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**Worship from: the United Reformed Church Additional Resources**

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# Introduction

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

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

There are poems relevant to the time of year, and these will provide a rich input for some situations. These can be a part of worship and, in many instances,

a poem will enhance our understanding of a theme. After using a prayer or a creative item, people may feel encouraged to write a prayer/poem/litany which will be used in worship. This is to be encouraged and welcomed. Listen for opportunities whereby creativity may flow. Let worship in our own local situation develop from where we are and send out people into the world.

Geoffrey Duncan, 2003

# Advent to Pentecost

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## Advent to Epiphany

**Praise for God’s power** Luke 1:46-55 Let us sing the greatness of the Lord

and rejoice because God comes to save us.

*All* **Praise the Lord of hope.**

God has come down in blessing

to the one who is humble, a person unknown, and through her is doing a great thing.

*All* **Praise the Lord of grace.**

God is the unchanging one steadfast through all generations, and now is present with power,

in the coming of the Christ.

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

In God’s coming

those are powerful meet the eternal power

and know how small they are, and those who are rich

meet the riches of grace and know their poverty.

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

God who led Abraham

and called Moses to his service and spoke through many prophets, come near us in a baby

cradled in the womb of Mary.

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

Bernard Thorogood

**Fulfilment** Luke 1:68-79

A moment of crisis has come,

a time of opportunity and challenge.

Over the centuries we knew this time would come, a time when we must face reality.

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

There were years of preparation, hints of the glory to come;

generations saw glimpses of the light and sought the path of God.

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

But now it is a new day, a new era:

the last of the prophets is here to prepare the way speak the word,

and challenge our hearts.

*All* **Make us ready, Lord.**

And so after a long night dawn is coming

and the sunshine of God’s truth will burst through the clouds to guide us home.

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

In the Temple Hannah prayed

and the tears of distress flowed

as she poured her heart out to God.

Bernard Thorogood

### Hannah prayed

‘Remember me,’ she cried, ’don’t forget me.’ Lord, remind us that you remember us,

that you knew us before we were formed in the womb, and that you cherish us;

help us to rest in the secure gentleness of your love, assured that you know us better than we know ourselves, content that we are remembered.

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

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

For peace and unity amongst the people of earth, especially in Hannah’s land,

that vision and generosity may vanquish fear and assertion.

For justice and equity for God’s poor and put-upon ones,

that they may be allowed their share of the bounty of the earth, and the scourges of hunger and disease be parried.

For the nurturing of hope in landscapes of concrete walkways and urban impersonality

that strangers may be welcomed, cultures valued for their rich diversity

and the language of the knife and broken bottle be exchanged

for self-respect and confident friendship.

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

Lord, you speak in Advent songs

offering your melody of change and transformation, a vision that things do not have to be as they are, that we can be different

and the world dance to a different rhythm, lions and lambs in stately gavotte together, the cow and the bear joined in friendship and a little child tending them.

No hurt, no harm on your holy mountain. advent God, lead us to Bethlehem

that it might be so.

Amen.

David G Cornick

**Seeing is believing** Luke 2:29-32

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

Today I have seen

and touched and blessed the one who will bless us all.

What a joy to be your servant today!

So now I know fulfilment.

So may we see and touch the gift of God

in every new life we meet,

each one a fresh word of grace. Bernard Thorogood

### God of dark and light

God of dark and light, we praise you

for in the Spirit of Christ

you are with us, your presence surrounds us.

In the warm dark,

in the silence of solitude, in the stillness of night, even in the scent of fear,

you are with us, your presence surrounds us.

In the clear light,

in the sounds of laughter, in the security of friends even in the scorching heat

you are with us, your presence surrounds us.

In the advent time

in the recall of faults,

in the remembering of sins, in the repenting of mistakes,

you are with us, your presence surrounds us.

In this holy place

in the hymns of praise,

in the hush of expectation, in the host of saints,

you are with us, your presence surrounds us.

God of dark and light, in you is welcome,

in you is forgiveness, in you is new life,

you are with us, your presence surrounds us.

Amen. Terry Oakley

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

#### Prayer

Lord Jesus,

prepare us for your coming.

Save us from the complacency

that can grow through familiarity with this great festival. Save us from going through the same motions,

the cherished traditions, the joyful celebrations

without seeing or understanding

the implications of your birth amongst us.

Here,

where bread and wine are set before us,

help us to know the full extent of what it meant

for you to take our flesh,

to live our life,

to suffer our fate.

Awaken us and our sleepy world. We are not ready to receive you. Our house is not in order,

the naked are not all clothed, neither are the hungry all fed.

Many are still imprisoned

and the poor do not hear good news.

Then stir us, Good Lord, so that we may greet you

as servants who cannot wait for the time to come

when you will reign with justice,

heal our conflicts,

forgive our failures

and show us the way that leads to peace. Amen.

Lord Jesus,

you have warmed and welcomed us at your table.

We came empty and you filled us,

hungry and you nourished us.

With new-found strength and fresh determination,

help us now follow in your footsteps and run the race of human life

until you bring us home victorious. Amen.

#### Closing prayer

Duncan Wilson

**Bible Sunday** Second Sunday in Advent In the beginning, God, you spoke your word

and the universe came to be.

People saw you in the beauty of creation and glimpsed your glory in the heavens.

After we had sinned and paradise was lost

you called your ransomed people to live by your law, written on tablets of stone.

As the ages passed, storytellers, poets and prophets told of your saving love

and longed for it to be written in the human heart.

When the time was ripe

you spoke your last and greatest Word

in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh.

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

*All* **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

Through him the Holy Spirit makes the Scriptures come alive and he meets us in its words:

we have felt his healing touch,

walked with him on the lonely road to Calvary and heard him speak his greatest work of love from the silence of his death upon the Cross.

By the power of your redeeming grace

we proclaim him risen and ascended in our midst.

[We praise you for the gift of the Scriptures in which we read how

the Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed

took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said: ‘This is my body which is broken for you.

Do this is remembrance of me.’

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying: ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.’]

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

May your Spirit so move upon these gifts

that Christ is known to us in the breaking of the bread.

May he so touch our lives

that we become his witnesses today. As we follow in his way,

treasuring his words of life,

may we be faithful in the service of his kingdom to preach his Gospel in both word and deed, until the whole world knows your love

and is made one in your eternal praise.

*All* **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

**Advent 3** Isaiah 6

***Opening Scripture*** Psalm 126 paraphrase When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion

it was as if health came new to the people,

hearts filled with laughter,

voices sang aloud with joy.

‘The Lord has done great things for us,’ the people said.

And they rejoiced.

Restore our fortunes, Lord,

like fresh springs rising in desert places, that those who sow in tears

may reap with songs of joy,

bringing home the harvest of their labours. Amen.

We can hardly wait, dear God.

Looking out upon a world

that is far too familiar with Isaiah’s sorrows, the mounting ashes of our failures

and the heavy heart of human suffering,

your coming cannot be too soon. So pour out your Spirit now, today.

Bind up broken hearts

and release the good word and the goodwill

that we have held back too long.

Announce your clear intentions now. Garland your sorry world with joy and clothe it with

the splendour of your presence here.

Plant a new way of life

in which truth and justice stand rooted like a tree.

Make us into a new race of people who love justice,

cherish their commitment to each other and are eager for your coming.

We can hardly wait. Amen.

#### Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

born for us in a stable,

making your humble way into our lives,

#### Prayer after Communion

we praise you for your tireless search for lost humanity. Hold us we pray.

And so that we might serve you, and you alone, grant us your Spirit’s wisdom

to know and reject all that is evil and harmful, to turn only to you for our pleasure,

and to spend ourselves for the sake of your kingdom and its peace.

Amen.

Duncan Wilson

God, our beginning and our end,

### Eucharistic prayer for Advent

based on Isaiah 40-55

in whom we live and move and have our being, we thank you for the gift of your presence through the long night of our travails.

You led you people on their journey into freedom,

a pillar a cloud by day, a pillar of fire at night.

You spoke to them through the Law, and when, like sheep, they went astray

you sought them and guided them home. You comforted them in times of suffering and called them to be a light to the nations. Now you do a new thing in our midst:

the voice of the Baptist cries out in the wilderness and the way is prepared for the coming of your Son. Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

*All* **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

Born in a stable of Mary

he comes to us in the form of a servant, friend of the poor and forgotten,

to open eyes that are blind and to lead the prisoners free.

He comes to preach good news of peace, to establish justice in our midst.

to share our sorrows and be acquainted with our grief. He comes to be despised and rejected,

to be wounded for our transgressions and to bear our iniquities.

He is led like a lamb to the slaughter bearing the sin of the world;

he is raised at the break of day,

and ascends to the heavenly places that we may rise with him.

Through him the Holy Spirit comes

to bring us and all creation to new birth.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed

took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said: ‘This is my body which is broken for you.

Do this is remembrance of me.’

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying: ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.’]

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

May the Spirit come upon these gifts of bread and wine that they may strengthen us on our journey

with the food of Christ’s own presence.

May the Spirit so increase our faith and our commitment that we may be Christ’s servants in the world,

until he comes again

and all your purpose, Father, is accomplished, in your eternal glory.

*All* **Amen.** Colin Thompson

### Christmas Eve

Of all the nights,

in each and every year.

This one is special

time seemingly stands still remembering when,

eternity collided with the present, this re-shaping history.

Life could never be the same again.

years of patient expectation, prophesies in prose and poetry.

Realised at last. God in human form.

A sentimental story, just for children, some will say,

tradition and myth mingled together. A folk tale that warms the heart.

Yet these avoid the truth

rob the revelation of its power.

The creator chose

to do things in such a way.

A plan of salvation for this soiled earth,

he who measured our creation with a surveyor’s chain,

and positioned each star, chose to be re-born,

as a helpless child in a cattle crib

on that first Christmas night.

Each subsequent year we remember, recalling the message that numbs the brain,

stirs the soul, gladdens the heart

as we marvel at the magnitude of God’s love.

We thank you God for the light of your grace shining for us in Jesus.

In sharing our darkness

he has overcome the darkness.

In sharing his light

we have found our hope. It is true!

You do not abandon us

Your Word is alive among us, one of us.

We rejoice in your love, here for good in Jesus,

and begin to live as your children in your promised peace.

*All* **Amen.**

Where are you Lord Jesus, on this special night? Are you safe and warm in a Bethlehem manger?

Watched over by a loving mother. Gazed on in awe by simple shepherds.

Worshipped by wise men from far away lands. With a choir of angels to sing you to sleep.

Y Mochyn Daear

### Christmas

Peter Trow

### This special night

Where are you Lord Jesus, on this special night? Are you lonely, cold and afraid on some City street?

Preyed upon by drug dealers.

Moved on by those to whom you are an inconvenience.

Despised by the wealthy in their comfortable homes. Deafened by the City’s noise.

Where are you Lord Jesus, on this special night?

Are you lying in a hospital bed, frightened and in pain?

Or lonely and sad in your own home.

Waiting for that one person who will never come.

Isolated and unnoticed by the busy people all around you. Longing for someone to break the lonely silence.

Where are you Lord Jesus, on this special night? Are you hungry, thirsty and homeless?

With no idea when you will next get a meal.

Desperate for a drink of clean water.

Waiting for a rich World to drop a few pence in the collection box. Too exhausted to cry out at the injustice.

Where are you Lord Jesus, on this special night?

Are you there in the workplace, stressed and anxious?

Pressured to work longer and longer hours in a job you hate. Worried that you might lose your job.

Where decisions are made based on profit and not people.

Unheard and ignored by those around you.

You are here Lord Jesus, on this special night.

We see you in the face of the street child, the sick and lonely, You are the patient in the hospital bed,

the grief-stricken neighbour we avoid speaking to. You are the stressed colleague at the next desk, our unemployed neighbour.

You are here Lord Jesus, on this special night.

Waiting for us to offer a helping hand, a friendly face, a shoulder to cry on.

The recipient of our small change in the collecting box.

May we always be ready Lord to see you in those around us,

and to follow your example as we seek to care.

Dwell with us Lord Jesus, not just on this special night

but through all our bright days and dark nights.

Amen.

Vivian Salter

I stopped beside a holly bush smothered with berries scarce room for a pin branches covered

leaves obscured

bright in the winter gloom

*All* **Blood red**

Gathered for decoration trim up the church

hang the wreath on the door links with the distant past evergreen

tokens in mid-winter holly berries bright

*All* **Blood red**

Not just borrowed but made our own

remembering that holy birth

‘the word made flesh’

true humanity on earth

life pulsating in human veins

*All* **Blood red**

Bethlehem was just the start a long journey home

Nazareth to Calvary via Gethsemane living life to the full

all too short

it ebbed away on the Hill

*All* **Blood red**

Yet put of winter gloom comes a message of hope a simple tale

with profound repercussions not just for travelling scholars but local labourers too

love that is their life blood

*All* **Life blood**

### Blood red

Y Mochyn Daear

We thank you, God,

### Eucharistic prayer for Advent

Based on the Great O Antiphons

for your wisdom, that from the beginning ordered the universe and shaped the earth.

We thank you that of old

you showed yourself to Moses in the burning bush and revealed to him the law on Sinai.

We thank you for your promise spoken through the prophets of the One who was to come,

to open doors long closed

to bring deliverance from slavery and death.

He is the king of all the nations binding all in one;

his name shall be Immanuel, God with us, for whose coming we prepare.

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

*All* **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

When he appeared among us

he brought light and hope to all in darkness.

His judgments were all mercy

his power was shown in words and acts of love.

He welcomed sinners and outcasts and made then glad with his presence. But Satan entered into human hearts and pursued him to the death.

We thank you that death could not hold him, that he rose again, ascended into heaven, and that he will come again

to establish for ever his kindgom of justice and peace.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed

took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said: ‘This is my body which is broken for you.

Do this is remembrance of me.’

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying: ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.’]

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

We pray that you will send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts of bread and wine,

that we may taste his death and resurrection and serve him through our earthly journey.

May he dawn upon the darkness of our time;

may we be ready to receive him when he comes in glory and you are all in all, one God in Trinity of love.

*All* **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

Light in our darkness Guide in our wandering Friend in our loneliness,

### Eucharistic prayer for Christmas

one God of wisdom, power and love: when the night was half spent

the all-powerful Word leapt from your royal throne and came to dwell among us in great humility,

to seek and to save the lost. Born of Mary, naked and poor, he shone in our darkness

he revealed the way to the Father

befriending sinners, gently calling us to follow.

He is the longed-for Saviour,

in whom all human hope and longing finds fulfilment; in whom all outcasts find welcome and shelter.

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

*All* **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

For his kingdom of justice and peace he gave up his life.

His love would not let us go even in the darkest hour.

He was raised at break of day

and his light shines for ever in our midst, undimmed.

He is present with us in this sign of love which he shared with his disciples

on the dark night of his Passion.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed

took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said: ‘This is my body which is broken for you.

Do this is remembrance of me.’

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying: ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.’]

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

May the fire of the Holy Spirit

come upon these gifts of bread and wine that they may stay our hunger and our thirst through his body and his blood.

May the power of that same Spirit

touch our dying loves and raise them to a flame

until the darkness is no more:

through him who was and is and is to be, Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All* **Amen.**

God of surprises who is not locked up by our narrow thinking or small ways, we pray

for small children waiting for big presents especially for those whose parents are poor.

Colin Thompson

### God of surprises

God of surprises changing the world we live in and calling us to new ways of being, we pray

for families who do not enjoy being together especially for homes where there is violence.

God of surprises born to be a man on the earth and calling us to use the earth well, we pray

for those who put themselves at risk who chain themselves to ships and lie on train tracks

we pray for the green warriors, for the challenging ones who work with you but outside respectable society.

God of surprises,

surprise us at this season because we are used to you and some are even faintly bored.

God who walked the earth we pray in your name. Amen.

Lesley Charlton

### Sting in the tail

There’s always that sting in the tail with God. Just when you think you’ve got it worked out,

back he comes with something you hadn’t thought of. Something so blindingly obvious, but still you’d missed it –

well, I’d missed it –

and you’re pulled up short and made to think again.

This Christmas thing, for example. The carols seemed to say it all.

‘Joy to the World.’

‘Christians awake, salute the happy morn.’ And there’s many more, of course.

So very – well, collective, somehow.

God reconciled with all sinners. Christ came to save the world. And of course that’s right.

God did come to this world for everyone;

his message is for all people, everywhere.

And somehow, I managed to lose myself in the crowd. That word: ‘Everyone’ – such an all embracing term And so comforting at times.

You don’t have to think too much about it;

You know it’s large, comprehensive – and that’s it.

Perhaps it’s a bit impersonal at times, but you know what it means;

it takes in my neighbours, the people in the next road, everyone out there in the High Street,

in the next town or city;

we know it takes in other countries – across the channel, across the oceans, other cultures, other continents.

Yes – everyone.

And you think you’ve got it sussed.

Then God whispers in your ear; quietly, as he always does. And you realise there’s a bit you’ve missed.

Everyone includes ‘me’. God came for **me**.

Not just me, but I’m part of ‘everyone’ And so God came for me.

And that’s not always quite so cosy.

I can’t hide under this ‘everyone’ blanket all the time. The impersonal suddenly becomes very personal.

If God came in his love for all people, then he came in his love for me.

And how should I respond to that? And how **do** I respond to that?

Perhaps I need to think **that** through a bit more. Perhaps I need to thank God a bit more.

Perhaps I need to understand what ‘God’s love for me’ really means.

And to see the manger in a new light this Christmas time.

Brian Hudson

### Eucharistic prayer for Epiphany

Creator who called light into being, Light shining in our darkness,

Fire of transforming love:

we praise you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for the beauty of your creation,

the cost of our redemption,

the power of your renewing love. Your love is without limit,

your purpose knows no boundaries.

We thank you that you made the first of your covenants

made with Noah and every living thing; that you called to yourself a people

to be a light for all the nations;

that you also called others who did not know you: Rahab the harlot, who sheltered Israelites;

Ruth, a faithful stranger in Israel and mother of kings; Cyrus the Babylonian Emperor,

whom you used to accomplish your will.

From out of your chosen people

and from those whom you were pleased to call you raised up your Son to shine in our darkness, whose showing forth we celebrate with joy.

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

*All* **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

For he too loved outcasts and sinners:

he made streams of living water flow

for the woman of Samaria at the well;

he healed the daughter of a Canaanite woman because he saw her faith was great.

Yet he was despised, rejected by his own:

evil powers pursued him to the death and darkness covered the whole land.

But yours is a light no darkness can overcome: the flame of your love burned bright on Calvary to change death into everlasting life.

Our age-old sickness was healed

and of that healing this bread and wine is the sign.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed

took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said: ‘This is my body which is broken for you.

Do this is remembrance of me.’

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying: ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.’]

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

May the living flame of your love

transform these gifts of bread and wine

that they become for us the body and blood of Christ and so nourish our lives

that we shine as light amid the dark places of the earth. And when all your purpose is complete,

may all your scattered children come with joy into the house of prayer for all the nations

and the whole creation join to sing your praise through Jesus Christ and in the Spirit evermore,

*All* **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

### Epiphany – A prayer of confession

Child of the promise to Mary forgive our lack of hope and vision

and our failure to believe the good news you bring. Child of the annunciation

*All* **have mercy upon us.**

Child for whom there was no room in the inn forgive our judgment of others

our finding no room for them in our heart.

Child of the stable and manger

*All* **have mercy upon us.**

Child of poverty and humility

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

*All* **have mercy upon us.**

Child of miracle and wonder

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

Child of the gift of frankincense

*All* **have mercy upon us.**

Child of great sorrow to come

forgive our fear of pain, suffering and death

and the despair which tempts us and haunts us. Child of the gift of myrrh

*All* **have mercy upon us.**

Child of poverty and persecution

forgive our complicity in systems which crush others and condemn the innocent to death.

