

Prayers for Community in a Time of Pandemic, from Lockdown to Easter 2020

13 March 2020

God of the good news that spreads faster than fear,
God of the courage that comes from the heart:
Be with us as anxieties rise
and with us as uncertainty grows.
Be with us when children ask difficult questions,
And with us when parents seem farther away.
Remind us that to be a community does not always mean
to be physically present beside those we know well.
It also can mean being spiritually present
with those who feel very alone;
and that you as our God, the God made flesh,
are also the God who calls us from the tumult
and tells us to be still
and know
that you are God
with us.
Amen.

14 March 2020

God of experts and amateurs,
in a time of great uncertainty,
we begin to realise how little we each know.
Yet you have placed within our community
those who speak from reason,
who know the science,
whose profession it is to protect.
May we hear the voices of informed wisdom,
and give thanks for what is already here:
the knowledge that overcomes ignorance,
the love that overcomes fear,
the community that includes the grace we all need.
Amen.

15 March 2020

God of new and renewed community,
where two or three are gathered in your name,
you promise to be there.
You promise also
to be in parishes that meet this week online,
and in congregations that courageously keep on keeping on,
and in churches that try something very different today,

and even when we find ourselves alone.
Our children sing in Sunday school that the
church is not a building.
Let us be the church together, wherever we are,
gathered by your Spirit, as only your Spirit can gather.
And may we find you already in our midst,
as we close our eyes in prayer.
Amen.

16 March 2020

God of the desert and God of the garden,
your son went into the wilderness.
And there he sat.
And there he prayed.
And there he dreamed
of a life more abundant for others.
As we root down for an uncertain time,
and consider how we've grown apart,
may we rest as needed and sprout new thoughts
for those less able to rest.
Amen.

God of the desert and God of the garden,
your son went into the wilderness.
And there he sat.
And there he prayed.
And there he dreamed
of a life more abundant for others.
As we root down for an uncertain time,
and sit with unanswerable questions,
may sprout new thoughts
for those less able to rest,
so that when we do leave this desert,
we join others in a garden that thrives.
Amen.

17 March 2020

God of the widow and God of the prophet,
you told us a story
of how a little oil and a little flour,
and the kindness of community,
saw a family through.
Jar after jar was filled and stored.
Remind us how a drop and a speck,
a tap on the door,

the willingness to believe in response to a need
made all the difference in that story,
and can make all the difference in ours, too.
Amen.

18 March 2020

God whose breath hovered over creation,
God whose breath brought wet clay to life:
Be in each grounding breath that we take,
The rise of our belly,
The fall of our chest.
Be in the kind word we extend,
the offer of help, the note of concern.
Be in the prayer that we whisper,
and the laugh that we share,
so that even in a time of chaos,
we might breathe into life a new creation.
Amen.

19 March 2020

God of the branches, God of the vine,
God of the fruit that will last,
when much of the familiar is pruned away
-- the work routine, the school run,
the certainty of our day –
may we see what is good and true
blossom in reassuring ways:
colleagues working as one,
children learning from home,
families praying together.
May these days of great disruption
bear out what is always true:
that we can reach others
with the love you provide
when our roots remain in you.
Amen.

20 March 2020

God of the home and God of the pilgrim,
we begin to dig in for an uncertain season,
and embark on a journey together.
This is a path we haven't been on.
Yet we know in each step
you are there alongside us:
a guide, a protector, a friend.
May each day on the road bring us closer together
closer to a land of grateful reunion

closer to the place you call home.
Amen.

21 March 2020

God of stilled waters,
God of calmed seas,
on a night of a difficult crossing
as your friends began to lose faith,
you awoke and hushed
the turbulent waves
with the power of unearthly peace.
May we respect the sheer force
of what we cannot control
and believe in the strength
that sleeps in this storm.
Amen.

22 March 2020

God of the Sabbath,
on this newest first day of creation,
your people gather in creative ways
to bear the image of God together.
As we worship and worry,
as we praise and pray,
let us pause
and acknowledge
all that happened this week.
And as we bring our fears and release our tears
let us see more clearly
that the world you have made
is still good.
Amen.

23 March 2020

God of the neighbour,
God of the stranger,
how many times have we left the house
and passed the homes of those
we barely know?
Yet you have known them.
And you know the people across the globe,
who have gone through what we will soon go through
and those who have yet to see what we now see.
The stranger is our neighbour
in this little world we've made.

May we no longer estrange our neighbour
in the world we build together.
Amen.

24 March 2020

God of our going out and our coming in:
each step we take today
needs to make space for others.
Each errand we run,
each purchase we make,
has to make sense for the whole.
We must consider how our lives
affect the lives around us.
This is not new.
It has always been thus.
But going forward, in this next step,
may this truth finally come home.
Amen.

25 March

God of the fire and God of the wind,
God of the silent sound,
when you speak to us,
you do so in ways we may not expect
but cannot ignore.
Allow us in this time of frantic noise
and eerie stillness
to listen again to the wind
and the earth,
to the gentle whisper of you
calling our name.
And may we hear in your voice
words of love and hope,
the good news of your presence with us
still.
Amen.

26 March 2020

God of the one and God of the whole,
be with those who are working from home today
and those whose work keeps them from home.
Be with those who won't go beyond the front porch,
and those who stay on the front line.
Be with those who must choose between
doing a job they know they can do
and being the parent only they can be.

May we each in our private worry
hear your universal call
to come, to lay down heavy burdens,
and find a welcome rest.
And then with our burdens lightened,
may we help to hold the whole.
Amen.

