

We've got to move on now, Lord,
they tell us we can go back to normal,
that medicine has the answers we need,
that the economy, not you, is king,
and that we need to focus on other things now,
hoping we won't ask too many questions about bumbling hypocrisy.

So be with us as we travel on, Lord,
help us still to show care to the vulnerable,
to value the NHS and others who work hard to support us,
to hold our political leaders accountable offering praise for what they got
right
and critique for their deadly mistakes.

Above all, Lord,
help us to celebrate and to mourn;

to celebrate
all that has been achieved in these two years,
the technological and medical advances,
the social solidarity,
the rediscovery of the bonds that hold us together,

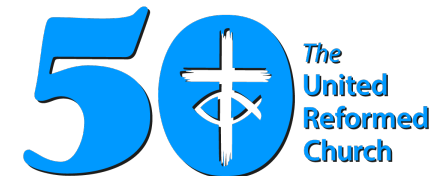
and to mourn
those we've loved and lost,
the pain of life
and the lost potential.

as we wait for your new heaven and new earth
when all will be made new. Amen.

Prayers during the Pandemic



Photo Credit Luis Qintero, pexels.com



Faith – Hope – Love – Since 1972

During the Pandemic a range of people from different places and perspectives wrote prayers to help us navigate those strange times. The prayers lament and celebrate, rage and reflect, and show hope and heartache. We have now gathered them into this little booklet and hope you may find them useful. We are happy for you to use any of these in public worship or in local church publications – just note they are Copyright © United Reformed Church.

*The Rev'd Andy Braunston
Minister for Digital Worship*

Contents

<i>O God, as we journey through these long Lenten days,</i>	5
<i>Dear and glorious God, we cry to you.</i>	5
<i>Lord, we give thanks for the scientists tackling the pandemic;</i>	6
<i>Lord, so many people who have died.</i>	6
<i>Gracious God as we journey through this pandemic,</i>	7
<i>God of towels and jugs and dirty feet</i>	7
<i>God, we never thought it would be like this,</i>	8
<i>Lord of life, as we begin to step out</i>	8
<i>Risen Lord Jesus, hear our prayers for all who mourn</i>	9
<i>Loving Lord Jesus, You told the disciples not to be afraid</i>	9
<i>Heavenly Father, we pray, as so many of us cast our votes today</i>	9
<i>Lord Jesus, on this Ascension Day,</i>	10
<i>With Pentecost approaching we trust you afresh</i>	10
<i>Liberating God, walk with us into our new freedoms,</i>	10
<i>God of the Oppressed, Lover of the Marginalised, Friend of the Poor:</i> .	11
<i>God of the Ages, to whom a day is as a thousand years,</i>	11
<i>Healing Father, giver of wholeness,</i>	12

Eternal One, we are invited to believe we stand at Pandemic's end, to discard our masks, "take responsibility", and go back to normal.

Yet we're reluctant Lord to go with the zeitgeist.

We want to question the Powers, protect the vulnerable, and ourselves, see the developing world vaccinated, and have a better grasp of the science behind it all.

Guide us, good Lord, as we take tentative steps forward, give us the courage to stand against the tide, help us to raise our voices to protect the weak and challenge the strong, that your Kingdom will break into the chaos of our world. Amen

*The Rev'd Andy Braunston
Minister for Digital Worship*

Maybe A Final Pandemic Prayer

So it's been two years, Lord, two years since the UK took Covid seriously, two years since the first lockdown, two years since the panic buying, two years since we found new ways of being Church, and two years since we noticed people were dying.

We've learned much, Lord, in these two years, the strength of solidarity, the chaos of governments who muddle through trying to do their best, the hypocrisy of leaders who tell us one thing and do another, the heroic dedication of NHS and social care staff, the importance of those who work in supermarkets and supply chains, the power of the state that can be harnessed in research and logistics to produce vaccines, the resilience You instil in us.

Longer

The tunnel is longer than we thought,
More winding than we thought,
Harder and more painful than we could have imagined.

Multiple lights have appeared
Seeming to illumine the way,
Then cast long and heavy shadows
Across our path.

