

Prayers for Community in a Time of Pandemic – 15 September to 31 December 2020

15 September 2020

God of lifelong companions,
God of sudden discoveries:
We know that to be honest with others
risks pushing them away;
we know that their honesty with us
will show what we'd hide.
Let our relationships be
the process of our becoming,
so that we are shaped
by laughter and tears,
by squabbles and smirks,
by courage and comfort,
by another who sees us
better than we can.
Amen.

16 September 2020

God of our great ideas,
God of our better angels:
when we are sure that we are right,
and that our solution is the best,
warn us of the danger that we pose.
Often, the insistence on one way
will make it harder for others to agree,
particularly when we think
it's the only answer that makes sense.
Help us as we choose to let go
of what we might want to impose
so that in the space that opens up,
a co-created possibility might emerge.
And then help us see
that what is mine
is hardly ever as nice
as what is ours.
Amen.

17 September 2020

God of risky love,
God of divine courage:
to be ready to listen
we should know what it's like

to be heard;
to be good at giving support
we should know what it's like
to be held.
We give thanks that our best relationships
not only provide additional strength;
they help us practice the skill
of being human
by being vulnerable.
And, therefore, strangely
of being more like you.
Amen.

18 September 2020 (Spirituality of Conflict 20 Sept 2020)

God of justice,
God of grace:
in trying to make sense
of this world
and our place in it,
we train ourselves to expect
reward for our work,
and that our worth will correspond
to our effort.
As you give us today what we need,
may we consider not
where we stand in relation to others,
but how we might stay
in communion with those who,
like us, are dependent
on divine generosity.
Amen.

21 September 2020

God beneath the encompassing sky,
God above the hardening earth:
in this thin space between,
the great human drama plays out
with deep and deepening pains
and endless moments of joy.
Even as we take note
of how small our part may be,
may we take heart
that our next breath can hold
a message of light and love,
like the one
that brought your creation to life.

Amen.

22 September 2020

God of earth's effortless turning,
God of this cycle of seasons:
one day on the calendar marks
both the beginning of autumn
and the beginning of spring;
the end of the north's summer
and the end of the south's winter.
While distant from each other,
we are connected by a rhythm,
a push and pull of light.
May it remind us that our journey
is not one we take alone,
and that the darkness that we enter
cannot stop the coming dawn.
Amen.

23 September 2020

God of persistent widows,
God of eventual justice:
as some sit with the luxury
of reflecting on how much
can be taken for granted,
others add their weight and their voice
to causes that may never
benefit them directly,
but can make it more likely
for rising generations to
experience what all should enjoy.
May we see privilege not
as a reward, deserved or not,
but as a tool in hand
to build a better world.
Amen.

24 September 2020

God of changing winds,
God of steadying hands:
be with us on the days
when we find ourselves in doubt,
so that we can be for others
when we they need some reassurance.
Give us extra strength

when we are feeling weak,
so we can lend a little muscle
to those who need support.
Grant us a double portion of your grace
so that when we are lacking enough
for ourselves, we can still extend
the peace that comes
from resting in your steadfast love.
Amen.

25-27 September

God who knows our fears,
God who knows our hearts:
we've taken your world
and created an endless game
of winners and losers.
We've set up a ladder
that gets us nowhere
but up and down.
Bring us down to earth.
Free us
from this hierarchical nonsense,
so we can see each other
face to face
and respond to real needs
without the fear of falling.
Amen.

28 September 2020

God with those on the margins,
God with those on the edge:
as we confine ourselves to what we know
and retreat into spaces we deem safe,
remind us that we are less likely
to find you there.
We will find ourselves alone
with the idols we carve and coddle,
and miss the chance to
touch your hem
as you head out to those in need.
But even as we fold ourselves
into our comfy pockets,
your grace doubles back to find us
and, with a cut, reveals
the edge we stand against

when we see ourselves as central.
Amen.

29 September 2021

God with us in difficult conversations,
God with us in difficult silences:
each moment and every mistake
gives us the chance to learn,
to understand and to change.
Before we react in fear or anger,
may we steady our breath
and calm our minds
to remind ourselves
that your love for us
is not in jeopardy.
And with that reassurance,
may we seek the truth
we need to hear,
and receive the grace
we mistook as threat.
Amen.

