

JOURNEYING TO EASTER with the Corrymeela Community:

Lenten Prayers from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday

Each day of Lent 2024, Corrymeela posted prayers online as part of our Lenten practice. Photographs of the coastline and countryside around Corrymeela accompanied these prayers, no doubt attracting people who would not always stop to read a prayer on a social media feed.

It is humbling, however, to imagine that the content of the prayers also caused people to pause, providing them glimpses of something beautiful and moments for meaningful reflection. We are encouraged by the level of engagement these prayers have received and grateful that people, churches and other faith communities chose to include them in their own daily rhythms.

These prayers are meant to be shared. Please feel free to pass them on and to adapt them as your context requires. There is no real restriction on their use. It is, of course, nice if Corrymeela is acknowledged as their source when they are used, but it is not necessary. More than anything, we are delighted to be made aware of new connections that arise because of them. So please: be in touch.

Grace and peace,
Alex Wimberly
Leader of the Corrymeela Community

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Ash Wednesday

God whose love journeys with us,
God whose love will hold us close:
as we begin these forty days
and venture into deeper truth,
may we move towards an embrace
with a humanity we've lost.
May we find in simpler living
that comforts become crutches;
that self-protection suffocates.
And may we then see
in glaring desert light
a love you have for us,
a love that can restore us
to a place of fuller contentment.
Amen.
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Second day of Lent

God of bodies that absorb the stress,

God of kindnesses that release the tears:
may the practices we take up
lead us out to those
whose private struggles
run parallel to our own.
May we find in this season
of focused reflection
a renewed sense
of how we're in this together:
humans who find good ways to cope;
creatures of clay
who contain your life.
Amen.
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Third day of Lent

God who lives with us in this world,
God who calls from us a better world:
keep us grounded and dissatisfied.
Keep us questioning how things are.
May we approach the reality of brokenness
not with dismay or cynicism,
not with exchanges of judgment
but with a faith to assure us
that living a message
of unworldly love
is the surest way to find
the divine alive on earth.
Amen.
+

Fourth day of Lent

God of fasting and prayer,
God of life in abundance:
fill this day
not with striving or proving,
the impulse to meet culture's norms
nor the demands of our own private idol.
Fill this day
with attention
to the breath our bodies pull in,
the beauty that comes into view,
the stories children eagerly tell,
the marvel of your daily bread.
Amen.
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Fifth day of Lent

God of this continuing journey,
God of this next right step:
bring us to a space
where reassuring kindness
and uncluttered honesty meet,
where we name what is broken
without doing more harm;
where we hold ourselves to account
and are held to account by others,
without fear of being let go.
May our courage come
not in protecting,
but in exposing
our true selves,
so that beneath it all we may find
the child you continue to love.
Amen.
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Sixth day of Lent

God of fishermen who leave their nets,
God of lambs who go astray:
you call us from our daily chores
inviting us to try something new.
You seek us out when we are lost,
reaching us where we are at risk.
Your draw and your drive
reveal a bond between us
we cannot deny
and you will not sever.
May we who are found
now follow,
leaving these toils
and these snares behind us.
Amen.
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Seventh day of Lent

God in our private prayer,
God in our civic courage:
may the moments we take
to be still and silent
restore our spirits

and clear our minds.
But may they not be just for ourselves.
May all we do in resetting ourselves
lead us to a new sense of community
where our ways of being at peace
help others find peace, too;
where our wellbeing
is never separated
from the wellbeing of the whole.
Amen.
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Eighth day of Lent

God of early morning routines,
God of late-night sessions:
we are creatures of habit
who co-habit this earth.
As we go about our day,
may we pause to marvel
at lives interwoven
with our own.
May we mark how our choices
affect and are affected by
the patterns of others.
And with grateful hearts,
may we see again
our small place on this spinning world,
this one day as a timely gift
to share more fully with others.
Amen.
+

Ninth day of Lent

God of new starts
and new responsibilities;
God of old friends
and retold stories:
give us the courage
to move forward together
away from what is familiar
and into a space that is unknown
but - with your spirit
and our commitment -
might become a place
where we and others
can begin again

to respond to each other
with love.
Amen.

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Tenth day of Lent

God of welcome;
God whose welcome stretches
our sense of self:
in creating space for others,
we change who 'we' are.
May we who have been welcomed
become ever more ourselves
in the welcoming of others;
through our vulnerable,
changeable humanity
something closer to divine.
Amen.

(Romans 15:7) 'Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you.'

