



# THIS IS YOUR SPACE TO PRAY

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:

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## 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?

## SERENITY PRAYER BY REINHOLD NIEBUHR (SHORT VERSION)

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.

## PRAYERS OFFERED BY MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY:



Heavenly Father,  
Please Lord be with us in these days of uncertainty.  
Be with those who are anxious about their health, those who are anxious about essential supplies and those who depend on the support of others each day.  
Guide us Lord to be able to be a loving / caring Brother or Sister to anyone who is in need of assistance.  
In Jesus name we pray,  
Amen.

(Greg Holmes, family@10)



Gracious God,  
Be with us in these uncertain times.  
Be with those who are anxious about their health, those who are anxious about essential supplies, those who depend on the support of others each day.  
Guide us to where we can be the loving neighbour you call us to be.  
We pray in Jesus' name,  
Amen



### CRISIS OR OPPORTUNITY?

Pandemic, panic-buying,  
social distancing, self-isolation,  
new normal.  
Words, which a few weeks ago we didn't use.

The virus has not only given us new words  
but a respite for our beleaguered planet.

The virus has done what we humans couldn't.  
Curtailed our movements and closed industries  
that were polluting our world  
to a dangerous tipping-point.

While we take drastic action to 'flatten the curve',  
and our beleaguered planet takes a breather,  
this is our opportunity  
to do some soul-searching.

As we self-isolate, we can seek a higher wisdom  
to ask,  
'what is our purpose on this earth?'

As we consider this,  
Is this our collective opportunity  
to bring good out of this crisis?

(Rosemary Beavis)



Lord,  
your world is in the middle of a health crisis  
that spans the globe and is shared across the  
internet and media as never before.  
We know more about the horrors, medical  
battles, struggles and mounting deaths than  
was previously possible.  
We mourn the loss of people, jobs, businesses,  
income, and the daily freedoms we take for  
granted in Australia.  
We are saddened as people are selfish; as  
health workers, teachers, carers are stressed;  
as people are alone and isolated, as the  
homeless are threatened and family violence  
rises.  
May we stop, breathe, feel your calm presence  
and allow your strong hand to guide us forward  
in peace to what is possible together –  
to connect safely, to encourage the minds  
finding daily and longer-term solutions,  
to see this period as a challenge to be managed  
that can lead to a kinder,  
more collaborative world, less focussed on self  
and more on a compassionate community.  
Help us to be inventive, to be grateful, to smell  
the gum leaves, to hear the birds, to make up  
songs, and especially to love and care for each  
other.  
Amen.

(Wendy Austen)

## “ SERENITY IN COVID-19 2020

*I was out walking the open space of the freeway track today, and it struck me I could try 'tweaking' the Serenity Prayer for Mar20, I have always loved it. Then I came home and opened Facebook and there it was on the MUC page!!*

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change  
Guide me to choose common sense and reason over anger, fear, racism  
Open my ears to the daily wisdom of the global medical world  
May I receive this with calm, gratitude and a sense of community  
Help me to dismiss the media hype while staying very aware  
Thank you for your peace and grace to us all

God grant me the courage to change the things I can  
Guide me to listen to and comply with uncomfortable restrictions  
Open my mind and heart to the needs of others at this time  
May I be led to new ways of connecting and living, of being neighbour  
Help me to share peace, love, a wave, a smile, a meal, a call,  
Thank you for your peace and grace to us all

God grant me the wisdom to know the difference  
Guide me to advocate for the common good, not selfish needs  
Open my soul to the benefits of time to focus on family or being with self  
May I enjoy more simple things, the forgotten book, recipes, games, meditation  
Help me to be creative, caring, connecting, resilient, relying on your love  
Thank you for your grace and peace to us all.  
Amen.

Wendy Austen

## “ PRAYER FROM THE UCA VICTAS SYNOD

God is with us;  
God walks with us;  
God is one with us, in all the realities of our lives;  
in God we unexpectedly find hope into new life and new ways of being.  
My prayers are with you constantly.  
In the grace and hope we have in Christ, may we find our life together.

Moderator, Rev Denise Liersch

“ Loving God,  
God of mystery and wonder.  
In our human frailty  
we come before you now,  
silent, open and waiting.

