

Prayer and Meditation in a Time of Isolation



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O Heavenly God I humbly beseech your blessings for my family. Keep my loved ones in your tender care and protect them from every evil. Grant that no matter how separated we may be by distance, we shall always be close to one another, and to you. May we continue to grow in love and peace, ever seeking your blessings until we are united with you forever in heaven. Amen.

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Dear friends,

this resource is for you to use, to enjoy some time getting closer to God while you cannot come to church. There are some hymns, prayers and readings, some images to colour if you wish, and some actions to take - again only if you want. This is for you so if something does not work for you, leave it and move onto the next session. I hope it helps to make you feel part of the church even when you cannot in the building. Do pray for us and let us pray for you too.

With love and prayers, Vanda

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging" (Psalm 46:1-3)

Who is there like you, God of mercy and grace who loves us as you do?
Who knows and understands our actions as you do?
Who hears the thoughts and words of our heart as you do?
Who knows our joys and sorrows and shares them as you do?
Who feels the pain we endure and comforts us as you do?

Who hears as we confess our sins and forgives as you do?
Who takes a broken heart and makes it whole as you do?
Who finds a life that's lost and welcomes it home as you do?
Who is there like you, God of mercy and grace who loves us as you do?

John Birch Faith and Worship

Be still for the presence of the Lord
The holy one is here
Come bow before him now
With reverence and fear
In him no sin is found
We stand on holy ground
Be still for the presence of the Lord
The holy one is here

Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around
He burns with holy fire
With splendour he is crowned
How awesome is the sight
Our radiant king of light
Be still for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around

Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal
To minister his grace
No work too hard for him
In faith receive from him
Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place

One

The Birth

John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² The same was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. ⁴ In him was life; and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

The joy of discovery that moment when hope and expectation were gloriously met by the illumination of one bright star. We cannot imagine what words were spoken by visitors or if first impressions left them somewhat confused. Messiah, Saviour, a King born in the barest of palaces. Yet they saw and fell down on their knees in adoration. Lord, they saw you and knew whom they had met. In the quiet moments of prayer, that brief oasis from the bustle of the world bring alive to us the smell of the hay the sound of the animals the cry of a baby. Draw us close to our Saviour Messiah and King as we bring not Gold, Myrrh or Frankincense but the gift of our lives the only offering we can bring. Amen.

Remember the story of the First Christmas.
Remember the astounding trust God places in Mary and Joseph.
Remember the love and joy you have known at this holy time of year,
and if you want why not colour in this well known image?



Two

The Palm Sunday Procession

John 12:12-16

The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord— the King of Israel!" Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: "Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written of him and had been done to him.

The crowds were fickle – today cheering and celebrating and all too soon this turned to anger and they were calling for Jesus' punishment. We are only human, and we are at times filled with the reality and joy of God's presence, only to bewail his silence in the next moment.

This time of being away from the world does not mean being away from God. Why not spend some time in His company? Sit still and read some of your bible. (If you need one let Vanda know and she can drop one off for you – she has loads!) Start with one of the gospels and see where you go from here.

Take a piece of green ribbon or a leaf, this can be a reminder to you to pray, lay before God your worries and your thanksgiving, the people and the world just as the people on Palm Sunday laid their palm leaves and coats before Jesus.

Three

Following the Lord's Footsteps

John 13:3-5 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

Think of those who have been your foot washers – those who have served you with love, cared for you when you could not care for yourself, and pray for them. Think of those you have cared for and served with love, and pray for them

Some beautiful prayers from John Birch

May the Father's hand keep you from stumbling,
the footprints of Jesus give you confidence to follow,
and the fire of the Spirit keep you warm and safe
in your walk with God this day.

May the love of Jesus Christ bring us wholeness,
the grace of God the Father grant us peace,
the breath of Holy Spirit instill passion
and the unity between them give us strength
for this and every day. Amen

May God's Word be in your heart. May God's Word be on your lips.
May God's Word be in your touch. May God's Word direct your feet.
On this day and all your days to come
May God's Word be the life you live.

