



PRAY

A collection of Prayers
for use in Public Worship

Published for
The Presbyterian Church of Australia
by the Public Worship and Aids to Devotion Committee
of the General Assembly of Australia
January, 2003

Introduction

"Pray" is published by the Presbyterian Church of Australia General Assembly Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion. It is the third and final book in a series of three publications released by the Committee for the purpose of aiding fervent and authentic worship of God throughout all our churches. It is a companion volume to "Rejoice", the hymn book of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, and "Worship", the Book of Common Order of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

"Pray", we trust, will prove a particularly useful tool to ministers, home missionaries, lay preachers, and elders in their conduct of public worship. We also trust it will have wider usefulness as an aid to private and family devotions.

The prayers selected cover a wide range of themes that regularly occur within the context of public worship. The following criteria have been rigorously adhered to for the purpose of selecting prayers for inclusion across all categories: faithfulness to the Word of God; consistency with our Confessional standards; God glorifying; Christ exalting; Cross centred; spiritual; and reflective of the rich heritage of devotion that exists within the Presbyterian and Reformed tradition.

Within the Presbyterian family of churches, there has long been a strong emphasis upon the use of extemporaneous prayer in public worship. However, there has been a long-standing and well-established practice of the use of written prayers also. This volume seeks to make available in edited form some of the wealth of devotion that has been left to us from the past, in particular from those times of great outpouring of the Holy Spirit in revival and from the pen of those men through whom God worked in a conspicuous way. It is our hope that this volume will be used in conjunction with and will further stimulate the continued practice of extemporaneous prayer.

We want especially to acknowledge a particular indebtedness to Arthur Bennett's compilation volume "The Valley of Vision: A collection of Puritan Prayers", published by Banner of Truth, 1975. Bible quotations are from the New International Version, use of which is acknowledged with thanks. Thank you to the many people who contributed to this work by way of submissions, advice and encouragement.

This work is offered in the hope that it will be used of God to strengthen the prayer life of our churches, to the praise of God, and the building up of His people.

Rev Philip Mercer, Editor
For the Public Worship and Aids to Devotion Committee
General Assembly of Australia
January, 2003

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Calls to Worship

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14

“Sing to the Lord, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvellous deeds among all peoples.” 1 Chronicles 16:23-24

“... Worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness. Tremble before him, all the earth” 1 Chronicles 16:29-30

“I will give thanks to the Lord because of his righteousness and will sing praise to the name of the Lord Most High.” Psalm 7:17

“I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me,” Psalm 13:5-6

“I said to the Lord: ‘You are my Lord; apart for you I have no good thing’.” Psalm 16:2

“The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer ..., who is worthy of praise.” Psalm 18:2-3

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” Psalm 19:1

“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.” Psalm 19:14

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.” Psalm 23:1

“Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false.” Psalm 24:3-4

“To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul; in you I trust, O my God. ... Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me.” Psalm 25:1, 2a, 4

“Ascribe to the Lord, O mighty ones, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the splendour of his holiness.” Psalm 29:1-2

“Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him.” Psalm 32:1-2a

“Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together.” Psalm 34:3

“Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.” Psalm 34:8

“Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”
Psalm 37:4

“I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet upon a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God.” Psalm 40:1-3a

“As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God.”
Psalm 42:1

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear.” Psalm 46:1-2a

“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love, according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.” Psalm 51:1-2

“Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.” Psalm 55:22

“O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”
Psalm 63:1

“How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.” Psalm 84:1-2

“Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.”
Psalm 84:10

“Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name.” Psalm 86:11

“I will sing of the Lord’s great love forever; with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all generations. I will declare that your love stands firm forever, that you established your throne in heaven itself.”
Psalm 89:1-2

“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you. Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O Lord.” Psalm 89:14,15

“It is good to praise the Lord and make music to your name, O Most High, to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night.”
Psalm 92:1-2

“Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.” Psalm 95:1-2

“Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.” Psalm 95:6-7

“Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day.” Psalm 96:1-2

“Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.” Psalm 100:1-3

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.” Psalm 100:4-5

“The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbour his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:8-12

“Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts. Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.” Psalm 105:1-3

“I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples. For great is your love, higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens, and let your glory be over all the earth.” Psalm 108:3-5

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.”
Psalm 118:1

“I lift up my eyes to the hills - where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.” Psalm 121:1

“I rejoiced with those who said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord’.”
Psalm 122:1

“Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.”
Psalm 124:8

“If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.” Psalm 130:3-4

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Psalm 139:23-24

“The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made. The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.” Psalm 145:17-18

“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.” Psalm 150:6a

“The Lord is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness. He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure.” Isaiah 33:5-6

“The ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.” Isaiah 35:10

“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom.” Isaiah 40:28

“... those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31

“Seek the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.”
Isaiah 55:6-7

“For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy: ‘I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.’” Isaiah 57:15

“... if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord’s holy day honourable, and if you honour it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob.” Isaiah 58:13-14

“I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with the garments of salvation and has arrayed me in a robe of righteousness.” Isaiah 61:10

“This is the one I esteem”, (declares the Lord), “he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.” Isaiah 66:2

“ ‘For I know the plans I have for you’, declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.’ ”
Jeremiah 29:11

“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” Lamentations 3:22-23

“Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour.” Habakkuk 3:17-18

Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship.” Romans 12:1

“... at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Philippians 2:10-11

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.” Colossians 3:15-16

“Let us ... approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Hebrews 4:16

“Through Jesus ... let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise - the fruit of lips that confess his name.” Hebrews 13:15

“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” 1 Peter 2:9

“Come near to God, and he will come near to you. Humble yourselves ... under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.” James 4:8a; 1 Peter 5:6,7

Ascription of Praise

“O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” Psalm 8:1

“Your love, O Lord, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies. Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains, your justice like the great deep.”
Psalm 36:5-6a

“Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you have planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.” Psalm 40:5

“Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre of your kingdom.” Psalm 45:6

“... God is the King of all the earth; ... God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne.” Psalm 47:7a, 8

“Great is the Lord, and most worthy of praise.” Psalm 48:1a

“I will praise you, O Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples. For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.” Psalm 57:9-11

Praise be to the Lord, to God our Saviour, who daily bears our burdens.” Psalm 68:19

“The Lord reigns, he is robed in majesty; the Lord is robed in majesty and is armed with strength. The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved. Your throne was established long ago; you are from all eternity.” Psalm 93:1-2

“Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgements, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.” Romans 11:33-36

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” Ephesians 3:20-21

“Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.” 1 Timothy 1:17

“... God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever. Amen.” 1 Timothy 6:15b, 16

“To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy--to the only God our Saviour

be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.” Jude 24-25

“... To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father - to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.” Revelation 1:5c, 6

“... Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.” Revelation 4:8c

“You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.” Revelation 4:11

“... Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!” Revelation 5:12b

“... To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honour and glory and power, for ever and ever!” Revelation 5:13b

“... Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honour and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!” Revelation 7:12

“Great and marvellous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you ... and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.” Revelation 15:3b, 4

Approach

Eternal God, the light of minds that know you,
the life of souls that love you,
the strength of wills that serve you;
help us to know you that we may truly love you,
so to love you that we may fully serve you,
whom to serve is perfect freedom,
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Augustine

Worthy of praise from every mouth, of confession from every tongue, of worship from every creature, is your glorious name, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who created the world by the word of your power, and in love wonderfully redeemed it. And so with angels, and archangels, and all the company of heaven, we adore and magnify your holy name, evermore praising you, and saying: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and earth are full of your glory: Glory be to you, O Lord, most High."

Valley of Vision

Grant, Lord God, that we may hold on to you without parting, worship you without wearying, serve you without failing, faithfully seek you, happily find you, and forever possess you, the one and only God, blessed for all eternity.

Anselm

You are God and we praise you; you are the Lord and we acclaim you;
You are the eternal Father; all creation worships you.
To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,
Cherubim and seraphim sing in endless praise,
Holy, holy, holy Lord God of power and might;
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
The glorious company of the apostles praise you;
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you;
The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.
Throughout the whole world the holy church acclaims you,
The Father, of infinite majesty;
Your true and only Son worthy of all worship;
And the Holy Spirit, the comforter.
You Christ are the King of glory,
You are the everlasting Son of the Father.
When you became man to set us free
You did not abhor the virgin's womb.
You overcame the sting of death
And opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.
You are seated at God's right hand in glory;
We believe you will come to be our judge.
Come then, Lord, and help your people,
Bought with the price of your own blood
And bring us with the saints
To glory everlasting.
Te Deum 4th Century AD

Blessing and honour, thanksgiving and praise more than we can utter, more than we can conceive, be unto you, O most holy and glorious Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, by all angels, all people, all creatures, for ever and ever. Amen and Amen.

Lancelot Andrewes

Let your mighty outstretched arm, O Lord God, be our defence; your mercy and loving kindness in Jesus Christ, your dear Son, our salvation; your true word our instruction; the grace of your Holy Spirit our comfort and consolation, to the end and in the end, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

John Knox, Book of Common Order, 1564

Father God, we are gathered together before you, not for what we can get out of worship, but for what we can give to you, our God, in worship. We acknowledge it is in giving that we receive. And so, we offer up to you the praise of our lips and the obedience of our lives. We offer up to you our whole being as living sacrifices, which is our reasonable worship. May every beat of our heart, every thought of our mind, every act of our will be pleasing and acceptable in your sight. In both word and deed may we give glory to you, the King of kings.

Yet as we are bowed before you, we realise that the primary importance of worship is not what we do, but what you, our God, are doing. For as we come into your presence, yielded to you in glad and willing submission, we realise that we are like clay in the potter's hands. You speak to us, you act upon us, you feed us, nourish us, care for us, fashion us. You give us your grace, you surround us with your love, you lift us up into your arms, you carry us close to your heart,

you affirm us as members of your family, and you send us into the world with a fresh vision of your work, your Word, your will, and a new concern to live for you.

Enable us, by your Spirit, to give you the worship that you deserve, the first and the best that we have to offer. And at the same time, cause us to be completely open before you, open to your good influence, open to your transforming grace. May you work upon us according to your good pleasure. May you continue, and indeed bring to completion the good work you have begun in each one of your people. May you break our desire to sin, and make us eager to do what is good. And in all things, may you be honoured and glorified, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Spirit of God, you who proceed from the Father and the Son, have mercy on us. When you first hovered over the face of the earth, you brought forth order out of chaos, and the world became a place of beauty, fruitfulness and life. Move, we pray, over our disordered hearts and lives. Take away the chaos of worldly desires, of hateful lusts. Lift the mist of darkness and unbelief. Brighten our souls with the pure light of your truth. Make our spirits as fragrant as the garden of paradise, rich with every good fruit, beautiful with your heavenly grace, and bright with the light of your presence.

Fulfil in us the goal of your good purposes: be our comforter, light, guide, and counsellor. Take of the things of Christ and teach them to us. Through you, may we learn more of Christ's love, grace, compassion, and faithfulness. Lead us to the foot of the cross, help us to understand his sufferings, so increase our awareness of the hateful nature of evil and the power of Satan. May we see our

sins as the nails that held him, as the cords which bound him, as the thorns that tore him, as the spear that pierced him. Help us to find in his death the reality and immensity of his love.

Open up for us the volumes of truth that are contained in his words: "It is finished".

Increase our faith in the sure and certain knowledge of the Father's justice satisfied, his anger turned aside, our sins forgiven, our debt paid, our life redeemed, our souls saved, hell defeated, heaven opened, and eternity made ours. Holy Spirit, deepen in us an appreciation of these great gospel truths. Write them upon our hearts, that in our walk with you, we may hate sin and every wrong path, that we may love Christ, seek first his kingdom and righteousness, grow strong and mature in the faith, not easily deceived by the devil, not blown about by every wind of doctrine, but rather empowered to stand unmoved, like a tree planted by streams of living water, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Lord Jesus, Great High Priest, through your death upon the cross you have opened up a new and living way by which sinners may approach our holy God with acceptance. As we take that new and living way again today, as we approach your throne of grace with confidence, give us a fresh awareness of the beauty of who you are, the perfection of your sacrifice, and the effectiveness of your mediation, which makes our approach possible.

We come weary from trials and testing, weighed down by cares and concerns, disturbed by fears and afflicted by hardships. For many of us, the battle has been intense. And so we come to you in our need. But as we do so, enable us to experience that peace of God, which passes all understanding. Send forth your Holy Spirit, to draw alongside of every believing heart, to be our Comforter and guide. Because your promise is true, we know that we will find your grace sufficient to help us in our time of need.

We are eagerly anticipating your good work among us, for you alone can refresh us, renew us, lead us, guard us, supply us, help us, and cause us to persevere in faith.

The challenges of the future will require more grace than any of us currently possess, but not more than is found in you, for you are full of grace and truth. So we return to you. We seek from you the manna we need for today. Fill us again with your grace and your Holy Spirit so that our love for you might be stronger, our hope in you bolder, our dependence upon you more complete, and our faith more steadfast. So, may we be strengthened to fight the good fight, finish the race, and keep the faith.

Lord Jesus, be with us now in all your risen power, and be pleased to prepare us for whatever the future holds: be it the blessing of prosperity, the hardship of adversity, the loss of possessions, the death of friends, days of darkness, changes of life, even our departure from this life. Cause our hearts to be strengthened by grace, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Sovereign Lord, we delight to approach your throne of grace, confident that we will find your mercy sufficient to help us in our time of need. We come in the name of Jesus, by whom we are reconciled to you. We come to worship you, to be fed from your Word, to put on your armour, to be strengthened by you for every conflict, to be equipped by you for every good work, to be further conformed to the likeness of Christ.

Father, you have extended so many favours towards us. Yet we are slow to grasp them. Have mercy on us for our insensitivity to you, our lack of faith. Quicken us, awaken us by your Holy Spirit, fan into flame our first love for you. Strengthen us to take hold of you and never let you go. Encourage us with the sure and certain promise that you will never let us go.

Father God, we are mindful that your eye always sees and your ear always hears. Everything is open and laid bare before you. Before a word is on our tongue, you know it completely, O Lord. You know the very thoughts and attitudes of our heart. So we come humbly before you, conscious of the wrongs we have done, and the good we have left undone. We are conscious of the futility of hiding our sins from you. We confess them to you, and plead your forgiveness through the blood of Christ, shed for us. And having cleansed us of a guilty conscience, may you also renew our minds, to know you, enlarge our hearts to love you, anoint our lips with grace to praise you, give us eyes to see you, ears to hear you, faith to believe you, and wills to obey you, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Loving heavenly Father, everything we do, we do for you, to please and honour you. Every day, we offer ourselves to you as living sacrifices. With our whole being, in the whole of our lives, we worship you.

Yet week days are working days, in which the pressures and demands of life take up our time, preoccupy our attention and expend our energy.

We thank you therefore for the Lord's Day, when we can rest from our work, when we can rest in Christ's finished work for us, when we can draw near to you and have you draw near to us. We thank you for the opportunities of the Lord's Day, for the privileges of worship, for the blessings of Christian fellowship, for the ministry of your Word, for being able to give our undivided attention to you.

This day, may we be refreshed in you, may we edify one another, may our souls be quickened and our spirits encouraged. We have come into the house of prayer. Pour out upon us a prayerful attitude of heart and mind. We have come into the house of praise. Grant us liberty and joy in your presence as we celebrate your great love for us. We have come here to be instructed by your Word. Empower the preacher with faithfulness, clarity and conviction. Bless your Word to all who hear it. May it enlighten the ignorant, awaken the careless, reclaim the wandering, establish the weak, comfort the troubled in spirit, and make us ready as your people for you, our God.

Be especially near to all who could not come today. Remember those who never come. And through our being here today, grant us love for our families,

forgiveness towards our enemies, peace towards our neighbours, and openness towards our fellow believers, through Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Heavenly Father, grant rest to your children as we come into your presence. Take the helmet from our brow. Take from us the weight of our heavy armour for a while, may we know your peace, and be at rest in you. Come to our aid and help us we plead. As you have already washed your people in that fountain filled with blood so that we are cleansed from every guilty stain, so now this day wash us with water through the Word to make us holy. Come to us as you came to the disciples and wash our feet again. Refresh our hearts in your presence; prepare us for sweet fellowship with yourself. As the high priests washed before entering the Holy of Holies, so wash us as we now approach your throne, that nothing may hinder our prayers, and we may be free to worship you acceptably, with reverence and awe, in spirit and in truth.

Lord Jesus, take from us now everything that would hinder the closest communion with the Father. Any wish or desire that may hamper us in prayer, remove it, we pray. Any memory of either sorrow or care that would preoccupy us and so hinder us from setting our affection wholly on you, take it away now. Cause us to tear from our hearts any idol, which may be found there, so to worship only you. You have seen us and know us. You know where the difficulty, the blockage, the bondage lies. Help us against it, deliver us from it, so may we come boldly into the Holy of Holies, into your immediate presence, and into that place where we would not dare to come had not the temple curtain been torn in two, and had not Christ sprinkled the mercy seat with his own blood, and called us to enter in.

Now we have come close to you and we speak with you as a man speaks with his friend. Our God, we are yours. You are ours. We are now united together with you in our concern for the business of Heaven. We are enlisted together in the same army for the fighting of one battle, not against flesh and blood but against the principalities and powers. And the battle belongs to you. Fight for us and we will win. You who did strengthen Michael and his angels to cast out the Dragon and his demons, come to our aid in the thick of the battle and assist poor flesh and blood to win the day, that your promise may come true: “The Lord shall trample Satan under your feet, shortly”.

Conscious of our own weakness, we pray you to sanctify us through and through, that you Holy Spirit may saturate every faculty, subdue every passion, and use every power of our nature for obedience to God. Come Holy Spirit, more fully take possession of us, fill us continually, hover over our disordered lives, and bring order out of our chaos and confusion. Cause us to be perfected in holiness, completely dead to sin, alive to righteousness, and fully devoted to God. Take us body, soul and spirit, take all that we have and are, make us your own and use us for your glory, for Jesus’ sake, Amen.

C.H. Spurgeon

Heavenly Father, you are our great and mighty God. Your kingdom is righteousness and peace. We love you and want to be with you. It is our heart’s desire, our deepest longing, our greatest joy, our chief delight, to be with you where you are. With our whole being, body, soul, mind and strength we love you and long for you. We want to live with you always, praise you forever, serve

you continually, find strength in you, and in you to go from strength to strength.

To know that you hear us, and that you look with favour upon us because of Jesus, that is all we need to know. We declare that you have captured our hearts with your love. We want to be with you where you are. We would rather spend one day in your presence than a thousand elsewhere. We would rather live out our days in your presence as your humblest servant, than have power, privilege and prestige in the eyes of the world. For you are our strong deliverer, our shield and defender, our sovereign protector. You are pleased to pour out upon us your favour and honour. You give good gifts generously to all your children. Our lives are truly blessed when we trust in you, in Jesus' name, Amen

Sovereign Lord, our Heavenly Father, it is our heart's desire, our deepest longing to know you, to love you, and to worship you. It is our greatest pleasure, our highest privilege, our chief delight, to meet with you, the one true and living God, and experience your grace and favour. Grant us power by your Holy Spirit to worship you now, in spirit and in truth.

Enable us to forget worldly concerns, so to be brought into the fullness of life in your presence, there to be refreshed, comforted, blessed. Give us an understanding of your goodness, so that we will not be overawed by your greatness. Give us Jesus Christ, our only Mediator before your throne, that we may not be terrified by your holiness, but that we may be drawn by your love and enter your presence with holy boldness.

Today, may Christ be lifted up so that all may be drawn unto him.

Father, what can we give to you in worship that we have not first received from your generous hand? What you have given, we return with grateful thanks, content to know that everything we have is yours, and is more fully ours when yielded completely to you. Father, we acknowledge the wisdom of giving to you what we cannot keep in order to gain what we cannot lose.

God grant that today and always, we may live for Christ with an undivided heart, set free from every distraction and hindrance in pursuit of the narrow way that leads to life.

Father, our one hope of glory is that we have entered through the narrow gate of faith in Christ, we have been pardoned through the blood of Jesus. Give us a new sense of that. Continue to pardon us by it. Enable us to come every day to be washed clean, that we might worship you always in spirit and in truth, and so that nothing may hinder our prayers, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Gracious heavenly Father, we acknowledge that you have saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of your great mercy in Christ Jesus. We affirm that it is on the basis of the finished work of Jesus upon the cross, applied to our hearts by faith, that we can come before you in worship, know you as our Father, and receive your Spirit, who assures us that we are indeed your children, heirs of the kingdom of Heaven.

Father, we worship you for the riches of your grace, which you have lavished upon us in Christ. We are confident that you will now, with Christ, graciously

give us all things. All that we need for life and godliness you promise to provide for your people.

So we expect great things from you. Impart to us the gifts of repentance and faith. Pour down upon us the fruit of your Spirit and the gifts of your grace so that we may serve you. Do a good work among us. Continue and bring to completion the good work you have begun in the lives of each one of your people.

Bring glory to yourself, and honour to Christ. Cause your Word to be living and active among us, sharper than a two-edged sword. Send your Spirit to stir us up to love and good deeds. Teach, correct, rebuke and train us in righteousness, that we may be equipped for every good work that you have prepared beforehand for us to do, and we ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

Great God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you are the God of our salvation, the delight of our souls. We stand amazed that you delight in us, that you take pleasure in us, that you rejoice over us in love.

Father, here and now we commit our way to you. We know the deceitfulness of our own heart, so guard us against the attacks of the evil one. Give us discernment to recognise his wiles. Help us to recognise his bold disguise as an angel of light and so to resist him and watch him flee.

May all our words and works adorn the gospel and commend Christ to a lost world. Cause us to be good ambassadors for Christ, to mirror your grace, to be joyful in your service.

Tune our hearts now to declare your praise. Anoint our lips with grace to worship you. Cause us to set our hearts on things above. And send us out with kindness and compassion, to walk as Jesus walked, our only Saviour, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. May the mind of Christ be in us. May his meekness characterise our attitudes and our actions. Enable us to number ourselves among the poor in spirit. Empower us to honour others above ourselves, always to think of ourselves with sober judgement, and find in true humility blessing, and your gracious favour, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Lord God, help us to worship you now in spirit and in truth. We thank you for this occasion, for the blessings of the Lord's Day, and for the gathering together of believers. As we gather, will you shut the door upon the world for us? Help us to forget our cares, to cast them completely upon you. Enable us to rise above the things of this world, and be free of its tendency to drag us down. May its attractions not trap us, nor its devices defile us, but instead may we be caught up to yourself, to gaze upon your beauty, to bask in the light of your presence, there to be comforted and blessed.

Father, we ask that by faith we may see Jesus, and meet him in his Word. May his presence be so evidenced here among us today, that we may rejoice as if our eyes had seen him, and love him and trust him and worship him as earnestly as we would if he were physically with us in person, such that we could put our fingers into the nail prints, and behold his hands and his side.

Dear Lord Jesus, our precious Saviour, we adore you with all our hearts. You are Lord of all. We honour you for becoming one with us, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. You have become our brother, our next of kin, and by such union with yourself, you have redeemed us from the captivity of the world, the flesh, and the devil. You have paid with your life the ransom price that sets us free. You have redeemed us by the shedding of your own blood.

You now stand among us in all your risen power. You are moving among us by your Holy Spirit. You are ruling over us by your Word. And you rule with infinite wisdom, love and compassion from your throne in Glory, at the Father's right hand. Even now you are seated there, arrayed in splendour and majesty, ruling over all things for your people. And even now we would join our voices with the heavenly host as they cry: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise", for you have redeemed us by your blood and have made us to be a kingdom of priests to serve our God, and we shall reign with you forever.

Our Saviour, accept these our poor praises. They come from hearts that love you, and just as we prize any gift we receive from those we love, so we are confident that you will accept the praise we offer, as your redeemed people, whose names are written on the palm of your hand, whom you have loved with an everlasting love.

