

Prayers for Community in a Time of Pandemic – 1 June to 15 September 2020

1 June 2020

God of righteous anger,
God of rippling peace:
somewhere, far from sight,
the tempestuous sea and
this quiet bay connect
in one great body of water,
linked to rivers and streams
that extend a backward reach
to headwaters far beyond our shore.
May we on this earth, separated
by vastly different experiences,
kept apart by distance and
the barriers we make,
be united by your spirit,
that the pain of one
might be borne by all
through the channels of your peace.
Amen.

2 June 2020

God of law,
God of order:
sometimes there are no words
for the vanity on display.
Remind us that when we use your name
for loveless purposes that divide,
we speak a clanging noise
and your voice cannot be heard.
Amen.

3 June 2020

God of one and God of all:
from our many
may a unity appear.
Help us find a way to hold
our differences together.
Bring us to the recognition that
to be most fully human
is to champion the

full humanity of others.
Your earthly image
cannot be found in the mirror,
but in the eyes of varied faces that
reflect the incarnated divinity
in our own.
Amen.

4 June 2020

God of spring and God of summer:
the first cutting has occurred
and the crows are picking through
the heaps, looking out for harvesters
who will arrive to scoop this up.
The beauty of these long rows draws
our eyes up and our minds back
to what has happened
these last few months.
We ask that you would be with us
as we consider what we've lost
and also what we've found.
May we mark these moments well.
The birds see now the value
of what will feed many
through the winter.
Amen.

5 June 2020

God of grace and beauty,
God of the crooked shore:
we give you thanks for those
who reveal your grace with
a wisdom they wear so lightly,
in a strength they only use
to lift up other people.
The generosity that some show
in conversation, and in lessons
they impart through open silence,
provides a glimpse of
divine light to be found
in stories yet to be told,
in questions we still want to ask.
Amen.

6-7 June 2020

God of holy relationship,
God of distinct inclusion:
with you and in you
togetherness matters.
Remind us that ours
is not a life
of living for ourselves.
In being with
and for each other,
may we discover that
how we relate to
how we are different
shows the essence
of who we each are.
Amen.

8 June 2020

God of cathartic tears,
God of embodied joy:
how good it is has been
to see a familiar face,
to hear comfort
in a dear friend's voice,
and to share our grief
with someone who knows.
As we move through this unbounded
and exhausting time
may we note the moments
when we've been our most human:
when our bodies
instinctively responded
to the truth of being alive
and a part of something greater.
Amen.

9 June 2020

God of the scales held in her hands,
God of the scales that fell from his eyes:
we pray for those who have waited
far too long for justice;
and for those who have taken
far too long to see
that systems said
to be balanced and blind

work for some but not for all.
May repentance come quick,
not from a fear of being condemned,
but in the hope of being set free
from the see-saw of us-them, win-lose,
and from the blindness of seeing
only what we want to be true.
Amen.

10 June 2020

God of each moment,
God of all time:
years from now
2020 will still be present
in our collective memory;
not just for ourselves
or our families
or this town, or this nation,
but for all people, everywhere.
May this shared experience,
with its sorrow, its anxiety,
its lessons and revelations
be the beginning
of a new 'we,' the us
you've been with
from the start.
Amen.

11 June 2020

God who weeps with us,
God who rejoices with us:
as we mark the seriousness
of this pandemic,
and lament the extent
of our brokenness,
give us the faith to see
that the power that lies beneath us
and that holds us fast to you
is the power of justice.
Remind us of the presence of joy
in the hearts of those who know
that love and beauty
and kindness will last
when all that is empty
fades away.
Amen.

12 June 2020

God of our healthy fears,
God of our courage and faith:
there is a strengthening pull
wanting to carry us
back to what they call normal.
But there is also cautious resistance
and a reluctance to embrace all that was.
Help us in this in between.
As we venture out
and relax restrictions,
may we not forget the dangers,
nor lose sight of what we've gained
in a time of self-imposed limitation.
Strengthen our patience
to let this play out;
and may the lessons we carry
help us all to pull through.
Amen

13-14 June 2020

God of the plentiful harvest,
God of the shaken-off dust:
there is enough work to be done
and enough good to be found
that no defeat can be final,
no success a time to stop.
As we set out
to help heal this world,
remind us that our own power
will always be insufficient,
but that your limitless spirit can speak
through the words we proclaim
of the good news of heaven
come near.
Amen.