In life's uncertainties  
we depend upon your grace  
for strength and guidance.  
We hold others in our hearts  
when distance holds us apart.

In others' suffering  
we seek the generous heart of kindness.  
Walk with us this Lenten Day  
into the unknown.  
In faith and hope and love, we pray.

(Rev Gail Pritchard)

“ Mighty God, who speaks a word of peace to calm our troubled sea;  
Caring God, who nudges us away from fear and toward faith;  
Ever-present God, who fills us with awe but also raises many questions without easy answers;  
Open our eyes to see you in our boat—today,  
Strengthen our hearts for the challenges that lie ahead,  
Open our ears this hour to hear the word you speak.  
This we pray, In Jesus' name. Amen



Lord God

There is much we want to pray for at this time of great anxiety. But deep down we know that we need to pray for ourselves.

Uppermost in our minds is our hope that we might be spared this virus. But more than that we pray that we might find the level headedness, the insights and the courage to make a difference to the lives of those we touch. May this be the moment in our lives when we can provide the strength and support to those around us that you would wish. Lord bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we can rise above ourselves and make a difference in our small part of the World.

In the months to come, may William Wordsworth's mantra be ours, "The best portion of a person's life; those little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and love."

Amen

(Don Bartlett)



## ROUGH TRANSLATIONS

*Here's a prayer reflection inspired by Romans 4:18, where Paul writes that, "Hoping against hope..."*

*Abraham continued to believe the promise of God.*

Hope nonetheless.

Hope despite.

Hope regardless.

Hope still.

Hope where we had ceased to hope.

Hope amid what threatens hope.

Hope with those who feed our hope.

Hope beyond what we had hoped.

Hope that draws us past our limits.

Hope that defies expectations.

Hope that questions what we have known.

Hope that makes a way where there is none.

Hope that takes us past our fear.

Hope that calls us into life.

Hope that holds us beyond death.

Hope that blesses those to come.



## INVITATION TO TRUST

*Here's a thoughtful litany inspired by Mark 4:35-41, the account of Jesus calming the storm. It was written by Connie R. Burkholder, from the Monitor Church of the Brethren in McPherson, Kansas.*

When dangers invade our sense of safety and we wonder if our Redeemer cares, we hear the invitation:

**Be at peace. Be calm.**

When we face job loss and financial downturns, and our sense of security is shaky, we hear the invitation:

**Be at peace. Be calm.**

When our congregations experience distress, conflict,

and loss of significant leadership, we hear the invitation:

**Be at peace. Be calm.**

When controversial issues and rigidity of spirit threaten to tear at the very fabric of the faith community,

we hear the invitation:

**Be at peace. Be calm.**

When our lives feel chaotic and desolate because of illness or sorrow,

we hear the invitation:

**Be at peace. Be calm.**

**Help us to know, O God, that the one who calmed the dangerous sea is present with us, cares for us, and can calm the stormy waters of our lives. Help us to trust more fully and more deeply in you. We pray in the name of Jesus, who invites us to be at peace. Amen.**

“ God of all seasons,  
God of all time,  
God of all words,  
we come.

We come as we are:  
out of time, out of sorts, out of reason,  
yet seeking time to be,  
reasons to be  
and most of all to be calm in Your presence,  
ready to listen, and know, and follow and obey.

Holy God, You gave us guidance.  
In all of history Your guidance has been there:  
muddled and devalued by words like command  
and order,  
when what You seek of us is desire, love,  
compassion, hope.

Forgive us when our lives are full of  
commandments and rules  
and bereft of compassion and love.

Forgive us when the word becomes more than  
the Word,  
when our determination to adhere to the word  
belies the Spirit of joy and hope.

Show us, gently, humbly, lightly, softly  
how to follow,  
how to be guided into obedience  
and teach us acceptance  
of Your love, Your forgiveness and Your  
compassion.  
Amen.

~ written by the Spill the Beans team (<http://spillbeans.org.uk/>)  
and posted on the Church of Scotland's Weekly Worship web-  
site. <http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/>

## “ CENTERING PRAYER

In this sacred space,  
in these moments of stillness,  
our thoughts and silence are like incense.