Lord Jesus, we love you, and we long for strength to love you more. For the love of you, we would live or die. We would leave all behind to follow you. And if we think we love you more than we do, we pray that we might love you more than

we think. You are our very life, our all, for whom have we in heaven but you, and there is none on earth we desire compared with you.

We worship you: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with all our heart, and with all our powers. We fall in reverence before you, and render unto you all honour, glory and praise, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

C. H. Spurgeon

Gracious Father, as we come into your holy presence, we remember all that you in your covenant love have done for us, your people. We remember all that Christ suffered for us. We remember all that you have promised to those who put their trust in you.

Enable us to love you as you have first loved us. May your love cause us to give ourselves continually as living sacrifices to you, for only in loving you is there lasting joy and peace. Give to us a clearer vision of things unseen and eternal. Fill our vision with the wonder of who you are, so we may more surely walk by faith and not by sight.

Grant that every spiritual desire and aspiration breathed into our souls this day by the Holy Spirit may endure. Grant that the Word of God planted in us might not be snatched away by the evil one, but spring up in us and bear fruit to eternal life. Grant the Holy Spirit to bring clearly to our remembrance all that Christ taught, so that we shall be led into all truth. Equip your people for the challenges of the future.

As we are bowed in your holy presence, strengthen our love for one another and for you. Bless each one as we meet, and all who gather in different places around the world as part of the universal church of Jesus Christ. Bless those who preach the Word, that they may declare it fearlessly, as they should. In your mercy, reach out to those who know little and care nothing for your love, and save them by your grace, in Jesus' name, Amen. *Valley of Vision*

Almighty God, we stand in awe of you for the dignity of your person: you are holy, just and true. We acknowledge that with respect to all humanity, you are creator, lawgiver and judge. Therefore, let the whole world keep silent, and all held accountable to you.

Knowing this makes us rejoice all the more that in relation to your chosen people you are our Saviour, Redeemer, and Friend. You are constant in love and faithfulness, generous, compassionate, merciful, forgiving.

You have called us out of darkness into your wonderful light, that we may declare your praises, tell of your greatness, speak of your worth, and live for your glory. May we do so full of hope, courage and confidence, sure that now nothing can condemn us in your presence, sure that now nothing can separate us from your love.

Father, our hearts' desire is to meet with you, and for you to deal with us according to your grace. So, purify our hearts, refine our spirits, forgive our sins, transform our minds, conquer pride, bring forth the fruits of your Holy Spirit and bestow upon us the gifts of your grace. We are yours, make of us what you will as we are quiet and still before you, as we submit to your Lordship, as we are open to your good influence, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Sovereign Lord, we come in submission to your rightful rule. We surrender to your good government. We acknowledge that our hearts are in your hands, for you have created, renewed, captured, conquered them.

Keep us from the Devil's attacks. Subdue in us every rebellious thought. Put to death in us every godless passion. Eradicate from us every worldly desire.

Create in us a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit within us. Grant to us a tender conscience. Empower us, by your Spirit, to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

You are worthy to receive far higher praise than we can offer. So awaken our hearts, energise our spirits, enliven our consciences, ignite our love for you, that our praise may rise worthily to you, that we might be delighted with you, be attracted by you and offer to you endless praise, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen

Valley of Vision

Lord, we come to you in the assurance that you are present with us now in all your risen power. We do not have to seek your presence, for you have promised that you will be with us always, to the very end of the age. We are living daily in the light of your presence. Make us aware of it. Make it real to us. Help us in these moments of prayer and praise to know that we are speaking to one who is near and not far off, who is near to all who call on you in truth and who knows what we need even before we ask you. We ask it through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Heavenly Father, for as much as no one can receive your Word, except you draw them by your gracious Holy Spirit's influence, we humbly ask you to pour out your Spirit upon all who worship you this day, that our hearts may be moved to receive what you have to say to us, so to steadfastly adhere to and obediently perform all that you would teach us; and may we evidence, in the dedication to you of our selves and all we possess, that thankfulness which we owe to you for your redeeming love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Rev R. M. Benson, 1824

O great King of Heaven and earth, the Lord and giver of life, receive us your servants as we draw near to your throne of grace in Jesus' name; give to each one of us what is best for us, purge away all evil and every stain of sin from within us, work in us a fullness of holiness, wisdom and spiritual understanding, so that, increasing in the knowledge and love of God, we may be fruitful in every good work, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen. *Jeremy Taylor, 1613*

Lord God, prepare our souls to meet you so that we may worship you acceptably this day, with reverence and awe, with godly fear, in spirit and in truth. Take from us all sinful thoughts and all worldly preoccupations. Set our minds on things above. Give us grace to receive your Word in a glad and obedient heart, so to manifest increasingly the fruits of the Spirit in our lives, to your glory and honour, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Bishop Hamilton, 1561

Lord God, look upon us in love and let all the darkness of our souls vanish before the light of your presence. Fill us with holy love and open to us the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ. All our desires are known to you, so continue the good work you have begun and bring it to completion. Cause us to respond to your Spirit's prompting concerning what we should pray for. Turn your face toward us. Show us your glory. Then shall the longings of our heart be satisfied and we know that peace of God which passes all understanding; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen

Augustine, 354

Lord God, place a new song in our hearts this day and, so renewed, enable us to sing in joyful unison with all the saints and to rejoice in you, our Creator and Redeemer. Grant to us such peace of conscience as will strengthen our work for you and our worship of you. Fit us with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, that we may faithfully strive against all that is opposed to your glory and your holy name, so as to stand for truth and righteousness, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen

Scottish Psalter, 1595

Praise

Gracious God, even though the highest heavens cannot contain you, let alone this building made by human hands, nevertheless we ask that you take for yourself the throne of our heart, made by you and for you, and rule supreme in our life as unrivalled king. Subdue in us every rebellious desire, every godless passion. Purify our hearts by your mighty power and make us yours forever.

You are worthy to be praised with every breath we take, loved with every thought and affection, served with every act of our will. For you have loved us, committed yourself to us, received, purchased, washed, cleansed, clothed and adopted us, when we were unworthy, offensive, polluted, opposed to you.

We were dead in our transgressions and sins, having no eyes to see you, no ears to hear you, no desire to know you and no capacity to please you. But your Son Jesus died for us and redeemed us from our sins by his blood shed on the cross.

And your Spirit has awakened us, has raised us from death to life. We are now a new creation. We now hunger and thirst after you. Your Word has come alive to us. It is our light, our guide, our comfort, our delight.

Your presence with us is now a source of continual peace. Your grace and forgiveness to us are much appreciated. Keep us by your mighty power. Protect us from sin and evil. Help us to walk closely with you. Cause us to lean upon you, to wait for you, to trust in you and to remain faithful to you, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen. *Valley of Vision*

Heavenly Father, you have loved us with an everlasting love. You have redeemed us by your grace. Your Holy Spirit now testifies with our spirits that we are your children. The temple curtain is now torn in two. The blood of Jesus now speaks on our behalf. By that blood we may enter into the Holiest of all. We stand before you, bold and confident in Christ, clothed in his righteousness, certain that there is now no condemnation for us, certain that now nothing can separate us from your love.

We know that Jesus Christ sits at your right hand, praying for us, representing us before your throne. We praise you that he is for us and not against us. We know that your love is unchanging. You will keep us in your love. You will never leave us, fail nor forsake us. You have placed your Spirit within us as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. He is now changing us to be like Christ, preparing us to see you face to face. Now all things are being worked out by your sovereign purpose for our good and for your glory.

We now hate sin as you hate it. We never want to grieve your heart of love by doing what displeases you. Your love has made us richer, happier, more content than all the treasures of earth ever could. We could never have loved you if you had not first loved us.

We worship you for your everlasting love which sought us and bought us, redeemed us, renewed us and brought us back into right relationship with yourself, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Sovereign Lord, we are conscious of the fact that, in approaching you, we come before a king, the one who is in fact King of kings and Lord of lords. As King, you are seated upon your royal throne in Heaven, arrayed in majesty and splendour. From your throne, you rule over all that you have made. You rule with unerring wisdom, infinite compassion and scrupulous justice. You possess all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, let all that you have made worship you. Let every knee bow before you and every tongue confess you as Lord.

Mindful of the glory and honour which is due to you, we, your redeemed people, may yet approach your throne with boldness, because you are seated upon a throne of grace. You have extended your hand of mercy to us. You delight in each one of your blood-bought children and you promise grace sufficient to help us in our time of need. We rejoice in being reconciled to you by the cross and we rejoice to plead none other than the name of Jesus before your holy throne.

Almighty God, we come into your presence, to sit at your feet, to gaze upon your beauty, to receive your loving instruction, to heed your gentle rebukes, to receive your wise correction, to be trained by you in righteousness.

We come to you as the source and spring of all our blessings. We know that you will open wide the gates of heaven and pour out your mercy upon us.

So quicken our spirits, enliven our consciences, enlighten our minds, enlarge our hearts and motivate our wills to obedience. Strengthen our hearts by your grace,

so that we will hold on to you and never let you go. These things we humbly pray, seeking your forgiveness for all our sins and failures, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Gracious God, we worship you for your steadfast love and faithfulness to us, your redeemed people. We are so thankful that you have loved us from eternity past, before time began. We cannot begin to comprehend the length and breadth, the height and depth of the love you have for us that has been so wonderfully expressed in the Lord Jesus Christ, yet we have believed in and have come to know something of the love you have for us. Help us to remain in your love so that we may live in you and you in us. Help us to love you whom we have not seen by loving our brother or sister whom we have seen. Teach us to love as you first loved us.

Shed abroad your love in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. May we never be reduced to the level of a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal, and become as nothing, for lack of love. Grant to us the patience and kindness of love in all our dealings with others. Help us increasingly to reflect the likeness of him who gave his life in selfless love. Grant that we may faithfully bear the image of our Creator, who is the very essence of love, so to love you with heart, soul, mind and strength, and to love our neighbour as our self.

Teach us today something more of your amazing love for us, unworthy as we are and increase our love for you through time and eternity, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Lord God, our Loving Heavenly Father, you are all good and the source of all that is good. Help us to see that whatever good we may experience in life, is all because of the goodness of you our God, who gives it and who, according to your wisdom, can take it away.

Help us to realise that true blessing is not to be measured by the quantity of good that we have received from you, but by our capacity to be able to see good in everything you do and to thank you for it.

There is no one good but you only. And yet in the works of your hands, in the mighty trees of the forest, in the pristine wilderness, in the noble and majestic creatures that you have made, we see your great goodness shining through.

We are near goodness when we are near to you. And to have been made by you, like you and for you, is an amazing thought.

How we long for you to be both the source and the goal of our life. How we desire more than anything else for our lives to be begun, continued and ended in you. For only as we live continually in your presence will any true and lasting good result.

We recognise that in times of peace and prosperity, you have been good to us. We affirm that in times of trouble, you alone can support and comfort us. We know and are certain that when life comes to an end, your grace alone will be sufficient for us.

Help us to see how good your will is in all things, especially when it crosses our own. Teach us to accept it and to be pleased with it. Help us to understand that your will for us is also our greatest good. Help us to feel your goodness in: the warmth of a fire; in the enjoyment of food; in the pleasure of friendship; in every provision you make for us. Help us to see that your many gifts and provisions are but your hands and fingers taking hold of us and caring for us.

You are an inexhaustible fountain of goodness. We give ourselves to you out of love, for all we have or own is yours, our possessions, family, church, selves, to do with as you will, to honour yourself by us and all that is ours.

And if it be consistent with your will and the purpose of your grace, and the great goal of your glory and your Kingdom, then continue to pour out upon us, your servants, the blessings of your comfort and peace. But if not, then give us the grace to accept your wiser counsel and to seek after the good you have planned for us in hardship, or persecution, or pain. For you are a good God and we believe you when you say that you will work all things together for the good of those that love you and are called according to your purpose. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Gracious heavenly Father, we are your redeemed people and, as we gather in your presence, how we rejoice in you. We rejoice in the majesty of your character, the sheer perfection of your being. You are the only wise God, the one true and living God, the Almighty, the all-knowing one, the ever present one, the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We rejoice in the perfection of who you are.

And we rejoice in the works of your hands, in the wonders you have done: the splendour of your creation, the generosity of your providential care, the sheer grace of redemption, the mystery of your purposes in election, the infinite wonder of your everlasting love, the gift of your Word, the power of your Gospel, the sanctifying work of your Holy Spirit, the blessings of your Church, the glories of Heaven and the wonders you have prepared for us there.

When we consider the wonder of who you are and all that you have done for us in Christ, we rejoice with trembling. We stand in awe of you. We realise something of the greatness and grandeur of who you are, the high and holy God who inhabits eternity. We also realise the finite, weak, limited, sinful condition of ourselves by comparison. But we rejoice in the fact that despite the vast gulf between us, you nevertheless delight to dwell with those who are humble and contrite in heart and who tremble at your Word. We rejoice that you have appointed Christ to bridge the gap between us, and that he has reconciled us to you through the cross. We rejoice that with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.

We come before you this day, yielded and still in the presence of you, our Lord and Master. Continue and bring to completion the good work you have begun in us. Humble us in our pride. Condemn in us any wrong. Wash us with water through the Word to make us holy and send us to our homes rejoicing that we have met with you, the Sovereign Lord, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Gracious Father, we praise you for your love without beginning in which you chose us in Christ from before the creation of the world; for your love without measure which entered into covenant for our redemption; for your love without failure which, at just the right time, appeared in the person of your Son, Jesus, to accomplish our salvation; for your love unchanging even though we wander; for your love without end, from which nothing can separate us; for your love which is faithful forever, even though we are unfaithful.

Merciful Father, we praise you for keeping us to this day and for the full assurance that you will never let us go. Thank you that when we wander away from your presence, you leave the 99 safe in the fold in order to seek and to save that which was lost. We worship you that you restore our souls and, having brought us to yourself, you will surely keep us from falling and one day present us faultless in your presence with exceeding joy. We bless you with our inmost being, we praise your holy name. You alone are the one who keeps our feet from stumbling, who has established us firm and solid on the rock of Jesus.

We praise you, Almighty God, because you are scrupulous in justice and perfect in knowledge. Therefore, all your judgments are right and just, fair and impartial. In judgment, you only give people what their sins deserve and no more. Never are you cruel, harsh, vindictive, or vengeful. No one can rightly complain that you have been unfair towards them or biased against them. And so, we praise you that, as Judge of all the earth, you do right, your judgments are just, your anger is always righteous. You never let the guilty go unpunished.

We also praise you, Almighty God, because you are rich in love and full of compassion, that your grace even now extends to the worst of sinners who

repent. In salvation, you do not treat us as our sins deserve. You treat us far better. And that is possible because you first treated Christ according to what our sins deserve. For Christ bore our sins in his own body upon the cross. He who knew no sin became sin for us and offered up his life a sacrifice for us. And there upon the cross, Father, you cursed Christ, you forsook Christ, you condemned Christ, on account of our sins, in our place, as our substitute. And as you did so, your justice was satisfied, and your anger is now turned aside from all who seek his mercy and forgiveness. So you have remained true to yourself, just in every way, while at the same time justifying sinners like us.

So we praise you, Father, that you are both scrupulously just and merciful and compassionate at the same time. We praise you that within the Godhead, these two attributes are never in conflict, but find perfect harmony in the death of Jesus, resulting in grace overflowing to sinners like us.

We bow in reverence before your scrupulous justice. We receive by faith your mercy and grace. We own you as our Heavenly Father, Christ as our Saviour and the Holy Spirit as our comforter and guide. We seek your forgiveness for sins committed. We ask for cleansing through the precious blood of Jesus, shed for us. And we pray that you will be pleased to pour out your blessings on your people as we wait upon you now, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Sovereign Lord, everlasting God, Creator of the ends of the earth,

You are ever watchful, never sleeping. We come to worship you for your wisdom, knowledge and understanding. All your ways are good and just. You have done all things well. You never make mistakes.

Your wisdom is unsearchable, your paths are beyond tracing out. By your wisdom the earth was established. By your wisdom, redemption was accomplished. You are too wise to err. Who has ever known your mind or been your counsellor? Even your folly is wiser than man's wisdom and your weakness is stronger than man's strength.

Your knowledge is complete. You know the number of grains of sand on the seashore, the number of stars in the sky, the number of hairs on our head. You perceive our thoughts from afar. Before a word is on our tongue, you know it completely, O Lord. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us, too lofty for us to attain.

Your understanding is great. You understand foreign affairs, domestic politics, the mysteries of the universe and the longings of our hearts. You never need to be taught, counselled or instructed. Your ways are higher than our ways and your thoughts than our thoughts.

And yet for all your infinite wisdom, knowledge and understanding, you are not distant or aloof from us. You have a tender heart toward us. You tend your people like a shepherd tends his sheep. You gather up the lambs into your arms and carry them close to your heart. You give strength to the weary and increase the power of the weak. For those who wait upon you, you renew their strength like the eagle's.

Father, today we ask that you will gather us up in your arms and carry us close to your heart. Lead us gently. May your strength be made perfect in our weakness. Renew us according to your Word. Refresh us by your grace. Revive

us by your Spirit. Forgive us all our sins and failures. Transform us more into the likeness of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Everlasting God, creator of the ends of the earth, Lord of the universe, your greatness is beyond comparison, your goodness is infinite, your compassion is unfailing, your mercies are new every morning. We worship you for the wonder of your Gospel of grace. We were lost, but in the Gospel you present us with a full, free and eternal salvation. We are weak, but we learn that help is to be found in one who is almighty. We are poor, but in Christ we discover unsearchable riches. We are blind, but in Christ we have all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

We thank you for your indescribable gift of Jesus. Your Son is our only refuge, foundation, hope and confidence. We depend upon his death and resurrection. We rest in his righteousness. We desire to bear his image. May his glory fill our minds. May his love reign in our hearts. May his holiness be met with our obedience. In Christ, may we be rich in faith, strong in faith, live by faith, walk by faith, do the work of faith, and experience the joy of faith, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Valley of Vision

God of all grace, you have done an amazing thing for us. You have done for us what we could not do for ourselves. What a glorious transaction you have accomplished! What a great exchange you have brought about! All our sins you have debited to the account of Christ, our Substitute, and the righteousness of

Christ, you have credited to us. We are now acquitted of all wrong. We are now robed in the righteousness of Christ. We are now clothed in the garments of grace. We are now set apart to the Lord, arrayed in holiness.

Yet in our Christian walk we notice a great discrepancy between what you have called us to and how we in fact live. Our best prayers are stained with sin. Our tears of repentance are often impure and insincere. Our confession of wrongdoing sometimes just compounds our sin. We need to repent of our repentance. Our tears need to be washed. We have no means to cover our sin or work out our own righteousness. We are always standing in the tattered rags of our own unrighteousness and by your grace, we may always receive a change of clothing. We are often going back to that far country and returning home as the prodigal, saying: "Father, forgive me", and you always bring out the best robe and put it on us. Every morning please clothe us in it. Every evening may we return home wearing it. May we work in it, be married in it, live in it, die in it, stand before your great white throne in it and at last enter Heaven in it, robed in the righteousness of Christ. Today, may we be enabled to worship you in it.

Help us never to lose sight of the utter sinfulness of sin, the finished work of salvation, the incomparable glory of Christ, the sheer beauty of holiness and the wonder of your grace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Father of mercies and God of all comfort, we honour you as the source of all life, and the one who brought us into this life. How grateful we are for such a precious gift. We affirm that it is your mercy that keeps us alive from day to day.

With thankful hearts we also affirm that it is your grace through the cross by which you have given us new life in Christ. You have drawn us to yourself by your great love, you have given us the gift of faith to believe in Jesus, and on that basis, you have declared us forgiven and not guilty in Christ, even though we still sin. We rejoice in your great salvation and our heart's desire is now to live for you and your glory.

But we are aware of our own weaknesses and of the fact that we have no strength but in you. We are dependent upon you for help and strength. Correct us when we are wrong. Rebuke us when we are stubborn and train us in righteousness. Strengthen us against every temptation. Conquer in us worldly passions and desires. Empower us to resist all the assaults of the devil. Cause us to be more than conquerors through him who loved us. Through every trial teach us more of your peace. Through every hardship satisfy us with your all-sufficient grace. Send your Holy Spirit to impart gifts and graces, that we may be built up in love, so to walk worthy, and to be found faithful, and to persevere to the end, and to overcome through him who loved us and gave himself for us. Give rest to the weary. Comfort those who mourn. Lift up those who are bowed down. Unburden those who carry heavy loads. Bind up the broken-hearted. Refresh, build up and encourage us in our faith. Impart your life and peace to every believing heart, in Jesus' name, Amen.

O Lord, our God, we honour you that you are enthroned in Heaven and that you are seated upon a throne of grace. We worship you that under your reign, we have received free and undeserved merit, grace and favour in abundance. We praise you that we now have free and open access to your throne through the shed blood of Jesus. The veil is now torn in two, and we can enter through into

the most holy place. We can approach your throne with holy boldness, confident that you will be ready to receive us, attentive to hear us, waiting to be gracious toward us, inviting us to pour out all our needs before you and promising to give us more than we could ever ask or imagine.

But while we hear your gracious call to approach your throne and enter your most holy presence, we also remember our sins that cling to us. We refuse to presume upon your grace. So we repent of our sins, our coldness of heart, our lack of love, our ingratitude towards you, our misuse of your gifts, our weak worship, our inconsistent service.

Mercifully forgive us and cleanse us of all our unrighteousness. Speak to us the peace we long to hear. Fill us with your peace that passes all understanding. Cause us to drink deeply from that river of life that flows from the throne of God. Fill us with the bread of life, the Word of God, and cause our hearts to be more completely yielded to Jesus Christ, who alone is the way, the truth and the life, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Gracious Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, your goodness is beyond our ability to express. In the works of creation, you have shown yourself to be almighty. In your provision for all our needs, you have shown yourself to be wise and generous. In the Gospel of grace, you have shown yourself to be rich in mercy, abounding in love. In the gift of your Son, you have made full provision for our deliverance from sin. You have saved us from the penalty of sin. You are renewing us from within, saving us from the power of sin. And you are preserving our souls, keeping us in eternal life, so that we shall stand complete at last, saved from the presence of sin forever.

Trusting in Christ and resting in his righteousness, we have a place of safety, secure from the attacks of the evil one.

Having received such goodness from you, our Father, we humbly pray that you will save us from taking your grace for granted. Instead, help us to show our appreciation for all you have done and continue to do for us, by growing in our dependence upon Christ, our love for Christ, our knowledge of Christ, our conformity to Christ. Give us a faith that is both real and active, that perseveres and grows stronger in grace, that operates not by human strength, but by the power of your Holy Spirit, that is teachable and profits by every rebuke and correction and that daily puts to death the deeds of the flesh so as to be renewed in the image of our Creator, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, we worship you, our mighty Saviour.

You have returned victorious from the fight.

You have disarmed the principalities and powers.

You have defeated the devil, making a public spectacle of him by the cross.

You have triumphed over all your and our enemies.

You have broken their power over us.

You have destroyed the destroyer.

You have bound the strong man, plundered his territory, burst open the gates of Hell, and set his captives free.

You are the liberator of the people of God and if the Son shall make us free, we shall be free indeed! You have set us free from our sin and guilt, from our corrupt and fallen nature, from the curse and condemnation of the law and from the devil's power. Our life was once meaningless, frustrating, and empty. We

were once separated from God and enslaved by our fear of death. But you have given us life and hope, you have brought release for captives, sight for the blind and light for those in darkness.

You have achieved this by your great sacrifice at Calvary, where you died as our scapegoat, substitute and sin bearer. There you bore our guilt, died our death and suffered our shame. There, you shed your blood in redeeming sacrifice, in order to satisfy God's justice and turn aside God's anger from all who truly repent and believe the Gospel.

