

**PRAYING IN A PANDEMIC:
PRAYERS FOR A TIME OF COVID 19**

How are we to pray when faced with a global pandemic?

Here are a small number of prayers that could be used. They have been adapted from a wide range of available resources. They range in tone and topic; some are ancient prayers and some are contemporary. There are general prayers of praise and trust in God, and prayers specific to the current situation. In all of them, feel free to adapt to your own circumstances and who you would like to pray for.

If you are praying at home alone, then you may like to do some mix and match – start with a prayer of praise and trust, and then use one of the more specific prayers for others, and end with the Lord’s prayer and/ or one of the blessings. If you wish to use any of these prayers in a joint setting, please acknowledge as appropriate.



As you come to pray, take time to be quiet, to gather your thoughts, to be ready to sense God’s presence with you.

If you have a Bible, a prayer book, a candle, a picture that recalls God/ life/ faith/ love and family who you want to pray for, a cross or other symbol that helps you to focus for this time, you may like to have it beside you.

General Prayers of praise and trust

Psalm 139:8

'If I ascend to heaven
You are there, O God.
And if I make my bed in hell,
Still you are with me.'

In the beginning, O God,
You shaped my soul and set its weave.
You formed my body
And gave it breath.
Renew me this day
In the image of your love.
O great God, grant me your light.
O great God, grant me your grace.
O great God, grant me your joy this day
And let me be made pure
In the well of your health. Amen

Celtic Prayers



Ever-living God,
you are infinite, yet compassionate;
in you we live, and move, and have our being.
One with us in Jesus Christ,
you share our life and our death;
flowing through us as living water,
you quench our thirst.

Holy One, we adore you;
Holy Wisdom, we adore you;
Holy Spirit, we adore you;
accept the praise we bring today and for ever. **Amen.** (UiW2)

Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance.

Govern and uphold them now and always.

Day by day we bless you.

We praise your name for ever.

Keep us today, Lord, from all sin.

Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.

Lord, show us your love and mercy,

for we have put our trust in you.

In you, Lord, is our hope:

let us never be put to shame.



Abiding in God

O loving God,

to turn away from you is to fall,

to turn towards you is to rise,

and to stand before you is to abide for ever.

Grant us, dear God,

in all our duties your help;

in all our uncertainties your guidance;

in all our dangers your protection;

and in all our sorrows your peace;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

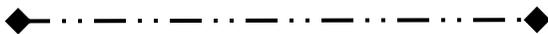
St Augustine, 354-430

The Shield of God

May the strength of God pilot us.
May the power of God preserve us.
May the wisdom of God instruct us.
May the hand of God protect us.
May the way of God direct us.
May the shield of God defend us.
May the host of God
 guard us against the snares of evil
 and the temptations of the world.
May Christ be with us,
Christ before us,
Christ in us,
Christ over us.
May your salvation, O Lord, be
always ours,
this day and for evermore. Amen.



Part of the 'Breastplate' of St Patrick, 389-461



A prayer for understanding

God be in my head and in my understanding.
God be in my eyes and in my looking.
God be in my mouth and in my speaking.
God be in my heart and in my thinking.
God be in my end and my departing.



For forgiveness and strength

Almighty and merciful God,
the fountain of all goodness,
you know the thoughts of our hearts:
we confess that we have sinned against you
and done what is evil in your sight.
Wash us from the stains of our past sins,
and give us grace and power to put away all hurtful things,
so that being delivered from the bondage of sin,
we may bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.

O eternal Light, shine into
our hearts;
eternal Goodness, deliver us
from evil;
O eternal Power, give us your
strength;
eternal Wisdom, scatter the
darkness of our ignorance;
O eternal Pity, have mercy
on us.



Grant that with all our hearts, and minds, and strength
we may always seek your face;
and finally, in your infinite mercy,
bring us to your holy presence.
So strengthen our weakness
that, following in the footsteps of your blessed Son,
we may obtain your mercy,
and enter into your promised joy. Amen.

