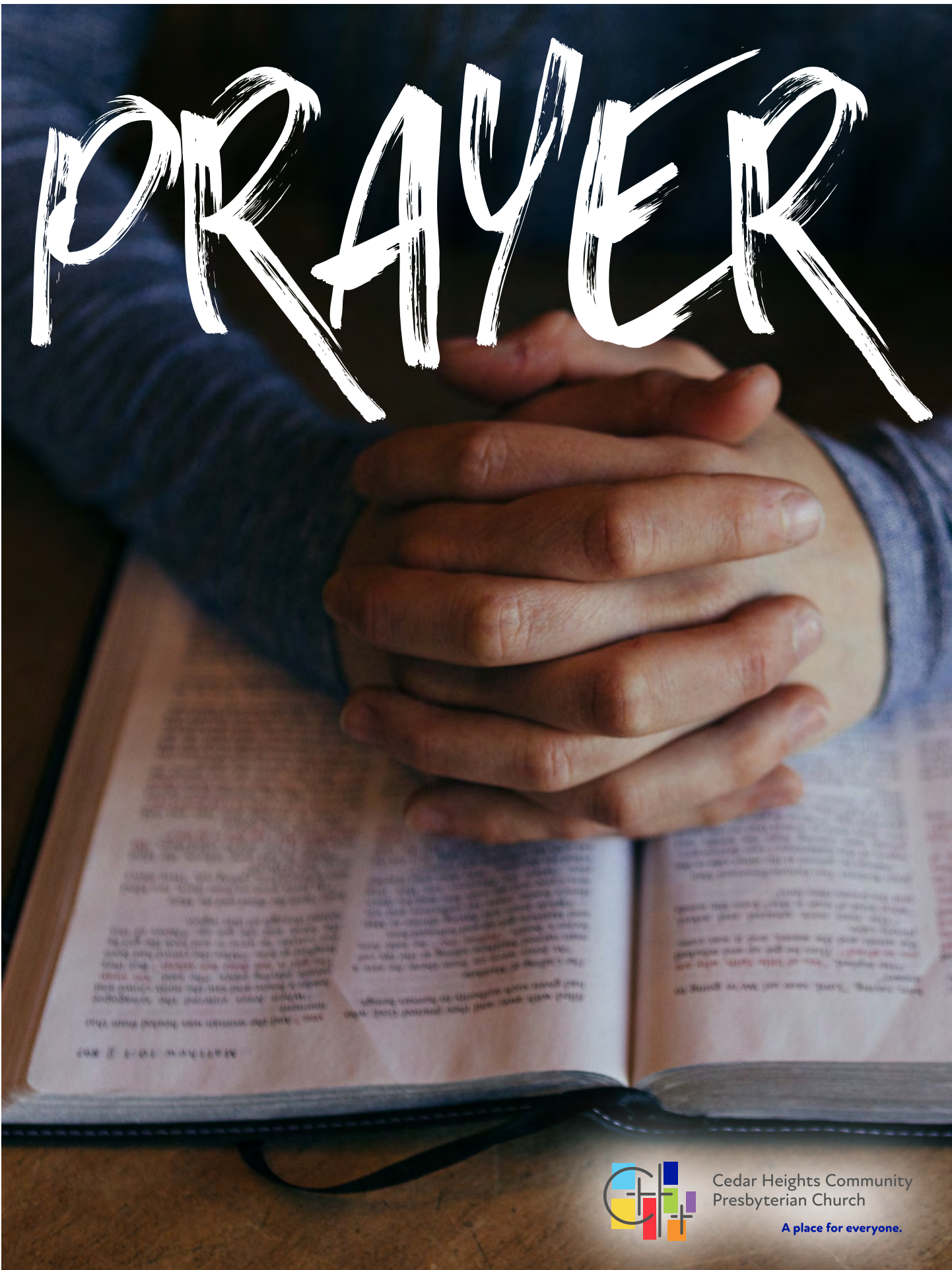
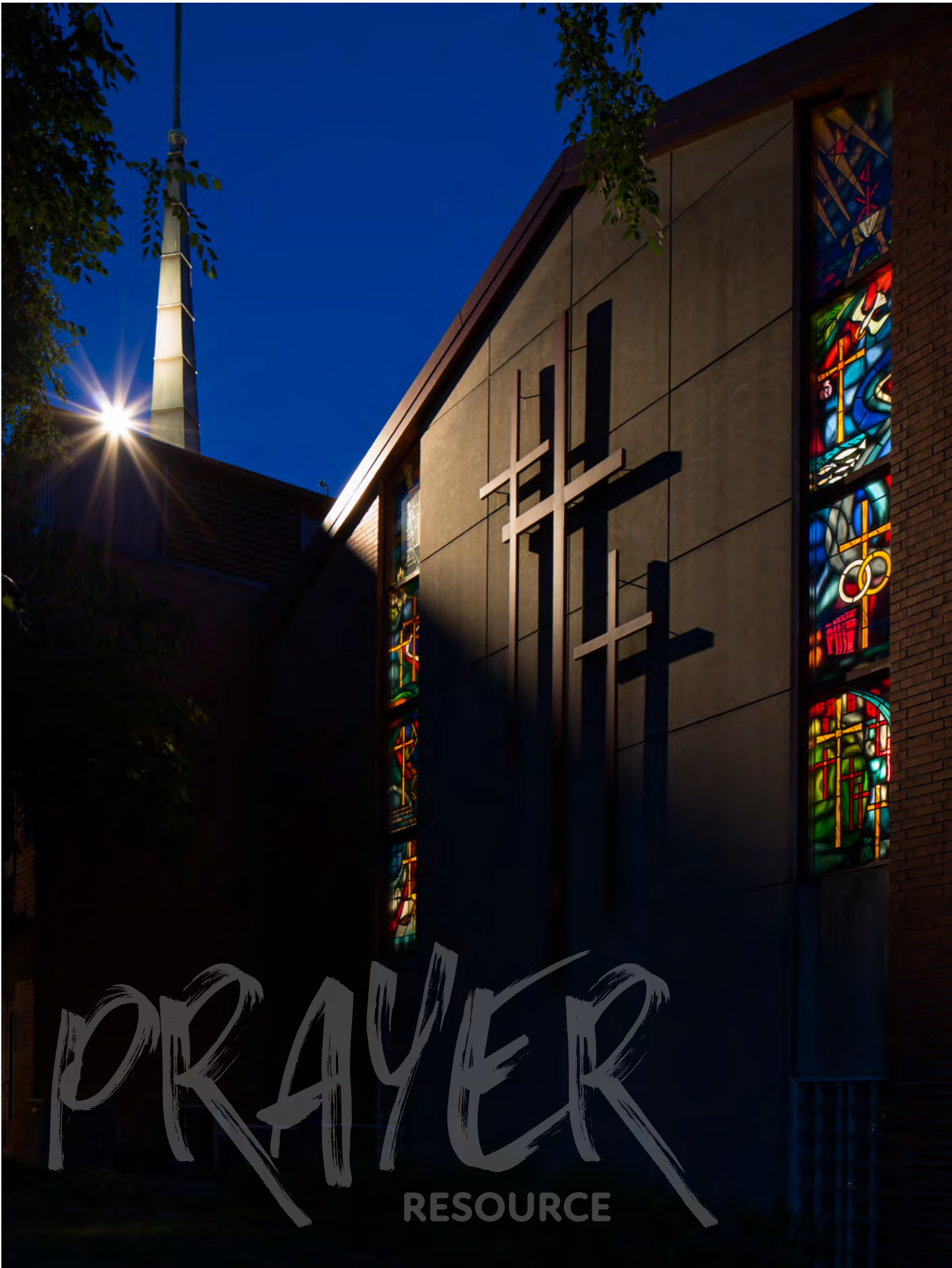


PRAYER



Cedar Heights Community
Presbyterian Church

A place for everyone.



