**St John’s, Hipswell & St Cuthbert’s, Colburn**

**Worship & prayer resources you may wish to use in this Covid-19 pandemic.**

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**Worship at home**

The Archbishops of the Church of England have taken the step of suspending public worship until further notice owing to the Coronavirus pandemic.

As they wrote in their letter to the church on March 17th:

*“We urge you sisters and brothers to become a different sort of church in these coming months: hopeful and rooted in the offering of prayer and praise and overflowing in service to the world.”*

We want to ensure that prayer and worship continues, even though churches have had to close, suspending all their services, meetings and activities.

Many of us already pray and study our Bibles at home, but it is hard to keep doing this without meeting with other Christians – especially without Sunday worship.

There are many ways in which we can continue to share in worship together, even if we are not in the same room.

This booklet contains a range of resources to help you pray and worship at home:

*Places to find worship and prayer while at home*

*Prayers written especially for this outbreak*

*Prayers for children* and *Helpful Bible passages*

You might find it helpful to set aside specific times of the day & week to pray & worship. Find a quiet place in your home & enable other members of your household to join you. You might want to light a candle to create a prayerful atmosphere and to use as a focus for your prayers.

The archbishops are suggesting that we all *light a candle*, place it in our windows at **7pm** on **Sunday evenings**, and pray together: for our communities, our nations and for the world.

We are starting to light a candle each evening at 7pm, as a reminder of God’s enduring love, and of the fact that darkness will never overcome the Light.

You could also try praying with others while still physically distant – for example, over the phone, text messaging, or using video calls.

**Places to find prayer and worship while at home**

There is a **daily service** on **Radio 4** every morning at 9.45am.

On Sunday, the service is at 8am & is now being broadcast not only on Radio 4, but every BBC local radio station. The first week, Sunday 22nd March, is led by *Archbishop Justin*.

**Premier Christian Radio** broadcasts Bible studies at intervals throughout the day.

At 12pm & 2.30pm: “*worship hours*”, including worship songs, prayer & Bible readings.

**BBC One** broadcasts *Songs of Praise* every Sunday at 1.15pm.

If you have access to the **internet**, there are many churches that are broadcasting their services, either on their website or using Facebook Live.

Some clergy are also sharing daily prayer in this way too.

**Holy Trinity Brompton** (the home of ***Alpha***) records their Sunday service each week and that recording is available until 9pm that Sunday evening.

<https://www.htb.org/sundayonline>

Online, there are countless resources that provide daily prayer & Bible readings.

**Church of England Daily Prayer**:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/daily-prayer>

[This is also available as an App on IoS and Google]

**Pray As You Go:** <https://pray-as-you-go.org/>

**24-7 Prayer:** <https://www.24-7prayer.com/>

If you would like to try some reflective Christian meditation, there is an App called **‘Soulspace’**, again available on IoS & Google

Of course, we are still working through Lent, and if you do not have the ***#LiveLent*** booklet, you can access this through the ***#LiveLent*** App from the CofE.

Don’t forget the **Leeds Diocese Learning Platform** (*learning.leeds.anglican.org*) for a wealth of resources, online groups, chat rooms, etc..**Prayers about the outbreak**

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord Jesus Christ, you taught us to love our neighbour, and to care for those in need as if we were caring for you. In this time of anxiety, give us strength to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick, and to assure the isolated of our love, and your love,

for your name’s sake. **Amen.**

God of compassion, be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation; in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light; through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**For those who are ill**

Merciful God, we entrust to your tender care those who are ill or in pain,
knowing that whenever danger threatens your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe. Comfort and heal them, and restore them to health and strength; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**.

**For hospital staff and medical researchers**

Gracious God, give skill, sympathy and resilience to all who are caring for the sick,
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.

Strengthen them with your Spirit, that through their work many will be restored to health; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**From one who is ill or isolated**

O God, help me to trust you, help me to know that you are with me, help me to believe that nothing can separate me from your love revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**For students and pupils**

Loving God, we pray for all those students

grieving goodbyes, celebrations and the opportunity to prove themselves.

Hold them, comfort them, assure them that their work was not in vain.

Give them direction; lead them, gently, into whatever the future may hold. **Amen**

**For the Christian community**

We are not people of fear: we are people of courage.
We are not people who protect our own safety:

we are people who protect our neighbours’ safety.

We are not people of greed: we are people of generosity.
We are your people God, giving and loving, wherever we are, whatever it costs
For as long as it takes wherever you call us.

*[Barbara Glasson, President of the Methodist Conference]*

**Prayers of Intercession**

Let us pray to God, who alone makes us dwell in safety:

For all who are affected by coronavirus, through illness or isolation or anxiety,
that they may find relief and recovery:
Lord, hear us, **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For those who are guiding our nation at this time, and shaping national policies,
that they may make wise decisions:
Lord, hear us, **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For doctors, nurses and medical researchers, that through their skill and insights
many will be restored to health:
Lord, hear us, **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For the vulnerable and the fearful, for the gravely ill and the dying,
that they may know your comfort and peace:
Lord, hear us, **Lord, graciously hear us.**

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,

to the mercy and protection of God.
Merciful Father, accept these prayers…

Let us pray to the Lord, who is our refuge and stronghold.