15 June 2020

God of the community well,
God of our individual needs:
we will draw from these days
a shared experience for years and years.
Yet each of us balances
this pandemic's challenge
with private struggles and
dissimilar circumstances.
May we take into account
the additional weight
that we and our neighbours will carry,

so that as we lend (and accept from)
each other support
we can draw out more lessons
from this well of community,
and bring home all that we can.
Amen.

16 June 2020

God of constant assurance,
God who is forever new:
a life of faith is
not without risk.
There is no telling what
lies ahead when we choose
to let go of what has been.
But as we set off on this next adventure
of finding our newer and truer selves,
remind us that it is in becoming
that we remain
the people you created us to be.
Amen.

17 June 2020

God of revelation,
God of unveiling:
the truths that many would
pretend to discover
are truths that others
could never avoid.
May this time be the time
of conversation about
matters that have laid
underneath fears and prejudices,
and beneath a wilful blindness.
May your revealing of
what has always been
change us and what is to be,
so that in acknowledging each other
and the sins brought to light
we might never find such cover again.
Amen.

18 June 2020

God of sisters and brothers,

God of growth through conflict:
we see raw heartbreak
when our children realise
how elusive fairness can be.
We gasp with them
as they learn that even childish pranks
and playful teasing can draw real blood.
Young tears can signal a realisation
that words and actions born from fear
can harm the ones we love.
May our growth in this time
reassure each other.
And as members of a family
you maternally adore,
may an unquestioned bond now hold us
as when a sibling seeks forgiveness.
Amen.

19 June 2020

God we see in familiar faces,
God in the strangers we think we know:
as we meet again and see each other
on the street or on a screen,
give us a moment to look again
and discover how people can change.
There are worlds within
each person we love,
and also within those we don't,
and steps to take from point a
to point b that we can walk together.
As we set out to reach the good ahead
may we greet what's new inside us.
Amen.

20-21 June 2020

God of uncovered secrets,
God of fearless truth:
to have faith in your goodness
is to trust
that after all we would hide
is revealed,
and all of our whispers are heard,
your undying love will remain,
and your truth will stand unchanged.
May we forgo our protection of self,
and find life made whole in shalom.

Amen.

22 June 2020

God of midsummer light,
God of midwinter snow:
as our tilted earth
rounds the bend and turns
along its course,
we note the connection we have
with those around the world,
whether they are basking
in the fullness of the season
or rejoicing in the sun's return.
May we know that even though
our highs and lows will rarely coincide,
the story of this year
and the shared rhythm of this life
provides a commonality with all,
even those to whom we are opposed.
Amen.

23 June 2020

God of human touch,
God of spiritual embrace:
this biggest event of our lives
will live on in our tissues,
something our bodies
are actively learning to hold.
And so the kindness we show
to ourselves,
and the support we offer each other,
is not just for right now.
May the soothing techniques we practice
and the centring breaths we take
hold us in this moment
and train us for moments to come,
so that without thinking
we can find ourselves
again, in your presence.
Amen.

24 June 2020

God of honest conversation,
God of ever-listening saints:
how we wish we'd found the words
and the courage in the moment

to say what needed said
when loved ones were much closer,
and the time was almost right.
Remind us of the time we have
alive with you right now.
Yours is an ear alert for prayer;
ours a communion in which to listen.
Help us
in silence with you, in words for others
convey both love and concern,
and may those who hear
and those who speak
receive the message of your peace.
Amen.

25 June 2020

God whose face is never seen
God whose image shall not be made:
you knew – even before we
melted our gold to worship a beast—
that we would be quick to put
our face, our skin, our accent, our culture
up on a throne and call it your name.
Save us from this idol that we want.
Remind us that you are not
the best version of us, so that we might
rank ourselves in second place.
Show us again that to be divine is not
to reign supreme, but to relinquish power,
to empty one's self in love.
May we find you again alive in community
rather than lifeless in our reflection.
Amen.

26 June 2020

God of caught breath,
God of welcomed pause:
so much has happened so quickly,
that we can lose a sense of time.
As we continue to pace
and prepare ourselves
for more unknown to come,
we are grateful
for the faithfulness you promise:
the 'strength for today and

bright hope for tomorrow'
that we find morning by morning.
Give us that song.
Have us hum it by heart.
May we share the new mercies we see.
Amen.

27-28 June 2020

God of prophets at the door,
God of cool cups of water:
justice is hard to define,
and harder to apply,
but love lived out in public
is never out of reach.
Help us all to welcome
the instinct in ourselves
to do the right thing
in the moment we're in.
As we greet the one before us
with a kindness we'd expect
may our reward be no stranger
than an offer of a drink.
Amen.

