

Prayers for the Church

At the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2022, the Faith Nurture Forum was asked to:

Call the Church to pray, and instruct the Forum to produce prayer resources to encourage and equip people to pray for the future well-being, peace and revival of the Church.

We have asked people from across the Church to write prayers to help us respond to this call. Their prayers reflect the range of different voices across the Church of Scotland, and offer a variety of prayer styles that can be used in public worship, church gatherings and meetings, or in your own personal prayer rhythm.

A prayer by the Very Rev Dr Derek Browning

Minister, Edinburgh Morningside Parish Church

Almighty God,
into Your hands we place the Church today,
this immense tapestry of hopes and fears,
possibility and challenge.

Into Your hands we place
our times, and talents, and money,
and ask that You may use them, and us
in ways that bring the brightness of faith,
and the honesty of doubt,
into a world where faith and doubt are real.
Open our minds and hearts to the graciousness
we find in the words and actions of Jesus.

In the busy-ness, may we find quietness;
in the quietness, may we find inspiration.
In our parishes and presbyteries and General Assembly
show us pathways ahead,
lead us on the ways You have already prepared.
Give us the vision to see them,
and the humility to walk them,
knowing that each and every step along that way,
You Yourself will walk with us.
Guide and guard us,
that we may be the ones You have called
to be the light in our world today.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

A prayer by Rev Erick du Toit

Minister, Kirkliston Parish Church

REVIVE (*Inspired by Job 37*)

**The words in bold in this responsive prayer are said together*

Revive our Church we pray

God, Your voice thunders in marvellous ways,
You do great things beyond our understanding.
You say to the snow, 'Fall on the earth,'
and to the rain shower, 'Be a mighty downpour.'
May Your Spirit fall afresh on us,
as we exclaim: 'Your love endures forever!'

Revive our people we pray

Nothing is impossible for You.
You use our imperfections,
to build a Kingdom worthy of Your Name.
You've done it in the past, come and do it again, LORD!
Challenge us to use our skills and gifts,
braving the sacrifices to serve You most effectively.

Revive our young people we pray

In a world where anxiety and stress dominate,
where Your kin are struggling for identity and purpose,
will You give them a renewed sense of direction?
To know who they are and to whom they belong.
That You are but a thought away:
lead them on the path of righteousness and restore their passion for Jesus.

Revive our structures and systems we pray

Cut.
Prune.
And remove.
What's not of Christ.
We want to abide in You alone.
With openness we welcome the Gardener's shears.

Revive our Church we pray!

A prayer by Beth Wallace

General Assembly Youth Representative

A PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

**The words in bold in this responsive prayer are said together*

Lord,
Cleanse the Church afresh with the blood of Christ.

Hear us, Lord Jesus

Inspire new zeal and commitment to the Lord in the church.

Hear us, Lord Jesus

Holy Spirit,
baptize the Church afresh with the love of God.

Hear us, Lord Jesus

Visit the Church with a freshness of power to demonstrate God's Kingdom
on the streets and in public places.

Hear us, Lord Jesus

Lord to pour upon the Church in full the spirit of Holiness, in Jesus name.

Hear us, Lord Jesus

Lord,
strengthen the Body of Christ with fresh insights and revelation
inspire new leaders and confidence to work with You in building the kingdom

Hear us, Lord Jesus

At this time more than any other, Lord, we need Your power and strength.

Hear us, Lord Jesus

A prayer by Stuart Davidson

Pioneer Minister – Paisley North Parish Church

A PRAYER OF HONESTY BEFORE GOD

**The words in bold in this responsive prayer are said together*

When I remember what has happened,

[Pause to remember...]

When I remember what has happened,

I tell God all my troubles.

Creator God,

we are here, just as we are – just as I am.

Invited to be ourselves as we pray to the God who gives us life.

At times the circumstances of our [world/nation] overwhelm us,

the uncertainties in our [community/city/town/village] cause us concern.

We turn to You, heavenly Father, for our [world/nation]...

We turn to You, Lord Jesus for our [community/city/town/village]...

We turn to You, Holy Spirit for those we see each day and for anyone in in any kind of need
who You bring to our minds...

Lord, we remember, all You have been, are and will be to us.

Humbly asking Lord, that You send times of refreshing

to restore and refill Your people as we know

“..who and what we really are,

in all its glory and ugliness, giftedness and limitations...”

We need Your help this day, our Saviour and our God.

Amen

[1]Stuart Ford, Bible Society's Supporter Relations team. Used with permission]

[Thursday 23 March: Humility - The Lent Encounter Blog 2023 - Bible Society](#)

Prayers by the Very Rev Albert Bogle

Leader, Sanctuary First

PRAYER OF APPROACH – FOR AN EXHAUSTED CHURCH

Almighty God, Creator of all,
Revealer of all that is good and evil,
another day has dawned,
and the hour of prayer has come.
Gather us in from far and near,
as we welcome
the stranger and seeker,
the scoundrel and the saint,
those who have nothing to lose,
and those who have lost nothing,
yet whose hands and hearts are empty.

We have come to worship and honour Your name.
To remind ourselves that
You have called us to set this sacred time apart,
to rest in Your presence,
and to give thanks for all Your goodness and loving kindness.
Accept the praise of our lips and the thoughts of our hearts,
as we worship You,
Father Son and Holy Spirit.

Come Spirit of God,
hover over our lives.
Make us into Your church.
May Your word be the lamp to our path,
leading us on into a journey of service and sacrifice,
ready to serve without counting the cost.
Lift our eyes to see beyond the hills,
make us impatient to embrace the vision,
to find the paths that lead to Your coming Kingdom.

