

# Elders and moments of worship

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## A prayer for the week

Living Lord, Our Risen Christ,  
when we meet, talk, cry or laugh with people  
as we travel along this week,  
we pray that there will be opportunities  
to see You at work in the world,  
through women and men  
as they go about their daily lives.  
Encourage us,  
to go about our lives  
sowing seeds of Peace  
In our communities.

*All* **Amen.**

Geoffrey Duncan

## Prayers of thanksgiving and confession

This is the day that our Lord God has made –  
a day for new hope.

Thank you, Lord for the fact that we are here;  
for our joys and our sorrows,  
our laughter and our tears,  
our work and our leisure time.

Thank you Lord for our lives  
– so precious –  
and may we remember that other peoples' lives are precious too,  
as we live in our local communities set within the global framework;  
and for the increasing need for understanding about living  
with many different people;  
for our families and our friends;  
for our holidays and refreshment.

We give this day and all our days to you Lord for service with people

Please forgive us for the wrong things that we have done in recent days.  
For the unkind words that may have hurt someone and for unpleasant  
thoughts about our friends and neighbours.

We know, Jesus, that you will forgive us. Please help us not to do these  
wrong things but instead help us to help people whoever they are –  
to be kind and thoughtful – and get on with everyone.

Geoffrey Duncan



## Treasuring us

Holy God,  
who chooses and treasures us,  
you love us.  
You keep faith with us  
even when we do not keep faith with you;  
breaking our promises to and for each other,  
giving the poor few chances,  
afraid to confront injustice.  
You know our struggles  
and our frustrations.

[Pause]

We are amazed  
that you have set your heart on us,  
choose us, treasure us  
and forgive us.  
We thank you, generous One.

Janet Lees

## Expand our vision

*(Based on Rejoice and Sing 498 God be in my head)*

God, be ahead of understanding;  
expanding our vision of the world and the church  
as we pray and work together.  
God, be beyond seeing;  
challenging us to probe the ready answers  
as we look deeper into our local situation.  
God, be more than words;  
echoing in both sound and silence  
as we tune into the small voices so easily ignored.  
God, be the fundamental beat of life;  
steadying us for clear thinking  
in the ups and downs of our experience.  
God, be beyond life itself;  
so that whatever marks the beginning or end  
we may know we are always in your company.

Janet Lees





We call to you with inarticulate groans  
and thwarted yearnings;  
following Christ our partner  
with clumsy, shambling gait,  
dragging our feet.

And in your grace, you turn and come to us,  
rejoicing in the dance;  
acknowledging our smallest steps,  
you take us by the arm  
and lead us  
in more and more glorious  
configurations.

Lord, my God, you are very great,  
wonderful you are, and wonderful your works.

Bless the Lord, my soul.

Fleur Houston

## **Hymn to Jesus**

Jesus, Lord most kind companion  
We would bless your holy Name



All you saints and martyrs of this estate,  
give to our God your thanks and praise.

O give thanks to our God who is good  
Whose goodness endures for ever.

Fleur Houston

## **Mothering Sunday**

Mother God, giver of life, creator of new worlds, you nurture universes within your enfolding presence. As a child in the womb is unaware of the mother who carries it, so are we unaware of your Spirit holding us in life, nourishing and supporting us. We listen to the muffled sounds of the world rushing by, and rarely notice the beating of your heart in the midst of it. For your all-encompassing, life-giving presence we praise you.

Mother God, eternal home-builder, bread-winner, labourer of love, you never cease toiling for the health and welfare of your beloved creation. For your life poured out for us, we praise you. Mother God, passionate with love for your world, in Jesus we see you bear the agony and disappointment of our failure as if it were your own, you graciously tolerate our arrogant certainties that we know best, you put your very life on the line for your vulnerable children. For your life, sacrificed for us, we praise you.

Like argumentative children, we have not acknowledged our unity in you, and our responsibility for the peace and harmony of your world-wide family. We blame each other for the wrongs of the world and self-righteously wash our hands of guilt. We allow others to bear the punishment for our failure, as if the death of Jesus has taught us nothing.

We are sorry for the failures of the past that have tolerated, even encouraged, bullying in communities, in families, in international affairs. We are sorry for the violence being inflicted in our name.

Come between us, gentle Spirit. Calm our anger and desire to blame everyone except ourselves. Encourage us to look with love into the hearts and desires of others. Bring out the best in war currently being waged by our State.

(Paragraph 1, with acknowledgement to Margaret Hebblethwaite)

Dick Wolf



## **In the beginning you were...**

Creator, in the beginning You were,  
and your love could not be contained.

From the overflowing of Your love you sang us into being  
that we might share love and wonder, and join Your song.

