berry

Creator, Redeemer and Spirit

May the blessing of the living God,
Creator, Redeemer, and Spirit,
Be with you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Jan Berry

The Spirit's power for change

Go your way rejoicing in the Spirit's power for change;
And may the living God, Creator, Redeemer and Spirit
Work with you and within you
Until God's justice fills the earth

Amen.

Jan Berry

Fill us with courage, wisdom and joy

May the God who guides our journey
The Christ who bears the suffering of the world
The Spirit who empowers us with the gifts of life,
Fill us with courage, wisdom and joy.

Amen.

Jan Berry

Today, tomorrow and forever

Let preachers hear Good News
Let seekers believe Good News
Let carers be Good News
Let victims make Good News
Let the earth hold Good News
Let us celebrate Good News
Today, tomorrow and forever,
In the name and Spirit of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Terry Oakley

Bless, protect and guide

Bless, protect and guide each one of us here,
and each one whom we love,
and each one who needs our love,
and to you, Blessed God, be glory and honour and praise.
now and forever.
Amen.

Terry Oakley

May the strength of God...

May the strength of God surround us;
the promise of God protect us;
and the grace of God guide us;
so may we be markers of God's mercy
to those whom we love and serve
Amen.

Terry Oakley

The light of God lead you

The light of God lead you;
the presence of God protect you;
the goodness of God go with you;
this day and every day.
Amen.

Terry Oakley

All our generations

The blessing of the God
of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David
of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba
of Jesus, son of Mary and Joseph
be with us and all our generations
now and forever.
Amen.

Terry Oakley

The unity of your whole creation

God, Maker and Lover of us all
Help us to live and breathe with the life of your Spirit,
That we may work with you
Towards the unity of your whole creation.
Amen.

Jan Berry

For the freedom of the whole creation

May the God in whose image we are made,
Strengthen us in our struggle,
Embrace us in our weakness,
And inspire us with hope for a different future:
As we work, separately and together
For the freedom of the whole creation.
Amen.

Jan Berry

Spontaneous love of the creator

The spontaneous love of the creator renew us;
The sacrificial love of the Christ reconcile us;
The sanctifying love of the Spirit restore us;
and blessing of grace, mercy and peace
be on us and all whom we love,
this day and for always.
Amen.

Terry Oakley

God of strength, of truth and of love

In the darkness, God, source of strength,
be present with us to guard and protect,
rest and encourage.

In the dawn, God, spring of truth,
reveal yourself to us to inspire and guide
refresh and renew.

In the daylight, God, spirit of love,
show us the way to justice and peace,
unity and joy.

Terry Oakley

Living God

Living God,
may our hearts feel the beat of your love for all;
may our hands reach out to each other in healing;
may our lips be open to drink in the delight of life;
may our ears hear the agony of inhumanity;
may our eyes see Christ in the stranger.
Breathe your Spirit into us
so that we are filled with the life of Christ.
Amen.

Terry Oakley

Bring us to new life

God of creative beginnings – bring us to new life;
Saviour with healing hands – make us whole;
Spirit of wisdom – send visions to old and young.
With grace, mercy and peace bless us and those around us,
This day and each day.
Amen.

Terry Oakley

May the God of peace sanctify you entirely

May the God of peace sanctify you entirely;
and may your spirit and soul and body
be kept sound and blameless
at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

I Thessalonians 5:23

Index of titles

Encircled by prayer

Calls to worship	93
Christ is our Lord	93
Come from many places	95
Come to celebrate God's world-wide people	95
Coming near to God	94
For resting in God	96
For healing and rest	97
Deep awareness of each other, A	94
Every family	93
Gathered on this Holy ground	94
Lord, our loving God	93
Open our hearts	95
Seeking the lost sheep	94
Spirit	96
Offertory prayers	98
Abundant gifts	98
Loving God	98
Prayers of approach and thanksgiving	99
Be our new life	104
Be present	101
Come, let us return to God	108
God is God	101
God of every day	110
God of new beginnings	102
God of time	103
God who is	103
God with us	112
Great big beautiful God	106
Hold us today	104
Holy risk-taker	107
How wonderful	105
In God is life	102
In peace let us pray to the Lord	110
Invocation, An	99
Jesus we come to worship you	111
Offering the best	105
One-in-three God	106
Praise the God of new things	104

Presence.....	100
Thank you loving God.....	109
To be here as our whole selves	111
We are here because you called	108
We're a mixed bag	99
Prayers of confession	113
Confession 1	113
Confession 2.....	114
Forgive us for the wasted moment	114
In steady pilgrimage.....	114
Living the life of faith	115
Prayer of confession	113
Prayers of assurance	116
Absolution	118
Assurance of forgiveness	116
Forgiveness 1	116
Forgiveness 2	117
Forgive Us	117
God, lover of all.....	116
Variations of forgiveness.....	118
Prayers of commitment.....	119
Bless our children	120
Living God you challenge us.....	120
Trinity of love.....	119
Global voices (for intercessions)	122
All are welcome	128
Body of Christ, The	134
Calling of the Church, The	136
Can the world get better?	130
Church, The	135
Come with peace	126
Commitment for Life	127
Compassion.....	138
Countryside patchwork, A	142
Deeper discipleship	136
Draw new people to you	138
Face of God, The	131
Glory is yours, The.....	124
God of Justice	128
God's invitation to all.....	132
Images of God	132
Jesus who meets our hungers.....	130

Journeying God	141
May we live by grace	124
Meeting new people.....	139
Now is the time	137
Peace in our communities	126
People matter most.....	140
Praising God with senses	142
Prayers before a meeting	144
Prayers for hope	133
Relationships	137
Respond to love and care	127
Sir, we would see Jesus	140
Small in terms of the world	125
Somerset sunset.....	143
Songs of our world, The.....	129
Tomorrow is God's agenda	122
Towards a new creation	123
Faith	145
Affirmation, An.....	145
Children's creed, A.....	147
Confidence in God	150
Fear	148
I believe	145
In love you.....	149
Laying on of hands, The	153
Litany of faith, A	146
Look forward	153
New vision, A	151
To touch and to heal	152
Our prayer for you.....	151
Celebrating the Lord's Supper	154
Communion prayers	165
Eucharistic prayer for creation	154
Eucharistic prayer for love	156
Eucharistic prayer for the excluded	157
Eucharistic prayer, based on 'En una noche oscura'	159
Heartbeat of God, The	166
Invitation to the Lord's table	154
Order for Communion at which children are present	160
Prayer after Communion.....	166
Whose are the hands of God.....	167

Blessings	171
All our generations	173
As we leave this place	171
Bless, protect and guide	173
Bring us to new life	175
Creator, Redeemer and Spirit	172
Ever-loving God	172
Fill us with courage, wisdom and joy	172
For the freedom of the whole creation	174
God of strength, of truth and of love	174
Light of God lead you, The.....	173
Living God.....	174
May the God of peace sanctify you entirely.....	175
May the strength of God	173
Receive gladly	171
Rejoice in the living God	171
Spirit's power for change, The	172
Spontaneous love of the creator	174
Today, tomorrow and for ever	172
Unity of your whole creation, The	173

Index of authors

Encircled by prayer

Jan Berry	95, 109-110, 116, 123, 171-174
Lesley Charlton	110-112, 125-127, 129-130, 135, 137-138, 144, 152, 154,
David G Cornick	108
Y Mochyn Daear	134, 140-141, 143
Charity Hamilton	148-149, 167-170
Brian Hudson	153
John LI Humphreys	93, 96, 99, 122, 128, 131-133, 145-146, 162-165
Vaughan Jones	93, 113, 126, 138, 153
Jennifer Martin	94
Terry Oakley	99-103, 105-106, 108-109, 114, 117-118, 133,
	141-142, 149-150, 172-175
Alan Paterson	119, 146-147, 160-161
Pamela Pavitt	127-128, 142
Alasdair Pratt	104
Carolyn Smyth	94-95, 98, 106-107, 171
Colin Thompson	154-160
Bernard Thorogood	114-115, 124, 130-131, 139-140, 150-152, 166
Trinity Church, Bedlington, Northumberland	120-121, 145
Peter Trow	124
Duncan Tuck	93, 96-97, 104, 166-167
Nigel Warner	101-102, 104, 113-118, 120, 132, 136, 138, 147
Duncan Wilson	165



A celebration of life

A service of thanksgiving and remembrance for our children who died at any age whom we love and commend to God

Welcome to ... United Reformed Church
(or whatever wording is applicable)

As you entered you were given a commemorative card and a candle. You are invited to write your child's name on the card. During the Act of Remembrance you will be invited to bring them both to the front where the candle will be lit.

We meet today to give thanks to Almighty God for the precious gift of life. We especially remember our children who have died and whom we love dearly.

In recalling and celebrating their lives we remember too the promise and hope which God has given us in Jesus who lived and died and loves again. For it is in the context of his life and his promises that we may escape from absolute grief and despair. Enabled by his promise we can be freed to anticipate, with joy, a shared future, bright beyond anything we have experienced or can understand, yet possible through the Grace of Almighty God, our loving Father.

Let us stand to worship God as we join in singing

Hymn: For the beauty of the earth

Prayer of approach

The Lord's Prayer

First reading

Address

Hymn: We cannot measure how you feel

Second reading

Act of remembrance

Hold fast to this moment; this time and space is for you. God waits in love, listens to what is in your heart and longs to take away the pain.

(All those wishing to participate, please come forward)

Music: Precious child

Now we remember and hold before God our children whose names are written on these cards.

In their names, too, we light these candles, symbols of love, faith and hope. May they burn brightly and lift our hearts and prayers to God.

Let us pray

Jesus said, 'Where your treasure is there shall your hearts be also.'

Minister Heavenly Father, these words would be dry as dust in our mouths if we did not trust in your promises.

All **Lord, to whom shall we go? Yours are the words of eternal life.**

Minister You have said that our names and the names of our children are written on your hands.

We are precious in your sight.

All **Forgive our lack of faith, help our unbelief, so that we may rest content knowing that they are safe in your keeping.**

Minister Encourage and strengthen us by your Holy Spirit. Help us to understand that it is a veil as thin as gossamer that separates us from them and that we are all cradled in your tender, loving care.

All **Our treasure is safe with you and there also may our hearts find peace.**

Minister We pray now for others around the world who mourn the loss of their children. May they find the blessing we seek.

All **In the name of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

Hymn: Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy

Closing responses

Minister Deep peace of the running wave to you

All **Deep peace of the flowing air to you**

Minister Deep peace of the quiet earth to you

All **Deep peace of the shining stars to you**

Minister Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you.

All **Amen.**

Blessing

Music: Gone too soon

Margaret Herbert and Compassionate Friends,
St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Sheffield

Creative decisions

Gifts and skills (Ecclesiasticus 38:24-end)

Gracious God,
we thank you
for the great diversity of gifts and skills
with which you have endowed the human race:
gifts of body and mind,
gifts of creativity, of perseverance,
of wisdom and compassion,
that together make up the fabric of this world.

Help us to encourage one another
to fulfil the potential you bestow on us;
to be more fully what you have created us to be,
and to offer ourselves in service
to the communities into which you have called us.

And may we,
who have been given leisure to be here today,
be blessed by each other's company
and by your Holy Spirit at work amongst us.
In Jesus' name we pray.

All **Amen.**

Wendy Baskett

A prayer for a meeting

Gracious and loving God,
you have called us into your Church
to worship, to witness, to minister in a variety of ways;
and we want to respond to that call
and fulfil your will for us.

We pray for our meeting here this evening
(or name any other part of day).
Help us to hear your voice
and feel your Spirit
as we talk together and seek to discern
in way in which you are leading us.

Take from us any anxiety or fear
and give us your deep peace,
in the confidence
that your purpose for each of us
and for your Church
is one for good;
and in the confidence that we are, together,
brothers and sisters in Christ,
in whose name we pray.

All **Amen.**

Wendy Baskett

Lead us in your ways of truth

Loving God,
in the midst of turmoil
and in the times of calm
you are with us;

when our hearts are troubled
and when our lives are at peace,
you are with us;

whether we forget you
or turn to you
you are with us;

so we worship you.

We praise you for your faithfulness
and loving kindness
which so often we do not deserve
yet on which we so much depend.

Be with us now
and help is in the task
that lies ahead of us.

Lead us in your ways of truth,
gentleness, wisdom and love.
We ask it in the name of Jesus.

All **Amen.**

Wendy Baskett

Easy choices or difficult decisions

Gracious God,
as we meet together
we pause to acknowledge
your presence with us
and our need of you.

You are with us
in the joys and the muddles of our lives,
in the easy choices and the difficult decisions,
and we praise you.