Loving God, we cry to you.
Healing God, we cling to you.
Compassionate God, we seek refuge in your arms.

You have journeyed with us this far -
You journey with us still.

You always will. Amen

*Karen Campbell,
Secretary for Global & Intercultural Ministries*

O God we are weary.

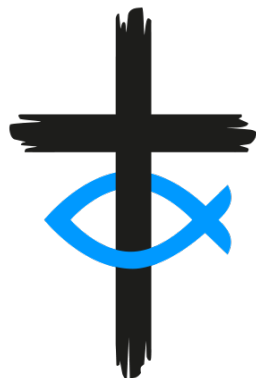
Weary of the pandemic. Weary of bad news on the TV.
Weary of public figures who behave like they are untouchable.
Weary of civil and human rights injustices around the world.

Renew us O God. Refresh us O God. Restore us O God.
Reinvigorate us O God

So we can share your Hope with the world
So we can share your Love with the world. Amen

<i>Loving God, we live in this waiting time,</i>	12
<i>God of all times, you teach us that there is a time for everything;</i>	13
<i>Out of the depths we cry to you, O Lord: hear our prayer.</i>	13
<i>Loving God, the struggle is real, but so are You:</i>	13
<i>Dear Lord, we pray for our hurting world, ravaged by Covid.....</i>	14
<i>Dear God as we enter this next phase of ‘Freedom’</i>	14
<i>Lord, we give thanks that you are with us:</i>	14
<i>God the holder of creation,.....</i>	15
<i>It’s August, holiday time for some.</i>	15
<i>Heavenly Father, as restrictions are eased.....</i>	16
<i>Constant (A Prayer in the Midst of Pandemic)</i>	16
<i>We think of those who are still afraid to go out of their homes</i>	17
<i>Loving God, we pray for people who continue to suffer</i>	17
<i>Loving and gracious God, You pour out your love</i>	18
<i>and invite us to share in it.</i>	18
<i>Days go by; weeks pass; the months accumulate.....</i>	18
<i>Ever living and ever loving God,</i>	19
<i>Living and loving God,.....</i>	19
<i>Loving God, every day we make choices.</i>	20
<i>Parent God, we are living through a time</i>	20
<i>O God, in the midst of changing seasons, crisper days,</i>	21
<i>O God, known to us in Three Persons,.....</i>	21
<i>God, in your great goodness,.....</i>	21
<i>“The light shines. It is not overwhelmed by the night.....</i>	22
<i>Lord Jesus, as we long for an end to this pandemic.....</i>	22
<i>Dear God, the last eighteen months has left us</i>	23

<i>Loving God in this season of Advent,</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Gracious God this has been an Advent season</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Oh dear God, this keeps going.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Dear Lord, as we remember the gifts of the Wise Men,</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>God of the future and of the past;</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Longer.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>O God we are weary.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Eternal One, we are invited to believe we stand at Pandemic's end,....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Maybe A Final Pandemic Prayer.....</i>	<i>27</i>



Dear Lord, as we remember the gifts of the Wise Men,
 let us give thanks for the gifts of technology keeping us connected;
 the gift of vaccinations and boosters,
 minimising our symptoms from the virus;
 for flu jabs, protecting us from winter illness.
 We thank you for the gifts of others that have kept us safe.
 May we see that we have gifts too
 that can be offered in your service, Amen

*The Rev'd Ruth Watson
 SCM MediaCityUK Church,
 Salford Quays*

God of the future and of the past;
 God of hope and of worry
 As we face another year,
 we want to feel more hope and less worry;
 we want to face the future and forget the past.
 We don't know what else we will face,
 but we know you will be there.
 Let us be comforted by this
 and know that although tomorrow is not promised, YOU are.
 In you we trust Lord, Amen

*Alexandra Priddy,
 Elder and Children's Church Leader,
 Trinity URC Mill Hill*

Gracious God this has been an Advent season
we could not have imagined.
Our resilience is continually tested,
as we adapt defensively to the unseen but present enemy
How much we need your good news,
coming in birth of the Christ child.
Open our hearts and minds
to receive afresh the salvation you offer us in his incarnation.
To those who are fearful, grant courage;
to those who feel lost, a way forward;
and to all, the blessing of peace. Amen

*The Rev'd John A Young,
retired minister of the National Synod of Scotland,
member Giffnock URC*

Oh dear God, this keeps going.
It ends, it spirals, it ends, something new is revealed.
People are welcomed, people are refused. We travel, we cancel.
We hope, hope is dashed, we hope, we dig for will-power.
How can we find you in the midst of all of this?

