

Opening Prayer (based on Matthew 16: 21-28)

Loving God,
You call us to turn away from our own selfish interests,
to take up our cross,
and to follow after You—
to find our lives by giving them up to Your greater purpose.

So we come before You with open hearts and open hands,
eager to hear Your Word, and eager to know Your will.

Through the power of Your Holy Spirit,
move within us and among us as we worship.
Open our eyes to Your presence;
open our ears to Your call,
open our hearts to one another.
And then send us into the world,
to live and work as Your faithful disciples.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Lord, Amen.

Prayer of Confession (inspired by Matthew 16:24 and others)

Like Peter, we are more 'rocky' than 'rock', like him we deny You Lord Jesus, like him we commit ourselves to have our minds and hearts open to be changed by Your grace, like him we want to be restored, to rise up again, to discern Your ways

You call us to be your voices in this world
and we stay silent.
You call us to be your hands in this world
and we keep them hidden.
You call us to be your feet in this world
and we go our own way.

When we meet those who are doubting and say nothing,
forgive us.
When we meet those who need your touch and do nothing,
forgive us.
When we are called to take up your cross and carry nothing,
forgive us.

We commit ourselves to reflect on the way we discern Your purposes and ways.

Breathe life into these bones,
bring freedom to these lives,
that we might declare

with heart and soul and voice
that you are our Lord and our God. Amen

Prayer of Intercession

Jesus make our hearts like Yours, yoked together, listening to your words, aware that our weakness is the door into your mercy. Jesus, reveal to us, Your Father,

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Abba, Father God we pray to you through our Lord Jesus Christ in the power of your Holy Spirit

Help us become a people that vulnerably share each other's burdens.

Holy Spirit - you pray for us in a power we do not own, with wisdom that we lack, in mercy we could never fathom, with a connection we don't possess, with God our Father's will in mind and with the love we can't contain, - fill us up, control our thoughts, bring our spirit alive, live in us we pray

We praise you for your indwelling Spirit of love, peace, joy and hope - for your free gifts that have been poured over us without measure - for the fact you have adopted us as your children, heirs and joint heirs with Christ.

With you and in Your strength, we bring to mind, we bring to you, we lift those who suffer, caught up in violence and disaster, for those grieving the loss of loved ones, those exhausted, sharing and caring, suffering and serving their loved ones, and for children who are abused by those they should be able to trust.

We bring before you now those for whom our prayers have been asked ... , that they may be touched by your healing love.

Silence

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Strengthen the leaders of Your church, those guiding, teaching, preaching and serving Your children, Your people here in Your cluster. Grant Your wisdom and understanding to the transition team and parish representatives as they humbly seek Your way forward with the appointment of Your new rector. For our homes and families, our schools, teachers, and young people as the autumn term preparations have started, companies and employees uncertain about their future.

Silence

Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Abba Father, you who love us more than we can know,
Who chose us from the very beginning to be family ,
We praise your holy name.

Jesus Christ, Son of God, Word become flesh,
Who dwelt among us and was sacrificed for us,
We praise your holy name.

Holy Spirit, present and power in our lives,
From the moment that we first believed,
We praise your holy name.

Thank you that we can bring to your feet
the hurts and fears that trouble us,
and leave them there,
knowing that your strength and assurance
are all that we require

Knowing you are hearing us better than we are speaking, we offer these prayers.
Amen

Prayer of Blessing

May we hold on to the hope that holds us. May we be given the gift of faith to believe that God is at work in the world, in our lives and in the lives of those around us. May our words point to Jesus. May our actions open doors of possibility for others. May God's flourishing life flow through us. Amen