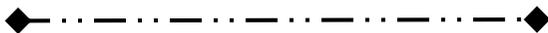
Alcuin, 735-804



The love of God's name

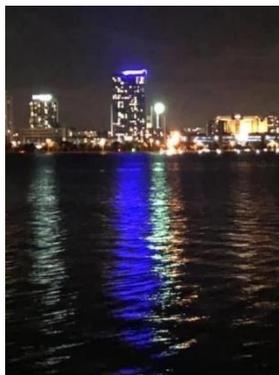
Lord of all power and might,
the author and giver of all good things:
graft in our hearts the love of your name,
increase in us true religion,
nourish us with all goodness,
and in your great mercy keep us in the same;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Book of Common Prayer, 1662



The Light in Darkness

Christ,
Light of the World,
Light of humankind,
Even in the darkest night,
The light shines bright,
Even though clouds may hide its shining,
The light of heaven shines unabated
Even though our eyes may close in the
face of the storm,
The illumination of the cosmos continues,
The light shines in the darkness
And the darkness cannot overcome it
Hope is born of faith
And faith is born of your faithfulness.
We may not be saved from suffering,
For even you were not exempt,



But we are brought through it in faith.
Your compassion and care are comforts in our affliction,
When our physical strength is at its ebb,
You strengthen our soul and lighten our spirit.
So even though we might walk through the valley of the shadow of
death,
You guide us as the Spirit, In helpful and best ways,
That we might see the light,
And find the peace you offer,
The peace that passes all understanding,
For such seems that it should not make sense in the face of hurt or
troubles,
But makes sense of our living, As we find your love for us,
And take up our calling to share it with others,
That they might see the light as well.
Christ,
Light of the World,
Illuminate our living,
We pray.
Amen.

Jon Humphries 2020 FB

General Prayers for the situation in midst of pandemic

Gracious and loving God, the Psalmist reminds us that “You are our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble”.

Lord God, we feel deeply that our world is in trouble with the spread of the coronavirus. There is a heightened sense of fear and anxiety about the future. We ask that we may calmly and lovingly trust in You and care for all who are affected by this pandemic.

Please bless the work of health professionals, government officials, aged care providers, school and community leaders.

Grant them strength and wisdom. We pray for all who feel stressed and worried, that they might find peace and reassurance. Free us from panic and selfish stockpiling.

We pray for all those who mourn the loss of loved ones to the virus, that they will find comfort and support.

May all our congregations and faith communities be places of empathy, compassion and calm, in all we face.

Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Rev Steve Francis, Moderator UCAWA

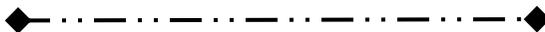


Gracious and loving God,
Give wisdom and strength to all those in our community and around the world, who are responding to the coronavirus - health professionals, government officials, aged care providers, school leaders.

May those who mourn the loss of loved ones to the virus, be comforted. May those in our community who are feeling anxious, find peace and reassurance. May our congregations, and faith communities be places of compassion, attentive to those who are impacted by the coronavirus. May we be communities of empathy, love and care, in all we face.

Through Christ, our Lord, Amen.

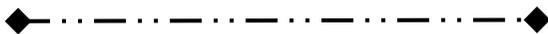
Dr Deidre Palmer, President of UCA



A Plea

God,
Carry me through these times.
Christ,
Help me keep keeping on.
Spirit,
Lift my spirit when it drops.
Immanuel, God with us,
Be with me in every moment.
Word of God,
Speak your peace into my worries.
Light of the world,
Light up my living to brighten life for others.
Love for all,
Fill me with love to live to all.
Guide me
Comfort me
And gift me with strength of character,
That in such blessings,
I may in turn be a blessing to any who need it.
This is my plea.
Amen.

Jon Humphries, 2020 FB



O Christ of the road of the wounded.
O Christ of the tears of the broken,
In me and with me the needs of the world.
Grant me my prayers of loving and hoping.
Grant me my prayers of yearning for healing.

Celtic Prayers

A Prayer for those from whom we are separated

O Lord our God,
you are in every place,
and no space or distance can ever part us from you;
take into your holy keeping
those from whom we are now separated;
and grant that both they and we,
by drawing nearer to you,
maybe drawn nearer to one another,
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Book of Common Order, 1940, Church of Scotland



Pray for the coming day and for healing within and among all people.