30 September 2020

God of the truth beneath our truths,
God of the foundation beneath our facades:
we give thanks that there is something
beyond our control
firmly devoted to our wellbeing.
We give thanks there is strength
available to us
in the moments when we want to give up.
We give thanks that sounding clear
through the noise and the distraction
is a whisper from you
calling our name
with the promise that you'll
always be with us.
Amen.

1 October 2020

God who was there before all the chaos,
God who will be in the Eden to come:
set us down in this moment
with our boundaries fixed.

As we look to each other
to make sense of this world,
remind us that there is no horizon
that will not lead us to you;
our spirits will not find a place
to hide from your searching love.
So may that knowledge inspire new courage
to build again structures of justice,
and bring out anew from an unsettled state
a community whose heart
is steadied by you.
Amen.

2-4 October 2020

God of this full moon,
God our of eyes that cannot see
the moon is always full:
so much of reality is hidden from us
because of where we stand.
As this season turns
and our attention naturally wanes,
may we not forget
what we have seen
or try to cloak in shadow
what we pretend was never there.
And may we start to recognise
how our positions blind us
to what is really there.
Amen.

6-5 October 2020

God of power that is not brute strength,
God of connections that empower us all:
when will we learn
that not every obstacle
demands that we force our way through?
When will we see
that admitting our limits
will not leave us in want or at risk?
When will we trust
that our dependence on others
is not a symptom of weakness,
but the glory of humans
made complete in relationship?
May that understanding,
that insight, that faith

be part of our being today.
Amen.

7-8 October 2020

God of the billions alive on this earth,
God of the one who feels most alone:
we all share this crisis, this moment;
we all hang on this hinge in our history.
Yet we know that some
are more affected than others:
more vulnerable to disease,
more at risk from injustice;
who can't afford a return to the normal.
As this pandemic has exposed
a common fragility,
may it reveal a common desire
to learn and to change,
restore and protect,
so that all may enjoy a sense of belonging,
and know that what comes
will be good.
Amen.

9-11 October

God of pilgrims who share this journey,
God of travellers upon this road:
This path changes us.
The conversations we have,
and the views we've gained;
the hurt we've endured,
and the muscles we've trained:
they bring us to a new place,
and to a newer sense of us.
As we unpack
the things we've carried
and recount the things we've lost,
may we marvel again
at the journey itself,
the gift of walking with others
along a path that takes us
into and beyond ourselves.
Amen.

12 October 2020

God of narrowing autumn light,

God of branching autumn colours:
as we hunker down
for these darker months,
may we wrap ourselves up
in memories of days together.
May our homes house the laughter
of visits from friends,
and sounds from a kitchen
in the midst of a party.
May our cosier moments
in the season ahead
give us the feel
of company we keep
even in our separation,
even in our waiting for
spring to arrive.
Amen.

13 October 2020

God of the strength
that lifts us each morning,
God of the weight
that drops us down in our beds:
this constant fight against gravity,
this struggle to push up and away –
is a marker of life.
It is our daily battle of no and yes.
No, we will not lie still. Yes, we will live
and move and have our being.
We give thanks for the rest
that preserves our life for tomorrow,
so that as we rise from our night's slumber
we begin again and gain a victory
in each waking, determined moment;
and see a glimpse, if only faintly,
of an endless rising dawn.
Amen.

14 October 2020

God with us in our policies,
God with us in our politics:
there are rarely easy answers
to the problems that confront us.
We do our best and make mistakes
and fix the damage done.
We try and fail and try again

but remain connected with each other.
We pray for those who represent us,
as well as those who don't.
May we find new ways to compromise
without compromising what's essential,
so that in fighting for what we need in life
we include the needs of others.
Amen.

15 October 2020

God of prudent precautions,
God of corrective adjustments:
in community,
we make decisions based
not on personal convenience
or private preference,
but on what is best for the whole.
As we pull back
from a desired outcome,
and let reality have its say,
give us the grace to accept
what is right for the many,
so that life is more than survival,
but a harvest that continually thrives.
Amen.