29 June 2020

God of the second mile,
God of the turned cheek:
some who receive more hardship
respond with greater love.
Their faith runs all the deeper,
and their hope becomes like rock.
With acquired humility they keep
accumulating lessons
and accomplish more
beyond a terminal sentence
than those who barely start.
We give you thanks for saints
whose shortened lives contain
enough for several books;
whose every thought and
prayer and pause
deserves an extra page.
Amen.

30 June 2020

God of eternal life,
God of letting go:
throughout this long season
and over a century of days,
you have remained constant
as we've rediscovered ourselves.
There is more change ahead.
This pandemic is not finished.
Nor are we.
As we continue to be transformed,
may we cling to kindness and mercy;
to courage and trust;
to faith and hope;
to undying selflessness.
May divine love be made flesh
and given breath
in the life that changes with you.
Amen.

1 July

God of the prodigal's return,
God of the rivals' reunion:
when the son neared his father,
he bowed as a servant
and relinquished all familial rights.
It was the same gesture Jacob made
when he came near Esau in fear.
Their repentance and humility
were immediately engulfed
in a full-bodied embrace,
into a restoration of what was lost,
and a fuller celebration of what was found.
As we return to patterns
of work and life, and find ourselves
face to face again,
may we be restored with all
our humility and repentance intact.
Amen.

2 July 2020

God of extraordinary kindness,
God of ordinary folk:
as we reform ourselves
in these rebuilding days,
we are bound to mimic
the behaviour we see in others.

May we not get distracted
by those whose sound and fury
signify nothing.
Remind us of a divine potency alive
in those who quietly carry on
with compassion;
whose simple goodness,
their gift from you,
can recreate the world.
Amen.

3 July 2020

God of community,
God of our deepest self:
in this time of isolation
and protective separation,
the truth of our connection
has risen to the fore.
Although our fear-based
structures are
more fragile than we thought,
the bonds of human kindness
contain the strength of godly love.
We give you thanks
that beneath this worldly tumult
and within our beaten hearts
we know that God is with us
and will be with us still.
Amen.

4 July 2020

We have been deeply moved by the response this series has received over the past 100 plus days, particularly as individuals and faith communities have incorporated them into their spiritual practice. Thank you so much for your comments and encouragement. The writer of these prayers will be on holiday for the bulk of July. During this break, we encourage you to share these posts and to review the collection, which can found in its entirety at our website: www.corrymeela.org.

3 August 2020

God of gardens we never noticed before,
God of the time we didn't know we had,
we give thanks for weeks of renewal,
for changes of scenery,

for hours set to a different clock.
We rejoice in the eyes we have to see
this beautiful, hurting world again.
We pray that as we return
to scheduled patterns,
we will continue to note
the realms of glory all around us,
the saints who have struggled on,
and the joyful, urgent work we have to do.
Amen.

4 August 2020

God of our growing hope,
God of a learned caution:
guide us now as our experiences diverge.
Some are eager to move forward,
with a certain degree of risk;
others continue to rely
on the shield of our collective response.
Grant us patience. Increase our courage.
Give us the sense to know
when we're being overly careful,
and when we're being cavalier.
But keep us united,
so we might find our hope together.
Amen.

5 August 2020

God of those who make good trouble,
God of those who prize peace:
we have been blessed
by two who testified to the light
just like their namesake before them:
one Baptist, one Catholic, both fearless.
We give thanks
that on bridges in Selma and Derry,
in marches and decades of politics,
they continued to press
with their own sweat and blood,
so that love would overcome hate,
and to show that a struggle,
if righteous and just,
should never have to be armed.
Amen.

6 August 2020

God of our protective impulses,
God of the common good:
help us
as we make decisions in the dark
that will affect not just ourselves
but those we love
and those we should love.
Give us the courage to trust
not just our primal instincts,
but the good news
that what is best for the whole,
for the neighbour and the stranger,
is what protects the best in ourselves.
Amen.

7 August 2020

God of deeper conversation,
God of deepening relationships:
with so little known
about what lies ahead,
may we now take the time
to meet ourselves again,
and to encounter anew
the people we say we know.
These strangers who may be close to us
have more to share when we
open ourselves to renewed curiosity
and trust that undiscovered joys
lie within
the connections we already have.
Amen.

8-9 August 2020

God who withdraws into quiet,
God who returns with reassurance:
after you took time for yourself
you approached the disciples
with a calming power.
May we, even as we fail
to match your miraculous ways,
find peace like yours
in the care we offer ourselves.
And then may we,
in the midst of new storms,
quiet the fears that unsettle our hearts.