In your death the wages of sin have been paid in full. No debt need now remain outstanding. No sin need now remain unforgiven. You have done it all and done it well. How excellent is your finished work upon the cross. It can never be improved upon, replaced, or repeated. You have fought for us a battle we ourselves could never win. Yours was a decisive victory, once and for all time. And what is more, you achieved it outside of us, independent of us, without our participation or contribution. You have gained the victory and yet the victory is ours, through trusting you.

So, we affirm that our salvation depends not on us but completely on you. For your life was perfect, your sacrifice was complete, your forgiveness is unconditional and your love is everlasting.

Glory be to you Lord, Jesus Christ, our mighty Saviour, our living Lord, our only Mediator, our resurrection and our life, Amen.

Lord Jesus, you are the lover of our souls and your love reaches out to us in acts of sacrifice. May we see the rich extent of your love for us in the manger of your birth, in the garden of your agony, in the cross of your suffering, in the tomb of your resurrection and in the heaven of your intercession.

May your love for us make us bold to defy the devil, resist his scheming, renounce the world and be courageous for truth.

Knowing that we are loved, may that deepen our spiritual purpose in life, and deepen our relationship with you as our Lord and King, our friend and Saviour, our rightful judge.

How unlovely we are and how unworthy we are to receive your love! We think of your glory and our corruption, your majesty and our meanness, your beauty and our deformity, your purity and our uncleanness, your righteousness and our sinfulness.

How great is your love, unmerited, undeserved. You love because it is your nature to love, despite our unworthiness. So, your love is constant: everlasting and unchanging. May we love as we are loved.

You have given yourself for us; may we give ourselves to you. You have died for us; may we live for you in every moment of our time, in every thought of our mind, in every beat of our heart.

May we never be enticed by the world and its attractions, but ever walk by your side, listen to your voice, be continually transformed by your grace, and always robed in your righteousness, in Jesus' name, Amen. *Valley of Vision*

Lord Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, amidst the conflict and strife of our world and of our daily lives, we praise you that you have made peace through your blood shed on the cross. We are so grateful for the fact that we can now know the calm of sins forgiven, of guilt removed and of peace with God because of your finished work upon the cross, applied to our hearts by faith. Now the peace of God, which passes all understanding, guards our hearts and minds and calms all our fears.

We praise you that having given to us your peace, you are now transforming us into peacemakers. Grant us your Spirit and wisdom so as to grow in Christ-likeness when faced with conflict. Help us to learn how to turn the other cheek and to walk the second mile. Give us the strength to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. And when others sin against us or deliberately seek to harm us, grant us your grace to be able to pray: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing". May we become channels of your peace, may we be willing to absorb the shock of bad or unfair treatment, may we be committed always to seek peace and to pursue it.

Lord Jesus, we know that sin is the cause of all conflict and we know that your sacrifice has saved us from the penalty of sin. But we praise you for the blessed hope that, in the Kingdom of Heaven, we shall at last be saved from the presence and power of sin forever, and consequently, will experience for the first

time, the completeness and perfection of the peace you have been working to restore ever since the peace of Eden was shattered by human rebellion.

We are amazed to think that in Heaven we will enjoy a perfect relationship with you, unmarred by sin and that we shall know fully, even as we are fully known. We praise you that in Heaven, we will know perfect peace and harmony in all our relationships together. For then, as the Prince of Peace rules in every heart, shall we beat our swords into ploughshares, our spears into pruning hooks, and study war no more.

So we join our voices with all creation in praising you for the peace you have won for us and, in anticipation of your coming again, we celebrate the perfection of your peace. So, let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad, let the seas resound and all that is in them, let the fields be jubilant and everything that is in them, let all the trees of the forest sing for joy, let all the trees of the field clap their hands before the Lord as he comes to establish true and lasting peace in the perfection of his Heaven.

Glory be to you, our Prince of Peace, Amen

Our Father, in a world of created and changeable things, we worship you that Christ and his Word remain unchangeably the same. In a world of chaos and confusion, we are so thankful that Christ and his Word remain sure and certain. Enable us, by faith, to abandon all other means, and so to build our lives upon the one sure foundation of Jesus Christ and his Word, there to abide in him and to be borne up by him, to be carried along as on eagles' wings by the unfailing love of our mighty Saviour. For everything good and blessed and worthwhile in

life comes through Christ, who has designed, purchased, promised and imparted them. Our lives are truly blessed when we are near to Christ, in vital union with him.

But when we sin, we grieve your Spirit. At such times, we have no comfort, no peace, no blessing. Thanks be to you, our Father, that you have given us your Son to be our Saviour, to mediate between us. And he is ever present to act as our go-between. We praise you that whenever our sins cause a gulf between us to occur, Christ alone can breach the gap and satisfy your justice and wash away our sin.

May we ever run to Christ for mercy and cleansing. May we not delay or seek some other way. For there is only one mediator between God and man: Jesus Christ the righteous. And he is ever ready to hear our prayer and forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. May Christ and his Word remain the one true object of our faith. May we never take our eyes off him. May we never seek comfort or hope elsewhere. May Christ and his word continually be our help and our strength, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the great shepherd and guardian of our souls and we are so glad you are for we are prone to wander. We feel the pull of temptation, the downward drag of sin. Our only shelter against being blown about by every wind of doctrine, against being seduced by every man-made scheme is to remain focussed upon the cross on which you died. Help us to keep our eyes fixed firmly on you, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For you have overcome, you have triumphed and we too may overcome, but only in your power to keep us and with your Spirit within us.

So we come to you for shelter and protection. We seek from you refuge and strength. Lead us in the way everlasting and keep us from every wrong path.

Lord, may we never cease to profit from your Word. May we never rest in a system of doctrine, however spiritual, that does not proclaim salvation or teach us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. May we never rely on our own opinions or convictions, or put our trust in worldly methods for building your kingdom. May we never cease to find your grace sufficient. May we never forget to run to you in all our trials, troubles and conflicts. May we never cease to live for you, who sticks closer than a brother, who is able to sympathise with us in our weaknesses, who can do for us far more than we ever dared to ask or imagine.

May we never limit our religion to special occasions, but acknowledge you in all our ways. May we never limit our devotion to particular seasons or times of the year, but walk with you, keep in step with you, and live in humble fear of you all day, every day. May we never be godly just on Sundays or just at church, but in every place and at all times. May we never make holiness a look or appearance, but a habit, a way of life.

Wash us clean and make our bodies a fit temple to be indwelt by your Holy Spirit, in Jesus' name, Amen. *Valley of Vision*

Lord Jesus Christ, we honour you that the outcome of the spiritual battle between yourself and Satan has never been in doubt and that it will end in certain victory to you. We worship you that at the cross, you crushed the

serpent's head, and we now contend with a defeated foe, who, despite all his craft and guile, has already been overcome.

So, when we feel the devil at our heels, hounding our every step, cause us to remember him whose heel was bruised when you crushed the serpent's head, when you triumphed over the devil, making a public spectacle of him by the cross.

But in the meantime, as we find ourselves in the thick of the spiritual battle, heal us of any wounds we may suffer. If our faith is assaulted, or our hope fails, our love grows cold, our souls sink, some sin besets us, or some worldliness attracts us: draw near to us weary from the battle, and refresh us with your grace, so that we might rise again to tread down the enemy.

Cause our fellowship with you to be close, that we may consistently defy the world, the flesh, and the devil, not in our own strength, but by your almighty power. Cause us to make good use of the means of grace made available to us. Then shall our hand never weaken, our feet never stumble, our sword never rest, our shield never rust, our helmet never shatter, or our breastplate never fall, as our strength rests in your almighty power, and we prove more that conquerors through him who loved us, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we thank you from the depths of our heart for the wonder of your love and grace in bearing our sins in your own body upon the cross. May your cross ever be to us that which sweetens all our bitterness, that which produces in us life and beauty, that which calls forth faith.

By your cross crucify in us every sin. Use it to increase our love for you. Make it the ground of all our assurance and peace, the motivation for all our service, the source of all our godliness. Make it the very essence of our religion and, because of it, may we never cease to praise you.

Because you bore for us the cross with all its shame, enable us with grateful thanks to take up our cross daily and follow you. Enable us to die daily to sin and self and to live for you. With the cross you call on us to bear, send your promised grace, so that we might bear it patiently, and find it to be your yoke which is easy, and your burden which is light.

Cause us to be crucified with you, our Saviour, so that it is no longer we who live, but you who live in us.

Valley of Vision

We praise you, Lord Jesus Christ, that you understand us completely, you identify with us totally and that you stand with us in our pain, our groaning, our brokenness. You can empathise with us in our struggles and sympathise with us in our weaknesses, for you have been tempted in every way, just like us. Yet you did not give in, you remained without sin. You have shared fully in our humanity. You have experienced the bitterness of betrayal, rejection, abandonment, forsakenness, yet you won through to victory. You were despised, rejected, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. Yet we recognise that your torment was all for us. You saw our miserable lost condition. You could not leave us that way. So in love you took on our humanity and bore our sins,

suffered our shame and died our death. You were tormented that we might be comforted, comforted with forgiveness, pardon and peace with God.

So, we praise you, Father, that you have visited us with your salvation, that you have comforted your people. We praise you, Lord Jesus Christ, that because your suffering was complete, our comfort is complete. Because your suffering was once and for all, our comfort is continuous and unfailing. Because your suffering was sufficient to cover all our sins, your comfort is to be found in every kind of suffering.

We praise you, Holy Spirit, that your ministry is one of comfort, assurance and hope for the people of God, for you testify with our spirits that we are children of God. So, by your ministry among us, meet each of us at our point of need, to soothe our sorrows, calm our troubled minds and take away our fears.

Renew our faith in you, our hope because of you and our love for you, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, enable us to love you even though once we had no regard for you and in fact loved the way of sin and preferred darkness to light because our deeds were evil.

But you loved us before we knew you. You loved us in our former lost condition, even while we were enemies, rebels and sinners. You loved us despite our unloveliness, you wept over our lost and unhappy condition.

Your love caused you to act. Your love for us brought you from heaven to earth, from earth to the cross, from the cross to the grave and from the grave back to life.

Your love caused you to be weary, hungry, tempted. Your love caused you to be ridiculed, rejected, whipped, spat upon and crucified. Your love for us led you to bow your head in death. And at the cross, the perfection of your uncreated love met us at our point of weakness and need, to deliver us from sin and guilt, to claim us for your own, to impart to us the gift of faith and to love you because you first loved us. Your love is everlasting. It never diminishes or comes to an end, in spite of all our sins and failures.

God grant that we shall never take your love for granted, but rather pursue holiness in response to your grace. May our appreciation of your love for us continue and increase. So, with the eyes of faith, may we see your love surrounding us, continually taking hold of us. Let us ever see the length and breadth and height and depth of your love in the cross. Let us also see the richness and diversity of your love in the lives of Christian people and in the world around us.

When we feel the warmth of the sun on our back, help us to realise that you, in love, have set it in place and cause it to rise and set each day. When we feel the refreshing rains, may we remember and thank you for all the simple blessings of life that you shower upon us. When we walk beside a quiet stream, help us to realise that you direct our heart and restore our soul.

Your love reaches out to us in a multitude of different ways and fills all of life. Increase our enjoyment and appreciation of your great love for us in Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Lord God, you are worthy to receive glory and honour and praise and to give these is the noblest and best act we are capable of.

Praise is what you deserve from all your creatures,

for all your works display your greatness, and fulfil your purpose.

Light and darkness, sunshine and rain, summer and winter, springtime and harvest: you have given them all freely for us to enjoy.

You are King of kings and Lord of lords; at your will and command rulers and empires rise and fall. All your works praise you for you are perfect and do all things well.

Father, let us always be numbered among your holy people. May we always resemble you in character and condition. May our religion be always firmly grounded in your Word, our understanding informed by your Word, our affections shaped by your Word, our motives simple and pure and our hearts ever right with you.

Deliver us from the natural darkness of our own mind, from the corruptions of our heart, from the temptations which we face every day and from the dangers we encounter along the way.

The life of faith leads by a winding and narrow path and the journey is often difficult. Be ever present to defend us. Save us from the power of both our worldly and our spiritual enemies. Spare us from the folly of our own decisions. Until you take us safely home, may we be kept in unbroken fellowship with Jesus. Until perfection comes, may we enjoy along the way a glimpse and foretaste of Heaven. Until we have run the race, may we persevere and, in every part, make full use of the provisions of your grace, so as to be a living testimony to the faith we profess in all that we say and do. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Lord God, you show love to the loveless, you offer hope to the hopeless, you extend peace to the restless, in and through your Son, Jesus.

It is your will that we love you with heart, soul, mind and strength, and love our neighbour as ourselves. But of ourselves, we are not adequate for such a high calling. By nature there is no pure love in us, we are slaves to sin and self and we cannot love you, as lovely as you are, unless you first set us free.

So we praise you that in Christ you have set us free from our slavery and that we are now free to serve you, for we believe that you are our God, through faith in Jesus Christ and that through Christ, we are redeemed, our sins are forgiven.

So rule in our hearts by your Holy Spirit, that your Word is our delight and your commands are the joy of our hearts. Lead us away from every wrong path. Instead, cause us to grow in love for you and display it in acts of kindness to those around us.

Make us more like Jesus. Give us his gentleness and kindness, that we might show forth your glory and, the more you do in us and through us, cause us to grow in humility and meekness, so that we are always ready to give the glory back to you, in Jesus' name, Amen.

We honour you, heavenly Father, that you have revealed yourself to us in the Bible. In that one book we come to a sure and certain knowledge of who you are, what you require of us, what you have done for us, what you have promised us and what you have given to us in Jesus.

We humbly ask that each of us may personally experience the saving grace of the Lord Jesus in our deliverance from sin, in our being transformed into his likeness, in our enjoying his presence and in our being upheld by his Spirit. Deliver us from uncertainty about who we are and where we are going. Bear witness with our spirits that we are your children and, as your children, may we have a growing assurance of salvation, confident that no one can condemn us and nothing can separate us from your love.

Grant us your grace to live a more abundant life. May our faith go from strength to strength. May we be more fruitful for you. May we grow in commitment to you. May we serve you more completely. May we surrender to your will. So may you be glorified in us and our joy made complete.

Increase our love for you in time and in eternity, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Sovereign Lord, your greatness is incomparable. Your name is above every name. Your glory is higher than the heavens. You are King of kings and Lord of lords. All the host of heaven bow before you, they worship and adore you. They render to you all honour and praise and we join our voices with theirs to tell of your great worth, to declare your mighty acts and ascribe to you all blessing, honour, glory and power.

However, unlike them, our lives are stained with sin. We do not approach you because of our own righteousness. We confess before you that we have sinned. Nevertheless, we earnestly seek you. Our need of your grace compels us. Your word of promise encourages us. Christ, our Mediator invites us and your acceptance of others gives us confidence.

Look upon us as found in Christ and be merciful to us because of what he has done. Grant us pardon and forgiveness through his death and a sure hope for the future through his triumphant resurrection.

We honour you for the way in which you keep us from falling, you supply our needs out of your glorious riches in Christ, you extend your hand of mercy to us, you surround us daily with your love and faithfulness.

We commit to you all that we have and are. Grant to us a clear conscience, a pure heart, an undivided spirit, and the grace to worship you now in spirit and in truth, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we worship you as the one, true and living God. This vast universe was made by your Word, is upheld by your power and is governed by your will.

But you are also the Father of mercies, the God of all comfort. You have considered us, you have remembered us and have visited us, preserved us, redeemed us and kept us. You have given us a godly heritage, the Holy Scriptures, the glorious Gospel and our mighty Saviour.

We come to you in the name of Jesus, pleading his righteousness, conscious that he alone has perfectly obeyed your law and having done so, he laid down his life for us as an unblemished sacrifice, a spotless lamb, to give us life through his death and forgiveness through the shedding of his blood.

God grant that we may be justified by his blood, saved by his life and joined to his Spirit. Enable us to take up our cross daily and follow him. Grant us faith to accept from you whatever path in life you may choose for us. If blessed with prosperity, we ask you free us from its traps, so as to use and not abuse its advantages. If you call upon us to suffer hardship or loss, grant us grace to submit to your will, to agree with it and to seek after the good you are working through it. When tempted to wander from your path, block our way, awaken in us the ugliness of sin and deliver us from all evil. Give us the confidence of a certain faith and the comfort of a holy hope, that we shall at last enter the perfection of your Heaven, where none is ever sick, and no tears are ever shed, nor are hearts ever sad, but your people are ever glad and your glory fills that place, in Jesus' name, Amen

Valley of Vision

Heavenly Father, our faith is in you, our hope comes from you, our love goes out to you. We believe in you, accept your Word, agree with your will, rely on your promises and trust in your providence.

We honour you for the fact that your Spirit testifies with our spirits that we are indeed your children. We do not need signs and wonders to believe, for your Word is sure and certain truth. Our lives are now guarded by your peace, since our present and our future are in the nail-pierced hands of Jesus.

You are good, wise, holy and just. No mistake is ever possible with you. Your law is perfect. You command and then call us to obey. We yield to your sovereignty in all that we have and all that we are. Do with us what you will. Quieten within us all discontent and ingratitude. Keep us from wilful pride and vain conceit. Humble us under your mighty hand and then raise us up in your good time. Empower us to love justice, to show mercy and to walk humbly with you, our God, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Gracious God, our loving heavenly Father, we honour you for the almighty God that you are, who simply spoke the word and the universe was formed from nothing. At your command, you called forth and gave names to every star in the sky. You fashioned every sea and shore. You gave life and breath to every creature. You cause the world to keep on turning, the sun to keep on shining. You are almighty God.

We are therefore amazed that although you are almighty, you nevertheless care tenderly for each one of your blood-bought children. You are our shepherd. You take us up into your arms. You carry us close to your heart. You know us each

by name, indeed our names are written on the palms of your hands. You know everything about us, even the number of hairs on our head. You know when we go out and when we lie down. You know what we are going to say before we even say it. You know us completely and you know exactly what we need at any given time, what is best for us. And so you work all things together for good. Every experience we encounter is shaped and ordered by you, our all wise, ever-loving God, for our good and for your glory, so that we might become more like Jesus. Surely you lead us into green pastures, beside quiet waters. You restore our soul.

As we are still in your presence now, do your work of soul restoration in us. Shepherd your flock. Recall those who stray, encourage those who doubt, rescue those under the devil's attack and feed us all upon the bread of life, the Word of God.

Cleanse us of all our sins and failures and send us from here to our homes rejoicing, glad that we have met with you, our God, that we have been with Jesus, knowing that you go ahead of us and will be with us and that you will never leave us or forsake us, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Eternal God, as we approach you in worship, we ask that you will fill our minds, enlarge our hearts and inspire our wills with a vision and appreciation of the greatness and grandeur of who you are. For you one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day. You are almighty God, who amid the imperfections of this world, amid our brokenness, change and decay, feels no change, not even a shadow cast by turning, but remains forever majestic, immortal, incorruptible.

We worship you that while men die, our Redeemer lives and that, while the things of this earth are broken reeds, empty vessels, fading flowers, withering grass, you are our Rock of Ages, our fountain of living water. We turn from the vanity and uncertainty of this world, we turn unfilled to you again. Give us an eternal interest in Christ. Grant us grace to use what little time we have as an opportunity for usefulness in your service. Enable us to redeem the time and so be awake and alert to care and share, to show the love of Christ and to shed abroad the greatness of his saving grace, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Gracious Father, you are a covenant making, promise keeping God. You are faithful to all your promises and loving towards all you have made. All your promises are "Yes" in Christ, as good as done. You speak the word and it is done. You are trustworthy, reliable and dependable. We put our faith in you, knowing that we will not be disappointed.

You never betray our trust. You never fail nor forsake your people. You never leave us. Underneath always are your everlasting arms bearing us up, carrying us. Although we may prove faithless, you remain faithful, for you cannot deny yourself.

Your covenant faithfulness towards us is complete. You stick closer than a brother. You are more watchful than a mother. You keep us in eternal life, you keep us from falling, you keep us from evil. Our names are written on the palm of your hand. We are the apple of your eye.

Father, in light of your unwavering commitment to us, we plead your forgiveness for our weak faith, our flagging zeal, our feeble prayers, our cold heart, our lack of love. Forgive us and cleanse us. Be merciful towards us. Renew us by your grace. Hover over the disordered chaos of our hearts and lives and speak your peace, in Jesus' name, Amen

Heavenly Father, you know all things. Nothing is hidden from you. Everything is open and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. You know all our thoughts and motives. You know all our secret sins. You know the corruption of our hearts and minds. We are often shocked by what we devise, disturbed by what we do, frightened by what we are capable of, so much so that, left to ourselves, we would be driven to despair, but for your grace.

Nevertheless, with you there is forgiveness, therefore you are feared. With you there is grace to cover all our sin. You do not despair over us. No, you have devised a way that we might be put right with you and that way is by your Son, who died to give us life.

How you deserve honour for the infinite wisdom of your love made known to us in Christ, for in him justice and love meet, righteousness and peace embrace. In Christ, you have found a way to be scrupulously just, and at the same time to justify sinners like us. In Christ, slaves are set free, the guilty are pardoned, the broken are made whole. In Christ there is strength for the weak, riches for the needy, wisdom and knowledge for the ignorant, and fullness for the empty.

At your gracious call we come, not only to submit to your mercy but to agree with it; not only to glory in the cross, but in him who was crucified; not only to enjoy your forgiveness, but also the one through whom atonement comes.

Lord God, without forgiveness of sins, we can never rest satisfied. Without the transforming work of your Holy Spirit, we can never rest easy. Without the hope of heaven, we can never be at peace. Yet all this and more we now have in your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, in whose great name we pray, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Confession

“Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.” Psalm 32:1-2

“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.” Psalm 51:1-2

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me.” Psalm 51:10-12

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against your majesty in thought, word, and deed, by the things we have done and by the things we have left undone. We have not loved you with heart, soul, mind and strength, and we have not loved our neighbour as ourselves. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy Name, Amen.

Book of Common Order

Lord God of justice and grace, you are of purer eyes than to look upon sin, but you have also promised mercy through Jesus Christ to all who repent and believe in him.

We confess that we have all sinned and fallen short of your glory. We have neglected and misused your holy worship. We have dealt unjustly and unkindly with our neighbours. We have not sought first your kingdom and your righteousness. You have revealed your wonderful love to us in Christ and have offered us pardon and salvation in him; but we have turned away. We have run into temptation and the sin we should have hated, we have committed.

Have mercy on us, merciful Father. In your Son is our salvation, in your promise is our hope. Take us for your children and give us the Spirit of your Son, and in the end receive us into glory, through Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, Amen.

Richard Baxter

Lord Jesus Christ, you have called us to come to you with the promise that all who come will not be turned away. We come to you, just as we are, in our need. We confess to you our sins and failures: our many wilful departures from your good and just laws; our thankless ingratitude for all your tender mercies; our rebellious disobedience and transgression of your righteous commandments; our proud and defiant pursuit of our own way; our constant failures and shortcomings in your sight; our fatal attraction to sin; our inbuilt bias away from what is right and toward what is wrong.

We cast ourselves upon you and plead your mercy and cleansing. Treat us not according to what our sins deserve but, according to your great mercy, blot them out, cover them over, wash them away, remove them from us as far as the east is from the west, cast them into the depths of the sea, remember them no more.

We own our sin and acknowledge our guilt. Our only plea is that you have died for sinners such as us. You have poured out your blood to make atonement for our sin. You have offered up your life as a guilt offering. You have died that death which is the wages of sin. We make our appeal to you for mercy. We make application to you for forgiveness. We pray that you will cleanse us deep within. Send your Holy Spirit to break our bad habits, to take away our desire to sin, to purify our hearts and to make us holy. Enable us to serve you and to please you in newness of life. Strengthen us to walk in the light as you are in the light. Grant that we may have fellowship with one another and experience your blood continually cleansing us from all sin, in your precious name we pray, Amen.

