

## Written prayers

### The Sanctuary's gathering and envisioning prayers

#### Gathering prayer declaring a faith-filled perspective as we pray

Lord Jesus,  
before we even read the headlines today  
and seek your heart to inform ours  
as we intercede with you for those in need,  
we choose to remember and declare again  
the life-giving truth we believe and see  
all other things through:

This is your world  
and you are still sovereign over it.  
You have not lost control,  
walked out or given up.  
We are all your children  
and you have not lost interest in,  
or compassion for, any one of us in seven billion.

You came to save us because you love us  
and your sacrifice defeated death once and for all.  
You promised to never leave or forsake your disciples  
and you have kept that promise  
to every one of your followers ever since.  
And you sent your Spirit to finish your work –  
and he is here with us – now.

You are still completely loving  
and always perfectly just.  
You are for us not against us  
and you are actively involved  
in the realities of nations  
and the lives of each individual  
you have created.

You are wholly good  
and there is no shadow of darkness in you.  
You are permanently consistent and constant  
and your heart, motives,

decisions and actions  
can always be trusted and relied upon  
with total certainty.

Lord Jesus,  
Before we even read the headlines today,  
and seek your heart to inform ours  
as we intercede with you for those in need,  
we remember and cling to these truths  
with faith in the One we come to  
who has all things and people in his unfailing hands.

### **Gathering prayer expressing thanks for a new day and new mercies, inspired by Psalm 96**

We will sing to the Lord a new song;  
and call out to the whole earth to join us.  
For his mercies are new every morning  
and even our old songs become fresh again  
as his Spirit moves through them  
and writes layer after layer of truth-validating story  
from our lives behind their words and lines.

We will sing to the Lord and praise his name;  
we will proclaim his salvation day after day.  
For although his redemption was done once and for all,  
still he keeps transforming our hearts and situations  
as his Spirit moves through them  
and creates testimony after testimony of truth-validating story  
in our lives as we experience him at work.

We will declare his glory among the nations,  
and celebrate his marvellous deeds among all peoples.  
For he keeps confiding his heart in ours  
and we have seen him do what he has said he will  
as his Spirit moves among us  
and brings breakthrough after breakthrough of truth-validating story  
through our prayers as we agree with him.

Yes Lord, your mercies are new every morning – so we will sing.  
Yes Lord, your mercies are new every morning – we will declare it.  
Yes Lord, your mercies are new every morning – we love living in your presence.  
Yes Lord, your mercies are new every morning – we give you praise for yesterday and wait with certain hope and  
expectation for what you will do today.

## **Gathering prayer expressing total dependence, inspired by Psalm 90**

Oh Lord, our Lord  
from everlasting to everlasting  
You have been, are and always will be -  
God.

You alone have been and are our dwelling place,  
for history rests within eternity,  
and our world is held together  
entirely by the power of your loving hand.

Where else would we go?  
Where else would we want to be  
but here in your presence?  
Oh Lord, our Lord, we run to you.

So on this very morning within our total history,  
flood our hearts with the unfailing love of eternity  
so we might constantly keep singing for joy  
at who you are and all you have done.

We need you every hour of the day today  
so in your mercy and goodness  
rest your favour Lord God upon us  
and please, yes, please, establish the work of our hands.

## **Gathering prayer surrendering the day to Jesus, our Master**

**All: Lord Jesus, come and be our Master again –  
truly, fully, completely; lead us to total surrender.  
We need to recognise you as you truly are  
and to remember to relate to you with a bowed posture again.  
Lord Jesus, what are you saying today?  
Where have we made ourselves master  
in pursuit of less responsibility – or too much?  
And where have we forgotten how much you love your other children  
in pursuit of always receiving or always giving?  
Lord Jesus, come and be our Master again –  
teach us how to follow and obey with joyful abandon  
to your safe authority, power, provision and plan:  
no more, no less... we give ourselves completely to you –  
the perfect Master, Lord and Leader.**