PRAYER

RESOURCE



PRAYER

RESOURCE

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A vertical strip of a stained glass window is visible on the left side of the page. It features various colored panes in shades of blue, purple, red, and green, with a prominent red cross in the lower half. The overall background of the page is a soft, light blue gradient.

INTRODUCTION

Our God is a relational God. Holy Scripture makes clear that human beings were created to be in relationship with our Maker. How wonderful and profound it is that our Creator has gifted us with prayer, the capability of being in constant communicative relationship with the Eternal, Triune God!

This purpose for our being created (to be in relationship with God) is attested by the reality that nearly every current and extinct religious system in the world engages in some form of prayer, of communicating (with or without words) with the Divine. Mainline Protestant Christianity is therefore, by no means, unique in this regard.

Without painting with too broad a brush, it seems that our Westernized form of Protestant Christianity, regrettably infused with the ideals and vices of modern consumerist society (in many cases), has lost sight of prayer as a spiritual discipline—one that enables us to be carefully attuned to discerning God's will for our lives, our communities, and our world.

In contrast, by and large, our Muslim and Jewish sisters and brothers in faith have set aside specific portions of their day for the spiritual discipline of prayer—living in to the conviction that a divine dialogue is essential to each day. Instead, mainline Protestants often approach God more and more only when we need something, and less and less for any other reason—such as praise, confession, and thanksgiving.

Indeed, prayer is more than our personal wish lists. Prayer is intended as a gift from God to deepen our love and intimacy and enjoyment of our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. It is our hope that this prayer resource may be a catalyst for engaging in prayer as a spiritual discipline or, at the very least, a tool that facilitates a more meaningful and fulfilling prayer life.

To God be the glory!

WHAT IS PRAYER?

Untutored, we tend to think that prayer is what good people do when they are doing their best. It is not. Inexperienced, we suppose that there must be an “insider” language that must be acquired before God takes us seriously in our prayer. There is not. Prayer is elemental, not advanced language. It is the means by which our language becomes honest, true and personal in response to God. It is the means by which we get everything out in the open before God.

Eugene Peterson, Living the Message

Everybody prays whether he thinks of it as praying or not. The odd silence you fall into when something very beautiful is happening or something very good or something very bad. The ah-h-h-h! that sometimes floats up out of a Fourth of July crowd when the sky-rocket bursts over the water. The stammer of pain at someone else’s pain. The stammer of joy at someone else’s joy. Whatever words or sounds you use for sighing over your own life. These are all prayers in their way. These are all spoken not just to yourself but to something even more familiar than yourself and even more strange than the world.

Frederick Buechner, Wishful Thinking

The fewer the words, the better the prayer.

Martin Luther

‘Thank you’ is the best prayer that anyone could say. I say that one a lot. Thank you expresses extreme gratitude, humility, understanding.

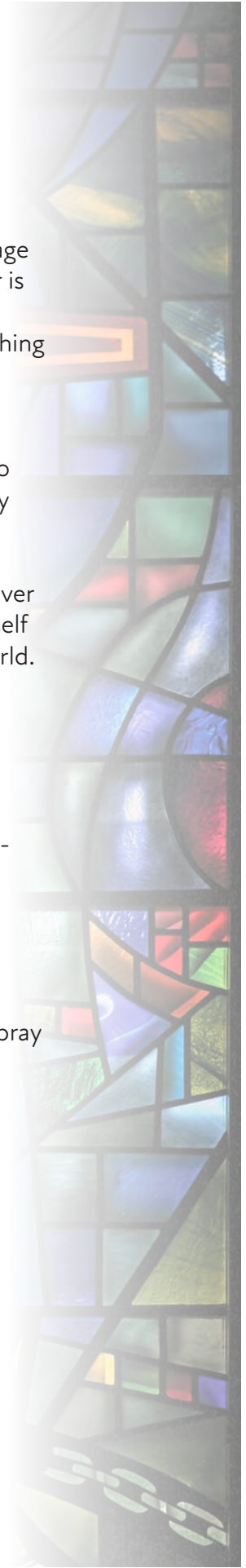
Alice Walker

This, I thought, is what is meant by ‘thy will be done’ in the Lord’s Prayer, which I had prayed time and again without thinking about it. It means that your will and God’s will may not be the same. It means there’s a good possibility that you won’t get what you pray for. It means that in spite of your prayers you are going to suffer.

Wendell Berry

For prayer is nothing else than being on terms of friendship with God.

Saint Teresa of Avila



HOW TO PRAY

From “Questions About Prayer – How to Pray?”

Sermon by Dr. Dave Kivett March 26, 2017

Texts: Luke 18:1-14 and Romans 8:26-17

Three possible guides - Keep at it. Keep it together. And keep it real.

Keep at it

Persistent prayer is patient prayer, regular communication with God
It is day and night ... and day after day and night after night
Jesus is telling us to pray and pray often, to pray regularly, to pray and keep at it,
and keep on keeping at it

Keep it together

It does help to schedule time to pray, to pray regularly
Regular, consistent and persistent prayer ... find a pattern
We develop a rhythm, a way of praying, maybe a list, maybe an outline

I first learned to pray by using a list, praying my way through the names.
Lists are a good way to structure our prayers. So too are outlines and acronyms;
One I like is to pray spelling out the word pray P-R-A-Y

P - Praise Begin with praise, with giving thanks.

You know how Elvis ended his concerts? Thank you. Thank you, very much.
That's a very good way to begin our prayers ... with an attitude of gratitude to say
thank you, to count our blessings, to sing God's praise

R - Repent To repent is to realize we're going the wrong way and to turn around

That is literally what it means to repent, to turn around
Prayer is realizing how lost we are and asking God for directions
Prayer is pulling the mask off, not pretending ... being vulnerable, broken
Prayer is honest, real. God knows our shortcomings
And God loves us still. That is grace
God loves us enough to hear us, to help us

A - Ask This is us reaching out to God for help ... please help!

We ask for ourselves, for family and friends, for the people added to our list
We ask with humility and with hope. We ask with confidence, not in the one doing
the asking but in the one listening

Y - Yield Prayer is not just us talking and God listening

Prayer is our listening to God ... listening in the silence, in God's word,
in the voices of others, in our dreams and in our suffering
It is the waiting that goes with our prayers. It is trusting, hoping, accepting
It is 'keeping it together' knowing that the keeping together of things is not what we
do with our lists and outlines. It is what God does

Keep it real

All this talk about how to pray comes with a caution
Prayer is not about getting it right, being right or saying it right
Pray is not so much about the one praying. It's about the one listening!