Guide us in our thinking and speaking
that we may hear what you are saying to us
and find unity in a common purpose,
as we strive to be faithful
in the work entrusted to us
as disciples of Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Wendy Baskett

Work or leisure

O God,
be present to us
in the work and leisure of this day
that we may reach the day's end
having been hearers and bearers
of good news;
in the name of Jesus.

All **Amen.**

Wendy Baskett

Grieving Remembrance Thanksgiving

Prayers for a Funeral (1)

Opening prayer

Gracious and loving God, you are the giver of life. We come from you, and in death we return to you. Be with us now.

We bring to you our grief and loss, because ... A ... was part of our lives, we loved *them* and now it hurts.

We bring to you our thanks for all that ... A ... meant to us, all that *they* shared with us and all that *they* gave us of *themselves*.

[as appropriate]

We bring to you our relief, that for ... A ... there is nothing left to fear, no more suffering, no more frailty, no more confusion, and *they* are with you and at peace.

Come into the turmoil of our emotions, renew our faith and grant us the peace that only you can give.

All **Amen.**

Prayer of thanksgiving for a life

God of life and light and hope, with your whole Church in heaven and on earth we bring to you our thanks, we offer to you our praise, for all that you have done for humankind through Jesus who is the Christ.

You gave him to live and die for us. You showed your plan for the world and proved that your love has no limit, and on that first Easter when you raised Jesus from the dead you promised that all humankind might share his resurrection life

For the hope of our faith, for the good news of your kingdom, and for all those whom you have welcomed into your loving presence, we thank you, gracious God.

But especially now, we thank you for the life of ... A ... whom we loved.

We thank you for all the ways in which ... A ... became special and precious to each of us who knew *them*;

for the values and standards *they* set *themselves* and lived by;

for *their* sense of what was good and right and decent;

for *their* warmth and humour and sense of family;
for every life that *they* enriched and all that *they* invested of *themselves*
in our lives;
for the faith by which *they* lived and in which *they* died. We thank you for the
glorious treasury of memories that are ours to keep, to hold on to and to enjoy –
the moments that were deep, special and personal, the times that rang with
laughter and fun,
and for the ordinary days of discovering each other a little more,
when affection and love, trust and respect, grew and were deepened.
We thank you for the courage shown, and for a life fulfilled,
and for all that ... A ... reflected of your goodness and love.

And now we are glad that ... A ... has found peace and will neither suffer
nor mourn again. *They* have laid *their* burden down before you and are with you,
safe, happy, whole, and welcomed by those for whom *they* once mourned.
Help us to hold on to what we should and to let go what we must.
Help us not to cling to the past constantly brooding for what might have been,
but rather to take forward what *they* gave us for the rest of our lives' journey.
Help us to trust and to know that ... A ... will never be far from us till that day
when we all stand together in your presence.

Through Jesus who is the Christ.

All Amen.

Closing prayer and benediction

Loving God, grant to us all now the grace to turn back to our lives and our
tasks with calm hearts, minds at peace, and a renewed faith.

Help us to be worthy of the (wo)man whose death we mourn today,
but whose life will always be dear to us.

May we go on from today to be the same people ... A ... helped us to become,
the people *they* were proud to call *their* family and *their* friends –
living out our lives as *they* want us to live, and celebrating in them all that
they gave us.

And may strength and courage and hope be with us all in the blessing of
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always.

All Amen.

Alan Paterson

Prayers for a Funeral (2)

Introductory prayer

Compassionate God, you have loved ... A ... , and we have loved *them* too.
We come to you because the love we feel is hurting and distressing.
We feel lost and helpless, sometimes lonely. We miss ... A
Help us to believe that your love is greater and more farseeing than ours.
Help us to find confidence in your love and peace in your compassion so that
our fears are calmed and our loneliness is eased. May today and tomorrow
be filled with your comfort, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer after the eulogy

Gracious Father God, your love never ends and is always willing to comfort
us. On this occasion grief can threaten us and over-shadow our hope
and optimism.

Help us to remember with gratitude ... A May *their* influence remain
with us because *they* were dear to us. May your compassion lead us
from the grief of separation to the hope of resurrection.

We thank you for the life which has passed; we give thanks because we
have seen the leading of God in ... A ... who has died.

We give thanks because of the virtues, love and activity which made
them what *they* were. We thank you for *their* life with all its
achievements and for the love given and received by *them* among
their family and friends.

We are content that whatever suffering and pain, sadness and sorrow there
was in *their* life has now passed and ended and that *they* have entered
into a life which is eternal.

We are grateful that *they* were such a person that our grief and sorrow is
real and pray for your comfort in healing the absence of *their* laughter and
joy of life.

We pray that you will bring comfort to those who grieve.

We pray particularly for parents, children, relations and friends of ... A

Give them courage to adapt to living. May grief and distress not overwhelm
them so that in time the wounds left by this death may be healed.

Give us insight to believe that physical death is the gateway to a more
complete and fulfilling life.

So give us your peace and light, comfort and compassion in the name and
for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Graham Robson

A service for the interment of ashes

Introductory words

We brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we cannot take anything out of the world.

After labour comes rest; after struggle, peace; after life's fitful fever, this last sleep.

Don't worry, said Jesus; I am the first and the last, and the living one; I died, and now I am alive for eternity, and I have the keys to eternal life.

We believe that Jesus died and rose again; and so it will be for those who died as Christians; God will bring them to life with Jesus. Thus we shall always be with the Lord. So there is consolation in the love and activity of God.

... A ... has now departed and *they* now rest with those who have gone before. What *they* have been and what *they* have given now rests with the God whom *they* worshipped and to whom *they* gave *their* life through Jesus, the Christ.

We thank God for who and what *they* were; for the love and concern *they* showed and was experienced by *them* and given by *them*. May *their* rest be in the peace and love of God, and our memory of *them* be blessed and loving, gracious and accepting. *They* have lived *their* life, and have departed to be with those who went before.

May we continue to be content to release *them* to you, and to be assured that in your keeping *they* are safe, happy and complete.

Prayers

Let us pray

God of mercy, and God of all comfort; look in love and compassion on us. Enable us to find in you refuge and strength, and close friend in times of trouble and stress, and to know, though it is beyond immediate knowledge, your strength which upbuilds and surrounds us in times of bereavement. Grant us faith and hope, and peace and comfort through Jesus the Christ who gave himself for us that the life we live may be filled with peace and hope.

Accept to yourself the life of ... A ... , with its achievements and failures, its ups and downs; its funny times and serious times, and deal with *them* graciously as we say goodbye to *them* and use our own lives to bring goodness and truth to those whom we know. These things we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Put ashes into ground

We have entrusted ... A ... to God's eternal keeping. Now we commit *their* ashes to their resting place; in the sure and certain hope of eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, who dies, was buried and rose again for us. To him be glory for ever.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple. His servants shall worship him and attend him and they will acknowledge his name.

Throw flowers over the casket

In memory, and in gratitude for the life of ... A ... we offer our flowers, confident of the certain hope that *they* are with *their* loved ones and cared for by God, and that we who are left will think of *them* with kindness and love.

We commend ourselves to you, praying that what we have done today will give us a deeper understanding of the issues of this life and an appreciation of its appointed end. Keep us in fellowship with the Church Triumphant; enrich us with light and truth, and enable us to find peace in the present and hope in the future since truth and light are both alike to you.

May the God of peace, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, love us and all his people, now and always,

All **Amen.**

Graham Robson

A Funeral service in a church followed by committal prayers at a cemetery or crematorium, and a rite for the burial of ashes

These alternative prayers of approach make provision for the violent grief of those who are bereaved by accidental death to be acknowledged and shared

The funeral of a young person may be attended by large numbers of people who are unfamiliar with church ritual and may bring their own symbols with them; these should be acknowledged where possible.

Appropriate liturgical provision may also be made for the inclusion of music that speaks meaningfully of lament and hope.

Introduction

Opening sentences

God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble

(Psalm 46:1)

Jesus said, Come to me all you that are weary
and are carrying heavy burdens,
And I will give you rest.

(Matthew 1:28)

Hymn

Prayer

(a)
God, O God,
we turn to you in anguish,
our hearts are screaming,
our minds are weeping
our spirits are numb.
We remember with sorrow
how we failed one another.
In the bitterness of regret, we turn to you.

(b)
Living God,
God of our strength
we come to you in sadness
at this time of parting.
We are restless and cast down.
Eternal Love, you know our guilt,
you taste our pain,
your outstretched arms enfold us.
God of mercy,
hear our cry,
breathe on us, raise us up,
speak to us
and strengthen us in hope
in the power of the holy Spirit,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Readings from the Bible

Address

Hymn, song or music for reflection

Prayer

God our Father, we thank you
that you have made each of one of us
in your image and likeness.

Especially today we thank you for ... A ... ,
for the life we shared with *them*,
for the good times and the bad
for the love *they* gave
and the love *they* received.

Faced with the mystery of life,
we affirm that love is unconfined.
Faced with the mystery of death,
we affirm that love is stronger than the grave.

Gentle God, for your pity's sake,
deal tenderly with those who mourn,
Especially ... A ... , ... A ... , and their families and friends.
In the pain of grief,
may they find comfort in you.
In their helplessness
may they find help in you;
In their loneliness,
may they find companionship in you.
May they find in us your comfort, your help
and your companionship.

God of undying life,
we thank you
that in Christ Jesus your Son,
you have given us life
which even death cannot destroy.
Form in us his likeness
and deepen his life in us
until our work on earth is done;
then time shall be no more
and night shall no more hide us
from each other' sight.
These things we ask
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who taught his disciples to say:

All Our Father ...

Where the coffin is open, the congregation may now be invited to come and take their leave of the body; music is played. The coffin is closed during the singing of the next hymn.

Hymn

Prayer of release

We now release ... A ... into the hands of God, our Maker and our Redeemer.

Let us pray

Holy God,
in whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning,
you have illuminated our human life
by the radiance of your presence
in Jesus Christ.
Sun of our souls, you pierce the mystery of death
with the light of eternity,
and great is your faithfulness.

We now release ... A ... to your merciful care;
we entrust *them* to your undying love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rest eternal grant unto *them*, O Lord,
Let light perpetual shine upon *them*.

All Amen.

Blessing

May the Lord bless you and keep you;
may the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you.
May the Lord look kindly on you,
and give you peace.

All Amen.

Fleur Houston

Prayers at cemetery or crematorium

Sentences

Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living one.

I was dead, and see, I am alive for ever and ever. (Revelations 1:17-18)

I am convinced
that neither death nor life,
nor angels, nor rulers,
nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,
nor height, nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation
will be able to separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 8:38-39)

Committal

(At the grave)

From the dust we have come,
to the dust we return.
The earthly life of ... A ... has come to an end.
We have released *them* into God's merciful keeping;
we now commit *their* body to the earth.
dust to dust, ashes to ashes,
trusting in the power of God
who raised our saviour Jesus Christ
in triumph from the dead
that we might live in glory everlasting.

All **Amen.**

(At the crematorium)

All fire and heat, bless the Lord,
praise him and magnify him for ever,
The earthly life of ... A ... has come to an end,
we have released *them* into God's merciful keeping.

We now assign *their* body to the flames.
Formed of the earth, to dust it shall return
Breathe on us, breath of God;
in the refining fire of your holy Spirit,
may we be brought with ... A ... to everlasting life.

All **Amen.**

Nunc Dimittis

Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace:
your word has been fulfilled.
My own eyes have seen the salvation
which you have prepared in the sight of every people:
a light to reveal you to the nations
and the glory of your people Israel.

Blessing

May the peace of God,
which is beyond all understanding,
keep your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus.
And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you, now and for evermore.

All **Amen.**

Note: At the cemetery after the blessing, mourners may, by prior arrangement, fill in the grave as others sing hymns/songs of faith and assurance. Flowers may then be removed from their wrappings and 'planted' on the mound.

Fleur Houston

Burial of the ashes after cremation

Greeting

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ
be always with you

We have come together to bury ... A ... 's ashes. As we do so, we remember our own mortality, affirming our faith that whether we live or die, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Prayer

God of the living and the dead,
strengthen us with peace
and steady us with hope;
speak to us the word of life
through Jesus Christ your son
who once was dead and now lives
forever.

All **Amen.**

Readings from the Bible

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all that is within me,
bless his holy name.
As a father has compassion for his children,
so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.
For he knows how we were made,
he remembers that we are dust.
As for mortals, their days are like grass;
they flourish like a flower of the field;
for the wind passes over it,
and it is gone.
But the steadfast love of the Lord
is from everlasting to everlasting
on those who fear him.

(Psalm 103:1,13-17a)

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house, there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself so that where I am there you may be also.

(John 14:1-13)

Prayer

(During or after which the ashes are buried)

Lord of life
You have promised that none of those you have redeemed
will ever be lost.
Strengthen us now as we return ... A... 's ashes to the earth
in the knowledge that all life finds fulfilment in you
and death has no domination
over us.

