

THIS IS YOUR SPACE TO PRAY

EDITION 2

This prayer resource is offered in the hope that it will sustain you whilst we are worshipping in different places. Just because we are not gathering together in one place as we would usually do on a Sunday morning, it doesn't mean we aren't gathering together as a community of faith and prayer.

We will be adding to this resource over the next few days as members of our community write their own prayers and reflections. Please keep in touch with us during this time.

If you need spiritual or pastoral support, please contact:

Rev Claire	0410 827 597
Rev Bob	0419 572 168
Megan	0417 558 376
Scott	0403 756 724

Don't forget worship services are available online each Sunday at <http://manninghamuc.org/online/>

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRAYER

Begin by centering yourself and your thoughts – you might like to light a candle or focus on an image or a flower, leaf, pinecone

Breathe the breathe prayer. If you say Yah-weh, the name of God, you cannot say it without breathing both in and out deeply. This will calm your breathing

You might like to write down the names of all those you know who need prayer

If you are praying in the morning, consider what is happening today. Is there anything you would like supported in prayer? Is there anything challenging today? Anything you know will bring you joy?

If you are praying in the evening, consider your day and all that happened. Where do you need guidance? What are you thankful for?

PRAYER OFFERED BY CONGREGATION MEMBERS

“ Just saying your name makes me breathe out and feel calm
You bring stillness and clarity in troubled times
You are our refuge and our strength
To you I bring my greatest fears and my deepest concerns
To you Lord I share my dearest hopes and my cherished dreams
To you I pray for guidance and hope
To you Lord I ask for love and forgiveness
God, there is so much beauty and goodness in your Creation
Help us to see the good and to spread this joy throughout our daily lives
Help us to love one another, look after our neighbour and to be kind to a stranger
In your name we pray God,
Amen.

Dale Steele

“ ISAIAH 41:10

do not fear, for I am with you,
do not be afraid, for I am your God;
I will strengthen you, I will help you,
I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

PRAYERS AVAILABLE FROM THE WIDER CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY SHARED WITH PERMISSION

PSALM 23

“ Generous Giver of all things: in your presence my inner spirit is fully satisfied.
I know I share in the abundance of life. I can lie down without fear.
I can sit beside the stillness of the river. I find my soul strengthened.
I know there are right paths. My God will guide me to them.
I know I must face the shadows of life and meet my death. I will do so with courage.
I know there is an unseen presence with me that gives me comfort.
Generous Giver, along with all the uncertainties and threats of life, you provide me with good gifts.
When I have enough, you pour into my life something more. Indeed: my cup overflows.
May I find and give goodness and kindness every day of my life.
Let my life be a constant expression of my desire to reflect your good presence wherever I am, wherever I go.
Wherever. Forever

Paraphrased by Dr Francis Macnab

TIME TO BE SLOW

“ This is the time to be slow,
lie low to the wall
until the bitter weather passes.

Try, as best you can, not to let
the wire brush of doubt
scrape from your heart
all sense of yourself
and your hesitant light.

If you remain generous,
time will come good;
and you will find your feet
again on fresh pastures of promise,
where the air will be kind
and blushed with beginning.

John O'Donohue
Excerpt from his book, "To Bless the Space
Between Us"

FEAST AND FAST FOR LENT

Let us fast from hugging and handshaking
and let us feast on bowing and waving.
Let us fast from hoarding food and toilet paper
and let us feast on the food in the back of our
pantries.
Let us fast from gathering physically
and let us feast on communing virtually,
let us fast from obsessing about the future
and let us feast on the everyday wonders of the
present.
Let us fast from casting blame for our troubles
and let us feast on showing compassion for the
most vulnerable.
Let us fast from being scared
and let us feast on getting prepared.
Let us fast from fear
and let us feast on the perfect Love that casts it
out.

Jim Burklo,
Senior Associate Dean, Office of Religious Life, University of South-
ern California

AND THEY ASSEMBLED

And Moses said *dayam*, enough.
enough: enough.
stop, withdraw,
bring/do/perform/gather, no more.

Let the silver glare of a silent sanctuary,
the gold blue of a plane-less sky
the garnet sheen of an empty concert hall
be our sacred offering.
meagre gifts of absence from wise and less wise-
hearted people.

Please God let our ceasing be enough.
let our hospital beds be enough.
Let our slow awakening to the interconnectedness
of every living being be enough
let a pillar of stillness rest at the entrance to every
home and prison.
Let this plague pass over us, enough of us.
Enough.
Shabbat Shalom dear chaverim (friends), far and
wide,

Tamara
(Rabbi Tamara Cohen, the Shalom Center,
Philadelphia, USA)

CERTAIN OF UNCERTAINTY

In life with such uncertainty
We long to feel at peace;
But with no proven guarantee
We feel our stress increase.
When in the maze we grope each day,
'Confusion' is our name;
When change can ruin life we say,
"Please, let things stay the same."

Sometimes our journey feeds our fear,
Can lead us to despair,
But in these times we need to hear
From Jesus and his care.
He trusted 'Love' would find a way
To ease his troubled soul;
He found that 'Love' would always say,
"My strength shall make you whole."

Disease, distress can take control
And test our firm resolve
To be a source that would console,
That helps our fears dissolve.
In human ways we play our part
When hearing Jesus' call;
He said "Fear not." He's in our heart
When helping those who fall.

We find our true humanity
When 'Love' directs our course.
Inspired by Jesus' melody
Of hope, with all its force;
He is our guide when life is grim;
He's with us in our strife;
We stride together. Trust in him
Who came to bring us life.

We cannot see what lies ahead;
It mostly is unknown;
But 'God in us' shares every dread;
We need not feel alone.
Together we can help 'Love' grow;
Together stand as one;
Our human love can make it so;
Our future can be won.

Tune: Forest Green
Lyrics: George Stuart in response to the Coronavirus Pandemic
Shared by permission.

LOCKDOWN



Yes there is fear.

Yes there is isolation.

Yes there is panic buying.

Yes there is sickness.

Yes there is even death.

But,

they say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise

you can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet,

the sky is no longer thick with fumes

but blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi

people are singing to each other

across the empty squares,

keeping their windows open

so that those who are alone

may hear the sounds of family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland

is offering free meals and delivery to the

housebound.

Today a young woman I know

is busy spreading fliers with her number

through the neighbourhood

so that the elders may have someone to call on.

Today churches, synagogues, mosques and temples

are preparing to welcome

and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary.

All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting.

All over the world people are looking at their neighbours in a new way.

All over the world people are waking up to a new reality

to how big we really are.

To how little control we really have.

To what really matters. To love.

So we pray and we remember that

Yes there is fear.

But there does not have to be hate.

Yes there is isolation.

But there does not have to be loneliness.

Yes there is panic buying.

But there does not have to be meanness.

Yes there is sickness.

But there does not have to be disease of the soul.

Yes there is even death.

But there can always be a rebirth of love.

Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.

Today, breathe.

Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic.

The birds are singing again

the sky is clearing,

and we are always encompassed by Love.

Open the windows of your soul

and though you may not be able

to touch across the empty square,

Sing.

By Richard Hendrick, OFM (Franciscan Friar)