Let's keep it real again realizing that prayer is not about what we say or do
It's about the One who hears us ... even, especially when we're not talking,
when we are dreaming, hoping, sighing, crying

Even more helpful than any 'how to' is the 'who to' God hears our prayers. Period.
However they may be expressed
Hear this from Romans, chapter 8.

**...the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray
as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.
And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit,
because the Spirit[intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.**

From Sally Goodenbour

P - praise God for all your blessings
R - repent and tell God you are sorry for your sins
A - ask for others, prayers of healing, prayers for blessings
Y - yourself, pray for your own needs

So just PRAY - praise, repent, ask, yourself - if you fall asleep before your prayer is
done, you have at least thanked him for your blessings!

From Hazel VerMulm

This is a little poem I learned when I was about 13 years old.

*You are writing a gospel - a chapter each day
By deeds that you do - by words that you say.
Men read what you write, whether faithless or true.
Say, what is the gospel according to you?*



HOW AND WHEN TO PRAY

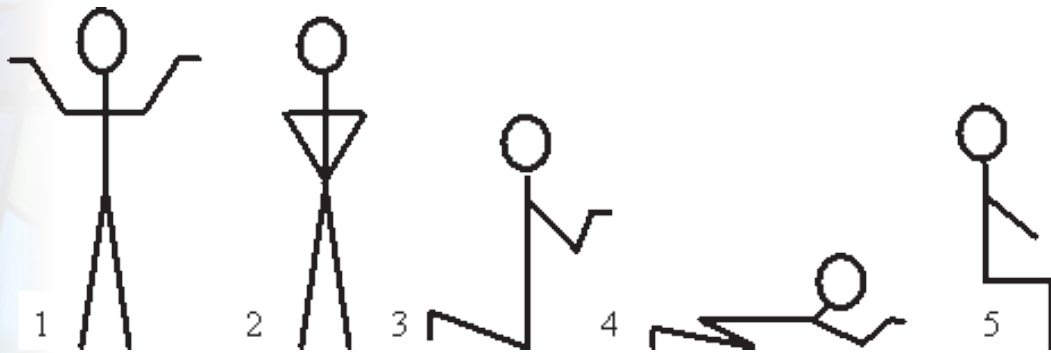
To be clear, there is no right or wrong method of prayer and there is no right or wrong time to pray. The God of grace is always listening, regardless of how or when we are praying. The Apostle Paul believes prayer should be ongoing and without end, to the point where one's entire life becomes a living sacrifice to God. Prayer is more than words spoken while our eyes are closed. Our sighs, tears, groans, and even screams can be equally understood as prayer, as can our music, artwork, or writing.

That being said, however, there are various postures of prayer that might be helpful to experiment with. There is also something to be said for keeping a prayer schedule—blocking our portions of our day as a spiritual discipline (morning, noon, and evening for example), all the while understanding that prayer cannot be reduced to schedule. Indeed, there is an inherent spontaneity in prayer—oriented and catalyzed by the Holy Spirit.

Postures of prayer—standing (Mark 11:25, 1 Timothy 2:8), sitting (2 Samuel 7:18), kneeling (Luke 22:41), bowing/prostrating (Matthew 26:39), eyes closed/open, arms raised (1 Kings 8:22 following), palms up and open, palms pressed together, hands clasped, etc.

Shall We Sit, Stand, or Kneel to Pray?

Here are the five traditional postures for prayer, how they originated, what they are used for, and who uses which one:



Standing 1: Eyes open, looking up, hands uplifted with the palms up

This is the oldest posture for prayer. It is called the orans position, from the Latin word for praying. By praying this way, the worshiper acknowledges God as external and transcendent. This posture is for thanksgiving, praises, blessings, benedictions, and general prayers. This is still the normal position for prayers in eastern churches and in Jewish synagogues, and it is still used in the western church, particularly when the clergy bless the bread and wine of the Eucharist.

About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when

they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him.
—*Luke 9:28-32, NIV*

After Jesus said this, he **looked toward heaven** and prayed
—*John 17:1a, NIV*

I want people everywhere to **lift up holy hands in prayer**... —*1 Timothy 2:8a, NIV*

Standing 2: Looking down, eyes averted or closed, hands clasped at the waist

This is the traditional posture of a shackled prisoner of war who is brought before the conquering king. The hands are clasped at the waist as if they were shackled in chains. The eyes are averted—in ancient times, looking directly at one’s captor was insolent and a good way to get killed on the spot. This posture is for submissive petitions or for intercessory or penitential prayer.

Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee **stood up** and prayed about himself: ‘God, I want to thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ But the tax collector **stood** at a distance. He **would not even look up** to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’
—*Luke 18:10-13, NIV*

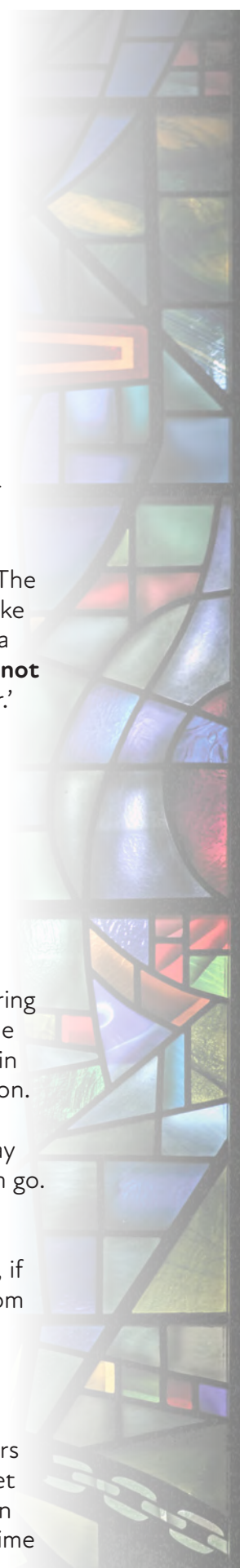
Kneeling: Eyes open, looking up
Hands uplifted with the palms up
—OR—
Looking down with eyes averted or closed, hands folded

This is the traditional posture for requesting favors from a king, and so it became the traditional posture for prayers of repentance or supplication. The Council of Nicaea in AD 325 forbade kneeling on Sundays, because penitential prayer is not appropriate during a celebration of the Resurrection. In western Christianity, kneeling came to mean simple humility and submission, and so kneeling became the normal posture for most prayers in the west. However, to eastern Christians, kneeling still means repentance or supplication.

The servant **fell on his knees** before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt, and let him go.
—*Matthew 18:26, NIV*

[Jesus] withdrew about a stone’s throw beyond them, **knelt down** and prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done.” An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.
—*Luke 22:41-44, NIV*

Some western churches have kneelers so the congregation can pray in the pews. Others do not have kneelers, but when people gather at the altar railing, they kneel. The secret to kneeling is not to bend at the waist. Thrust your hips forward, so that your abdomen and thighs form a straight, vertical line, and you’ll be able to kneel for long periods of time without fatigue and without sitting on your heels.



