

Prayers for a Time of Pandemic



St. Andrew's Episcopal Church
State College, Pennsylvania
March 2020



Rembrandt, *The Storm on the Sea of Galilee* (1633)

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Prayers and Collects

A Prayer for This Time of Crisis

O GOD OF ALL CREATION, when we are in crisis our world becomes so tiny. We focus on our own needs and those of the people closest to us. Save us from thinking too small. Help us to remember that your love reaches to everyone everywhere. Expand our hearts, Lord, to encompass a larger circle than we can ponder on our own. Give us your grace that we may learn to love the world more like you do, and grant us the vision to see each other through your eyes; through Jesus Christ our eternal Lord. *Amen.*

The Rev. Jeffrey A. Packard

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In Time of Great Sickness and Mortality

O MOST MIGHTY AND MERCIFUL GOD, in this time of grievous sickness, we flee unto thee for our succour. Deliver us, we beseech thee, from our peril; give strength and skill to all those who minister to the sick; prosper the means made use of for their cure; and grant that, perceiving how frail and uncertain our life is, we may apply our hearts unto that heavenly wisdom which leadeth to eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Book of Common Prayer 1928

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KEEP US, GOOD LORD, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort, knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Amen.*

LORD GOD, whose Son, Jesus Christ, understood people's fear and pain before they spoke of them: we pray for those in hospitals or sick at home; surround the frightened with your tenderness; give strength to those in pain; hold the weak in your arms of love, and give hope and patience to those who are recovering; we ask this through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*

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For Those in Isolation

God of compassion, be close to those who are ill, afraid, or in isolation. In their loneliness, be their consolation; in their anxiety, be their hope; in their darkness, be their light; through him who suffered alone on the cross, but reigns with you in glory, Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

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LORD JESUS, when your disciples were tossed and tormented by a terrifying storm, you came to them with great calm, and they were safe. Speak peace, we pray you, to those who are in agony of mind or body; that even when pain and fatigue threaten to overwhelm them, they may find rest to their souls and to their bodies; grant them to drink deeply of the fountain of life that is in you and that gives hope and healing evermore. *Amen.*

Saint Augustine's Prayer Book

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O GOD, OUR SOVEREIGN AND OUR SHEPHERD, who brought again your Son Jesus Christ from the valley of death, comfort us with your protecting presence and your angels of goodness and love, that we also may come home and dwell with him in your house for ever. *Amen.*

GOD OF HEALING AND HOPE, in Jesus you meet us in our places of pain and fear. Look with mercy on those who have contracted the new virus, on any who are vulnerable, and on all who feel in danger. Through this time of global concern, by your Holy Spirit bring out the best, not the worst, in us. Make us more aware of our interdependence on each other, and of the strength that comes from being one body in you; through Christ our wounded healer. *Amen.*

The Rev. Dr. Samuel Wells

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ALMIGHTY GOD, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The Book of Common Prayer

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O LORD, I know not what to ask of You. You alone know what are my true needs. You love me more than I myself know how to love. Help me to see my real needs which are concealed from me. I dare not ask either cross or consolation. I can only wait on You. My heart is open to you. Visit and help me for the sake of Your great mercy. Strike me and heal me. Cast me down and raise me up. I worship in silence Your holy will and Your unsearchable ways. I offer myself as a sacrifice to You. I have no other desire than to fulfill Your will. Teach me how to pray. Do You, yourself, pray in me. *Amen.*

Prayer of Metropolitan Philaret

A Collect for Our Patron Saint Andrew

ALMIGHTY GOD, who gave such grace to your apostle Andrew that he readily obeyed the call of your Son Jesus Christ, and brought his brother with him: Give us, who are called by your holy Word, grace to follow him without delay, and to bring those near to us into his gracious presence; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Book of Common Prayer

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A Prayer in Confusion

O GOD, who brought us to birth, and in whose arms we die: in our grief and shock contain and comfort us; embrace us with your love, give us hope in our confusion, and grace to let go into new life; through Jesus Christ. *Amen*

Janet Morley

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MY LORD GOD, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end, nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this, you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