Child of the wrath of Herod

*All* **have mercy upon us.**

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

Child of the flight into Egypt

*All* **have mercy upon us.**

Colin Thompson

The star was there in the sky for all to see – but not everyone saw it.

Just those men with open and enquiring minds.

A bit like the shepherds –

only a few heard the message of the angels and came to see the baby in the crib.

The rest of the world got on with its work,

unaware, blind to the immensity of what was happening.

Save us, Lord, from being so busy

that we don’t see the star in the sky,

that we don’t hear the angels bringing your message.

Forgive us when we miss the immensity of your incarnation. Open our eyes to the truth and reality of what your birth means,

not just as a December treat, soon to be forgotten, but as a guiding light for the months of the new year and as a message to lead us, all the days of our life.

### Epiphany

Brian Hudson

## Lent to Pentecost

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

Your commitment to us is complete:

We see it is the crucifixion of Jesus.

Our commitment to you is often mixed: What do we want for ourselves?

What shall we give to you?

With what measure of love shall we serve you?

Help us now, in this time of Lent,

to walk with Jesus on his Calvary journey, that our commitment may be clear

and our love complete.

Take us Lord, to the end of the road. Take us Lord, to the cross.

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

### An opening prayer

Duncan Tuck

### Hold us tight Lord

Hold us tight Lord, as we cry out for peace.

Hold us tight Lord and shoulder our burden at your cross.

Vaughan Jones

### During Lent

Patiently I waited for the Lord;

#### Opening Scripture: Psalm 40

who bent down to me and listened to my cry.

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

The Most High set my feet upon rock

and gave me a firm footing.

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

**Happy are those**

**who put their trust in the Lord. Amen.**

With what great heart, dear God, do you love the world.

We are the people you made, yours is the earth we walk

and all the good things we have come from you.

*All* **You are not only the origin of our life**

**but the source of our strength and hope.**

**We are glad to meet you here where heaven and earth combine**

**in this bread and wine**

**to spell out your purpose and your love in Jesus Christ our Lord,**

**Amen.**

#### Prayer of approach

Again you come, dear Lord, the table is set,

the bread is baked, the wine is poured,

and you await your friends.

Brief silence.

*All* **But all is not right with us,**

**we feel it and cannot escape it.**

**We know we are not invited because we are worthy**

**but because you are gracious. Nonetheless,**

**we wish we were more ready to meet with you.**

Frustrations accumulate,

differences go unresolved

and our best intentions come to nothing.

*All* **Called to take up our cross**

**we have barely picked up our feet.**

**We wonder how can you find pleasure**

**in our company?**

And yet you do.

#### Prayer

*All* **So set a table in our hearts,**

**and call it acceptance.**

**Spread a cloth**

**and call it forgiveness. Come and sit with us, Lord,**

**where we are,**

**as you always do. Amen.**

Bread is broken,

and his love revealed, Wine is poured,

and the promise sealed.

Hands reach out,

and lives are filled,

Hope is born

and conflict stilled.

Christ who entered sin and death

is now our life, our very breath.

#### A prayer after Communion

Duncan Wilson

### Eucharistic prayer for Lent

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal:

*All* **Have mercy upon us.**

In the beginning your Spirit moved across waste and void and you formed a world of wonderful beauty out of nothing. You called forth life in many forms;

you looked on all that you had made and saw that it was good.

Yet we could not bear to live in harmony with your will. We spoiled the beauty of creation;

we lost the peace you gave us, and still we pollute and we destroy.

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal:

*All* **Have mercy upon us.**

Out of this lawless world you called a people to be your light; you fed them in their wanderings and gave to them your Law. Many prophets called them to repentance;

few were those who heard them

and walked the paths of justice and of peace.

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal:

*All* **Have mercy upon us.**

Finally you sent your own beloved Son. His was a birth both poor and humble, yet earth rejoiced and heaven sang.

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

*All* **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

Before he began his great work of healing your Spirit led him into the wilderness

where he was tempted as we are, yet without sin. Faithfully he walked the way of his Cross;

lovingly opened his arms in death to reconcile both earth and heaven.

Yet he was rejected and despised.

Even his disciples fled in that dark hour;

only faithful women saw him give up his life.

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal:

*All* **Have mercy upon us.**

Yet in your infinite mercy he was given to us

to bear and to heal the sin of the world, to rise from the darkness of death

and to flood the world with light and hope.

In him the wastelands of our earth and of our hearts grow fresh and green and break forth into song:

for he has broken the hold of sin and death

and the gates of paradise stand open before us.

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal:

*All* **Have mercy upon us.**

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed

took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said: ‘This is my body which is broken for you.

Do this is remembrance of me.’

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying: ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.’]

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

May the Spirit who moved across the waste and void descend upon these gifts of bread and wine

that they may be for us the fruits of his Passion,

his body and his blood, given for the life of the world. May your power be made perfect in our weakness; may your purpose be accomplished through us,

until the pain and hurt of all creation

finds healing through the wounded Christ:

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal:

*All* **Have mercy upon us.**

Colin Thompson

### Passion Sunday

#### Opening Scripture: Psalm 130

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

*All* **Lord, hear our cry.**

If you, Lord, kept account of sins,

*All* **who could stand?**

But with you is forgiveness,

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

We wait for you more eagerly

than sentinels wait for the morning.

*All* **For in you is love unfailing, and great is your power**

**to set us free from our sins.**

Dear Lord,

battlefields are not the only graveyards

#### Prayer Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-4

where the eternal struggles between good and evil have been fought.

*All* **Human hearts are also heavy with the dead weight of failure,**

**of loves denied and hopes dashed to pieces.**

The bright mornings of human goodwill, raising our spirits,

too often give way

to dark nights of fears and doubts

that drain our confidence and sap our strength.

*All* **Sometimes, all that remains**

**are remains, the shambles of our lives.**

But faced with such devastation we reach out with Ezekiel

to touch the eternal promise

that you will make all things new.

*All* **This is our faith**

Broken families, failed relationships, hard work come to nothing:

– an endless variety of hard knocks do not prevent your grace

from loving new life into being.

*All* **This is our hope**

Out of the fragments of the past, dear Lord, build anew your temple within us

and take the sobs and sighs of grief or regret

and make of them the first breaths

of our re-creation.

*All* **This is our prayer,**

**for you are the bringer of life. Amen.**

Duncan Wilson

### Palm Sunday

#### Scripture: Isaiah 42 paraphrased

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

*All* **On him God’s Spirit firmly rests,**

**by him God’s justice will be done.**

He will not shout or raise his voice.

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

In him God’s holy arm is bared.

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

Then let the watchers shout for joy

*All* **and let the desert places sing!**

#### Reading: Isaiah 50:4-9a

Gracious and patient God.

it can be hard to bear rejection at any time but especially so

when we are trying to give our best to others. Like your Servant,

we have sought to console the weary with a timely word –

and in a busy world,

to follow the Maker’s instructions, to sharpen our ears to your voice,

and to shrug off life’s knocks, if we can, with a smile.

Today we rejoice in the final journey

of the Prince of hard knocks, the Servant King –

who bore so patiently

his fragile and short-lived popularity, the unpredictability of his followers

and the lonely walk towards our salvation. Teach us, therefore, with him,

to lift our eyes

to that greater purpose

you cherish for all humanity compared to which

all present discomfort with our fractious world

fades into insignificance.

May there be no halting to lick our wounds, rather, forgetting what lies behind,

may we press towards the goal of his eternal kingdom.

#### Prayer

Ride on, carpenter King,

uneasy in your majesty.

Open your heart to the people’s welcome and ride your donkey

through their brief glimpse of glory.

*All* **And show us,**

**who dip our palms in homage the things that honour peace, as mounted in humility,**

**you proclaim the reign of God.**

#### Prayer

Enter our world

of strutting armies and commercial empires and cure our addiction

to worldly notions of power and glory.

*All* **Come,**

**cry over our cities,**

**the endless trail of refugees,**

**the tragic list of human atrocities, the raping of our silent planet until your pathway of peace**

**makes headway in our stony hearts and stirs our stale assumptions.**

Then may your kingdom Come – **not ours;**

and your will be done – **not ours;**

for yours is the power and glory – **not ours.**

*All* **And may our hosannas**

**no longer sound the hollow note of those who join in the singing but not the striving.**

**But with sincerity and truth**

**may the gates of our hearts be open to receive you,**

**our humble, patient, servant king.**

#### A meditation

Make no sound, gentle beast, but firmly place your hooves on what becomes,

even as you pass, ground made more holy by your precious burden.

Even the stones

(he says so himself)

are bursting to shout ‘hosanna!’

For this is not a day for keeping praise locked up

in the dungeon of our despair.

Then let it out – all that longing

for one, just One Chosen, to take hold of the reins of our weary existence; someone worth following who tells no lies

but lives the truth so well that he will even die

to plant its seed

in out little plot of hope and love. Go gently, then,

towards his Jerusalem and our salvation.

Duncan Wilson

### Good Friday

A long night. Interrogations. Anger mocking.

#### Father, forgive them, they know not what they do

The cup is there, waiting to be drunk.

Brutality and expediency are taking their course. Now is the time for hiding,

for counting the cost of denial,

Being numbered amongst the betrayers.

Such love, such sacrifice.

A love that is willing to be broken, shattered, eliminated,

whilst we fade away into the night of Jerusalem, too scared by the cost of discipleship

too afraid to take the ultimate risk of giving all into God’s hands.

We have not changed Lord. On countless Good Fridays we have wielded the hammer,

driven in the nails and pushed down the crown of thorns. The evidence is all around –

the jagged edges of broken relationships, the distended bellies of the starving,

the holes in the ozone layer.

Praise be to God

that you have not changed Lord, on countless Good Fridays

you let our sins nail you to cruel, unyielding crosses, your love unbreaking,

powerful beyond our imagining in powerlessness.

And from your love flows forgiveness

and new opportunity

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

Hear the words of Jesus:

– Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.

David G Cornick

### Good Friday 1

It was while we were still helpless that, at the appointed time,

Christ died for us whilst we were sinners

#### Opening Scripture: Romans 4

and that is proof of God’s love towards us.

And so, since we have been made right

by Christ’s sacrificial death,

we shall all the more certainly be saved through him.

We exult in God through our Lord Jesus

for he has won our reconciliation.

How many times, dear Lord,

you must have wished for blessed solitude –

from the daily demands of people hungry for hope, anxious for healing or reassurance –

a crust, a touch, a word from God.

And then the constant surveillance of hostile eyes and ears

and the nagging drip of disapproval.

What wouldn’t you give, just now,

for one friendly, familiar face or voice!

You expected it would come to this

and in the Garden it is finally settled.

Among the olives

you have wrapped your love around the fragments of humanity, the discards and disasters,

and borne the gross weight

of history’s damned, appalling record.

This is your cup.

It will cost you everything.

But we cannot ask it not to do. Our life is hidden in your death, our hope in your despair.

In the very moment

when you feel you are forsaken, poured out, generations are graced into life.

#### Meditation

Duncan Wilson

Jesus said:

in very truth I tell you,

### Good Friday 2

#### Opening Scripture: John 12 paraphrased

unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains a solitary seed and nothing more;

but if it dies, it bears a rich harvest.

Whoever loves himself is lost,

but he who disregards himself in this world will be kept safe for eternal life.

If anyone would serve me, they must follow me; where I am is where my servant will be.

Now my soul is in turmoil and what am I to say? ‘Father save me from this hour?’

No, it was for this very purpose that I came to this hour.

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

I shall draw everyone to myself.

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

#### 2 Corinthians 5

For anyone united to Christ, there is a new creation:

the old order has gone,

the new order has already begun.

God was in Christ

reconciling the world to himself

no longer holding our misdeeds against us.

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

so that in him

we might be made one

with the righteousness of God.

#### Prayers of approach

1. We gather to worship, O God, under the shadow of the cross,

sign of human shame and symbol of divine grace.

Like Jesus, we would follow faithfully the way you set before us;

like Jesus we would die to self and live for you.

Here we offer you our worship and our lives. May your name, so often derided by our world, and sometimes dishonoured by our own actions, be praised throughout your church

as we open ourselves to your love and mercy; through Jesus our Lord. Amen.

1. At the foot of the cross we gather, dear God, to witness again

the dying of your Son, our friend,

our saviour, Jesus.

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

save and redeem us.

Beyond words of explanation we know

that he is here, upon the cross, on account of his love for us and people everywhere.

Therefore

we are not here as voyeurs of some grotesque drama,

nor mourners come too early for the wake, but suppliants of his mercy

with hearts grieving, yet more grateful

than prayers can express.

This, then, is our simple offering,

that we keep faith, so far as we may, and watch with him, even over him

for your sake.

Amen. Duncan Wilson

### Good Friday – Evening

#### Scripture: Ephesians 1 and 2 paraphrased

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Before the foundation of the world

he chose us in Christ to be his people, to be full of love.

In Christ our release is secured and our sins forgiven

through the shedding of his blood. In the richness of his grace

God has lavished on us all wisdom and insight.

God has made known his secret purpose, that the universe,

everything in heaven and on earth, might be made one in Christ.

In our natural condition

we lay under the condemnation of God. But God, rich in mercy,

and because of his great love towards us, brought us to life with Christ

when we were dead because of our sins; It is by grace we are saved.

We gather, dear God, as evening falls to recount the events of this day

and to keep a vigil over our dying Lord.

We come to bear witness to One whose whole life

was lived in the light of your truth and love.

We come, if we may, to keep faith with him

in his loneliest hour, to show our thankfulness,

and to mark his self-less sacrifice. Amen.

#### Prayer

Duncan Wilson

Lord my heart sings, like the blackbird, feathered flautist,

serenading the snowdrops, heralding the spring.

Lord my soul leaps like a hare,

bounding across the fields. Bursting with energy, heralding the spring.

Lord my spirit soars, like a bird, high above,

descending to gather twigs, build a nest,

heralding the spring.

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

Lord, bird song proclaims your victory,

light floods the garden, revealing an empty grave, Christ is risen!

My heart sings.

Risen Lord, you sprang forth, strode out,

into all the world,

meeting people on their own patch, my soul leaps.

### Easter

#### Lord my heart sings

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

Lord my heart sings,

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

Y Mochyn Daear

Wow! Amazing, stupendous, incredible, remarkable, startling, marvellous, wonderful, glorious, splendid, superb, astounding, astonishing, stunning, fantastic, extraordinary.

Jesus Christ is risen! Hallelujah!

Creative God,

you turn the shadow of death

into the brightness of a new morning lift our hearts and minds

with the hope and joy of the Easter Gospel;

you transform the suffering of earth into the wholeness of heaven heal our brokenness and division with the peace and love

of the Easter Gospel;

you transpose the injustice of society into the pattern of friendship

change our selfishness and suspicion

with the truth and trust of the Easter Gospel.

Jesus,

no longer sealed by stone in death but revealed as Redeemer of life, you live in us!

### Easter morning

Nigel Warner

### Easter day

Jesus,

no longer mocked as misguided Messiah but celebrated as cosmic Christ,

you live in us!

Jesus,

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

Holy Spirit, breath of life,

re-awaken us to powers of good; renew us in practices of forgiveness; refresh us for patterns of praise.

This is the day that God has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.

Alleluia!

Amen.

From old wood new life grows.

From death sprouts forth the buds of spring. And from you, Lord of our hearts,

come all that we need to be your people. In love you draw us to you.

In grace you offer a way through our sin.

In weakness you show the power of sacrifice.

And here we give ourselves afresh. We recognise your hold on our lives,

not because you are stronger, or hold all the aces, but because your love, which knows no end, nailed you to the cross – for us.

In gratitude, we give you our praise. We say again – you are our Lord.

We give ourselves to you. Take us and use us,

for your glory. Amen.

Terry Oakley

### An Easter prayer

Duncan Tuck

Can it be you, Lord? The way the sun,

filtering through the leaves strikes the muddy pool and makes it gleam,

as if it were clear and clean –

### Easter 3

#### The risen Christ in everyday life

Can it be you, Lord, doing the same with me?

Can it be you, Lord? The flicker of recognition in a stranger’s face

that quickens to a smile as though finding a friend but not being sure –

Can it be you, Lord, doing the same with me?

Can it be you, Lord?

The morning paper

dropping through the letter box a world of misery and deception in pages of faces

looking up at me,

but surely not in hope ? –

Can it be you, Lord, doing the same with me?

Can it be you, Lord?

In every moment of the day a nudge of wondering

if you also pass this way,

not like a ghost, all cold and fear, but like fresh air, bright light, warm hand, familiar voice –

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

Duncan Wilson

Good Shepherd Jesus, inwardly, we hunger and thirst but most of the time

no-one suspects we do. Surrounded by people, even family,

### Easter 4

#### Reading: John 10:1-11 Prayer: Good Shepherd Jesus

we can still feel isolated, undervalued, even unloved. We hunger for recognition, intimacy, assurance –

we thirst for absent joy.

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

Can you, will you, love and cherish us?

We hunger also for peace and for truth.

Our world sets before us a diet of deceptions, plying us with a thin gruel of empty attractions and unpalatable attitudes

that neither fill nor feed our spirits, while daily strife and violent conflict

are meat and drink to a whole generation of child soldiers and refugees.

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

Can you, will you, lead us in the paths of truth and peace?

Good Shepherd Jesus, you lead us and feed us, you call our names,

you guard our door,

you come between us and evil, you lay down your life.

We recognise and welcome your voice. Help us then to follow you,

to reject all impostors and to keep faith with you. Amen.

### Prayers for other people

Lord Jesus Christ,

who, in the image of the Good Shepherd revealed not only your love

but also your responsibility for all humankind, we would be good shepherds too.

As we have received all creation as a gift from you and as you have made us brothers and sisters to one another,

may we watch with you over those people who are least able to protect themselves.

Make us ready to challenge exploitation and abuse

wherever we find it

and to stand with those who feel powerless against commercial interest and political greed.

Make us sensitive also

to those whose lives stand to be ruined

by personal experiences of rejection or failure.

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

Amen.

Duncan Wilson

### Easter 5

#### Opening Scripture: Psalm 31 paraphrased

In you, Lord, is our refuge;

you do not expose us to shame but by your power you save us, you bend and hear us

and hasten to our rescue:

You lead and guide

where evil will not ensnare us

and, therefore, in you we put our trust and your face shines upon your servants with unfailing love.

Amen.

#### The Gospel: John 14:1-14 ‘Put your fears to rest’

#### Prayer

We do worry, dear Lord,

especially about fending for ourselves

when the guidance and confidence

of leaders we have come to depend upon, is no longer near at hand.

For some it may be the loss of a mother or a son, for others, a friend or a teacher.

Like your disciples,

we are uncertain about the future, our own abilities and strengths

and how to make the right decisions.

Therefore, we are glad of your assurance that you will not leave us bereft,

also that you will send your own spirit, whose power and gifts are endless,

to be our encourager.

It does not seem possible that any one of us might do greater things than you

yet we see from history how great have been the deeds of those who put their trust in you.

Therefore, our prayer is

that we may hold nothing back, but learn to take you at your word,

and expect you to work wonders even through us.

Help us to test our desires and motives so that we may want only

that which honours your name

and serves your loving purpose for our world.

May we not shrink back when we realise what it may cost for our hopes, and your will,

to become a reality.

Amen.

Lord Jesus,

sometimes we feel that the world is falling apart. Perhaps every generation has thought the same. We see the breakdown of family ties,

the gradual erosion of community, and poor people cast adrift

by a world more wealthy than ever before.