May the grace of God uphold you, the peace of God surround you,
the love of God flow from you and the strength of God protect
and bring you safely through this day. Amen.

Who would true valour see,
Let him come hither;
One here will constant be,
Come wind, come weather;
There's no discouragement
Shall make him once relent
His first avowed intent
To be a pilgrim.

Whoso beset him round
With dismal stories
Do but themselves confound;
His strength the more is,
No lion can him fright;
He'll with a giant fight;
But he will have a right
To be a pilgrim.

Hobgoblin nor foul fiend
Can daunt his spirit;
He knows he at the end
Shall life inherit,
Then fancies fly away,
He'll fear not what men say;
He'll labour night and day
To be a pilgrim.

Four

Light of the World

John 8. 12

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."



Third Collect from Evensong

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord;
and by thy great mercy
defend us from all perils and dangers of this night;
for the love of thy only Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

How can you walk in the light of Christ?
How do you carry his light for others?

Five

St Patrick's Breastplate

Take a pipe cleaner teaspoon, and as you recite this prayer wind the pipe cleaner around the spoon as a visual reminder of how you are being wrapped in the protection and love of God. Then do it again for each person you feel called to pray for today.

I bind unto myself today
The power of God to hold and lead,
His eye to watch, His might to stay,
His ear to hearken to my need.
The wisdom of my God to teach,
His hand to guide, his shield to ward,
The word of God to give me speech,
His heavenly host to be my guard.

**Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.**

I bind unto myself the name,
The strong name of the Trinity;
By invocation of the same.
The Three in One, and One in Three,
Of whom all nature hath creation,
Eternal Father, Spirit, Word:
Praise to the Lord of my salvation,
salvation is of Christ the Lord.