Father, we come to you just as we are. This is how we came at first and this is how we come still. We do not flatter ourselves and think that we are better than we are. We do not pretend that we have done some good thing that you have required of us. We come with all our failures, with all our transgressions, with so many things as they ought not to be. We are your children, but more like delinquent children than deserved ones. Like the prodigal, we have so often been thankless, proud, self willed, reckless. We are not worthy to be called your children.

But as we come to you in such an unfit condition, we rejoice that you receive us again, and tend our wounds, and heal our diseases, and wash us clean, and give us your robe of righteousness to wear. We praise you that, because of Jesus' sin-bearing suffering, we are redeemed. We come to you weary and burdened. We come to you for rest. Thank you that you take the burden of our guilt and remove it from us. Cause us go from here and sin no more, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Father, it is with a sense of shame that we confess our sins to you. It grieves us that we continue to fall short of your glory. We feel the burden of our guilt, but if we are blind to sins in us, trouble our souls about them, prick our consciences, bring them out into the light, show us the true nature of our hearts, and the deceitfulness that resides there. Give us no rest until our sins have been dealt with by the cross, until all sin has been forsaken, its power broken and put to death.

Lord God, you have been very patient with us. You have disciplined us. You have corrected us and rebuked us. Grant us the grace to heed your corrections and yield to your gentle rebukes. We do not want to provoke you. We do not want to grieve you. We do not want to resist your Holy Spirit. Make us humble, keep us responsive, and enable us to keep short accounts with you.

It is our hearts' desire to be your holy people, set apart to you and unspotted by the world, wearing the robe of Christ's righteousness. Keep us by your almighty power. Increase our faith in you and lead us in the way everlasting, for we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Almighty God, it is right to approach you humbly, with reverence and awe and as Moses did before the burning bush, to take the shoes from off our feet, for the place where we are standing is holy ground. If you, Lord God, demanded such a thing of the prophet when you appeared to him amid the flames, then how much more shall we reverence you, now that you have appeared to us in the person of your Son, who is the radiance of your glory and the exact representation of your being.

Truly we are on holy ground before you and very much feel our need of forgiveness, for there is much that is false, impure, and unholy in us. Your holiness simply exposes the guilt of our sin and so we pray that, for the sake of Jesus and through the power of his blood shed for our forgiveness, you will graciously grant us full pardon and complete forgiveness for all that is past. Blot out all our sins and cause them never to be seen or spoken about again. Grant to us also that word of comfort, spoken to our hearts by the Holy Spirit, that having been justified by faith, we now have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Cause us to be forgiven and to know it. Let there be no doubt about our reconciliation with you, but rather grant to us a firm, full assurance based upon the finished work of Christ, applied to our hearts by faith. Then, having been forgiven, help us to show it by the way we live: in holy fear of you, adorning your Gospel, obeying your Word, being led by your Spirit, reflecting your image and conformed to the likeness of Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Almighty God, we confess that we all like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way. We have followed the passions and desires of our own hearts, we have broken your good and just laws, we have left undone those things we ought to have done, and we have done the very things we ought not to have done. But we plead with you to have mercy upon all who confess their sins, restore those who truly repent, according to your promise declared to us through Jesus. Grant that for Jesus' sake we may, from now on, live a godly, righteous, and holy life, to the glory of your great name, Amen.

Almighty and most merciful Father, look down on us, your unworthy servants through the mediation and merits of Jesus Christ, in whom alone you are well pleased. It is because of your mercy that we are not consumed. Your mercies endure forever and your compassions never fail. Continue the wonder of your mercy toward us and wash away all our sins with the precious blood that Jesus shed for us. Purify our hearts by your Holy Spirit and, as you add days to our lives, so Lord, add repentance to our days; that when we have passed through this mortal life, we may be partakers of your everlasting kingdom; through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

King Charles I

Lord God, we humbly plead with you to forgive us our many sins and failures. Blot them out. Wash away each guilty stain in the blood of Jesus who died for our forgiveness. Remove our sins from us as far as the east is from the west. Cast them into the depths of the sea and remember them no more. Put them behind your back, treat us just as if we had never sinned on account of the atoning

death of Christ in our place. Then, having forgiven us, change us, sanctify us through and through, remove our desire to sin, take from us that spirit of rebellion which is our great weakness, and replace it with a spirit of glad and willing surrender to all your perfect will. Heal us of all carelessness and negligence in following you. Deliver us from the folly of our own ignorance and grant to us spiritual wisdom and discernment. Cause us to make amends for our past mistakes and misunderstandings. Unburden us of the grief and shame of our past unfaithfulness. Reassure each repentant heart that if we confess our sins you are faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Cause us to go from here and sin no more; indeed, to go forward in faith from strength to strength, persevering in godliness and holiness and not growing weary in well doing, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Almighty God, give us grace to approach you acceptably, with reverence and awe. We tremble before you for you are a holy God, a consuming fire, who is of purer eyes than to look upon sin, and who has declared that the wages of sin is death. We confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed. We confess that we are not worthy to be called your children and say with Peter: "Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinful man". Yet we grieve over the offence we have caused you by our sin, we long for you with our whole heart and so we humble ourselves before you, we plead none other than the merits and mercy of Jesus and the satisfaction that was made for sin by the shedding of his precious blood. Speak to each trembling heart the peace we long to hear. Say to each one: "Your sins are forgiven, go in peace and sin no more". Restore to each one the joy of your salvation. Turn your face toward us, send your Spirit to testify with our spirits that we are still children of God, that we can still call you "Abba"

Father, that nothing can separate us from your love or snatch us out of your hand and that now, forgiven and made new, we can approach your throne of grace with confidence, knowing that no sin remains to hinder our prayers. This we ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

Gracious God, you take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, you desire that none should perish, you long that all should turn from their evil ways and live. Have mercy upon us and forgive the sins of all who turn to you this day, forsaking the way of pride and bowing humbly before the cross of Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Most gracious and merciful God, who is of purer eyes than to look upon sin, but who has promised mercy and forgiveness to all who confess and forsake their sin, we come before you with a humble sense of our own unworthiness, acknowledging our many transgressions of your holy and just laws, in thought, word, and deed. We appeal to you who takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked: look upon us as found in Christ and, on the basis of his perfect obedience and his sacrificial death, be merciful to us and forgive all our sins. So blot out all our sins that none may remain to hinder our prayers and, conscious of how much we have been forgiven, help us to love much for your glory and your name's sake. Into your gracious protection and safe-keeping we commit ourselves, our loved ones and all that we have, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Dean Stanhope, 1787

Almighty God, we humble ourselves before you and confess that our sin has defiled us and defied you, has forfeited your favour, has shattered in us your image, has banished us from your presence and has exposed us to the curse of your Law. We cannot deliver ourselves and despair for the future.

But a rich resource is found in you, for without deserving or desiring it, you devised an everlasting plan for the saving of sinners like us, a plan which is true to your just and holy character and, at the same time meets our deepest need of forgiveness, pardon, and peace with you, our God. And that plan, put into effect in time and history, is made known to us in the Gospel, which calls us to repent and believe the good news.

May we all, convinced and self-despairing sinners, find Jesus to be the power of God for salvation, his death the centre of our relief, the source of all our comfort and hope.

Help us continually to live in the light of the cross, to be crucified to the world by it and in it to find the grace to be humble, the motivation to patience and self-denial, the mercy to care for others in need, the hope to live with confidence and certainty and the love to bind us forever to Christ, who died and rose again for us.

May his shed blood make us more thankful for your tender mercies, more humble under your correction, more eager in your service, more watchful against temptation, more content in our circumstances and more useful to others, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen. *Valley of Vision*

Our Father, we cry out to you for mercy as we confess our sins to you. We mourn over our many departures from your righteous and just laws. We lament our fickle nature, our waywardness of heart. To think that you have a few things against us, even though they are but a few, is sufficient to cause us grief. Yet the fact that they are but a few is testament to your keeping power. We give thanks for your restraining hand upon us, preventing us from going completely astray.

Now we seek your remedy for those things that you have against us at present. We want to have ears to hear. We want to put them right. We do not want to harden our hearts. We do not want to grieve your Holy Spirit. We do not want you to remove our lamp-stand from its place. Help us therefore to hear what your Spirit is saying to us as a church. Grant us the grace to repent. Renew in us our first love for Jesus. Help us to do the things we did at first. Purify your church in all her parts and powers, that she may more adequately resemble, in our day, that spotless and pure bride whom the Lord Jesus is coming back to take to himself, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Gracious Father, you are love. In love receive our prayer.

Our sins are more numerous than the grains of sand on the seashore, but where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more. Look upon the cross of your own dear Son and see how precious is his atoning blood. Listen to his never failing intercession, as he pleads for us before your throne and then whisper to our hearts: "Your sins are forgiven. Go in peace and sin no more."

We come before you stained as we are with sin. We come to receive your pardon and forgiveness. Wash us clean. Purify our hearts. May there be no hindrance to our prayers or to your graciously answering according to your perfect will, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Our Father in Heaven, mindful of your love, which led you to give your one and only Son to die on the cross of Calvary in order to redeem us, we are conscious of our unworthiness and of our many shortcomings, sins and failures. We repent of a heart not gripped by grace, of days spent in neglect of prayer, of weariness in running the race of faith, of hours wasted, of opportunities missed, of blindness to your light, of indifference to your Word. Lord, forgive us and help us. Restore us to yourself and renew a right spirit within us. Cleanse us and strengthen us.

Then, once forgiven and renewed, enable us, Lord Jesus, to be more single-minded in serving you, to sit like Mary at your feet, to lean like John upon you, to appeal like Peter to your love, to count like Paul everything as rubbish for the sake of knowing you. Enable us to grow in grace, that we might be more decisive in following you, more vigorous in serving you, more fervent in worshipping you and more constant in our love for you, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen. *Valley of Vision*

Help us Father, and forgive us when we offer you less than the best of our loyalty and service; when we resent your loving correction, when we grudgingly

give to the work of your kingdom, when we fail to value the fellowship of your people. In your tender mercy, Lord, forgive us and help us.

When, through pride, we will not admit our mistakes, when we make it easier for others to do wrong, when we bring upon them anxiety and needless worry, in your tender mercy, Lord, forgive us and help us.

For every unkind word we have spoken, for every act that has hurt another person, for every wrong desire we have harboured in our minds, in your tender mercy, Lord, forgive us and help us.

Lord have mercy upon us and forgive us, that we may live close to you now, and be with you forever in eternity, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Prayers for the People

Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness
and put on the armour of light,
now in the time of this mortal life,
in which your Son Jesus Christ came to us in great humility;
so that, on the last day,
when he shall come again in glorious majesty
to judge both the living and the dead,
we may rise to life immortal,
through him who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Thomas Cranmer

Almighty and everlasting Father,
You hate nothing that you have made
and forgive the sins of those who truly repent.
Create and make in us new and contrite hearts that,
lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness,
we may receive from you, the God of all mercy,
perfect forgiveness and peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Thomas Cranmer

We beg you, good Lord, that it may please you to give us true repentance; to forgive us all our sins, our neglect, our ignorance and to gift us with the grace of your Holy Spirit, so to amend our lives according to your Holy Word.

Thomas Cranmer

Forgive them all, O Lord:
our sins of omission and our sins of commission;
our sins of youth and our sins of riper years;
the sins of our souls and the sins of our bodies;
our secret and our more open sins;
our sins of ignorance and surprise
and our more deliberate and presumptuous sins;
the sins we have done to please ourselves
and the sins we have done to please others;
the sins we know and remember
and the sins we have forgotten;

the sins we have striven to hide from others
and the sins by which we have made others offend;
forgive them, O Lord, forgive them all for his sake,
who died for our sins and rose for our justification
and now sits at your right hand to make intercession for us,
Jesus Christ, our Lord, in whose name we pray, Amen. *John Wesley*

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have done wrong and have strayed from your ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and the desires of our own hearts, we have offended against your holy laws. We have left undone those things that we ought to have done, and have done those things that we ought not to have done and there is no health in us. But you, O Lord, have mercy on us miserable offenders; spare them, O Lord, who confess their faults; restore those who repent, according to your promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus, our Lord. And grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may from now on live a godly, righteous and sober life, to the glory of your holy Name.

Book of Common Prayer, 1552

The hatred which divides nation from nation, race from race, class from class, Father, forgive.

The covetous desire of men and nations to possess what is not their own, Father, forgive.

The greed which exploits the labours of men and lays waste the earth, Father, forgive.

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others, Father, forgive.

Our indifference to the plight of the homeless and the refugee, Father, forgive.
The lust which uses for unrighteous ends the bodies of men and women, Father,
forgive.

The pride which leads to trust in ourselves and not in you, Father, forgive.

Coventry Cathedral Prayer

Almighty God, we humble ourselves before your most perfect and holy character
and confess to you our many sins and failures.

We repent of gifts misused, opportunities neglected, words ill-advised.

We repent of thoughtless and inconsiderate ways: our broken promises; our
weak service; our wayward steps; our impure thoughts.

We bury our sins in the ocean of Jesus' blood and pray that no evil may result
from our quick temper, our unseemly behaviour or our petty mindedness.

If by unkindness we have wounded or hurt another, please pour out your
healing comfort from Heaven. If we have turned coldly from need, misery or
grief, do not in your just anger forsake us. If we have withheld relief from those
in hardship or pain, do not withhold your gracious provision from us. If we have
shunned those who have offended us, please keep open the door of your heart
towards our need. Fill us to the full with your compassion. Transform us by
your grace. Motivate and inspire us by your love.

Gracious God, cause us to be more thankful and more humble. Grant to us
repentance that leads to life. Eradicate from our hearts all desire to sin. Form in
us more of the character and likeness of Christ. Establish more completely our

union with Christ, that our faith may cling to him more firmly, that our love may hold onto him more tightly and that his Spirit may pervade every fibre of our being. Then send us out into the world in peace, to love and to serve you, and to make Christ known to those who are lost without him, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Valley of Vision

O Lord God, eternal and almighty Father, we acknowledge and sincerely confess before your most holy majesty that we are miserable sinners, conceived and born in iniquity and sin, prone to evil, incapable in the flesh of any good work and that, in our depravity, we make no end of breaking your holy commandments. We thus call down destruction on ourselves from your just judgements. Nevertheless, O Lord, we lament that we have offended you, and we condemn ourselves and our faults with true repentance, asking you to help us from our wretchedness by your grace.

Be pleased, our most gracious God and Father, to pour out your mercy on us in the name of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Blotting out our faults and our sinfulness, daily increase in us the gifts of your Holy Spirit, that we from our inner hearts, acknowledging our sin, may be more and more displeasing to ourselves and become truly repentant, so that your Holy Spirit may produce in us the fruits of righteousness and holiness, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

John Calvin

Our gracious and compassionate God, Father of mercies and God of all comfort, we pour out our hearts to you concerning the deceitfulness that resides there and

the evil of which we are capable. We acknowledge that we are much too easily provoked to anger, jealousy and revenge. We resort much too easily to ambition and pride, which results in conflict and ill-will between ourselves and others. Too often we have offended both yourself, our long-suffering heavenly Father, and others whom we love. Forgive us our impulsive and quick-tempered behaviour and continue to sanctify us. Conform us to the likeness of Christ, so we become peacemakers and can be called the sons of God.

Grant to us such gentleness, patience, and forbearance, such kind and loving hearts and the ability to extend grace and forgiveness, that we may not cause needless offence to anyone, but as far as it depends on us, live at peace with all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Almighty God, help us to put away all bitterness and anger, slander and every form of malice. Enable us to possess our souls in patience, however much we are tempted or provoked, and not to be overcome by evil, but to overcome evil with good. Enable us to bear one another's burdens and to forbear with one another in love. Teach us and help us to live in peace and to love in truth. Help us to follow Christ in all meekness and humility, so to find rest for our souls. Subdue in us every godless passion, every worldly desire, along with all bitter resentment, and so work in us that we may think charitably, speak kindly, and act graciously toward all, as is fitting for children of God and servants of Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Benjamin Jenks

Lord, you are a God who is ready to forgive and of infinite kindness, remove from us all needless and destructive anger. Grant to us a meek, gentle, humble and peaceable spirit that, mindful of our own weakness, we may with greater patience bear with the weaknesses of others; and thinking of ourselves with sober judgement, we may not be provoked when others think poorly of us. So may we be Christlike in character: patient towards all; easily won over to forgive the wrongs of others; not keeping a record of wrongs, nor holding the sins of others against them; that you, Lord God, may so be gracious toward us.

Almighty God, Father of mercies, continue to work in us what is pleasing to you. Grant to us the grace to see our sins as you see them, so to grieve over them: then turn our sin into repentance, and let our repentance lead to forgiveness; and teach us diligently to guard all our actions that we may never willingly transgress your laws or disobey your Word, but make it our life's work to obey you, the joy of our souls to please you, and the purest of all our desires to live with you in your kingdom of grace and glory.

Jeremy Taylor

Thanksgiving

We give you thanks, almighty, ever-living God of truth, eternal Father of our Lord Jesus, creator of heaven and earth, of people and of all creatures, sustainer of all things, source of all life, order and wisdom, unfailing source of help: and to your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, your Word and eternal image: and to your Holy Spirit, with whom you endowed the apostles at Pentecost. We give thanks to you, O God, fountain of grace and truth, wisdom and goodness, justice and mercy, purity and loving kindness, for with wisdom unmatched you revealed yourself to us, sending your Son into the world, who was destined to assume human nature and to become a sacrifice for us.

We give thanks to you, O God, for gathering your eternal church, for guarding the ministry of your Word, for granting your Holy Spirit and for giving everlasting life. We thank you, O God, because you gave us all things, because you alleviated and removed the punishment we justly deserve, because you pour out upon us all the blessings of soul and body. To you be all glory, honour, praise and thanksgiving for ever and ever, Amen.

Philipp Melancthon

Loving Heavenly Father, you know how to give good gifts to your children. You are a generous Father; you withhold no good thing from us. In you we have all that we need for life and godliness. Today we celebrate the gifts of your grace.

You have given us life and health and strength. You have given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. You have

given us the gift of faith, by which we can lay hold of Christ as our Saviour and Lord. You have given us your Spirit by whose power we can call you “Abba” Father. You have given us your Word so as to direct our paths into right living. You have given us the fellowship of your church and your people that we may be encouraged in the faith and grow in godliness. Your transforming grace has made all the difference in the world to us. We never cease to be amazed by the difference: between what we have received and what we in fact deserve; between the spiritual state we are now in and our former lost condition apart from your grace; between the heaven we are destined for and the hell we deserve.

You have made all the difference. For you chose us. You loved us from eternity past. We could not have begun to love you if you had not first loved us. We could never have willingly surrendered to you unless you had not first changed our hearts.

Grant us the ability to respond to your gifts of grace by living a life of faith that honours you and pleases you. May we always submit to you, be dependent upon you, walk in your footsteps and be found where your Spirit leads. May we always consult you first in choices both great and small and seek your approval for all we do. May we never take our eyes off you, become separated from you, grow cold towards you, question or accuse you, turn our backs upon you or try to live without you. May we make full use of your gifts of grace to live every moment of every day for you and for your glory. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Valley of Vision

We thank you, O Lord, our Lord, for our being, our life, our gift of reason; for our nurture, our preservation, our guidance; for our education, our civil rights, our religious privileges; for your gifts of grace, of nature, of this world; for our redemption, our regeneration, our instruction in the Christian faith; for our calling, our recalling, for your forbearance and long-suffering, your prolonged forbearance, at many times and over many years; for all the benefits we have received and all the endeavours in which we have prospered; for any good we have done; for the use of the blessings of this life.

For these and all other mercies, known and unknown, open and secret, remembered by us or now forgotten, kindnesses received by us willingly or even against our will, we praise you, we bless you, we thank you, all the days of our life.

Lancelot Andrewes

Loving Heavenly Father, from the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. Our hearts are overflowing with thankfulness and praise to you, because our lives are full of the good things you give us. From out of the fullness of our lives and the richness of your blessings, we return thanks to you in a ceaseless flow of praise.

Your unnumbered blessings give our spirits voice. You are the giver of every good and perfect gift. At your hand we have been blessed with life in all its fullness. Countless pleasures and delights we have received, and all have come from you.

We bless you for the life you have given,
 for sustaining it from day to day;

for the soul you have created,
for loving and saving it;
for the body you have given,
for preserving its health and strength;
for providing senses so as to enjoy your world;
for the strength and mobility of arms and legs;
for hearts and hands to do your will;
for all your good gifts providing our daily needs:
for food on the table,
and homes that provide shelter and protection;
for satisfying our appetites, taste, sweetness;
for the precious ties of family and friends;
for the joy of human affection and love;
for the gifts of creativity, imagination, skill and ability;
for the strength to work and the time to relax;
for the ability to serve others;
for a heart that feels both joy and pain;
for a conscience that is moved by a sense of right and wrong;
for a mind to care for those in need;
for opportunities to spread happiness around;
for loved ones on earth and in heaven;
and for our own sure and certain hope of seeing you there.

Our love for you is above the power of language to express for what you are doing and have done for us your people. Increase our love for you, our Father, through time and eternity, in Jesus' name, Amen. *Valley of Vision*

Loving heavenly Father, your greatness is beyond improvement, your goodness is beyond description, your grace is beyond measure. We could no sooner count the grains of sand on the seashore as count your blessings toward us. We know only a fraction of your blessings, still that part exceeds our praise.

We acknowledge with grateful thanks your mercies towards us:

for the measure of health and strength we enjoy;

for soundness of mind and body;

for the comforts of house and home;

for the ample provision of food and clothing;

for the powers of intelligence, intuition and imagination;

for the mutual help and support of family and friends;

for the favour of domestic harmony and peace;

for the enjoyment of plants and animals, flowers and fruits;

for the pleasures of music and creative expression;

for the richness and diversity of cultures that make this country what it is;

for the freedom, peace, prosperity and stability we enjoy in our land;

for the fellowship and encouragement of your church;

for the comfort, assurance and hope of your Word;

and for the certainty of faith.

The extent of your blessings becomes even more greatly magnified in light of our own unworthiness. Upon reflection, in moments of complete openness and honesty before you, we realise what grief we cause you continually. Not a day goes by in which we do not sin, or act with ingratitude towards you. Not a day goes by in which we do not add to our guilt either in thought, word, or deed.

Father, we dare not deny our sins, we make no excuses for them, we humbly confess them before you, we repent of them and return to you for forgiveness and cleansing. This we do, knowing that you will not turn us away, for in Christ we are accepted. You will not condemn us, for Christ died in our place. You will remember our sins no more, for they are cast into the depths of the sea. Your grace covers all our sins.

So we resolve to put sin to death. We commit ourselves to a life of grateful thanks for all your blessings and of humble obedience to your Word, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Almighty God, Father of mercies, we, your unworthy servants, give you our humble and heartfelt thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all people everywhere. We honour you that you have created us, that you sustain us and that you enrich our lives with so many blessings. Above all, we thank you for your unbounded love in redeeming us through the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you too that you have supplied all the means for us to grow in grace and for the sure hope of Heaven that is now ours through faith in Jesus Christ.

We humbly ask that you will give us an awareness and appreciation of all your mercy and grace, that we may be truly thankful and that we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives also, by giving ourselves to your service and by walking with you in holiness and righteousness all our days.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory, world without end, Amen

Sovereign Lord, you have made summer and winter, sunshine and rain, seed time and harvest. You have made day and night, heat and cold, for work and rest. Each of these cycles of life serves our welfare and speaks to us of your tender care and your fatherly goodness.