But your life and teaching strike a different note

that calls for building each other up.

Help us find ways to do this.

Give us grace

to discover you in both friend and stranger,

to accept other people with open hand and heart, to be ready to share whatever we have.

Help us to say and do

whatever will give people greater confidence in you

and help them realise how much you care.

Help us make fast with bonds of peace the unity which your Spirit gives.

Amen.

As so often happens, dear Lord

you come to us when least expected, when we are busy and preoccupied and least inclined to turn to you.

It makes us wonder

at the depth of your thoughtfulness, your anticipation of our moods.

God of surprises,

come near when least expected and make ordinary moments bright.

#### Prayers for peace

Duncan Wilson

### Easter 6

#### Prayer

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

with every dawn and breakfast table.

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

Just when we are looking back at wasted effort,

or facing the day empty handed,

you turn disappointment into anticipation. Tired or discouraged,

your companionship transforms us.

God of surprises,

show us how good can come even from ‘lost causes’.

When, therefore,

we encounter others in our daily lives who are heavy with things gone wrong or at odds with the world,

put something in our hands or our hearts, or in our conversations,

that may give to them what you have given us – your unconditional acceptance,

the assurance of your love,

and real purpose for the future.

God of surprises,

Show us that we always have something to give

though it may take some finding.

Amen.

Duncan Wilson

### Eucharistic prayer for Easter

Responsive passages from the ‘Exultet’

Living God, out of chaos and darkness your creative word called light into being and life in all its fulness.

Though in the garden we chose to disobey you and death entered our world

you are the bringer of life from the places of death.

You saved Noah and his family from the Flood and passed over the children of Israel

when death struck the firstborn of Egypt.

You led your people out

from slavery in Egypt and exile in Babylon. You saved Jonah from the belly of the whale and Daniel from the lions’ den.

By your power Sarah and Hannah brought forth sons and Ruth the stranger became the mother of kings.

*All* **Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels!**

**Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendour!**

**Christ has conquered! Jesus Christ our King is risen!**

**Glory fills you! Darkness vanishes for ever!**

**Rejoice, O Mother Church!**

**The risen Saviour shines upon you! Let this place resound with joy,**

**echoing the mighty song of all God’s people!**

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

*All* **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

Born on a dark night, during his life on earth

the light of your Son’s presence brought hope to the lost

and healing to the sick.

He preached good news to the poor and ate with sinners.

For this he was pursued to the death.

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

‘This is my body which is broken for you.

Do this is remembrance of me.’

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying: ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.’]

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

We praise you that the darkness could not hold him for he was raised at dawn

to bring new life to the world.

*All* **By his power sin is purged, innocence restored to the fallen, joy to the mourners;**

**hatred is vanquished, tyranny laid low; harmony reigns, heaven and earth are united and humanity is reconciled with God.**

**The Morning Star has risen, never again to set.**

His light is become our light; his Spirit is ours; may our lives shine with the radiance of his glory

and this bread and wine lead us to the feasting of the Kingdom, where we shall be raised up to see him face to face,

in the glory of the blessed Trinity, through all ages.

*All* **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

### Pentecost

#### Pentecost

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

Jennifer Martin

#### Spirit of love, joy, peace

Use the Taizé chant ‘Ubi Caritas’ as a sung response to each prayer Spirit of Love, you pour out your life into young and old,

we pray for all those who are vulnerable, marginalised, and abused because of their age.

May your love inspire our love in our community so that all are included.

*All* **Ubi Caritas**

Spirit of joy, you pour our your energy into the poor and oppressed, we pray for all those who are exploited, downtrodden,

and made slaves because of our economy.

May your joy of freedom drive our work for justice so that all are liberated

*All* **Ubi Caritas**

Spirit of peace, you pour out your comfort into all who are in conflict,

we pray for all those who are caught up in war, violence and estranged because of hostility.

May your peace lead us towards reconciliation, so that all are living in unity.

*All* **Ubi Caritas**

Jesus said to them ‘Peace be with you.’

Terry Oakley

### Peace-making Christ

Peace making Christ,

our world is racked with violence and disquiet.

The politics of terror and calculated response

leave behind rivers of broken lives and tormented consciences.

The pressures of living gather like storm clouds

and sometimes they break and batter and bruise us, driving us to the very edge.

We come open-handed, eager for your gift of peace,

ready to be enfolded in your Father’s blessing,

longing to see the universe from the perspective of your love and know in the depths of our souls

that you are Lord

and that all shall be well.

And every manner of thing be well. Lord, give us the gift of peace.

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

Commissioning Christ, uncertainty reigns.

There is no centre any longer. People turn this way and that,

seeking a fulfilment which always eludes them,

their laughter tinged with sadness, their success haunted by hollowness.

The world needs your Word, for in it lies the Truth

that all life is woven from your Father’s love,

and that meaning is to be found in returning to him and living lovingly.

So we pray for your Church,

the bearers of your commission.

We give thanks for this place

where your word has been spoken and heard

your comfort received and your challenge heeded.

We ask that you will send us out again

to be bearers of your love and heralds of your Word that the world may hear and rejoice.

Lord commission us anew.

‘He breathed on them, and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”’ Pentecostal Christ,

the task seems overwhelming, our resources so slender

just as once it did in Jerusalem, the world hustling and bustling,

speaking every language but yours.

Then the breath of your Spirit transformed weakness into strength,

forging the world’s hope from the crucible of despair, reversing Babel

with good news which each heard in their own language.

Touch us with Pentecostal fire,

breathe your Spirit into our lives.

Gentle breath of God, whispering comfort to our ears,

bringing messages of hope and healing, speaking truth and building confidence come and inspire us now.

David G Cornick

### Transforming Spirit

Strong wind of God, blowing love through the nations of earth, challenging injustice and confronting violence

stirring change and bringing liberation, come and move us now.

Hurricane of God,

sweeping purposefully across the universe, overturning deceit and hate,

removing hunger and poverty, eradicating inequality,

come and change us now.

Terry Oakley

Blessed be you Spirit of God

### Blessed be you Spirit of God

for you inspire us, you renew our life you restore our faith and revive our love.

Blessed be you Breath of God

for you inspire us, you remove our selfishness

you relieve our stuffiness and redeem our situation.

Blessed be you Wind of God

for you inspire us, you redirect our priorities

you recharge our enthusiasm and refill our hopes.

Blessed be you, Spirit of God,

for you rouse, refresh, reinvigorate us.

Amen.

Terry Oakley

Come, Holy Spirit, come air, wind and breath of God,

### Come, Holy Spirit

fill us with new life, waken us to unexpected possibilities,

speak to us your Word of Good News.

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

Come, Holy Spirit, come air, wind and breath of God, in the name of Jesus we meet

and call for you to be present with us.

Amen.

Terry Oakley

Come, Breath of God inspire us,

remove our selfishness, relieve our stuffiness,

relax our worry.

Come, Wind of God disturb us,

redirect our priorities, recharge our enthusiasm,

refill our hopes.

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

Spirit of God, rest, refresh and rouse us.

### Come, breath of God

When we are frightened, holding our breath,

give us confidence to face our fears.

When we are complacent, careless, apathetic, shake us up, challenge us to care.

When we are selfish, greedy, hateful,

lead us to remorse and repentance.

Here and now, we acknowledge our need for courage. Here and now, we ask to be awake to injustice.

Here and now, we confess our sin

and promise renewed commitment in love. Creative, forgiving, holy God forgive us and empower us with your Spirit.

Amen.

Suddenly it arrived, like a violent wind. Rattling the windows.

Tongues of fire resting on each.

Words are inadequate

to describe this momentous moment.

Spot on. Impeccable timing. Being in the right place.

At the precise moment.

Anxious awaiting the promised gift. United in a common purpose.

Resolved to serve.

Even more amazing,

was the resultant change. In the gathered few.

No longer afraid. Unlock the door,

got out into the world.

No longer tongue tied. Speak out boldly.

Proclaim the truth.

To those who want to hear good news for every one the Risen Christ is Lord.

Terry Oakley

**Kairos:** Mark 13:33

Y Mochyn Daear

God –

*All* **Your love surrounds us**

Christ –

*All* **Your peace enfolds us**

Spirit –

*All* **Your breath awakens us**

God,

fire – setting us ablaze

sap – flowing through our veins

ground – rooting us to the earth

Christ,

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

Spirit,

cord – linking us to the stars and to the earth breath – harmonising our breathing

guide – pointing us to God

Worship with us – God, Christ and Spirit, unifying us each with the other

and each to all that is beyond our knowing. Amen.

### Trinity

Vaughan Jones

### God, Christ, Spirit

Vaughan Jones

### Eucharistic prayer for Trinity Sunday

Trinity of power, wisdom and love,

God from all eternity, present in every passing moment, we give you thanks for the wonders of creation

and for the story of your constant love. With Moses before the burning bush words fail us in your presence.

With Naomi we have been in exile, knowing hunger and loss; with Ruth we have come home, but as strangers to your law.

With Isaiah in the temple, we cannot bear the vision of your holiness

and long for your fire to burn away our sin. Knowing our need and hearing our cry you came to embrace our humanity

and in the longed-for Christ

tasted deep of our joys and sorrows.

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

*All* **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

Yet we drove him out from among us,

and he whose dying words were of forgiveness was made the victim of our sin.

From the silence and darkness of death he rose; his victory is ours by faith,

proclaimed and shared in this, the harvest of his sacrifice.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed

took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:

‘This is my body which is broken for you.

Do this 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.**

Come, Creator God: renew the face of the earth.

Come, eternal Word of the Father: remake us in your likeness.

Come, Holy Spirit: transform these gifts and our lives

that here on earth we may sing the songs of the new creation and in heaven see your glory,

one God, for ever and ever.

*All* **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

### Eucharistic prayer for the transfiguration

We praise you, almighty God, Creator, Redeemer, Giver of life.

that amid the shadows of our journey you make yourself known. You brought order and beauty out of primeval chaos;

you gave a child of promise to Abraham and Sarah;

you summoned Moses from the burning bush to fight injustice

and in cloud and darkness revealed your will on Sinai. Hannah and Manoah saw you in ascending flame, your name too wonderful to speak.

Elijah knew you in a still, small voice; you called Isaiah when the temple shook and touched his lips with fire.

He heard the seraphim calling as they flew,

and we too join their song of praise:

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

*All* **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

Blessed was that hour when the Dayspring from on high

dawned upon us, full of grace and truth.

We praise you that your Son was born of Love to dwell among us;

for the beauty of his parables and his acts of healing power. Truly his words and deeds shone in our midst,

signs of a love which sought us when we were far from home.

On the mountain his disciples saw his glory for a moment as he spoke with Moses and Elijah,

yet they could not understand. Soon they forsook him and fled, when he was led out to die.

But he came to stand among them in his risen power

and was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Now he is ascended to reign on high

and pours out his gifts upon us through his Spirit.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed

took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:

‘This is my body which is broken for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.’

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying: ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.’]

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

May his sorrows and his victory go with us through all our darkness and our doubt,

and transfigure them with the glory of his presence. May we know Christ in the breaking of this bread and in the sharing of this wine,

that we may receive him crucified and risen

in the fruits which earth has given and human hands have made.

And, at the last, may we behold him with unclouded eyes in the new Jerusalem, city of everlasting light,

where with you, Father, and the Holy Spirit, he reigns throughout the ages.

*All* **Amen.**

Strong Spirit Wind

blow through all creation,

fill the world with love’s transforming power.

Bright Spirit Fire

rest upon your people,

touch each of us with warmth and light.

Translate our weak words

so that all may hear and understand the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Enthuse the Church

with courage and excitement,

so that people may be challenged and amazed By your intoxicating joy.

Come, Holy Spirit. Amen.

Colin Thompson

### Strong Spirit wind

Peter Trow

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# Exploring the year

Exploring the Year 61

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**First Sunday in the New Year** Matthew 28:20

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

Thank you Lord Amen.

Come now to our God, the living one,

the Alpha and Omega.

Come to the God of all beginnings and endings.

At this new year,

come to the God of January

and December.

Come and follow,

that we may walk in God’s footsteps through every month

and every season. Come and give our love afresh.

Jennifer Martin

### For beginning a New Year

Duncan Tuck

### Holocaust Memorial Day

Lord God, in a world of shallow pleasures, you are the one true joy.

In a world of darkness, you are the one true light. In a world of pain, you are the one true healer.

And so we come to you now, with our prayers for your world, for this place and for our friends and place into your hands

both our joys and our laughter and our concerns and our tears.

Lord, we stand baffled as we see those parts of the world

where hatred builds on hatred

and there is little sign of reconciliation.

We remember those situations

where children are again in the frontline of historic prejudices and injustices.

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

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

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

killing and discrimination.

Lord, we pray for peace in those and all places –

but for the true peace that comes only when our relationships are right with you.

But in asking for peace, we recognise our own stubbornness at times, and must confess that we are not always ready to forgive

and to build anew,

to turn the other cheek and seek a new way.

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

We pray for our country,

recognising that it is not always a just society in which we live –

that we can so easily find arguments for doing things

in ways that are convenient to us as individuals or as groups, rather than doing those things which are right.

When we jump in to put our point of view,

help us to pause, and to search and to listen for the words that you would say.

We pray for this church, and those churches in this area.

We ask for vision to help us determine what you want us to be doing, and for enthusiasm in carrying out that work.

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

local congregation.]

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

Remind us, Lord, that you are with us in the darkness. When the shades of night seem long, and we cannot clearly see the way ahead,

then we feel your hand in our hand, taking us forward one step at a time.

When there are tears in our eyes, and we cannot form the words in our hearts

then we hear your voice saying: Don’t be afraid. I am here.

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

*All* **Amen.**

Brian Hudson

### Eucharistic prayer for Mothering Sunday

Fourth Sunday in Lent Based on Julian of Norwich and Hosea 11

We praise you, blessed Trinity:

your great power, our Father; your deep wisdom, our Mother; your great love, our Lord.

In the beginning your Spirit brooded over the waters and brought forth all created things.

As a mother you loved your people Israel and called your children out of Egypt.

You taught them to walk in your way, you took them in your arms,

bent down to them and fed them.

When they went astray you did not let loose your anger: compassion grew warm within you,

for you are God and not a mortal, the Holy One in our midst.

Through Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel, through Ruth and Hannah,

you brought to birth children of promise, to be patriarchs, priests and prophets. To accomplish your loving purpose,

Elizabeth bore John the Baptist, last of the prophets, and Mary bore Jesus, our Brother in being,

our Mother in mercy, our Saviour from evil.

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

*All* **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

As a hen gathers her chicks,

so he longed to gather his children to himself,

and wept over Jerusalem, because our hearts were hard.

We praise you that through his sacrificial death

and by his rising from the grave we are reborn to grow

into the liberty and splendour of the children of God. In his mercy he restores us;

in this bread and wine

he joins us to his Passion, death and resurrection. [The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed

took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:

‘This is my body which is broken for you.

Do this is remembrance of me.’

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying: ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.’]

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

Remembering the work and passion of our Saviour Christ

and pleading his sacrifice made once for all,

we set forth this bread and cup

that by the coming of the Holy Spirit

our beloved Mother Jesus may feed us with himself, granting us by faith to glimpse the Godhead

and to taste of heavenly joy.

May he who like a mother brought us into being and from whom flows the motherhood of grace bring to birth in us new works of love,

to the glory of the blessed Trinity,

whose love is over all that has been made, world without end.

*All* **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

### Mothering Sunday – Introduction to a Eucharist prayer

And here we come, this Mothering Sunday, to celebrate the one

who gives flesh to what love

is really all about.

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

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

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

Duncan Tuck

The words of institution should be read here.

### Mothering Sunday – Eucharist prayer

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

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

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

God whose strength upholds us when we are down,

we give our lives into your own strong hands – protect us. Bless this moment of sharing together,

that our eating and our drinking may be more than bodily food, but may refresh our hearts and minds

and bind us together as one body, caring and sharing.

Send your spirit down upon what we do here, and enter our hearts,

so that this bread and wine may truly become for us the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Then we may feast in joy for all you have done, and work to be one body in anticipation

of what you will do with us, together. Amen.

Duncan Tuck

### Eucharistic prayer for May Day/work

All our work and joy, Creator God, is to sing your praise for the six days on which you laboured

and for this, the sabbath day of rest and resurrection. Your glory speaks to us in all creation:

the sun and rain calling life from bare earth the greening of the hedgerows in the spring

the coming of swallows, the blossom on the apple-tree. Yet the world you made is spoiled by sin and suffering: we make war against each other

and in greed for selfish gain

plunder and pollute the gifts with which you bless us.

Through long years you toiled to call your people to a way of righteousness and peace.

You led us to freedom when we were burdened in Egypt you gave us the Law and prophets

when we could not find the way.

But your greatest work was yet to come.

You took upon yourself the glory and the shame of our humanity when Jesus your Son was born of Mary.

All his work to him was joy

though he knew our weariness and sorrow.

He left the workshop of the carpenter and, as teacher, healer, friend of sinners,

called those who heard him to share in his labours.

In his last and greatest work

through wood and nails he wrought us our salvation, enduring the Cross for the joy that was set before him. Risen from the dead, he fills all creation with hope ascended in glory, he raises all things to the Father; through him the life-giving Spirit

makes marvellous the common, and drudgery divine. Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

*All* **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

So, remembering the work and passion of our Saviour Christ

we celebrate him crucified and risen

in bread and wine which earth has given and human hands have made.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed

took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:

‘This is my body which is broken for you.

Do this is remembrance of me.’

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying: ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.’]

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

Send down the Holy Spirit upon us and upon creation’s fruit

that we may find healing in the broken bread and peace through the shedding of his blood. May we, his fellow-workers here,

be refashioned by his grace that all his work may be fulfilled and all things sing your praise, one God, Trinity of love.

*All* **Amen.**

God of all creation,

in your teeming and orderly world,

### God of all creation

For environmental issues or One World Week

we have disturbed the balance –

the rich forcing the poor to wreck environments; the ripping and spoiling of your creation

in order that we may have convenience, comfort and abundance.

Help us to care –

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

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

help us to leave behind our own selfishness.

Help us to restore and see restored what has been destroyed, even if it means inconvenience for us.

Help us to work and pray and live

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

Duncan Tuck

Dear God,

we confess that sometimes

we give in to what are often irrational fears.

Strange people and places

can make us feel anxious and edgy. We are hesitant to welcome others into what we regard as our own space. Almost without knowing it,

we establish safe and familiar territories

and hedge them round with self-justification.

### True Inclusivity

Within the context of Communion

We know it will not do.

We know it goes against your nature.

Your love crosses all boundaries to gather all peoples and makes no distinctions –

and neither should ours. We seek your help.

We hear you invite us to your table and to share your broken bread

and we find that everyone is given a place

and none are turned away.

Your love is not choosy, nor hesitant, nor forced. Your love is open, gracious, accepting.

Sometimes ours is not. And therefore, in our world, classes and clubs divide

and what you made to be one human family is torn by fear and greed.

As we come to your table, therefore, help us reclaim those yearnings

for a kingdom where all are welcome and wanted,

affirmed and embraced,

even as Jesus stretched out his arms for us. Amen.

Duncan Wilson

Praise the Eternal One!

### Praise the Lord for Harvest

Based on Psalm 65:5b-11a

People on land and sea, trust in the Most High. Our God calms the roar of the seas,

and softens the turmoil of the peoples. So shout of the things God has done! Stand in awe of God’s deeds.

Echo God’s name in every corner of this world. Behold God’s gentle care for this land –

the richness and fertility;

the streams filling with life-giving water;

the abundance of swelling crops. This is God’s doing.

Without the blessing of rain our fields would be iron. We would have nothing but the dust of bitter drought, and the taste of tears too dry to shed.