16 October 2020

God of the chaos we fear,
God of the day we create:
the eternal nature of your love
is something greater than permanence.
We don't so much rest upon it
because it is fixed and unchanging
as we continually discover it:
surprising and true.
Morning by morning new mercies we see.
Give us faith not in what
we hope can still last
from the first breath of creation,
but in what arrives
in this newborn moment:
your voice bringing light
with news that is good.
Amen.

19 October 2020

God of waking children,
God of ageing parents:
right now, our worlds contain
those we've known for all our lives,
and those whose lives are just beginning.
In this moment, as surreal as it is,
we can still hold together a family
of friends and companions
with lines of communication,
and daily short connections.
We give thanks
for these domestic and digital bonds.
But may we also, through your spirit,
extend our reach to actively commune
with others still unknown to us
who likewise dwell with you.
Amen.

20 October 2020

God of cleared fields,
God of replenished stores:
the season that passes from
seeding to harvest
does not bring us to our destination.
It brings to us all
the substance we need
to carry ourselves further along.
As we look back
at how far we have come
and see the journey ahead,
let us give thanks for our progress
and the produce of time,
so our growth may continue
each day.
Amen.

21 October 2020

God of the hope we cling to,
God of the hope that won't let us go:
be with us as we push forward
and as we pull back.
Be with us as we loan courage to friends
and receive some back in return.
Be with us as we proclaim
a truth with certainty,

and when we harbour real doubts;
Be with us as we dream up crazy new plans,
and when we are brought to our senses.
Be with us this moment
as you always have been
with a hope
that never has faltered.
Amen.

22 October 2020

God of a welcomed pause,
God of a calming exhalation:
we can move so fast
in our thoughts, our actions,
our reactions and our whims,
we can't quite catch up with ourselves.
Even in lockdown, even on days
cleared of scheduled tasks,
we can fail to stop and accept from you
a moment's gift of rest.
When time seems both to barrel on,
and hardly move at all,
may we catch our breath,
and settle in to your unhurried pace
so that we might then
with steady minds
approach the task at hand.
Amen.

23-25 October 2020

God of the friends who change our minds,
God of friendships that change who we are:
we give thanks
that in being with and for others,
we become something different ourselves.
Instead of pretending to know
another's experience, or believing
the worst of what we've heard;
we can assume that what's best in us
is also true for others.
To lead with trust instead of fear
is to have the faith
that you are God not just with one,
but with all; not just for us
but for everyone.
In finding you in the lives of others,
we find more of you within.
Amen.

26 October 2020

God of late night chats,
God of early morning thoughts:
the time we make with friends,
and the time we devote to friendship
restores and rewards us.
We pick up the phone
or join up for a stroll,
or simply look in the eyes
of those closest to us.
As creatures of connection,
we come alive as we relate our place
and our own story to others,
to shared memories and dreams.
So help us to dream ourselves
into a fuller and richer humanity,
with those we already know we love
and those who are always loved by you.
Amen.

27 October 2020

God of healthy disagreements,
God of principled stands:
we need not have the same mind
to sit around the same table.
We need not share precise beliefs
to fit within a home.
We need not speak the same dialect
to be a part of a loving family.
And we need not see the world the same
to know it's big enough for all.
As we hold firm
to what we know is right
may we honour the ground
where others stand
so that more of the earth,
and more of our imagination,
may be hallowed in your name.
Amen.

28 October 2020

God of serenity and courage,
God of serenity and wisdom:
may we know the difference

your promise makes
as we struggle to be patient;
as we steel ourselves for disappointment,
and speak our will out loud.
We pray that in a raw
and honest vulnerability,
as we wait and fret and hope,
we remember that the truth
you ask us to accept
is the good news brought
by the better angels of our nature:
news of justice and mercy and peace,
of those left out brought in.
Amen.

29 October 2020

God of the long to embrace,
God of the reunion to come:
so much of what you told us
about separation and waiting,
about sons and brothers
and widows rejoicing,
takes on new meaning these days.
As we note how part of ourselves
is aching for connection and completion,
for ghost limbs of a shared humanity,
may the bone of our bone
and the flesh of our flesh
return in the form of those among us
we had not fully counted before.
Amen.