Your mercy and grace are seen:

- in family who love us;
- in friends who support us;
- in laws that defend us;
- in homes that shelter us;
- in food that nourishes us;
- in clothing that warms us;
- in the measure of good health you give to us;
- in soundness of mind and clarity of thought;
- in keenness of senses, intellect, affections, and will.

However, all of these your blessings cannot begin to compare with the vast extent of your wisdom and grace that planned and accomplished our redemption through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour. We worship you for the fact that you came to our rescue in one who is mighty, willing and able--who is able to save completely. We thank you most sincerely that you saw our need of your saving grace and acted so decisively. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts that Jesus willingly shed his blood for us and that through

confession of sin, his blood now washes us clean of every guilty stain. We thank you that through faith in Jesus, we have now passed from death to life and that there is now no condemnation for us. We worship you for the fact that you freely justify the guilty: to those who deserve death, you give eternal life and to those who deserve Hell, you grant the blessings of your Heavenly kingdom through faith in your Son, Jesus, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Almighty God, we come to you through the cross of Christ, conscious of the fact that had his blood not been shed there, we could have no forgiveness. We come to you through our great Redeemer, who has washed us of each guilty stain, through whom we can now be assured of your acceptance and love.

Heavenly Father, having given us the indescribable gift of your Son, will you now with him graciously give us all things? We thank you for all the things you have so generously supplied to us, for all your gracious gifts toward us.

We thank you for the gift of life itself, and for keeping us alive moment by moment.

We thank you for another night of rest and keeping and for awakening us to see the dawning of a new day.

We thank you for the next breath we shall take and for the fresh air that we breathe.

We thank you for the light of the sun and its warmth on our backs.

We thank you for nourishing food that imparts health and strength to our bodies.

We thank you for clothes to keep us warm and homes to keep us dry.

We thank you for refreshing rains that water the earth, making it bud and flourish.

We thank you for the beauty and aroma of flowers, for the harvest of fruit and fields.

We thank you for the brilliance of a night sky and the stars in their vast array.

We thank you for the immeasurable blessing of family and friends.

Surely you anoint our heads with oil, our cup overflows.

Keep us mindful of these and all your mercies to us and that you are the one who imparts blessing and averts disaster. You are the one who imparts the gift of faith, the comforting presence of your Spirit and the instruction of your Word. We give thanks for these and all your mercies to us in Jesus' name, Amen.

Valley of vision

Gracious God, giver of every good and perfect gift, our lives are full of your love towards us. You have made us. You have redeemed us from sin and death. You have brought us from darkness to light, from death to life, from misery to peace, from folly to wisdom, from error to truth, from sin to victory.

Thanks be to you for our high and holy calling in Christ. Thanks be to you for every spiritual blessing now ours in Christ: for the teaching of your Word; for the comfort of your Spirit; for the ministry of angels; for the fellowship of your church; for the gift of your sacraments; for the example and encouragement of godly people.

Thank you for every provision you have made for us that we may grow in grace and holiness. We ask you for more grace, knowing that you have already given it. We entrust ourselves to you, for you have redeemed us. We draw near to you, knowing that you will draw near to us. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray, Amen.

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have won for us, for all the pains and insults you have borne for us.

O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
may we know you more clearly, love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day.

Richard of Chichester

With grateful thanks we honour you, our Heavenly Father, for all your goodness and loving kindness which you have shown toward us throughout the length of our life, for the rich blessings of this life and for the promise of the life to come. You are a God of tender mercy and compassion. You know how to give good gifts to your children.

We thank you for the many blessings we have received from you:

for health and strength; for soundness of mind and body; for all things good and pleasant given for our pleasure and enjoyment; for the privilege of learning; for a good education and the opportunities it opens up for us; for a knowledge of your will; for Christian friends who, by their example and encouragement, have helped us; for the fellowship of your church; for the gifts of your Holy Spirit and for the privilege of using these gifts to serve you; for the ministry of prayer; and for the future hope of Heaven.

Having received all these gifts from you, grant us grace not only to benefit from them, but to employ them in the service of your kingdom, and to the glory of your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Almighty God, we lift up our hearts in gratitude to you for all your loving kindness to us your children. For life and health, for love and friendship, and for the goodness and mercy that have followed us all the days of our life. For the wonder and beauty of the world, for all things true and honest, just and pure, lovely and of good report.

For the gift of Jesus Christ your Son, for the grace and truth which came by him and for his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross. For his glorious resurrection, his ascension to your right hand and for his everlasting kingdom and glory. For the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Lord and Life giver; for your holy Church throughout the world; for your Word and sacraments and all the means of grace; and for the fellowship of the redeemed in heaven and on earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Honour and praise be unto you, O Lord our God, for all your tender mercies so freely given to us throughout another week. Endless praise be unto you for creating us in your image; for redeeming us by the precious blood of your dear Son when we were lost; and for sanctifying us by your Holy Spirit. For your help and support in our times of need; for your protection in the many dangers to body and soul; for your comfort in our sorrows; for granting us the continued gift of life, and for being so patient with us, giving us so much time to repent. For these and all your mercies that we have received of your goodness alone, we thank you, and ask you to fill us continually with the Holy Spirit, that we may grow in grace, remain sure in faith and persevere in doing good, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

John Knox 1505

Intercession

Save us, Lord, from being self-centred in our prayers, and teach us to remember to pray for others. May we be so caught up in love for those for whom we pray, that we may feel their needs as keenly as our own, and pray for them with imagination, sensitivity, and understanding. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

John Calvin

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time to agree together in prayer concerning the things that you have laid on our hearts, and you have promised that where two or three are gathered together in your name, there you are in the midst. Fulfil now the desires of our hearts and answer our prayers as may be best for us and for your greater glory.

Eternal God, you created us by your power and redeemed us by your love. Guide and strengthen us by your Spirit, that we may give ourselves in love and service to one another and to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

God of mercy, you have promised to hear what we ask in the name of Christ. Accept and fulfil our requests, not as we ask in ignorance, nor as we deserve in our sinfulness, but as you know and love us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

General Intercessions

Almighty God, our loving heavenly Father, we worship you that you have set your love upon us, that you have loved us with an everlasting love, indeed, you have chosen us before the start of time to be loved by you.

We thank you that having chosen us, you sought us and bought us and imparted to us the gift of faith to receive you, believe you and obey you.

How we thank you for a knowledge of the truth and the hope of eternal life that it promises. Indeed, your Word is truth, your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Give us such a hunger and thirst for you, that we will not seek to live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of you, our God.

Grant us that knowledge of the truth which leads to godliness, that the seed of the Word planted in us might bring forth the fruit of righteousness.

Grant that our leaders might be men of godliness and spiritual integrity who lead well, rule wisely and shepherd tenderly the flock of God that is under their care. Grant them an unwavering commitment to the truth of your Word, that they may be able to encourage all by sound teaching and refute all error. Grant us all a measure of spiritual discernment sufficient to tell the difference between God's truth and the devil's lies. Enable us to adorn the Gospel we profess. Having been justified by your grace, cause us now to devote ourselves to doing what is good in your sight.

Give power and strength to all who seek to live with purity, kindness and compassion. May we not grow weary in well doing. Grant us grace to act justly, to show mercy, and to walk humbly with you, our God. Grant your comfort and encouragement to all those who doubt. Grant your peace to troubled minds. Grant joy to heavy hearts. Grant your patience and faith to those who are sick in mind or body.

Keep us looking to you, our eyes ever fixed on Jesus, until you are pleased to send us deliverance from all our troubles, in Jesus' name, Amen.

O God, our creator and preserver, we pray for people of every race, in every kind of need: make your ways known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Especially we pray for

We pray for your Church throughout the world: guide and govern us by your Word and by your Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold to the faith in the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace and in righteousness of life. Especially we pray for

We pray for the peoples of the world and the leaders of nations, that they may seek justice, freedom and peace for all.

We pray for our own country and for all within it who exercise authority and influence, that they may serve in wisdom, honesty and compassion.

We pray for the communities in which we live and work, that there we may use your gifts to act justly, show mercy and walk humbly.

We commend to your fatherly goodness all who are anxious or distressed in mind or body; comfort and relieve them in their need; give them patience in their sufferings and bring good out of all their troubles. Especially we pray for

We pray for the life and witness of this church and all of its members. Grant each one grace to serve you in holiness and righteousness all our days, find joy and contentment in your service and to see you add to our number day by day those who are being saved, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Prayers for the People

Lord God, the lover of our souls, the great shepherd of your sheep, look with mercy and compassion upon your needy people, and pour out upon us the riches of your grace.

Awaken those who slumber and slide so easily from vows and promises and purposes made before you. Touch their hearts and consciences this day and raise them to new spiritual life.

Sustain by your grace all who seek to remain loyal to you and your cause under trouble or difficulty and often against the subtle pressure of those whom they love. Preserve them from the evil one and uphold them by your saving Spirit.

We pray for those who have no personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus and no saving interest in him. Bring them to know the Saviour, to discern his beauty, to believe his power and to trust in his grace.

Anoint all who minister the Word of God that they may do so faithfully, as they should. Enable all who hear the Word of God to receive it mixed with faith, that we may be not only hearers of the Word, but doers also. May the seed of the Word be sown in the soil of human hearts, and may your Holy Spirit water the seed so that it brings forth fruit to eternal life.

Be with all who grieve, to comfort them. Send forth your healing words to all in beds of sickness. Forgive, O God, those who do not forgive us. If we have made enemies by our folly, grant us the grace of repentance. If any hate us without a cause, give them repentance and us love.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit, that the fruit of his presence may be seen in our lives continually and increasingly. Grant to us love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.

Guide your people through the wilderness of this present world. Fulfil your promises to us. Lead us into green pastures and beside still waters. Restore our souls. We ask you to continue the goodness of your love toward us until you take us to yourself, where sin shall be no more and we be perfected in holiness, a complete image and likeness of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We remember before you all the Lord's missionary servants who at your call have left home and loved ones, making many sacrifices, to carry the good news

of the Lord Jesus to those who have never heard. Give them grace to persevere, oftentimes under trying circumstances, enable them not to grow weary in well doing. Encourage them with the light of your presence and grant fruit for their labours, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

O Lord, our God, we rejoice in you. Please accept our praise for your many mercies to us, coming to us so abundantly, day by day; never late, always right on time, just when we need them, and often anticipating our needs and making provision before we even ask you. Surely, in the little things of your daily providence, as well as the great thing of your boundless eternal salvation, before we call you answer and while we are yet speaking you hear us.

Guide each one of us according to the variety of our conditions and needs and lead us by paths that, with your gracious help and our diligent obedience, shall bring us to yourself. May none of us prefer the broad and easy road to the narrow and hard road. May we all seek to follow in the footsteps of Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith; whatever he says may we accept and whatever he commands, may we obey.

Bless us in our daily work. There may we remember you and devote the labour of our hands to you. Keep us from everything that we cannot so devote to you. Guide us in things that are doubtful or unclear, showing us the path of faith in which you want us to walk, reminding us that whatever is not of faith is of sin.

Hear us now for those who are suffering or experiencing dark and difficult days; the lonely and solitary and afflicted; the sick and the aged; the hungry and cold; the homeless and imprisoned; the persecuted and grief stricken. Lead them to

the one of whom it is said: "Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." Help them to see that you are the one who sticks closer than a brother, who never changes, who is the same yesterday, today and forever and that in you we may have comforts and encouragements far greater than our deepest and darkest needs. Comfort us with the certainty that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that awaits us, that far outweighs them all.

So give us the present joy of your salvation, the peace of God which passes all understanding, enlightenment for all we need to know, patient trust in all that remains hidden from our sight, hearts to grasp the length and breadth and height and depth of the love of Christ and wills to pray: "Not my will but yours be done."

Hear and answer these prayers of your people, along with all the unspoken prayers of our hearts, in Jesus' name, Amen

Heavenly Father, we honour you for all your gracious promises to those who put their trust in you and for all the wonderful fulfilment of them to trusting hearts in every generation. We thank you that the fullness of your grace is the same as it ever was, that there is enough for us, enough for each, enough for everyone in your great storehouse. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Be pleased to grant us some gift from yourself which shall remain with us, in its sweetness and power, in the coming days, sustaining us in times of need and forming in us more completely the image of Christ, our Saviour. Indeed, our heart's desire is to be like Jesus, both in public and in private, in word and in deed.

Thank you for your promise that wherever two or three are gathered together in your name, there Christ is in the midst. Each time we, your people, meet, may you rule in our hearts by your Word and Spirit, to enrich our lives with your heavenly grace.

Prosper all our labours, may they be begun, continued and ended in you. We know that our best efforts are small, and our purest ones are stained with sin, but we thank you that you condescend to use even bruised reeds, smouldering wicks, weak earthen vessels for your instruments and even to bless the imperfect work and mixed motives of us your servants.

Send your Holy Spirit to come upon and remain with your people and with all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and in truth. Grant that the faithful witness of your people may result in many more being gathered around your throne to sit at the feet of their Redeemer King, Jesus.

Bless any who are in special need, in sorrow, in confusion, in trial or in joy--especially those whom we name before you in our hearts just now. We ask that whatever condition your children may find themselves in, each may be led by your Holy Spirit to be wise to know what you mean by your dealings with them.

Prosper our Sovereign, Queen Elizabeth, and all who are set in authority under her, especially in our own land. Remove far from us those sins that are a disgrace to any people and bring in that righteousness by which alone, as a people, we shall be exalted as a nation.

Cause your Word to be living and active. May it prosper and have free course among us. May we be willing to receive it with glad and obedient hearts, hold fast to it with clear consciences, and bring forth the fruit of righteousness with patient endurance, to the glory of God.

And these things we ask through Jesus Christ, our only mediator before your throne, Amen.

Lord God, breathe into our hearts the desires that you delight to see there and to answer from your royal throne. We know that if we cherish sin in our hearts, you will not hear us, so we thank you that with you there is forgiveness, therefore you are feared. Grant that, drawn by your love in Christ, we all may, in some measure, realise in our own experience the reality of your promise that you are near to all who call on you, who call on you in truth. Grant us such integrity of heart so to call on you, and therefore to have the right to claim from you the fulfilment of your own gracious promises.

Grant us your inward strength to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, to adorn the gospel we profess, to keep ourselves from idols and to keep ourselves from being corrupted by the world.

Father, we bring to you our needs and pray that you will help us to claim and to own the rich things you have provided. We bring to you our sorrows and ask that you will wipe all tears from our eyes. We bring to you our limited knowledge of you, our many errors and misconceptions and pray that you will take from our eyes the scales and take from our hearts the veil, that with unveiled faces we may behold your glory in the face of Christ.

Pour your grace into our souls, master our weaknesses, sins and failures, deliver us from grumbling or complaining or rebelling against your will. Bring us to the point where we can be still and know that you are God, where we can sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of him, so to be refreshed, comforted and blessed by the hand of you, our Master.

Prepare your church to meet you. May she be as a bride, beautifully dressed for her husband. Send your Spirit to revive us again. Restore sound doctrine and holy living. Rekindle within our hearts our first love for you. Remove from us all attachment to this world. Take us again to the foot of the cross. Remind us again of the doctrines of grace. Establish within us again the centrality and supremacy of Christ. Cause the wonder of your redeeming love to be our souls' delight both in time and in eternity, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

We thank you, Lord God, that you want us to know your ways and you desire to take us into your confidence. Help us by your Spirit to respond to your loving heart, that we may truly be friends of God, children and heirs of the king of Heaven. We thank you for your changeless and everlasting love, for your almighty and all sufficient presence. We thank you that we have you for our companion, counsellor, comforter, and guide. You are our heart's delight and crown.

Strengthen us by your grace, that we may love you with heart, soul, mind and strength. So may we take hold of all your promises and receive all your blessings. So may we enjoy all the privileges and discharge all the responsibilities, savour all

the joys and bear all the sorrows of this earthly life in such a way as to bring us nearer to yourself.

With what weak faith we hold on to you and with what flagging zeal we obey your commands. How often we wander from your way, you, O Lord, know only too well, but our humble prayer is that you will help us each day, more and more, to follow Jesus, whatever the cost, without turning back. Strengthen us to live righteous, godly and holy lives with greater consistency and with less interruption to the flow of your friendship and love to us by our own departures from you. It is true that none who look to you will ever be put to shame: help us to fulfil the condition of trust and fulfil your own promise to us.

Teach us the fear of the Lord that is the beginning of wisdom. Help us to call on you in truth, which ensures that you are always near.

Grant us, Lord, all the good we need. We quietly wait on you in dependence and faith, confident in your word of promise that those who wait upon the Lord shall lack no good thing. We thank you for past and present mercies: surely not one good thing of all the Lord has promised us in Christ has failed. All your promises are “Yes” and “Amen” in Christ. Help us then, to hold on to you in love and obedience, in holy living and righteous desire, so as to obtain daily strength from you to run with perseverance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith and may we persevere to the end. Help us to find that in full surrender and glad obedience there is great reward.

Extend your hand of mercy to all those who grieve. Send your Comforter, the Holy Spirit to minister peace and hope to their hearts. Send forth your healing word for all who are sick. Restrain and frustrate all evil forces among us. Mercifully look upon the lost, dead in transgressions and sins; send forth the awakening, life-giving Gospel, the word of the cross, the power of God for the salvation of all who believe. Send forth your ambassadors with the message of grace, mercy and peace in the Lord Jesus. Make your church as a city set upon a hill, as a light in the darkness, a herald of the Gospel to a lost world rushing headlong down the broad road that leads to destruction and oblivious to its awful end.

Grant to us some message and light from your Word, your strength for our weakness and your peace for our troubled hearts. Grant to each one your presence and your gracious help, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Heavenly Father, in the full light of your grace, we desire to rejoice and to walk day by day, living in expectant dependence upon you and strengthened in the hope we have in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Bless all our homes. May every family be a church and may there be a church in every home. Grant your Holy Spirit's ministry for both parents and children. May our young grow in purity, in honour, in truth toward maturity in Christ. May none among us be found at the last without grace and so lost, but trusting in the Saviour and growing in the grace and knowledge that is in him.

Bless your people in relation to the world around us: in our duties, in our contacts with people, in our ambitions, in our hopes, in our joys and in our

sorrows, in our defeats and in our victories. Make us truly Christ-like in our attitudes, conduct and character before our neighbours.

Give relief to the troubled, send forth your healing word for the sick and comfort those who mourn. Grant that they and we may find rest from care and worry and receive spiritual encouragement from your Word.

Look upon this community in which we live and work. Cleanse it, purify it, make it strong in the things that make for peace, justice and truth. Look favourably upon our land and nation. Give us laws that are fair and just, administrators that are wise enough to establish righteousness among us. Deliver us from the passions of evil men: from strife, envy, hatred, covetousness, deviousness, malicious intent and the folly of blindly following after the latest fashion.

Bless your Word to us as we receive it. Unfold its truth to us. Help us to receive it mixed with faith, that we might not only be hearers of the Word, but doers also. Cause your Word to do us good, so that we may profit from it. Help those who need help. Give clear light to those who are in darkness and doubt. Be a shepherd to those who are in the valley of the shadow of death. Help us all to break free from bad habits and ungodly passions, so to pursue holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord. Grant that each one may grow in grace and godliness until we become mature, conformed to the likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ. Enable us to live in such a way that we adorn the Gospel, and thus demonstrate to all that we belong to Jesus, that they in turn may glorify our Father in Heaven, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Heavenly Father, you know our needs even before we ask you. You witness the longings of our hearts. Indeed all things are open and laid bare before the eyes of you to whom we must give an account.

We ask for help to bow in glad submission to your kingly rule in our lives, to do what is right in your eyes and what is pleasing in your sight. Teach us from your Word what is right and grant us the obedience of faith, so that we may walk in your way, although we may feel alone at times in doing it.

We lift up before you all who are sick. Send forth your healing word for them and your great peace for all who may be called to endure suffering. We uphold before your throne of grace those who are perplexed by life's circumstances; enable them to be patient until the coming of the Lord.

We remember before you those of our families who remain strangers to your grace; continue to strive with them by your Spirit and, in your mercy and love turn their feet from the broad road that leads to Hell and destruction, and onto the narrow road that leads to Heaven and eternal life.

Hear us for our nation, our leaders of public opinion and action and all appointed to govern us. Be merciful to us and do not punish us as our sins deserve. Rather, send upon our nation a spiritual awakening that originates at your throne in heaven, lest we be destroyed because of our sin. Awaken our nation to the reality of sin and righteousness and judgement to come. Awaken in us all a godly fear of you and a desire to flee the coming judgment.

We lovingly commend to you our children. Cover them with your protection from the evil that is so prevalent. May they be true followers of Jesus Christ. May our lives ever be an example of godliness to them and of the power of faith, hope, and love. May we never cause one of your little ones to stumble. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.

Sovereign Lord, we thank you that we can rest secure in the knowledge that all authority in Heaven and on earth rests in the nail-pierced hands of Jesus. We are thankful to know that your kingly power is still exercised in gentleness and meekness. We thank you that, constrained by your love, our hearts' desire is now to do everything which pleases you. Help us to know more of the blessedness of glad surrender and the peace that comes from being and doing what our gracious Saviour desires. We yield our lives to you in glad and willing submission. We acknowledge with thankfulness that we are no longer our own, to live as we please, for we have been bought with a price, the precious blood of Jesus Christ. So we seek to honour you in all things. May the joyful conviction that we are his and he is ours forever, flow through all our lives and change everything for us: making the crooked straight and the rough smooth and helping us in every task so that all the responsibilities you lay on us may be borne cheerfully.

We thank you for all your mercies toward us. Equip us by your own gifts of grace for every situation and circumstance. Guide us to victory in every conflict with evil; strengthen our hearts by grace that we may courageously stand against all the powers of darkness. Help us to prove your faithfulness in explicit obedience to you. Help us to learn through disciplined faith what your power can do. We delight to know that for those who wait upon you, Lord, you renew

their strength like the eagle's and for those who hope in you, you grant the desires of their heart.

Keep us, we pray, from self-will, from impatience, from simply asking you to bless our plans, rather than seeking diligently to know and to do what you have planned for us. Deliver us from grumbling and complaining against you about the plans you have made for us.

Look with tender mercy upon the lost of this world who are on the broad road that leads to Hell's destruction. Enable us to see them as you see them, so as to have your compassion and concern. Move us to work with you, both by prayer and action, toward the salvation of those whom you have chosen to become your believing people.

Be mindful of the sick, the needy, the oppressed and the persecuted among your people, O Lord. Extend to them your hand of mercy. Draw near to all who suffer for the Gospel's sake to comfort them. Bless our aged and frail folk - reassure them in the twilight years of life that soon they shall see the Saviour's face. Draw our children to yourself and save them by your grace. Keep them from the dangers of childhood, and deliver them from the temptations of youth. Rescue them from folly and teach them to fear you, which is the beginning of wisdom. Prosper all the labours of your missionary servants. In recognition that the fields are white unto harvest, we pray that you will thrust forth labourers into your harvest field. Strengthen the hands of all faithful ministers of the Gospel. May they feed your people with the Word of God, so that each may be strengthened to run with perseverance the race of faith.

We ask all these things, with the forgiveness of all our sins and failures, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Our Gracious God and Father, we thank you that, by your faithful word, you have filled the dark unknown of the future with the glories of eternity and the certainty of Heaven. Lord, may it be true for each one that we throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles and run with perseverance the race of faith. Conscious of the fact that, even now, our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life, enable us so to live and to die, that at last we shall enter that mansion with many rooms and join the company of all those who have been justified by faith and saved by grace.

Help us in all the circumstances of life. Guide us with your wise counsel and make us willing to hear and submit to your guidance. May no sinful desire or godless passion obscure what you want us to be and to do.