All **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Closing sentences

I will not fail you or forsake you says the Lord.

(Joshua 1:5)

Jesus said: And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

(Matthew 28:20)

Blessing

Now may the peace of God
which surpasses all understanding,
keep guard in your hearts and minds
so that you may be found
secure in Christ at the last.
And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be with you all
today and for evermore.

All **Amen.**

Go in peace and the God of all peace go with you.

Fleur Houston

Words and prayers for a child's Funeral

Opening words

We gather here, needing God's healing love,
and searching for his reassuring strength.

We gather to share our grief, to comfort and support one another
in our common loss.

We gather to share our hurt and our sense of outrage
that A's life has been unjustly cut off, and we have
been robbed of that promising young life.

We gather to commend to God, ... A ... and ... A ... ,
and to look for his comfort in our loss.

Opening prayer

Eternal God, you have loved us from the beginning.

In a vulnerable infant born in a stable you began the
demonstration of your eternal love, and with an empty
tomb you sealed your promise of eternal life.

In the ache that seems endless and the longing that we cannot let go,
speak to us in the depth of our being, and help us to know that the God
who made us in his own image never lets us go, never tires and never
abandons his children.

In our grief for ... A ... , as we hear again the words of our faith,
let your peace that passes understanding and your love that is deeper
than words touch our hearts. Transform our grief with the certainty that
Christ walks beside us through this life and beyond.

All **Amen.**

Prayer of thanksgiving

God of grace and light and healing,
God of our depth and our elation,
God of today's sorrow and of eternal joy,

We bring to you the turmoil of our emotions.

We bring to you our sense of injustice and understand that
you too are outraged by this injustice.

We bring to you our indignation and recognise that it is you
who inspires our indignation.

We bring the ache of our bereavement to the God whose only child
died on a cross.

We bring our fear and despair for a stark and bleak future without ... A

We bring our thanks for *their* life – and for all the lives *they* touched and
enriched – for the *daughter/son*, the *granddaughter/grandson*, the great
granddaughter/grandson, the *niece/nephew*, the cousin, the friend, the pupil,
the *Brownie/Cub*.

We thank you for the pictures *they* painted and the ones *they* were going to paint, for the music *they* played and the music *they* would have played, for the languages *they* were keen to learn.

We give thanks for the swimming and the sports *they* had found – for the open heart and the open mind, committed to the present and fascinated by the future, for *their* feet on the ground and *their* eye on fresh horizons.

We remember *their* zest for life, in a hurry to grow up, but with time for friendship, fun and family.

Help us to know that what we shared with ... A ... is ours to keep, and let *their* questions, *their* jokes, *their* enthusiasm and *their* grin fill the empty future that frightens us. Our hopes are thwarted, our plans for ... A ... have been destroyed and the colour and the music have gone from our lives. We miss that boundless energy and *their* limitless fresh enthusiasm.

On that first Easter, you helped Jesus' friends to discover that he was alive to inspire and encourage them; help us today to know that ... A ... is alive with the God who has always loved *them* and always will.

Help us gathered here this morning to find comfort in this place where ... A ... loved worshipping.

We pray for all those who are not able to be with us today, but who desperately want to be. We ask you to help them. Assure them all, and us, that ... A ... is with *their* God, safe, happy and whole. Help us to face the future in the certainty that ... A ... will never again know fear or worry, and the only pain left is ours at parting.

Help us to grieve for *them* honestly as we should, but spare us from the bitterness that corrodes and destroys. Help us not to turn *them* in our memories into a plaster saint, but let us take into our future *their* giggles, *their* shrieks *their* nonsense, *their* chatter, along with *their* laughter, *their* music and *their* bright open mind. Help us to recognise that our grief is part of loving, but that we will still be able to find warmth in *their* memory when the pain has eased.

Let your love enfold us today, dear God, as it also enfolds ... A Let the love which raised Christ from the dead, sustain us all till that day when together with ... A ... , we all worship you in the glory of your eternal kingdom.

All Amen.

Dismissal and blessing

Go in peace. Take into your future the joy that ... A ... gave you.
Be glad that you were part of *their* happiness. Know that death has not separated *them* from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord:
And may grace, and mercy and peace, from Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you all evermore.

All Amen.

Alan Paterson

A prayer for children who have died

Ever-loving Father we pray that you will receive the soul of this child ... A You will care for *them* and *they* will find life in you which is no longer possible here. We are devastated by this death, where we would expect so much to be achieved and where the innocence and joy of childhood has been cut short so tragically. We ask that in the midst of this grief you will surround us with your compassion and love and that you will instil in us the thought that your love is greater than ours and that this tragedy will not make us despair or that our grief will be unending. May our memories of ... A ... be gracious and loving, our remembrances compassionate and creative. Accept this child into your care, and help us to cope, find love and hope, and may our lives not be blighted by this death, but find new ways of love and care – for *their* sake and through Jesus Christ, our loving and caring Saviour.

Graham Robson

A prayer in a service for a stillborn child

God of healing and God of hope,
God who made us to know depth and elation,
We turn to you for help
because ... A's ... birth has become *their* death.
God of our sorrow and our joy,
we bring to you the frustration, the pain,
the confusion and the disappointment
that have stirred turmoil in our hearts and minds.
We bring our grief to the God who knows grief well.
We bring our fear for a future, now bleak and overshadowed
by the loss of a life that we should have been part of.

We did not know ... A ... , but we anticipated *their* presence.
We knew *they* were there – on the way
and we celebrated *their* coming.
We were glad and we were hoping,
making plans and looking forward.
And now the hopes have become sorrows,
our plans for a welcome have become a goodbye,
and instead of sharing in a new life
we have found an aching emptiness.
Be with us.
Help us to remember this time honestly,
to let it deepen our characters and our understanding.
Help us still to be the people we intended being for ...
Assure us today that ... A ... is safe and whole
in the love and care of the God whose image *they* bear.

Our lives can never be quite the same again.
We have no wish to forget *them*,
nor do we want to cling to the past,
brooding constantly for what might have been.
So lead us through this time into your future, God of life.
Hold out your hand when we are lost,
embrace us when we are desolate,
and support us when we are staggering.
Show us what we should take forward from this time
into the rest of our living.
As colours come back to our world
And we hear again the song of creation,
let ... A ... be in the music and in the brightness.
Let hope surprise us again.
Help us in today's darkness and tomorrow's light
To know that neither death nor life
Nor things present nor things to come,
Nor powers, nor height nor depths,
Nor anything else in all creation,
Will be able to separate us from the love
You demonstrated to the world in Jesus who is the Christ.

All **Amen.**

Alan Paterson

Burial of the organs of a baby removed during post-mortem

Greeting by the grave-side

We meet in the faith of God who created us, Christ who redeemed us, the Holy Spirit who brings us life. We meet in the faith that, though ... A ... has died, *their* life is not destroyed by death. *They* now lay cradled in God's love, whose warmth gives life to the dead.

As we return *their* remaining organs to the earth, let us comfort one another with the assurance that one day we will be reunited with *them* in joy and blessing beyond our imagining.

And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up on the last day

(John 6:39)

Prayer

Loving God, giver of life,
all that we have and hold
is on trust from you.
What you have given to us we return to you.
Give us grace to let go
of those things we can cling to no longer
that we may know ourselves to be held by you
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,
who taught us to say when we pray:

All **Our Father ...**

Prayer of committal

(During or after which, the casket is buried)

We now return to the earth
the remaining organs of this little child.

God of compassion,
We pray for this family in their pain and grief.
Give them courage and strength in the days ahead.
Touch then tenderly with your love
that they may know your peace,
and have hope in their hearts
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.

All **Amen.**

So let us go in peace

(Numbers 6:24-26)

Fleur Houston

A Funeral prayer for a person who has committed suicide

(Exploring our sense of guilt and anger)

Loving God, our words are not enough. We remember before you today our friend ... A ... whose hurt we were not able to ease. We feel as if we let *them* down, because the hurt was too great, life too frightening, worries too great and our efforts failed. Help us to let go, to forgive ourselves and others, just as you have always forgiven your children. We celebrate the life which ... A ... lived. We remember *their* successes and the sound of *their* laughter and give thanks for the moments of joy we shared. Thank you for the times we shared which we shall always treasure. Unfulfilled potential is not your will, and we feel anger that we have to deal with so many unanswered questions and unfulfilled hopes. Help us to remember what it is that is good in life and to celebrate it with all our being. We believe that ... A ... is now with you, released from this life and the pain we could not take away. For *their* sake help us to live in the power of your love, and when we do not have the answers to our questions, to accept the silence with anticipation and the assurance of your love.

Elizabeth Kemp

Look down from the cross

(A prayer following a suicide)

Look down from the cross, Lord
In the darkest of hours;
As the shock of what's happened
Hits as hard as the nails.
As the fear of desertion
Leaves us empty, betrayed.
Look down from the cross, Lord
Be with us we pray.

Look down from the cross, Lord
In the bleakest of days;
As the loss we are suffering
Tears a hole in our ways.
As our fear for the future
Leaves us angry and dazed.
Look down from the cross, Lord
Be with us we pray.

Look down from the cross, Lord
And see us here, now;
As we try to forgive
When we feel so dismayed.
As our lives must move on
With our hearts torn in two.
Look down from the cross, Lord
Be with us we pray.

Look down from the cross, Lord
At our future lives;
As time passes slowly
And nights last for days.
As you suffer with us
And carry us on.
Look down from the cross, Lord
Be with us we pray.

Melanie Frew

O Lord through all our days

O Lord, through all our days
you held us in your care,
and though we wandered from your ways,
surprised, we found you there;
wherever we have been,
though strange the paths we trod,
there's nothing that could come between
your children and their God.

If such a love as this
has followed us from birth,
has blessed our lives and guided us
through all our time on earth,
then surely you will keep
our spirits in your care,
and bring us safely through death's sleep
to know and find you there.

And this we dare believe
through Jesus Christ your Son,
who promised that he would receive
us there, where he has gone;
he died and rose again:
and all he came to give
we know has not been given in vain;
he lives, and we shall live.

Tune: Diademata
Basil Bridge

A service of thanksgiving for a person who has given their body for medical research

Introduction

Opening Sentence

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God,
No torment will ever touch them.

(Wisdom 3:1)

Hymn of praise

Prayer

Most merciful God, whose wisdom
is greater than anything we can ever understand,
we come before you as we are,
offering you our pain, our doubts,
our feelings of guilt, and our anger.
Trusting in your mercy and your grace,
we ask that you will forgive what needs to be forgiven
and heal what needs to be healed
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through the power of your Spirit,
may the words of Scripture
bring strength where there is weakness,
light where there is darkness,
faith where there is doubt
and life where there is death,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Readings from the Bible

Address

Hymn of assurance

Eternal God, our strength and our redeemer,
Giver of life and conqueror of death

(a)

We thank you for ... N ... ,
for *their* sense of adventure, *their* insatiable curiosity,
their sunny lively personality,
their sheer joy in being alive.

We thank you
that *they* who served humanity so lovingly
should continue to do so after *their* death
and benefit generations yet to come.
In life, in death, *they* gave glory to you.

(b)

We remember before you ... N ... ,
they were sociable and good company;
we know that *they* were no plaster saint;
they wanted to live life *their* way,
often at the expense of other people;
they was sorry all the time for what went wrong.
Their final act was to do a good turn
for other people,
and for that we honour *them*.

We give thanks for all *they* meant to *their* family and to
the community in which *they* lived. We acknowledge
with gratitude the service *they* have given to medicine and
to humanity and we commend *them* to your loving care,
confident that *they* are at peace.

God of compassion, we pray for those who mourn;
especially ... N ... , ... N ... and all members of their families;
that they may grieve indeed
but not as those without hope.
Surround them with your love and grace
and let them have good friends
to share their burdens and ease their pain;
through our saviour Jesus Christ,
who taught his disciples to say:

All Our Father ...

Final hymn

Nunc Dimittis

(All remain standing and join in saying the words in bold type)

All **Save us, Lord, while we are awake,
protect us while we sleep,
that we may keep watch with Christ,
and rest with him in peace.**

Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace:
your word has been fulfilled.

My own eyes have seen the salvation
which you prepared in the sight of every people;

A light to reveal you to the nations,.
and the glory of your people Israel.

All **Save us, Lord, while we are awake,
protect us while we sleep,
that we may keep watch with Christ,
and rest with him in peace.**
(as in Rejoice and Sing 742)

May the God of all hope strengthen and sustain you,
and may the God of life be always with you.
May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May his face shine upon you,
and be gracious to you.
May he look upon you with kindness,
and give you his peace.