Prayer of Thomas Merton

A Prayer for Those Absent

O LOVING GOD, who has given us family and friends; be with all those whom we love who cannot be with us, guard and bless them wherever they may be, grace them with joy, protect them from all evil, and bring them safely to us once again. In the name of Jesus, we pray. *Amen.*

Anne E. Kitch

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For the Dead

FATHER OF ALL, we pray to you for those we love, but see no longer: Grant them your peace; let light perpetual shine upon them; and, in your loving wisdom and almighty power, work in them the good purpose of your perfect will; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Book of Common Prayer

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For Those Who Mourn

GRANT, O LORD, to all who are bereaved the spirit of faith and courage, that they may have strength to meet the days to come with steadfastness and patience; not sorrowing as those without hope, but in thankful remembrance of your great goodness, and in the joyful expectation of eternal life with those they love. And this we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

The Book of Common Prayer

A Prayer Amid an Epidemic

Kerry Weber

Jesus Christ, you traveled through towns and villages “curing every disease and illness.” At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love.

Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care.

Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbors from helping one another.

Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders.

Jesus Christ, healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow.

Be with those who have died from the virus. May they be at rest with you in your eternal peace.

Be with the families of those who are sick or have died. As they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair. May they know your peace.

Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected, and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know your protection and peace.

Be with the leaders of all nations. Give them the foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve. Give them the wisdom to invest in long-term solutions that will help prepare for or prevent future outbreaks. May they know your peace, as they work together to achieve it on earth.

Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, Jesus Christ, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare. In place of our anxiety, give us your peace.

Jesus Christ, heal us.

Litany Amidst the COVID-19 Outbreak

The Rev. Michael Kurth

God the Father, *have mercy on us.*

God the Son, *have mercy on us.*

God the Holy Spirit, *have mercy on us.*

Holy Trinity, one God, *have mercy on us.*

Most merciful God, we come to you in this time of anxiety and uncertainty surrounding the outbreak of COVID-19. As the sorrows of our heart and mind increase, we beseech you to save us from all trouble and fear. Cast away all works of darkness. Be our rock, a castle to keep us safe. For the Lord is our stronghold and sure defense, and he will be our Savior.

For all who have died: receive them into the arms of your mercy, grant them eternal peace, and surround those who mourn with your healing grace. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For those directly infected with the virus: help them recover in good health and restore them in body, mind and spirit. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For those at high risk of infection, especially the elderly, those with underlying illnesses, the marginalized, and the poor: keep them healthy and free from all sickness. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For those in quarantine, the shut-in, and the infirm: help them find peace, keep them in good health, and renew their mind and spirit. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For all hospitals, doctors, nurses, and staff: protect them as they minister to the sick; relieve all stress; and provide the

resources and space to meet the needs of all the infirm. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For first responders: guard them from all harm, and grant them strength and courage as they respond to all calls for help. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For service industry workers and those forced to work as their communities shutdown: keep them healthy, bestow the resources to best care for themselves and their families, and assure them in times of financial and medical anxiety. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For those experiencing financial loss and uncertainty of resources: have mercy on them, alleviate any fear, and provide for them daily bread and wage. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For the leaders of this nation and the world: help them make sound and safe decisions to best secure the future of our planet. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For all schools, students, teachers, administrators and school staff: as schools remain open, keep them healthy and in good spirit to learn; as schools close, feed those who will go hungry without guaranteed meals and shelter all students have no place to live. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For all scientists and those working to find a cure: inspire them towards your truth, and help them discover and disseminate a vaccine and cure. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For all media and journalists: protect them from all harm in their reporting, and move them to be a vector of truth and

certainty, and never fear or panic. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For all places of worship: embolden them to be beacons of hope and love, and help us to gather however and wherever we can – be it in person or online – to give you praise. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For the leaders of our church: help them minister to their flock; fortify them to be faithful pastors, to persevere in prayer, and to build up the family of God in new and creative ways. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For the young: spare them from harm and fear, and keep them a joyful sign of your love and light. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For all parents: build in them strength and fortitude for the time ahead, and give them the words and witness to be wise counselors and compassionate caregivers. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

For calm amidst the storm: as the waves toss our boat and we wonder “do you not care?,” remind us to not be afraid, that with you all things are possible, and that even the wind and sea obey you. *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Stir up in us a spirit of compassion and tenacity for the time ahead. *Amen.*

Move us to check-in with loved ones at high risk of infection and those in quarantine. *Amen.*

Ease our fear and anxiety, that we may share our resources rather than hoard them, and extend a helping hand to those in need. *Amen.*

Inspire us to share the Good News of your love and hope.
Amen.