HOW AND WHEN TO PRAY

Prostrate: Lying on one’s belly, looking down with eyes averted or closed

This is the traditional posture for begging favors from a king when the favors are great and the petitioner is either desperate or has no standing before the king even in the literal sense. It became the traditional posture for desperate, penitential, or intercessory prayer and is still used in eastern churches, which have plenty of room because they don’t have pews.

Then [Jesus] said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” Going a little farther, **he fell with his face to the ground** and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

—Matthew 26:38-39, *NIV*

Sitting: Looking down with eyes averted or close, hands folded

The Roman Catholic Church invented pews during the Middle Ages, right before the Protestant Reformation. Since the Protestant Reformation was essentially a Christian education movement with very long sermons, the Protestants kept the pews even though they rejected just about everything else they regarded as a ‘Roman invention.’ As a result, sitting has become the normal posture for prayer for many western congregations.

In 2 Samuel 7:18, David sat to pray. However, sitting for prayer was not prevalent until after the invention of pews.

In general:

- Looking up is for thanks and glory
- Looking down is for submission and humility
- Standing while looking up shows confidence
- Standing while looking down shows submission
- Lying prostrate shows humility and possibly desperation
- Sitting is considered mostly neutral

Credit: www.kencollins.com/worship/pray-20.htm

Notes: _____

BIBLICAL PASSAGES ON PRAYER (NRSV)

A) Jesus' Teaching in Matthew's Gospel

The Lord's Prayer—Jesus instructs his disciples to pray in such a way that would make those who follow him distinct from other communities and those worshiping other gods.

“Pray then in this way: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one. –**Matthew 6:9-13** (see also Luke 11:2-4 & Mark 11:25)

Without flaunting piety—Jesus teaches to pray for the right reasons, one of which is not to make known to others what a frequent or talented prayer a person is, for this leads to self-righteousness.

“And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. “When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. –**Matthew 6:5-8**

Praying as a united community—Jesus asserts the goodness of praying together and in agreement concerning what to pray for.

Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” –**Matthew 18:19-20**

B) Old Testament Examples

Psalms—Every psalm can be considered as a prayer to God.
Types of psalms: **Praise, Petitionary, Thanksgiving, Lament**

Praise: Psalm 100, 145, 146

Petitionary: Psalm 143, 69, 86

Thanksgiving: Psalm 138, 118

Lament: Psalm 13, 22, 44, 55

**Note: This is not an exhaustive list of psalm types or examples of these types.*

King David the Dancer—This is a wonderful example of praying, not with words but with one's whole body and spirit (compare to liturgical dance).

David and all the house of Israel were dancing before the Lord with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.

David danced before the Lord with all his might; David was girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

-2 Samuel 6: 12, 14-15

King Hezekiah's prayer—Hezekiah, under threat from the Assyrians, prays this prayer, focusing on God's sovereignty and deliverance.

And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord, and said: "O Lord the God of Israel, who are enthroned above the cherubim, you are God, you alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; you have made heaven and earth. Incline your ear, O Lord, and hear; open your eyes, O Lord, and see; hear the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to mock the living God. Truly, O Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, and have hurled their gods into the fire, though they were no gods but the work of human hands—wood and stone—and so they were destroyed. So now, O Lord our God, save us, I pray you, from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Lord, are God alone."

-2 Kings 19:15-19

Jeremiah's Confessions/Laments—The prophet Jeremiah, known as the "weeping prophet," prayed these very personal laments to God, which help us understand God wants to hear about our struggles, with unbridled honesty.

Cursed be the day on which I was born! The day when my mother bore me, let it not be blessed! Cursed be the man who brought the news to my father, saying, "A child is born to you, a son," making him very glad. Let that man be like the cities that the Lord overthrew without pity; let him hear a cry in the morning and an alarm at noon, because he did not kill me in the womb; so my mother would have been my grave, and her womb forever great. Why did I come forth from the womb to see toil and sorrow, and spend my days in shame? -Jeremiah 20:14-18

See also Jeremiah 11:18-23, 12:1-6, 15:10-21, 17:14-18, 18:18-23, 20:7-12, 20:14-18.

Hannah's prayer—From the depths of her pain related to her infertility, Hannah prays silently to God: first as a petition and then with praise and trust.

She made this vow: "O Lord of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. He shall drink neither wine nor intoxicants, and no razor shall touch his head." -1 Samuel 1:11

Hannah then prays God's praises, echoing the psalms and Mary's "Magnificat" (See 1 Samuel 2:1-10).

Pray because God is merciful and loving—Daniel makes it clear that he prays because he knows God is full of mercy. His belief is confirmed when none other than the angel Gabriel appears to let him know God has heard him because he is so beloved by God.

Now therefore, O our God, listen to the prayer of your servant and to his supplication, and for your own sake, Lord, let your face shine upon your desolated sanctuary. Incline your ear, O my God, and hear. Open your eyes and look at our desolation and the city that bears your name. We do not present our supplication before you on the ground of our righteousness, but on the ground of your great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, listen and act and do not delay! For your own sake, O my God, because your city and your people bear your name!” While I was speaking, and was praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God on behalf of the holy mountain of my God—while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen before in a vision, came to me in swift flight at the time of the evening sacrifice. He came and said to me, “Daniel, I have now come out to give you wisdom and understanding. At the beginning of your supplications a word went out, and I have come to declare it, for you are greatly beloved.

-Daniel 9:17-23

C) New Testament Teachings and Examples of Prayer

The Sinner’s prayer—A tax collector in one of Jesus’ parables, fully aware of his transgressions, prays this prayer, humbling himself before the Lord.

‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ -Luke 18:13

Parable of the Unjust Judge—Jesus teaches us that our prayers should be often and persistent.

Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. He said, “In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, “Grant me justice against my opponent.’ For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, “Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.’ “And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?” -Luke 18:1-8

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane—Jesus, in his most fearful moments, prays a deeply personal prayer that holds in tension his wish to not suffer and the desire that God’s will be done.

And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. He said, “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.”

-Mark 14:35-36 (continues through verse 41)

Compare to Matthew 26:39-44 and Luke 22:42-44 (Jesus prays so strongly that his sweat becomes like drops of blood).

Forgiveness and Prayer—Jesus teaches that we should forgive others since God has forgiven us. Both Jesus and Stephen (recognized as the first Christian martyr) show us what this looks like in practice.

When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. [Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”] **-Luke 23:33-34**

While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he died. **-Acts 7:59-60**

Prayer as prologue/preparation—Jesus often withdrew from his followers and the crowds in order to spend some alone time with God, usually as preparation for ministry.

But now more than ever the word about Jesus spread abroad; many crowds would gather to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. But he would withdraw to deserted places and pray. **-Luke 5:15-16**

Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. **-Luke 6:12**

In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. **-Mark 1:35**

And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. **-Matthew 14:23**

The Benedictions of Paul—The Apostle Paul typically ends his letters with prayers to God on behalf of those to whom he is writing.

Peace be to the whole community, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ. **-Ephesians 6:23-24**

See also the concluding portions of his other epistles.

The Importance of Intercessory Prayer—Examples abound in Scripture that illustrate the need to pray on behalf of others in need.

