

## Prayer of Gathering

From Psalm 52:8 Like a green olive tree in the House of God "Prayer Handbook 2013" p.75

1. With roots in the soil  
Of past generations  
We worship you,  
Living, loving God.

2. Through layers of soil  
At times fertile,  
At other times depleted,  
We reach for experience and  
Sustenance from saints of old.

3. And in our own time, we offer to you, fresh shoots and new ideas  
Borne upon branches shaped and gnarled by life,  
And pray our worship shall be to you fruitful, sweet and rich. **Amen**

## Prayer of Praise *Adapted from Prayerbook 1998 7 June*

Creator God,  
We see your reflection mirrored in the purple haze of distant mountains.  
Christ, Son of God,  
We see your reflection mirrored in the red blood throbbing through our bodies.  
Holy Spirit,  
We see your reflection mirrored in the flicker of candle flame.  
Holy Trinity,  
We see your reflection mirrored in the sweep of a rainbow's arc whose beginning  
and end we cannot define and we wonder at your mystery. **Amen**

## Prayer of Confession *Adapted from Prayerbook 1998 10 April*

Lord, we confess that most of the time we forget that Good Friday was not an end  
but a beginning; the day that Jesus showed his love for us and gave us hope.  
When nothing seems to be going right and we feel powerless and despairing, the  
image of the cross reminds us of your love. **Amen**

## Prayer of Thanksgiving *Adapted from Roots July 19 2020*

Lord, we come to your presence with humility,  
So aware of our imperfections.  
We want everything to be perfect & we know we are far from achieving that.  
Therefore, we rejoice that you are a patient teacher,  
Who is willing to keep trying to transform our lives  
And gives us chances to learn, time and again,  
How to create a right environment,  
So that we may be your presence in this world  
And be fruitful in all we do.  
Thank you. **Amen**

## Personal Reflection on Dementia by Rev'd Margaret Goodall *Adapted from Prayerbook 1998 4 October* *For the many in our society whose mental health has been weakened by the isolation of "Lockdown"*

"To the onlooker it may seem as if the personality has been flattened. Smiles may be wiped  
away. Tears dried up. Speech may become all but incomprehensible. Limbs may become  
twisted. Yet here is a person who was once able to live and be at home in contemporary  
society and still can be to some extent, if we give them time and loving attention so we can  
look beneath the dementia.

**Spirituality** is being in touch with the core of our being, that which makes us ourselves and  
also with the otherness or strangeness that we sometimes recognise within. When we feel  
the pressures of life, we long for a time to stop and be still, so that we can be in touch with  
the centre of our being. However, we often run from it, as it emphasises our aloneness in the  
universe. For most of our lives we aim to be independent, making our own decisions, going  
our own way, but there is also a part of us that needs to depend on someone in order to find  
comfort. It is this need to be overwhelmingly dependent that makes dementia so frightening  
for most of us.

**From** the outside, it appears that those with dementia are totally dependent so unable to give  
anything to a relationship. Despite this, those who are able to give time to the sufferer, may  
find that they have received so much more than they have given. If spirituality is about  
knowing who we are, then as we find time to affirm the person, we are enabling them to  
know themselves. By believing that they are worth the time and the effort, we enable them  
to be in touch with themselves at times....As a Christian I would say that we awaken the  
image of God which is in every person.

**Spirituality** is about our relationship with the divine. For most people, the Divine is *out there*,  
but for the dementia sufferer it is most certainly *within them* as their world view becomes  
narrowed....so the real gift we can give is to help them to find their image of God within."

## Prayers of Intercession

### 1. *For mental resilience for world leaders as society struggles to control the spread of Covid 19 across the world and its many impacts on society & economies*

We pray for your presence in every country on the globe

And in particular:

For the national political leaders who are trying to determine how and  
where to put their efforts to halt the spread of Covid 19, as it impacts on societies  
already suffering from war, famine and poverty, plus demanding new lockdowns for  
some places, then working out the complexity of easing lockdown for others;  
For local political leaders working to keep their communities safe;  
For those working in emergency services, hospitals and care homes where the impact  
of the virus is most immediate;  
For scientists and researchers in many countries developing treatments and potential  
vaccines for Covid-19;  
For employers, managers, staff and volunteers charged with making offices, shops,  
schools and colleges, transport services and public venues safe places to be in. **Amen**

**2. For those in pain and grieving** *Adapted from URC streamed service 31 May 2020*

Holy Spirit, Light in our darkness, bless those known to us who are ill in mind, body or spirit, whom we name now in the silence of our hearts.....

Bring comfort to those who are grieving, especially for those who have been separated from the dying and those unable to attend their funerals.....

Bless with love those who have died and now rest in your presence. **Amen**

**3. For justice and equality in world society**

Forgive us for the economic divisions we have been part of creating in society

As a result of our desire for more things to make our lives more comfortable.....

The consequences of inequality in the food, housing & education available are evident with many people in low paid jobs with poor health & low life expectancy.

Forgive us for the deliberate or unwitting racism we may be part of.

Forgive us for any gender bias.

Forgive us for bias against other religions & suppression of freedom to worship.

Forgive us for the repression of people's freedom to voice opinions peacefully.

There is so much for different people in societies throughout the world to be angry about & try to change.

Our world societies are so closely linked that we need to have an awareness of each other's circumstance & how a decision in one place impacts in another place.

We pray for justice & fairness in all societies. **Amen**

**4. For those in despair over loss of work & income** *Adapted from Prayerbook 2020 p94*

Lord, we are facing a tsunami of unemployed people,

Desperate for what the future holds for them and their families.

It is difficult for us to understand why things happen in the ways they do;

Why people make and carry out plans to hurts others

Why we find ourselves facing danger when we thought all would be well;

Why challenges seem to follow us wherever we go.

Help us to live confidently and love generously,

And trust that wherever life may lead

Your loving presence goes with us forever.

Open our eyes to those in need so that

If we have anything to share, we can truly love our neighbours. **Amen**

**Reflection time – on what we have just prayed about**

**Closing Prayer** *There's a Wideness In God's Mercy (F W Faber 1814-63)*

For the love of God is broader than the measures of our mind;

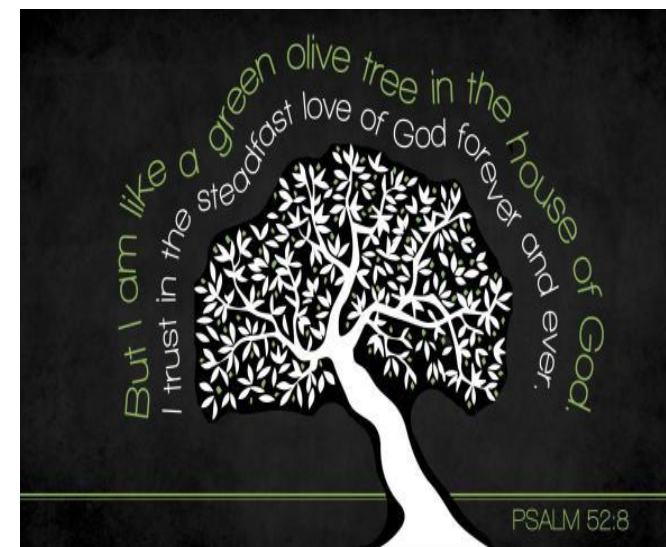
And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.

But we make His love too narrow by false limits of our own;

And we magnify His strictness with a zeal He will not own. **Amen**

# Prayer Fellowship

## At home



**You are invited to use these prayers  
to help you in your own worship  
for the work of our Church  
and the life of our community**

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**St John's URC Northwood**