Oh dear God, we'd don't have to search.
In the midst is where you always have been and are still.
We summon our stretched energy to praise you.
Give us grace beyond our experience and belief
to experience energy and new hope.
In this Advent waiting time, we pray for ourselves and each other to live
these days as well as we can, no matter their shape.
We praise you and commit to Hope. Amen

*The Rev'd Elizabeth Gray-King,
North Western Synod pastor*

O God, as we journey through these long Lenten days,
give us both respite and food for the journey.
Help us grieve with those who have lost loved ones to this plague.
Help us support those who nurse and care for the critically ill.
Help us to show love by keeping our distance.
And help us, O God, to rejoice as the vaccine is rolled out,
lives are saved, and our world starts slowly to spring to life again. Amen.

*The Rev'd Andy Braunston
URC Minister for Digital Worship*

Dear and glorious God, we cry to you.
At the moment love seems
both deeply hidden and alive like never before.
Selfishness is alarmingly exposed,
numbing us to the fear which feeds it.
Selflessness is gloriously and exhaustingly alive,
restoring our faith in you and in humanity.
In this Lenten time, stir in us, waking your love,
enriching us with grace to be gracious.
Comfort us to know that our small steps made well
are your active, powerful love. Amen.

*The Rev'd Elizabeth Gray-King,
member St Columba's URC*

Lord, we give thanks for the scientists tackling the pandemic;
for their curiosity about your world;
for their commitment to finding rigorous answers.
We pray for those who nurture young minds;
for teachers who open up new possibilities;
for those who make it safe to ask hard questions.
May your Church be somewhere where we wonder anew at Creation,
hold out hope for a better world for all your children
and take action to make that world a reality. Amen.

*Gordon Woods
Elder, St. Columba's URC, Oxford*

Lord, so many people who have died.
So many families left grieving.
We struggle to understand.
A pandemic and a loving God?
We rail at the suffering and injustice;
When death counts obscure the sorrow of each individual;
Each precious person lost; each loved one left behind broken.
Our eyes blur with tears ...and through them a figure takes shape:
of another agonising and weeping;
the crucified Christ aching to embrace and share our sorrow.
Be with us, Lord. Amen.

*Professor Graham Handscomb,
Member of Christchurch URC, Chelmsford*

Dear God, the last eighteen months has left us
feeling forlorn and abandoned.
Life's certainties have been swept away.
With the prophet Jeremiah we say:
"My heart is crushed within me;
all my bones shake."
So God we ask that you meet us in our anguish
that you sit beside us in our desolation.
For we know in sharing our suffering
You restore, replenish and make us new. Amen.

*Professor Graham Handscomb,
Member of Christ Church URC,
Chelmsford*

Loving God in this season of Advent,
we thank you for Jesus who is the Alpha and Omega,
the beginning and the end.
As we wonder what Christmas will be like
with the various strains of Covid
we thank you that Jesus will be here with us.
We thank you for the certainty you give us
through your wonderful gift of your Son.
Thank you for your Holy Spirit who is with us
and guides us through everything. Amen

*John Collings,
Lay Preacher,
member of Rutherglen URC*

“The light shines. It is not overwhelmed by the night.”
(John 1:5 paraphrase)

Jesus, as we begin Advent,
we pray for your light to shine,
especially for folks experiencing difficult times
or missing a loved one who has died.
We think of NHS workers
and ask that they not be overwhelmed this cold and flu season.
We think of the bereaved
and ask that your light shine on the good memories,
so that grief does not overwhelm.
Help us to get through this winter together. Amen.