While Peter was kept in prison, the church prayed fervently to God for him. **-Acts 12:5**

Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak. **-Ephesians 6:18-20**

“Pray Without Ceasing”—Paul urges us to pray always, that our entire lives may be an offering, a living sacrifice to God.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. **-1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

See also Philippians 4:4-7.

The Intercession of the Holy Spirit—Here, Paul teaches that prayer is more than words. Indeed, words seem to fall short at times. Yet, God hears our heartache, sighs, groans, and tears.

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. **-Romans 8:26-27**

Faith and Prayer—Jesus teaches that there is a clear connection between one’s faith and one’s prayer life. Jesus is not saying, however, that because one person may have a stronger faith, that God hears that person’s prayer louder than another’s (and is, therefore, more likely to answer that prayer).

Jesus answered them, “Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, “Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will be done. Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive.” **-Matthew 21:21-22**

Compare to Mark 11:20-25. See also John 15:7.

D) Praying Scripture (Lectio Divina)

This spiritual discipline of prayer predates the medieval period and originates in monasticism. This practice is most often understood as a four-step process (“movements”) in which the Holy Spirit enables readers to enter into a text and dwell in the presence of God.

Rather than interpreting a text and focusing on what one can get out of it, Lectio Divina instead puts one into the text. This practice isn’t so much analytical as it is invitational. A passage’s context isn’t as important as reading it through the lens of Christ—even pondering it with Christ as one’s Scripture partner. In so doing, one invites the Word of God into one’s heart.

- **Read**—Get a basic understanding of what the text means and is saying.
- **Meditate**—Read slowly, focusing on particular words or phrases that are meaningful to you.
- **Pray**—Enter into a time of prayer, listening to what God is saying in the silence and through those meaningful words/phrases.
- **Contemplate**—Simply dwell in God’s presence, aware of the sacred conversation that is still taking place, changing our hearts.

The Four R's of Lectio Divina

Lectio (Reading)

Take your time and read the passage. Get a sense of what it is saying. Read the passage a second time. Listen for any words or phrases that strike you, and listen in your heart.

Meditatio (Reflecting)

Read the passage again, slowly. As you pause on the words or phrases that strike you, take time to consider what the word, phrase, or passage means, particularly in your life.

Oratio (Responding)

Read the passage again, slowly. Consider now how God has spoken to you in this passage and respond back to Him. You may want to consider how this passage is asking you to act differently.

Contemplatio (Remaining)

Now take some time to simply remain in the presence of God.

Adapted from the Catholic Youth Prayer Book, St. Mary's Press, Winona, MN, 2006.

*Try using Psalm 46 as an introduction into this discipline—focusing and meditating on “Be still and know that I am God”.

Add a word or phrase then reverse:

Be
Be still
Be still and know
Be still and know that I am God
Be still and know
Be still
Be

Notes: _____

PRAYING IN AND FOR THE WORLD

Praying for the World

Perhaps the best known verse of the bible is John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world, he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.” We often personalize this verse and apply it to ourselves individually. That is understandable. But God has a much larger audience in mind. God so loved the world, shouldn’t we too love the world?

This church began praying for the world one country at a time, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, in the Fall of 2017. Each week, in our Sunday morning worship services, we prayed for one nation in particular. Our effort to pray for each and every country took five years until May of 2022. Church members did research for each nation to highlight that country - noteworthy things, things needing prayer. We shared images of each country. Those images included landmarks, the people, the food, their flag and a map showing its location in this big, beautiful world God so loves. We learned about our neighbors and prayed for them. In 2024, we will repeat that type of effort praying for each state in the United States (plus Washington DC and US territories) each week for 52 Sundays.

One way to pray for the world is to adjust the pattern of our prayers from time to time. We often pray for others beginning with those closest to us and then move outward. Sometimes we don’t move that far beyond our inner circle. Perhaps we can begin with a prayer circle that encompasses the whole world. Pray for our neighbors far away and then work our way down from the world, to the nation to our community to our family and friends.

Praying for our Leaders

Our leaders need our prayers, those we voted for and those we did not. Praying for our leaders is not a partisan political activity! Two biblical models may help us in praying for those who have answered the call to serve as our leaders.

Pray for Wisdom

In 1 Kings 3:1-15, we read the story of Solomon at the very beginning of his reign. Verse five tells us, **“At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night; and God said, ‘Ask what I should give you.’”**

Solomon answers by first talking about the goodness God has shown him and his people and then he answers in verse 9, **“Give you servant an understanding mind to govern, able to discern good from evil; for who can govern this your great people.”** We pray for our leaders praying that God will give them understanding minds to govern. It is a request for a particular and useful kind of wisdom, wisdom to govern and discern good from evil for the purpose of governing.

Pray Psalm 72

The bible offers us a sample prayer for our leaders. It is a prayer for the king. We can adjust the language to fit those who govern us locally, nationally and globally understanding that democracy is a post-biblical development. While the language of monarchy may not translate directly to our day and time, many of the themes in the psalm are timeless – justice, righteousness, concern for the poor, prosperity, security, etc.

Psalm 72 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Prayer for Guidance and Support for the King

- ¹ Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to a king's son.
- ² May he judge your people with righteousness,
and your poor with justice.
- ³ May the mountains yield prosperity for the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.
- ⁴ May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor.
- ⁵ May he live while the sun endures,
and as long as the moon, throughout all generations.
- ⁶ May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass,
like showers that water the earth.
- ⁷ In his days may righteousness flourish
and peace abound, until the moon is no more.
- ⁸ May he have dominion from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.
- ⁹ May his foes bow down before him,
and his enemies lick the dust.
- ¹⁰ May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute,
may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts.
- ¹¹ May all kings fall down before him, all nations give him service.
- ¹² For he delivers the needy when they call,
the poor and those who have no helper.
- ¹³ He has pity on the weak and the needy,
and saves the lives of the needy.
- ¹⁴ From oppression and violence he redeems their life;
and precious is their blood in his sight.
- ¹⁵ Long may he live! May gold of Sheba be given to him.
May prayer be made for him continually,
and blessings invoked for him all day long.
- ¹⁶ May there be abundance of grain in the land;
may it wave on the tops of the mountains; may its fruit be like Lebanon;
and may people blossom in the cities like the grass of the field.
- ¹⁷ May his name endure forever, his fame continue as long as the sun.
May all nations be blessed in him; may they pronounce him happy.
- ¹⁸ Blessed be the LORD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL,
who alone does wondrous things.
- ¹⁹ Blessed be his glorious name forever;
may his glory fill the whole earth.
Amen and Amen.

Praying the News

However, whenever and wherever you get the news, you can pray the news. It is a matter of taking the time to lift up the people and events in the news in prayer. A natural time for that prayer is between stories. After seeing, hearing or reading a story, take time to mention the people and places by name in prayer. Maybe pause the TV or highlight the names in the paper. Maybe keep a note book and jot down the names of places and people.

Like praying for our leaders, praying the news need not be a partisan practice. Simply lift up the names of the people and places and events. Trust God to hear and answer our prayers according to a wisdom far greater than our own. Praying for all the names and nations in the news is also a good way of praying for and loving our enemies.

