

Welcome

Join in saying the underlined words in **bold type** together.

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 Approach *Adapted from Roots 27 November 2016*

We walk in your light, Lord, so that we may walk on your paths.
As we come to learn your ways.

While we await the coming of Christmas in this Advent season,

Teach us patience and grant us understanding.

May we be instruments of peace,

Part of the beating of swords into ploughshares. Amen.

Prayer of Praise & Thanksgiving *Adapted from Prayerbook 2016 p.113 & Roots 27 November 2016*

Ever Loving Lord, you stand hopefully at the door, waiting for us to let you in.

You break through the back doors to our hearts

And through the windows to our minds

Filling our rooms with the gift of peace.

We are the unexpected hosts who warmly welcome you,

To make our homes your own.

We are thankful for the hope that you hold out to a weary world

As once again we are reminded of the birth of the Christ-Child.

We are thankful for the man that he became,

And grateful to tread in the imprint of his footsteps. Amen.

Prayer of Confession *Adapted from Roots 11 December 2016*

Lord, we confess our disillusion, the world is still in such a mess:

Has anything changed since your Son was born?

Teenage girls still give birth in poverty.

Children are massacred even today.

Refugee families are more numerous than before.

We confess our helplessness in the face of all this.

What can people like us, with little power or prestige, do?

What good does our religion do? What use is faith?

Lord, we long to hear words of comfort and hope,

And from these, to be inspired to action.

Hear us, forgive us, and come to our aid, we pray;

Enable us to be the builders of your kingdom. Amen.

Pause for silence & reflection as we prepare ourselves for prayer.

Personal Prayer *Adapted from Prayer Handbook 2016 p.118*

Eternal God, our joy is in you.

Draw near – flood our senses with signs of you–

Your touch, your taste, your sight, your sound;

Let every breath draw us deeper into your presence,

Emmanuel, God with us.

Prayers of Intercession

1. In the Political Wilderness *Adapted from Prayer Handbook 2013 p.120*

Lord, we pray:

For all seeking answers

That they may find you,

For all those confused by the clamour of many voices

That they may hear your word,

For sharp-minded and fearless speakers

That they may use their gift for those unheard or afraid,

For those ignored because they speak in different ways

That they may choose their words carefully whilst others retune their ears to hear,

For those yearning for radical change but who are too tied to the present

That they may have the courage to take action,

For all who turn to you and look for new beginnings

That together we all may bear the fruit of your kingdom. Amen.

2. In the Personal Wilderness *Adapted from Roots 4 December 2016*

Lord, we pray for those lost in the turmoil of grief,

For those battling exhausting attacks of serious illness,

For those wrestling with mental illness.

We pray for the wilderness inside each one of us–

That place of honest confrontation that we are afraid to visit;

And we pray that each person who seeks will find you there–

To comfort, heal and bless them in the middle of confusion. Amen.

3. Christmas *Adapted from Called to Praise #63*

From the refugee camp to the asylum centre,
From the drab inner cities and wastelands of the world,
From the villages and towns of poverty,
From homes where fear lurks in the corner
Comes a cry, the cry of a child.
Christ is born though still unrecognised.

Unstop our ears, open our eyes, release our compassion,
To hear the Christ who will always come in the form of those who cry in need.
Amen.

4. Our Churches *Adapted from Prayer Handbook 2014 p.67*

We pray for congregations, large and small:
For elders and ministers, who serve with dedication,
For members who exercise their ministries quietly and competently,
For all those who serve the Church.

God who stands at the doorway and welcomes us with open arms,
Guide us, your church, to do the same in our community
To show that your love is reflected and offered to all. Amen.

5. We think about those we know suffering from ill-health,
Especially those for whom there appears to be little or no improvement.
We remember those bereaved recently or still mourning past losses.
Bless them all with courage, healing and love.
If possible help us to make a practical gesture of support. **Amen.**

Reflection time – on what we have just prayed about AND
Time for those present to add their prayers, if they wish to,
for the life of St John's & St Martin's, our communities & the World
either in open prayer
or by using stones symbolically & placing them at the foot of the Cross.

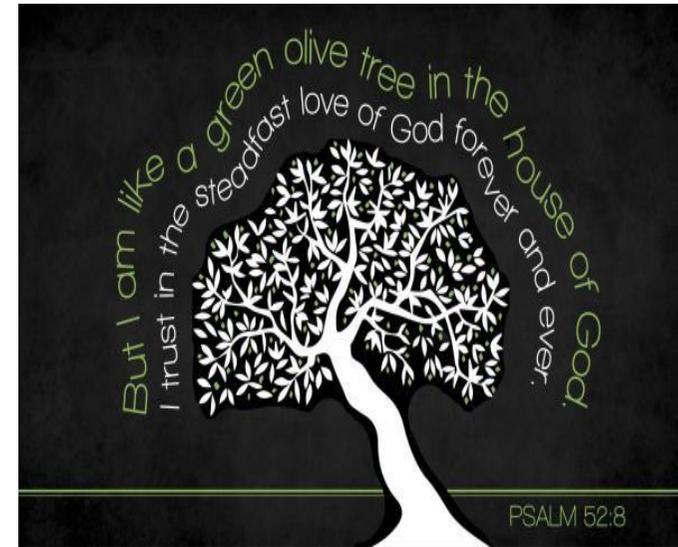
Closing Prayer *Adapted from Roots 25 December 2016*

In the beginning was the Word. **All things came into being through him.**
What has come into being is life. **The life was the light of all people.**

The light shines in the darkness. **The darkness does not overcome it.**
Send us out in the power of the Spirit
As messengers of peace & heralds of good news. Amen.

Prayer Fellowship

At home or in Church



To pray for the work of our Church and the life of our community

Wednesday: 7th 11.15a.m. & 21st 8p.m. December 2016

Number 38

St John's URC Northwood & St Martins URC South Oxhey