What a rich harvest is the goodness of God.

Duncan Tuck

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

We will praise the Most High, because of God’s goodness. We will praise the Eternal One, because of God’s love.

We will tell of all God has done here among us. We will tell of God’s grace in the heavens above.

Yet we will not forget what the Most High is desiring, for God loves us no matter how badly we live,

and calls us to leave behind all of our idols,

to strive to be those that the Most High loves to be with.

Duncan Tuck

### The earth moves through the seasons

The earth moves through the seasons to fruitful maturity. The lambs fatten the wheat swells and the fruit ripens.

We too grow and learn and find joy as we mature. Creating God, you too enjoy the fulfilment of your purpose.

But, there are floods and droughts, disease and decay.

There are painful and hurtful experiences,

so we look forward with both trembling expectation and a terrifying fear to the unknown future.

We are glad that there is growth and joy and satisfaction. We pray for help and courage to face the disappointments.

We trust that you will be there sharing our sadnesses and that all in the end will be well.

Your kindness and forgiveness go with us through the valleys and the mountain tops.

For you are the faithful God, the one who is with us

we know you through Jesus Christ our friend and guide. We praise you in the name and spirit of Jesus.

Amen.

Terry Oakley

Lord you are great!

### Harvest thanksgiving

#### Praise from Scripture: Psalm 104 paraphrase

You make springs flow down the valleys,

streams between the hills, giving drink to the wild animals and river banks for birds to nest,

singing in the trees.

From your storehouse in the sky you water the mountains

and saturate the earth,

greening the grass for the cattle, swelling the grain,

bringing bread to sustain our strength, wine to gladden our hearts

and oil to make our faces shine.

All your creatures look to you in hope – you open your hand

and we are filled with good things.

#### Prayer

How good and right it is,

to give you thanks, our God.

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

Rain and sunshine combine

to bring the best from your creation.

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

Your promise never fails.

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

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

*All* **And we are part of it, called to shape the future, to care for the earth,**

**and to share with one another.**

Therefore,

give us grace to do all that is Christlike

so that we may bear fruit in daily acts of goodness and reap the harvest of our souls.

Amen.

The heavens proclaim God’s glory, their dome God’s handicraft:

day to the following day, night to night

tell God’s story.

Duncan Wilson

### Communion for Harvest

#### Praise from Scripture: Psalm 19

No speech, no word, no voice is heard.

Yet their music sounds across the world, announcing themselves to remotest peoples!

The sun pitches its tent in the sea, happy as a bridegroom,

exulting like a runner, eager to win the race!

Rising from one end of the heavens the sun travels to the other, completing a circuit

and all are blessed by its rays. Amen.

### Prayer of approach

God of earth and heaven, warmth of heart

and fire of love,

bring us into the shining sun of your presence and banish all coldness from our thoughts.

As autumn steals the last of summer’s lingering glory and our eyes adjust to the fading of this day

we rejoice to see the table set with bread and wine and to hear again your generous words of welcome.

But our broken world contends with

the harsh realities of war and deprivation and millions of people, young and old,

are left out in the cold, unblessed, unwanted.

Therefore, we would have you

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

May hands that hold your bread and take your cup

find how to hold you also in friend or stranger.

May voices that hymn your praise and stammer in prayer

find courage to press home your truth and justice.

Let some glimmer, some early promise

of the ‘sun of righteousness’, of Christ our Lord, be evident, even in the conduct of our daily lives, and in our modest acts of faithfulness.

Then may your rising

be seen and understood in this and every generation.

Amen.

Dear Lord Jesus,

ever constant and generous in all your dealings with us, you have fed and filled us,

we who came empty to your table, with much more than bread and wine.

### Prayer after Communion

May we who have seen again your grace at work,

and who know how grandly your love intends to hold and heal all things,

give ourselves joyfully to all that declares your saving purpose for our world.

Amen.

Duncan Wilson

### A Sunday in the early Autumn

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

For your Son’s sake Amen.

Jennifer Martin

### Breads of the world

(Suitable for One World Week and other occasions

celebrating our shared humanity)

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

Jesus said: ‘I am the bread of life.’ The breads which we offer are symbols of

our shared human community and of our diversity within the family of God.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*All* **Amen.**

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

### Eucharistic prayer for One World Week

We praise you, God of many names:

one God in Trinity,

community of power, wisdom, love.

In the beginning you created all worlds

and gave us this one world to be our home.

You blessed us with dreams of paradise

when nature and humanity lived in perfect harmony; you inspired us with visions of unity,

when all the world spoke with one voice.

Yet in our foolishness we preferred our own ways: we forfeited your paradise and spoiled the earth, filling it with violence and corruption.

We were scattered and became many nations

speaking different tongues, cherishing different goals.

So you called one people, to be a light to all the nations, revealed to them the Law

and spoke to them through the prophets; but the burden was too great.

To turn us from our hardness of heart you sent your only Son, born of Mary,

who heard your call and humbly did your will. Therefore with all your people in heaven and on earth we sing the triumphant hymn of your glory:

*All* **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

Through his living witness to your truth, his unjust death on our behalf

his rising from the dead to break the power of evil you gave the human race a new beginning,

entered through the waters of baptism by the Holy Spirit. Through this same Spirit you called into one Church peoples and nations of many tongues

to be a sign of unity and hope for a divided world.

To your Church you gave this thanksgiving meal in which your people share one bread, one cup, following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ [who, the night he was betrayed

took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:

‘This is my body which is broken for you.

Do this is remembrance of me.’

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying: ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.’]

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

Lord, we bring before you this sacrifice of love made to reconcile all things in heaven and on earth through Christ your Son, our Saviour.

Send down your Spirit on this bread and wine that we may receive them for our healing

and for the healing of the nations.

So unite us in the Spirit

that our life together may build one Church to be a living sign of justice and peace until all things in heaven and on earth

are reconciled to you,

through Jesus Christ, in whom all are at one in the fellowship of the Father and the Spirit.

*All* **Amen.**

Colin Thompson

### Eucharistic prayer for All Saints

Lord, we praise you that the story of your grace

is full of names, women and men with many failings, surprised by your call, transformed by your love.

Today we remember them with thanks: Abraham our father, who was your friend,

the laughter of Sarah, the faithfulness of Ruth, Moses the liberator and law-giver,

David the king, the poet and musician,

who saw from afar the One who was to come. So when the time was ripe,

you sent Jesus your Son, our great High Priest,

who in the days of his flesh

learned obedience in the school of suffering and who, sharing our weakness, sympathizes with us in our struggles.

He befriended sinners and ate with outcasts; people came to him burdened and sick

and he made them free and whole.

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

*All* **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!**

In this his supper of love

he befriends us time and time again

and takes us with him on his memorable journey from Cross to Resurrection, from loss to gain.

[The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed

took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said:

‘This is my body which is broken for you.

Do this is remembrance of me.’

In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying: ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.’]

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

Lord, we offer you these gifts:

Send your Spirit down upon them

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

Let your Spirit touch our lives

that we may be conformed to Christ

and follow in the steps of all his faithful friends of many times and places.

Sanctify your Church, that it may live as the company of the redeemed,

and bring us at the last to where the saints in light are one in your eternal presence

lost in wonder, love and praise.

Colin Thompson

### A litany for All Saints Day

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

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

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

with eccentric saints who danced before God,

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

*All* **With artist saints who painted and sculpted**

**and sang the colours and contours and melodies of the Kingdom,**

**with royal saints whose rule reflected the rule of God,**

**with weeping saints whose holy sorrow comforts us:**

With blithe saints whose laughter lifts us,

with irascible saints who drive us to distraction – and to God – with humble, anonymous saints,

who have no memorial but whose name lives for ever:

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

With this unlikely fellowship, who make human the depth and riches and power and grace of life before God,

we celebrate the gift of life and the call to faith:

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

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

### True Saints

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

As precious as bales gathered in the barns

or stored at the field side

are your saints.

As strong as the rocks graining the hillsides

or forming the river bed are your saints.

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

As strange as it seems grace makes possible

that me and my neighbour are your saints.

Terry Oakley

### God of all Saints and Martyrs

God of all the saints and martyrs who called your people

to walk together the path of freedom, gathering as a community of believers, surrounded by the great cloud of witnesses, the communion of loved ones,

friends, leaders, teachers,

our forebears in faith; we approach you

Great Ancestor of our ancestors in worship and in love,

praying that we might once more draw from the well of your inspiration and be renewed in your presence.

Amen.

Vaughan Jones

### Autumn

As the nights draw in, and we pull the curtains a little earlier each evening,

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

Amen. Brian Hudson

### Remembrance Sunday 1

#### Opening: Psalm 33 paraphrase

*All* **Let the whole world acknowledge its Creator.**

**For God spoke and everything came into being, God commanded, and there it stood.**

The Most High frustrates the purposes of the nations

*All* **but God’s own purpose stands for ever.**

Happy is the nation whose God is the Eternal One,

*All* **the people God chooses to serve.**

No sovereign is saved by a great army,

*All* **no warrior is delivered by great strength.**

God’s eyes are turned to those who fear the Most High,

*All* **to those who set their hope on God’s unfailing love.**

We wait eagerly for the Eternal One

*All* **who alone is our help and our shield. Amen.**

#### Prayer

Around and within us, dear God, stir the tender emotions

of people who regret the past with all its pain and loss whilst looking to the future with yearning for peace

and the healing of the nations.

Our greatest fear

is that we learn too little of the past, and fail to deal with

those tendencies in our human nature which lead us, either by folly or fear, towards inevitable conflict

and mutual destruction.

‘The good that we will, we do not do.

The evil we would not do, that we do.’

Open our hearts, we pray

in a true spirit of confession and self examination

lest we exalt the courage and sacrifice of others without measuring the expense of our own commitment to justice, freedom, and peace.

Set before us the example of One who came and gave everything

that we might have life in all its fullness.

‘He was despised and held of no account,

an object from which people avert their eyes,

yet he bore our afflictions

and by his wounds we are healed.’ Therefore, save, forgive and heal us dear Christ. Amen.

### Prayer for peace

God of justice, encircle our earth

with your demand for integrity and openness, for fairness and sharing

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

Prince of Peace, heal your divided world of its warring madness.

Still our fears and calm our stormy confrontations.

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

Spirit of reconciliation, breathe your fertile influence on all creation and help us find the common ground

where forgiveness may flourish and flower in new friendship

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

Holy Trinity of Hope and Love and Joy,

let your desire for justice, peace and reconciliation mark every encounter with you and with our neighbour

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

Duncan Wilson

God is our refuge and strength, a timely help in trouble;

### Remembrance Sunday 2

#### Opening Scripture: Psalm 46

so we are not afraid though the earth shakes

and the mountains move in the depths of the sea.

Nations are in tumult, kingdoms are overturned; when God thunders, the earth melts.

The God of Hosts is with us,

the God of Jacob and Leah is our fortress.

Come, see what the Most High has done, the astounding deeds wrought on the earth;

The Eternal One breaks the bow, snaps the spear. The God of Hosts is with us,

the God of Jacob and Leah is our fortress. Amen.

#### Reading: Isaiah 25:1-9

***Prayer***

Generation after generation, dear God,

has lifted its hands and voice to you in search of peace –

for a world in chaos, aflame with anger, and torn by hatred.

And thus we come on behalf of our generation.

The horrors of war

are no longer distant or hidden.

We watch the terror unfolding, the smoke rising, the stricken bodies falling, the earth exploding.

Fear and sorrow well up within us in equal measure.

With deep sighs approaching despair, we watch the march of death

across the fields where people laboured in hope of harvest,

and through their towns now turned to rubble. We sense the breaking of your heart,

the unfinished grieving of Gethsemane.

Brief silence

And we recognise that war is no accident. We have allowed evil the upper hand.

Just grievances go unheeded, resentments fester

and indifference clouds

the wisdom and love that would save us.

Forgive us for wanting peace without working for it,

for mistaking talk of sacrifice for the real thing.

Come, Lord, mend and remake us

and show us the way that leads to true peace. Amen.

Duncan Wilson

Sing

### Remembrance Sunday 3

*All* **Bless the Lord, my soul, and bless God’s holy name.**

**Bless the Lord, my soul, who leads me into life.**

It is God who forgives all your guilt, Who heals every one of your ills,

Who redeems your life from the grave,

Who crowns you with love and compassion.

The Lord is compassion and love, The Lord is patient and rich in mercy.

God does not treat us according to our sins, Nor repay us according to our faults.

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

And remembers that we are dust. (Taizé)

So we remember

All those who died in and from this country and those who died from the countries of the Commonwealth, allies and former enemies, the people of Nagasaki and Hiroshima during the two World Wars;

Those who died in the wars that followed – Korea, Vietnam and too many others; Those who died in the Genocides of African Slavery in the Caribbean and the Americas, the Holocaust, the Congo, Cambodia, East Timor, Rwanda, and too many others; Those who died in the fight to end apartheid in Namibia, South Africa and too many others;

Those who died in the ‘Dirty Wars’ of repression – in Chile, in Colombia, Peru,

Brazil, the Philippines and too many other countries;

Those who died in countries close to the heart of people in this community – Ireland, Chile, Rwanda, Colombia, and in Bethnal Green itself.

We remember Those we knew

Those who were brave

Those who were afraid Those who mourn and grieve

Those who carry the memory of war in their souls Those whose scars refuse to heal.

Silence

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord.

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

May they rest in peace.

*All* **And rise in glory.**

Sing

God gives peace like a river, Peace like a river,

God gives peace like a river In my soul.

God gives hope, hope forever, Hope, hope forever,

God gives hope, hope forever For my soul.

God gives life, life forever, Life, life forever,

God gives life, life forever To us all.

Let’s bring peace like a river, Peace like a river,

Let’s bring peace like a river To the world.

God of the heavens, creator of sun and stars

nothing is beyond your power.

Saviour of the downtrodden,

crucified by principalities and power,

nothing can separate us from your love.

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

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

*All* **Amen.**

Vaughan Jones

### Prayers of intercession for Remembrance Sunday

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

The terrorist, or is it freedom fighter, decides that this is the day they will die and

pauses to say goodbye to their home and walks out to trigger oblivion.

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

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

The soldier prepares. The politician plans.

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

We wait.

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

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

Really, do you really mean that, do you?

### All are your children

The bomber, the corrupt politician they are yours? We pray for peace.

We pray for justice.

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

We pray for the peace of knowing and doing your will. In the name of Jesus the Prince of Peace.

Lesley Charlton

### Colours for remembering

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

first, a red poppy.

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

Red is for anger.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Gold is for Warmth – warm rays of sunshine on your back, relaxing tired muscles, easing away aches and pains. Warmth floods our bodies making us feel safe and secure, warmth reassures us that we are loved, valued

and cherished. As we feel the warmth shared between family and friends, we experience the warmth of God enfolding us each day of our lives. Gold is for warmth.

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

the petals together.

White is for Peace – the quiet fall of a snowflake, each individual flake seemingly insignificant, yet before long a blanket of perfection covers the ground, so thick that unless you look closely you can’t see the tiny flakes which make it up. Peace begins with the tiny acts of individuals but can become

an avalanche for change in our world, peace is not the absence of anything but demands action and commitment. Living in peace with ourselves, our neighbours, and our world, we live in peace with God, whose peace is greater than our understanding. White is for peace.

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

Lindsey Sanderson

### World AIDS day

#### The lighting of the first candle

For all those people and countries affected by AIDS

#### Welcome Invocation

Anxious, passionate, overwhelmed, determined;

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

Angry, diligent, confused, enmeshed;

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

Joyful, cynical, practical, faithful;

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

#### The lighting of the second candle

For all people caring for people affected by HIV/AIDS

#### A reflection

***The lighting of the third candle***

For all people who have died of HIV related causes

#### A reflection

***The lighting of the fourth candle***

For Justice

***A reflection The lighting of the fifth candle*** To shine into the darkness of stigma

#### A reflection

***The Eucharist***

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

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

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

We confess our complacency in the face of this global pandemic; Our ignorance and fear that breed discrimination and stigma;

Our part in the blame and hatred that isolate people and destroy life; Our inaction and avoidance that contribute to life-threatening silences.

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

#### The peace

Peace and new life be always with you.

*All* **And also with you**

(we greet each other with peace)

Thank you life-giving God,

For feeding us and so clothing us in your grace. Send us out as people of Christ,

Seeking justice, restoration and freedom. Amen.

Communion may be celebrated

#### Post Eucharistic prayer

***Silence and stillness The lighting of the sixth candle***

For hope and restoration

#### A reflection

***The blessing***

Charity Hamilton

Lord God, in these cold days,

when the frosty air freezes our breath and chills our bones,

may we know ever more deeply the warmth of your love.

May we recognise it in the welcome of this fellowship, the kindness of friends or neighbours

the excited laughter of young children

and the beauty of nature, stark and shorn against a winter sky.

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

### Winter

In Christ’s name.

Brian Hudson

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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 Ll Humphreys

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.

Lord, our loving God, whose ways are mysterious

and yet whose love is deep and tender; you provide for all our needs.

### Christ is our Lord

Vaughan Jones

### Lord, our loving God

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

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.

### Come from many places

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.

### Spirit

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 Ll Humphreys

Let us worship God:

### For resting in 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

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.

### For healing and rest

Duncan Tuck

## Offertory prayers

Dear God

### Abundant gifts

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.

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

### Loving God

Carolyn Smyth

## Prayers of approach and thanksgiving

We’re a mixed bag of people!

### We’re a mixed bag!

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.

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.

John Ll Humphreys

### An invocation

Terry Oakley

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 or 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.

### Presence

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.

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.

Terry Oakley

### God is God

Nigel Warner

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.

God of new beginnings,

### In God is life

Nigel Warner

### 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,

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.

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.

### God of time

Terry Oakley

### God who is…

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.

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

Nigel Warner

### Be our new life

Amen.

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.

Alasdair Pratt

### Hold us today

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.

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.

Terry Oakley

### How wonderful

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

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.

Great big beautiful God – we are so glad to be here with you and with each other

celebrating our life together as your people.

### One-in-three God

Duncan Tuck

### Great big beautiful God

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 is all its fulness. Great big beautiful God, thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Amen.

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.

Carolyn Smyth

### Holy risk-taker

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

Creating God,

### We are here because you called

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.

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.

David G Cornick

### Come, let us return to God

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.

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.**

Terry Oakley

### Thank you loving God

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.

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

*All* **Lord have mercy**

Jan Berry

### In peace let us pray to the Lord

(A peace candle may be lit)

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.**

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

Liturgy of John Chrysostom. adpt.

### God of every day

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 kindliness 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.

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.

Lesley Charlton

### God with us

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

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.**

### Prayer of confession

**Amen.**

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.

Vaughan Jones

### Confession 1

Nigel Warner

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.

### Confession 2

Amen.

Forgive us,

for the wasted moment

Nigel Warner

### 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.

How complex life is,

Terry Oakley

### In steady pilgrimage

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.

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.

Bernard Thorogood

### Living the life of faith

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

God, we praise you for your love

For the assurance of your forgiveness, And the promise of wholeness.

### Assurance of forgiveness

Amen.

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.

Jan Berry

### Forgiveness 1

Nigel Warner

You are free.

The grace of God through Jesus makes you free. Accept the grace of God.

Your sins are forgiven. You are free.

### Forgiveness 2

Amen.

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.

Nigel Warner

### Forgive us

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.

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance,

that Christ Jesus came in to the world to save sinners.

Terry Oakley

### Absolution

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, 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.

### Bless our children

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

There are so many things happening: Places to be, people to see!

### Tomorrow is God’s agenda

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 Ll 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 if 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

God, each of us is small

### Small in terms of the world

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

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.