30 October – 1 November 2020

God of the dust to which we return,
God of the ash that enriches the soil:
there are seeds from trees
that open
only after a fire has passed through.
They push the tips of their roots down
when the sunlight above has space.
May we remember
that after all we see passes away,
the gifts you promise remain.
Faith. Hope. Love.
And the greatest of these

is taking root now
in the soil of compassion and kindness.
Amen.

2 November 2020

God of childhood stories,
God of grownup concerns:
democracies are about faith.
We choose to believe,
not just in ideals,
but in people.
We choose to trust
something as unpredictable
and unreliable as ourselves.
Democracy rests on the faith
that we ourselves can rule ourselves
not only when we get what we want
but also when we don't.
Be with us in this test
as you have been with us in the past
so that we might reward the faith
you place in us.
Amen.

3 November 2020

God of charity for all,
God of malice toward none:
be with us.
Be with us as we 'strive to finish
the work that we are in
to bind up a nation's wounds.'
Be with us
as we 'do all which may achieve
and cherish a just and lasting peace
among ourselves and with all nations.'
Be with us on this and every day.
Be with us all.
Amen.

5 November 2020

God of those who agree with us,
God of those who don't:
keep us from dividing the world
into us and them,
for or against,

good and bad.

Remind us that humans
and human systems are always
more complex than the binary
choice of on/off, up/down.

As you have met us in the reality
of a living, breathing human life,
may we meet each other again
as three-dimensional people
and not as another yes or no.

Amen

6-8 October 2020

God of our exposed divisions,
God of your uniting spirit:
there is a rawness to democracy,
A revelation occurs as we see
more of who we really are.
And with that clarity comes a choice
to stand with or against
each other.

Remind us that you stood with us,
when you knew we were wrong,
when you didn't agree with our choices,
when we were quick to turn against you.
So may we now choose to stand
with all those we can,
and in the choice to be together,
may we find new ways to thrive.
Amen.

9 November 2020

God of those we call enemies,
God of those you call family:
may we learn that democracy
is not about outnumbering the opposition
in a struggle for dominance.
It is about learning more about those
with whom we disagree,
our fellow citizens;
so that instead of drawing more to one side
or the other
we can co-create a greater whole.
Amen.

10 November 2020

God of hope-filled trials,
God of a cautious release:
as we begin to imagine
good news arising
from the measured process
of labs and computers,
of heroes and scientists,
of incomplete successes
and instructive failures,
may we allow ourselves
a sigh of relief,
but draw in more strength
so that a winter of waiting
may bring a spring of renewal.
Amen.

11 November 2020

God of sacrifice,
God of silence:
after years of battle,
the moment came
to quiet the guns
and acknowledge the loss.
That moment, extended now
for over a lifetime,
continues to witness
to others' valour and honour,
and also to our madness
of turning to war again and again.
May we in this silence
do more than remain still.
May we commit to lives lived
worthy of peace.
Amen.

12 November 2020

God of our faith,
God in our uncertainty:
in our shock and in our lack of shock;
in our constant surprise,
and in our numbed sense that
nothing may surprise us anymore;
you have been present.
You remain with us,

giving reassurance
when things seem lost;
reinvigorating us
when we grow complacent;
telling us it's okay to be tired
when we need a break.
May we find the balance
of neither doubting your steadiness
nor take it for granted.
Amen.

13-15 November 2020

God of those in acute need,
God of those in chronic need:
months and months in,
we still struggle to know
how cautious to be,
how much risk to accept,
how 'normal' we safely can act.
As hospitals fill up
and shops remain shut;
as political postures blur
into policy decisions,
may we gain wisdom from you
so that our cures may not do
more harm than disease,
and our wants not outweigh
neighbours' needs.
Amen.

16 November 2020

God of each breath,
God of this next breath:
may this moment we're in
be a moment now filled
with reassurance and grace;
with kindness and patience
for ourselves and for others.
May it be marked by hope
and compassion,
by learning and unlearning.
May it be a moment unencumbered
by mistakes we've made
or results we fear.
May it be a moment of peace

and renewal; a breath of new life.
Amen.