## Gathering prayer based on Psalm 138

**All: We will praise you O Lord with all of our hearts.  
We will kneel before you in your Sanctuary  
and sing your praise unashamedly.  
We will choose to worship you over the gods of our age  
because of your unfailing love and faithfulness.**

**When we call, you answer us -  
You've done it before and you'll do it today and every day  
as we come before you in heartfelt prayer  
for our world; our nation; our communities and ourselves.  
So we come with confidence to intercede today.  
For though you are high and lifted up,  
You look with kindness on the humble  
and watch them attentively and lovingly.**

**And even though our service of you may cost us dearly, or lead us into opposition  
You preserve our lives – and our hearts in your truth.  
We know you will vindicate us if we continue to stand for you and those you love -  
the lost, the poor and the broken – who we ourselves would always be, outside of you.**

**Your love endures forever and you will never abandon us,  
because we are the precious works of your hands.  
So fill us again with your Spirit's love and power today  
that we might pray and act for your kingdom's rule,  
in your strength and for your glory.  
Amen.**

## Gathering prayer inspired by God's generosity

**Leader: Generous God  
You came to seek and save the lost;  
You brought good news to the poor;  
proclaimed freedom to captives;  
bound up the broken-hearted;  
and healed the sick.**

**Generous God  
You're still seeking and saving the lost;  
You're bringing good news to the poor;  
proclaiming freedom to captives;**

binding up the broken-hearted  
and healing the sick.

**All:**           **Generous God, pour out your Spirit through us -  
that today we might follow and partner with you  
as you seek and save the lost.  
We want to give as freely as we have received.  
may we be good news to the poor;  
speak up for freedom for captives;  
comfort the broken-hearted  
and see the sick healed.  
In your precious name and through your love and power,  
use us today Lord Jesus.  
Amen.**

### **Gathering prayer inspired by the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)**

**Leader:**       Hear O people, the Lord our God is one God.  
**All:**           **The Lord our God is one God. We will seek to love him and his children with all our hearts, with all  
our souls and with all our strength.**  
**Leader:**       We declare O Lord, you are one God. Three in a perfect relationship of love - yet one.  
**All:**           **You O Lord are one God. Help us seek to love you and others with all our hearts, with all our souls  
and with all our strength, through the power of Christ and the constant presence of your Spirit.  
Amen.**

### **Gathering prayer celebrating the coming together of many stories**

**Leader:**       Lord Jesus we come together to praise you with one voice,  
weaving our lives together in unity and diversity as a representation of your body.  
We are all different but we have the same maker;  
we have unique stories but the same author  
who writes again and again on our hearts his miracle testimonies  
of transformed lives, answered prayers and changed perspectives  
Each of us has countless stories to tell of his goodness.  
And today we choose to bring them together for his precious names' sake.  
And as a testimony to ourselves, each other and the world of his kingdom's rule.

**All:**           **We gather together to share our stories,  
to build our fellowship  
to spur each other on to grow in faith  
– individually and as a community –  
and to persevere more in prayer for the things on his heart.**

**We seek Jesus' righting of every wrong and his re-writing of every troubled story  
until it reflects his best plan  
and the truth that he is alive and moving today.  
This is the God we gather to worship.  
This is the God we unite to praise.  
Able; Almighty; Active; Kind.  
Amen.**

## **Prayer of thanksgiving and gathering**

Faithful God,  
we give you thanks and praise  
for every story of faith found,  
every testimony of healing given,  
every experience of hope strengthened,  
and every revelation of your love received  
gathered here today.

Generous God,  
make us generous with our praise.  
We want to be eager tellers of your stories,  
proclaiming your transforming work in our lives  
to each other, and to those who are new to your love.  
May you find us faithful in sharing our testimonies  
and expectant and watchful for what you will do next.

## **Gathering prayer of testimony to inspire faith and intercession**

*We first wrote this prayer for the dedication of the Sanctuary's centre, but have since adapted it for everyday use. We use it frequently at the Sanctuary as we gather different people to pray and worship together; it serves as a helpful reminder of our motivation and confidence to pray being founded in our own experience of God being our sanctuary.*

From different places and churches  
we gather in one spirit -  
we stand for one cross; one resurrection  
and one source of life to receive and give -  
the beautiful, sacrificial love of Jesus Christ.