All **Amen.**

Fleur Houston

Elders and pastoral care

A prayer for the vestry

Amazing God who is within and beyond all things; who is transcendent but is also immanent; how can we make an exclusive claim on you? How can we possess you and not let you reach others in different forms at different times?

Therefore, may our worship recognise your presence with all people. May your Spirit rule the words and thoughts of all who gather here today.

David Jonathan, North India

A simple prayer

Creator God, Father and Mother!

Who are these people you have created who look so different?

Who refuse to integrate and accept but readily agree to segregate and reject?

If they are your creation, why are they so threatening?

Is my fear a mere prejudice or a natural reaction to reality?

But what is reality?

The one they say in the news or the one they deny in Council.

As I gather courage to adore you,

In all your creation of fellow beings ...

In the Churches

In the Temples

In the Mosques

In the Synagogues

In the Street

In the Pubs

I lay beside you all my ambiguity, apprehension, suspicion and fear.

All **Amen.**

David Jonathan, North India

Just an ordinary day

Today is just an ordinary day, Lord,
nothing special is happening,
nothing startling has happened during the week,
and nothing unusual is planned for next week.
Today is just an ordinary day.

But today is Sunday,
and the congregation has come to worship you, Lord –
please help!

Pause

Thank you that you are the same yesterday, today and forever.
Thank you that you are the same now
as when you called (*name*) to preach your Word.
Please remind *them* of that call now.

Pause

Help (*name*) to share the enthusiasm and wonder of that moment
with all who come to worship you today.
And may the worship we offer you be special –
even on this ordinary day.

All **Amen.**

Ruth Sermon

In the following two prayers by Wendy White 'we' and 'us' can be substituted,
where appropriate, for 'I'

Pour out your Spirit

I want to do something
Reach out and make it alright
Calm, reassure, listen, solve
all the problems I hear.

I am very capable
Trained to deal with anything
Find nice sensible solutions
Keep everybody happy.

I return to the illusion
That I can do everything
If only I try hard enough
and pay attention.

I fall at your feet – again,
Broken, frustrated, humble
Knowing that I don't know
Empty, helpless.

You – hold out Your arms – again,
Pick me up, hold me,
Pour out Your Spirit
Creator, healer.

Wendy White

Because I am frightened

Because I am frightened you will not come again,
Because I am frightened that you will,
Because I know and don't know
and in knowledge lose all understanding

All **Lord have mercy.**

Because I am frightened that this is illusion,
Because I am frightened when I know it is real,
Because I both trust and doubt you
and am wary of loving this much

All **Lord have mercy.**

Because You have come this far for me,
Because I still run from you,
Because I turn, trembling, at
Your love aching to believe

All **Lord have mercy.**

Wendy White

Prayers when we feel distant from God

Creator of light and darkness

All **you hold us.**

When we wander in dark places

you speak to us.

When we can find no words to speak to you

All **you do not forget us.**

When life seems too bleak for hope

All **you give us strength to continue.**

When we do not hear you, when we cannot speak to you and we feel most alone

All **you touch us in the darkness, offering to travel with us.**

Elizabeth Kemp

Care of aliens

(The prayer of an Elder with responsibility for children and young people)

What aliens are these?

Loud, confident, brash

Interfacing with computers

All seeing and all knowing.

What aliens are these?

Dressed in bizarre clothing

Listening to strange rhythms

And a language all of their own.

What aliens are these?
How can I communicate with them?
How can I get to know them?
Why should they listen to me?

What aliens are these?
The babies you bless
The little children you love
The young people questioning and testing you

What aliens are these?
I was one, too
I will remember what it was like
And be as a child to stand alongside those you love.

Melanie Frew

A prayer for young people in vulnerable situations

Father of all,

We thank you that when we were still far off
You saw us and were filled with compassion.
In Christ Jesus your Son,
A new humanity was clothed with your love.

We pray for all young people on this estate
(or similar words to fit with local communities)
Even if their father and mother forsake them,
may they know that they are loved by you.
Give them strength to turn away
from things that are harmful
and courage to start again in a new way of life.

Grant us perseverance to walk with them,
discernment in maintaining boundaries,
wisdom to resist manipulation.
Grant us the humility to know
that on our own we can do nothing
and faith
to trust always in you.

Renew your broken people in the power of your Holy Spirit.
So the dead come to life, the lost are found
And the whole earth will sing your praise.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord,

All **Amen.**

For those affected by drug abuse

All **Blessed be God who delivers us from death,
despair turns to hope in your great goodness.**

Lord, we pray for those who are afraid
of ever-increasing addiction to drugs;
whose families live with stigma;
who steal and mug and lie
to feed their habit;
who lose all track of life
and human dignity;
who feel trapped.

In your mercy, Lord, heal us
All **in your tender love remake us.**

Lord, we pray for those who are afraid
of being robbed;
who are suspicious of their neighbours;
who hate the noise and smells
of people desperate for drugs;
who envy dealers with expensive cars and clothes;
who dread their children finding sharps
in parks or gardens;
who feel angry.

In your mercy, Lord, heal us
All **in your tender love remake us.**

Lord, we pray for those who work
with users and their families;
those who seek to guard communities
from anti-social and criminal behaviour;
those who teach young people
to resist substance abuse.

All **Blessed be God who delivers us from death,
despair turns to hope in your great goodness.**

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All **Amen.**

The ministry of flowers (1)

God, our beloved,
we breathe your fragrance
and we are drawn to your radiant beauty.
You make flowers appear upon the earth,
the time of singing has come.

What flowers we have, what scent,
what delicacy of tone and shape!
In loveliness, they raise our hearts you.

And so with joy and gladness
we thank you for the skill and patience
of those who beautify our worship
as ministers of flowers.

Spring and flowers fear the frost
but you bloom for ever.
In you we live, we breathe, we love,
you are our all, our praise
and all our good.

All **Amen.**

Fleur Houston

The ministry of flowers (2)

As we come to worship we cannot help
but see the flowers which adorn this place
and our thoughts are drawn to you and your creation.
For they reveal the multitude of
colours and textures in your creation.

They speak to us of the intricate detail
and great magnitude of your creation,
from the smallest microbe to the largest mammal.

So as we look upon their beauty,
we give you thanks for those
who week by week ensure that there are flowers
to remind us of your creative power.

We thank you for the skill and creative talents
of those who week by week create such wonderful displays.

Lord God we also ask,
that as these flowers are sent to
those with something to celebrate or who are in need,
that they may speak of our love for them,
and dear God of your loving creative power.

All **Amen.**

David Coote

The ministry of flowers (3)

The lily reaching to heaven, architectural, pure
More perfect than Solomon's finest garb
We thank you for the flowers of the field.

Our churches of plain bricks and mortar
In cities bereft of beauty
We thank you for the flowers of hope.

For those that bring us your roses
Cut and gathered with care
We thank you for the flowers of love.

Melanie Frew

The ministry of music

Living God,
Composer of the universe,
In tumult you began your work,
Your symphony took shape;
Earth, sea and air and life in all its forms;
Each movement had its place.

And we were free to play, to sing,
to improvise its themes.
But we forgot the score.

And so in time, you sent your Son
to teach and to inspire a music
of contrapuntal harmony
fusing your melody with ours.
And in our worship we remember him.

Today we give thanks
for ministers of music,
organise, pianist, choir, band, orchestra, music group,
praising you for the skill and creativity
with which they enrich our worship,
looking ever to that glorious day
when all the voices of our world
resound as one
and in a rising crescendo of love and praise
all will be Amen and Alleluia.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Fleur Houston

Baking cakes – again!

Do I *have* to, Lord?
Not *ANOTHER* cake!
Yes, I know I like baking –
and I find it therapeutic,
and it's very satisfying to see people enjoying my handiwork.
But I don't feel like it today –
and I haven't time,
and I'm on a diet,
and ...

Where does cake baking come in the Bible, Lord?
I never heard Jesus or Paul talk about it.
I never knew it was part of the Christian life –
it isn't in the membership promises,
or the eldership service,
so why are we expected to produce cakes so faithfully?

Pause

I'm sorry, Lord, I'm giving in to ungenerous thoughts.
Please help me,
I do want to be generous.
I want to see people come together in your name as they eat –
in imitation of the meal you had with your disciples.

It may not be bread and wine,
and I may not be ordained,
but I am part of the priesthood of all believers.
Please use my offering
to bless your people.

All **Amen.**

Ruth Sermon

Prayers before visiting pastoral care/difficult situations

Compassionate Christ, you always had time, even for your enemies.
Grant me the gift of seeing those who are difficult, those who make me feel
uncomfortable and those who disturb me, through your eyes; that I may listen
to them with love and commend them to you.
Help me to understand that silent presence is often a more powerful gift than
many words.
And if, in spite of my efforts, my ministry is rejected – give me the wisdom
to let go of contentious problems and leave them with you.

Elizabeth Kemp

Hospital visiting

Lord Jesus, you spent so much of your time with those who were in pain, concerned about the future and feeling worried about their loved-ones. Be with ... A ... at this time. Whatever the future brings, may *they* know your constant love and not feel alone. Thank you for family, loved-ones and friends, for their concern and prayers. Thank you health care workers and all those who daily attend to patients' comfort and well-being; thank you for their skill, patience and care, may they never feel undervalued or taken for granted. Whatever the future brings, may we be enabled to face it with peace and in the assurance of your love.

Elizabeth Kemp

The whole armour of God for Christian Aid collectors

Take up the whole armour of God, so that you may knock at each door. Stand, therefore and fasten the money bag around your waist, and put on the badge of identification. As for your feet, put on whatever will make you comfortable on the tarmac, gravel and slabs. With all these, take the information leaflet, with which you will be able to answer all questions. Take the umbrella to save you from rain (*or sun block to save you from burning*) and the message of charity, which is the word of God. Pray at all times. Grace be with you all as you go out to collect this Christian Aid Week. [\(With apologies to Ephesians 6:13-17\)](#)

Melanie Frew

For those in our care

Help us to stand with those in our care,
To make the coffee and hold the hand
To offer the handkerchief and provide the shoulder
To listen, to love, to laugh, to let be.
Help us to stand with those in our care.

Help us to comfort those who are ill,
To do the shopping and take the post
To bring some flowers and wear a smile
To plump the pillow and pour the water.
Help us to comfort those who are ill.

Help us to understand the needs of others,
The time to talk, the time for silence
The time to pray, the time to cry
The time to hug, the time to leave.
Help us to understand the needs of others.

Help us to ask for your help, Lord,
To find the time and to use it well
To ask for advice and to seek support
To stay strong, to be sensitive, to care, to be a friend.
Help us to ask for your help, Lord.

Melanie Frew

Make room

They pick him up on his stretcher.
Carry him in the sun.
Straining as they carry him up on to the roof.
Family members caring for a disabled family member.
Disabled people longing for independence.
Neighbours who allow someone to stay in their home
because they shop and pop round.

They cannot get in.
There are too many people.
No way through.
Churches designed to keep you, Jesus, for themselves,
to keep strangers out.
Churches that are clubs of the like-minded.
Making those needy feel humiliated
and thinking somehow of God as a pet.

Your sins are forgiven.
Many cannot hear these words.
People burdened by guilt.

Get up and walk.

Those who find movement too demanding want to stay where they are.

Lord Jesus may you be at home with us
and may we make room in our structures
and personalities for you.

Lesley Charlton

Outside

The kid in my class – **outside** – because he says stupid things, has dull clothes.

Outside because she works too hard and shows off.

Outside because they move around;
travelling people, refugee people, people who are trafficked.

Outside because they behave oddly;
socially challenged people,
not able to cope with the complexity of all the information.

Outside because they do not want to be inside;
those who do not need us,
do not want the message we bring,
know all the answers.

Outside because they are in hospital,
residential home/school;
those who are forced to wear the label 'patient'.

Lord enfold us all in your love and at the end welcome us home.

Lesley Charlton

Lord of the upside down

Lord of the upside down
your ways are not our ways.
In our world the middle aged have the power
yet you come with a child as an example of the kingdom.

For children exploited and neglected.
For those not heard.

For the elderly whose power was once.
Move in those coming to terms with the changes old age brings.

We look for a leader to provide quick, stock answers.
You expect that we will work together beyond barriers of religion and race.

We value doers, the proactive, the achievers.
You show us the value of being,
of praying,
of silence,
of rest.
Prophetic people whose lives point in new directions.

We value strength,
military might.
You hang on a cross.
There are those countries at war

(name situations currently in the news)

Places beginning to build the peace

(name situations currently in the news)

Relationships with one another:

listeners to the quiet voice;

a gentle approach as well as strident noise,

Lord we wrestle with these issues every day.

Cheapest or fairly traded

quickest or best

me or us

In Jesus' name

Lesley Charlton

Season of mists and holiday returns

The time to celebrate the fruitfulness of the earth
and to abhor the weight of the lives we have built for ourselves.