For the health and well-being of our nation,

that all who are fearful and anxious
may be at peace and free from worry:
Lord, hear us, **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For the isolated and housebound, that we may be alert to their needs,
and care for them in their vulnerability:
Lord, hear us, **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For our homes and families, our schools and young people,
and all in any kind of need or distress:
Lord, hear us, **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For a blessing on our local community,
that our neighbourhoods may be places of trust and friendship,
where all are known and cared for:
Lord, hear us, **Lord, graciously hear us.**

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,

to the mercy and protection of God.
Merciful Father, accept these prayers…

**Prayers with Children**

**A prayer for when a friend is ill**

Dear God, (*name of friend*) is ill.

We are not allowed to go to school or let them come over to play.

I’m sad because I miss them.
They must be feeling miserable and lonely as well. Please be close to them.
Please be with the people who are looking after them.
Please help them to get better and to know that you love them. **Amen.**

**A prayer for the world**

God of love and hope, you made the world and care for all creation,
but the world feels strange right now.
The news is full of stories about Coronavirus.

Some people are worried that they might get ill.
Others are anxious for their family and friends.

Be with them and help them to find peace.
We pray for the doctors and nurses and scientists, and all who are working to discover the right medicines to help those who are ill.
Thank you that even in these anxious times, you are with us.
Help us to put our trust in you and keep us safe. **Amen.**

**A prayer at bedtime**

Before the ending of the day, Creator of the world, we pray
That you, with steadfast love, would keep Your watch around us while we sleep.

Tonight we pray especially for *(names family or friends who are affected by Coronavirus)* and the people of (*country or place which is affected by Coronavirus)*.
Please give skill and wisdom to all who are caring for them. **Amen.**

**A prayer remembering God is with us**

Lord God, you are always with me. You are with me in the day and in the night.
You are with me when I’m happy and when I’m sad.
You are with me when I’m healthy and when I am ill.
You are with me when I am peaceful and when I am worried.
Today I am feeling*(name how you are feeling)*

because *(reasons you are feeling this way).*
Help me to remember that you love me & are with me in everything today. **Amen.**

**Bible Passages**

**(Extracts are given where readings are longer.)**

**Psalm 23**

*“Even though I walk through the darkest valley,*

*I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”*

(Verse 4)

**Psalm 91**

*“Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’”*

(Verses 1-2)

**Psalm 139**

*“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.”*

(Verse 23)

**Isaiah 41:10**

*“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*

**Isaiah 43: 1b & 2**

*“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.*

*When you pass through the waters , I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;*

*when you walk through fire, you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.”*

**John 14**

*“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

(Verse 27)

**Luke 12:22-34**

*“Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?*

*Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?”*

(Verses 25-26)

**Philippians 4:4-9**

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

(Verses 6-7)

**Prayer for Worldwide Mission**

Please join us in the following prayer, written by *Paul Thaxter*, Director of International Mission at CMS:

Father God, help us remember in this coronavirus pandemic that you have not only created the world but are still upholding and sustaining your universe by your mighty Word. Help us to put our trust in you and bring any fear we have to you, knowing that you are in control of all of our lives. Keep us all, Lord, in your care –

particularly comfort those who may feel vulnerable or anxious at this time. Thank you for sending your son into the world to bring us into a meaningful relationship with you – bringing forgiveness, peace and hope. Enable us by the power of your Holy Spirit to live out your good news in all the world. Help us to remember all those involved in our work.

We pray for all our churches, organisations and other partners around the world working in over 40 different countries, who are already faced with many challenging circumstances but also now have to cope with the effects of the coronavirus. Give them wisdom, patience and grace for all those they are seeking to serve and may they continue to share the love of Christ with all.

Help us to draw strength from Colossians 1:16-17: “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."

Lord, one day this heaven and earth will be renewed, but until then, thank you for being with us and use us, Lord, to bring your love into the world.

**Pope Francis shared these words a few days ago: Words of hope…**

“Tonight before falling asleep think about when we will return to the street.

When we hug again,

when all the shopping together will seem like a party.

Let’s think about when the coffees will return to the bar,

the small talk, the photos close to each other.

We think about when it will be all a memory

but normalcy will seem an unexpected and beautiful gift.

We will love everything that has so far seemed futile to us.

Every second will be precious.

Swims at the sea, the sun until late, sunsets, toasts, laughter.

We will go back to laughing together.

Strength and courage. See you soon! "

**Finally…**

May the peace of God give you renewed hope and wisdom,

May you find the strength you already carry within you to be enough,

May the grace of God be sufficient,

May you find a deep breath when the air around you is thin,

May you grow in compassion in these days,

May you love well, not in spite of these anxious times,

But because of them. **Amen.**

 *(Sarah Bessey)*

Keep us, good Lord,under the shadow of your mercyin this time of uncertainty and distress.Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,and lift up all who are brought low;that we may rejoice in your comfortknowing that nothing can separate us from your lovein Christ Jesus our Lord.**Amen.**

(A prayer offered to the national Church)

**May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you,**

**wherever he may send you.**

**May he guide you through the wilderness**

**and protect you through the storm.**

**May he bring you home rejoicing at the wonders he has shown you.**

**May he bring you home rejoicing**

**once again into our doors.**

**Amen**

*(from Celtic Daily Prayer, and used at the end of our All-age Worship services)*

Remember that much that we need to read about the coronavirus outbreak is available on the **Leeds Diocesan Website**, which is regularly updated, and has links to the CofE website: <https://www.leeds.anglican.org/covid-19>