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Eleventh day of Lent

God of the father
who runs out to embrace;
God of the son
who returns to repent:
while acknowledging the past
we can still present
unconditional love,
and start to make a future
that is just and right for both.
Let us find joy in this reconciliation.
And let us find ourselves again
at home with one another.
Amen.

(Luke 15: 20) 'While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him. He ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.'

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Twelfth day of Lent

God of the peacemakers;
God of those who fight
to bring more peace to others:

be with all those who do not lash out
who do not return evil for evil,
who look into eyes of those
who would harm them,
and see a fellow child of God.
It is wearying work, this fight:
a battle against the urge to give in
It is constant at times,
this labour of heroes.
Blessed be the children of God.
Amen.

(Matthew 5:9) 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'
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Thirteenth day of Lent

God of the Samaritan,
God of our neighbour:
be with us on this road
as we follow a sense of duty
and answer our calling.
Lead us not with ambition
or self-preservation.
But drive us with compassion,
so that both our attention
and our commitment
are to the one in need.
For there, with the wounded
beyond the boundary of our own
we discover our limits
and receive your healing:
Amen.

(Luke 10:36-37) "Which of these, do you think, was a neighbour to the man?" He said
"The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."
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Fourteenth day of Lent

God in our collective sorrow,
God in our collective joy:
you pulled us from the earth
to breathe life into each individual,
yet you keep us our most human
when we remain grounded
in our shared experience.
Build us up into your people.

Remind us of the gift of life,
the truth that we are connected
with all that bears life on this earth
and that we are not truly ourselves
without the life
that others bear around us.
Amen.

(I Cor. 12:26) 'If one member suffers, all suffer together. If one member is honoured, all rejoice together.'

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Fifteenth day of Lent

God who truly treasures
the relationships we have;
God who cares for people
rather than possessions:
when we turn to you
to steal your attention
with shiny things
and beautiful words,
turn us back to what is broken,
and the people we forget.
Then when we come again
to worship in your presence
perhaps we will remember
what it is you really value.
Amen.

(Matthew 5:24) 'Leave your offering there before the altar and go. First be reconciled with your brother or sister and then come and offer your gift.'

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Sixteenth day of Lent

God of deeds that speak
with a more honest conviction;
God of truth that resonates
beyond our clanging cymbals:
there is talk
and then there is the ability
to offer real love,
exercising the freedom
to treat others
as we have been treated,
to give as we have received,
to not hold back when we see

a child of God in need.
Amen.

(1 John 3:18) 'Little children, let us love not in word or in speech but in deed and truth.'
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Seventeenth day of Lent

God in our interdependence,
God in our mutual wellbeing:
what a joy to discover
we don't know our true selves
until we become
something new with others.
Reverse any colonial impulse
that leads us to believe
people would be better off
if they were more like us.
Restore us into your image
by being changed
through and with community:
the people of God
you created us to be.
Amen.

Ubuntu: 'I am because we are.'
+

Eighteenth day of Lent

God of provision,
God of aspiration:
you created us
to admire and reproduce,
to protect and supply,
but our fear of scarcity
has claimed our faith.
We have turned this gift
for creating and sharing
into an impulse
to hoard and to possess.
Break the grip of this idol
we have fashioned
so we can choose to serve
the God who gives
abundant life.
Amen.

(Matthew 6:24) 'You cannot serve both God and wealth.'

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Nineteenth day of Lent

God of those in rivalry with us,
God of a humility at work within us:
may we with the assumption
that we have more to learn
than to teach;
more to hear
than to explain;
more to admire
than to judge.
And then may find
a stronger companion
in the mutual respect
that overpowers our conceit.
Amen.

(Philippians 2:3) 'Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves.'

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Twentieth day of Lent

God of the women at the tomb,
God in the message
that settles our fear:
as we reach this midpoint in Lent,
this season of deeper contemplation,
remind us where this journey leads.
The good news of your new life
allows us to embrace
the fullness of our humanity,
but to strip back the layers
that would hide our true selves;
to love
even what is broken,
perhaps especially what is broken,
for we know your wholeness
will heal.
Amen.

(Matthew 28:5) 'The angel said to the women: "Do not be afraid; I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified."'

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Twenty-first day of Lent

God of nations
who repurpose their power;
God who defeats
the urge for revenge:
may the blades that kill
cut instead the soil
and allow new life to take root.
May our hearts be retrained
as muscles of peace
to tend to your garden of grace.
Amen.