We long to be embraced by the strength
that comes from You – our refuge.
Free us from our fears,
by the touch of Your loving kindness.

Remove our poverty of spirit,
by the richness of Your compassion.
Restore in us hope,
as the morning opens out into a fuller day.
May the light of Your grace fill our hearts,
enlighten our minds,
and direct the works of our hands,
that we might raise the fallen,
and sustain the weary,
and at the end of the day,
bless Your name.
In rest and hope,
may we lie down in sleep,
ready to awake
and serve
another day.

A PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

**The words in bold in this responsive prayer are said together*

Almighty God, Creator of all,
Revealer of all that is good and evil,
forgive our hidden prejudice,
cleverly concealed from others – and ourselves.
Thoughts and attitudes,
covered up with politically correct comments,
contradicted by nervous body language.

Nothing is hidden from Your holy gaze
Change our hearts
that our souls might ring true to those who listen

When it is easier to do nothing – or go with the flow,
let truth teach us to do the right thing –
to be honest in our hearts,
speaking honestly about the things in which we believe.
Searching for the truth in our meetings and programmes and activities.
Today we remember all those who have been wrongly accused,
and who bear the pain of injustice.

We pray for those whose lives have been torn from them
through war and the indiscriminate actions of others.

Nothing is hidden from Your holy gaze
Change our hearts
that our souls might ring true to those who listen

Give us the courage to seek after the truth –
to be more like Jesus – to embody our truth,
to become the way of truth,
to embrace Your life-giving truth,
through our lifestyles and conversations with each other.
Help us to be fair in all our dealings,
to use our wealth and influence to seek justice.

Nothing is hidden from Your holy gaze
Change our hearts
that our souls might ring true to those who listen

Open our eyes to understand the power and significance of resurrection.
To look beyond the emptiness of fearing endings and loss.
To focus our eyes upon resurrection and restoration and renewal.
To sense what it means to speak with authority in order to bring about resurrection life.
To have the courage to be face the facts in order to bear new fruit for the future.
Restore Your church in communities where the light is flickering and the people are bruised.
Bring healing to all this day who suffer from any affliction or trouble.

Nothing is hidden from Your holy gaze
Change our hearts
that our souls might ring true to those who listen

Help us remember that we are people called to proclaim the forgiveness of sins
to those who are broken and hurting and who have lost hope.
Let the light of Your truth communicate grace
through our words, gestures, expressions, signs, body language,
dance, pictures rhythm, silences, even in our sighing.
Lord hear our prayers
and let our cries come unto You.

A PRAYER TO THE URBAN SHEPHERD

God of the City,
Creator of Community,
Urban Shepherd,
guard the lonely tonight.
Those who walk down
lonely streets dimly lit,
looking for comfort of any kind.
Loneliness defines many a city dweller.
Everyone is busy,
like bees in a hive,
no time to be.
The plan is never questioned.
Simply making money
is the rule.
But strangely never tasting the honey.
To be a worker is to be a bee,
to be the hive, not a single bee.
Loneliness is best defined in a crowd.
There You are hidden,
homogenised,
blocked in,
always behind someone else,
pushed aside,
crushed like sheep in a pen.
Woolly hats and mitts
jostling together in the train,
It's the rush hour pain.
Going home,
alone
again.
God of the City,
Creator of Community,
Urban Shepherd,
Guard the lonely tonight.

A PRAYER FOR WHEN WE ARE ON OUR BACKS

Almighty Life-giving Father,
we're lying here,
flat on our backs
exhausted
weary
broken.
A pile of dry bones.
We've lost our place.
We've lost our purpose.
We lost our plans.
We are Your lost people.
We have no muscle left,
no flesh to make us look beautiful.
Our outward appearance has gone.
Our breath
Has long since departed.
We are decaying in the sands of time,
yet somehow
we know,
we want to live.

Come,
breathe again upon our bones.
Bring life back.
Rewind our demise,
re-imagine us again
as Your people in Your image,
Your body in the world.
Give us muscles to move,
eyes to see,
tongues to speak and sing
and hearts to beat again.

Lord,
We're waiting
We're listening
Could it be we can hear
the sound of wind blowing

Rushing
Moving
Re-energising
Lord,
Is it Resurrection?

A prayer by Rev David Coleman

Chaplain, EcoCongregation Scotland

A PRAYER WITH THE CHURCH IN AN AGE OF URGENT ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES

**The words in bold in this responsive prayer are said together*

**Sustaining God, Shared Flesh, Wild Wind and Breath of every life:
You gather us, connect us;**

You give us a home already shared:
a mighty, fragile, Habitat
to respect, tend and love
the life of which we are not other.

In this age of urgency and threat,
when Creation daily cries in pain
from wounds by knowing human injustice,
bless us with courage, faith and cheerfulness
bless us with warnings: with truth faced head on
to be Church beyond the tipping points:
dependent, collaborative,
not pretending we're in charge.

So that we find our place and purpose
in the bold aspirations of Net Zero
and still bolder compassion
for creatures, voices, people
-downtrodden and despised-
in whose speech and wisdom,
as from the Cross,
You speak.

Strengthen us against the satanic comfort of denial;
of bit-by-bit, and greenwashed lukewarm change.
Save us from isolated, 'self-sufficient' 'witness.

Repurpose what passes for good sense,
for loyalty and fortitude;
as we read afresh Your resurrection call
to preach – and be – Good News for every creature.

Sustaining God, Shared Flesh, Wild Wind and Breath of every life,

In this crisis, Your Gospel makes sense.
So: recycle us: as we hear Christ say –
“Get on with it”

Amen

(A video of this prayer is available for use from Eco-Congregation Scotland
<https://vimeo.com/812224220>

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