Amen.

10 August 2020

God of receding tides,
God of rising waters.
more has become exposed
from around us and within:
beauty and ugliness,
and resilience and hurt.
May we hold what we discover
from these pools of hidden life
with gentle curiosity.
And may what we find
lead us into a daily rhythm
of extending your grace further
across near and distant shores.
Amen.

11 August 2020

God of this shared earth
and this shared experience:
may this great leveller of a disease,
this reminder of our common fragility,
our mortality,
and our recognisable fears,
be also the great correction
in our collective story.
May this be the moment
when we start again
with clearer eyes and kinder hearts,
and with a renewed resolve
to do justice, love mercy
and walk humbly
together.
Amen.

12 August 2020

God of childhood summers,
God of lifelong memories:
these present days are unlike
any that have come before,
but remind us a little
of surprising moments that appeared
when we were growing up;

days of discovering ourselves
for the first time
in the context of others;
seasons of actively figuring out
who we thought we were.
May we all renew our license
to explore again who we can be,
so that when this crisis is over
we're each a little more grown up.
Amen.

13 August 2020

God who holds us in our brokenness,
God whose healing makes us whole:
the biggest event of our lives
is still unfolding.
It is not something to be
outmanoeuvred or outwitted.
This story is still incomplete,
and our recovery has yet to begin.
That unknowing is part of our pain.
There is wisdom in accepting
the things we cannot change.
But there is strength
in remembering that nothing,
not even what we can't control,
will separate us from your embrace.
Amen.

14-16 August 2020

God of friends we've lost,
God of friends we've kept:
these surreal days we're sharing
do not meet us all equally;
the private agonies
that some are experiencing
can be obscured by
our universal ordeal.
Remind us that today
may be more difficult for others
for reasons we do not fully see.
May our solidarity in one experience
not desensitize us to others' pain,
and may we be for them
in ways that meet their needs.

Amen.

17 August 2020

God of the guest house
God of the room we prepare:
the ones we welcome
and the ways we welcome
will reveal a great deal
about how we receive
your good news.
May we, in this time
of social distancing
and human longing,
accept your invitation
to meet you again in the stranger,
and to meet ourselves in the
emotions we house,
and at the doors we either open
or close.
Amen.

18 August 2020

God of the people,
God of the daoine,
God of the Rén,
God of the ashkhas,
God of the bobl,
God of the personas,
God of the Menschen,
God of the log,
God of the lydui,
God of the watu,
God of the dhaoine:
may our glorious human diversity,
which we confuse with babble,
be the way our spirits unify
in your incarnate love.
Amen.

19 August 2020

God of empathy,
God of embrace:
your image rests in all of us,
even those we push away.

As we find the courage to welcome ones
we have seen as other,
may we find a clearer glimpse
of your eternal presence with us,
and discover in our encounters
our truer, better selves.
And then may we,
despite our brokenness
be received into your wholeness,
into a family where no difference
can deny that we belong.
Amen.

20 August 2020

God of welcome,
God of boundary:
we give thanks that
each of us can be our full selves
in the community you create.
And we pray
that with your grace,
our way of being our true selves
will never harm others or
prevent them
from being their true selves.
May we welcome one another
as you have welcomed us,
so that the lines we draw together
trace the image of your love.
Amen.

21 August 2020

God of opening possibilities,
God of grace at the table:
faith in you
is faith in humanity.
You have loved us enough
to remain with us through death.
You see in us is what
we fail to see ourselves:
that each person we encounter is
a child of a loving God,
a partner for a better world,
a voice that adds meaning to this prayer.
May we be freed
to be ourselves,

to live the life you want,
and in that freedom find communion,
and your presence in our midst.
Amen.

24 August 2020

God of humility,
God of courage:
each conversation we enter,
if honest and meaningful,
will expose a vulnerability.
We share our life experiences,
the good and bad, and open up to pain.
We reveal our ignorance of things,
both consciously and not.
And so we pray for your grace
to be with us
in these imperfect conversations.
For acknowledging our weaknesses
will reveal your loving strength;
and facing of our fears together
will lead to something better.
Amen.

26 August 2020

God of honesty, God of grace:
opening up to others
raises a fear of being judged,
for reasons both
legitimate and imagined.
And so we pray that you
would let us love ourselves
the way you do:
to recognise another child of God.
May we also find you alive
in those who listen to us
and hear our story,
so that instead of judgement
we are given compassion;
and instead of rejection
we are offered embrace.
Amen.