(Isaiah 2:4) 'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares; their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift sword up against nation; neither shall they learn war anymore.'
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Twenty-second day of Lent

God of the straighter path,
God in the gift of letting God win:
remind us how we all struggle
in this life,
trying to be our most human,
by being our most humane.
Show us that
the path to our connection
reveals itself
in our shared desire
to love as all humans love,
to care for stranger and friend,
to submit to the peaceful
will of God.

from the Hadith, the writings of the prophet Mohammed (pbah): 'As you would have people do to you, do to them. Do not do to them what you dislike being done to you.'
+

Twenty-third day of Lent

God in arguments of greatness,
God who welcomes the powerless:
allow us to grow up
into those who care
less about successes and
personal accomplishments,
hoping that we might get more;

and more into those who ensure
that everyone has what they need.
Then may we find ourselves
at your side,
striving so no one
is left out.
Amen.

(Luke 9:46-48) 'An argument arose among the disciples as to which one of them was the greatest. But Jesus, aware of their inner thoughts, took a little child and put him by his side, saying: "whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me."'

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Twenty-fourth day of Lent

God in the love we owe ourselves,
God in the love we show to others:
your golden rule is not an insight
one culture bestows on another.
It is the common language
we already share,
the instinct we all possess.
May we discover together again
how love only increases
the more we choose to share it.
Amen.

(Leviticus 19:18) 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

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Twenty-fifth day of Lent

God who alone
is in a position to condemn;
God who frees us
from our trap of judgement:
there is right
and there is wrong,
but remind us that
the point of our faith
is not to place ourselves
in a position to safely judge
other people.
The point of our faith
is to give thanks for the grace
we ourselves have received.
Amen.

(Matthew 7:1) 'Do not judge.'

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Twenty-sixth day of Lent

DE-ESCALATING GOD,
as the heat rose in the day
you lowered yourself
to the earth.

You withdrew from the noise
to write in the dirt.
In the midst of charged words,
you changed the atmosphere
to save a life.

May we, as tensions rise
and charges fly
and heated words are exchanged
find ways to lower the temperature,
to ground ourselves in love,
and to put
down
the stone
we would raise.

And then.
Standing before you,
may the release that we feel
as we hold ourselves high
bring a softness
to all we would carry.
Amen.

(John 8:7) 'Jesus straightened up and said to the people: "Let the one who is without sin cast the first stone."'

*This prayer appears in the Bible Study and Prayers for 'Seed of Sequoia', the resource produced by Corrymeela for faith communities responding to domestic and sexual violence. See more at www.seedofsequoia.org/resources.

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Twenty-seventh day of Lent

God of the golden rule,
God of our common courtesy:
there is treasure to be found
in the unexplored space
between us and those
we have yet to treat

as equals.
In discovering the worth
you have placed in others,
may we find new depths
within ourselves.
Amen.

(Matthew 7:12) 'In everything do to others as you would have done to you; for this is the law and the prophets.'

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Twenty-eighth day of Lent

God of those
who have forgiven us;
God whose forgiveness
makes a new start possible:
free us from whatever
holds us back.
Without condoning
what is wrong or
ignoring what can harm,
let us move into a new day
with changed minds
and real grace.
Amen.

(Colossians 3:13) 'Forgive each other. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, you must also forgive.'

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Twenty-ninth day of Lent

God who sees us
in our blindness;
God who leads us
to open our eyes:
when we survey
what needs attention
in this broken beautiful world,
may we first look
to ourselves.
Any harsh scrutiny begins
with our own hypocrisy.
Then may we remember
that you can see it all
and choose to look on us
with mercy.

Amen.

(Matthew 7:5) 'First take the log out of your own eye. Then you will be able to see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbour's.'

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Thirtieth day of Lent

God of an otherworldly peace,
God of our encouraged hearts:
may your good news
beat within us
with a steady pulse.
May we hear your voice
in moments of anxiety
and be reminded
of the presence
you have promised.
And then may we breathe
more easily,
and share this gift of peace.
Amen.

(John 14:27) 'Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give as this world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.'

+

Thirty-first day of Lent

God in Mary's song for justice,
God in the tender mercy of peace:
may the dawn from on high
break upon us
and break the darkness
of our injustice.
We live in the rut
of what came before,
replacing one empire with the next.
May the day quickly come when
those with power set power aside
without fear of retribution;
and when the greatest strength
will be that of mother with child
bearing light and life with a song.
Amen.

(Luke 1:78-79) 'By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness.'

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Thirty-second day of Lent

God who could demand anything,
God who requires justice
and kindness and humility:
we have set up in your place
idols of power and control,
systems for winning
in which all of us lose.
These false gods demand too much.
They set us up against each other,
and lead us farther from your path.
Call us back.
Let us walk with you.
Please.

