

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 & Thanksgiving #37 "Sunflowers & thistles" Rev John Campbell

"O God, who longs to make us whole in body, spirit, mind,
we **praise** you for the hopes and dreams you share with humankind:
for those in pow'r – whom you inspired to share the nation's wealth,
that rich and poor alike might know, security and health.

We give you **thanks** for those who strive that knowledge might increase;
for all in office, ward or home, whose efforts never cease;
for those who give of wealth or self, who care or who campaign,
and all who bravely watch and wait to share your people's pain;
for those in countless walks of life who daily work and strive
to keep each other safe and well, and help the weak to thrive;
for those who go beyond the call in myriad other ways,
and keep alive the light of hope in dark and cheerless days. **"Amen**

Prayer of Confession *Adapted from Roots 6 June 2021 p.27*

God, forgive us when our words are harsh and our actions are unkind.
Forgive us when we judge others rather than join with them in community.
Forgive us when we become set in comfortable ways and are not open to change.
We are grateful that you give us second chances to try to be more like you expect.
Alleluia! Amen

Personal Food for Thought *Rev'd Martha McInnes, Minister, Cardiff & Penarth Pastorate Daily Devotions URC website 3 July 2021*

Jesus healed a crippled woman on the Sabbath. The Pharisees reminded him that it is unlawful to heal on the Sabbath. And his response was 'What better way to use a Sabbath than to heal a daughter of Abraham—a child of God?'
Perhaps this scripture is not only about healing, but about the role of religion in our world. Is the church's role to create laws by which people should live or is it for healing? It seems pretty clear that Jesus wants the Pharisees, and us, to see that religion/church is for healing. We, as Jesus' followers and members of his church, need to work to bring healing to the world.

As pandemic restrictions ease, we may be called to listen to the pain of those around us. As listeners, we bring healing.

We may be called to speak against injustice, thus bringing healing.

We may be called to work to reduce climate change, thus bringing healing.

We may be called to serve food, thus bringing healing.

We may be called to move outside church buildings to work in ways that bring healing, in different ways than our previous patterns of church.

There are many people doubled over in agony with the weight of climate change, racism, poverty, anxiety, and grief. How can we, the body of Christ, offer healing in God's name?

Living God, help us see the weight of the world carried by our friends and neighbours. Give us the vision and courage to be instruments of your healing through your church and in new ways. **Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

1. For healing *By Ann Barton, local leader at Whittlesford URC in the Eastern Synod*

Healing Father, giver of wholeness,
as we move once again out of a life of restriction and into the glory of your world,
we give thanks for places and people of healing,
for individuals in communities, churches, hospitals, and care homes.

We pray for your healing to be present
in the lives of all who hurt and grieve and in the midst of a broken world.
As we move towards being able to worship you again in our communities,
Let us not forget those churches that remain closed and the congregations
that may never worship together again.

We ask that we too will receive the touch of your presence in our lives
so that we can pass it to others who have not yet seen your glory and majesty.
Help us to open ourselves to You as our lives gradually open up,
and give us hope enough to trust in Your resurrection promises. **Amen**

2. For those vulnerable to disease and pain

Lord, as Covid cases surge yet again across the world, we pray that as lockdown restrictions ease in the UK, folk temper their behaviour in public and are mindful of those who have poor immune systems and are vulnerable to catching the disease despite vaccinations, so still need to shield and are going to feel cut-off from life outside home again.

Cast your blessing over all those working in caring roles in the medical world, care homes and at home.

Give patience to folk needing surgery but caught up in the massive backlog of cases.

Strengthen their stamina to bear pain and to keep going.

Amen

3. For the struggles of our world societies

Lord, we pray for those standing up for citizens' rights and for justice throughout the world. We pray for our world and those nations where violence and tyranny cause so much suffering... *Pause to name the nations in our hearts*

We pray for people driven out of their homes and their homelands, who struggle to survive in Refugee camps... *Pause to name the places in our hearts*

We pray for those who do not have enough food to sustain them or water to quench their thirst... *Pause to name the places in our hearts*

In the midst of this global pandemic, we pray for all who care and clean and comfort, for Those who are able to work and those still in isolation. **Amen**

4. Let us pray for those who make decisions, every day across the world

Lord, You must often despair at the decisions of local & International Politicians who are influenced by competing points of view, and whose actions can often be at odds with what is best for society as a whole, in the long-term.

We pray for the governments of the world and those who manage our economies, that they may align their priorities to your kingdom.

We pray for those charged with deciding on how to organise the fair distribution of Covid 19 vaccines from its suppliers across the world.

We pray particularly for the mental and physical health of Olympic Athletes and officials, competing in strangely quiet stadiums in Japan.

"We are sailing in the darkness and our captains have no charts, and so much is uncertain it sits heavy on our hearts; though our boats feel very flimsy and we are forced to sail apart, our God sails with us all." (quoted from #3 "Sunflowers & thistles" Rev John Campbell) **Amen**

5. 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 #37 "Sunflowers & thistles" Rev John Campbell

"O give us grace to trust your love when hope remains concealed,
To watch and pray beside the ones who are not swiftly healed.
And grant us faith when death itself provides its own release,
To trust in your undying love to give them perfect peace.

Give us, O God, your loving zeal to comfort, heal and save,
To care for one another from the cradle to the grave.
Then north to south, and east to west, let love and hope extend,
Until the universe is whole and justice knows no end." **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**

July 2021

Number 95

St John's URC Northwood