Comfort and support all who are sad. Be a friend and companion to the lonely. Be a light to those in darkness. We commend one another to your gracious care and keeping. Have your way with us, and fulfil your purposes in us.

Extend your hand of mercy to us as a nation. Do not withhold your blessings from us. Help us to seek you while you may be found and to call you while you are near. Help us to forsake wickedness and pursue righteousness.

So direct us by your Word. Forgive us all our sins. Enable us to receive some lasting benefit from gathering together before you today, for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Our God and Father, we come before you today and affirm that not one of the good promises you have given us has failed, nor can they ever fail for they are guaranteed in Jesus, they find their “Yes” and “Amen” in him. We thank you that his name is high over all and is the only name under heaven, given among men, by which we must be saved.

We thank you that there are no hardships or difficulties in life that are without purpose. So we ask that our faith, tested by trials, may be strengthened and purified and so proved genuine, that we might be unashamed at the coming of the Lord.

Father, we acknowledge our need of your sustaining and comforting power. Help us to receive all that you are pleased to give us, without complaining against you or doubting your love and care. Help us all to reach the place of full submission to your will, which brings with it your, which passes all understanding.

Strengthen us for all our work and keep us from any activity for which we cannot seek your blessing or expect you to prosper. Guide us all by your wise counsel and keep us in your love and care. Help us to walk worthy of our high calling in Christ Jesus and to adorn the Gospel we profess.

We pray for all in authority over us in our land. Please give us good government. May those things which exalt a nation: the pursuit of righteousness, truthfulness, fair dealing, lawful endeavour, moral purity and seeking after you, mark us as a nation that fears God. May all that provokes you to anger be put away and finished with. May the Gospel of grace in your own dear Son come to the homes and the hearts of our nation to turn us back to you, our God.

Hear us then for those in various situations of need. Comfort all who are sad. Enlighten those who sit in darkness. Dispel all doubt and confusion from the minds of those in whom such things exist. Bring again prodigal sons and daughters to their senses and to repentance and faith in Christ. Awaken by your Spirit those who are careless and indifferent about their spiritual state, to seek you while you may be found and to call upon you while you is near.

All this we ask with one mind and heart, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who has assured us that whatever we agree upon on the earth will be done for us in heaven. Hear us for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Lord God, our gracious heavenly Father, we thank you that you have revealed yourself to us in the person of your Son. Indeed, he is the radiance of your glory and the exact representation of your being, full of grace and truth. Help us so to believe you, that we may receive all that you have promised, find your grace sufficient for every need, and your power able to keep us in every situation.

We ask for the gifts we need, due to our sin and weakness, so as to fulfil all our responsibilities, so as to persevere under every trial, so as to profit continually

from your Word, and so as to grow in Christ-likeness through every circumstance. Conscious that we are kept by your almighty power, help us also to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, bringing every thought captive unto Christ.

Guide us by your perfect will in all our daily work. May it never come between us and you, but be used by us for the purposes you have appointed. Help us to know you as the source and the goal of all that we do, so to enter into deeper fellowship with you, for like Noah, we desire to walk with you, and, like David, we desire to be a people after your own heart.

We pray for one another in all our different conditions and needs. Comfort and encourage all who are troubled and sad; draw near to the bereaved and devastated - from whom open arms and loving hearts have been taken. For those who no longer feel that tender touch, for whom that special gentle voice has fallen silent and kind words are heard no more, draw along side by your Comforter, the Holy Spirit. Send to them people who will bear their burden, weep with them and speak a word in season, that they might grieve, but unlike those who have no hope. While nothing can fill the empty space for those who are left behind, we humbly pray that from your own fullness you will repay all that you have taken away. Grant that your all-sufficient help may be realised by us all the more when those whom we love are taken from us.

We thank you for those who have been given responsibility to govern us. We uphold all who possess authority and responsibility, both in Church and State, that they may fulfil their appointed office in the fear of the Lord. Grant to each one wisdom sufficient for their work and be pleased to deliver them from the

corrupting influences of power and money, along with the peculiar temptations of their office.

Guide and bless all your children throughout the world. Prosper the message of your grace in every land and tongue. Cause your holy providence to brood over the confusions of our earth, to bring order out of chaos and light out of darkness. We thank you for the power of your Gospel and pray that the outward call of the Gospel might combine with the inward call of the Holy Spirit so as to draw many people to faith in Christ in our day. These things we ask for the sake of Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Heavenly Father, we commit and commend into your gracious care each one here present, according to our different needs and circumstances. Impart the gifts of your grace and bring forth the fruit of your Holy Spirit in us all. You are our generous Father, who knows how to give good gifts to his children. In your great storehouse is sufficient supply for every want, healing for every wound, comfort for every sorrow, help for every responsibility and grace sufficient for every need. Enable us to be filled continually with your Holy Spirit, so as to receive your best and greatest gifts. Relying on the power of your Holy Spirit, enable us to live a life of openness and transparency before you, walking by faith, not by sight, and pursuing holiness without which no one shall see the Lord.

Send your Holy Spirit as comforter to draw alongside of those who need your consolation in a special way. Enlighten any who are darkened in their understanding. Deliver any who are struggling against temptation. Show the right way to those who are confused. Be a companion to the lonely, comfort those who mourn and bind up the broken hearted.

Strengthen each one of your redeemed people for holy living as we fulfil our daily responsibilities. May we do all to catch your eye, to win your approval and to receive your commendation: “Well done, good and faithful servant”. Deliver us from the fear of man. May we never be so concerned about what others think of us as about what you think of us.

Lead us each one by your Word, which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Humble us under your mighty hand and make us teachable. Help us to understand the Bible by standing under it, submitting to its authority, believing all that it says and doing all that it commands.

Continue to sanctify us through and through. Deliver us more and more from the power of sin and the pull of temptation. Strengthen us to put to death daily the old sinful nature, with its passions and desires and instead to hunger and thirst after righteousness. Reveal to us any sinful habit, any deficiency or fault in our character or conduct and grant to us the courage to willingly forsake these, so that nothing may hinder our prayers, so that nothing may come between us.

Bless all who love the Lord Jesus Christ. In particular, we pray for the suffering church around the world, for all who live under regimes of tyranny and oppression. Preserve them from despair and, from your throne in Heaven, hear their cry for help, come to their aid and save them. Cause your people to persevere under trial, so that their persecutors may be convinced that you are mighty to save.

Guide us now as we attend to your Word. Grant us the ability to receive your Word mixed with faith, that we might not only be hearers of it, but doers also, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

We are grateful, Heavenly Father, for all your blessings and for the abundant grace we have received from you. Your divine power has given us all that we need for life and godliness through faith in Jesus Christ. We thank you for Jesus and for your glory and goodness revealed to us in him. We thank you that he has become for us wisdom, righteousness and salvation. Thank you that through your very great and precious promises to us, we participate in your divine nature and escape the corruption that is in the world caused by evil desires. Help us, your children, never to despise wisdom and discipline, but to reverence you, for the fear of you is the beginning of wisdom. Help each one of your people to listen to your voice as you speak to us in the Bible with a word that is sure and certain. Help us to find out what pleases you, so as to live wisely and righteously, that we may have you answer when we call, and find you when we look for you.

Lord God, you know the cry of our hearts and the desire of our souls as we are bowed before you. Give us a conscious awareness of your loving presence with us now and of your grace which abounds to the chief of sinners. May our hearts go out to you with loving devotion, glad submission, willing obedience and certain hope. Enable us to consider ourselves crucified with Christ, and now a new creation in him. Cause us to be dead to sin, but alive to righteousness. May the manner of our lives be marked by an unshakeable trust in the Son of God who loved us and gave himself for us. Help us to resist evil company, along with all alliances that would draw us away from you. Keep us from laziness, but help

us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, so as to fan into flame the gift of God. Deliver us from grieving or quenching your Holy Spirit, but rather help us to keep step with the Holy Spirit, so that his energies may be powerfully at work in us and through us.

We commend one another to your gracious care and keeping. Look upon us in our various circumstances, temptations and responsibilities. In them all, lead us to a clearer vision of things spiritual and eternal and into a greater possession of them. As we go about our daily work and the pursuit of all our interests, enable us to make the most of every opportunity for denying self, taking up our cross and following Christ in the service of his Gospel and Kingdom. Shield and defend us against all the temptations we face in our work, our family and our social life and deliver us from all the weaknesses we face in ourselves, to which we are blind so often, until you reveal them to us, and this we ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

Hear us, Gracious Father, for those who serve you in the service of others. For those in the caring professions, we ask your grace for doctors and nurses who seek to minister healing and life, grant them diligence and compassion. For those who teach and influence our young, grant wisdom and knowledge, patience and faith. For missionaries of the cross of Christ, as they bear the message of light and life in the Lord Jesus to countless millions who as yet do not know or trust you, grant perseverance and winsomeness. Because the fields are white unto harvest, we pray that you, the Lord of the harvest, will thrust forth labourers into the harvest field. Bless the church wherever Christ is proclaimed as supreme and wherever his cross and resurrection are preached as central to faith.

For all in authority over us in this land, grant a sense that they themselves are under authority, so they may exercise their authority with humility, openness and transparency, conscious that they are accountable not just to the electorate, but to you for their governance. Grant to us as a nation, leaders of integrity and faithfulness, possessing a spirit of service and sacrifice. Guide key opinion leaders, captains of industry, media personalities, leaders in commerce, agriculture and education that they may influence the thinking and direction of our community for good. Forgive our sins as a nation. Humble us in our pride, condemn in us any wrong, hold back the rising tide of immorality, root out all forms of evil, frustrate the plans of those who seek to devise wicked schemes, catch them in the trap they have set for others and bring their plans to nothing. Send upon our nation a spirit of repentance, a seeking after the truth, a hungering and thirsting after righteousness and of turning to the Lord. Cause there to be a great awakening, a work of revival and a drawing of many people unto Christ.

Look upon the nations of this world with compassion. Break the rod of every oppressor and set their captives free. Look upon the miseries inflicted by cruel, ruthless and unprincipled men, hear the cries of the downtrodden and bear your arm, display your might, to maintain the cause of the oppressed and those who have no voice. Especially we pray for all who are persecuted for their faith in Jesus. Help them to persevere, to be faithful, even unto death, to bless their enemies, to pray for those who persecute them and to turn the other cheek. May the light of the world shine brightly through your redeemed people into the darkness of cruelty and oppression, so that the world may know that you are a God who hears the sighs of his people and the groans of the oppressed.

Grant us your gracious help, our Father. Speak to our waiting hearts as we are quiet and still in your presence and are open to your good influence in our lives. Teach us what we need to hear and enable us to display our love for you in glad submission and willing obedience to your revealed will. Send your Holy Spirit to be our teacher, to lead us into all truth, to remind us of all that Christ said and did. Grant to us the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, to guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Lord God, amid the busyness of life, as the blur of bare events flash past at ever-increasing speed, may we know that you are working all things together for the good of those who love you and are called according to your purposes. Amid the maze of life, cause us to know your will and to hear your voice saying: "This is the way, walk in it". Enable us to exchange needless worry for that peace which passes all understanding, by taking everything to you in prayer. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

The Church

Almighty God, who has built your church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ as the chief cornerstone: grant us to be so joined together in unity of spirit by their teaching that we may be made into a holy temple, acceptable to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

English Reformers, 1549

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, and Prince of Peace: Give us grace seriously to consider the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatever may hinder us from godly union and harmony: that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all; so may we from now on be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of one faith and love, and with one mind and one mouth glorify you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Book of Common Prayer, 1715

God of all power, who raised from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, Jesus Christ, our Lord: comfort and defend the flock, which he has redeemed through the blood of the everlasting covenant. Increase the number of true preachers; enlighten the hearts of the ignorant; relieve the pain of the afflicted, especially those who suffer for the testimony of the truth, by the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. *John Knox*

Thanks be to you, O God, for revealing yourself to mankind, and for sending your messengers in every generation. Thanks be to you for the first apostles of Christ, sent into all the world to preach the gospel; for those who brought the good news to our land; for all who, in ages of darkness, kept alive the light of truth, or in times of indifference were faithful to your Word; for all your followers in every age who have given their lives for the cause of Jesus; for those who in our day have gone to the ends of the earth as messengers of your love; for that vast multitude that no one can number being gathered in from every nation, tribe, language and tongue. With these and the whole company of the host of heaven we worship you, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

General Assembly/Presbytery

Almighty God, by whom alone kings reign and princes decree justice and from whom alone comes all wisdom and understanding; we your unworthy servants, here gathered in your name, do most humbly request you to send down your heavenly wisdom from above, to direct and guide us in all our deliberations; and grant that, having a godly fear of you ever before us, we may lay aside all private interests, prejudices and party spirit, so that the result of all our proceedings may be to the glory and honour of your great name, the advancement of your kingdom, the progress of the Gospel, the welfare and peace of your Church, the strengthening of local congregations and the knitting together of every believing heart in true Christian love and acceptance of one another, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sir Christopher Yelverton, 1578

Our Heavenly Father, look with tender mercy upon your church, purchased with the precious blood of Christ. Deliver her from the enemy without and from the enemy within. Cause a godly fear to come upon your church that would prevent any one of your people from being taken captive by the evil one to do his work. Remind us of our accountability to Christ, the king and head of the church. Indeed, remind ministers and elders of our double accountability and of the consequences for others of our words and actions. Grant there to be an abiding in Christ, such that in vital union with him, your people may bear much fruit, fruit that shall last. Cause there to be a waiting upon you, a keeping step with you and for hearts to be stayed upon you. Strengthen your people to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with you, our God. Deliver us

from merely believing the right things. Help us also to do the right things, with a right heart attitude toward you and one another. Remove from our hearts any sense of mischief, any touch of evil. Purify your church and be glorified among your people, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Almighty God, through your Son Jesus Christ you gave the apostles many gifts and commanded them to feed your sheep. Inspire all pastors to preach your Word diligently and your people to receive it willingly, that we may at last receive the crown of eternal glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Heavenly Father, we pray for your holy universal church. Fill it with all truth and peace. Where it is corrupt, purify it; where it is in error, direct it; where it is right, strengthen it; where it is in need, provide for it; where it is divided, reunite it; for the sake of Jesus Christ, your only Son, our Saviour.

Almighty God, increase the faith, vision and energy of your church to desire and work for the salvation of all people, that they might be freed from the tyranny of sin's oppression, and that hope might be renewed in many hearts, to the increase of the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Merciful Father, your kindness caused the light of the Gospel to shine among us. Extend your mercy now, we pray, to all peoples of the world who do not have hope in Jesus Christ, that your salvation may be known to them also and that all hearts would turn unto you; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Protect and defend your Church, O God, purchased with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus. Give to her pastors and ministers filled with your Spirit, and strengthen her through the ministry of your Word and prayer. Perfect her in love and make her to be eager for every good work. Establish her in the faith once for all delivered to the saints. Sanctify and unite your people throughout the world, that with one heart and voice we may bear faithful witness to you. Give wisdom and much grace to all who exercise spiritual leadership within your church. By their faithful service, may your people be encouraged, may faith abound and your kingdom increase. Continue to raise up servants of Christ to labour in your harvest field, both at home and abroad. In your mercy, strengthen all churches under trial. Make them loyal, faithful and persevering in the work of the Lord. Let their faith and zeal for the Gospel serve as a model and inspiration for the whole church to renew our witness for Christ, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty God, giver of all good things, with gladness we give thanks for all your goodness. We honour you for your love, which created and sustains us from day to day. We praise you for the gift of your Son our Saviour, through whom you have made known your will and grace. We thank you for the Holy Spirit, the Comforter; for your church; for the means of grace; for the lives of all faithful servants of Christ and for the hope of the life to come. Help us to treasure in our hearts all that Jesus has done for us and help us to show our thankfulness by lives that are given wholly to your service, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord God, we pray for you to prosper the mission of your church to the world. Lord, save the lost for all eternity and keep your people safe in the world, until

our work here is done. Cause your church to be built up by many who confess faith in Christ and are baptised into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Continue to multiply the faithful in the land. Turn the hearts of men and women, boys and girls to the Gospel once again. Your people are very often saddened because of the many who have forsaken Christ and have departed the faith. Mercifully bring them back and restore them once again by your grace. Do not let Satan take away any more stars with his tail, but may the lamps of God burn brightly. May he who walks amongst the seven golden lamp stands trim the wicks, pour out the oil and let the light of your church and the truth of your Gospel shine brightly and steadily to dispel the darkness. Even in earth's darkest corner, let there be light. This we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

C.H. Spurgeon

Almighty and ever blessed God, we plead with you to grant us your ever present help. We need the light and the grace of your Holy Spirit and we pray that you will teach us to depend upon you. We know that vain is the help of man. Unless the Lord builds the house, they labour in vain who build it.

Grant to us, Lord God, new spiritual faith and energy in prayer. Help us to repent. Give us true humility before you, to be contrite before you and to tremble at your Word. Your Word declares: "You have not because you ask not". Help us to be praying men and women, whose prayers are inspired by you and full of faith in you to do immeasurably more than we ever dared ask or imagine.

We thank you for the church to which we belong; for the measure of your help in these days, for faithful ministries. We seek an increase of this blessing, for the honour of your own great name.

Deliver your church from spiritual oppression and unbelief. Deliver us from holding to a form of godliness, yet denying its power. May we never be ashamed of you, or a shame to you. Be our defence in the hour of trial.

We pray for our community, and for that vast multitude who are lost and remain far from you. Lord God, may our lives be touched with a burning concern for their spiritual condition and need, that Christ may be known and exalted among them.

Bless your Word to us. Help us to discern that which is true and grant us grace to be faithful all the days you have apportioned us in this earthly life. Receive our thanks and praise for all your mercies toward us, we ask, with the pardon of all our sins, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Heavenly Father, we pray for your church upon the earth, purchased with the blood of Christ. Guide, protect and care for her. Cause every member of your church to be a servant and a pastor to others. Let all strive together for the glory of God and the good of all, so that your kingdom may come among us.

Be pleased to prosper the work of all true churches of Jesus Christ. What we ask for ourselves, we seek for them. Let missionary servants especially be helped by your Spirit and may there come a day when the hearts and minds of many are better prepared to receive the Gospel. May Messiah's rule come to the overthrow

of she that sits on the Seven Hills and to the destruction of every idol, that Christ alone may reign supreme. Reign, Lord Jesus, reign; sit upon your royal throne; ride upon your white horse and let the armies of Heaven follow you, conquering and to conquer. Come, Lord Jesus, even so come quickly, Amen.

C. H. Spurgeon

Lord God, we pray for your church upon the earth. Grant us to know the quickening power of your Holy Spirit. We thank you for what evidence of spiritual life there is: for the smallest flicker of faith, for the least glimmer of hope. We rejoice to see something of the life of Christ being formed in any man. But you have come, our Saviour, not only that we might have life, but that we might have it abundantly and so we pray for an abundance of life among your people.

Make your people strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Cause your people to live in the world but to be not of the world. Grant that your people walk with God and abide in Christ and keep step with the Spirit. Cause there to be an uncommon outpouring of the Spirit of God on common men, whom you have prepared for such a purpose. Set your people free from a love of the world and fill them with joy in the Holy Spirit.

Anoint our service to you with power. Grant fruitfulness in all our endeavours as we bear witness to Christ and the Gospel. Be pleased to add to our number those who are being saved. Encourage us with evidences that all those whom you have appointed to eternal life are coming to faith in Jesus. Keep us walking in the light and rejoicing in the Lord, despite the fact that we may at times be

called upon to endure opposition and persecution for the sake of the name of Jesus.

Revive your work. Strengthen faithful ministers to proclaim Christ and him crucified, so that it is proved that he draws all people unto himself. Encourage those who presently labour in your harvest field, by raising up and thrusting forth many more to labour along with them. Cause all your servants to proclaim Christ simply, boldly, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Grant us days of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, in Jesus' name and for his sake, Amen.

The World

O God, you created all people in your image. We thank you for the astonishing variety of people groups and cultures in our world. Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of fellowship. Break down the barriers of pride and prejudice that divide us. Grant to us a love for all peoples and enable us to strive on earth for that unity which we shall share together in Heaven, where you shall gather to yourself people from every nation, tribe, language and tongue.

Heavenly Father, we intercede for this poor sinful world in which we live. We are often shocked and horrified by it. We sometimes wish that we could rise on the wings of the dawn and make good our escape. We know we are not of this world, but we confess we sometimes find it hard to live in this world. We hear of oppression and exploitation, theft and murder, and the extent of man's inhumanity to man seems to know no bounds. All we can do is turn to you, cry out for mercy, and pray: "Deliver us from evil." We wonder what difference we can possibly make in the midst of such a large city with its teeming millions, but then we remember that you call each one of your children simply to be faithful. So help us to do our best, wherever you have planted us. Prevent any of us from contributing to the spread of evil, either directly or indirectly, but may we contribute to the good that is in the world.

We feel we can pray for our city and our community, for we remember how your servant Abraham stood before you and prayed with earnest pleading for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. We take heart that as you heard him, so you

will hear us now. We now follow the example of the great father of all who believe and we pray for the people and nations of this earth. Let your kingdom come, and cause your will to be done. Send forth your light and your truth. May that day come quickly when the Son of Man shall rule the nations with a rod of iron, full of mercy, full of power, full of grace, yet irresistible. We long for the triumphal return of Jesus, when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea. But until then, strengthen us for the fight, and cause us to be among those who overcome through the blood of the Lamb and the Word of his testimony, in Jesus' name, Amen.

C.H. Spurgeon

Merciful Father, look with tender pity upon those who do not love you. Redeemer, look upon them with those eyes which are as flames of fire. Let them see how badly they treat you. Help them to realise the dire consequences of ingratitude, indifference and neglect of our Saviour's blood. Bring those who are careless and godless to seek mercy, to seek the Lord while he may be found. Let all who are resisting or postponing a response to the claims of Christ see that it is both treason and folly to do so. Saviour, fire off your darts, to prick the consciences of many, that they may fall down before you and cry out for mercy.

We continue to be amazed by your grace in which the worst of sinners who were afar off have been brought in by your grace. But Lord do more of this amongst us. Let us see greater things than these. Where we have seen one saved, let us see one hundred, to the praise and glory of your name, in Jesus' name, Amen.

C. H. Spurgeon

The Nation

Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, bring in your reign of peace and cause wars to cease to the ends of the earth. We remember our Queen and all set under her authority. In particular, we pray for our Prime Minister, and his cabinet, all Members and Senators of Federal Parliament. Direct all our affairs. Lead us into all truth. Cause us to pursue that righteousness which exalts a nation. Deliver us from national sins of self-interest, greed, immorality and pride.

We remember with gratitude that our freedom has come to us through the sacrifice of many who have stood firm to resist the tyrant and the oppressor. Help us never to presume upon your mercies, but remain ever vigilant to defend all that is right and good in our land, that has been hard fought and won for us to enjoy. We especially remember with honour those who paid the supreme sacrifice. We give thanks for their courage under fire, their bravery unto death and ask that those who grieve for them will find true consolation and comfort through faith in Christ Jesus, in whose name we pray, Amen.

In Time of War

Grant, O merciful God, that with malice toward none, with charity to all, with firmness in the right as you give us to see the right, we may strive to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan; to do all which we may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Abraham Lincoln

Lord God Almighty, in judgment you permit nation to rise up against nation. Strengthen and defend us against our enemy who would take up arms against us. Grant to those who have gone for us to fight our battles, by air or land or sea, protection in danger, patience in suffering and resolve to persevere on to victory.

Look with compassion on the sick, the wounded and those taken captive as prisoners of war. Cause their difficult circumstances to turn their hearts to you, to seek you and to find you.

In your mercy, rescue and redeem those who are dying, have mercy on those who are left widowed and fatherless, sustain those who are gripped by fear and comfort all who mourn.