Holy God,  
Whose glory touches and transfigures the mind  
and the material,  
Whose intimate, gentle Spirit embraces our  
vulnerability  
and fills our empty spaces with hope,  
may we know the deep calm that only You can  
give.  
Through the mystery of absence and presence,  
come, fill us with Your emptiness, Your eternal  
silence.

~ excerpted from a longer prayer written by Rev. Scott McKenna,  
Minister of Edinburgh Mayfield Salisbury. Posted on the Church  
of Scotland's Weekly Worship website. <http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/>

## “ God of Creation

We are so troubled by what has befallen our  
World. We have emerged from those terrible  
fires to find a world petrified by a virus we  
neither understand nor see a way past.  
Yet God of love, we know deep down that you  
understand our turmoil and feel our pain. So  
in our anxiety we turn to you, for we know that  
you will see us through these troubled times.  
It may not be easy, it might not be the way we  
hope or expect, but we know that you will bring  
us through.

We pray for this fragile World, for our world's  
politicians that they will show the insight and  
leadership we need at this time of crisis. We  
pray for the doctors, nurses and pathologists  
who lead the fight and for their persistence,  
expertise and fearlessness and for those  
scientists searching for a vaccine.  
Mostly Lord God we pray for those afflicted and  
those yet to be infected by this terrible virus,  
particularly those near and dear to us. We pray  
also for those impacted most by the economic  
impact, the unemployed, the homeless, the  
hungry.

Lord God, be with us all in these troubled times  
that we fairly share the pain and anxiety of all  
who suffer.

Amen

(Don Bartlett)

## A PRAYER FOR COMPASSION, WISDOM AND STRENGTH

Loving and compassionate God,  
You call us to love our neighbours and to be bearers of your hope and grace in our world. Expand our hearts and vision to respond with compassion to those around us, who are struggling in this time of uncertainty, anxiety, grief and suffering.

Give wisdom and strength to our health workers, and government officials, as they provide leadership in bringing our country through this crisis.

We bring before you and into our hearts and minds:

- Those whose work and income are uncertain
- Those who are isolated
- Those who are fearful of an unknown future
- Those who live in situations of domestic violence, and whose isolation increases the control of their violent partners
- Those who are homeless, and all those who offer them support and care
- Those who are involved in aged care – our agency leaders, staff and residents and their loved ones
- Businesses whose futures are uncertain – their leaders and staff
- School staff and students
- Those with health conditions that put them at greater risk

Give wisdom and care-filled discernment to all our Church leaders – our Councils, and local congregations, as we seek to creatively live out our worship, witness and service in ways that offer Christ's life-giving love and presence. Strengthen and sustain us to be your people – shaped by your abundant grace, bearers of your generosity and overflowing love.

Through Christ our Light and Hope, we pray,  
Amen.

From UCA Assembly

## PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

All thanks to you, most holy Friend,  
**Giver of light and love and holy joy.**  
Before the beginning, when space and time did not exist,  
you nursed a brilliant hope for the children who were yet to be.

All thanks to you, most holy Friend,  
**Giver of light and love and holy joy.**  
In the young world, when you first raised up humankind,  
you planted in them a hope that would survive their wandering and falling.

All thanks to you, most holy Friend,  
**Giver of light and love and holy joy.**  
Through the turmoil of history,  
with the rise and fall of powerful nations,  
you called the Hebrew tribes to be your people of hope.

All thanks to you, most holy Friend,  
**Giver of light and love and holy joy.**  
With prophets and ethical law-makers,  
with their poets and devout scholars,  
you prepared the world for a hope-event to outstretch all others.

All thanks to you, most holy Friend,  
**Giver of light and love and holy joy.**  
At exactly the appropriate time,  
you sent John the Baptist to get your people ready for the incarnate Hope  
that would begin at Bethlehem and ripple around the world.

All thanks to you, most holy Friend,  
**Giver of light and love and holy joy.**  
And when we, you latter-day children,  
found our place in this world,  
we discovered all around us, like yeast in dough,  
the energy of this Hope veined through all things.

All thanks to you, most holy Friend,  
**Giver of light and love and holy joy.**  
For the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,

All thanks to you, most holy Friend,  
**Giver of light and love and holy joy. Amen!**



And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply.

Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows.

And the people began to think differently, and the people healed.

And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.

By Irene Vella (Italian journalist)

Translated  
by Kitty O'Meara