27 March 2020

God of honest emotions
God of cathartic tears,
it would be sadder if in these days
we didn't need a good cry,
a release from the body,
a moment to name how it feels.
We thank you that these tears
are not tears of weakness
but of witness.
They speak to a God
who wept as we do, and showed
human love is divine.
Amen.

28 March 2020

God of the heartbeat, God of the pulse:
every day we ring a bell
to call us all to prayer;
at 9am and 9pm,
for years and years and years.
Its surprising note cuts through our talk
and breaks our scheduled plans.
It interrupts our conflict
and disturbs our fragile peace.
Today, though there are very few
who are close enough to hear,
may its peel reach out to those whose lives
need reassuring sound,
and bring to all the shocking news
that you are always near.
We ring it as we always do
to call us all to prayer.
Amen.

30 March 2020

God of the seed and God of the branches,
you promised that a grain of faith
would be enough to move a mountain,
or better yet,
to make a nest for roosting.
May we now see the ripe fruition
of seeds planted long ago
by grand, motherly types
who sang us hymns we still can hum,
who showed us kindness
and quiet strength.
May we then grow in this new season
to plant a mountain-moving seed ourselves,
a shelter for tomorrow's wings.
Amen.

31 March 2020

God of pan-demos, God of all-people,
how odd that it takes a global disease
to show us that we are all one:
one species, one family
one genomic form,
one people dependent on you.
There are some among us
acutely at risk
to an invisible, indiscriminate foe.
We join in prayer for them and us,
that in our shared vulnerability
you would cure us of this sickness.
And the other one,
the one that divides us,
so that in healing we might become whole.
Amen.

1 April 2020

God of pastures and God of lambs,
these new-born creatures of spring
know nothing of the worry
or anxiety of our last month.
They know instead of
the earth beneath them
and the sky above,
and a mother who cares for them daily.
May we who are more experienced
remind each other of
the steadiness of your providence,

the instinct in your protection,
the simplicity of your love.
And may we then with confidence
find our footing in this new-born world.
Amen.

2 April 2020

God of hills and valleys,
the newsreader said
the peak will come in mid-April,
just as we are set to celebrate
resurrection.
We enter this shadowy valley
with verses half-remembered
about your rod and your staff,
and our not fearing.
May the memory of your goodness
follow us in these days;
may your presence with us now
provide a constant comfort;
and may this darkened valley
light up with the dawn of an Easter
not bound by any chart or calendar.
Amen.

3 April 2020

God who loves those we love,
God who loves those we don't;
it is easy to empathise
with people who behave as we do,
and face what we fear.
But when the us means
those who seem part of the problem,
our Christ-like compassion is tested.
Can our us include those
who take short-sighted decisions?
Can our we mean those
who put others at risk?
Can this community extend to those
whose actions threaten the whole?
We pray that it can,
because it already does.
Your compassion has included us all.
Amen.

4 April 2020

God of believers, God of deniers,
God of those who don't know:
faith assumes uncertainty.
The truth is hardly ever simple;
the path ahead rarely clear.
We turn to you in part because
we know not where to go.
Yet faith assumes assurance.
Faith remains, with hope and love,
when all else fades away.
As we step forth with you today,
grant us faith to trust ourselves,
and let us believe in the good you provide
that is well beyond our knowing.
Amen.

5 April Palm Sunday

God of crowds and God of crowns:
in your humility,
on the back of a donkey,
at the start of a week of great pain,
you showed a determination
to save us
not with overwhelming force
but with self-giving, revolutionary love.
May we see in your life and death,
and in your resurrection,
the way to face the foes within.
May we overcome our fears,
and put down our selfish wants;
may we stop our tendency to blame,
and fight for others first.
As you shield us from what we can't control,
save us from ourselves.
Amen.

6 April

God of Lazarus and God of Judas,
your great love raises the dead,
and condemns what is wrong in this life.
During this holiest of weeks we see hatred
and brokenness, and hypocrisy;
but also beauty, and mercy
and undying love.
Your death made clear
what must come to an end:
our fear, our waste, our selfishness.

Yet we rejoice that in this dying
lies our rebirth
and that you will bring the world,
and all the grace-filled good in us,
back to life.
Amen.

7 April 2020, *John 12:20-36*

God of the fallen grain,
God of the children of light:
It was in your being broken down
that you were lifted up.
It is in releasing our lives to others
that we bear your lasting truth.
As we head further into this week,
a community dispersed,
may our relinquishing of self,
and our selfless love for others
broadcast wide the great good news
that even in death there is glorious new life,
and that darkness will not overcome it.
Amen.

8 April 2020

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 a common threat
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.

9 April 2020

God who washes our feet,
God who commands us to love:
before the prayers in the garden,
and the stations of the cross;
before the tomb and the spices

and the stone they put in place,
there was this moment
when you showed us what it meant
to be divine.
May we not forget
that the power to defeat death
was not what you wanted us to imitate.
It was to lay aside all other things
and to love.
Amen.

10 April 2020, Good Friday

God of the crowds crying, 'crucify!'
God on the cross crying, 'forgive them':
by doing and not doing,
we have repeated that Friday scene
in countless ways,
in countless places,
to countless sons and daughters.
We know not what we do
even when we know too well.
We are now facing death in a new way.
And human frailty. And human need.
And human solidarity.
Perhaps as we begin to see as you see
the reality of who we are,
we can finally begin to love as you love,
answer compassionately the cries we hear,
and be able to forgive, ourselves.
Amen.

11 April 2020

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.

12 April 2020

God of unbounded joy,
God of undying love:
the women went to the tomb
to tend to the crucified dead
and came back the first preachers
of resurrection.
As we come back from our tomb today,
and begin to 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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