*The Rev'd Angela Rigby,
Minister serving Christ Church URC Tonbridge
and St Johns Hill URC Sevenoaks*

Lord Jesus, as we long for an end to this pandemic
and a return to the happy freedoms we took so much for granted,
lift our hearts and make us steadfast
as we seek to protect one another and our NHS.
Give us wisdom and strength to continue
on Your path of love and care for others,
to Your glory, Amen.

*Dorothy Curtis,
Lay Preacher and Elder,
Wortwell Chapel URC*

Gracious God as we journey through this pandemic,
watching its effect, fearing its progress,
we turn to you in hope and expectation.
By restraining ourselves
from greeting others as we would wish for over a year,
we have learned to value human contact as never before.
Let your Spirit's touch upon our lives encourage and sustain us
in these days of promise and recovery.
We commit to you those who grieve.
We thank you for all who sustain us. Amen

*The Rev'd John Young,
retired minister of the Scottish Synod
member Giffnock URC*

God of towels and jugs and dirty feet
you revealed your glory
in the apparent foolishness of service.
God of towels and jugs and dirty feet
I reveal my foolishness
in my all too obvious thirst for glory.
God of towels and jugs and dirty feet
wash my feet, wash my hands, wash my heart
then send me out with fool's towel
to wipe your glory into our covid-stained world. Amen.

*The Rev'd Phil Nevard
URC Minister in Cambridgeshire*

God, we never thought it would be like this,
we can't think straight.
Yet blinded by your radiance
we know that
you alone make all things new,

God, in our loneliness and hunger of heart,
you restore us to new life
in Christ Jesus, and we bless you.

May his risen power be strong within us
and bless us with his peace,
that we may face adversity with courage
and grow in love for you and for each other. Amen.

*The Rev'd Fleur Houston,
retired minister,
member of Macclesfield & Bollington URC*

Lord of life, as we begin to step out
along the pathway of easing lockdown, be with us.
Help us to take it slowly and carefully,
heeding the encouragement to take care.
We have shown love to our neighbour
through the restrictions we have followed,
may we not stop now.
In our desire for 'normality' give us patience;
let us not forget all that has been.
May we act wisely, show mercy and live love.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

*The Rev'd Jenny Mills
Secretary for Education and Learning*

O God, in the midst of changing seasons, crisper days,
and the beauty of autumn,
bless with your love those who work in the NHS -
medics, administrators, cleaners and support staff -
as they face winter with uncertainty.

Enable our political leaders to hear what the NHS has to say,
and give them the humility to respond. Amen.

*The Rev'd Andy Braunston
Minister for Digital Worship*

O God, known to us in Three Persons,
bless us with your love as we wear our masks,
portraying not an aspect of our deepest being,
but the love we have for others,
and a concern to protect them from infection.
Let our masks be a sacrament,
a sign of health and protection of others,
telling of your love and life. Amen.

*The Rev'd Andy Braunston
Minister for Digital Worship*

God, in your great goodness,
hear our prayers for all who suffer:
suffering from Covid 19, whether it be short or long,
suffering from fear of getting sick,
suffering from treatment or investigation delayed,
suffering from exhaustion and overwork in all avenues of caring,
suffering from the burdens of decision-making and tough choices,
suffering from loss and grief unending.
We, so fragile, pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.

*The Rev'd Neil Thorogood,
minister of Thornbury URC and Trinity-Henleaze URC (Bristol)*

Loving God, every day we make choices.
Some of those choices are simple,
such as what to have for breakfast,
and others are more difficult,
involving many factors amid conflicting evidence.

Every choice we make has an impact
on ourselves, our neighbours and your world:
the food we buy, the health choices we make,
the way we treat other people and the planet.
As we make decisions, help us to be in touch with you,
so that the choices we make are right for us,
for others and for your Kingdom. Amen

*The Rev'd Sue Cossey,
Synod Pastoral Advisor,
Bristol area*

Parent God, we are living through a time
when many things look the way they did
before we lived through lockdowns,
but many things look different.
Remind us that you are our ever-present, unchanging, loving God.
The news continues to dwell on the worst aspects of life,
it is easy to be pulled towards a negative viewpoint.
Help us remember that we carry Your Hope in our souls;
that our spirits bubble with a joy that cannot be extinguished.
Walk with us, guiding us on the days that we are
the joy and light for others through the uncertainty.
Comfort us during our dark and fearful days.
Call us to action, when we despair that things are bad.
Inspire us to think of the needs of others, when self-pity is close at hand.
Catch us close to you always. Amen.