God before me, God behind me
God above me, God beneath me.
I on your path O God,
You O God, on my way.
In the twistings of the road
In the currents of the river
Be with me by day
Be with me by night
Be with me by day and by night. Amen

Celtic Prayers

A Prayer based on Ephesians 4. 7- 16

There is no pain in our hearts or in our planet
That you do not know
For you have touched the lowest places on earth.
Teach us to grieve with you, O Christ,
The loss of all the beauty that is dying.
There is no place in the heavens
That cannot be touched by your resurrection presence,
For you fill all things.
Give us strength in your victory over death
To grow into your way of love,
which does not despair but keeps sowing seeds of hope
and making signs of wholeness

Under Christ's control
all the different parts of the body fit together
and the whole body is head together
by every joint with which it is provided.
Teach us to know our interconnectedness with all things.
Teach us to grow with each other
and all living creatures through love.
(© The Iona Community)

A prayer for those diagnosed with COVID 19

God of love and healing I pray for those diagnosed with COVID 19: those I know (*name*), or know of (*name*), for those I don't know and will never know.

Grant that those who have minimal symptoms be mindful of others. In their quarantined isolation they may find comfort. Grant them healing.

For those sick and at home alone, may there be others who can express care for them. For those ill in homes with others, in being cared for they may also be able to be 'care-ful' of loved ones around them. Grant them healing.

For those who have been hospitalised, in fever and pain and separation from family, may they be calm and not anxious. Grant them healing.

Let those in Intensive Care, who are gravely ill, know a deep peace of your caring presence. Let there be doctors, nurses, ventilators and necessary resources for them to be cared for. In their separation from family may they still know they are loved. Grant them healing. Grant them peace.

Great God of love you know all of these. I place them in your care, in the name of Jesus who reached out his hand of love and healing, Amen.

A prayer for doctors, nurses and all carers

God who cares for all, we pray for all of those who are caring for the sick at this time, working in hospitals and clinics and general practices. We thank you for all of these who are working so that we, and our loved ones, might be cared for.



Give doctors the emotional physical and mental energy they need as they keep responding and giving and directing, making endless decisions about best care. When their duties are over help them to be able to take time away and be refreshed.

For nurses who give their care and their expertise, who can be run off their feet and yet remain unflappable and caring, we pray for them for energy, for patience, for extra helpings of kindness in responding to anxious and demanding patients.

Strengthen all the other medical staff who are testing, dispensing drugs, and helping in numerous ways. Give patience and calm to receptionists and ward staff and cleaners and all of the people who simply make our hospitals work.

We thank you for all of these selfless people. Loving God we pray that they would be kept healthy; for those who do become infected as they work in the midst of contagion, that they would recover. May their families, who also make this sacrifice of their loved one working in front lines of this battle, be supported and helped and comforted.

In the name of Jesus who cares beyond all, Amen.

A prayer for Chaplains, Ministers and Pastoral Workers

God, great shepherd of the sheep, we thank you for those who are caring pastorally for those in hospitals and homes. May they be a comforting presence with those who are ill. May they have words of comfort to give those who cannot be with their loved ones. May pastoral carers in the community know how to navigate the barriers and boundaries of isolation. We ask for them to have deep compassion, perceptive insight into people's concerns, and good boundaries and protection in a time and place of contagion. Amen.



A prayer for hospitals.

O God of healing, we pray for our hospitals here in Perth and Western Australia, the Royal Perth Hospital, Perth Children's Hospital, Subiaco and Murdoch, Sir Charles Gardiner, and Joondalup, and all the other regional and private hospitals. (*You might like to picture them in your mind as you pray, and image God's presence in those places*). Be so present in these places, O God, that those in their illness feeling alone and separate would still know you are there; and those working and tired, stressed, and despairing would still know that God is not absent even in the saddest and darkest hours.

For those with administrative responsibilities, grant them ongoing stamina to keep staff rosters going, sufficient beds and medical equipment and resources supplied, and a safe and secure place for care. Help them to give calm steady leadership in a time of anxiety and stress.