17 November 2020

God of the stories that include us,
God of the inclusions that restore us:
we need each other to thrive.
Without the other we are incomplete.
In our fiercer independence we
grow smaller and less true.
It is our inter-dependence
that reveals what's best within us all.
If we should be cut off from our fullness,
stunted by a sin of self-assurance,
show us that the lack in ourselves
is the space for something greater:
and our work with others a discovery
of the holy in ourselves.
Amen.

18 November 2020

God of Martha,
God of Mary:
in opening our homes to you,
in opening our lives to you,
may we also open ourselves,
so we are able to simply receive.
May we quiet our need to impress
and allow ourselves to be moved;
May we still an impulse to stay busy,
and turn to the task of being still.
And then may we find a better thing,
in the company of loved ones and rivals:
new purpose in the things we attend to.
Amen.

19 November 2020

God of the softness of night,
God of the brightness of day:
the change that comes
at twilight and dawn
arrives with no fuss,
yet is reliably revolutionary.
In a matter of moments
what was hidden is exposed,

and what we wrestled with
can be put to rest.
May we, in these daily transitions,
find comfort and solace,
and learn how to ease into
transformation with a grace
you build into each day.
Amen.

20-22 November 2020

God of those who hunger and thirst,
God of the ones we imprison:
you meet us in the lives of others.
Too often we seek you by pulling away,
by retreating into ourselves
or by assembling some body
of like-minded souls. And yet,
the way to find you
is not in separating ourselves
one from another,
but in seeking your presence
alive in encounter;
in meeting the needs
of the people before us:
the ones in your family
we've sought to exclude.
Amen.

30 November 2020

God of days with multiple arcs.
God of the stars in the sky:
there are countless reminders and signs
of your grace,
your promise to always be near.
May we in our habits
and the stories we tell
remember the truth underneath.
May we notice and witness
to a steadying strength:
the love that cradles us all.
Amen.

1 December 2020

God with us in our individual struggles,
God with us in our common ordeals:

there is a freedom that comes in knowing
that life is simply hard;
not because we've done something wrong,
or because we fail to see
something obvious to others,
but simply because life itself is hard.
May that never become the licence
to devalue another person's hardships
or the invitation to let our fears
fill the space that opens up.
May it become instead a moment
to marvel at your gift
of unconditional love;
the security that provides us with
a confidence not our own.
Amen.

2 December 2020

God of a lowering December sun,
God in the early morning watch:
be with us in this work of waiting
in keeping alert;
in the practice of not being
the one in control.
May we find beauty
in the quiet acceptance
of being dependent
on a promise of returning light
as we watch the days grow shorter;
on an Easter dawn
as the hours grow dark.
Amen.

3 December 2020

God of separated families,
God of grace-filled reunions:
as we turn to go home
or imagine how we might,
may a clearer sense
of how far we are
not diminish the extent
of your welcome.
May an extended season of
distant togetherness
not obscure the view
or lessen the excitement
of an expectant parent

who longs for the return
of one, until now, thought lost.
Amen.

4-6 December

God of the songs our parents taught us,
God of the songs our children make up:
if lucky, we get to see
one generation reappear in the next,
with ourselves in the midst
of a much fuller chorus.
As we welcome another Advent season
may we rejoice in an ongoing arrival
of a strangely familiar refrain.
May we find our homes again filled
with the presence of those far off,
whose lives linger on in held moments
and whose voices are blended with ours.
Amen.

7 December 2020

God of watchers in the night,
God of lanterns lit:
our waiting turns
from anxiety to anticipation
when what is hoped for
feels like a sure thing.
May the lamps we raise
and the light we cast
cut the gloom around us,
so that we become a beacon
for your brighter day to come.
Amen.

8 December 2020

God of friends in hospital,
God of families of friends in hospital:
be with those who
are receiving care, and those
who wait to hear the news.
Be with those who offer care, and those
who wait for them at home.
May we know your presence with us.
And may those of us held together
in a moment both critical and routine,

be embraced by a community
more aware of the extraordinary gift
of those who tend to us
on each and every day.
Amen.

9 December 2020

God of those we've lost this year,
God of what we've found:
our grief speaks to the beauty of life
and the toll that comes
at the end of each connection.
Death can offer a lesson
to the lasting goodness of life,
a pain that means that love is real.
May we never forget
that our grief gives proof of something
that was and continues to be true:
that our hope endures
in being held by your undying love.
Amen.