Another helpful way to pray the news is to pray whenever you hear sirens or see an emergency response vehicle. Ask God to look over the person(s) the ambulance is transporting or going to transport. Pray for the first responders – for police, firefighters and EMT's. Pray for all those who serve and for those they serve.

Praying in Times of Particular Need

Praying the Psalms

A helpful daily discipline is reading and praying the Book of Psalms. Located in the middle of the bible, this collection of psalms / songs is the heart of the bible. These songs of praise and cries for help come from the heart. It is our earliest hymnal full of a variety of songs. The Book of Psalms includes songs of praise meant for worship together and cries for help. One third of the psalms are psalms of lament as the psalmists pour their pain out before God pleading for help. The psalms are real, even raw. These psalms of lament are not flowery speech. They are honest cries for help.

Reading and praying a psalm each day helps us see the full span of our own hearts. One day we might sing God's praise turning up the volume full tilt and inviting others to sing along. The next day we may lay out our troubles and tell God how much it hurts. And back and forth it goes much like we do - some good days, some very good days; some not so good days, some dark, very dark days.

Simple Prayers

Prayer need not be long. Prayer need not be eloquent. It can be quite simple. Here are a few examples of prayer in its simplest forms.

Tears – Our tears are the most basic form of prayer. God hears or tears!

Help!

Please!

Repeating a person's names multiple times.

Repeating a simple word multiple times, like hope, peace, love, mercy, etc

Thank you!

Prayers for Particular Times

From The Book of Common Worship (PCUSA)

The Birth of Children

Mighty God, by your love we are given children through the miracle of birth.
May we greet each new son and daughter with joy, and surround them all with faith, so they may know who you are and want to be your disciples. Never let us neglect children, but help us enjoy them, showing them the welcome you have shown us all; through Jesus Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

For Parents

Almighty God, from whom we receive our life, you have blessed us with the joy and care of children. As we bring them up, give us calm strength and patient wisdom, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

For Young People

Almighty God, you see your children growing up in an uncertain and confusing world. Show them that your ways give more life than the ways of the world, and that following you is better than chasing after selfish goals. Help them to take failure, not as a measure of their worth, but as an opportunity for a new start. Give them strength to hold their faith in you and to keep alive their joy in your creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For Christian Marriage

Eternal God, without your grace no promise is sure. Strengthen _____ and _____ with patience, kindness, gentleness, and all other gifts of your Spirit, so that they may fulfill the vows they have made. Keep them faithful to each other and to you. Fill them with such love and joy that they may build a home of peace and welcome. Guide them by your Word to serve you all their days. Help us all, O God, to do your will in each of our homes and lives. Enrich us with your grace so that, supporting one another, we may serve those in need and hasten the coming of peace, love, and justice on earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For Those Having Marital Difficulty

Lord God, you set us in families,
where we learn to live together in charity and truth.
Strengthen weak bonds of love.
Where separation threatens, move in with forgiving power.
Melt hard hearts, free fixed minds, break the hold of stubborn pride.
Lay claim on us, so that our separate claims may be set aside in love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For the Divorced or Separated

God of grace, you are always working to hold us together,
to heal division, and make love strong.
Help men and women whose marriages fail to know that you are faithful.
Restore confidence, bring understanding, and ease the hurt of separation.
If they marry others, instruct them in better love,
so that vows may be said and kept with new resolve;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

For Orphans

Gracious God, you remember all your children,
especially those who are left alone, innocent victims of the acts of others.
Remind us of the orphans of this world,
that we may show special care and embrace them with your love.
Give them confidence in your parental guidance,
so they will find a home in your family of faith,
with brothers and sisters who follow Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**

In a Personal Crisis Attributed to Augustine of Hippo (354–430)

God of life, there are days when the burdens we carry
are heavy on our shoulders and weigh us down,
when the road seems dreary and endless, the skies gray and threatening,
when our lives have no music in them, and our hearts are lonely,
and our souls have lost their courage.
Flood the path with light, turn our eyes to where the skies are full of promise;
tune our hearts to brave music; give us the sense of comradeship
with heroes and saints of every age; and so quicken our spirits
that we may be able to encourage the souls of all who journey with us
on the road of life, to your honor and glory. **Amen.**

For Guidance

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with your most gracious favor
and further us with your continual help, that in all our works,
begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name,
and finally, by your mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



For Appreciation of Truth and Beauty

Give us, O Lord, a reverence for the truth, the desire both to think and to speak truly. Save us from all fear of truth. Grant us all an appreciation of beauty and things that are lovely. Increase our reverence for them; help us to see in them a part of your revelation of yourself, that beauty becomes you no less than truth and righteousness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

For the Sick

O God, the strength of the weak and the comfort of sufferers, mercifully hear our prayers and grant to your servant _____, the help of your power, that his/her sickness may be turned into health and our sorrow into joy; through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

During an Illness

Ambrose of Milan (340–397)

You are medicine for me when I am sick.
You are my strength when I need help. You are life itself when I fear death.
You are the way when I long for heaven. You are light when all is dark.
You are my food when I need nourishment! **Amen.**

For Healing

Mighty and merciful God, you sent Jesus Christ to heal broken lives. We praise you that today you send healing in doctors and nurses, and bless us with technology in medicine. We claim your promises of wholeness as we pray for those who are ill in body or mind, who long for your healing touch. Make the weak strong, the sick healthy, the broken whole, and confirm those who serve them as agents of your love. Then all shall be renewed in vigor to point to the risen Christ, who conquered death that we might live eternally. **Amen.**

For Health Restored

Almighty God, we rejoice that, by the power of your Spirit, you have given the gift of health and wholeness to your servant _____. In thanksgiving we renew our commitment to you, so that health regained may provide opportunities for service in the helping and healing work of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. **Amen.**

For Leisure

O God, give us times of refreshment and peace in the course of this busy life. Grant that we may so use our leisure to rebuild our bodies and renew our minds, that our spirits may be opened to the goodness of your creation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

At Death

For the Dying

O God, who gave us birth, you are ever more ready to hear than we are to pray.
You know our needs before we ask, and our ignorance in asking.
Show us now your grace, that as we face the mystery of death
we may see the light of eternity.
Speak to us once more your solemn message of life and of death.
Help us to live as those who are prepared to die.
And when our days here are ended, enable us to die as those who go forth to live,
so that living or dying, our life may be in Jesus Christ our risen Lord. **Amen.**

For Those Who Mourn

Eternal God, we bless you for the great company of all those who have kept the faith,
finished their race, and who now rest from their labor.
We praise you for those dear to us whom we name in our hearts before you. . . .
Especially we thank you for _____,
whom you have now received into your presence.
Help us to believe where we have not seen, trusting you to lead us through our years.
Bring us at last with all your saints into the joy of your home,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

