

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 Prayer Handbook 2018 p.25*

God, wiser than we can comprehend, more loving than our hearts can hold,
In our stumbling walk towards you, we try, we fail, we forget.
We ask and receive forgiveness,
We try again and we fail.
May your warm compassion and abundant grace continue to drench us in love. **Amen**

Prayer of Praise *Adapted from Prayer Handbook 2018 p.26&27*

God's love runs deep, praise be.
God, rich in grace, may the gift of your love reach deep into our hearts.
May we drink deeply from the well of grace, the living water offered through Jesus,
To enable us to display his goodness and grace in our lives. **Amen**

Prayer of Confession *Adapted from Roots 28 March 2021*

We confess that we have been mean with our attitudes and our possessions and
Also, that we have sometimes preferred to keep ourselves to ourselves,
Which was mean behaviour.
We ask ourselves if we would be prepared to shout "Hosanna"
And throw our coats before an impoverished preacher on the humblest of beasts,
For our nice clothes to be trampled underneath a donkey's hooves.
We confess that we would probably be loath to leave our homes
To join in the celebrations.
We ask forgiveness for holding back so much of ourselves. **Amen**

Prayer of Thanksgiving *Adapted from Roots 14 March 2021*

God, thank you for the assurance of forgiveness.
Every day you offer us choices but ours is the decision.
The choice may be between good and evil, the paths of right or wrong.
Thank you for forgiving a wrong choice which might have been driven by our selfishness
Rather than love for you, then being prepared to guide our feet back onto
The right path when we realise that we are headed the wrong way. **Amen**

Personal Food for Thought in the context of the World Day of Prayer, 5 March

"Intercession leaves you neither time nor inclination to pray for yourself. The thought of yourself is not kept out because it is not there to keep out; you are completely and entirely identified with God's interests in other lives."

"It is not so true that prayer changes things as that prayer changes me, and then I change things; consequently, we must not ask God to do what he has created us to do".

Quote from Oswald Chambers "The Complete Works"

Prayers of Intercession

1. *Adapted from URC Daily Devotions, Rev Andy Braunston*

O God, as we journey through these long Lenten days,
Trapped by Covid,
Give us respite and food for the journey
Through prayer and Bible Study.
Help us to grieve with those who have lost loved ones to this plague.
Help us to support those who nurse and care for the critically ill.
Help us to show care for others by keeping a social distance.
Help us O God, to rejoice as the vaccine is rolled out, lives are saved
And our world slowly springs to life again. **Amen**

2. *For the NHS and its tired staff*

Lord, 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 alongside GPs who are working in their local communities to maintain their services.
We pray for stamina for those administering the new vaccines. **Amen**

3. *For the physical and mental well-being of children and students, parents & teachers*

Lord, 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 calm for teachers and students as they return to classrooms
After months of a wide range of experiences:
Teachers trying to teach simultaneously students in school & virtually at home,
And students trying to learn remotely often with unsuitable technology and environments.
We pray that anxious parents stop worrying and allow time for life to become more normal.
We pray that the month of school before the Easter holidays is a time of healing. **Amen**

4. *For vaccine researchers, makers & distributors*

Lord, we rejoice that the numbers serious Covid cases in the UK are declining.
We are so grateful for what has been achieved so far
But we pray for stamina for the scientists challenged by new variants of the Covid-19 virus,
And those running the pharmaceutical factories making the drugs
And especially for those charged with fair distribution of vaccine across the globe. **Amen**

5. For those fighting injustice

Lord, We pray for those standing up for citizens' rights and for justice throughout the world, And in particular Palestine, Myanmar, Iran, Hong Kong, Russia and China. Give those detained, your comfort in their bleakest moments. **Amen**

6. For those without an income

Lord, 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. With a bleak outlook ahead. Help us to be conscious of people's physical needs. We remember those charities trying to support these needs. In particular, we pray for resilience for the leaders of local initiatives who have been inspired to collect and give away warm clean second-hand clothes or gather good food with the sell-by date up, from local supermarkets for distribution daily. Remind us of the need for kindness. **Amen**

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

Lord, we pray for those seeking clarity and stability on how to proceed, For businesses, farmers and fishermen adapting to new trade agreements, And comfort for those who are seeing their livelihoods collapsing due to regulations. We pray for supermarkets trying to maintain the flow of adequate food supplies. **Amen**

8. For our elected national & local governments

Lord, we pray for all our elected leaders to put our nation's considerable needs Ahead of political posturing, as the Chancellor lays out plans in our national budget. With local elections in May, we ask for your help in supporting people's needs To re-establish a more normal society in the next few months And that these are put ahead of rival personal ambitions. **Amen**

9. For those householders completing the census

Lord, as you said, part of living in a civilised society is "giving to Caesar what is due", So help us to support any of our friends and neighbours who reject the census Or find it difficult to complete. **Amen**

10. 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**

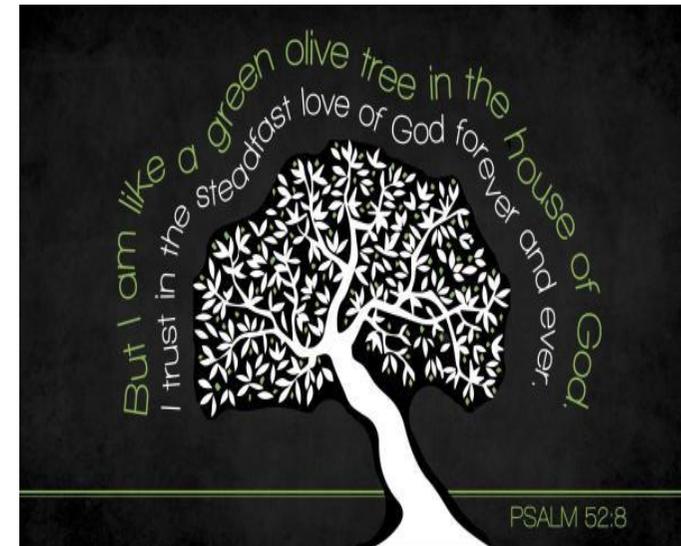
Reflection time & time for quiet or open prayers

Closing Prayer *Adapted from Prayerbook 2018 p.31*

Lord, let us love you as did the woman who anointed you with precious oil, Its heady fragrance presaging the sorrow of your human death. May the service of our lives in our communities over the coming months Be as wise and as prophetic, as courageous and as tender, And as sweet and pleasing to you. **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