Gracious Father, you who makes wars cease to the ends of the earth, who breaks the bow and shatters the spear, come quickly to restore the blessing of your peace. Grant that our present troubles be overruled to your glory, and the extension of your kingdom and the union of nations in faith and love of you. Hear us for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Almighty God, who breaks the bow and shatters the spear, who makes wars cease to the ends of the earth, we give all praise and honour to you for restoring to us the blessing of peace. Deliver us from so sorely provoking you to anger as to inflict upon us such judgment in the future. Teach us to show our gratitude for your goodness by striving constantly to obey your will and help us as individuals and as a nation to keep the peace and improve the peace which you

have granted, to the glory of your name, the advancement of your kingdom, the welfare of our nation and the good of all mankind.

Hasten the day when the Prince of Peace shall take to himself his great power and reign, when, under his mighty rule, nation shall no longer rise up against nation, nor shall they study war any more, for we ask it in Jesus' name, Amen.

For the Navy

Eternal God, who alone rules over the seas and at whose command the wind and the waves are stilled; surround with your gracious protection all our Naval personnel. Preserve them from the dangers of the deep and from the violence of our enemies. Cause them to be an impenetrable defence for our country, so that our land may be a place of peace and freedom in which to serve you. In your good time, bring them safely home, to be united with their loved ones and families, with a testimony concerning your mercy and deliverance, and we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

For the Army

Lord God Almighty, Captain of the Host of Heaven, surround with your protection these your servants and the Army in which they serve. Lead and guide them by your all-wise counsel. Strengthen and defend them with your might. Grant them to be a shield of protection and an impenetrable defence for our lands against every foe. Strengthen them to fight courageously and, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, may we all enter your eternal glory, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

For the Air Force

Almighty God, who makes the clouds your chariot and who walks upon the wings of the wind, watch over all Air Force personnel and protect the Force in which they serve. Defend them from harm and accident, from the dangers of storm and fire and be their guide by day and night. Grant them strength and endurance to fulfil their duty, that they may be a shield and defence to this country. Be to us all our refuge and strength and place underneath us your everlasting arms, we pray in Jesus, name, Amen.

Almighty God, you have given us this good land as our heritage. Make us always remember your generosity and so constantly do your will. Bless our land with industry, truthful education and an honourable way of life. Save us from violence, discord and confusion, from pride and arrogance and from every evil course of action. Make us, who came from many nations with many different languages, a united people. Defend our liberties and give to those who have been entrusted with the authority of government the spirit of wisdom, that there might be justice and peace in our land. When times are prosperous, let our hearts be thankful and in troubled times, do not let our trust in you fail. We ask all this through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Lord God, keep this nation under your sovereign care and control. Bless the leaders of our land, so that we may be a people who are at peace among ourselves and a blessing to the nations of this earth. Help us to elect trustworthy leaders and give to all in authority the wisdom to know your will and to do it. Help us to be responsible citizens who contribute to wise decisions that promote

our greater good. Help us to serve you faithfully in our day and generation, to the honour of your holy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord God, you have shown us what is good and what you require of us: to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with you our God. Grant that our nation's life may be guarded by your sovereign power that, as a people we might be characterised by that righteousness which exalts us as a nation. May we be kept by your power from those sins which are a disgrace to any people. You, who decree righteousness and justice, uphold the courts and judges in our land. Grant them such wisdom and understanding as to perceive the truth and administer the law impartially as instruments of your sovereign will. We pray this, mindful that we are all under authority, we will all face judgment and we will all have to give an account. And we pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

Society

Gracious Father, we commend to your safe keeping the communities in which we live and work, that they may be kept by your power from social strife and moral decay. Give us such strength of purpose and concern for others that, with your enabling, we may build communities of justice and peace where your will is done. Free our communities from sectarian violence and racial hatred. Take from our hearts all arrogance and pride. Break down the walls that divide us. Advance the desire for true reconciliation among us and grant to us your peace, in Jesus' name, Amen.

We uphold the disadvantaged within our society, conscious of the fact that you have a heart for the orphan and the widow and that you call upon us to aid them in their distress. Help us to care for the lonely, the bereaved and the poor. May there be none among us who are overlooked or neglected. Help us to comfort those who are broken in body or in spirit and so turn their sorrow to joy and their tears to laughter. Enable us to be a compassionate society which values the young, and supports the elderly, which maintains fairness and justice, so that all who seek to do good may find their place, obtain suitable and fulfilling employment and receive just payment for their labour. And these things we ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

Merciful God, we pray for those who have been forcibly removed from society in order to protect it. For all who are serving time in our prisons and correctional facilities, we ask for a spirit of remorse, contrition and repentance. For those charged with their supervision, we ask for a strong determination to

oversee their rehabilitation and, in due course, their return to society, in order to take their place and make a positive contribution to its life and work. Keep all who work in these institutions humane and compassionate and save them from becoming brutal and callous. Give us a deep concern for the welfare of prisoners and their families and mindful that what we do for those in prison, we do for you, lead us to do all in our power to help, for your mercy's sake, Amen.

We ask you to look with pity upon the people of this land who live with injustice and oppression as their constant companions in life. When they are accused, deliver them from hate; when they are rejected, save them from bitterness; and when they are imprisoned, rescue them from despair. Grant power and strength to all who seek to establish equal protection at law, and equal opportunities for all. Break down the institutional evils of our society, that we may be cleansed and strengthened as a people. Grant that every one of us may be able to enjoy a fair portion of the wealth and abundance of this land.

Home and Family

Lord Jesus Christ, who by your coming to us in great humility sanctified the life of the home: we commend to you our homes and the members of our families, near and far. Unite us in your love and guard us by your power from all evil, harm and danger. Make us thankful for all the blessings of family life and keep us mindful of those for whom home has no meaning, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Almighty God, our loving heavenly Father, who gave marriage to be a source of blessing to mankind, we thank you for the joys of family life. Pour upon us your Holy Spirit, so that we may truly love and serve you. Bless all who are married and every parent and child. May we know your presence and peace in our homes; fill them with your love and use them for your glory.

Give patience to those who look forward to marriage.

Give courage to those who face trials within their marriage.

Give comfort to those whose marriage has broken.

Give gratitude to those whose marriages are successful and fruitful
and let all our lives reflect Your love and power.

We pray that marriage may be held in honour everywhere:

that husbands and wives may live faithfully together

and that members of every family

may grow in mutual understanding,

in courtesy and kindness;

that we may learn to forgive one another

as you forgave us;

that we may bear one another's burdens

and so fulfil the law of Christ.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Lord God, look with love upon our families.

We thank you for the homes in which we live,

for the love that unites us,

for the peace afforded us this day,

for the hope we have for tomorrow;

for the health, the work, the food and the bright skies that make our lives
delightful;

for our friends in all parts of the earth.

Give us courage and laughter and calm.

Spare us to our friends, soften us to our enemies.

Bless us if in all our endeavours prompted by faith;

but if not, give us strength to endure what is to come, that we may be brave in
danger, persevering in trouble, peaceable in times of anger and, in all
circumstances of life, even in death, may we be loyal and true to you and to each
other. As the clay is to the potter, as the windmill is to the wind, as children are
to their father, so we yield to you in full submission and we seek from you this
help and mercy, for Christ's sake, Amen.

Robert Louis Stevenson

Lord, God, you are a covenant-making, promise-keeping God and it is on this
basis that we approach you and make our appeal to you on behalf of our
children. Have you not promised that you will not only be our God, but the
God and Father of our children also? Have we not, in faith, entered into

covenant with you for the salvation of our children? Lord, be true to your Word, and redeem these your covenant children. Let not one of them be lost or left behind. Rescue them by your grace and for your glory. Do whatever it takes to bring them right through to a position of saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Lord, deliver them from the snares of the evil one. Do not let the devil claim any of your little ones for his own. Prevent us, by carelessness, from doing anything that would cause one of your little ones to stumble. Set them free from a love of this world. May the things of the flesh turn to dust in their hands. May all the wells they have dug for themselves run dry. Hem them in behind and before. Lay your hand upon them. Send forth your Holy Spirit, the hound of heaven, to convict them of sin and of righteousness and of judgment. Give them no peace and no rest until they yield to you in full and glad surrender.

You are the God who has revealed yourself to be compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Be true to yourself, and to your covenant. Bare your arm and display your might. Do for us what we cannot do for ourselves: save our children. Rescue them from perishing. Do not forsake them or let them go. Save them by your mercy and make them to be trophies of your grace, to the praise of your great name, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Lord God Almighty, we make our appeal to you on behalf of our prodigal sons and daughters. We cry out to you to be merciful to them. We plead with you: remember not the sins of their youth. We have nurtured them in faith and love, but now they are beyond our care and we cannot reach them. We give them

wholly into your care. Deliver us from discouragement and despair in regard to them. Give us faith to believe your covenant promises concerning them. Give us prayers to pray in regard to them that flow from your very throne in Heaven.

Father, watch over them as they wander far from home and far from you. We rejoice that while we do not know where they are or what state they are in, yet they are never away from your presence and never outside of your care.

Lord God, our prodigals have seized their inheritance and have departed for a far country. Even now they squander their inheritance in riotous living. Lord, bring them to their senses. Open their eyes to their need. Awaken them to their sin. Prick their consciences concerning the unhappy state they are in and the love they have spurned. Grant to them true repentance. Rescue them from guilt and shame. Melt their hearts with remembrances of your love. Reassure them that with you failure is not final and that a fresh start awaits them if only they would forsake their sin and return to you. Deliver them from the clutches of pride or self pity, which would seek to hold them back from seeking a remedy in you.

Grant to us patient faith and brave endurance, as we trust you for them. Enable us to be like the waiting father, who kept looking and longing for his son to return, who, when he saw him at a distance, ran to meet him, threw his arms around him and kissed him. Help us to be like him: to go on waiting and hoping and praying. Give us cause to kill the fattened calf and celebrate as, in answer to our prayers, you recall those who stray and bring them home where they belong. May those once lost soon be found and may those once dead be given back to us alive again.

We make our appeal to you enthroned in Heaven, possessing all authority in Heaven and on Earth and with the power to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Restore the years that the locusts have eaten. Grant to your people the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

These things we pray in Jesus' name and for his glory, Amen.

Bless our children with healthy bodies, with good minds, with the graces and gifts of your Holy Spirit, with sweet dispositions and holy habits. Sanctify them throughout their bodies and souls and spirits and keep them blameless until the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Jeremy Taylor

Almighty God and heavenly Father, we thank you for the children whom you have given us; give us grace to train them in your faith, fear and love; that, as they advance in years, they may grow in grace and may hereafter be found in the number of your elect children; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

John Cosin

The Human Condition

The Aged

Gracious God, our Heavenly Father, whose gift is length of life, help us to make the best possible use of mind and body in advancing years. Give us productive work to perform appropriate to our health and strength. As you have graciously pardoned all our sins and failures, so renew our minds, that evil may lose its hold over us, so that we desire to do only that which is good and pleasing in your sight.

We honour you for all your good gifts to us and thank you especially for your presence with us always. We thank you, too, for loved ones on earth and in heaven. Grant us new ties of friendship, new opportunities of service, the joy of knowing our children's children, sympathy with those who carry heavy burdens, clarity of thought and a sure and certain faith.

Teach us to bear troubles and hardships with patience and hope in you. Keep us from narrow-mindedness and from resentment. Deliver us from that blindness which sees no good in change and which impatiently passes judgment on the efforts and attempts of others. Let your peace rule in our hearts through all the trials of our failing strength. Take away all fear of death, all despair and an undue love of life, that with glad hearts, we may rest in you and wait for your will to be done concerning us, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

A Book of Offices and Prayers

Lord God, look with tender mercy and compassion upon all those who, in advancing years, face isolation, distress and weakness. Provide for them carers who will maintain their dignity and peace. Grant them an acceptance of their changing circumstances and the grace to receive help. May they find fulfilment in loving you and their neighbours and in practising the power of prayer, as they follow in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus. As their strength diminishes, increase their faith and their assurance of your love. While outwardly wasting away, may you renew them inwardly day by day. Cause them to see that their present sufferings are but light and momentary in comparison with the eternal glory that awaits them, which far outweighs them all, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

With warm affection we remember before you, our everlasting God, all our departed friends and relatives. Keep us in union with them here through faith and love towards you, that hereafter we may enter into your presence and be numbered with those who belong to you, who serve you and who see you face to face, in the eternal glory of your heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Blessed Lord Jesus, you had compassion on all who were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. In your tender mercy, look with compassion this day upon all who through bondage to addiction have lost their health, their freedom and their dignity. Restore to them the assurance of your unfailing love; remove the fears that attack and oppress them; strengthen them in the work of their recovery. Also to those who care for them, give patient understanding and persevering love, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, our Great Physician, we give you thanks for answered prayer in the restoration to health and strength of your servant, with whom we rejoice and praise your name. Grant that he/she may, with renewed purpose and dependence upon you, continue the mission you have given him/her in this world, the confidence of knowing that you will keep us alive until our work here is done and that one day we shall share in eternal glory at your appearing.

Heavenly Father, who has promised to renew our minds by the transforming power of your Holy Spirit: we pray for all your children who suffer mental illness and are tormented by dark thoughts and fears. Be pleased in good time to restore them to strength of mind and cheerfulness of spirit. Comfort them with the hope that you turn sickness into health, and tears into joy and that one day all suffering will be ended. Then all tears will be wiped from our eyes by your own gracious hand, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Merciful Father, you have promised that you do not willingly afflict or grieve your children and that you are compassionate and gracious, slow to anger and rich in love. Look with tender mercy upon the sorrows of, your servant. Remember him/her in love. Strengthen him/her in patience, comfort him/her in the memory of your goodness, let your presence shine on him/her and give him/her peace through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty and everlasting God, a comfort to the sad and a strength to those who suffer; let the prayers of your children who are in any trouble rise to you. To everyone in distress grant mercy, relief and refreshment, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Father God, we come before your throne of grace today to intercede on behalf of those who are marginalised, or ostracised, or stigmatised within our community. We pray for those whose lives are difficult, whose lives are distressed, whose lives lack contentment and a sense of well being.

For those who are: lonely, frightened, or confused;

May they find in you their security, one who is ever-present, who understands their confusion and who speaks a word of peace to calm their lurking fears.

For those who are: deserted, bereaved, or orphaned;

May they find in you a new identity. As a child of God, may they know the loyalty of one who sticks closer than a brother, who will never leave nor forsake them.

For those who are: dispossessed, homeless, or a refugee;

May they find their citizenship in Heaven, and a new sense of belonging that nothing and no one can take away from them.

For those who are: unemployed or poor;

May they find their sufficiency and sustenance in you. May they experience the true riches of your grace and favour. May they ever find employment in doing your will.

For those who are: victims of crime, exploitation, or injustice;

May they find in you their strength and defence. May they seek refuge in you until the storm is past, and may they find you fighting for them, upholding their cause and frustrating those who so cruelly oppress them.

For those who suffer: a terminal illness, physical or mental affliction. May they find in you their comfort, hope and peace.

May each one, in the midst of their personal hardship, be given faith to see the good you have purposed for them in their suffering. May they not simply endure it but may they grow in grace as a result and may you grant them patience and faith until you are pleased to send them deliverance from all of their troubles. These things we ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Watch, dear Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight,
and give your angels charge over those who sleep.

Tend your sick ones.

Rest your weary ones.

Bless your dying ones.

Soothe your suffering ones.

Pity your afflicted ones.

Shield your joyous ones.

And all for Jesus' sake, Amen

Augustine

O God, from whom to be turned is to fall,
to whom to be turned is to rise,
and with whom to stand is to abide forever;
grant us in all our duties your help,
in all our perplexities your guidance,
in all our dangers your protection,

and in all our sorrows your peace,
though Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Augustine

Prayers for Growth Toward Maturity in Christ

Almighty and most merciful Father, in you we live and move and have our being. From you we have received tender mercy and compassion. To you we owe our safety in days past, together with all the comforts of this present life and the hopes of the life to come. We praise you, O God, our creator; unto you do we give our thanks, for you are our joy and crown. You daily pour out your good gifts upon us.

We humbly pray that Jesus our Lord, the hope of glory, may be more fully formed in us and evidenced in a growing humility, meekness, patience, contentment and absolute surrender of our whole lives - body, soul, and spirit--to your will and pleasure.

Do not leave us or forsake us, our Father, but lead us safely through all the changes of this present world, with an unchanging love for you, and with a holy peace of mind which comes from an assurance of your steadfast love for us, until we come at last to see you face to face, be with you where you are, behold your glory and worship you forever, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Simon Patrick, 1626-1707

O God, be present with us always, dwell within our heart. With your light and your Spirit guide our souls, our thoughts and all our actions, that we may teach your Word, that your healing power may be in us and in your church world wide.

Philipp Melancthon

O Lord, I am yours. Do what seems good in your sight and give me complete resignation to your will.

David Livingstone

Lord Jesus Christ, pattern of humility, who emptied yourself of your glory and took upon yourself the form of a servant, root out of us all pride of boasting in our hearts. Acknowledging that we are guilty sinners, may we willingly suffer contempt for your sake and only glory in you. Not unto us, O Lord, but to your name be the praise, for your loving mercy and for your truth's sake.

Treasury of Devotion

Heavenly Father, the God of all goodness and grace, you are worthy of a greater love than we can give or understand: fill our hearts with such love towards you which overcomes laziness and fear, that nothing may seem too hard for us to do or to suffer as we obey you; and grant that, in loving you, we may daily become more like you and may finally obtain the crown of life which you have promised to those who love you, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Author unknown

O Lord, to be turned from you is to fall, to be turned to you is to rise and to stand in you is to abide forever. Grant us in all our duties your help, in all our perplexities your guidance, in all our dangers your protection and in all our sorrows your peace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Augustine

O God, who has taught us that to love is to fulfil the law; help us, by your Holy Spirit, so to love you that we may always seek to do your holy will; and so to love our neighbour that we may in all things do to others as we would have them do unto us; for the sake of him who loved us and gave himself for us, your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

W.W. Howe

Loving heavenly Father, we come as your children to bow before you in quietness, reverence and humble obedience. In that spirit, we take to heart and pray for ourselves the prayer which your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Not my will, but yours be done."

We rest our souls in you. We cease striving after plans of our own making. We sacrifice all self-interest, pride and ungodly ambition before you. We repudiate all worldly gain, privilege and prestige. We refuse to be driven, controlled or mastered by them.

We yield to you in glad and willing surrender. We acknowledge that your will is best, your way is good and your paths are right. We affirm that our vision is

clearest, our faith is strongest and our life most rewarding when your will, not ours, is done.

It is humbling to realise that there is no good in us except what you have worked in us according to your good pleasure and will. It is humbling to think that we are like clay, of no use or value by ourselves, until we are shaped and moulded by the will of you, our Master. Yet with grateful thanks we acknowledge it to be true.

We welcome your continued working. We submit to your discipline. We follow your leading. We heed your correction and we defer to your greater wisdom.

Show us what sins hide you from us. Help us to humble ourselves because of past evils. Grant us your grace to walk before you with greater care, consistency, and conviction.

Keep us meek and humble before you. By faith may we rest in your grace and so find your will and knowing your will, may we continually evidence your love.

So, gracious Father, enable us never to run ahead of you or lag behind you, but always to keep step with you. May we ever await your will, ever pray for it to be done, always accepting it, even when it crosses our own and ever striving to be fully obedient to it, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Valley of Vision

God of Compassion, you have called us by your grace from death to life and from darkness to light. Enable us so to respond to your infinite mercy that we may pursue holiness, heavenly-mindedness and willingly spend and be spent for the sake of the Gospel. Enable us to deny self and to devote our hearts and lives to your glory. Stir us up with a proper sense of the great work which you have prepared for us to do in the world. Grant us purity of faith and reality of religion and a sense of the blessing that awaits us at the end of such a life. Impress upon us the infinite value of our eternal reward and stir us up to constant endeavours that having pursued a holy life, we may at last come to such a blessed end, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

After Jonathan Edwards

Lord God, we come to you amidst the difficulties, temptations and pressures of life. We come to you because we know that, if we seek you we will find you, if we seek you with our whole heart.

We come to you because you know us completely and yet you still love us unconditionally. We come to you because seated at your right hand is our great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was tempted like us in every way, yet remained without sin and is therefore able to sympathise with us in our weakness. We come to you so that you may fill us with yourself and, in so doing, transform us inwardly by your Holy Spirit. Create in us a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit within us. Give us a spirit of grace and humility. Give us a prayerful attitude of mind.

Amidst the ordinary concerns of everyday life, may our thoughts and desires instinctively rise to you and, in a disciplined life of openness before you, may we

find in you all the resources we need to soothe our sorrows, sanctify our successes and qualify us in every way to show mercy and grace to other people.

We worship you that you have made us capable of knowing you, the creator of all things; of reflecting your likeness, the perfection of all that is excellent and of enjoying you, the source of all happiness.

Lord God, remain with us in every step of our earthly life because we need your wisdom, counsel, defence and comfort always. Continue the gentleness of your goodness towards us; so that waking or sleeping, your presence may protect us, your grace sustain us and your blessing attend us.

Father, you have led us thus far and we have found your promises to be true. At times we have been sad, but you have helped us; at time we have been fearful, but you have delivered us; at times we have been despairing, but you have lifted us up.

So may your love pursue us that as long as Jesus represents us in Heaven, we may reflect him on earth and as long as Jesus pleads our cause before your throne, we may show forth his praise before a watching world.

We praise you Father that you make sense of life, give us purpose in life, provide enjoyment of life and give us hope for the future, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Almighty God, creator of all things, judge of all people, and saviour of sinners, we worship you for making us capable of knowing you, for giving us reason and conscience and for leading us to want to know you.

We praise you for the revelation of yourself in the gospel, for loving us from eternity past, for your desire to make peace with us, for your patience with us, your grace toward us and for the vastness of your mercy in the Lord Jesus. You have enlightened our minds and awakened our consciences to know how the guilty may be pardoned, sinners may be forgiven and enemies of God may become friends.

May we be always amongst those who not only hear about you but who know you, who walk with you, who rejoice in you, who take you at your word and find life there.

Keep us always conscious of our Christian duties as well as of our privileges, of the need for simplicity and godly sincerity, of the imperative of authenticity and integrity and of your command to reach lost people with the Gospel.

Help us to live lives that are distinctive because of their grace and godliness. So may we appear before you as we are before people. May our profession and practice be consistent. May we be in the world but not of the world. May we set our hearts and minds on things above. May we lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. May we continually put sin to death in our lives. May we be prepared to suffer evil as well as to do good.

Lord God, make us worthy of your high calling, that the name of Jesus may be glorified in us, and we in him, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Lord God, our Mighty Saviour, we are reminded of the fact that our first and greatest duty in life is to love you with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and our second great duty is to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Help us to learn from this that only one thing deserves our greatest care, that requires our best attention and that is, to attain the goal for which we were made, which is to glorify you and enjoy you forever and to do all the good we can for our fellow man.

Surely, life is not worth living unless it is improved by this godly purpose. Yet, we see how little honour is given to this command. Sadly, most people seem to live for themselves, with little or no regard for your glory or for the good of others. They eagerly pursue riches, honour and the pleasures of this life, supposing that wealth, greatness and entertainment could somehow satisfy the deep longings of the heart. However, what delusions of grandeur possess them, what chasing after the wind, what disappointment awaits them, for we know that true and lasting happiness is only to be found in knowing and loving you and in being known and loved by you.

Lord God, keep us from ever falling for the passing pleasures, the hollow promises, the easy answers of this present world. For to do so is to embrace a vast empty nothingness. It is to invite sadness and sorrow and to court disaster.

For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and yet loses his own soul.