After a sudden death

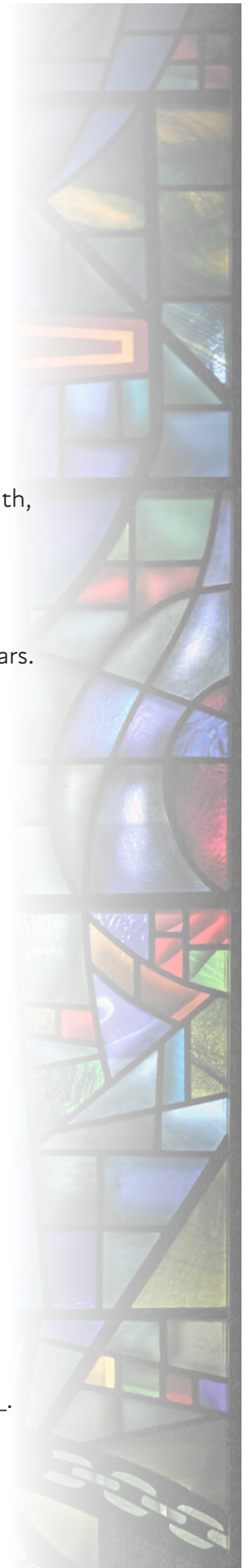
God of compassion, comfort us with the great power of your love
as we mourn the sudden death of _____.
In our grief and confusion, help us find peace
in the knowledge of your loving mercy to all your children,
and give us light to guide us into the assurance of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

At the death of a child

O God, your love cares for us in life and watches over us in death.
We bless you for our Savior's joy in little children
and for the assurance that of such is the kingdom of heaven.
In our sorrow, make us strong to commit ourselves,
and those we love, to your unfailing care.
In our perplexity, help us to trust where we cannot understand.
In our loneliness, may we remember _____ in love,
trusting her/him to your keeping until the eternal morning breaks;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Prayer of Committal

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant _____.
Acknowledge, we humbly pray, a sheep of your own fold,
a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming.
Receive him/her into the arms of your mercy,
into the blessed rest of everlasting peace,
and into the glorious company of the saints in light. **Amen.**



A vertical stained glass window on the left side of the page, featuring various colored panes in shades of blue, purple, red, green, and yellow, with a prominent cross design in the lower half.

MORNING PRAYERS

From The Book of Common Worship (PCUSA)

Prayers taken from brief services that also include hymns, scripture and the Lord's Prayer

Eternal God, our beginning and our end, be our starting point and our haven, and accompany us in this day's journey.

Use our hands to do the work of your creation, and use our lives to bring others the new life you give this world in Jesus Christ, Redeemer of all. **Amen.**

As you cause the sun to rise, O God, bring the light of Christ to dawn in our souls and dispel all darkness. Give us grace to reflect Christ's glory; and let his love show in our deeds, his peace shine in our words, and his healing in our touch, that all may give him praise, now and forever. **Amen.**

Eternal God, your touch makes this world holy. Open our eyes to see your hand at work in the splendor of creation, and in the beauty of human life. Help us to cherish the gifts that surround us, to share your blessings with our sisters and brothers, and to experience the joy of life in your presence. We ask this through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Eternal God, you never fail to give us each day all that we ever need, and even more. Give us such joy in living and such peace in serving Christ, that we may gratefully make use of all your blessings, and joyfully seek our risen Lord in everyone we meet. In Jesus Christ we pray. **Amen.**

O God, you are the well-spring of life. Pour into our hearts the living water of your grace, that we may be refreshed to live this day in joy, confident of your presence and empowered by your peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Eternal God, you call us to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

God our creator, yours is the morning and yours is the evening. Let Christ the sun of righteousness shine forever in our hearts and draw us to that light where you live in radiant glory. We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ our Redeemer. **Amen.**

From Karen Wagner – Morning and Evening Prayer

Martin Luther’s Evening Prayer

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. **Amen.**

—Adapted from Luther’s Small Catechism

Notes: _____



A vertical strip of a stained glass window is visible on the left side of the page. It features various colored panes in shades of blue, purple, red, and green, with some geometric patterns and a cross-like shape near the bottom.

EVENING PRAYERS

From The Book of Common Worship (PCUSA)

Prayers taken from brief services that also include hymns, scripture and the Lord's Prayer

As you have made this day, O God, you also make the night.
Give light for our comfort. Come upon us with quietness and still our souls,
that we may listen for the whisper of your Spirit
and be attentive to your nearness in our dreams.
Empower us to rise again in new life to proclaim your praise,
and show Christ to the world, for he reigns forever and ever. Amen.

Great God, you are one God, and you bring together what is scattered
and mend what is broken. Unite us with the scattered peoples of the earth
that we may be one family of your children. Bind up all our wounds,
and heal us in spirit, that we may be renewed as disciples
of Jesus Christ, our Master and Savior. Amen.

God of all who fear you, make us one with all your saints
and with any who are in need. Teach us to befriend the weak,
and welcome the outcast, that we may serve the Lord Jesus Christ
and live to offer him glory. In his holy name we pray. Amen.

God our shepherd, you have brought us through this day
to a time of reflection and rest. Calm our souls, and refresh us with your peace.
Keep us close to Christ and draw us closer to one another
in the bonds of his wondrous love. We pray through Christ our Lord. Amen.

To you, O God we give up the burdens of this day, trusting your love and mercy.
To you, O God, we surrender ourselves, trusting our risen Lord to lead us always
in the way of peace, today, tomorrow, and forever. Amen.

Protect your people, O God, and keep us safe
until the coming of your new dawn and the establishment of your righteous rule.
By your Holy Spirit, stir up within us a longing for the light of your new day,
and guide us by the radiance of Jesus Christ your Son, our risen Lord. Amen.

Abide with us, O Lord, for evening comes and the day is almost over.
Abide with us, for the days are hastening on and we hasten with them.
Abide with us and with all your faithful people, until the daystar rises
and the morning light appears, and we shall abide with you forever. Amen

TABLE BLESSINGS

Shared from members of the congregation

Bless this food to our use and us to thy service.
And keep us ever mindful of the needs of others. Amen.

Come Lord Jesus, Be our guest.
May this food, to us be blessed. Amen.

For what we are about to receive Dear Lord,
Make us truly grateful;
Grant us thy guidance through the affairs of this day,
And at its close thy peace. Amen.

God is great!
God is good!
Let us thank Him
For our food. Amen.

God is great and God is good,
And we thank God for our food;
By God's hand we must be fed,
Give us Lord, our daily bread. Amen.

Bless us, O Lord,
And these Thy gifts
Which we are about to receive,
Through Thy bounty
Through Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

Rub a dub dub
Thanks for the grub
Yay God! Amen.

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest
May this food by you be blessed. Amen.

Good food,
Good meat,
Good God,
Let's eat. Amen.





TABLE BLESSINGS

Round this table, here to pray
First we thank you for the day
For our family and our friends
Gifts of grace that heaven lends
Living water, daily bread
Countless blessings our God sends
Thank you, Jesus, for them all
For the great ones and the small
When we're happy, when we're sad
On the good days and the bad
We are grateful, we are glad. Amen.

Thank you for the world so sweet,
Thank you for the food we eat.
Thank you for the birds that sing,
Thank you God for everything. Amen.

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest
May this food by you be blessed. Amen.

Bless the food before us
The family beside us
And the love between us
Amen.

Notes: _____

GREAT PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

From The Book of Common Worship (PCUSA)

Come, O Holy Spirit.

Come as Holy Fire and burn in us,
come as Holy Wind and cleanse us within,
come as Holy Light and lead us in the darkness,
come as Holy Truth and dispel our ignorance,
come as Holy Power and enable our weakness,
come as Holy Life and dwell in us.