All this we ask through your son Jesus Christ our Lord: healer
of the sick, ruler of the tempestuous sea, and Savior of the
world. *Amen.*

Officiant: Lord, have mercy.

People: Christ, have mercy.

ALL: Lord, have mercy.

A Liturgy During a Pandemic

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This liturgy has been designed for use at home during this time of uncertainty and fear due to COVID-19. One person may read the portions in regular font and everyone responds together for italicized portions. It may also be read by one person. This is meant to be used at any time of the day, or multiple times a day, if so desired.

Our help is in the Name of the Lord;
The Maker of heaven and earth.

Most holy God, the source of all good desires, all right judgments, and all just works: Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, so that our minds may be fixed on the doing of your will, and that we, being delivered from all fear may live in peace and quietness; through the mercies of Christ Jesus our Savior. *Amen.*

O God, you will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are fixed on you; for in returning and rest we shall be saved; in quietness and trust shall be our strength. (Isaiah 26:3; 30:15)

CONFESSION

Heavenly Father, we confess to you our fears, our worries, and our anxieties. You have given us your perfect love which casts out all fear, and your peace which transcends all understanding, but even still we feel dislodged, displaced, untethered, and uncertain during these times.

We believe, Lord; *help our unbelief.*

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

O God, make speed to save us.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

COMFORTING WORDS

Use one or more of these verses as a prayer.

Come to me, all who labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11:28-30)

May the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. (Hebrews 13:20-21)

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty. For everything in heaven and on earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom, and you are exalted as head over all. (1 Chronicles 29:11)

But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. (Isaiah 43:1)

For he has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." So we can say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?" (Hebrews 13:5-6)

INTERCESSIONS

O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people as we cry out to you; in the multitude of your mercies, look with compassion upon us and all of your creation; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, giver of life, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever. *Amen.*

Gracious God, the comfort of all who sorrow, the strength of all who suffer: Let the cry of those who grieve come to you, that they may find your mercy present with them in all their afflictions; and give us, we pray, the strength to serve them, for the sake of him who suffered for us, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Let us also pray

For a swift end to COVID-19.

For those infected and those who have been exposed; *grant them strength, healing, and protection.*

For their loved ones and caretakers; *grant them peace, comfort, and endurance.*

For those leading nations; *grant them sound minds, courage, and humility.*

For physicians, nurses, technicians, researchers, administrators, and all other healthcare employees around the world; *grant them strength by your life-giving Spirit, wisdom, and resources to do the work before them.*

For those who must work, despite the threat of sickness; *grant them protection and continued provision.*

For those who have become unemployed or underemployed during this pandemic; *grant them comfort, wisdom, and financial provision.*

For churches and their clergy; *grant them discernment and creativity to lead and minister in unprecedented circumstances.*

For parents and families; *grant them wisdom, patience and joy.*

For children; *grant them protection from fear.*

For those for whom home is not a safe haven; *grant them refuge.*

For those who are alone; *grant them a sense of your nearness and love.*

For all navigating decisions during this time of uncertainty and fear; *grant them your peace.*

And for all the prayers we cannot voice because our language is insufficient or our ignorance too great;
Lord, hear our prayer. Amen.

O God, your unfailing providence sustains the world we live in and the life we live; *grant that we may never forget that our common life depends upon each other's toil; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

THE GENERAL THANKSGIVING

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.

We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts
we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up ourselves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. *Amen.*

A PRAYER TO CLOSE

MORNING

Lord God, almighty and everlasting Father, you have brought us in safety to this new day: Preserve us with your mighty power, that we may not fall into sin, nor be overcome by adversity; and in all we do, direct us to the fulfilling of your purpose; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

DAY

Almighty God, Father of mercies and giver of comfort: Deal graciously, we pray, with all who are scared, anxious, those who are mourning, or who are nervous; that, casting all their cares, worries, and anxieties upon you, they may know the overwhelming peace of your presence and the consolation of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

NIGHT

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or

weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. *Amen.*

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you." May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Prayer with Children and Families

The Liturgy During a Pandemic may also be appropriate for older children and youth.