*Kirsty-Ann Mabbott,
Church Related Community Worker,
Coventry*

Risen Lord Jesus, hear our prayers for all who mourn
as they remember loved ones lost to this pandemic.
Hear our prayers for livelihoods destroyed and hopes devastated.
Hear our prayers for all continuing to sustain and support us
even as we begin to taste again so much we have had to wait for.
Bless the nations with a renewing spirit of generosity,
that vaccine and support might reach the poorest and most marginalised.
We pray in your name. Amen.

*The Rev'd Neil Thorogood,
minister of Thornbury URC and Trinity-Henleaze URC (Bristol)*

Loving Lord Jesus, You told the disciples not to be afraid
on the first Easter Sunday.
Help us not to be afraid as the restrictions are eased
but to trust in Your strength.
Give us the strength we need
to move towards the uncertainty of a new normal.
Enable us to speak of you to those in distress and those who are afraid.
Fill us with The Holy Spirit
and empower us to live our lives for You. Amen

*John Collings, Lay Preacher,
Rutherglen URC*

Heavenly Father, we pray, as so many of us cast our votes today
throughout the UK,
that what the pandemic has shown us and taught us
might inform our politics
so we vote in alignment with our faith and Your values,
as revealed in the life and sacrificial death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Dorothy Courtis,
Lay Preacher, Thurso URC*

Lord Jesus, on this Ascension Day,
we remember that your perspective is so much wider than ours.
You know how each person's experience of the pandemic
has been unique. Help us not to make assumptions about others.
We pray particularly for those whose circumstances
have made the last year especially difficult.
We pray too for generous and open access to everything
that will help to deal with any of the wide ranging
effects of the pandemic. Amen.

*The Rev'd Jacky Embrey,
minister in the Bolton and Salford Missional Partnership*

With Pentecost approaching we trust you afresh

Lord, our God of surprises.
With the Holy Spirit within us
we say with confidence; 'we are not shaken but strong!'
With the joy of your presence
we declare victory is yours over everything we face.
With praises on our lips we sing a new song of hope, life and fullness.
With peace in our hearts
we live in rest and know with certainty
that you show us the path to follow. Amen

*Jo Patel, local leader,
Wattisfield URC, Eastern Synod*

Liberating God, walk with us into our new freedoms,
taking care to remember that we all approach life differently;
Give us sensitivity to people's feelings.
Give each person a sense of joy as we explore renewed life.
Reveal to us, your vision,
as we hold on to the simplicity, we have found with you.
Enable us to share your enduring love for all people and creation.
Hug us every day, by your spirit. Amen

*The Rev'd Sue Chapman,
Hove and Portslade Pastorate, East Sussex*

Ever living and ever loving God,
as we tentatively explore a brave new world,
familiar yet strange, take us by the hand,
guide our baby steps, and as we stumble,
hold us firmly in your steadfast love,
that we may face the days ahead in confidence and hope.
Through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

*The Rev'd Fleur Houston,
retired minister,
member of Macclesfield & Bollington URC*

Living and loving God,

You see the hidden fears and anxieties of folk
who are not yet ready to step out
and you know the eagerness and confidence
with which others stride forth.

We are such different people
caught in the same storm
in very different boats.

Open our hearts to accept one another
however far apart our desires and needs are at this time.
And guide those who are mediating across our diversity
Amen.

*The Rev'd Jacky Embrey,
Bolton and Salford Missional Partnership*

Loving and gracious God, You pour out your love
and invite us to share in it.

May we grow in your love for creation,
for refugees, for all who are affected by Covid,
in this country and across the world.

When we are cast down by despair,
open our eyes again to see what you make possible.

May your gifts of peace and hope and new life flourish,
for people and creation.
May we be an instrument of this flourishing today. Amen.