Convict us, convert us, consecrate us,
until we are set free from the service of ourselves,
to be your servants to the world. Amen.

Lord, open unto me

Open unto me—light for my darkness.
Open unto me—courage for my fear.
Open unto me—hope for my despair.
Open unto me—peace for my turmoil.
Open unto me—joy for my sorrow.
Open unto me—strength for my weakness.
Open unto me—wisdom for my confusion.
Open unto me—forgiveness for my sins.
Open unto me—love for my hates.
Open unto me—thy Self for my self.
Lord, Lord, open unto me! Amen.

Howard Thurman (1900–1981)

O loving God, to turn away from you is to fall,
to turn toward you is to rise,
and to stand before you is to abide forever.
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.

Augustine of Hippo (354–430)

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 at my end, and at my departing. Amen.

Sarum Primer (c. 1514)





GREAT PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Almighty and eternal God,
so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds,
so fill our imaginations, so control our wills,
that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated unto you;
and then use us, we pray, as you will,
but always to your glory and the welfare of your people,
through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

William Temple (1881–1944)

Gracious God,
we pray for your holy catholic church.
Fill it with all truth in all peace.
Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it;
where in anything it is amiss, reform it.
Where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in want, provide for it;
where it is divided, reunite it;
for the sake of Jesus Christ your Son our Savior. Amen.

William Laud (1573–1645)

O gracious and holy God, give us diligence to seek you,
wisdom to perceive you, and patience to wait for you.
Grant us, O God, a mind to meditate on you;
eyes to behold you; ears to listen for your word;
a heart to love you; and a life to proclaim you;
through the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Attributed to Benedict of Nursia (c. 480–547)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not seek so much
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Attributed to Francis of Assisi (1181–1226)

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 forevermore. Amen.
Patrick of Ireland (389–461)

God, give me serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things that can be changed,
and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.
Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time,
accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it,
trusting that You will make all things right, if I surrender to Your will,
so that I may be reasonably happy in this life,
and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.
Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) "The Serenity Prayer"

Notes: _____





PRAYERS FROM OTHER RESOURCES

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields and,
Until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand. **Amen.**
An Irish Blessing

O God, all holy one, you are our Mother and our Father and we are your children. Open our eyes and our hearts so that we may be able to discern your work in the universe. And be able to see Your features in every one of Your children. May we learn that there are many paths but all lead to You. Help us to know that you have created us for family, for togetherness, for peace, for gentleness, for compassion, for caring, for sharing.

May we know that You want us to care for one another as those who know that they are sisters and brothers, members of the same family, Your family, the human family. Help us to beat our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning hooks, so that we may be able to live in peace and harmony, wiping away the tears from the eyes of those who are less fortunate than ourselves. And may we know war no more, as we strive to be what You want us to be: Your children. Amen.
Desmond M. Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, South Africa

A Greek Orthodox Morning Prayer

After rising from sleep, stand with reverence and fear of God, make the sign of the cross, and say:

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory to you, our God, glory to you.

Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who are present everywhere filling all things, Treasury of good things and Giver of life, come and dwell in us. Cleanse us of every stain, and save our souls, gracious Lord.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us (3).

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

All holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, forgive our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for your name's sake.

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

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

“Jesus Prayer” well known in the Eastern Orthodox Church

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.”

“A Prayer for Peace” from A New Zealand Prayer Book

O God, it is your will to hold both heaven and earth in a single peace.
Let the design of your great love
shine on the waste of our wraths and sorrows,
and give peace to your Church, peace among nations,
peace in our homes, and peace in our hearts.

A Butterfly Blessing
Lord,
Bless me with the ability of a butterfly
to endure the changes that will happen to me in my lifetime.
Help me to accept these changes with a positive and loving attitude.
Bless me with the beauty of a butterfly
to allow me to reflect the colors of my soul, being and individuality,
and to look for these things in others.
Bless me with the ability of a butterfly
to create and instill the feeling of wonder, passion, and excitement
towards all of your living creatures.
Bless me with the butterflies' ability
to pollinate your flowers,
so that I may cultivate your human garden with love and compassion.
Last, but not least, Lord,
Bless me with the grace of ascension,
so that I may ascend into your glorious heaven like a rising butterfly,
when my journey here on earth, is complete.

Amen

Author - J. Dilts

From Mark Lane – “...it is my all-time favorite prayer”

A Prayer by Laura Jean Truman

God, Keep my anger from becoming meanness.
Keep my sorrow from collapsing into self-pity.
Keep my heart soft enough to keep breaking.
Keep my anger turned towards justice, not cruelty.
Remind me that all of this, every bit of it, is for love.
Keep me fiercely kind. Amen.

A New Serenity Prayer

By Fr. James Martin, SJ

God, grant me the serenity
to accept the people I cannot change,
which is pretty much everyone,
since I'm clearly not you, God.
At least not the last time I checked.

And while you're at it, God,
please give me the courage
to change what I need to change about myself,
which is frankly a lot, since, once again,
I'm not you, which means I'm not perfect.
It's better for me to focus on changing myself
than to worry about changing other people,
who, as you'll no doubt remember me saying,
I can't change anyway.

Finally, give me the wisdom to just shut up
whenever I think that I'm clearly smarter
than everyone else in the room,
that no one knows what they're talking about
except me,
or that I alone have all the answers.

Basically, God,
grant me the wisdom
to remember that I'm
not you.
Amen.



A blessing for animals

Almighty and everlasting God,
Creator of all things and giver of all life,
let your blessing be upon all these animals.
May our relationship with them mirror your love,
and our care for them be an example of your
bountiful mercy.

Grant the animals health and peace.
Strengthen us to love and care for them
as we strive to imitate the love of Jesus Christ
our Lord and your servant Francis. Amen.

—From the “Book of Common Worship” (2018),
A Service for the Blessing of the Animals



Numbers 6:24-26 (NRSV)

The LORD bless and keep you;
The LORD make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious to you;
the LORD lift his countenance upon you,
and give you peace.

PRAYERS FROM OUR CHILDREN



Johnny Appleseed
 Oh the Lord is good to me and so I thank the Lord for ^{giving me the} the sun and the rain and the appleseeds. Amen
 Amen Amen
 The Lord is good to me.



Dinner: Dear God, thank you for your miri cals. Thank you for this food before us. Amen. Big in!



Dear God,
 Now I lay me
 down to sleep, pray
 the Lord my soul
 to keep guide me
 through the starry
 night & wake me
 in the morning bright.

Jesus here me from
 above fill my
 little heart with love
 bless me every
~~day~~ Single
 day make me
 good and kind always
 Amen.



Dear God, Thank you for the food you give us and the homes you give us!

Amen! Dear Lord, Thank you for the treats and the nice change to live!

Dear Lord we ask you to bless this thanksgiving meal. We ask you to keep us humble and appreciative of what we have been giving. Amen
(Thanksgiving Prayer)

I see the moon and the moon see me
god Bless the moon and god bless me.



jesus hear me from above
fill my little heart with love
bless me every single day
make me good and kind
always, AMEN...



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Presbyterian Church

A place for everyone.

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