A Prayer for the World

GOD OF LOVE AND HOPE,
you made the world and care for all creation,
but the world feels strange right now.
The news is full of stories about coronavirus.
Some people are worried that they might get ill.
Others are anxious for their family and friends.
Be with them and help them to find peace.
We pray for the doctors and nurses and scientists,
and all who are working to discover the right medicines
to help those who are ill.
Thank you that even in these anxious times,
you are with us.
Help us to put our trust in you and keep us safe.
Amen.

+AΩ+

A Prayer at Bedtime

BEFORE THE ENDING of the day,
Creator of the world, we pray
That you, with steadfast love, would keep
Your watch around us while we sleep.
Tonight we pray especially for (*family or friends who are affected
by coronavirus*) and the people of (*country or place which is
affected by coronavirus*).
Please give skill and wisdom to all who are caring for them.
Amen.

Night Prayer

LORD, it is night.

The night is for stillness.

Let us be still in the presence of God.

It is night after a long day.

What has been done has been done;

what has not been done has not been done;

let it be.

The night is dark.

Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives
rest in you.

The night is quiet.

Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,

all dear to us,

and all who have no peace.

The night heralds the dawn.

Let us look expectantly to a new day,

new joys, new possibilities.

In your name we pray.

Amen.

The New Zealand Prayer Book

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The Breton Fishermen's Prayer

DEAR GOD, be good to me.

The sea is so wide,

and my boat is so small.

A Prayer Remembering God is With Us

LORD GOD, you are always with me.

You are with me in the day and in the night.

You are with me when I'm happy and when I'm sad.

You are with me when I'm healthy and when I am ill.

You are with me when I am peaceful and when I am worried.

Today I am feeling (*name how you are feeling*)

because (*reasons you are feeling this way*).

Help me to remember that you love me and are with me in everything today.

Amen.

+AΩ+

A Blessing for Your Home

God bless this house,

From door to door,

From wall to wall,

From room to room,

From basement to roof,

From beginning to end.

Anne E. Kitch

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Setting up an Outdoor Prayer Hunt

If you have yard space available, here is an idea for outdoor prayer stations: <https://engageworship.org/ideas/were-going-prayer-hunt-outdoor-prayer-stations>

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Coloring Prayer

Download mandalas for coloring here:

<https://mondaymandala.com/m>

The Butterfly Hug

Traci Smith

1. **Say:** “The psalmist says this about God, ‘Suppose I had wings like the dawning day and flew across the ocean. Even then God’s powerful arm would guide and protect me. Or suppose I said, “I’ll hide in the dark until night comes to cover me over.” But you see in the dark because daylight and dark are all the same to you.’ [Psalm 139:9-12 CEV] This passage reminds us that God is always with us, in darkness and in light. Let’s ask God to be near to us and to help us find calm and focus.” *Guide your children through steps 2-5.*
2. Sit or lie in a relaxed position.
3. Take a couple of deep breaths to begin to calm down and relax.
4. Cross your arms across your chest so that your fingertips rest just under your collar bone. Fingers should point more toward the top of the head, rather than the side of the body. Thumbs can interlock, or not, depending on what is most comfortable.
5. Gently close eyes, or softly focus ahead.
6. Alternate tapping fingers, left and right, at whatever speed feels most comfortable.
7. Continue to breathe deeply while tapping, left and right. Keep tapping for at least three minutes.
8. Either end the butterfly hug naturally (when the children feel calm and ready) or by saying “Thank you, God, for peace. Help us to feel peace whenever we feel worried or unsafe.”

O gracious and holy Father,
give us wisdom to perceive you,
diligence to seek you,
patience to wait for you,
eyes to behold you,
a heart to meditate upon you,
and a life to proclaim you,
through the power of the spirit
of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

- St Benedict of Nursia