Because you have proved yourself to be *our* sanctuary –  
our safe-hiding place; our transforming champion  
and our ever present help in trouble.  
And now that we know you are Love

– that you are truly *this* good -  
we cannot help but pray and live and act and give  
until everyone knows who you are and seeks to love like you do.  
And our world moves closer to your kingdom's justice rule  
for the sake of the poor, the lost and the broken  
who we count it a privilege to walk beside.

## **Gathering prayer asking for humility as we intercede for the poor**

*This gathering liturgy is based on a prayer that was offered spontaneously by one of our pray-ers before we started to use our prayer stations on economic justice at the start of Fairtrade fortnight in 2013. We have found it helpful to focus our hearts and minds as we gather to intercede on multiple occasions subsequently:*

**Lord, we ask for humility as we come to you today  
For we are rich - and we are quick to grow tired of 'the poor'.  
We don't know what it feels like to go to bed at night hungry - persistently.  
We don't know how it feels to sleep under canvas - every night.  
We don't know what it feels like to be a refugee; to be persecuted; or to be voiceless.**

**Keep our hearts soft we pray.  
Open our eyes to those who are homeless in our town today;  
Show us who we might be able to assist practically or financially among those who cross our paths locally;  
And help us as we look beyond to those who are distant to us,  
Remembering they are never nameless or faceless  
And seeking to find ways to live out your love  
By interceding for them to you, and speaking up about them in our world.**

**Help us as we act to transform unjust systems  
And as we continue to pray for the softening of the hearts of those who create them,  
Or who are happy to benefit from them - like ourselves.  
We give you permission to meet us today and to change us  
As your Spirit of truth and love leads us in humility to this holy ground we tread -  
The reality of the lives some of our brothers and sisters are forced to live.  
Lead us and help us we pray -  
In your precious and beautiful name Lord Jesus,  
Amen.**

## **Gathering prayer of resolution (inspired by Joshua 24:14-16, Luke 10:26-28 and Amos 5)**

*This prayer was first written as part of our selection of prayers for economic justice for the global prayer, but we have found it is also helpful as we gather and so are including it here also:*

**Leader:** Choose today whom you will serve  
**All:** **We choose to serve the Lord**

Leader: Choose today whom you will worship

**All: We choose to worship the Lord**

Leader: Choose today whose laws you will follow

**All: We choose to obey the Lord**

Leader: Today we choose to serve you Lord – with all our hearts, souls, minds, and strength.  
We choose to follow your law – and worship you in the way we know you require.  
We choose to love our neighbours – even as we love ourselves.  
We choose to reject the empty religion you despise that prays with beautiful words but continues to pursue self-promotion at the expense of the poor and the weak.  
We choose to turn our backs on the gods of our land and our time – materialism and self-sufficiency.  
God of the humble heart, the poor, and the broken – it is you, and our neighbours, we choose to serve.

Leader: Choose today whom you will love

**All: We choose to love the Lord, and the neighbours he has given us**

Leader: Choose today who rules your decisions

**All: We choose to have no god before you Lord – come and reign in our hearts, our minds, and over our resources**

Leader: Choose today how you will live

**All: We choose to live generously – giving all we have to God and our neighbour – for the sake of him who gave himself for us.**

## Envisioning prayer, inspired by God's graciousness

Gracious, gracious God,  
how can we thank you?  
You lavish your love and generosity on us,  
giving favour we don't deserve  
simply because of who you are.  
For you are LOVE  
and you are good *all the time*  
and whatever we've done,  
whoever we think we are – or aren't –  
you created us, delight in us  
and constantly seek to father us  
into the best and complete reflection  
of your design for each one of our God-in-ourselves.

Gracious, gracious God,  
how can we be like you?  
Show us how to lavish love and generosity on others,  
giving favour where we stand to gain nothing back  
save the knowledge that we have recognised  
the God-in-themselves worth of all your children.