10 December 2020

God in the return
to a simplified Christmas;
God in the advent
of extravagant joy:
may we, who are so accustomed
to connecting happiness
with an accumulation of things,
receive the gift of valuing
the connections we already have.
May a stripped down celebration
and a slower pace to the holiday
reveal the treasure
that was ours all along.
And may we find in the strangeness
of this year's Christmas
the wonder that was present
in its first incarnation.
Amen.

11 December 2020

God in the conversations
that manage to change us,

God in the encounters
that change the conversation:
rarely is it the argument that
convinces us. It is more likely
the experiences of others that,
because they are shared
and accepted, become a part
of our own experience.
Help us in this time of separation
and waiting
to connect to each other in ways
that convey not just ideas or images
but the spirit of community
that forms us anew.
Amen.

14 December 2020

God of Mary,
who pondered your greeting;
God of good tidings
that brought us great joy:
the first words she heard
were 'be not afraid'.
And now in this year
we, too, must consider
whether we will accept
a message of endless salvation
when so much would make
the idea sound absurd.
May your power and spirit
overshadow our fears
so that our choice can be
to bear light to this world.
Amen.

15 December 2020

God of incarnation,
God whose presence arrives with a word:
there are friends who connect
so well and so genuinely
that even though they wear a mask,
their eyes can tell a story.
There are loved ones
who are so close to us,
that even from thousands of miles away
their voice can do enough

to calm our bodies and steady our breath.
May we remember that with a word
you entered this world;
and with a message of unconditional love,
you bring our true humanity to life.
Amen.

16 December 2020

God of Joseph,
God of those who find supporting roles
in stories they presumed
were about them:
help those who have the power
to push others away
find gentle ways to draw them closer.
May those who have the means
to walk away from problems,
find the strength to remain
so that solutions can be found
and made together;
and so we can be found
and remade together.
Amen.

17 December 2020

God who walks with us in our darkness,
God who draws out an inner light:
even in the brightness of day,
there is a limit to what one can see.
Our ignorance and bias;
our narrowed views and
chosen positions prevent us
from seeing the whole,
and from seeing ourselves.
In the welcome
of others' perspectives
we gain greater sight.
May we fear neither
the uncertainty of night
nor the exposure of day,
for in both we are known by you.
Amen.

18-20 December 2020

God of colleagues who start to wind down,
God of children already wound up:
this season will meet us wherever we are,
to offer a message of hope.
We give thanks for connections
that have strengthened this year,
and the resilience we've managed to show.
As many take time
to gain much needed rest
and to focus on family at home,
may our sense of being
your people together
give all of your children some peace.
Amen.

21 December 2020

God of this deeper winter solstice,
God of a southern summer height:
as friends far away
mark daylight's full stretch,
and we note the lowest notch of the sun,
let us give thanks
for local and global neighbours alike
who, in sharing what extra they have,
create a community of giving and receiving,
of lending and borrowing,
of weeping and laughing,
of darkness kept within its bounds;
a growing light always on the horizon.
Amen.

23 December 2020

God of carols we know by heart,
God of traditions that reassure us:
there is comfort in knowing that
beneath all the tinsel and fuss
the message of Christmas
continues to speak truth.
May those who are separated
from loved ones this year
and all of us unable to take part
as we'd wish,
find the gift of your presence
and spirit with us;
the warmth of love that is felt
in the flesh.

Amen.

24 December 2020

God of silent nights,
God of heavenly peace:
your light shines in the darkness
so that even our darkness
becomes a place to find hope.
Still our hearts and minds.
Quiet our concerns,
and ease our anxieties
so that in this moment
we might hear the initial cry
of new life born to us
in a place of glorious humility;
with the strength of human
and divine vulnerability.
Amen.

25 December 2020

God of incarnation
God who is Emmanuel:
this year we receive the good news
that the divine gift is being with
and for one another.
May we who are brought
together by your grace
even if we are physically apart,
carry with us
hope, peace, joy and love
into a new year and
into a world that longs for
truer community.
Amen.