(Micah 6:8) 'What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God?'

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Thirty-third day of Lent

God of this day,
God of our companions:
may our means of communication
not only be through
pixels and emojis,
the miracle of satellite links;
but through eye contact
and stories shared round a table;
in passed down recipes
and raised toasts;
so that our hearts might be filled
with greater generosity.
Amen.

(Acts 2:46) 'Day by day, as they spent time together, they broke bread in each other's homes, and ate with glad and generous hearts.'

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Thirty-fourth day of Lent

God of the widows,
God of the prophets:
you told us stories
of how a little oil and a little flour,

and the kindness of community,
were enough and more than enough.
Jar after jar was filled and stored.
Remind us how a drop and a speck,
and a tap on the door;
the willingness to believe
in response to a need
made all the difference in those stories,
and can make all the difference
in ours, too.
Amen.

(I Kings 17:16) 'The jar of oil did not empty nor the jug of flour fail.'; (II Kings 4:3) 'Elisha said: "Go outside, borrow vessels from all your neighbours -- and not just a few!"'
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Thirty-fifth day of Lent (Holy Monday)

God of this holy week,
God of righteous anger:
you ascended to the temple
and found it turned
into a marketplace of low worth.
Into spaces set apart,
we import a common currency;
an invitation to pray in your presence
traded for tokens of piety.
Drive this from us.
Overturn our status quo.
Reset the room of our hearts
that we might worship
with clearer minds
the one who stands apart.
Amen.

(Matthew 21:12) 'Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the benches of those who sold doves.'
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Thirty-sixth day of Lent (Holy Tuesday)

God of the sheathed sword,
God of the restrained choice:
You know how each wrong act
can be justified
by some previous wrong.
You died to put an end

to the madness of such solutions.
Be with those
who now choose another way,
who resist without vengeance,
who provide an escape
from our cycle of violence;
who live and die
without perishing.
Amen.

(Matthew 26:52) 'Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.'

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Thirty-seventh day of Lent (Holy Wednesday)

God who kneels to wash our feet,
God who tends to feelings
of shame and discomfort:
in an act that is humbling
and awkward;
simple yet profound,
you bring a tactile attention
to who we are,
cleansing and caressing us.
Help us as we make sense
of why such kindness makes us
uncomfortable,
and why simple attentive
service feels so strange.
Amen.

(John 13:4-5) 'Then Jesus poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was around him.'

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Thirty-eighth day of Lent (Maundy Thursday)

God of the shared bread
and the common purse,
You broke bread with those
who broke your trust and took
more than they needed for themselves.
You still do.
May our shared response
to common fears
lead us each to reconsider

what we need and what we want,
and how we divide what we have.
Break who we are
so that we can be more for others.
Amen.

(Mark 14:22) 'While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread; and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said: "Take. This is my body."'

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Thirty-ninth day of Lent (Good Friday)

God of nailed flesh,
God of finished breaths:
the death of Jesus is repeated
in countless ways each day
as our inhumanity is marked
by our cruelty to others.
May this day be for us
a death to that life.
May the day then dawn
of a renewed humanity:
one that truly bears your image
in its flesh;
one that breathes with your spirit
of undying love.
Amen.

(Luke 23:20-22) 'Pilate, wanting to release Jesus, addressed them again; but they kept shouting, "Crucify, crucify him!" He said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?"'

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Fortieth day of Lent (Holy Saturday)

God of grieving,
God of silence,
there is a strange gift in having time,
one whole day this holy week,
to sit with questions of why and how long
and to hear no response at all.
To rush from Friday to Sunday,
from death to resurrection,
wouldn't do either justice.
Nor would it dignify the life of those
whose daily pain and grief
and constant pleas for justice
go unanswered in the world's daily rhythm.
Let your silence fill this silence,

until our empty noise dies out.

Amen.

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Easter Sunday

God of reborn hope,

God of undying love:

women went to the tomb

to tend to the crucified dead.

They came back the first preachers

of resurrection.

As we come back from our tomb today,

help us live again.

May we deliver with unbridled joy

what the world is dying to hear:

that death is never the end;

that love remains what is most divine;

and that you continue to live

in the beating heart of our humanity.

Amen.

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NB: Many of these prayers were inspired by the texts used in the 2024 Corrymeela Community prayer guide. On each day of the month, members of the community, members of staff and residential volunteers are named as part of our ritual of prayer - and a text read to set our intentions for the day.

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