In the exuberance of Your Love You created a world of diversity  
and beauty beyond our imagining,

## Holy Spirit of God

Holy God, you cannot exist, for you are before any existence was. How can you be the *centre* of our life's pilgrimage, home of our hearts? – for you are in *no* place and *no* time ... *all* places and *all* times. The compass needle of our hearts swings wildly in all directions: we are lost without you, and lost within you.

Forgive the arrogance of the religious heart that claims to know you.

Jesus of Nazareth, only uncreated child of God, we turn to you for you are nonetheless one of us, and you have loved us. You are human like us, walking the roads of Galilee and Jerusalem, 2000 years ago. Our hearts' compass needle swings about in the mystery of God, and then points steadfastly to you. We take our bearings from you, we seek to walk your 'Way' ... we crucify you.

Forgive the arrogance of the religious heart that tries to recruit you to its own cause, and use your name as its Big Excuse.

Holy Spirit of God, comforter and disturber, life-giver, opener of doors: no sooner do we know you have touched us than you are gone. You it is who steer the compass of our hearts towards the real Jesus, the *living* Lord. You it is who put the ultimate choice before us – life or death? You it is who makes the choice easy, even when choosing life *means* death.

Forgive the closed minds and stubborn wills of the religious heart that turns your exuberant loving freedom into doctrine, Scripture, law and habit.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, I dare to declare to you : though we *have* chosen, and will choose *again*, deadness, lifelessness, lovelessness and our own comfort – Christ has, in his own body, broken the bonds that hold us in this slavery. It is not inevitable. The door to life in the Spirit remains open. Let us walk through it together, humbly rejoicing in the name of Jesus.

Holy God, as we recite the prayer Jesus gave us, may your Spirit awaken the words in us:

*All* **The Lord's Prayer**

Dick Wolf

## **Lord, we are a worried people**

Lord, we are a worried people.

From the time we wake each morning we worry about:  
the weather, the state of the roads, whether we have  
sufficient clothing and is it fashionable.

We worry about the day ahead, our job prospects, our health, our loved ones  
and our pets.

We turn on the news and we are told to worry even more:  
about the state of our food,  
the state of our hospitals,  
the stock market,  
our strange neighbours.

## God, you take our breath away

Creator,  
You who made everything,  
can You really hear us?

Love,  
definition of love,  
do You really care that much about each one of us?  
God,  
God who we cannot comprehend,  
You take our breath away  
as we struggle to hold a vastness, at which our minds recoil,  
with a love for each one of us,  
created and known as individuals.

God, we have no words,  
We cannot define You except that You exceed all definitions.  
Higher, vaster, richer than all our imaginings.  
Our praise becomes silence as we contemplate You.

But You, seeking to love and how us love,  
(not wanting empty praise or gratitude  
but to bring us into relationship with Yourself)  
have poured Yourself out to Your creation and become man,  
one with us to show us what love can do.  
To help us glimpse across our feeble boundaries –  
so much more!

You have stood beside us ... and let us nail You to the cross,  
because that too was needed to show us the strength and  
power of Your love.

Lord, as we struggle to hold the seeming impossible,  
help us to hold onto the truth of Your resurrection and praise You.  
Knowing resurrection is not the past  
but resurrection and new creation, for each one of us, now,  
as part of Your love.

Wendy White

## Creator, we praise and adore you

Creator, we praise and adore You ...

and the words become empty because we have repeated so often what is far beyond our grasp.

When we look up you are there – in the vastness of unfolding space we glimpse your immensity.

When we look down you are there – in the beauty and complexity of detail, the molecular dance beyond our vision.

When we look around us you are there, in the play of dark and light, sound and silence, in water, air, land.

We cannot begin to encompass all you are, but, made in your image, we catch glimpses in one another of the complexity and richness of relationships, in love, in laughter, in friendship, in the myriad communities we are part of.

But, most of all, when in your desire for us to truly know, to share, your nature, which is love, you became man and walked with us, we see love worked out in humankind. Even to what we perceive as the end. And then you turned the shabby death of a criminal into new life when you showed us resurrection. Turning, with the gift of your Spirit, an uncertain band of travellers and hangers-on into messengers of love for all people for all time.

Creator, how often have we repeated this story but not made it our own? You turn awesomeness of love into something we could recognise, and gave us your Spirit so that we too could know we are part of Your love and share it with others. Yet too often we have been content with our decent little lives and chosen to ignore the promptings of Your Spirit which would show us a world made new.

Forgive us when we have put ourselves first at the expense of others, when at work we have clung to our salary, our way and ignored the cries of the unemployed, the untrained, the rejected. Forgive us when our standard of living ignores the cries of the third world for fair wages, for health care, education, food, water.

Forgive us when our time is so hoarded to ourselves we have ignored the