*The Rev'd Dr Elizabeth Welch,
retired minister,
member St Andrews Ealing.*

Days go by; weeks pass; the months accumulate and the world seems to
move on. People gather; families reconnect; social life is rekindled
And we breathe a sigh of relief. The pandemic storm has been
weathered...

But for many the clouds do not lift; their loved ones have died;
Long Covid persists; jobs and careers are stunted.

Lord be there in the midst of us all. Be with us in our rejoicing at renewal
and return to what we have treasured. And Lord also embrace those
who continue to mourn and grieve; for whom things will never be the
same. Lord be with us all in the days in our life. Amen.

*Professor Graham Handscomb,
Member of Christchurch URC, Chelmsford*

God of the Oppressed, Lover of the Marginalised, Friend of the Poor:
Fill us with, loving kindness
so we can offer open hospitality to the places and people we serve.
Inspire us like those of the early Church
to stand up against injustice here and overseas.
Embolden us to speak out against inhumane decisions.
As Pentecost People:
We want to step out and model a counter-cultural way of living that sees
a person not a cog in a machine
We want to represent a "new normal" that isn't only aware of COVID but
is aware of mental & physical health
We want to imitate the now and not-yet of the kin-dom of God that
ensures people have all they need to thrive without causing destitution
amongst those in deprivation.
Keep us soft enough to weep with those who suffer, especially in
Myanmar, India and Palestine, but hard enough to stand against
structural evil in the world to bring about change in the world. In Jesus'
name we pray, Amen.

*Kirsty-Ann Mabbott,
CRCW, Ansty Road URC, Coventry*

God of the Ages, to whom a day is as a thousand years,
be with us as we wait for infections to decrease,
for data to be analysed, for decisions to be made,
and for life to return to something more normal.
But help us, O God,
to learn from these long months,
to value new ways of accessing worship,
new ways of ministry,
and new patterns of working,
that we may not return unquestioningly to the old
but listen to your voice speaking through the chaos. Amen.

*The Rev'd Andy Braunston
Minister for Digital Worship*

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.

When I survey the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss, and pour contempt on all my pride.
God be merciful to me, a sinner. Amen

*Ann Barton,
local leader at Whittlesford URC
in the Eastern Synod*

Loving God, we live in this waiting time,
Wondering what will happen next.
Asking, questioning, searching.
Will we return to the old normal?
What new things do you have in store for us?
Creator God, grant us hope
in the midst of a confused and troubled world.
Redeemer God, pour out your gift of love, that our lives may bear fruit.
Sustainer God, free us from fear about what the future might hold
and give us power to live whole-heartedly for others and all creation.
Amen.

*The Rev'd Dr Elizabeth Welch,
12 member of St Andrew's URC Ealing*

We think of those who are still afraid to go out of their homes
and feel trapped and uncertain,
loving God give them peace and reassurance.
Bless those who care for these vulnerable and frightened people.
We ask that you guide us in all so we do
what we need to do to protect the vulnerable from this virus
and from all else that can cause them harm.
We thank you for hearing our prayer in Jesus' name Amen

*John Collings,
Lay Preacher,
Rutherglen URC*

Loving God, we pray for people who continue to suffer
because of the necessary care given
to those who have had or have the coronavirus.
We think especially of those who have had
procedures or operations postponed,
perhaps more than once,
and those who are in constant pain.
Grant them the courage they need
to bear their situation and the patience to go on waiting.
And grant wisdom to those who make decisions
as to how resources should be used.
In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

*The Rev'd John Matthews,
retired Baptist minister,
member, Wellingborough URC.*

Heavenly Father, as restrictions are eased
and people are able to mix more freely,
leave off their masks with great relief in hot muggy weather,
help us remember and be gentle with those who are nervous,
those whose health is daily endangered,
those who do not celebrate what others are calling freedom.
Let us remember those who feel left behind
as the world crunches back into top gear again
and let us - and our churches - not forget them. Amen

*Dorothy Courtis,
Lay Preacher, Wortwell URC*

Constant (A Prayer in the Midst of Pandemic)

The sun still shines, the rain still falls and the wind still blows –

The constant rhythms of life
reminding us that your hand
still rests upon all Creation.

