

Encircled by prayer

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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.
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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

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

The Church

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

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