### Come with peace

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.

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

*All* **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.

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.

Pamela Pavitt

### All are welcome

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 Ll Humphreys

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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.

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

Bernard Thorogood

### The face of God

The smile, the frown, the politeness, the pre-occupoation 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 Ll Humphreys

Lord Jesus,

in your life and death

### God’s invitation to all

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

We are free to speak of God in so many ways

### Images of God

Use a number of different voices

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 l Humphreys (amended 2019)

God our Saviour,

### Prayers for hope

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

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.

### The body of Christ

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

Loving Lord,

### The calling of the Church

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.

Master,

teach us to be your disciples,

to follow you through thick and thin, never to deny that we know you,

Nigel Warner

### Deeper discipleship

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.

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.

Lesley Charlton

### Compassion

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

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.

### People matter most

But remind me, God of wonders, that, behind all the screens people matter most.

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.

Bernard Thorogood

### Sir, we would see Jesus

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.

Journeying God,

Y Mochyn Daear

### 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

Thank you, Creator God, for colours.

### A countryside patchwork

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

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.

### Somerset sunset

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 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.

### I believe

we believe in God – the Shorthand

Trinity Church (United Reformed/Methodist,

Bedlington, Northumberland)

### An affirmation

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’)

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.**

John Ll Humphreys

### A litany of faith

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

### Fear

#### Music

*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.

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.

Bernard Thorogood

**A new vision** Revelation 21 and 22

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

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.

### The laying on of hands

Amen.

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.

Vaughan Jones

### Look forward

Brian Hudson

## Celebrating the Lord’s Supper

This is the Lord’s table.

### Invitation to 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 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.**

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 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.**

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 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.’

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.

#### Prayer

Alan Paterson

Let this service be conducted informally.

#### Communion

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.

*Voice* Words of institution: 1 Corinthians 12

#### Breaking bread

*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

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

### Communion prayers

#### Prayer of confession

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.

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.

#### Prayer of approach

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 that 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.

Oh come let us sing to the Lord!

Duncan Tuck

### Whose are the hands of God?

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.

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.

***Reading: Luke 8:37-38***

***Music***

***A reflection***

***Music The Eucharist***

***Blessing***

Charity Hamilton

#### Music

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.**

Whose eyes will weep for the poor ... ? Whose hands will reach out in love ... ?

***Psalm of praise And he delivers them Reading: free choice***

***Music***

***A reflection***

***Music Silence***

***Some things to think about ...***

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.

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.

#### The peace Eucharist Blessing

Charity Hamilton

## Blessings

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.

### As we leave this place

Amen.

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.

Carolyn Smyth

### Receive gladly

Amen.

Go on your way rejoicing in the living God; And the blessing of God,

Creator, Redeemer and Spirit, Be with you all.

Amen.

Carolyn Smyth

### Rejoice in the living God

Jan Berry

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.

### Ever-loving God

Jan Berry

May the blessing of the living God, Creator, Redeemer, and Spirit,

### 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.

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,

Jan Berry

### 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.

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.

The light of God lead you;

the presence of God protect you; the goodness of God go with you; this day and every day.

Terry Oakley

### May the strength of God…

Terry Oakley

### The light of God lead you

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

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.

### Bring us to new life

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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# A celebration of life

## A service of thanksgiving and remembrance for our children who died at any age whom we love and commend to God

Welcome to ... United Reformed Church (or whatever wording is applicable)

As you entered you were given a commemorative card and a candle. You are invited to write your child’s name on the card. During the Act of Remembrance you will be invited to bring them both to the front where the candle will be lit.

We meet today to give thanks to Almighty God for the precious gift of life. We especially remember our children who have died and whom we love dearly.

In recalling and celebrating their lives we remember too the promise and hope which God has given us in Jesus who lived and died and loves again. For it is in the context of his life and his promises that we may escape from absolute grief and despair. Enabled by his promise we can be freed to anticipate, with joy, a shared future, bright beyond anything we have experienced or can understand, yet possible through the Grace of Almighty God, our loving Father.

Let us stand to worship God as we join in singing

**Hymn: For the beauty of the earth**

**Prayer of approach**

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**First reading**

**Address**

**Hymn: We cannot measure how you feel**

**Second reading**

**Act of remembrance**

Hold fast to this moment; this time and space is for you. God waits in love, listens to what is in your heart and longs to take away the pain.

(All those wishing to participate, please come forward)

### Music: Precious child

Now we remember and hold before God our children whose names are written on these cards.

In their names, too, we light these candles, symbols of love, faith and hope. May they burn brightly and lift our hearts and prayers to God.

Let us pray

Jesus said, ‘Where your treasure is there shall your hearts be also.’

*Minister* Heavenly Father, these words would be dry as dust in our mouths if we did not trust in your promises.

*All* **Lord, to whom shall we go? Yours are the words of eternal life.**

*Minister* You have said that our names and the names of our children are written on your hands.

We are precious in your sight.

*All* **Forgive our lack of faith, help our unbelief, so that we may rest content knowing that they are safe in your keeping.**

*Minister* Encourage and strengthen us by your Holy Spirit. Help us to understand that it is a veil as thin as gossamer that separates us from them and that we are all cradled in your tender, loving care.

*All* **Our treasure is safe with you and there also may our hearts**

**find peace.**

*Minister* We pray now for others around the world who mourn the loss of their

children. May they find the blessing we seek.

*All* **In the name of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.**

**Amen.**

### Hymn: Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy

**Closing responses**

*Minister* Deep peace of the running wave to you *All* **Deep peace of the flowing air to you** *Minister* Deep peace of the quiet earth to you

*All* **Deep peace of the shining stars to you** *Minister* Deep peace of the Son of Peace to you. *All* **Amen.**

### Blessing

**Music: Gone too soon**

Margaret Herbert and Compassionate Friends,

St Andrew’s United Reformed Church, Sheffield

# Creative decisions

**Gifts and skills** (Ecclesiasticus 38:24-end)

Gracious God, we thank you

for the great diversity of gifts and skills

with which you have endowed the human race: gifts of body and mind,

gifts of creativity, of perseverance, of wisdom and compassion,

that together make up the fabric of this world.

Help us to encourage one another

to fulfil the potential you bestow on us;

to be more fully what you have created us to be,

and to offer ourselves in service

to the communities into which you have called us.

And may we,

who have been given leisure to be here today, be blessed by each other’s company

and by your Holy Spirit at work amongst us. In Jesus’ name we pray.

*All* **Amen.**

Wendy Baskett

Gracious and loving God,

you have called us into your Church

### A prayer for a meeting

to worship, to witness, to minister in a variety of ways; and we want to respond to that call

and fulfil your will for us.

We pray for our meeting here this evening (or name any other part of day).

Help us to hear your voice and feel your Spirit

as we talk together and seek to discern in way in which you are leading us.

Take from us any anxiety or fear and give us your deep peace,

in the confidence

that your purpose for each of us and for your Church

is one for good;

and in the confidence that we are, together,

brothers and sisters in Christ, in whose name we pray.

*All* **Amen.**

Wendy Baskett

Loving God,

in the midst of turmoil and in the times of calm you are with us;

when our hearts are troubled and when our lives are at peace, you are with us;

whether we forget you or turn to you

you are with us;

so we worship you.

We praise you for your faithfulness and loving kindness

which so often we do not deserve yet on which we so much depend.

Be with us now

and help is in the task that lies ahead of us.

Lead us in your ways of truth, gentleness, wisdom and love. We ask it in the name of Jesus.

*All* **Amen.**

### Lead us in your ways of truth

Wendy Baskett

### Easy choices or difficult decisions

Gracious God,

as we meet together

we pause to acknowledge your presence with us and our need of you.

You are with us

in the joys and the muddles of our lives,

in the easy choices and the difficult decisions,

and we praise you.

Guide us in our thinking and speaking

that we may hear what you are saying to us

and find unity in a common purpose,

as we strive to be faithful in the work entrusted to us

as disciples of Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All* **Amen.**

O God,

be present to us

in the work and leisure of this day that we may reach the day’s end having been hearers and bearers of good news;

in the name of Jesus.

*All* **Amen.**

Wendy Baskett

### Work or leisure

Wendy Baskett

# Grieving Remembrance Thanksgiving

## Prayers for a Funeral (1)

### Opening prayer

Gracious and loving God, you are the giver of life. We come from you, and in death we return to you. Be with us now.

We bring to you our grief and loss, because ... A ... was part of our lives, we loved

*them* and now it hurts.

We bring to you our thanks for all that ... A ... meant to us, all that *they* shared with us and all that *they* gave us of *themselves*.

[as appropriate]

We bring to you our relief, that for ... A ... there is nothing left to fear, no more

suffering, no more frailty, no more confusion, and *they* are with you and at peace.

Come into the turmoil of our emotions, renew our faith and grant us the peace that only you can give.

*All* **Amen.**

### Prayer of thanksgiving for a life

God of life and light and hope, with your whole Church in heaven and on earth we bring to you our thanks, we offer to you our praise, for all that you have done for humankind through Jesus who is the Christ.

You gave him to live and die for us. You showed your plan for the world and proved that your love has no limit, and on that first Easter when you raised Jesus from the dead you promised that all humankind might share his resurrection life

For the hope of our faith, for the good news of your kingdom, and for all those whom you have welcomed into your loving presence, we thank you, gracious God.

But especially now, we thank you for the life of ... A ... whom we loved.

We thank you for all the ways in which ... A ... became special and precious to each of us who knew *them*;

for the values and standards *they* set *themselves* and lived by; for *their* sense of what was good and right and decent;

for *their* warmth and humour and sense of family;

for every life that *they* enriched and all that *they* invested of *themselves*

in our lives;

for the faith by which *they* lived and in which *they* died. We thank you for the glorious treasury of memories that are ours to keep, to hold on to and to enjoy – the moments that were deep, special and personal, the times that rang with laughter and fun,

and for the ordinary days of discovering each other a little more, when affection and love, trust and respect, grew and were deepened. We thank you for the courage shown, and for a life fulfilled,

and for all that ... A ... reflected of your goodness and love.

And now we are glad that ... A ... has found peace and will neither suffer

nor mourn again. *They* have laid *their* burden down before you and are with you, safe, happy, whole, and welcomed by those for whom *they* once mourned.

Help us to hold on to what we should and to let go what we must.

Help us not to cling to the past constantly brooding for what might have been, but rather to take forward what *they* gave us for the rest of our lives’ journey. Help us to trust and to know that ... A ... will never be far from us till that day when we all stand together in your presence.

Through Jesus who is the Christ.

*All* **Amen.**

### Closing prayer and benediction

Loving God, grant to us all now the grace to turn back to our lives and our tasks with calm hearts, minds at peace, and a renewed faith.

Help us to be worthy of the (wo)man whose death we mourn today, but whose life will always be dear to us.

May we go on from today to be the same people ... A ... helped us to become, the people *they* were proud to call *their* family and *their* friends –

living out our lives as *they* want us to live, and celebrating in them all that

*they* gave us.

And may strength and courage and hope be with us all in the blessing of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and always.

*All* **Amen.**

Alan Paterson

## Prayers for a Funeral (2)

### Introductory prayer

Compassionate God, you have loved ... A ... , and we have loved *them* too. We come to you because the love we feel is hurting and distressing.

We feel lost and helpless, sometimes lonely. We miss ... A ... .

Help us to believe that your love is greater and more farseeing than ours. Help us to find confidence in your love and peace in your compassion so that our fears are calmed and our loneliness is eased. May today and tomorrow be filled with your comfort, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### Prayer after the eulogy

Gracious Father God, your love never ends and is always willing to comfort us. On this occasion grief can threaten us and over-shadow our hope

and optimism.

Help us to remember with gratitude ... A May *their* influence remain

with us because *they* were dear to us. May your compassion lead us from the grief of separation to the hope of resurrection.

We thank you for the life which has passed; we give thanks because we have seen the leading of God in ... A who has died.

We give thanks because of the virtues, love and activity which made *them* what *they* were. We thank you for *their* life with all its achievements and for the love given and received by *them* among *their* family and friends.

We are content that whatever suffering and pain, sadness and sorrow there

was in *their* life has now passed and ended and that *they* have entered into a life which is eternal.

We are grateful that *they* were such a person that our grief and sorrow is real and pray for your comfort in healing the absence of *their* laughter and joy of life.

We pray that you will bring comfort to those who grieve.

We pray particularly for parents, children, relations and friends of ... A ... . Give them courage to adapt to living. May grief and distress not overwhelm them so that in time the wounds left by this death may be healed.

Give us insight to believe that physical death is the gateway to a more

complete and fulfilling life.

So give us your peace and light, comfort and compassion in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Graham Robson

## A service for the interment of ashes

### Introductory words

We brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we cannot take anything out of the world.

After labour comes rest; after struggle, peace; after life’s fitful fever,

this last sleep.

Don’t worry, said Jesus; I am the first and the last, and the living one; I died,

and now I am alive for eternity, and I have the keys to eternal life.

We believe that Jesus died and rose again; and so it will be for those who died as Christians; God will bring them to life with Jesus. Thus we shall always be with the Lord. So there is consolation in the love and activity of God.

... A ... has now departed and *they* now rest with those who have gone before. What *they* have been and what *they* have given now rests with the

God whom *they* worshipped and to whom *they* gave *their* life through Jesus, the Christ.

We thank God for who and what *they* were; for the love and concern *they* showed and was experienced by *them* and given by *them*. May *their* rest be in the peace and love of God, and our memory of *them* be blessed and loving,

gracious and accepting. *They* have lived *their* life, and have departed to be with those who went before.

May we continue to be content to release *them* to you, and to be assured that in your keeping *they* are safe, happy and complete.

Let us pray

### Prayers

God of mercy, and God of all comfort; look in love and compassion on us. Enable us to find in you refuge and strength, and close friend in times of trouble and stress, and to know, though it is beyond immediate knowledge, your strength which upbuilds and surrounds us in times of bereavement. Grant us faith and hope, and peace and comfort through Jesus the Christ who gave himself for us that the life we live may be filled with peace and hope.

Accept to yourself the life of ... A ... , with its achievements and failures, its ups and downs; its funny times and serious times, and deal with *them* graciously as we say goodbye to *them* and use our own lives to bring goodness and truth to those whom we know. These things we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord.

### Put ashes into ground

We have entrusted ... A ... to God’s eternal keeping. Now we commit *their* ashes to their resting place; in the sure and certain hope of eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, who dies, was buried and rose again for us. To him be glory for ever.

Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple. His servants shall worship him and attend him and they will acknowledge his name.

### Throw flowers over the casket

In memory, and in gratitude for the life of ... A ... we offer our flowers, confident of the certain hope that *they* are with *their* loved ones and cared for by God, and that we who are left will think of *them* with kindness and love.

We commend ourselves to you, praying that what we have done today will give us a deeper understanding of the issues of this life and an appreciation of its appointed end. Keep us in fellowship with the Church Triumphant; enrich us with light and truth, and enable us to find peace in the present and hope in the future since truth and light are both alike to you.

May the God of peace, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, love us and all his people, now and always,

*All* **Amen.**

Graham Robson

## A Funeral service in a church followed by committal prayers at a cemetery

**or crematorium, and a rite for the burial of ashes**

These alternative prayers of approach make provision for the violent grief of those who are bereaved by accidental death to be acknowledged and shared

The funeral of a young person may be attended by large numbers of people who are unfamiliar with church ritual and may bring their own symbols with them; these should be acknowledged where possible.

Appropriate liturgical provision may also be made for the inclusion of music that speaks meaningfully of lament and hope.

God is our refuge and strength,

### Introduction

**Opening sentences**

A very present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1)

Jesus said, Come to me all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,

And I will give you rest. (Matthew 1:28)

### Hymn

### Prayer

(a)

God, O God,

we turn to you in anguish, our hearts are screaming, our minds are weeping our spirits are numb.

We remember with sorrow how we failed one another.

In the bitterness of regret, we turn to you.

(b)

Living God,

God of our strength

we come to you in sadness at this time of parting.

We are restless and cast down. Eternal Love, you know our guilt, you taste our pain,

your outstretched arms enfold us. God of mercy,

hear our cry,

breathe on us, raise us up, speak to us

and strengthen us in hope

in the power of the holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All* **Amen.**

**Readings from the Bible**

**Address**

**Hymn, song or music for reflection**

### Prayer

God our Father, we thank you

that you have made each of one of us in your image and likeness.

Especially today we thank you for ... A ... , for the life we shared with *them*,

for the good times and the bad for the love *they* gave

and the love *they* received.

Faced with the mystery of life, we affirm that love is unconfined. Faced with the mystery of death,

we affirm that love is stronger then the grave.

Gentle God, for your pity’s sake, deal tenderly with those who mourn,

Especially ... A ... , ... A ... , and their families and friends. In the pain of grief,

may they find comfort in you.

In their helplessness

may they find help in you;

In their loneliness,

may they find companionship in you.

May they find in us your comfort, your help

and your companionship.

God of undying life, we thank you

that in Christ Jesus your Son, you have given us life

which even death cannot destroy.

Form in us his likeness and deepen his life in us

until our work on earth is done; then time shall be no more

and night shall no more hide us from each other’ sight.

These things we ask

through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught his disciples to say:

*All* **Our Father …**

Where the coffin is open, the congregation may now be invited to come and take their leave of the body; music is played. The coffin is closed during the singing of the next hymn.

### Hymn

**Prayer of release**

We now release ... A ... into the hands of God, our Maker and our Redeemer.

### Let us pray

Holy God,

in whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning, you have illuminated our human life

by the radiance of your presence in Jesus Christ.

Sun of our souls, you pierce the mystery of death with the light of eternity,

and great is your faithfulness.

We now release ... A ... to your merciful care; we entrust *them* to your undying love

in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Rest eternal grant unto *them*, O Lord, Let light perpetual shine upon *them*.

*All* **Amen.**

May the Lord bless you and keep you;

may the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you.

May the Lord look kindly on you, and give you peace.

### Blessing

**All Amen.** Fleur Houston

## Prayers at cemetery or crematorium

### Sentences

Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living one.

I was dead, and see, I am alive for ever and ever. (Revelations 1:17-18)

I am convinced

that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers,

nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth,

nor anything else in all creation

will be able to separate us from the love of God

in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

### Committal

(At the grave)

From the dust we have come, to the dust we return.

The earthly life of ... A ... has come to an end.

We have released *them* into God’s merciful keeping; we now commit *their* body to the earth.

dust to dust, ashes to ashes, trusting in the power of God

who raised our saviour Jesus Christ in triumph from the dead

that we might live in glory everlasting.

*All* **Amen.**

(At the crematorium)

All fire and heat, bless the Lord,

praise him and magnify him for ever,

The earthly life of ... A ... has come to an end,

we have released *them* into God’s merciful keeping.

We now assign *their* body to the flames. Formed of the earth, to dust it shall return Breathe on us, breath of God;

in the refining fire of your holy Spirit,

may we be brought with ... A ... to everlasting life.

*All* **Amen.**

Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace:

your word has been fulfilled.

My own eyes have seen the salvation

which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations

and the glory of your people Israel.

May the peace of God,

which is beyond all understanding,

keep your hearts and thoughts in Christ Jesus.

And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you, now and for evermore.

*All* **Amen.**

***Nunc Dimittis***

### Blessing

Note: At the cemetery after the blessing, mourners may, by prior arrangement,

fill in the grave as others sing hymns/songs of faith and assurance.

Flowers may then be removed from their wrappings and ‘planted’ on the mound.