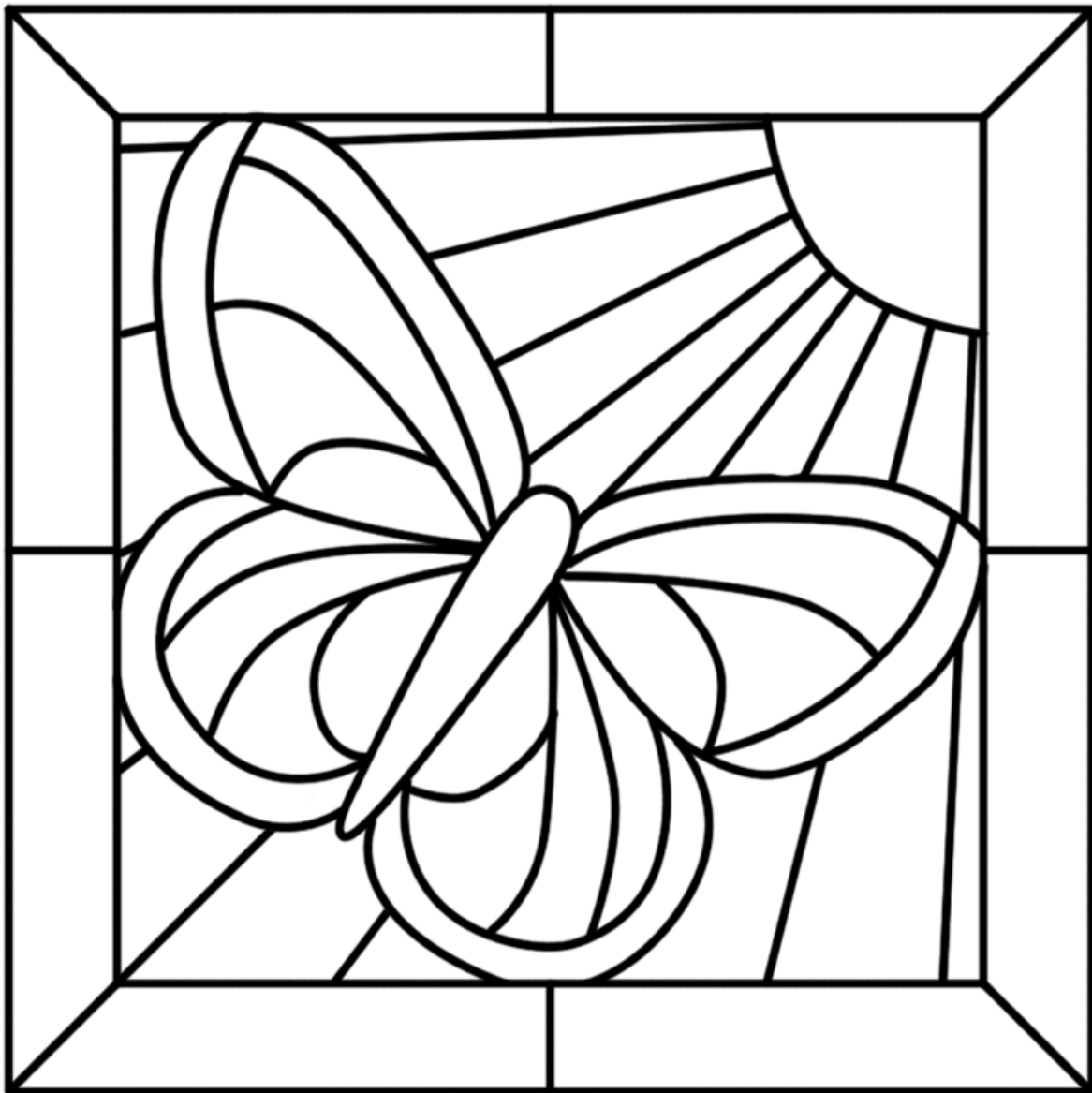
Six

New Life

John 3.16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

The butterfly is a wonderful symbol of the resurrection, who would imagine looking at the ungainly caterpillar or the dead larva that from this such grace and beauty would emerge?

So I pray it may be for your time of isolation, that something beautiful may emerge, and bring you new life, new love, new hope.



Amazing Grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear,
And Grace my fears relieved.
How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come.
'Tis Grace hath brought me safe thus far
And Grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me.
His Word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

Seven

Love

1 Corinthians 13 4-8, 13

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸Love never fails.

¹³And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.

But the greatest of these is love.

Circle us, Lord

Circle us with the light of your presence, bright within this dark world

Enable us to be overcomers of fear and temptation

Enable us to be victors over sin and despair

Enable us to become that which you would desire

Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation

Circle us with the light of your presence

Circle us, Lord.

Circle our family within the shelter of your outstretched arms

Protect them in each moment of their daily lives

Protect them in the decisions that they face

Protect their homes and relationships

Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation

Circle our families with the light of your presence

Circle us, Lord

Circle this world with the joy of your Salvation


Where there is sickness and disease bring healing

Where there is hunger and despair bring hope


Where there is torture and oppression bring release

Lord of creation, Lord of Salvation

Circle this world with the light of your presence




"We love because
he first loved us."
1 John 4:19



"Let us love one
another, for love
comes from God."
1 John 4:7a



"In all things God
works for the good
of those who
love him."
Romans 8:28



"Love the LORD
your God with
all your heart."
Deuteronomy 6:5

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Thine be the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son:
endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won;
angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes where thy body lay.
*Thine be the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son;
endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won.*

Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
let the church with gladness, hymns of triumph sing,
for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting.
*Thine be the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son;
endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won.*

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of life;
life is naught without thee: aid us in our strife;
make us more than conqu'rors, thro' thy deathless love:
bring us safe thro' Jordan to thy home above.
*Thine be the glory, risen, conqu'ring Son;
endless is the vict'ry thou o'er death hast won.*

Heavenly Father,
Bless this house and those within,
Bless our giving and receiving,
Bless our words and conversation,
Bless our hands and recreation,
Bless our sowing and our growing,
Bless our coming and our going,
Bless all who enter and depart,
Bless this house, your peace impart. Amen.