Lord, slow us down  
and help us take down all our walls  
of defence, shame or self-justification  
so your limitless love can overwhelm us and enable us  
to give freely as we keep receiving from you.

Use our voices,  
use our words,  
use our consumer power,  
use our finances  
use our intercessions  
use our songs,  
use our choices,  
use our time  
Use it all Lord  
to release a tidal wave of love, mercy, justice –  
and above all –  
GRACE  
to the poor, the producer and the powerless.

And Lord may others be swept up in this deluge of grace too,  
receiving and giving, receiving and giving  
till every barrier to your graciousness falls and crumbles  
and we love our neighbour as we love ourselves,  
and we love ourselves as you love us and our neighbours.

By your grace Lord Jesus,  
let it be so,  
for this is your kingdom come  
and we are thirsty for it!

### **Sending prayer of blessing for the day's work ahead inspired by Psalm 90:17**

Compassionate Father, Lord and friend,  
thank you for sharing your heart with us  
and inviting us to agree with your prayers  
and join in your work.  
As we continue on into today and beyond  
– praying and acting with you and for you –  
may your favour rest on us,  
your presence remain tangible to us  
and the work of our hands be established  
through the blessing of yours  
as they hold us – and all things – in perfect sovereignty.

## **Sending prayer for seasons of rest or conclusion**

*We wrote this prayer on Friday 2 August, 2012 – when our centre broke for the summer for the first time at the end of its first year. Sometimes it's hard to leave the Sanctuary's space, community and rhythm... but of course they are all just reflections and glimpses of the one who never leaves or forsakes us. That's why we love this prayer! We re-discovered it in August 2015 when a newer Christian was going away for three weeks and was genuinely struggling with the prospect of being out of fellowship with us and others during this time. It was a joy to put these words in her hands.*

Father, more than anything today, we thank you for the fact that your presence goes before us, behind us and around us – you surround us and hem us in.

Your sanctuary is a moveable love  
which shelters, shepherds and steers us.

Your outstretched, over-stretched wing is not static –  
it covers us wherever we go.

And so, as we retreat into rest and refreshment, we know your presence goes before us, behind us and around us all – you surround us and hem us in.

Keep us aware of your love beyond these walls,  
sheltered, shepherded and steered by your word.

And may we find restoration in the shadow of your wing –  
as you cover us wherever we go.

## **Reflective meditation prayerfully exploring the desire to live – and give – from grace**

What's so amazing about grace?

The world says push, strive, grasp  
or I'll sink, a failure, pointless and worthless.

So I work hard, trying to keep my head above the water,  
gathering as much stuff around me as I can to stay afloat –  
but it just drags me down, deeper and deeper...

What's so amazing about grace?

Maybe the world's got it wrong...

What if I let go of this stuff  
that just clings and suffocates?

What if I stop pushing, striving, grasping?

Am I worth anything without it, without success?

I'm not sure...

What's so amazing about grace?

Can it be the answer?

Is it possible that I have value from just being me,  
from the pure and simple fact that he created me?

What if I really am wholly and deeply loved  
aside from what I do or whether I deserve it?

Can this amazing grace really be true?

I let go, I untie the strings,  
I free myself of the suffocating debris.  
I stop pushing, striving, grasping  
and I lean back, risking falling,  
daring to drown in the hope that instead  
I'll rise above the waters.

And that's what's so amazing about grace...  
It's in the letting go, that I have all I need,  
it's in the resting, that I gain,  
and in the choosing to trust,  
that I'm raised to new life.

And as I embrace this,  
I find I am free.  
Free to love,  
free to hope,  
free to reach out,  
free to share beautiful, life-transforming mercy with those in need,  
free to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice,  
free to know that goodness, justice and righteousness will win,  
free to believe the Kingdom of the amazing Grace-giver is coming  
and already here.

I am loved. Each one of us is loved.  
Together then, we can all live out this love  
in the strength and power  
of the One whose name is Love.

Yes, that's what's so amazing about grace.