Fleur Houston

## Burial of the ashes after cremation

The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be always with you

### Greeting

We have come together to bury ... A ... ’s ashes. As we do so, we remember our own mortality, affirming our faith that whether we live or die, nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

God of the living and the dead, strengthen us with peace

and steady us with hope; speak to us the word of life through Jesus Christ your son

who once was dread and now lives forever.

*All* **Amen.**

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

### Prayer

**Readings from the Bible**

As a father has compassion for his children,

so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him. For he knows how we were made,

he remembers that we are dust.

As for mortals, their days are like grass;

they flourish like a flower of the field;

for the wind passes over it, and it is gone.

But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him.

(Psalm 103:1,13-17a)

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house, there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself so that where I am there you may be also.

(John 14:1-13)

Lord of life

### Prayer

(During or after which the ashes are buried)

You have promised that none of those you have redeemed will ever be lost.

Strengthen us now as we return ... A... ’s ashes to the earth

in the knowledge that all life finds fulfilment in you

and death has no domination over us.

*All* **Amen.**

I will not fail you or forsake you says the Lord.

### The Lord’s Prayer

**Closing sentences**

(Joshua 1:5)

Jesus said: And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

(Matthew 28:20)

Now may the peace of God

which surpasses all understanding, keep guard in your hearts and minds so that you may be found

secure in Christ at the last.

And may the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you all

today and for evermore.

*All* **Amen.**

Go in peace and the God of all peace go with you.

### Blessing

Fleur Houston

## Words and prayers for a child’s Funeral

### Opening words

We gather here, needing God’s healing love, and searching for his reassuring strength.

We gather to share our grief, to comfort and support one another in our common loss.

We gather to share our hurt and our sense of outrage

that A’s life has been unjustly cut off, and we have

been robbed of that promising young life.

We gather to commend to God, ... A ... and ... A ,

and to look for his comfort in our loss.

### Opening prayer

Eternal God, you have loved us from the beginning. In a vulnerable infant born in a stable you began the demonstration of your eternal love, and with an empty tomb you sealed your promise of eternal life.

In the ache that seems endless and the longing that we cannot let go, speak to us in the depth of our being, and help us to know that the God who made us in his own image never lets us go, never tires and never abandons his children.

In our grief for ... A ... , as we hear again the words of our faith,

let your peace that passes understanding and your love that is deeper than words touch our hearts. Transform our grief with the certainty that Christ walks beside us through this life and beyond.

*All* **Amen.**

### Prayer of thanksgiving

God of grace and light and healing, God of our depth and our elation,

God of today’s sorrow and of eternal joy, We bring to you the turmoil of our emotions.

We bring to you our sense of injustice and understand that you too are outraged by this injustice.

We bring to you our indignation and recognise that it is you who inspires our indignation.

We bring the ache of our bereavement to the God whose only child died on a cross.

We bring our fear and despair for a stark and bleak future without ... A ... . We bring our thanks for *their* life – and for all the lives *they* touched and enriched – for the *daughter/son*, the *granddaughter/grandson*, the great *granddaughter/grandson*, the *niece/nephew*, the cousin, the friend, the pupil, the *Brownie/Cub*.

We thank you for the pictures *they* painted and the ones *they* were going to paint, for the music *they* played and the music *they* would have played,

for the languages *they* were keen to learn.

We give thanks for the swimming and the sports *they* had found – for the open heart and the open mind, committed to the present and fascinated by the future, for *their* feet on the ground and *their* eye on fresh horizons.

We remember *their* zest for life, in a hurry to grow up, but with time for friendship, fun and family.

Help us to know that what we shared with ... A ... is ours to keep, and let

*their* questions, *their* jokes, *their* enthusiasm and *their* grin fill the empty future that frightens us. Our hopes are thwarted, our plans for ... A ... have been destroyed and the colour and the music have gone from our lives. We miss that boundless energy and *their* limitless fresh enthusiasm.

On that first Easter, you helped Jesus’ friends to discovered that he was alive to inspire and encourage them; help us today to know that ... A ... is alive with the God who has always loved *them* and always will.

Help us gathered here this morning to find comfort in this place where

... A ... loved worshipping.

We pray for all those who are not able to be with us today, but who desperately want to be. We ask you to help them. Assure them all, and us, that ... A ... is with *their* God, safe, happy and whole. Help us to face the future in the certainty that ... A ... will never again know fear or worry, and the only pain left is ours at parting.

Help us to grieve for *them* honestly as we should, but spare us from the bitterness that corrodes and destroys. Help us not to turn *them* in our memories into a plaster saint, but let us take into our future *their* giggles,

*their* shrieks *their* nonsense, *their* chatter, along with *their* laughter, *their* music and *their* bright open mind. Help us to recognise that our grief is part of loving, but that we will still be able to find warmth in *their* memory when the pain has eased.

Let your love enfold us today, dear God, as it also enfolds ... A Let the love

which raised Christ from the dead, sustain us all till that day when together with

... A , we all worship you in the glory of your eternal kingdom.

*All* **Amen.**

### Dismissal and blessing

Go in peace. Take into your future the joy that ... A ... gave you.

Be glad that you were part of *their* happiness. Know that death has not separated *them* from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord: And may grace, and mercy and peace, from Father, Son and

Holy Spirit be with you all evermore.

*All* **Amen.**

Alan Paterson

## A prayer for children who have died

Ever-loving Father we pray that you will receive the soul of this child ... A ... . You will care for *them* and *they* will find life in you which is no longer possible here. We are devastated by this death, where we would expect so much to be achieved and where the innocence and joy of childhood has been cut short so tragically. We ask that in the midst of this grief you will surround us with your compassion and love and that you will instil in us the thought that your love

is greater than ours and that this tragedy will not make us despair or that our grief will be unending. May our memories of ... A ... be gracious and loving, our remembrances compassionate and creative. Accept this child into your care, and help us to cope, find love and hope, and may our lives not be blighted by this death, but find new ways of love and care – for *their* sake and through Jesus Christ, our loving and caring Saviour.

Graham Robson

## A prayer in a service for a stillborn child

God of healing and God of hope,

God who made us to know depth and elation,

We turn to you for help

because ... A‘s ... birth has become *their* death. God of our sorrow and our joy,

we bring to you the frustration, the pain, the confusion and the disappointment

that have stirred turmoil in our hearts and minds. We bring our grief to the God who knows grief well.

We bring our fear for a future, now bleak and overshadowed by the loss of a life that we should have been part of.

We did not know ... A ... , but we anticipated *their* presence.

We knew *they* were there – on the way and we celebrated *their* coming.

We were glad and we were hoping, making plans and looking forward.

And now the hopes have become sorrows,

our plans for a welcome have become a goodbye, and instead of sharing in a new life

we have found an aching emptiness. Be with us.

Help us to remember this time honestly,

to let it deepen our characters and our understanding. Help us still to be the people we intended being for ...

Assure us today that ... A ... is safe and whole

in the love and care of the God whose image *they* bear.

Our lives can never be quite the same again. We have no wish to forget *them*,

nor do we want to cling to the past,

brooding constantly for what might have been.

So lead us through this time into your future, God of life. Hold out your hand when we are lost,

embrace us when we are desolate,

and support us when we are staggering.

Show us what we should take forward from this time into the rest of our living.

As colours come back to our world

And we hear again the song of creation,

let ... A ... be in the music and in the brightness. Let hope surprise us again.

Help us in today’s darkness and tomorrow’s light To know that neither death nor life

Nor things present nor things to come, Nor powers, nor height nor depths, Nor anything else in all creation,

Will be able to separate us from the love

You demonstrated to the world in Jesus who is the Christ.

*All* **Amen.**

Alan Paterson

## Burial of the organs of a baby removed during post-mortem

### Greeting by the grave-side

We meet in the faith of God who created us, Christ who redeemed us,

the Holy Spirit who brings us life. We meet in the faith that, though ... A ... has died,

*their* life is not destroyed by death. *They* now lay cradled in God’s love, whose warmth gives life to the dead.

As we return *their* remaining organs to the earth, let us comfort one another

with the assurance that one day we will be reunited with *them* in joy and blessing beyond our imaging.

And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me but raise it up on the last day

Loving God, giver of life, all that we have and hold is on trust from you.

What you have given to us we return to you.

Give us grace to let go

of those things we can cling to no longer

that we may know ourselves to be held by you through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,

who taught us to say when we pray:

*All* **Our Father ...**

(John 6:39)

### Prayer

**Prayer of committal**

(During or after which, the casket is buried)

We now return to the earth

the remaining organs of this little child.

God of compassion,

We pray for this family in their pain and grief.

Give them courage and strength in the days ahead.

Touch then tenderly with your love that they may know your peace, and have hope in their hearts through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All* **Amen.**

The Lord bless you and keep you;

the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;

the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.

*All* **Amen.**

So let us go in peace

### Blessing

(Numbers 6:24-26) Fleur Houston

## A Funeral prayer for a person who has committed suicide

(Exploring our sense of guilt and anger)

Loving God, our words are not enough. We remember before you today our friend ... A ... whose hurt we were not able to ease. We feel as if we let *them* down, because the hurt was too great, life too frightening, worries too great and our efforts failed. Help us to let go, to forgive ourselves and others, just as

you have always forgiven your children. We celebrate the life which ... A ... lived. We remember *their* successes and the sound of *their* laughter and give thanks for the moments of joy we shared. Thank you for the times we shared which we shall always treasure. Unfulfilled potential is not your will, and we feel anger that we have to deal with so many unanswered questions and unfulfilled hopes. Help us to remember what it is that is good in life and to celebrate it

with all our being. We believe that ... A ... is now with you, released from this life and the pain we could not take away. For *their* sake help us to live in the power of your love, and when we do not have the answers to our questions,

to accept the silence with anticipation and the assurance of your love.

Elizabeth Kemp

## Look down from the cross

(A prayer following a suicide)

Look down from the cross, Lord In the darkest of hours;

As the shock of what’s happened Hits as hard as the nails.

As the fear of desertion Leaves us empty, betrayed.

Look down from the cross, Lord Be with us we pray.

Look down from the cross, Lord In the bleakest of days;

As the loss we are suffering

Tears a hole in our ways. As our fear for the future

Leaves us angry and dazed. Look down from the cross, Lord Be with us we pray.

Look down from the cross, Lord And see us here, now;

As we try to forgive

When we feel so dismayed. As our lives must move on With our hearts torn in two.

Look down from the cross, Lord Be with us we pray.

Look down from the cross, Lord At our future lives;

As time passes slowly And nights last for days. As you suffer with us And carry us on.

Look down from the cross, Lord Be with us we pray.

Melanie Frew

## O Lord through all our days

O Lord, through all our days you held us in your care,

and though we wandered from your ways, surprised, we found you there;

wherever we have been,

though strange the paths we trod, there’s nothing that could come between

your children and their God.

If such a love as this

has followed us from birth, has blessed our lives and guided us

through all our time on earth, then surely you will keep

our spirits in your care,

and bring us safely through death’s sleep

to know and find you there.

And this we dare believe

through Jesus Christ your Son, who promised that he would receive

us there, where he has gone; he died and rose again:

and all he came to give

we know has not been given in vain; he lives, and we shall live.

*Tune: Diademata*

Basil Bridge

# A service of thanksgiving for a person who has given their body for medical research

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, No torment will ever touch them.

Most merciful God, whose wisdom

is greater than anything we can ever understand, we come before you as we are,

offering you our pain, our doubts,

our feelings of guilt, and our anger. Trusting in your mercy and your grace,

we ask that you will forgive what needs to be forgiven and heal what needs to be healed

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through the power of your Spirit, may the words of Scripture

bring strength where there is weakness, light where there is darkness,

faith where there is doubt and life where there is death,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All* **Amen.**

### Introduction

#### Opening Sentence

(Wisdom 3:1)

***Hymn of praise***

***Prayer***

***Readings from the Bible***

***Address Hymn of assurance***

Eternal God, our strength and our redeemer,

Giver of life and conqueror of death

(a)

We thank you for ... N ... ,

for *their* sense of adventure, *their* insatiable curiosity,

*their* sunny lively personality,

*their* sheer joy in being alive.

We thank you

that *they* who served humanity so lovingly should continue to do so after *their* death and benefit generations yet to come.

In life, in death, *they* gave glory to you.

(b)

We remember before you ... N ... ,

*they* were sociable and good company; we know that *they* were no plaster saint; *they* wanted to live life *their* way,

often at the expense of other people;

*they* was sorry all the time for what went wrong.

*Their* final act was to do a good turn

for other people,

and for that we honour *them*.

We give thanks for all *they* meant to *their* family and to the community in which *they* lived. We acknowledge

with gratitude the service *they* have given to medicine and to humanity and we commend *them* to your loving care, confident that *they* are at peace.

God of compassion, we pray for those who mourn; especially ... N ... , ... N ... and all members of their families; that they may grieve indeed

but not as those without hope. Surround them with your love and grace and let them have good friends

to share their burdens and ease their pain; through our saviour Jesus Christ,

who taught his disciples to say:

*All* **Our Father …**

#### Prayer

***Final hymn Nunc Dimittis***

Worship from the URC additional resources |

**208** A service of thanksgiving for a person who has given their body for medical research

(All remain standing and join in saying the worlds in bold type)

*All* **Save us, Lord, while we are awake, protect us while we sleep,**

**that we may keep watch with Christ, and rest with him in peace.**

Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace:

your word has been fulfilled.

My own eyes have seen the salvation

which you prepared in the sight of every people;

A light to reveal you to the nations,. and the glory of your people Israel.

*All* **Save us, Lord, while we are awake, protect us while we sleep,**

**that we may keep watch with Christ, and rest with him in peace.**

(as in *Rejoice and Sing* 742)

May the God of all hope strengthen and sustain you, and may the God of life be always with you.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May his face shine upon you,

and be gracious to you.

May he look upon you with kindness, and give you his peace.

*All* **Amen.**

Fleur Houston

# Elders and pastoral care

### A prayer for the vestry

Amazing God who is within and beyond all things; who is transcendent but is also immanent; how can we make an exclusive claim on you? How can we possess you and not let you reach others in different forms at different times?

Therefore, may our worship recognise your presence with all people. May your Spirit rule the words and thoughts of all who gather here today.

David Jonathan, North India

### A simple prayer

Creator God, Father and Mother!

Who are these people you have created who look so different?

Who refuse to integrate and accept but readily agree to segregate and reject? If they are your creation, why are they so threatening?

Is my fear a mere prejudice or a natural reaction to reality?

But what is reality?

The one they say in the news or the one they deny in Council.

As I gather courage to adore you,

In all your creation of fellow beings ... In the Churches

In the Temples In the Mosques

In the Synagogues In the Street

In the Pubs

I lay beside you all my ambiguity, apprehension, suspicion and fear.

*All* **Amen.**

Today is just an ordinary day, Lord, nothing special is happening,

nothing startling has happened during the week, and nothing unusual is planned for next week.

Today is just an ordinary day.

But today is Sunday,

David Jonathan, North India

### Just an ordinary day

and the congregation has come to worship you, Lord – please help!

Pause

Thank you that you are the same yesterday, today and forever.

Thank you that you are the same now

as when you called *(name)* to preach your Word. Please remind *them* of that call now.

Pause

Help *(name)* to share the enthusiasm and wonder of that moment with all who come to worship you today.

And may the worship we offer you be special –

even on this ordinary day.

*All* **Amen.**

Ruth Sermon

In the following two prayers by Wendy White ‘we’ and ‘us’ can be substituted, where appropriate, for ‘I’

I want to do something Reach out and make it alright Calm, reassure, listen, solve all the problems I hear.

I am very capable

Trained to deal with anything Find nice sensible solutions Keep everybody happy.

I return to the illusion That I can do everything If only I try hard enough and pay attention.

I fall at your feet – again, Broken, frustrated, humble Knowing that I don’t know Empty, helpless.

You – hold out Your arms – again, Pick me up, hold me,

Pour out Your Spirit Creator, healer.

### Pour out your Spirit

Wendy White

### Because I am frightened

Because I am frightened you will not come again, Because I am frightened that you will,

Because I know and don’t know

and in knowledge lose all understanding

*All* **Lord have mercy.**

Because I am frightened that this is illusion, Because I am frightened when I know it is real,

Because I both trust and doubt you and am wary of loving this much

*All* **Lord have mercy.**

Because You have come this far for me, Because I still run from you,

Because I turn, trembling, at Your love aching to believe

*All* **Lord have mercy.**

Wendy White

### Prayers when we feel distant from God

Creator of light and darkness

*All* **you hold us.**

**When we wander in dark places you speak to us.**

When we can find no words to speak to you

*All* **you do not forget us.**

When life seems too bleak for hope

*All* **you give us strength to continue.**

When we do not hear you, when we cannot speak to you and we feel most alone

*All* **you touch us in the darkness, offering to travel with us.**

Elizabeth Kemp

### Care of aliens

(The prayer of an Elder with responsibility for children and young people) What aliens are these?

Loud, confident, brash Interfacing with computers All seeing and all knowing.

What aliens are these? Dressed in bizarre clothing Listening to strange rhythms And a language all of their own.

What aliens are these?

How can I communicate with them? How can I get to know them?

Why should they listen to me?

What aliens are these? The babies you bless

The little children you love

The young people questioning and testing you

What aliens are these? I was one, too

I will remember what it was like

And be as a child to stand alongside those you love.

Melanie Frew

### A prayer for young people in vulnerable situations

Father of all,

We thank you that when we were still far off You saw us and were filled with compassion. In Christ Jesus your Son,

A new humanity was clothed with your love.

We pray for all young people on this estate *(or similar words to fit with local communities)* Even if their father and mother forsake them, may they know that they are loved by you.

Give them strength to turn away from things that are harmful

and courage to start again in a new way of life.

Grant us perseverance to walk with them, discernment in maintaining boundaries, wisdom to resist manipulation.

Grant us the humility to know

that on our own we can do nothing and faith

to trust always in you.

Renew your broken people in the power of your Holy Spirit. So the dead come to life, the lost are found

And the whole earth will sing your praise.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord,

*All* **Amen.**

### For those affected by drug abuse

*All* **Blessed be God who delivers us from death, despair turns to hope in your great goodness.**

Lord, we pray for those who are afraid of ever-increasing addiction to drugs; whose families live with stigma;

who steal and mug and lie to feed their habit;

who lose all track of life and human dignity; who feel trapped.

In your mercy, Lord, heal us

*All* **in your tender love remake us.**

Lord, we pray for those who are afraid of being robbed;

who are suspicious of their neighbours; who hate the noise and smells

of people desperate for drugs;

who envy dealers with expensive cars and clothes;

who dread their children finding sharps

in parks or gardens; who feel angry.

In your mercy, Lord, heal us

*All* **in your tender love remake us.**

Lord, we pray for those who work with users and their families;

those who seek to guard communities from anti-social and criminal behaviour; those who teach young people

to resist substance abuse.

*All* **Blessed be God who delivers us from death, despair turns to hope in your great goodness.**

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All* **Amen.**

God, our beloved,

we breathe your fragrance

and we are drawn to your radiant beauty.

### The ministry of flowers (1)

You make flowers appear upon the earth,

the time of singing has come.

What flowers we have, what scent,

what delicacy of tone and shape!

In loveliness, they raise our hearts you.

And so with joy and gladness

we thank you for the skill and patience of those who beautify our worship

as ministers of flowers.

Spring and flowers fear the frost

but you bloom for ever.

In you we live, we breathe, we love, you are our all, our praise

and all our good.

*All* **Amen.**

Fleur Houston

As we come to worship we cannot help

### The ministry of flowers (2)

but see the flowers which adorn this place

and our thoughts are drawn to you and your creation.

For they reveal the multitude of colours and textures in your creation.

They speak to us of the intricate detail and great magnitude of your creation,

from the smallest microbe to the largest mammal.