Amidst the uncertainty, and confusion, and untold tears,
when the ups are far outnumbered by the downs,
remind us that you are still there - with us, amongst us, around us,
ever constant.

Always there - just as the sun still shines, the rain still falls, and the wind
will never cease to blow. Amen

*Karen Campbell,
URC Secretary for Global
& Intercultural Ministries*

God of all times, you teach us that there is a time for everything;
we have had our fill of the unsettled time,
we are so acquainted with death and grief that we might forget it's sting,
the time of unjust sharing of the vaccine and all resources, hurts us.
We lament the struggles of the global pandemic
and trust that you continue to guide us
through the questions it has raised.
Remind us that this is only one time
and that times of joy and laughing are present with us also. Amen

*The Rev'd Martin Knight,
Minister of St Paul's URC and South Croydon United Church*

Out of the depths we cry to you, O Lord: hear our prayer.

Protect health-workers who place themselves at risk to heal others;
aid the efforts of those who produce, distribute, and administer vaccines;
strengthen weary producers and drivers and workers;
give patience to parents and carers;
and if we can be an answer to someone else's prayer in the depths,
help us to be ready and willing to offer what is needed,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*The Rev'd Julian Templeton,
Minister of St John's URC, New Barnet*

Loving God, the struggle is real, but so are You:

as new variants of COVID fuel more infections;
as fewer people of colour receive the vaccine;
as ignorance and stubbornness abound;
as more of Your creation meet and grieve untimely deaths,
Give to all Your children
good sense, patience, attitudes of empathy and community,
and a sacramental spirit that affirms the extraordinary habits
of a pandemic era
as sacred acts that save lives. Ase and Amen.

*The Rev'd William Young,
Pastor Covenant Baptist United Church of Christ, Washington DC*

Dear Lord, we pray for our hurting world, ravaged by Covid.
We ask that as we journey slowly through this phase
of relaxation of restrictions, unsure of the way forward,
that You will walk alongside us, guiding and enfolding us
in your loving arms, giving us strength and reassurance
that no matter how long and arduous the journey may be,
you will always be by our side. This we ask in your name, Amen

*Eva Bangle, Secretary,
Newport Pagnell URC*

Dear God as we enter this next phase of 'Freedom'
with fewer restrictions, may we realise that we were always 'free';
free to love, free to care, free to give joy.
With the lessons learned from this past year,
may we be unleashed to love as you do
by being of service to our fellow brothers and sisters
with renewed energy and commitment.
For in this way, we not only exercise our freedom,
but also our faith. Amen

*Alexandra Priddy,
Elder and Children's Church Leader, Trinity Mill Hill URC*

Lord, we give thanks that you are with us:
when we feel we are groping for the way forward,
when we are confused by government advice,
concerned about vulnerable loved ones,
worried about our jobs and the state of the economy.
Help us to continue to delight in the life you give us;
the beauty of creation and the joy of friendship and families.
Hear our prayers for a better future. Amen

*Gordon Woods, Elder,
St. Columba's URC, Oxford*

God the holder of creation,
among rising numbers, changing guidelines, and new risks,
we turn to you from among those made in your image -
all who are beloved and yet broken.
We pray for the governments within our nations, and around the world,
that they might have insight and discernment;
that whether or not they call on your name, they might hear your voice.
And we pray too for those whose lives are blighted today,
that they might know your presence and your healing.
And we pray for ourselves,
That we might take our place in your purposes.
We bring this prayer trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit,
the giver of life, and through our Lord Jesus Christ,
broken among creation and risen for the world. Amen

*The Rev'd Alistair Smeaton,
Minister, Cumbria Missional Partnership*

It's August, holiday time for some.
Perhaps the Sun shines fiercely
on a bright summer's day,
or maybe the rain falls hard,
watering the crops, preparing for harvest.
Perhaps today you feel hope
for a new, brighter future of freedom,
or maybe you feel dragged down by what has been,
and by grief for people who have gone.
Loving God, however we feel today,
be alongside us in the sun or the rain.
In joy or sadness, bring us hope. Amen

*The Rev'd Dr Nick Jones,
Minister, Heswall URC
& St. George's URC, Thornton Hough*