This is the time when the leaves fall
and the leavers are now joiners
at university and big school.

This is the time to get back to the ordinary

This is the time to resume meetings;
the clubs and activities.

Be our light as it gets darker
be a present guide in our fogs
be a hand to hold in our lostness
be peace to those at war for they crave the ordinary that we disparage.

In Jesus' name we pray

Lesley Charlton

Elders and moments of worship

A prayer for the week

Living Lord, Our Risen Christ,
when we meet, talk, cry or laugh with people
as we travel along this week,
we pray that there will be opportunities
to see You at work in the world,
through women and men
as they go about their daily lives.
Encourage us,
to go about our lives
sowing seeds of Peace
In our communities.

All **Amen.**

Geoffrey Duncan

Prayers of thanksgiving and confession

This is the day that our Lord God has made –
a day for new hope.

Thank you, Lord for the fact that we are here;
for our joys and our sorrows,
our laughter and our tears,
our work and our leisure time.

Thank you Lord for our lives
– so precious –
and may we remember that other peoples' lives are precious too,
as we live in our local communities set within the global framework;
and for the increasing need for understanding about living
with many different people;
for our families and our friends;
for our holidays and refreshment.

We give this day and all our days to you Lord for service with people

Please forgive us for the wrong things that we have done in recent days.
For the unkind words that may have hurt someone and for unpleasant
thoughts about our friends and neighbours.

We know, Jesus, that you will forgive us. Please help us not to do these
wrong things but instead help us to help people whoever they are –
to be kind and thoughtful – and get on with everyone.

Geoffrey Duncan

Full of grace and truth

(Based on John 1:14)

God of truth,
who lives in us,
help us to be people of truth;
to resist copping out when questions get difficult,
looking for easy answers to life's complexities,
or meeting openness with narrow mindedness.
Rather, shine in us,
that full of grace and truth,
we may show life's fullness
as your daughters and sons.

Janet Lees

Transforming us

(Based on Jeremiah 20:7-13)

Liberator God, we sing to you
for you are just and do which is right.
Life and breath, freedom and love
are your gifts to us.
Yet, with every breath,
our humanity catches up with us
and faith comes hard.
Violence and destruction are around us
and even within us;
we become afraid to speak your name
and claim your love.

[Silence]

Even so, your fire still burns in us
as you are so ready to forgive,
both our personal shortcomings
and our communal failures.
We are thankful that you see right to the hearts and minds,
that peace and justice are your standards
and that love is your everlasting gift.
We declare that this is the new life we have received.

Janet Lees

Treasuring us

Holy God,
who chooses and treasures us,
you love us.
You keep faith with us
even when we do not keep faith with you;
breaking our promises to and for each other,
giving the poor few chances,
afraid to confront injustice.
You know our struggles
and our frustrations.

[Pause]

We are amazed
that you have set your heart on us,
choose us, treasure us
and forgive us.
We thank you, generous One.

Janet Lees

Expand our vision

(Based on Rejoice and Sing 498 God be in my head)

God, be ahead of understanding;
expanding our vision of the world and the church
as we pray and work together.
God, be beyond seeing;
challenging us to probe the ready answers
as we look deeper into our local situation.
God, be more than words;
echoing in both sound and silence
as we tune into the small voices so easily ignored.
God, be the fundamental beat of life;
steadying us for clear thinking
in the ups and downs of our experience.
God, be beyond life itself;
so that whatever marks the beginning or end
we may know we are always in your company.

Janet Lees

Lord of life and love

Lord of Life and Love, give us fresh insights for the ways in which we use resources with our people skills and our finances. Help us to appreciate the need to re-evaluate our skills and our purchasing power and ensure that we are supporting people in need, without strings attached, in local and global communities.

Enable us to work together for justice in our neighbourhood, the nation and the world.

Lord of Life and Love, give us the spiritual strength to participate in activities which will bring about better living conditions for people in developing nations. Lead us to a renewed understanding of what it means for women and men to be empowered; for our neighbours and our global friends, who live in poverty in the marginalised communities, to reach their potential in education, skills and income generation.

Enable us to understand and appreciate the resilient nature of marginalised women and men; to know that all life is valued and to rejoice with them as they continue to become increasingly resourceful people.

Lord of Life and Love, open our minds to existing and new ways of caring for people and sustaining Earth. Lead us to discover with people, in partnership, fresh, energetic methods of communicating improved ways of Living in remote, barren villages or industrialised, polluted cities.

Enable us to turn around our life-styles; to become less demanding in our wants and desires so that we are able to experience new ways of Living. Awaken our consciences to become pro-active with people wherever they are in your world.

Lord of Life and Peace, help us to discover, now – today – the many faces of Justice and Peace waiting to be pursued. Help us to know how we can be alongside people ...

(Please name here areas of the world where there is violence, terrorism and war ...)

Keep us well-balanced as we take positive action to support suffering women, men and children wherever they are.

Enable us to be more informed; increase our understanding; lead us to greater wisdom and compassion. Prompt and prod us to be spiritually more open for gospel-action and to see the face of Christ in the stranger. Lord of Life, Love and Peace hear our prayers and act upon them as you will.

All **Amen.**

Geoffrey Duncan

Spirit of God

As you prompt us
Open our eyes to see the needs in your world,
Open our ears to hear the cries
of the poor
of the suffering
the marginalised
give us the courage and the tenacity to take our spoken
prayers into serious action.
Move us from our security
To take risks just like Jesus
And as you want us to do now
To walk with humankind
Knowing that you, Spirit of God, will support us
As we meet you please
Re-assure
Re-new
And re-commit us to a life of service
With no strings attached
Where we will stand for justice and peace
Spirit of God, on this (*Pentecost*) * Day may things change
because of us.

All **Amen.**

* Please be flexible with the use of the Day as this prayer can be used on many other occasions.

Geoffrey Duncan

A Psalm

(For the leader and all the people)

Bless the Lord, my soul;
Lord, my God, you are very great.
We sing to you in dances.

You are the love which moves the sun and stars,
you are the source, centre and spring
of all that lives and loves;
this have you done for your true love.

You call us to the dance
with simple steps and ever-changing patterns,
where all have space and freedom.

We call to you with inarticulate groans
and thwarted yearnings;
following Christ our partner
with clumsy, shambling gait,
dragging our feet.

And in your grace, you turn and come to us,
rejoicing in the dance;
acknowledging our smallest steps,
you take us by the arm
and lead us
in more and more glorious
configurations.

Lord, my God, you are very great,
wonderful you are, and wonderful your works.

Bless the Lord, my soul.

Fleur Houston

Hymn to Jesus

Jesus, Lord most kind companion
We would bless your holy Name
Praise your ministry of healing
And your love that's still the same.

Jesus, Lord for ever caring
We would praise your patient ways
Human sorrows always sharing
giving aid in darkest days.

Jesus, Lord for ever faithful
Keep us in your heavenly way
always learning from your teaching,
seeking pardon every day.

Jesus, Lord help us to see you
in the troubled, wounded ones.
Let us pray for all despairing,
both your daughters and your sons.

Rosemary Watts

Come to us now Lord

Come to us now Lord, surrounded by so many things,
keep our focus on you, the righteous King of Kings.
Help us to work and pray for social justice every day,
for your gifts of faith and courage as we follow in your way.
'Thy kingdom come' – you taught us, Lord to pray.
Jesus abide in us, and in the hearts of all humanity.

Rosemary Watts

God of beginnings and endings

God of beginnings and endings
Help us to remain focused on you.
God of hope and love
May we in silence hear your voice.
God of joy and peace
Open our hearts and minds
To encounter you in the
Great variety of human experience.

Keith Brown

Benedicite

Written for Blackbird Leys, but could be used in other situations

O give thanks to our God who is good,
whose goodness endures for ever.

You sunrise and sunset, night and day,
give to our God your thanks and praise.

Cherry and chestnut trees, starlings and rooks,
give to our God your thanks and praise.

Roses and lavender, butterflies and voles,
give to our God your thanks and praise.

All you whippets and punters, footballers and fans,
give to our God your thanks and praise.

All tower blocks and flats, houses and caravans,
give to our God your thanks and praise.

Churches and Leisure Centre, shops, schools and pubs,
give to our God your thanks and praise.

All you men and women, black and white, young and old,
give to our God your thanks and praise.

All you saints and martyrs of this estate,
give to our God your thanks and praise.

O give thanks to our God who is good
Whose goodness endures for ever.

Fleur Houston

Mothering Sunday

Mother God, giver of life, creator of new worlds, you nurture universes within your enfolding presence. As a child in the womb is unaware of the mother who carries it, so are we unaware of your Spirit holding us in life, nourishing and supporting us. We listen to the muffled sounds of the world rushing by, and rarely notice the beating of your heart in the midst of it. For your all-encompassing, life-giving presence we praise you.

Mother God, eternal home-builder, bread-winner, labourer of love, you never cease toiling for the health and welfare of your beloved creation. For your life poured out for us, we praise you. Mother God, passionate with love for your world, in Jesus we see you bear the agony and disappointment of our failure as if it were your own, you graciously tolerate our arrogant certainties that we know best, you put your very life on the line for your vulnerable children. For your life, sacrificed for us, we praise you.

Like argumentative children, we have not acknowledged our unity in you, and our responsibility for the peace and harmony of your world-wide family. We blame each other for the wrongs of the world and self-righteously wash our hands of guilt. We allow others to bear the punishment for our failure, as if the death of Jesus has taught us nothing.

We are sorry for the failures of the past that have tolerated, even encouraged, bullying in communities, in families, in international affairs. We are sorry for the violence being inflicted in our name.

Come between us, gentle Spirit. Calm our anger and desire to blame everyone except ourselves. Encourage us to look with love into the hearts and desires of others. Bring out the best in war currently being waged by our State.

(Paragraph 1, with acknowledgement to Margaret Hebblethwaite)

Dick Wolff

In the beginning you were...

Creator, in the beginning You were,
and your love could not be contained.
From the overflowing of Your love you sang us into being
that we might share love and wonder, and join Your song.

In the exuberance of Your Love You created a world of diversity
and beauty beyond our imagining,
and with Your hands made each of us unique,
so special that each difference may be a cause for rejoicing:
for learning, sharing, loving,
for rhythms and harmonies with You, and with each other.

We praise You, creator, together with words and with music,
and in the silence
with our hearts.

But Creator, what have we done?
We have taken our trust away from You,
labelled, owned and destroyed the gifts of Your natural world.
We have taken the diversity of one another
as reason to reject: by colour, by language, by talent, by belief, by difference.
We have taken even the greatest gift of Your love in flesh among us
And believed our science and structures were better and more reliable.
We have even, glimpsing Your Spirit, tried to hoard love to ourselves.

Forgive us Creator, for all the times we have tried to limit Your love
and chosen not to recognise You in our neighbour,
twisting ourselves, and each other, out of shape in our fear.

Help us to lose this foolish pride before You, and learn the humility
to accept Your offer to partner in this amazing creation,
in all its diversity, beauty and pain.
We thank You that, whenever we try to erect our definitions around You,
the power of Your Spirit breaks through, assuring us of forgiveness
when we come to You, creating us anew as loved and forgiven people.

Wendy White

Holy Spirit of God

Holy God, you cannot exist, for you are before existence was. How can you be the *centre* of our life's pilgrimage, home of our hearts? – for you are in *no* place and *no* time ... *all* places and *all* times. The compass needle of our hearts swings wildly in all directions: we are lost without you, and lost within you.

Forgive the arrogance of the religious heart that claims to know you.

Jesus of Nazareth, only uncreated child of God, we turn to you for you are nonetheless one of us, and you have loved us. You are human like us, walking the roads of Galilee and Jerusalem, 2000 years ago. Our hearts' compass needle swings about in the mystery of God, and then points steadfastly to you. We take our bearings from you, we seek to walk your 'Way' ... we crucify you.

Forgive the arrogance of the religious heart that tries to recruit you to its own cause, and use your name as its Big Excuse.

Holy Spirit of God, comforter and disturber, life-giver, opener of doors: no sooner do we know you have touched us than you are gone. You it is who steer the compass of our hearts towards the real Jesus, the *living* Lord. You it is who put the ultimate choice before us – life or death? You it is who makes the choice easy, even when choosing life *means* death.

Forgive the closed minds and stubborn wills of the religious heart that turns your exuberant loving freedom into doctrine, Scripture, law and habit.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, I dare to declare to you : though we *have* chosen, and will choose *again*, deadness, lifelessness, lovelessness and our own comfort – Christ has, in his own body, broken the bonds that hold us in this slavery. It is not inevitable. The door to life in the Spirit remains open. Let us walk through it together, humbly rejoicing in the name of Jesus.