In the name of our God who is present in all places and all times,
Amen

A Prayer for Governments and leaders

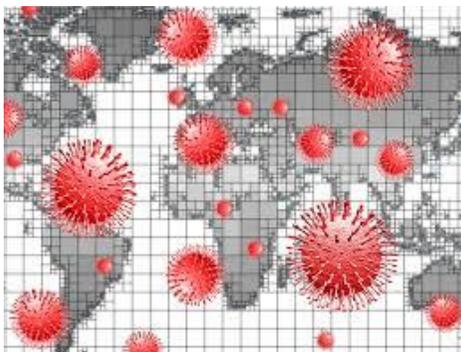
God of love and power, who holds this whole world in your hands, we pray for governments and leaders at this time. We pray for Scott Morrison, Prime Minister, State Premier Mark McGowan, and all leaders, that they would have the capacity to listen well to all kinds of advice and be able to weigh up what they hear as they come to decisions that affect us all. As they carry the care and concern for this land, may they know deep wisdom, work out of calm and not anxiety, and work together to make good joint decisions. We pray they may seek you and find you in their care for the nation.



A prayer for the world

Great God of love there are so many affected in this world, approaching two million or maybe more, the numbers change so quickly. My mind boggles, but you know every one, the hair on the head of every one of these sick people.

For those countries where the health systems can't keep up and meet the needs of the gravely ill, where people live so close to each other they can't practice any kind of physical distancing, who have no access to running water, let alone hand sanitiser, O God of infinite mercy we pray. Grant us compassion, that the well-equipped may come to the aid of the ill-equipped,



and that in sharing our resources lives would be saved, and we would all be protected.

May the World Health Organisation, national governments, and all those who are working together to alleviate the effects of this pandemic, be granted wisdom that the terrible devastation from loss of life and illness may come to an end.

In the name of the merciful and compassionate God of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Prayers for when a loved one has died

Out of the depths we cry to you, O Lord. Hear our voice.
We wait for you, O God. Our souls wait for you. (Psalm 130)
Give us now your word of hope.
We know your love is steadfast,
always there when we need it.
Let us feel your presence now in our time of sorrow.
Help us to look to tomorrow to see hope beyond grief,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** *UiW2*



Peaceful Spirit,
hear our prayer and, in your grace, respond to our grief.
The shock and the pain caused by the death of (loved one's name),
threaten to overwhelm us.
We feel powerless and vulnerable, angry and uncertain.
We grieve for the devastation that has been brought upon their
family (families) and upon our community (and congregation).
Spirit of life and hope, we seek your strength and your guidance.
Answer our sadness with the assurance of your presence.
Touch our pain with the healing power of your love.
Amen. *UiW 2*

A litany of remembrance

Loving God,

We are in a time where we cannot gather together as a community
but we remember with thanks our community

people who have welcomed us and befriended us

people who have walked with us through the journeys of life

people who have shared in vulnerability and honesty

people who have modelled to us the rhythms of trying, falling
short but being reconciled through your love

people who have taught us and pointed us in love towards you.

We thank you for all the blessings that these people have been to us
in good times and bad.

We thank you for your love that our human relationships can only
reflect imperfectly

for the wonderful acts of your creation and provision for each
of us

for the gifts of scripture and prayer that your Holy Spirit uses to
call us into your presence

for your faithfulness and love shown so powerfully in the life,
death and resurrection of Jesus Christ

for the assurance that Jesus will be with us to the end of time.

We pray that we may know your wonderful presence today

that we know your love

that we may know that we are your forgiven children

that we may know your call to live and be part of your Good
News in our communities

We come to you in thanks and praise today, through Jesus Christ
our Lord, Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.



Blessings

(For yourself and those you have been praying for)

May the Lord of peace
give you peace at all times and in all ways.
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
be with you all evermore. **Amen.**

The grace of Christ attend you;
the love of God surround you;
the Holy Spirit keep you;
this day and for ever. **Amen.**

May God take your hand as you go,
Christ be your constant companion,
and the Spirit guide you on the Way
this day and for evermore. **Amen.**

May God go with you by day, go with you by night,
be with you in light, be with you in shadow,
strengthen you in work, strengthen you in sleep,
the great God encircle your thought and your prayer. **Amen.**
(UiW2)

The grace of our Saviour Christ,
the love of our faithful God,
and the joy of our Friend the Spirit,
be with you now and always. **Amen.** (UiW2)

Sources:

Uniting in Worship 2, Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, Sydney, 2005.

The Iona Abbey Worship Book, published by Wild Goose Publications, Iona Community, Fourth Floor, Savoy House, Glasgow UK, 2001. P 139

J. Philip Newell, Celtic Prayers Wild goose publications, Iona. 2002.

Thanks to individuals whose prayers are also used unnamed.