28-30 August 2020

God of friends, God of enemies:
perhaps the great act of faith these days
is not a belief in you,
but a belief that you are present
in the people we want to turn away.

Help us discover
that there is always more to love
when we see others as you do;
there are differences not just to tolerate,
but to celebrate.

As you have remained with us and for us
despite all we have done to withdraw,
may we remain with and for others,
judging not as you could judge,
but loving more than we deserve.

Amen.

31 August 2020

God in our conflict,
God in our learning:
to be human is to find ourselves
in relation to those
with different goals, different needs,
different ways of being.

Remind us that our disagreements
are not the end of our connection.

May our differences
inspire our curiosity.

May our questions lead us
to better conversations,
letting us to see the world through
others' eyes.

Amen.

1 September 2020

God of our knowing selves,
God of our inquisitive selves:
when we stop being curious,
our relationships wither.

May we encounter others today
not with our minds made up,
but with our ears pricked up
with interest and fascination.

May we form questions still open
to the possibility of surprise,
finding something wonderful
in answers we weren't expecting,

and discovering how
everyday experiences
can still change us,
when we let them.
Amen.

2 September 2020

God of new lessons
God of old truths:
this faith of ours is
in what lies beyond us,
not just within us.
As we release ourselves
from the trap of thinking
we have it all figured out
and turn to you
and others for help,
for strength and insight
we don't possess,
may the fear of not
being in control
be replaced by the assurance
of never being alone.
Amen.

3 September 2020

God of form and frame,
God of tension and resistance:
to grow we need something
to push against.
We need conflict to reveal
what we think, how we feel,
and for whom we're willing to fight.
We need conflict to train us
how to be kind
when we really don't want to;
how to make room for others
because we simply have to.
and because it makes
a better space for us all.
As we struggle and strain
may we hold our own
but always in connection with others.
Amen.

4 September 2020

God of the spaces between us,
God of the fractures within us:
in the gap between what is
and what should be
there is room
for empathy and learning.
There are truths there we don't yet see
but could come to understand
if we care enough to ask,
if we imagine the reality of others,
if we have the courage to change.
May we enter that space
knowing well you are there,
waiting for us to join you
in a recreation of what was empty
into a garden full of life.
Amen.

7 September 2020

God of incremental changes,
God of seismic shifts:
this year has seen the world
transformed, even if we sometimes feel
that we have barely moved.
As we assess where we are now
in this strange, familiar place,
may we take heart in knowing
that the simple acts of kindness
and compassion we extend
help shape the world that's yet to form
and affect what happens next.
Amen.

8 September 2020

God of changed minds,
God of changed hearts:
sometimes a good argument
can affect our thinking,
and in turn affect our behaviour.
But more often, it's a better relationship
with someone we thought
we'd figured out
that reveals what our mind had missed,
exposing the flaw in our certainty.

No matter how we come to know that
your truth is different to what we imagined,
may this revelation lead
to a gentle revolution,
and may our turning around
bring us closer to you.
Amen.

9 September 2020

God of a long hard look in the mirror,
God of steadfast love:
the knowledge of your undying love
does not give us permission
to do what we want,
or license to act with overconfidence.
Instead, may it give us the courage
to address what is broken in ourselves
and the will to change what we can.
May our faith in your grace reassure us
that no matter what we find
staring back at us,
it will be accompanied
by your ever-loving presence.
Amen.

10 September 2020

God of righteous anger,
God of unsettling compassion:
even if do not seek it,
we can find ourselves with much
that could leave us upset.
Too often we choose to dwell there,
taking residence in resentment.
We pray that you would move us,
and unseat us from this state
with a grace we hope
that we can carry forward.
May we take the lessons gathered
and change direction as is needed,
so we end up in a new place
on the path of peace you show us.
Amen.

11-13 September 2020

God of our distinct identities,
God of our shared possibilities:
if we want the world to change,
and if we ask others to change,
we must be willing to change ourselves.
We give you thanks
for the faith to believe
that what is true and good in us
will remain and be revealed.
Through this transformation,
and even in our letting go
of what we want to protect,
may we trust that we will find you
holding on
to who are meant to be.
Amen.

14 September 2020

God of long walks with friends,
God of the longer walk of friendship:
we give thanks
for the accidental encounters,
the weekly catch-ups,
the second cups of tea.
We give thanks
for the desire to pick up the phone,
the thought to send a line,
the time we make when we have none.
We give thanks
that humans are relational creatures,
begun before birth in contact
with another,
and forever after made
not for efficient productions,
but for deeper connections.
Amen.