Holy God, as we recite the prayer Jesus gave us, may your Spirit awaken the words in us:

All **The Lord's Prayer**

Dick Wolff

Lord, we are a worried people

Lord, we are a worried people.

From the time we wake each morning we worry about:
the weather, the state of the roads, whether we have
sufficient clothing and is it fashionable.

We worry about the day ahead, our job prospects, our health, our loved ones
and our pets.

We turn on the news and we are told to worry even more:
about the state of our food,
the state of our hospitals,
the stock market,
our strange neighbours.

In a land of plenty we are told to worry about:
pensions and savings,
employment levels
illegal immigration.

Occasionally we are invited to worry outside of our self-centred universe
and we worry about:
war
flood,
famine.

Lord, we are worn out with worrying.

We ask You today to restore our sense of perspective.
We need reminding to celebrate, and to praise You.
God, You created the universe before we were,
and created all we see.
You became part of creation, became an ordinary chap,
who chose the way of the cross,
chose to be subject to our will,
so that we could see, for all time, by Your resurrection,
that in the end is life,
rich abundant life,
for all, for ever.

Forgive us when we worry, remind us of Your love.
Teach us to recognise the genuine concerns and take action.
Show us how to stop wasting time, instead to praise You,
turning to our neighbour and sharing Your good news,
and sharing their joys and sorrows.
Help us to recognise Your kingdom now,
not to ignore the poverty and pain around us,
but to work with You to bring Your light, Your help into the darkness.
To stand beside.
To listen.

Forgive us when we try to do this alone and fall back dispirited,
Forgive us when we take ourselves too seriously while ignoring our neighbours.

Wendy White

God, you take our breath away

Creator,
You who made everything,
can You really hear us?

Love,
definition of love,
do You really care that much about each one of us?
God,
God who we cannot comprehend,
You take our breath away
as we struggle to hold a vastness, at which our minds recoil,
with a love for each one of us,
created and known as individuals.

God, we have no words,
We cannot define You except that You exceed all definitions.
Higher, vaster, richer than all our imaginings.
Our praise becomes silence as we contemplate You.

But You, seeking to love and how us love,
(not wanting empty praise or gratitude
but to bring us into relationship with Yourself)
have poured Yourself out to Your creation and become man,
one with us to show us what love can do.
To help us glimpse across our feeble boundaries –
so much more!

You have stood beside us ... and let us nail You to the cross,
because that too was needed to show us the strength and
power of Your love.

Lord, as we struggle to hold the seeming impossible,
help us to hold onto the truth of Your resurrection and praise You.
Knowing resurrection is not the past
but resurrection and new creation, for each one of us, now,
as part of Your love.

Wendy White

Creator, we praise and adore you

Creator, we praise and adore You ...

and the words become empty because we have repeated so often what is far beyond our grasp.

When we look up you are there – in the vastness of unfolding space we glimpse your immensity.

When we look down you are there – in the beauty and complexity of detail, the molecular dance beyond our vision.

When we look around us you are there, in the play of dark and light, sound and silence, in water, air, land.

We cannot begin to encompass all you are, but, made in your image, we catch glimpses in one another of the complexity and richness of relationships, in love, in laughter, in friendship, in the myriad communities we are part of.

But, most of all, when in your desire for us to truly know, to share, your nature, which is love, you became man and walked with us, we see love worked out in humankind. Even to what we perceive as the end. And then you turned the shabby death of a criminal into new life when you showed us resurrection. Turning, with the gift of your Spirit, an uncertain band of travellers and hangers-on into messengers of love for all people for all time.

Creator, how often have we repeated this story but not made it our own? You turn awesomeness of love into something we could recognise, and gave us your Spirit so that we too could know we are part of Your love and share it with others. Yet too often we have been content with our decent little lives and chosen to ignore the promptings of Your Spirit which would show us a world made new.

Forgive us when we have put ourselves first at the expense of others, when at work we have clung to our salary, our way and ignored the cries of the unemployed, the untrained, the rejected. Forgive us when our standard of living ignores the cries of the third world for fair wages, for health care, education, food, water.

Forgive us when our time is so hoarded to ourselves we have ignored the stranger, the sick, our neighbour, our family and rationed the giving of ourselves to others and to you.

Forgive us the fear of loving. Forgive us when we ignore your Spirit, the great disturber, help us to trust that your love is infinite and grows by giving.

Wendy White

Prayers at times of ordination and induction

Prayer for Elders and their pastoral care responsibilities

Loving, strengthening God,
through your church you call people
into positions of leadership
and to care for you people.
Such a task loving God
can be filled with joy one moment
and frustration the next.
So today we pray for those
you have called to be Elders in this church
thinking especially of the task of pastoral care
of your people here.
Give to those you have called the strength and the wisdom
to care for your people.
Lord, it is not always doing it themselves,
but about being part of a team
sharing with the whole congregation
making sure that this your church,
cares for its people
physically, mentally and spiritually,
ensuring that it is not only the few who are cared for but all.
Loving God, may those you have called,
find their faith and trust in you
strengthened and their vision
of your Kingdom enlarged.

All Amen.

David Coote

Hymn: O Shepherd-God

O Shepherd-God, your people knew your presence on their way –
its sign, a fire to guard by night, a cloud to guide by day;
their goal, a distant promised land, a home where they'd belong,
a place of peace, of hopes fulfilled, their song, your freedom-song.

In later years your people learned to trust a shepherd-king;
to value in their prophets, too, the wisdom shepherds bring;
and Jesus, the good shepherd, called on burdened souls to come;
he sought the wayward, healed the sick, and led his followers home.

So many in our world today have nowhere they belong,
like sheep without a shepherd, lost, like singers with no song;
their minds and spirits sorely lack a hope that satisfies,
that wholesome Bread, the Word of Life, the peace true faith supplies.

Lord Christ, we're called to feed your lambs, restore the sheep that stray,
to learn the wisdom shepherds need for this, your work today;
your cross, the sign of selfless love, will light the way ahead;
we'll serve with joy the God who raised our Shepherd from the dead.

Tune: Ladywell

Metre 8686D

Basil Bridge

Times of celebration

Anniversaries and landmarks

Occasions for commission rededication and recommitment for service

A litany of prayer and thanksgiving for an anniversary or celebration

On this anniversary day we thank you, Lord,
for our church here in ...

We praise you for all the joy we have known in this fellowship,
and we pray for all those who together
make up this community of your people,
so that our church may be a real home
for all who share its life.

We pray for those who bear responsibility for leadership:
for
our minister, elders and teachers, ...

that they may be guided by your wisdom
and sustained by your strength.

All Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness
and we pray your blessing upon them.

We pray for our young people:
for
the Pilots, Junior Church, Youth Group ...

that they may grow in faith
and renew the vision of the church.

All Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness
and we pray your blessing upon them.

We pray for those who work to enhance our worship:
through singing and music,
through the reading of the scriptures,
through the arrangement of flowers,
through ...

that they may be channels of your grace
and find joy in your service.

All Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness
and we pray your blessing upon them.

We pray for those who meet for Bible study, and for prayer,
that through their devotion the whole fellowship may be enriched.

All Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness
and we pray your blessing upon them.

We pray for the groups that meet for friendship and recreation:
for
the women's fellowship, the ...

that in them people may find true fellowship
and discover Christ in their neighbour.

All Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness
and we pray your blessing upon them.

We pray for all who maintain the fabric of our church:
for
the maintenance team and the caretakers,.....

and for all who hold office in the church,
that they may be ever aware that they are workers in your kingdom.

All Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness
and we pray your blessing upon them.

We pray for all who use our premises,
that they may find us welcoming and hospitable.

All Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness
and we pray your blessing upon them.

Lord God, you have called us to share the joy and fullness of life
that you give in your Son, Jesus Christ.
Grant that our church may be a blessing to all in this neighbourhood,
so that more and more people may come to love and trust you,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Wendy Baskett

Petition and intercession for a church anniversary or celebration

Lord God
we offer our prayers to you today
for our church here in ... ;
that your Holy Spirit may inspire our worship
and lead us into deeper fellowship;
that we may continue to pass on our faith,
hope and love to succeeding generations;
that we may serve the community in which we live
with commitment, vision and enthusiasm;
that within our fellowship there may be found
comfort for the sorrowful,
strength for the anxious,
compassion for the sick,
and concern and love for all.

We pray for the minister and elders of this church;
for all who hold positions of responsibility
in worship, teaching, caring or administration;
and for each member with their particular gifts;
that together we may fulfil our calling
eagerly, conscientiously, and with imagination,
strengthened by your Spirit
and upheld by one another's prayers.

We pray for those for whom we are particularly concerned:
those who are ill, at home or in hospital;
those who are housebound or unable to get to church;
those who are bereaved or face losing someone they love;
those who are worried or depressed;
and for those who no longer come to church,
that they may be drawn back into our fellowship.

Lord, we thank you
for the lives of your faithful people in every age
and especially for members of this community
who have been witnesses to your love.

We remember especially ...

We, with them, are the living stones
with which you build your church.
We pray that we, too, may remain faithful to our calling,
as did your Son, Jesus Christ,
that by your grace our lives may be the examples
on which those after us may build,
to your praise and glory.

All **Amen.**

Wendy Baskett

Loving gracious God

Loving gracious God,
we come before you
as we mark another year in the life of this church.
We give you thanks for your guidance,
your prodding and your leading over this past year.
We give you thanks for all
we have accomplished in your name,
but we also know sometimes
we have missed the mark.
We thank you for all those with whom
we have had contact over this last year,
Whether it was for joyous reasons
or sad ones, or for whatever reason
they found themselves here in this building.
May we through that contact however brief
have shared something of your love for all people.
Today we thank you for the past year
and all it has contained.
At this anniversary time we cannot
stand only looking backwards,
we must also look forward.
So at this time we thank you
that you will walk with us into the coming year
in the life of this church.
May we who this day celebrate and remember
the past year in our constant walk with you,
go forward in hope and joy,
into your future.

All **Amen.**

David Coote

A time for rededication

Leader: We come Lord God
to rededicate ourselves to your purposes.

All: **Gracious God
as a body of your people
and as individual members of that body.
We come now to rededicate ourselves to the task you have set
before us your church.
We also at this time rededicate ourselves anew to living a life that
reflects your presence with us and your love for each one of us.**

**We rededicate our lives to your service
and the service of others,
just as our Lord came to serve.**

All: Loving God renew and strengthen in us
the joy of knowing you,
and our faith and trust
in your Son our Saviour.

Amen.

David Coote

The challenge of the call

This dramatic reading may be included in a service of commissioning
or rededication focusing on the challenge of call

Water from the Rock

Narrator: The whole Israelite community left the desert of Sin and made a camp at Rephidim, where they quarrelled with Moses, saying ...

People: Give us water to drink,
for we are thirsty and ready to die.

Narrator: Then Moses cried to the Lord,
Moses: What am I to do with these people?
They are almost ready to stone me!

Narrator: And the Lord answered Moses:
God: Take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go.
I will stand before you on the rock of Horeb.
Strike the rock and water will come out of it for the people to drink.

Moses: I struck the rock with such force, that the water simply gushed to the surface.
Like slitting an artery, the glistening fluid bled from its source and spurted forth and everyone got drenched.

Is 1: For the first time in ages our thirst was assuaged and we were able to drink again.

Is 2: Extravagant, gaping mouths snatched greedily at every passing droplet, freeing shrivelled tongues from the imprisonment of drought.

Is 3: Torn and blistered feet found soothing relief in the sudden miraculous appearance of rock pools.

Narrator: The people danced for joy
Is 1: We had been desperate for water for days. Not since Marah had we been blessed with such a prodigiously sweet outpouring.

Is 2: The desert, with eager determination had once more sought our rasping throats and wrung them dry, until scored and scorched, they felt like sandpaper, leaving us choking on our own dry spittle.

Is 3: Oh yes. We had been desperate.

Moses: So desperate in fact that they turned on me.
Is 1: Why did you bring us here, to this forsaken hellhole?
Is 2: To watch our livestock die?
Is 3: To see our children perish?

Moses: Then they gathered rocks to stone me.

Narrator: Desperation can drive a people to the very edge. It may sharpen the instinct for survival but in the end, in extremity, it turns even those of mildest disposition into beasts who then turn on each other. It also shortens memories.

God: How quickly they have forgotten the cruel oppression of their Egyptian overlords, and the miraculous escape across the Sea of Reeds. Now, suddenly, years of intolerable slavery take on an almost rosy glow, and they begin to reminisce about 'the good old days'. But I have heard it all a thousand times before. Moan, moan, moan. The same old scratchy record. Poor Moses you've certainly got your work cut out.

Moses: So Lord, tell me what to do?
I'm really struggling with this one.
Give me Pharaoh any day.