So as we look upon their beauty, we give you thanks for those

who week by week ensure that there are flowers

to remind us of your creative power.

We thank you for the skill and creative talents

of those who week by week create such wonderful displays.

Lord God we also ask,

that as these flowers are sent to

those with something to celebrate or who are in need, that they may speak of our love for them,

and dear God of your loving creative power.

*All* **Amen.**

David Coote

### The ministry of flowers (3)

The lily reaching to heaven, architectural, pure

More perfect than Solomon’s finest garb We thank you for the flowers of the field.

Our churches of plain bricks and mortar In cities bereft of beauty

We thank you for the flowers of hope.

For those that bring us your roses Cut and gathered with care

We thank you for the flowers of love.

Living God,

Composer of the universe,

In tumult you began your work, Your symphony took shape;

Earth, sea and air and life in all its forms; Each movement had its place.

And we were free to play, to sing, to improvise its themes.

But we forgot the score.

Melanie Frew

### The ministry of music

And so in time, you sent your Son to teach and to inspire a music

of contrapuntal harmony fusing your melody with ours.

And in our worship we remember him.

Today we give thanks for ministers of music,

*organise, pianist, choir, band, orchestra, music group,*

praising you for the skill and creativity with which they enrich our worship, looking ever to that glorious day when all the voices of our world resound as one

and in a rising crescendo of love and praise all will be Amen and Alleluia.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All* **Amen.**

Fleur Houston

Do I *have* to, Lord? Not *ANOTHER* cake!

Yes, I know I like baking –

and I find it therapeutic,

### Baking cakes – again!

and it’s very satisfying to see people enjoying my handiwork. But I don’t feel like it today –

and I haven’t time, and I’m on a diet, and ...

Where does cake baking come in the Bible, Lord? I never heard Jesus or Paul talk about it.

I never knew it was part of the Christian life – it isn’t in the membership promises,

or the eldership service,

so why are we expected to produce cakes so faithfully? Pause

I’m sorry, Lord, I’m giving in to ungenerous thoughts.

Please help me,

I do want to be generous.

I want to see people come together in your name as they eat – in imitation of the meal you had with your disciples.

It may not be bread and wine, and I may not be ordained,

but I am part of the priesthood of all believers.

Please use my offering

to bless your people.

*All* **Amen.**

Ruth Sermon

**Prayers before visiting**

### pastoral care/difficult situations

Compassionate Christ, you always had time, even for your enemies.

Grant me the gift of seeing those who are difficult, those who make me feel uncomfortable and those who disturb me, through your eyes; that I may listen to them with love and commend them to you.

Help me to understand that silent presence is often a more powerful gift than many words.

And if, in spite of my efforts, my ministry is rejected – give me the wisdom

to let go of contentious problems and leave them with you.

Elizabeth Kemp

### Hospital visiting

Lord Jesus, you spent so much of your time with those who were in pain, concerned about the future and feeling worried about their loved-ones.

Be with ... A ... at this time. Whatever the future brings, may *they* know your constant love and not feel alone. Thank you for family, loved-ones and friends, for their concern and prayers. Thank you health care workers and all those who daily attend to patients’ comfort and well-being; thank you for their skill, patience and care, may they never feel undervalued or taken for granted.

Whatever the future brings, may we be enabled to face it with peace and in the assurance of your love.

Elizabeth Kemp

**The whole armour of God for**

### Christian Aid collectors

Take up the whole armour of God, so that you may knock at each door. Stand, therefore and fasten the money bag around your waist,

and put on the badge of identification.

As for your feet, put on whatever will make you comfortable on the tarmac, gravel and slabs.

With all these, take the information leaflet, with which you

will be able to answer all questions.

Take the umbrella to save you from rain *(or sun block to save you from burning)*

and the message of charity, which is the word of God. Pray at all times.

Grace be with you all as you go out to collect this Christian Aid Week. (With apologies to Ephesians 6:13-17)

Help us to stand with those in our care,

To make the coffee and hold the hand

Melanie Frew

### For those in our care

To offer the handkerchief and provide the shoulder

To listen, to love, to laugh, to let be. Help us to stand with those in our care.

Help us to comfort those who are ill, To do the shopping and take the post

To bring some flowers and wear a smile To plump the pillow and pour the water. Help us to comfort those who are ill.

Help us to understand the needs of others, The time to talk, the time for silence

The time to pray, the time to cry The time to hug, the time to leave.

Help us to understand the needs of others.

Help us to ask for your help, Lord,

To find the time and to use it well

To ask for advice and to seek support

To stay strong, to be sensitive, to care, to be a friend. Help us to ask for your help, Lord.

They pick him up on his stretcher. Carry him in the sun.

Straining as they carry him up on to the roof.

Family members caring for a disabled family member.

Disabled people longing for independence. Neighbours who allow someone to stay in their home because they shop and pop round.

They cannot get in.

There are too many people. No way through.

Churches designed to keep you, Jesus, for themselves, to keep strangers out.

Churches that are clubs of the like-minded.

Making those needy feel humiliated and thinking somehow of God as a pet.

Your sins are forgiven.

Many cannot hear these words. People burdened by guilt.

Get up and walk.

Melanie Frew

### Make room

Those who find movement too demanding want to stay where they are.

Lord Jesus may you be at home with us and may we make room in our structures and personalities for you.

Lesley Charlton

### Outside

The kid in my class – **outside** – because he says stupid things, has dull clothes.

**Outside** because she works too hard and shows off.

**Outside** because they move around;

travelling people, refugee people, people who are trafficked.

**Outside** because they behave oddly; socially challenged people,

not able to cope with the complexity of all the information.

**Outside** because they do not want to be inside; those who do not need us,

do not want the message we bring, know all the answers.

**Outside** because they are in hospital, residential home/school;

those who are forced to wear the label ‘patient’.

Lord enfold us all in your love and at the end welcome us home.

Lord of the upside down your ways are not our ways.

Lesley Charlton

### Lord of the upside down

In our world the middle aged have the power

yet you come with a child as an example of the kingdom.

For children exploited and neglected. For those not heard.

For the elderly whose power was once.

Move in those coming to terms with the changes old age brings.

We look for a leader to provide quick, stock answers.

You expect that we will work together beyond barriers of religion and race.

We value doers, the proactive, the achievers. You show us the value of being,

of praying, of silence, of rest.

Prophetic people whose lives point in new directions.

We value strength, military might.

You hang on a cross.

There are those countries at war

*(name situations currently in the news)* Places beginning to build the peace *(name situations currently in the news)* Relationships with one another:

listeners to the quiet voice;

a gentle approach as well as strident noise,

Lord we wrestle with these issues every day.

Cheapest or fairly traded quickest or best

me or us

In Jesus’ name

Lesley Charlton

### Season of mists and holiday returns

The time to celebrate the fruitfulness of the earth

and to abhor the weight of the lives we have built for ourselves.

This is the time when the leaves fall and the leavers are now joiners

at university and big school.

This is the time to get back to the ordinary This is the time to resume meetings;

the clubs and activities.

Be our light as it gets darker be a present guide in our fogs

be a hand to hold in our lostness

be peace to those at war for they crave the ordinary that we disparage.

In Jesus’ name we pray

Lesley Charlton

# Elders and moments of worship

Living Lord, Our Risen Christ,

when we meet, talk, cry or laugh with people as we travel along this week,

we pray that there will be opportunities to see You at work in the world, through women and men

as they go about their daily lives. Encourage us,

to go about our lives sowing seeds of Peace In our communities.

*All* **Amen.**

### A prayer for the week

Geoffrey Duncan

### Prayers of thanksgiving and confession

This is the day that our Lord God has made – a day for new hope.

Thank you, Lord for the fact that we are here; for our joys and our sorrows,

our laughter and our tears, our work and our leisure time.

Thank you Lord for our lives – so precious –

and may we remember that other peoples’ lives are precious too, as we live in our local communities set within the global framework; and for the increasing need for understanding about living

with many different people;

for our families and our friends; for our holidays and refreshment.

We give this day and all our days to you Lord for service with people

Please forgive us for the wrong things that we have done in recent days. For the unkind words that may have hurt someone and for unpleasant thoughts about our friends and neighbours.

We know, Jesus, that you will forgive us. Please help us not to do these wrong things but instead help us to help people whoever they are –

to be kind and thoughtful – and get on with everyone.

Geoffrey Duncan

God of truth, who lives in us,

help us to be people of truth;

### Full of grace and truth

(Based on John 1:14)

to resist copping out when questions get difficult, looking for easy answers to life’s complexities, or meeting openness with narrow mindedness. Rather, shine in us,

that full of grace and truth, we may show life’s fullness as your daughters and sons.

Liberator God, we sing to you

for you are just and do which is right. Life and breath, freedom and love are your gifts to us.

Yet, with every breath,

our humanity catches up with us and faith comes hard.

Violence and destruction are around us and even within us;

we become afraid to speak your name and claim your love.

[Silence]

Janet Lees

### Transforming us

(Based on Jeremiah 20:7-13)

Even so, your fire still burns in us as you are so ready to forgive, both our personal shortcomings and our communal failures.

We are thankful that you see right to the hearts and minds, that peace and justice are your standards

and that love is your everlasting gift.

We declare that this is the new life we have received.

Janet Lees

Holy God,

who chooses and treasures us, you love us.

You keep faith with us

even when we do not keep faith with you; breaking our promises to and for each other, giving the poor few chances,

afraid to confront injustice. You know our struggles and our frustrations.

[Pause]

We are amazed

that you have set your heart on us, choose us, treasure us

and forgive us.

We thank you, generous One.

### Treasuring us

Janet Lees

### Expand our vision

(Based on *Rejoice and Sing* 498 God be in my head) God, be ahead of understanding;

expanding our vision of the world and the church as we pray and work together.

God, be beyond seeing;

challenging us to probe the ready answers as we look deeper into our local situation. God, be more than words;

echoing in both sound and silence

as we tune into the small voices so easily ignored. God, be the fundamental beat of life;

steadying us for clear thinking

in the ups and downs of our experience. God, be beyond life itself;

so that whatever marks the beginning or end we may know we are always in your company.

Janet Lees

### Lord of life and love

Lord of Life and Love, give us fresh insights for the ways in which we use resources with our people skills and our finances. Help us to appreciate the need to re-evaluate our skills and our purchasing power and ensure

that we are supporting people in need, without strings attached, in local and global communities.

Enable us to work together for justice in our neighbourhood, the nation and the world.

Lord of Life and Love, give us the spiritual strength to participate in activities which will bring about better living conditions for people in developing nations. Lead us to a renewed understanding of what it means for women and men to be empowered; for our neighbours and our global friends, who live in poverty in the marginalised communities, to reach their potential in education, skills and income generation.

Enable us to understand and appreciate the resilient nature of marginalised women and men; to know that all life is valued and to rejoice with them as they continue to become increasingly resourceful people.

Lord of Life and Love, open our minds to existing and new ways of caring for people and sustaining Earth. Lead us to discover with people, in partnership, fresh, energetic methods of communicating improved ways of Living in remote, barren villages or industrialised, polluted cities.

Enable us to turn around our life-styles; to become less demanding in our wants and desires so that we are able to experience new ways of Living. Awaken our consciences to become pro-active with people wherever they are in your world.

Lord of Life and Peace, help us to discover, now – today – the many faces of Justice and Peace waiting to be pursued. Help us to know how we can be alongside people ...

*(Please name here areas of the world where there is violence, terrorism and war ... )*

Keep us well-balanced as we take positive action to support suffering women,

men and children wherever they are.

Enable us to be more informed; increase our understanding; lead us to greater wisdom and compassion. Prompt and prod us to be spiritually more open for gospel-action and to see the face of Christ in the stranger. Lord of Life, Love and Peace hear our prayers and act upon them as you will.

*All* **Amen.**

Geoffrey Duncan

### Spirit of God

As you prompt us

Open our eyes to see the needs in your world,

Open our ears to hear the cries of the poor

of the suffering

the marginalised

give us the courage and the tenacity to take our spoken prayers into serious action.

Move us from our security To take risks just like Jesus

And as you want us to do now To walk with humankind

Knowing that you, Spirit of God, will support us As we meet you please

Re-assure Re-new

And re-commit us to a life of service With no strings attached

Where we will stand for justice and peace

Spirit of God, on this *(Pentecost)* \* Day may things change

because of us.

*All* **Amen.**

\* Please be flexible with the use of the Day as this prayer can be used on

many other occasions.

Bless the Lord, my soul;

Lord, my God, you are very great. We sing to you in dances.

Geoffrey Duncan

### A Psalm

(For the leader and all the people)

You are the love which moves the sun and stars, you are the source, centre and spring

of all that lives and loves;

this have you done for your true love.

You call us to the dance

with simple steps and ever-changing patterns, where all have space and freedom.

We call to you with inarticulate groans and thwarted yearnings;

following Christ our partner with clumsy, shambling gait, dragging our feet.

And in your grace, you turn and come to us, rejoicing in the dance;

acknowledging our smallest steps, you take us by the arm

and lead us

in more and more glorious

configurations.

Lord, my God, you are very great,

wonderful you are, and wonderful your works. Bless the Lord, my soul.

Jesus, Lord most kind companion We would bless your holy Name

Praise your ministry of healing

And your love that’s still the same.

Jesus, Lord for ever caring

We would praise your patient ways Human sorrows always sharing

giving aid in darkest days.

Jesus, Lord for ever faithful

Keep us in your heavenly way always learning from your teaching,

seeking pardon every day.

Jesus, Lord help us to see you

in the troubled, wounded ones.

Let us pray for all despairing,

both your daughters and your sons.

Fleur Houston

### Hymn to Jesus

Rosemary Watts

### Come to us now Lord

Come to us now Lord, surrounded by so many things, keep our focus on you, the righteous King of Kings.

Help us to work and pray for social justice every day,

for your gifts of faith and courage as we follow in your way. ‘Thy kingdom come’ – you taught us, Lord to pray.

Jesus abide in us, and in the hearts of all humanity.

God of beginnings and endings

Rosemary Watts

### God of beginnings and endings

Help us to remain focused on you. God of hope and love

May we in silence hear your voice. God of joy and peace

Open our hearts and minds To encounter you in the

Great variety of human experience.

Keith Brown

### Benedicite

Written for Blackbird Leys, but could be used in other situations O give thanks to our God who is good,

whose goodness endures for ever.

You sunrise and sunset, night and day, give to our God your thanks and praise.

Cherry and chestnut trees, starlings and rooks, give to our God your thanks and praise.

Roses and lavender, butterflies and voles,

give to our God your thanks and praise.

All you whippets and punters, footballers and fans, give to our God your thanks and praise.

All tower blocks and flats, houses and caravans,

give to our God your thanks and praise.

Churches and Leisure Centre, shops, schools and pubs, give to our God your thanks and praise.

All you men and women, black and white, young and old, give to our God your thanks and praise.

All you saints and martyrs of this estate, give to our God your thanks and praise.

O give thanks to our God who is good

Whose goodness endures for ever. Fleur Houston

### Mothering Sunday

Mother God, giver of life, creator of new worlds, you nurture universes within your enfolding presence. As a child in the womb is unaware of the mother who carries it, so are we unaware of your Spirit holding us in life, nourishing and supporting us. We listen to the muffled sounds of the world rushing by, and rarely notice

the beating of your heart in the midst of it. For your all-encompassing, life-giving presence we praise you.

Mother God, eternal home-builder, bread-winner, labourer of love, you never cease toiling for the health and welfare of your beloved creation. For your life poured out for us, we praise you. Mother God, passionate with love for your world, in Jesus we see you bear the agony and disappointment of our failure as if it were your own, you graciously tolerate our arrogant certainties that we know best, you put your very life on the line for your vulnerable children. For your life, sacrificed for us, we praise you.

Like argumentative children, we have not acknowledged our unity in you, and our responsibility for the peace and harmony of your world-wide family. We blame each other for the wrongs of the world and self-righteously wash our hands of guilt. We allow others to bear the punishment for our failure, as if the death of Jesus has taught us nothing.

We are sorry for the failures of the past that have tolerated, even encouraged, bullying in communities, in families, in international affairs. We are sorry for the violence being inflicted in our name.

Come between us, gentle Spirit. Calm our anger and desire to blame everyone except ourselves. Encourage us to look with love into the hearts and desires of others. Bring out the best in war currently being waged by our State.

(Paragraph 1, with acknowledgement to Margaret Hebblethwaite)

Dick Wolff

### In the beginning you were...

Creator, in the beginning You were, and your love could not be contained.

From the overflowing of Your love you sang us into being

that we might share love and wonder, and join Your song.

In the exuberance of Your Love You created a world of diversity and beauty beyond our imagining,

and with Your hands made each of us unique,

so special that each difference may be a cause for rejoicing:

for learning, sharing, loving,

for rhythms and harmonies with You, and with each other.

We praise You, creator, together with words and with music, and in the silence

with our hearts.

But Creator, what have we done?

We have taken our trust away from You,

labelled, owned and destroyed the gifts of Your natural world.

We have taken the diversity of one another

as reason to reject: by colour, by language, by talent, by belief, by difference. We have taken even the greatest gift of Your love in flesh among us

And believed our science and structures were better and more reliable. We have even, glimpsing Your Spirit, tried to hoard love to ourselves.

Forgive us Creator, for all the times we have tried to limit Your love and chosen not to recognise You in our neighbour,

twisting ourselves, and each other, out of shape in our fear.

Help us to lose this foolish pride before You, and learn the humility

to accept Your offer to partner in this amazing creation,

in all its diversity, beauty and pain.

We thank You that, whenever we try to erect our definitions around You, the power of Your Spirit breaks through, assuring us of forgiveness when we come to You, creating us anew as loved and forgiven people.

Wendy White

### Holy Spirit of God

Holy God, you cannot exist, for you are before any existence was. How can you be the *centre* of our life’s pilgrimage, home of our hearts? – for you are in *no* place and *no* time ... *all* places and *all* times. The compass needle of our hearts swings wildly in all directions: we are lost without you, and lost within you.

Forgive the arrogance of the religious heart that claims to know you.

Jesus of Nazareth, only uncreated child of God, we turn to you for you are nonetheless one of us, and you have loved us. You are human like us, walking the roads of Galilee and Jerusalem, 2000 years ago. Our hearts’ compass needle swings about in the mystery of God, and then points steadfastly to you. We take our bearings from you, we seek to walk your ‘Way’ ... we crucify you.

Forgive the arrogance of the religious heart that tries to recruit you to its own cause, and use your name as its Big Excuse.

Holy Spirit of God, comforter and disturber, life-giver, opener of doors: no sooner do we know you have touched us than you are gone. You it is who steer the compass of our hearts towards the real Jesus, the *living* Lord. You it is who put the ultimate choice before us – life or death? You it is who makes the choice easy, even when choosing life *means* death.

Forgive the closed minds and stubborn wills of the religious heart that turns your exuberant loving freedom into doctrine, Scripture, law and habit.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, I dare to declare to you : though we *have* chosen, and will choose *again*, deadness, lifelessness, lovelessness and our own comfort – Christ has, in his own body, broken the bonds that hold us in this slavery. It is not inevitable. The door to life in the Spirit remains open.

Let us walk through it together, humbly rejoicing in the name of Jesus.

Holy God, as we recite the prayer Jesus gave us, may your Spirit awaken the words in us:

*All* **The Lord’s Prayer**

Dick Wolff

Lord, we are a worried people.

### Lord, we are a worried people

From the time we wake each morning we worry about:

the weather, the state of the roads, whether we have

sufficient clothing and is it fashionable.

We worry about the day ahead, our job prospects, our health, our loved ones and our pets.

