

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 & Approach *Adapted from Prayer Handbook 2021 p.82*

We turn to you, our God, and sing your praises.
We lift our heads, look up and seek your gaze.
We clear our minds of current circumstances
And leave behind the muddle of our days.

We choose to come to Jesus, seeking healing.
We wonder if you will accept us too.
Our hearts leap at your affirmation,
Our bodies, minds and souls are all made new.

We choose to trust the Spirit for Life's leading,
To keep our eyes fixed on the things of God;
Receive the gift of life in all its fullness;
And follow in the steps the saints have trod. **Amen**

Prayer of Confession *Adapted from Called to Praise #5178*

Father, forgive us: for we so readily divide your one human family into neat groups,
Tidily sorted with convenient labels.

We forget that you are father-like to us all,
Mother-like in your unconditional love.

Forgive us: the North protects itself from the poverty of the South,
Black and white approach each other with suspicious fear,
Nation is set against nation, faith against faith.

Forgive us: we use religion as a weapon, culture as a shield,
And build dividing walls that deny the rich variety of human experiences.

In Christ's Name we affirm: we are all members of one family,
All women are our sisters, all men are our brothers,
We are kinsfolk to every race,
And we will work and pray and serve, towards the unity you have promised. **Amen**

Prayer of Thanksgiving *Adapted from Roots 21 & 28 February 2021*

We thank you faithful Lord, that you never give up on us,
Even when we forget about you in the turmoil of our daily lives.
We thank you for our relationships with family, friends, work colleagues & acquaintances
And for your guidance which teaches and equips us to traverse today's world
Reflecting your steadfast Love which glows within us. **Amen.**

Personal Food for Thought *Adapted from URC Racial Justice Service 14 February 2021*

Lord, turn me inside out so people can see the YOU in me
With the same shape heart, the same colour of blood and one world in our flesh
That makes us just like YOU
Revealing the image of God in our coats of many colours.

Lord, may I love from the inside what I see on the outside
So we may love what we see and be loved for who we are:
Brothers and sisters, united from inside out
To turn the world upside down!

Prayers of Intercession

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

With today's technology we have access to news from afar almost immediately.
Help us not to become blasé about the situations we hear and see
But to pray and care faithfully for all concerned.

We pray for your presence in every country on the globe
And in particular for our leaders throughout the world.

We pray especially for our government to take decisions for the good of ALL society. **Amen**

2. *For the NHS*

Cast your blessing over all those working to the limits of their energy to care for the sick
including those who are in intensive care with Covid 19.

Give wisdom to hospital managers and consultants organising staff rotas and scheduling
regular surgery and treatment alongside the present crisis.

Enable paramedics and pharmacists to work safely alongside their hospital colleagues.

Be with GPs who are working in their local communities to maintain their services.

We pray for those administering the new vaccines. **Amen**

3. *For the physical and mental well-being of children and students*

Lead us to work for the welfare and protection of all young people.

May we respect their dignity so that they flourish in life.

We pray for teachers and students amid uncertain term times & new ways of learning.

And for all families juggling stressful situations. **Amen**

4. For vaccine researchers, makers & distributors

We are so grateful for what has been achieved so far but we pray for the scientists challenged by new variants of the Covid-19 virus, those running the pharmaceutical factories making the drugs and those charged with fair distribution across the globe. **Amen**

5. For the bereaved *Adapted from Prayerbook 2021 p.143*

"The news was painful -yet wondrous.

You heard our prayer for healing.

Your response wasn't exactly what we expected. You surprised us.

It reminded us that you work in mysterious ways- ways we often don't understand.

Your healing was to call them home – to end the pain and suffering-for them and for us.

No more worrying whether it is to be today or tomorrow.

No more wondering why they must suffer so.

Yes, we hurt. We grieve. We cry and laugh as we remember days gone by.

Yet when all is said and done and we sit in the stillness of a moment-

We say a gentle "Thank you" for calling our loved one home." **Amen**

6. For those without an income

Help us to look out for those among our family, friends and neighbours

Who are at the end of their tether due to loss of jobs and lack of money.

And to be conscious of people's physical needs.

We remember those charities trying to support them.

And the need for kindness. **Amen**

7. For those fighting injustice

We pray for those standing up for citizens' rights for justice throughout the world and in particular Palestine, Iran, Russia and China.

Give those detained, your comfort in their bleakest moments. **Amen**

8. For those trying to learn new ways of trading abroad

We pray for those seeking clarity and stability on how to proceed,

For businesses, farmers and fishermen adapting to new trade agreements,

For supermarkets trying to maintain the flow of adequate food supplies. **Amen**

9. For those who are unwell

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 & with whom we must keep in touch...*PAUSE*

Make them aware of your presence as the Comforter...always with them. **Amen**

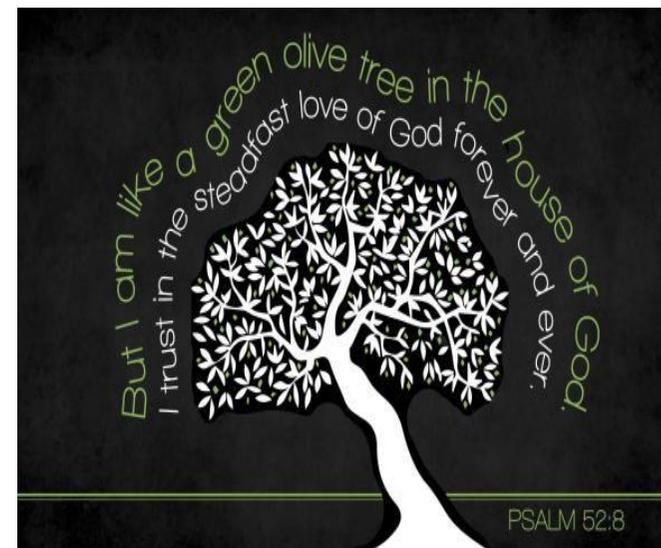
Reflection time & time for quiet or open prayers

Closing Prayer

Lord, encourage us to be a blessing to others through our kind actions and attitudes in our lives. **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