Narrator: Thirst and frustration finally gives way to rage.

Is 1: We've had enough and he should know it too.

Is 2: Our leader.

Is 3: The man who speaks in secret with our God, in private session, behind billowing clouds of smoke.

Is 1: Striking bargains.

Is 2: Negotiating terms.

Is 3: It's all very well but we never get a say.

Is 1: Let's face it, the man who performed so dramatically in public, on our behalf, in front of Pharaoh, just a little while ago ...

Is 2: Waving that magic stick of his, that swallowed snakes and all, and struck the Nile and turned it red with blood ...

Is 3: Well, he now looks pretty unconvincing.

Is 1: He's not the fighter he was.

Is 2: It's a different ball game out here in the desert and it's not what I'd call liberation either. Egypt may have been servitude, yes, but at least we knew where we stood. We were fed and had a roof over our heads.

Is 3: To be honest, I don't think he's up to it any more. Past his sell-by date if you ask me but then he's getting on.

Narrator: The honest broker becomes the convenient whipping boy, a scapegoat for a thousand smouldering resentments.

God: If I were you I'd hit someone or something.

Moses: I brought the staff down so heavily that I only missed their heads by a whisker.
I suppose it was my way of re-asserting authority. (His or mine you may ask) or it could have been sheer exasperation.
Any way, whatever ... it did the trick.

God: It was most impressive. The moment the rock was struck, a huge jet shot up over their heads and everyone got soaked. Quite amazing really. One for the record books I'd say.

Moses: Dear God, will we always be driven to the limits before we encounter your saving hand?
God: Probably.
Narrator: So Moses did this in the sight of the people, and he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the Lord saying ...
People: Is the Lord among us or not?

Helena McKinnon

Strike the rock

Great God, do you know what you are asking?
This Rock of your is Holy ground to us – a precious stone,
that moulded by the years has shaped our own lives too.

Strike the rock.

It has been both sure foundation and building block, for from it we have cut and carved the stone that built the great cathedrals, churches, chapels to your name.

Strike the rock.

Your people too have made their mark. Through centuries of service and self-sacrifice, history has born witness to that boundless love entered in and paid the price.

Strike the rock.

Together we weathered storms of fire, flood and persecution. But now age, erosion, indifference and internal wrangling eat at the very fabric of our faith – both walls and worshippers are wearing thin and there seems more life outside the church than in.

Strike the rock.

This rock has been our refuge and our strength, a very present help in time of need.

A home, a sanctuary, a house of prayer, where those who seek your solace come to plead.

And yet, you ask that we should take your hand and smite the Holy Ground on which we stand?

Strike the rock.

So Moses raised his staff and struck the rock.

And so he did.

And dare we do the same?

Release the living water from its core that all may drink,
be satisfied and want more?

Helena McKinnon

At an induction or recommitment

I recommit myself to the Holy One,
to the company of Christ's friends
and the highway of the Spirit of Wisdom.
I concur with the gospel call to repentance,
looking inside myself and round about
for those things which impede
God's commonwealth of justice and peace.
I embrace life on the margins of church and society,
a sentinel, fully sentient,
hunting for and gathering together
gifts to be used in the building of community.

Janet Lees

Vineyard Kyrie

Vine-grower God, we have forgotten it is your vineyard.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

True Vine Christ, we have forgotten we are your co-workers.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Fruitful Spirit, we have forgotten how to co-operate.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Retrain us; prune us for a new harvest,

In which first and last are reversed.

All **In your mercy, hear our prayer.**

(This could be used with any of the Kyries at number 5 in Rejoice and Sing)

Janet Lees

The Body of Christ

That's us, the Church!
How gross it is.
No longer lithe and supple
Full of energy.
Now twisted and deformed,
Lethargic in the extreme.

Once I dreamed
As all young men do
Of a vibrant renewed Church.
United yet not uniform.
Exhibiting its rich diversity
In all aspects of its life.

Can we break free,
From the straitjacket of tradition?
Remove the ritual's noose
That would choke
Any outreach of the spirit,
Beyond the enmeshing structures.

Uniting together with one mission,
Affirming all we hold in common,
Spelling out the differences,
Respecting each other in love,
Acknowledging our ignorance
About each other and our faith.

If we are unfit
Our bodies suffer.
Likewise within the Church.
Shed the weighty burden
Of outmoded structures and customs,
Adopt a healthy spiritual diet.

As Christ's human body
Was broken and scarred
So the Church bears signs
Of conflict and dissent.
Yet healing is possible
Gained through this timeless victory.

Y Mochyn Daear

To celebrate marriage

Opening words for a Wedding ceremony

We have come together today to witness the marriage of ... N ... to ... N ... ,
to celebrate their happiness and to assure them of our love and support.

In marriage, we bless God
who gave us our humanity,
who created us,
in felicity and joy.

Blessed be God
who brings us together
that our desires
may find ripe fulfilment;

Blessed be God
who makes us one
that in our mutual love
we may cherish one another.

In marriage,
we bless God
for his faithfulness
and celebrate God's constancy
in free commitment to a shared life
and mutual exchange of promises;

In marriage,
we bless God
for his gift of grace in Jesus Christ,
that in our frail consistency,
relations are refashioned
by his self-giving love;

In marriage,
we bless God
who gives us a future and a hope;
[who gives us children,]
sets us in community
and calls us in society
to new beginnings.

Blessed be God for the precious gift of love.

Fleur Houston

A blessing for a Wedding

Blessed are you, God our Maker;
You create joy and gladness,
pleasure and delight;
you make this couple
companions in love.

Bestow your blessing on ... N ... and ... N ... ,
that they may know your presence with them
in times of joy and in times of sadness.
May their home be filled
with laughter and tenderness.
May they be tender with one another's dreams
and remain faithful and true to one another
for the rest of their lives.

So may this marriage be a sign of blessing
in the world around.

Fleur Houton

At a Wedding

You are trusted forever with the intimacies of one another.

You won't hold grudges.
You will love the other even when unlikeable.
You will see the small child within.
You will look for the divine potential inside.

How sacred, to be held in the night,
by someone who thanks God for you,
by someone you feel blessed to hold.

Your marriage is an opportunity,
to grow in love and friendship,
to entrust all your faith and loyalties,
and with this understanding you shall flourish,
together,
forever.

Donna Lee

A blessing at a Wedding

Let the promises of today make you strong
Let the joy of today fill your lives
Let the hope of today give you courage
Let the memory of today live in your hearts.
Go hand in hand into the world, staying true to your dreams,
with love overflowing
And the blessing of Father, Son and Spirit is with you always.

Melanie Frew

A blessing for a marriage

Living God, Creator of Humankind,
Bless ... N ... and ... N ... as they go on their way together
in love and unity of purpose.

Loving Christ, Creator of Compassion,
Bless ... N ... and ... N ... as they develop their skills
to that their love will bring wholeness to people.

Refreshing, Resilient Spirit, Creator of Vitality,
Bless and encourage them to engage in lively activity
and to seek justice throughout their lives,
to turn disappointments into challenges,
to transform darkness into light,
to root their ideals in the ground that they walk.
Go in Grace
with Confidence
and know Peace.

All **Amen.**

Geoffrey Duncan

Index of titles

At a Wedding	247
At an induction or recommitment	244
Baking cakes – again!	217
Because I am frightened	212
Benedicite	228
Blessing at a Wedding, A	248
Blessing for a marriage, A	248
Blessing for a Wedding, A	247
Body of Christ, The	244
Burial of the ashes after cremation	196
Burial of the organs of a baby removed during post-mortem	202
Care of aliens	212
Celebration of life, A	181
Challenge of the call, A	241
Come to us now Lord	228
Creative decisions	183
Creator, we praise and adore you	234
Easy choices or difficult decisions	185
Elders and moments of worship	222
Elders and pastoral care	210
Expand our vision	224
For those affected by drug abuse	214
For those in our care	218
Full of grace and truth	223
Funeral prayer for a person who has committed suicide, A	204
Funeral service in a church, followed by committal prayers at cemetery or crematorium and a rite for the burial of ashes	191
Grieving, remembrance, thanksgiving	186
Gifts and skills	183
God of beginnings and endings	228
God, you take our breath away.....	233
Holy Spirit of God	231
Hospital visiting	218
Hymn to Jesus	227
In the beginning you were... ..	230
Just an ordinary day	210
Lead us in your ways of truth	184
Litany of prayer and thanksgiving for an anniversary or celebration, A	237
Look down from the cross	205
Lord of life and love	225
Lord of the upside down	220
Lord, we are a worried people	232
Loving gracious God	240

Make room	219
Ministry of flowers, The (1)	215
Ministry of flowers, The (2)	215
Ministry of flowers, The (3)	216
Ministry of music, The	216
Mothering Sunday.....	229
O Lord through all our days	206
O Shepherd God	236
Opening words for a Wedding ceremony	246
Outside	220
Petition and intercession for a church anniversary or celebration	239
Pour out your Spirit	211
Prayer for a meeting, A	183
Prayer for children who have died, A	200
Prayer for Elders and their pastoral care responsibilities	235
Prayer for the vestry, A	210
Prayer for the week, A	222
Prayer for young people in vulnerable situations, A	213
Prayer in a service for a stillborn child, A	200
Prayers at cemetery or crematorium	194
Prayers at times of ordination and induction	235
Prayers before visiting pastoral care/difficult situations	217
Prayers for a Funeral (1)	186
Prayers for a Funeral (2)	188
Prayers of thanksgiving and confession	222
Prayers when we feel distant from God	212
Psalm, A	226
Season of mists and holiday returns	221
Service for the internment of ashes, A	189
Service of thanksgiving and remembrance for children	181
Service of thanksgiving for a person who has given their body for medical research, A	207
Simple prayer, A	210
Spirit of God	226
Strike the rock	243
Time for rededication, A	240
Times of celebration	237
To celebrate marriage	246
Transforming us	223
Treasuring us	224
Vineyard <i>Kyrie</i>	244
Whole armour of God for Christian Aid collectors, The	218
Words and prayers for a child's Funeral	198
Work or leisure	185

Index of authors

Wendy Baskett	183-185, 237-239
Basil Bridge	206, 236
Keith Brown	228
Lesley Charlton	219, 220-221
David Coote	215, 235, 240-241
Y Mochyn Daear	244-245, 248-250
Geoffrey Duncan	222, 225-226, 248
Melanie Frew	205, 212-213, 216, 218-219, 248
Margaret Herbert	182
Fleur Houston	191-197, 202-203, 207-209, 213-216, 226-227, 228-229, 246
David Jonathan	210
Elizabeth Kemp	204, 212, 217-218
Donna Lee	247
Janet Lees	223-224, 244
Helena McKinnon	241-243
Alan Paterson	186-187, 198-201
Graham Robson	188, 189-190, 200
Ruth Sermon	210-211, 217
Rosemary Watts	227-228
Wendy White	211-212, 230, 232-234
Dick Wolff	229, 231

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Table of Contents

Contents

Contents	1
Introduction	2
Advent to Pentecost	3
Advent to Epiphany	4
Praise for God's power Luke 1:46-55	4
Fulfilment Luke 1:68-79	5
Hannah prayed	5
Seeing is believing Luke 2:29-32	7
God of dark and light.....	7
Advent 1: Introduction to Communion Luke 12:35-48.....	8
Prayer	8
Closing prayer.....	9
Bible Sunday Second Sunday in Advent.....	9
Advent 3 Isaiah 6	10
Opening Scripture Psalm 126 paraphrase.....	10
Prayer	11
Prayer after Communion.....	11
Eucharistic prayer for Advent	12
Christmas Eve.....	13
Christmas.....	14
This special night	14
Blood red.....	16
Eucharistic prayer for Advent.....	17
Eucharistic prayer for Christmas.....	18
God of surprises.....	19
Sting in the tail	20
Eucharistic prayer for Epiphany	21
Epiphany – A prayer of confession.....	23
Epiphany	24
Lent to Pentecost.....	25
An opening prayer.....	25
Hold us tight Lord.....	25
During Lent	25
Opening Scripture: Psalm 40	25
Prayer of approach	26
Prayer	26
A prayer after Communion	27
Eucharistic prayer for Lent.....	27