We turn on the news and we are told to worry even more: about the state of our food,

the state of our hospitals, the stock market,

our strange neighbours.

In a land of plenty we are told to worry about:

pensions and savings, employment levels illegal immigration.

Occasionally we are invited to worry outside of our self-centred universe and we worry about:

war flood, famine.

Lord, we are worn out with worrying.

We ask You today to restore our sense of perspective. We need reminding to celebrate, and to praise You.

God, You created the universe before we were, and created all we see.

You became part of creation, became an ordinary chap, who chose the way of the cross,

chose to be subject to our will,

so that we could see, for all time, by Your resurrection, that in the end is life,

rich abundant life, for all, for ever.

Forgive us when we worry, remind us of Your love.

Teach us to recognise the genuine concerns and take action. Show us how to stop wasting time, instead to praise You, turning to our neighbour and sharing Your good news,

and sharing their joys and sorrows.

Help us to recognise Your kingdom now,

not to ignore the poverty and pain around us,

but to work with You to bring Your light, Your help into the darkness. To stand beside.

To listen.

Forgive us when we try to do this alone and fall back dispirited,

Forgive us when we take ourselves too seriously while ignoring our neighbours.

Wendy White

Creator,

You who made everything, can You really hear us?

Love,

definition of love,

### God, you take our breath away

do You really care that much about each one of us? God,

God who we cannot comprehend,

You take our breath away

as we struggle to hold a vastness, at which our minds recoil, with a love for each one of us,

created and known as individuals.

God, we have no words,

We cannot define You except that You exceed all definitions.

Higher, vaster, richer than all our imaginings.

Our praise becomes silence as we contemplate You.

But You, seeking to love and how us love, (not wanting empty praise or gratitude

but to bring us into relationship with Yourself)

have poured Yourself out to Your creation and become man, one with us to show us what love can do.

To help us glimpse across our feeble boundaries – so much more!

You have stood beside us … and let us nail You to the cross, because that too was needed to show us the strength and power of Your love.

Lord, as we struggle to hold the seeming impossible,

help us to hold onto the truth of Your resurrection and praise You.

Knowing resurrection is not the past

but resurrection and new creation, for each one of us, now, as part of Your love.

Wendy White

### Creator, we praise and adore you

Creator, we praise and adore You ...

and the words become empty because we have repeated so often what is far beyond our grasp.

When we look up you are there – in the vastness of unfolding space we glimpse your immensity.

When we look down you are there – in the beauty and complexity of detail, the molecular dance beyond our vision.

When we look around us you are there, in the play of dark and light, sound and silence, in water, air, land.

We cannot begin to encompass all you are, but, made in your image, we catch glimpses in one another of the complexity and richness of relationships, in love, in laughter, in friendship, in the myriad communities we are part of.

But, most of all, when in your desire for us to truly know, to share, your nature, which is love, you became man and walked with us, we see love worked out in humankind. Even to what we perceive as the end. And then you turned the shabby death of a criminal into new life when you showed us resurrection.

Turning, with the gift of your Spirit, an uncertain band of travellers and hangers-on into messengers of love for all people for all time.

Creator, how often have we repeated this story but not made it our own?

You turn awesomeness of love into something we could recognise, and gave us your Spirit so that we too could know we are part of Your love and share it with others. Yet too often we have been content with our decent little lives and chosen to ignore the promptings of Your Spirit which would show us a world made new.

Forgive us when we have put ourselves first at the expense of others, when

at work we have clung to our salary, our way and ignored the cries if the unemployed, the untrained, the rejected. Forgive us when our standard of living ignores the cries of the third world for fair wages, for health care, education, food, water.

Forgive us when out time is so hoarded to ourselves we have ignored the stranger, the sick, our neighbour, our family and rationed the giving of ourselves to others and to you.

Forgive us the fear of loving. Forgive us when we ignore your Spirit, the great

disturber, help us to trust that your love in infinite and grows by giving.

Wendy White

# Prayers at times of ordination and induction

Loving, strengthening God,

through your church you call people into positions of leadership

and to care for you people.

Such a task loving God

can be filled with joy one moment

and frustration the next. So today we pray for those

### Prayer for Elders and their pastoral care responsibilities

you have called to be Elders in this church thinking especially of the task of pastoral care of your people here.

Give to those you have called the strength and the wisdom to care for your people.

Lord, it is not always doing it themselves, but about being part of a team

sharing with the whole congregation making sure that this your church, cares for its people

physically, mentally and spiritually,

ensuring that it is not only the few who are cared for but all. Loving God, may those you have called,

find their faith and trust in you strengthened and their vision of your Kingdom enlarged.

*All* **Amen.**

David Coote

### Hymn: O Shepherd-God

O Shepherd-God, your people knew your presence on their way –

its sign, a fire to guard by night, a cloud to guide by day;

their goal, a distant promised land, a home where they’d belong,

a place of peace, of hopes fulfilled, their song, your freedom-song.

In later years your people learned to trust a shepherd-king; to value in their prophets, too, the wisdom shepherds bring;

and Jesus, the good shepherd, called on burdened souls to come; he sought the wayward, healed the sick, and led his followers home.

So many in our world today have nowhere they belong,

like sheep without a shepherd, lost, like singers with no song;

their minds and spirits sorely lack a hope that satisfies,

that wholesome Bread, the Word of Life, the peace true faith supplies.

Lord Christ, we’re called to feed your lambs, restore the sheep that stray, to learn the wisdom shepherds need for this, your work today;

your cross, the sign of selfless love, will light the way ahead;

we’ll serve with joy the God who raised our Shepherd from the dead.

*Tune: Ladywell* Metre 8686D Basil Bridge

# Times of celebration

## Anniversaries and landmarks

**Occasions for commission rededication and recommitment for service**

**A litany of prayer and thanksgiving**

### for an anniversary or celebration

On this anniversary day we thank you, Lord, for our church here in ...

We praise you for all the joy we have known in this fellowship, and we pray for all those who together

make up this community of your people, so that our church may be a real home for all who share its life.

We pray for those who bear responsibility for leadership: for

*our minister, elders and teachers, ...*

that they may be guided by your wisdom and sustained by your strength.

Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness

*All* **and we pray your blessing upon them.**

We pray for our young people:

for

*the Pilots, Junior Church, Youth Group ...*

that they may grow in faith

and renew the vision of the church.

Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness

*All* **and we pray your blessing upon them.**

We pray for those who work to enhance our worship: through singing and music,

through the reading of the scriptures, through the arrangement of flowers, *through ...*

that they may be channels of your grace

and find joy in your service.

Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness

*All* **and we pray your blessing upon them.**

We pray for those who meet for Bible study, and for prayer,

that through their devotion the whole fellowship may be enriched.

Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness

*All* **and we pray your blessing upon them.**

We pray for the groups that meet for friendship and recreation: for

*the women’s fellowship, the ...*

that in them people may find true fellowship

and discover Christ in their neighbour.

Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness

*All* **and we pray your blessing upon them.**

We pray for all who maintain the fabric of our church: for

*the maintenance team and the caretakers,.....*

and for all who hold office in the church,

that they may be ever aware that they are workers in your kingdom.

Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness

*All* **and we pray your blessing upon them.**

We pray for all who use our premises,

that they may find us welcoming and hospitable.

Lord, we give you thanks for their work and witness

*All* **and we pray your blessing upon them.**

Lord God, you have called us to share the joy and fullness of life that you give in your Son, Jesus Christ.

Grant that our church may be a blessing to all in this neighbourhood, so that more and more people may come to love and trust you, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

*All* **Amen.**

Wendy Baskett

Lord God

**Petition and intercession for a church**

### anniversary or celebration

we offer our prayers to you today

for our church here in ... ;

that your Holy Spirit may inspire our worship and lead us into deeper fellowship;

that we may continue to pass on our faith, hope and love to succeeding generations;

that we may serve the community in which we live with commitment, vision and enthusiasm;

that within our fellowship there may be found comfort for the sorrowful,

strength for the anxious, compassion for the sick, and concern and love for all.

We pray for the minister and elders of this church; for all who hold positions of responsibility

in worship, teaching, caring or administration; and for each member with their particular gifts; that together we may fulfil our calling

eagerly, conscientiously, and with imagination, strengthened by your Spirit

and upheld by one another’s prayers.

We pray for those for whom we are particularly concerned: those who are ill, at home or in hospital;

those who are housebound or unable to get to church; those who are bereaved or face losing someone they love; those who are worried or depressed;

and for those who no longer come to church, that they may be drawn back into our fellowship.

Lord, we thank you

for the lives of your faithful people in every age and especially for members of this community who have been witnesses to your love.

*We remember especially ...*

We, with them, are the living stones with which you build your church.

We pray that we, too, may remain faithful to our calling, as did your Son, Jesus Christ,

that by your grace our lives may be the examples on which those after us may build,

to your praise and glory.

*All* **Amen.** Wendy Baskett

### Loving gracious God

Loving gracious God, we come before you

as we mark another year in the life of this church. We give you thanks for your guidance,

your prodding and your leading over this past year.

We give you thanks for all

we have accomplished in your name, but we also know sometimes

we have missed the mark.

We thank you for all those with whom we have had contact over this last year,

Whether it was for joyous reasons or sad ones, or for whatever reason

they found themselves here in this building.

May we through that contact however brief

have shared something of your love for all people.

Today we thank you for the past year and all it has contained.

At this anniversary time we cannot stand only looking backwards,

we must also look forward.

So at this time we thank you

that you will walk with us into the coming year in the life of this church.

May we who this day celebrate and remember the past year in our constant walk with you, go forward in hope and joy,

into your future.

*All* **Amen.** David Coote

### A time for rededication

*Leader:* We come Lord God

to rededicate ourselves to your purposes.

*All:* **Gracious God**

**as a body of your people**

**and as individual members of that body.**

**We come now to rededicate ourselves to the task you have set before us your church.**

**We also at this time rededicate ourselves anew to living a life that**

**reflects your presence with us and your love for each one of us.**

**We rededicate our lives to your service and the service of others,**

**just as our Lord came to serve.**

*All:* **Loving God renew and strengthen in us the joy of knowing you,**

**and our faith and trust in your Son our Saviour.**

**Amen.**

David Coote

### The challenge of the call

This dramatic reading may be included in a service of commissioning

or rededication focusing on the challenge of call

#### Water from the Rock

*Narrator:* The whole Israelite community left the desert of Sin and made a camp at Rephidim, where they quarrelled with Moses, saying …

*People:* Give us water to drink,

for we are thirsty and ready to die.

*Narrator:* Then Moses cried to the Lord,

*Moses:* What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me!

*Narrator:* And the Lord answered Moses:

*God:* Take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go.

I will stand before you on the rock of Horeb.

Strike the rock and water will come out of it for the people to drink.

*Moses:* I struck the rock with such force, that the water simply gushed to the surface.

Like slitting an artery, the glistening fluid bled from its source and

spurted forth and everyone got drenched.

*Is.1:* For the first time in ages our thirst was assuaged and we were able to

drink again.

*Is 2:* Extravagant, gaping mouths snatched greedily at every passing droplet, freeing shrivelled tongues from the imprisonment of drought.

*Is 3:* Torn and blistered feet found soothing relief in the sudden miraculous appearance of rock pools.

*Narrator:* The people danced for joy

*Is 1:* We had been desperate for water for days. Not since Marah had we been blessed with such a prodigiously sweet outpouring.

*Is 2:* The desert, with eager determination had once more sought our rasping throats and wrung them dry, until scored and scorched,

they felt like sandpaper, leaving us choking on our own dry spittle.

*Is 3:* Oh yes. We had been desperate.

*Moses:* So desperate in fact that they turned on me.

*Is 1:* Why did you bring us here, to this forsaken hellhole?

*Is 2:* To watch our livestock die?

*Is 3:* To see our children perish?

*Moses:* Then they gathered rocks to stone me.

*Narrator:* Desperation can drive a people to the very edge. It may sharpen the instinct for survival but in the end, in extremity, it turns even those of mildest disposition into beasts who then turn on each other. It also shortens memories.

*God:* How quickly they have forgotten the cruel oppression of their Egyptian overlords, and the miraculous escape across the Sea of Reeds.

Now, suddenly, years of intolerable slavery take on an almost rosy glow, and they begin to reminisce about ‘the good old days’.

But I have heard it all a thousand times before. Moan, moan, moan. The same old scratchy record. Poor Moses you’ve certainly got your work cut out.

*Moses:* So Lord, tell me what to do?

I’m really struggling with this one. Give me Pharoah any day.

*Narrator:* Thirst and frustration finally gives way to rage. *Is 1:* We’ve had enough and he should know it too. *Is 2:* Our leader.

*Is 3:* The man who speaks in secret with our God, in private session, behind billowing clouds of smoke.

*Is 1:* Striking bargains.

*Is 2:* Negotiating terms.

*Is 3:* It’s all very well but we never get a say.

*Is 1:* Let’s face it, the man who performed so dramatically in public, on our behalf, in front of Pharoah,

just a little while ago …

*Is 2:* Waving that magic stick of his, that swallowed snakes and all, and struck the Nile and turned it red with blood …

*Is 3:* Well, he now looks pretty unconvincing.

*Is 1:* He’s not the fighter he was.

*Is 2:* It’s a different ball game out here in the desert and it’s not what I’d call liberation either. Egypt may have been servitude, yes, but at least we knew where we stood. We were fed and had a roof over our heads.

*Is 3:* To be honest, I don’t think he’s up to it any more. Past his sell-by date if you ask me but then he’s getting on.

*Narrator:* The honest broker becomes the convenient whipping boy, a scapegoat for a thousand smouldering resentments.

*God:* If I were you I’d hit someone or something.

*Moses:* I brought the staff down so heavily that I only missed their heads by

a whisker.

I suppose it was my way of re-asserting authority. (His or mine you may ask) or it could have been sheer exasperation.

Any way, whatever … it did the trick.

*God:* It was most impressive. The moment the rock was struck, a huge jet shot up over their heads and everyone got soaked. Quite amazing really. One for the record books I’d say.

*Moses:* Dear God, will we always be driven to the limits before we encounter

your saving hand?

*God:* Probably.

*Narrator:* So Moses did this in the sight of the people, and he called the place Massah and Meribah because the Israelites quarrelled and tested the Lord saying …

*People:* Is the Lord among us or not?

Great God, do you know what you are asking?

Helena McKinnon

### Strike the rock

This Rock of your is Holy ground to us – a precious stone, that moulded by the years has shaped our own lives too.

Strike the rock.

It has been both sure foundation and building block, for from it we have cut and carved the stone that built the great cathedrals, churches, chapels to your name.

Strike the rock.

Your people too have made their mark. Through centuries of service and self-sacrifice, history has born witness to that boundless love entered in and paid the price.

Strike the rock.

Together we weathered storms of fire, flood and persecution. But now age, erosion, indifference and internal wrangling eat at the very fabric of our faith – both walls and worshippers are wearing thin and there seems more life outside the church than in.

Strike the rock.

This rock has been our refuge and our strength, a very present help in time of need.

A home, a sanctuary, a house of prayer, where those who seek your solace come to plead.

And yet, you ask that we should take your hand and smite the Holy Ground on which we stand?

Strike the rock.

So Moses raised his staff and struck the rock.

And so he did.

And dare we do the same?

Release the living water from its core that all may drink,

be satisfied and want more?

Helena McKinnon

### At an induction or recommitment

I recommit myself to the Holy One, to the company of Christ’s friends

and the highway of the Spirit of Wisdom.

I concur with the gospel call to repentance, looking inside myself and round about

for those things which impede

God’s commonwealth of justice and peace.

I embrace life on the margins of church and society, a sentinel, fully sentient,

hunting for and gathering together

gifts to be used in the building of community.

Vine-grower God, we have forgotten it is your vineyard.

*All* **Lord, have mercy.**

Janet Lees

**Vineyard *Kyrie***

True Vine Christ, we have forgotten we are your co-workers.

*All* **Christ, have mercy.**

Fruitful Spirit, we have forgotten how to co-operate.

*All* **Lord, have mercy.**

Retrain us; prune us for a new harvest,

In which first and last are reversed.

*All* **In your mercy, hear our prayer.**

(This could be used with any of the *Kyries* at number 5 in *Rejoice and Sing*)

Janet Lees

### The Body of Christ

That’s us, the Church! How gross it is.

No longer lithe and supple Full of energy.

Now twisted and deformed, Lethargic in the extreme.

Once I dreamed

As all young men do

Of a vibrant renewed Church. United yet not uniform.

Exhibiting its rich diversity In all aspects of its life.

Can we break free,

From the straitjacket of tradition? Remove the ritual’s noose

That would choke

Any outreach of the spirit, Beyond the enmeshing structures.

Uniting together with one mission, Affirming all we hold in common, Spelling out the differences, Respecting each other in love, Acknowledging our ignorance About each other and our faith.

If we are unfit Our bodies suffer.

Likewise within the Church. Shed the weighty burden

Of outmoded structures and customs, Adopt a healthy spiritual diet.

As Christ’s human body Was broken and scarred So the Church bears signs Of conflict and dissent.

Yet healing is possible

Gained through this timeless victory.

Y Mochyn Daear

# To celebrate marriage

### Opening words for a Wedding ceremony

We have come together today to witness the marriage of ... N ... to ... N ... , to celebrate their happiness and to assure them of our love and support.

In marriage, we bless God who gave us our humanity, who created us,

in felicity and joy.

Blessed be God

who brings us together that our desires

may find ripe fulfilment;

Blessed be God who makes us one

that in our mutual love

we may cherish one another.

In marriage, we bless God

for his faithfulness

and celebrate God’s constancy

in free commitment to a shared life and mutual exchange of promises;

In marriage, we bless God

for his gift of grace in Jesus Christ, that in our frail consistency, relations are refashioned

by his self-giving love; In marriage,

we bless God

who gives us a future and a hope; [who gives us children,]

sets us in community and calls us in society to new beginnings.

Blessed be God for the precious gift of love.

Fleur Houston

Blessed are you, God our Maker; You create joy and gladness, pleasure and delight;

you make this couple companions in love.

### A blessing for a Wedding

Bestow your blessing on ... N ... and ... N ... , that they may know your presence with them in times of joy and in times of sadness.

May their home be filled

with laughter and tenderness.

May they be tender with one another’s dreams and remain faithful and true to one another

for the rest of their lives.

So may this marriage be a sign of blessing in the world around.

You are trusted forever with the intimacies of one another. You won’t hold grudges.

You will love the other even when unlikeable. You will see the small child within.

You will look for the divine potential inside.

How sacred, to be held in the night, by someone who thanks God for you, by someone you feel blessed to hold.

Your marriage is an opportunity, to grow in love and friendship,

to entrust all your faith and loyalties,

and with this understanding you shall flourish,

together, forever.

Fleur Houton

### At a Wedding

Donna Lee

Let the promises of today make you strong

Let the joy of today fill your lives

Let the hope of today give you courage

### A blessing at a Wedding

Let the memory of today live in your hearts.

Go hand in hand into the world, staying true to your dreams,

with love overflowing

And the blessing of Father, Son and Spirit is with you always.

Melanie Frew

Living God, Creator of Humankind,

### A blessing for a marriage

Bless ... N ... and ... N ... as they go on their way together in love and unity of purpose.

Loving Christ, Creator of Compassion,

Bless ... N ... and ... N ... as they develop their skills to that their love will bring wholeness to people.

Refreshing, Resilient Spirit, Creator of Vitality,

Bless and encourage them to engage in lively activity and to seek justice throughout their lives,

to turn disappointments into challenges, to transform darkness into light,

to root their ideals in the ground that they walk.

Go in Grace

with Confidence

and know Peace.

*All* **Amen.**

Geoffrey Duncan

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