Passion Sunday	29
Opening Scripture: Psalm 130	29
Prayer	29
Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-4.....	29
Palm Sunday.....	30
Scripture: Isaiah 42 paraphrased.....	30
Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a	30
Prayer	31
Prayer	31
A meditation	32
Good Friday	33
Father, forgive them, they know not what they do	33
Good Friday 1	34
Opening Scripture: Romans 4.....	34
Meditation	35
Good Friday 2	36
Opening Scripture: paraphrased	36
John 12	36
2 Corinthians 5.....	36
Prayers of approach.....	37
Good Friday – Evening	38
Scripture: Ephesians 1 and 2 paraphrased.....	38
Prayer	38
Easter.....	39
Lord my heart sings	39
Easter morning.....	40
Easter day.....	40
An Easter prayer	41
Easter 3.....	42
The risen Christ in everyday life.....	42
Easter 4.....	43
Reading: John 10:1-11	43
Prayer: Good Shepherd Jesus.....	43
Prayers for other people	44
Easter 5.....	44
Opening Scripture: Psalm 31 paraphrased.....	44
Prayer	45
Prayers for peace.....	46
Easter 6.....	46
Prayer	46
Eucharistic prayer for Easter.....	47
Pentecost	49
Pentecost	49
Spirit of love, joy, peace	49
Peace-making Christ.....	50
Transforming Spirit.....	51
Blessed be you Spirit of God	52

Come, Holy Spirit	52
Come, breath of God	52
Kairos: Mark 13:33.....	53
Trinity	54
God, Christ, Spirit.....	54
Eucharistic prayer for Trinity Sunday	54
Eucharistic prayer for the transfiguration	56
Strong Spirit wind.....	57
Index of titles Advent to Epiphany.....	58
Index of titles Lent to Pentecost.....	58
Index of authors Advent to Epiphany	59
Index of authors Lent to Pentecost	59
Exploring the year	60
First Sunday in the New Year Matthew 28:20	61
For beginning a New Year.....	61
Holocaust Memorial Day	61
Eucharistic prayer for Mothering Sunday	63
Mothering Sunday – Introduction to a Eucharist prayer	65
Mothering Sunday – Eucharist prayer.....	65
Eucharistic prayer for May Day/work	66
God of all creation.....	67
True Inclusivity	68
Praise the Lord for Harvest.....	69
Based on Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23	69
The earth moves through the seasons	69
Harvest thanksgiving.....	70
Praise from Scripture: Psalm 104 paraphrase	70
Prayer	70
Communion for Harvest.....	71
Praise from Scripture: Psalm 19	71
Prayer of approach	72
Prayer after Communion.....	72
A Sunday in the early Autumn.....	73
Breads of the world	73
Eucharistic prayer for One World Week.....	74
Eucharistic prayer for All Saints	76
A litany for All Saints Day	77
True Saints.....	78
God of all Saints and Martyrs.....	79
Autumn.....	79
Remembrance Sunday 1	79
Opening: Psalm 33 paraphrase	79
Prayer	80
Prayer for peace	81
Remembrance Sunday 2	81
Opening Scripture: Psalm 46	81

Reading: Isaiah 25:1-9.....	81
Prayer	82
Remembrance Sunday 3	83
Prayers of intercession for Remembrance Sunday	85
All are your children	85
Colours for remembering	86
World AIDS day.....	87
The lighting of the first candle	87
Welcome	87
Invocation.....	87
The lighting of the second candle	87
A reflection	88
The lighting of the third candle.....	88
A reflection	88
The lighting of the fourth candle.....	88
A reflection	88
The lighting of the fifth candle	88
A reflection	88
The Eucharist.....	88
The peace	88
Post Eucharistic prayer	89
Silence and stillness	89
The lighting of the sixth candle	89
A reflection	89
The blessing.....	89
Winter.....	89
Index of titles Exploring the year.....	90
Index of authors Exploring the year	91
Encircled by prayer	92
Calls to worship	93
Every family	93
Christ is our Lord.....	93
Lord, our loving God	93
Coming near to God.....	94
Seeking the lost sheep.....	94
A deep awareness of each other	94
Gathered on this Holy ground	94
Come from many places	95
Open our hearts	95
Come to celebrate God's world-wide people	95
Spirit.....	96
For resting in God	96
For healing and rest.....	97
Offertory prayers	98
Abundant gifts	98
Loving God.....	98

Prayers of approach and thanksgiving	99
We're a mixed bag!	99
An invocation	99
Presence	100
Be present.....	101
God is God.....	101
In God is life	102
God of new beginnings	102
God of time	103
God who is... ..	103
Praise the God of new things.....	104
Be our new life	104
Hold us today	104
Offering the best	105
How wonderful	105
One-in-three God	106
Great big beautiful God	106
Holy risk-taker	107
We are here because you called	108
Come, let us return to God.....	108
Thank you loving God	109
In peace let us pray to the Lord	110
God of every day.....	110
To be here as our whole selves	111
Jesus we come to worship you	111
God with us	112
Prayers of confession	113
Prayer of confession	113
Confession 1	113
Confession 2	114
Forgive us for the wasted moment.....	114
In steady pilgrimage.....	114
Living the life of faith	115
Prayers of assurance	116
God, lover of all	116
Assurance of forgiveness.....	116
Forgiveness 1	116
Forgiveness 2	117
Forgive us	117
Variations of forgiveness	118
Absolution	118
Prayers of commitment.....	119
Trinity of love.....	119
Bless our children	120
Living God you challenge us.....	120
Global voices	122
Tomorrow is God's agenda	122

Towards a new creation	123
The glory is yours.....	124
May we live by grace	124
Small in terms of the world.....	125
Peace in our communities.....	126
Come with peace	126
Respond to love and care	127
Commitment for Life.....	127
God of Justice	128
All are welcome.....	128
The songs of our world	129
Jesus who meets our hungers	130
Can the world get better?.....	130
The face of God	131
God's invitation to all.....	132
Images of God	132
Prayers for hope	133
The body of Christ.....	134
The Church	135
The calling of the Church	136
Deeper discipleship.....	136
Relationships	137
Now is the time	137
Compassion	138
Draw new people to you	138
Meeting new people.....	139
People matter most.....	140
Sir, we would see Jesus.....	140
Journeying God.....	141
Praising God with senses	142
A countryside patchwork.....	142
Somerset sunset.....	143
Prayers before a meeting.....	144
Faith.....	145
I believe.....	145
An affirmation.....	145
A litany of faith.....	146
A children's creed.....	147
Fear.....	148
Music.....	148
Reading.....	149
The silent peace with candles	149
The Eucharist.....	149
Music	149
Blessing	149
In love you.....	149
Confidence in God Romans 8:35-39.....	150

Our prayer for you Ephesians 3:14-21	151
A new vision Revelation 21 and 22	151
To touch and to heal.....	152
The laying on of hands.....	153
Look forward	153
Celebrating the Lord's Supper	154
Invitation to the Lord's table	154
Eucharistic prayer for creation	154
Eucharistic prayer for love	156
Eucharistic prayer for the excluded.....	157
Eucharistic prayer	159
Order for Communion at which children are present	160
Invitation.....	160
Communion prayer	160
The bread.....	161
The wine	161
Prayer	161
Communion.....	162
Gathering around the table	162
Deep community	163
Breaking bread.....	163
Communion prayers.....	165
Prayer of confession	165
Prayer of approach	165
Prayer after Communion.....	166
The heartbeat of God based on Ezekiel 11:19-20	166
Whose are the hands of God?	167
Music.....	167
Reading: Matthew 25:37-40.....	168
Reading: Luke 8:37-38	168
Music.....	168
A reflection	168
Music.....	168
The Eucharist	168
Blessing	168
Music.....	169
Psalm of praise	170
And he delivers them	170
Reading: free choice	170
Music.....	170
A reflection	170
Music	170
Silence	170
Some things to think about ..	170
The peace	170
Eucharist	170
Blessing	170

Blessings.....	171
As we leave this place	171
Receive gladly.....	171
Rejoice in the living God	171
Ever-loving God	172
Creator, Redeemer and Spirit	172
The Spirit's power for change	172
Fill us with courage, wisdom and joy	172
Today, tomorrow and forever	172
Bless, protect and guide	173
May the strength of God.....	173
The light of God lead you.....	173
All our generations	173
The unity of your whole creation	173
For the freedom of the whole creation	174
Spontaneous love of the creator	174
God of strength, of truth and of love	174
Living God.....	174
Bring us to new life.....	175
May the God of peace sanctify you entirely	175
Index of titles Encircled by prayer	176
Index of authors Encircled by prayer	180
A celebration of life.....	181
A service of thanksgiving and remembrance for our children who died at any age whom we love and commend to God.....	181
Hymn: For the beauty of the earth	181
Prayer of approach	181
The Lord's Prayer	181
First reading.....	181
Address.....	181
Hymn: We cannot measure how you feel	181
Second reading.....	181
Act of remembrance.....	181
Music: Precious child	182
Hymn: Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy	182
Closing responses	182
Blessing	182
Music: 'Gone too soon'.....	182
Creative decisions	183
Gifts and skills (Ecclesiasticus 38:24-end).....	183
A prayer for a meeting.....	183
Lead us in your ways of truth	184
Easy choices or difficult decisions	185
Work or leisure.....	185
Grieving Remembrance Thanksgiving	186
Prayers for a Funeral (1).....	186

Opening prayer	186
Prayer of thanksgiving for a life.....	186
Closing prayer and benediction	187
Prayers for a Funeral (2).....	188
Introductory prayer	188
Prayer after the eulogy.....	188
A service for the interment of ashes	189
Introductory words	189
Prayers.....	189
Put ashes into ground	190
Throw flowers over the casket	190
A Funeral service in a church followed by committal prayers at a cemetery or crematorium, and a rite for the burial of ashes	191
Introduction	191
Opening sentences	191
Hymn.....	191
Prayer	191
Readings from the Bible	192
Address	192
Hymn, song or music for reflection	192
Prayer	192
Hymn.....	193
Prayer of release.....	193
Let us pray	193
Blessing	193
Prayers at cemetery or crematorium	194
Sentences	194
Committal.....	194
Nunc Dimittis.....	195
Blessing	195
Burial of the ashes after cremation	196
Greeting	196
Prayer	196
Readings from the Bible.....	196
Prayer	197
The Lord's Prayer	197
Closing sentences.....	197
Blessing	197
Words and prayers for a child's Funeral	198
Opening words.....	198
Opening prayer	198
Prayer of thanksgiving	198
Dismissal and blessing	199
A prayer for children who have died	200
A prayer in a service for a stillborn child	200
Burial of the organs of a baby removed during post-mortem.....	202
Greeting by the grave-side.....	202

Prayer	202
Prayer of committal	202
Blessing	203
A Funeral prayer for a person who has committed suicide	204
Look down from the cross	205
O Lord through all our days	206
A service of thanksgiving for a person who has given their body for medical research.....	207
Introduction	207
Hymn of praise.....	207
Prayer	207
Readings from the Bible	207
Address.....	207
Hymn of assurance	207
Prayer	208
Final hymn	208
Nunc Dimittis.....	208
Elders and pastoral care	210
A prayer for the vestry	210
A simple prayer	210
Just an ordinary day.....	210
Pour out your Spirit	211
Because I am frightened.....	212
Prayers when we feel distant from God	212
Care of aliens.....	212
A prayer for young people in vulnerable situations	213
For those affected by drug abuse	214
The ministry of flowers (1).....	215
The ministry of flowers (2).....	215
The ministry of flowers (3).....	216
The ministry of music	216
Baking cakes – again!.....	217
Prayers before visiting pastoral care/difficult situations	217
Hospital visiting	218
The whole armour of God for Christian Aid collectors.....	218
For those in our care.....	218
Make room	219
Outside.....	220
Lord of the upside down.....	220
Season of mists and holiday returns.....	221
Elders and moments of worship	222
A prayer for the week	222
Prayers of thanksgiving and confession	222
Full of grace and truth.....	223
Transforming us	223
Treasuring us	224
Expand our vision	224

Lord of life and love.....	225
Spirit of God	226
A Psalm.....	226
Hymn to Jesus	227
Come to us now Lord.....	228
God of beginnings and endings	228
Benedicite	228
Mothering Sunday.....	229
In the beginning you were.....	230
Holy Spirit of God.....	231
Lord, we are a worried people	232
God, you take our breath away.....	233
Creator, we praise and adore you.....	234
Prayers at times of ordination and induction	235
Prayer for Elders and their pastoral care responsibilities.....	235
Hymn: O Shepherd-God	236
Times of celebration.....	237
Anniversaries and landmarks	237
Occasions for commission rededication and recommitment for service	237
A litany of prayer and thanksgiving for an anniversary or celebration.....	237
Petition and intercession for a church anniversary or celebration	239
Loving gracious God.....	240
A time for rededication	240
The challenge of the call	241
Water from the Rock	241
Strike the rock	243
At an induction or recommitment	244
Vineyard Kyrie.....	244
The Body of Christ.....	244
To celebrate marriage.....	246
Opening words for a Wedding ceremony.....	246
A blessing for a Wedding	247
At a Wedding	247
A blessing at a Wedding	248
A blessing for a marriage	248
Index of titles	249
Index of authors	251
Acknowledgments	252
Table of Contents.....	253



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