Help us to realise the futility, the meaninglessness of trying to find purpose, fulfilment and satisfaction in life apart from you. Help us therefore to reject the temptations to worldly greatness, sinful pleasures and the love of money.

Help us to know continually that there can be no true and lasting happiness and no fulfilment of your purpose for us, apart from a life lived in and for your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

So fill us with your Spirit and with a godly sense of purpose, that we may always only ever love you completely and seek first your Kingdom, righteousness, and glory. So may you add to us all that we need in order to live a full, satisfying, and rewarding life here in this world, and prepare us for heaven, to live with you there, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Loving heavenly Father, King of Heaven and sovereign Lord, you rule over all things with infinite wisdom, compassion and might. In your tender mercy, you have opened up a way for sinners to be put right with you, a Holy God.

There is only one way, your way, and whosoever will may come to you, but only on your terms and only by that way which you have opened up for us in the Lord Jesus.

Help us to grasp what a great privilege and opportunity is now afforded us in being able to receive your pardon, peace and acceptance in Christ. Help us never

to take for granted such a privilege or abuse such an opportunity. Help us never to be deluded into thinking that we can come back to you on our own terms, in our own strength, by the so called good things that we do. If we are ever tempted to believe such a lie, help us to realise that as long as we keep believing it, as long as we take pride in our achievements and boast in our own goodness, we will never enter your kingdom or share your glory.

Help us to surrender completely to your will, O God. Help us to enthrone Christ in our hearts by faith, that he might rule supreme, as unrivalled King. Help us to appreciate the fact that we have been ransomed, bought with a price, by the precious blood of the Lord, Jesus Christ, so that we are no longer our own to do as we please, therefore help us to honour you in our bodies.

Heavenly Father, may we each one enter through the narrow gate of salvation, in no way attempting to cling to the tattered rags of human pride in achievement, self-will and self-rule. May we come empty handed: "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to your cross I cling".

May we trust completely in the finished work of Christ alone and never seek to add to it our own poor and imperfect efforts. Likewise, may we never be tempted to take away from all that Christ has accomplished.

So may we enter through the narrow gate and continue along the narrow way, by faith and not by sight, enduring to the end and so be welcomed into life by Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, in whose name we pray, Amen.

O Lord God, you are our refuge and defence, our fortress and shield. Fight for us and we will win, uphold us and we cannot fall, strengthen us and we stand unmoved, equip us and we lack no good thing, stand by us and Satan must flee.

Enable us to shun evil, for it defies your law and defiles our nature, producing only misery.

Teach us to look to Jesus and his cross, so to know how despised sin is in your sight. Teach us to believe that there is no pardon but through the death of Jesus, no cleansing but in his precious blood and no atonement but in his sin bearing suffering. Show us more of the shame, the agony and the curse of Christ crucified, so we may better understand our great debt and the fact that Christ has paid it all in full.

Help us to put to death the old sinful nature, to resist temptation, to turn away from all evil.

May we ever remember the awful misery from which we have been saved and the desperate plight of all who remain lost outside of Christ. So may we hold onto you with strong faith, remain fully devoted to you and pursue holiness without which no one will see the Lord and these things we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Valley of Vision

God of all grace, you have given us a Saviour, and you have produced in us faith to live by him, to make him all our desire, all our hope, all our glory.

May we seek shelter in him as our refuge, build on him as our foundation, walk in him as our way, follow him as our guide, conform to him as our example, heed his instruction as our Prophet, rely on his intercession as our High Priest, and obey him as our King.

May we never be ashamed of him or his words, but gladly bear whatever criticism or opposition may come and rejoice that we have been considered worthy of suffering for the sake of Christ. May we never displease him by conduct unbecoming of the Gospel, or grieve him by a hard and unyielding heart. May we never model our life by the standards of this world. May we never delay when your Word calls us to obey.

May Christ ever keep us from the evils of this present world, so that its attractions may never trap us, nor its opposition terrify us, nor its vices defile us, nor its errors delude us.

May we know that we are but strangers and pilgrims here on earth, ever seeking after a better inheritance. May each day confirm in us that purpose, prepare us to enter it and long to receive it, so that whatever we do may be done in Jesus' name, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Gracious and Loving Heavenly Father, we come to you for the grace another day will require for its challenges and responsibilities. We live in a fallen, sinful world. We carry about within us the remnants of a fallen and sinful nature. So we know that, apart from you, we can do nothing and that everything which

may occupy our time and attention, however harmless, may become an occasion for sin, unless we are kept by your power.

However, kept by your power, we shall be safe. So preserve our understanding from the subtlety of error, our ambition from the love of idols, our character from the stain of vice. May we not involve ourselves in anything for which we cannot ask your blessing and invite your inspection, so as to meet with your approval.

May we never put you to the test by choosing what we know displeases you. So prosper our way in all our seeking first your kingdom and righteousness. Enable us to live well as your people in your world. So, teach us to use and not to abuse the things of this world. Enable us to improve our talents, to redeem our time, to be wise in our dealings with unbelievers and to be kind in our dealings with believers. Help us to do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith. To you be all glory and praise, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Almighty God, we give thanks and praise that when troubles arise, we can hasten to your throne and find it to be a throne of grace. We rejoice that we are under the care of one who is too wise to err, too kind to injure and too tender to crush. We worship you that, even now, help is on the way. You will hasten and not delay to hear our prayer. You are never late, you are always on time in coming to our aid.

We are so thankful that we can run to Jesus as our mighty fortress, our strong tower, our safe refuge, the rock of our salvation. Although he is the stone the

builders rejected, yet he remains our solid rock, our sure foundation. All around is sinking sand, but on Christ the solid rock we stand. When the storms of life blow, we praise you that our house stands firm. Nothing can separate us from your love. No one can snatch us out of your hand. We acknowledge that every experience we encounter is shaped and permitted by you, our all wise God, for our good and for your glory, to conform us more to the likeness of Christ, and so to prepare us for Heaven.

So through all of life's experiences and difficulties, may we increasingly be as Christ in the world, to do what he would do, to live as he would live, to walk in love and meekness and continue in this way until the complete image be obtained and we be made a perfect copy of Christ, our Master, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Lord God Almighty, we come to you today not to ask for earthly riches or greatness, but to plead with you for Heaven's blessings and to be numbered among those on whom your favour rests.

Lord, make it our top priority to seek first your kingdom and your righteousness and to be in possession of those things which are spiritual in nature, eternal in duration and truly satisfying to our souls.

Deliver and protect us from the trap of spiritual pride. Preserve us from thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought, rather help us to think of ourselves with sober judgment.

Give us grace to judge ourselves, rather than judging others for whom Christ died. Enable us to remove the plank from our own eye before we seek to remove the speck from our brother's eye. Help us to pay careful attention to our behaviour as much as to our belief, our motives as much as to our actions. May we allow no root of bitterness to spring up within us, nor give the Devil a foothold. May our hearts be right with you, our walk close with you, so that our life adorns the glorious Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. May the longing of our heart be for another and better world, that eternal city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Lord God, we acknowledge and accept the fact that we are but strangers and pilgrims in this world, just passing through. Lord, extend your hand of mercy to us and grant to us all the direction, protection, support and comfort our journey heavenward requires. Grant to us a mind that is stayed on you. Fill us with your Holy Spirit, that we may be prepared for every responsibility, submit to you in every trial or difficulty, trust you when life becomes dark, know your peace amid life's changes and love you for all your tender mercies toward us.

Lord, we believe. Help us overcome our unbelief, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Gracious Father, when we are overcome by the temptations and dangers of life, come to our aid and defend us. When laziness and carelessness grips us, inspire us with visions of heaven. When the way of sinners seems attractive to us, remind us of their folly and their ultimate destiny. When the desires of the flesh come upon us, refine and purify our hearts. When worldly possessions become

desirable, help us to be rich towards you. When we make mistakes and wrong decisions, rescue us from guilt and ruin.

Father, keep us ever mindful of our Christian freedom and help us never to abuse that freedom to the neglect of our souls. May we never be so engrossed with time that we forget the things of eternity.

So, may we not only live for you, but also grow in our love for you. Renew our minds by the inward working of your Holy Spirit, that we might think pure thoughts and possess right attitudes towards you.

May we all strive to love you more; to submit completely to your will; to show mercy and compassion to those who are in need; to be more patient and persevering in faith; and to please you both in public and in private.

Form in us more of the likeness of the Lord Jesus, for we are your workmanship, new creatures in Christ Jesus, in whose name we pray, Amen

Valley of Vision

Father God, we pray that out of your glorious riches, you will strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit in our inner being. We pray that we might be filled continually with your Spirit. We acknowledge before you that this is our very great need, for so often we act not in the power of the Spirit, but according to the flesh. So often, we find ourselves motivated more by our own weak desires than by the power of your presence. We recognise that such living leads us to frustration and to quenching the Spirit's fire.

Save us from being content with only a little of your Spirit and from thinking that you will not give us more. Send your Holy Spirit to move over our disordered hearts and lives and grant to us your peace. Send your Spirit afresh to convict of sin and righteousness and judgment. Send your Spirit to quicken, awaken, renew. Send your Spirit to comfort, to bind up the broken hearted. Send your Spirit to humble us and impart faith. Send your Spirit to accompany your Word and cause it to be living and active among us, sharper than a two edged sword. Father, send your Spirit, who always points to Jesus, so we may be filled with the fullness of Christ, who is our joy and crown, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Send forth your light and your truth, that we may always live near you, our God. Let us feel your love, that we may be, as it were, already in heaven, that we may do our work as the angels do theirs; and let us be ready for every work, ready to go out or in, to stay or to depart, just as you direct. Lord, let us have no will of our own, or consider our true happiness as depending in the smallest degree on anything that happens to us outwardly, but as consisting totally in conformity to your will.

Henry Martyn

Almighty God, in whom we live and move and have our being, you have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you. Grant us purity of heart and strength of purpose, that no selfish ambition may hinder us from knowing your will, no weakness from doing it; but that in your light we may see light and in your service we may find perfect freedom, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Augustine*

O Lord, you are our Father and we are your children. You are the potter and we are the clay. You are the Creator and we are the work of your hands. You are our shepherd and we are your sheep. You are our Redeemer and we are the people you have redeemed. You are our God and we are your heritage. Deal with us according to your grace, do unto us what seems good and pleasing in your sight.

John Calvin

O Lord, we have nothing to do in this world but to seek and to serve you. We have nothing to do with our heart and its affections but to long for you. We have nothing to do with our tongue and pen but to speak to you and for you and to make known your glory and your will.

Richard Baxter

Keep us, O Lord, while we remain on this earth, in a serious daily seeking after you and in a believing affectionate walking with you; that when you come again, we may be found not hiding our talent, nor serving our flesh, nor asleep with our lamps gone out; but waiting and longing for our Lord, our glorious God, for ever and ever.

Richard Baxter

O Lord, who though you were rich yet for our sakes became poor and you promised in your Gospel that whatever we do for one of the least of these your brothers, we do for you. Give us grace, we humbly pray, to be always willing and ready to serve, as you enable us, the needs of others and to extend the blessings of your kingdom over all the world; to your praise and glory, who are God over all, blessed for ever. *Augustine*

Almighty God, the Protector of all who trust in you, without whose grace nothing is strong, nothing is holy; increase and multiply to us your mercy, that through your holy inspiration we may think the things that are right and by your power may carry them out, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Martin Luther

Eternal God, who has placed all things under the dominion of mankind and has made mankind for your glory; sanctify our souls and bodies, our thoughts and our intentions, our words and our actions. Let our body be the servant of our spirit and both body and spirit servants of Jesus; that doing all things for your glory here, we may share in your glory hereafter, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Jeremy Taylor

Lord Jesus, grant us to know in weakness the strength of your incarnation:
in pain the triumph of your passion:
in poverty the riches of your Godhead:
in reproach the satisfaction of your sympathy:
in loneliness the comfort of your continual presence:
in difficulty the efficacy of your intercession:
in perplexity the guidance of your wisdom;
and by your glorious death and resurrection bring us at last to the joy of seeing you face to face.

Almighty God, who knows our needs before we even ask you and our ignorance in asking; set your servants free from all anxious thoughts about tomorrow; make us content with your good gifts and confirm our faith that as we seek first your kingdom and righteousness, you will not allow us to lack any good thing, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Augustine

O holy Jesus, meek Lamb of God; Bread that came down from heaven; light and life of all trusting souls: help us to a true and living faith in you. Open yourself within us with all your holy nature and Spirit, that we may be born again by you and in you be a new creation, brought alive and revived, led and ruled by your Holy Spirit. *William Law*

Guide us, Gracious Father, through all the changing circumstances of life; that in all things present and future, we may have a calm, consistent and peaceful spirit; our wills completely surrendered to your perfect will; never grumbling or complaining at your gentle rebukes or your wise correction.

Jeremy Taylor

Almighty God, you know our needs even before we ask you, you see our weakness and the troubles we endure. We confess that we stand in need of your comfort, direction and help. You alone know what is best for us. Help us never to dispute your wisdom nor to doubt your goodness. Strengthen our hearts by your grace, so that no hardship may overwhelm us, no trials distress us, no temptations deceive us, nor sin beset us. Grant us a willing spirit to readily accept whatever your providence may order or permit. Spare us from ever

complaining about what you have appointed, or ungrateful for what you have so generously supplied.

Thomas Wilson

Lord God, this is all our desire: to walk along the path of life that you have appointed for each one of us and to walk as Jesus walked, with a steadfast faith, in meekness of spirit, with a humble heart, in gentleness of love. Because outward events have the potential to confuse our thoughts and disturb our inner peace in which your still small voice is heard, be gracious to us and grant to us a calm and serene frame of heart and mind, as we take every thought captive unto Christ. All that we have is yours; do with it what seems best to you. Protect us from becoming too burdened with the cares and responsibilities of life, but bear them with us so that we may follow you in quietness and reverence, filled with thankfulness for your mercy and serving you faithfully, in Jesus' name, Amen

Maria Hare

Lord God, perfect us in love, that we may conquer all selfishness and hatred of others; fill our hearts with your pure joy, and shed abroad in them your peace which passes all understanding; that we may not be overcome by grumbling and complaining attitudes to which we are so prone. Make us like yourself: long-suffering and gentle. Subdue in us our impatience and our short temper and enable us to grow in grace and to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit, to the praise of your glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Henry Alford

Almighty God, give to your servants a meek and gentle spirit, that we may be slow to anger, quick to show mercy and ever ready to forgive. Give us a wise and trusting heart, that we may never be provoked to anger by any wrong that is done to us but, like Jesus, may we not answer back or seek to justify ourselves, but rather refer the matter to you, who judges justly. Deliver us from a complaining or contentious spirit so that as far as it depends upon us we may live at peace with all people. Help us to be ever willing to offer forgiveness, to confess our own mistakes, to seek to put things right and to be reconciled. When sick, or tired, or harassed, deliver us from harshness, ingratitude, or discontent. Rather help us to see your hand at work in the difficult times, refining us, purifying our faith, working all things together for our good and conforming us into the likeness of Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Our heart's desire, Lord God, this day and always, more than anything else, is to please you, to do your will in each and every task and circumstance and when that means submitting to things we would not have chosen for ourselves, grant meekness, patience and humility, subdue self-will in us and make your will our own. May we not think, breathe, speak, or do anything that would displease you, our Father, or that would be dangerous to ourselves or hurtful to our neighbour. May all that we do be in sweet agreement with your good and perfect will, for the advancement of your glory, to the fulfilment of your calling of us and for the good of our neighbour. May we be found not as children of the darkness, but as children of the light and be found walking in the light even as you are in the light, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Heavenly Father, teach us to love as you first loved us, for then to do your will and obey your commandments will not be a burden to us. For to those who love, nothing is too hard, nothing is impossible, because love is stronger than death. Lord God, may your love fill and rule in our hearts. For then there will form and be treasured between us a common bond, a likeness of character and a union of wills, so that we may both choose the things that please you and refuse the things that displease you. May your will be done in us and by us forever. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The Offering

Scripture Sentences Introducing the Offering:

Ephesians 5:1-2;; Matthew 6:19-21; Matthew 10:8b;

Romans 12:6-8; II Corinthians 8:9; II Corinthians 9:6-7; Galatians 6:2;

Hebrews 13:16; Revelation 4:11; 1 Chronicles 29:11; Deuteronomy 15:10,11b;

Psalms 116:12,14; I Corinthians 4:2; I Corinthians 9:10-11; I Chronicles 16:29;

Deuteronomy 12:6; Deuteronomy 16:17; Matthew 5:23-24; Psalm 50:14; Acts

20:35b; I John 3:17-18; Psalm 54:6; Psalm 96:8; Romans 12:1

Sovereign Lord, the earth is yours and everything in it. You own the cattle on a thousand hills; all the trees of the forest are yours and yet you love a cheerful giver. Lord, we gladly give you what is your own, in acknowledgement of the fact that all we have and are comes to us as a gracious gift from you. You have granted us health and strength and skills to be able to work and earn an income, to create wealth, in grateful thanks of which we bring these your tithes and our gifts, the first fruits of all our labours, praying that you will bless both the gift and the giver. Grant wisdom to those entrusted with the management of these funds, that they will be well used for the advancement of your Gospel and kingdom both here and even to the ends of the earth, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Eternal God, every good gift comes from above, a certain sign of our Father's love, in appreciation of which we return thanks by presenting these your tithes and our offerings, the first fruits of our labour, from hearts full of love to you for

your mercy and grace. Be pleased to bless both these gifts and we who bring them, for the advancement of your Gospel and Kingdom, and the glory of your great name, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Heavenly Father, we are mindful that you are concerned, not so much with what is in the hand, but with what is in the heart while the hand is giving. Your acceptance of the widow's mite teaches us that you delight in cheerful and sacrificial giving. As we present your tithes and our offerings before you, cause our hearts to be right with you. Teach us more of what it means to give cheerfully and to store up for ourselves treasure in heaven. Be pleased to bless these gifts and we who bring them, in Jesus' name, Amen.

All things come from you and of your own do we give you. Accept and bless, O God our Father, these our gifts and pour out upon us the spirit of your own abundant giving; that as we have freely received, so we may freely give, to the glory of your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Author unknown*

Almighty God, be pleased to grant that these gifts, being dedicated to your service, may be used for your glory and the good of your church and people, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Author unknown

We thank you, O God, for all your good gifts, which we have received as tokens of your love for us. Accept these gifts, tithes and offerings that we now bring to you as tokens of our gratitude and heartfelt thanks and use them in the service of your kingdom, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

We praise you, Lord Jesus Christ, for your generosity in that you were rich beyond measure, yet for our sake you became poor, so that we, through your poverty, might become rich. With our praise, O Lord, accept these our gifts, and use them for the work of your Gospel and Kingdom, and for the glory of your Name, Amen.

O Lord our God, the giver of every good and perfect gift, who loves a cheerful giver: we humbly ask you to receive and bless these gifts which we present to you, and with them ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Preaching of the Word

I. Before the Sermon

Gracious God, send forth your Holy Spirit to till the soil of human hearts, there to sow the seed of your Word in prepared ground. May your Word, believed and received into glad and obedient hearts, take root, spring up and bear fruit to eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

O Gracious and holy Father, give us wisdom to perceive you, intelligence to understand you, diligence to seek you, patience to wait for you, eyes to see you, ears to hear you, a heart to meditate on you and a life to proclaim you, through the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Benedict, 480-547

Lord God, your holy Word is before us; open to us its sacred truths and enable us to receive it, not as the word of men, but as your Word which lasts forever. Holy Spirit, be our teacher. Enlighten our minds and prepare our hearts. Lead us into all truth. So make us wise unto salvation, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen

Ashton Oxenden

Almighty God, who has taught us that your Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path: grant that we, with all who diligently search the Scriptures, may profit thereby to our teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. So may we walk in the light as you are in the light and so may we

have fellowship with one another and know the power of the blood of Jesus cleansing us from all sin, in Jesus' name, Amen.

O God, whose Word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path: open our eyes that we may behold wonderful things in your Word and rejoice as one who finds great treasure, even the pearl of great price, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Lord God, cause your Word to be written on the tablets of our hearts, so may its life-giving power be evidenced in our lives. Cause us to know the truth so that the truth may set us free, to the glory and praise of Jesus.

Lord God, whose Word is living and active, sharper than a two-edged sword; grant us the grace to receive your truth with faith and love; that by it we may be fed and guided, strengthened and comforted and equipped for every good work, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Most gracious God, our heavenly Father, in whom alone dwells all the fullness of light and wisdom, enlighten our minds by your Holy Spirit truly to understand your Word. Give us grace to receive it reverently and humbly. May it lead us to put our whole trust in you alone and so to serve and honour you that we may glorify your holy name and encourage others by setting a good example.

John Calvin

May the Lord grant that we engage in contemplating the mysteries of his heavenly wisdom with ever increasing devotion, to his glory and to our edification.

John Calvin

We plead with you, O Lord, to enlighten our minds and to strengthen our wills, that we may know what we ought to do and be enabled to do it, through the grace of your Holy Spirit and through the merits of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

William Bright

Give us grace, O Lord, not only to hear your Word with our ears, but also to receive it into our hearts and to show it in our lives, for the glory of your great name, Amen.

Author unknown

O Lord, mercifully give us grace not only to be hearers of the Word, but doers also; not only to love, but also to live your gospel; not only to profess, but also to practise your blessed commandments, for the honour of your holy name.

Thomas Becon

Open my eyes that I may see,
Incline my heart that I may desire,
Order my steps that I may follow
The way of your commandments.

Lancelot Andrewes

O Lord, whom to know is to love, we humbly plead that you will increase in us the knowledge of your truth. In the truth which we know, establish us; whatever we ought to know, teach us; in truths from which we waver, strengthen us; in things concerning which we are deceived, correct us; in things hard to understand, guide us; and from untruths deliver us. Send out your light and your truth and let your Holy Spirit lead us into all truth, until we know fully, even as we are fully known, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen. *“The Preacher’s Prayer”*

Heavenly Father, you have declared that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of your mouth. Cause us this day and always so to hunger and thirst after the truth of your Word that we may eat and be satisfied and that our faith may be nourished and strengthened as we journey along the narrow road that leads to life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord God, whose truth is hidden from the wise and learned, but which is revealed to babies: grant to us pure and childlike hearts, which receive and believe the message of your Word, that being taught by your Spirit, we might behold the wonderful things contained in your word, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

O God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness: we pray you to shine into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of your glory in the face of Jesus Christ; to whom be all praise and honour both now and for evermore, Amen.

II. After the Sermon

Heavenly Father, now may the Spirit, who gave the Word, and called me to be a preacher of it, graciously and powerfully apply it to the hearers, in Jesus' name, Amen. *Henry Martyn*

Almighty God, grant that the Word we have heard this day may not be snatched away by the evil one, nor fall on hard ground, nor be choked by the cares and worries of life, but be received in glad and obedient hearts, that we might truly profit from the Word, so may we be edified and you be glorified, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

God, grant that we may not just be hearers of your Word, but doers also, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Heavenly Father, you have declared that while the grass withers and the flowers fall, your word lasts forever. May your Word be hidden in our hearts and written upon them, that it may last and bear fruit that will last, for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Lord God, you have promised that your Word will not return to you void, but will accomplish the purpose for which you sent it. May you be pleased to send your Holy Spirit to accompany the Word, so that the outward call of the Gospel may combine with the inward call of the Holy Spirit so as to make your grace irresistible. May your good purposes in sending forth your Word be accomplished among us, to the praise of your great grace, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Gracious God; grant that our words may be evidenced in deeds, our profession of faith be demonstrated in practice, our belief in you be backed up by godly behaviour, that there may be within us no contradiction between lip and life, but rather enable us to adorn the Gospel we profess, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Give to us, O Lord, humble, teachable and obedient hearts, that we may receive what you have revealed and do what you have commended. As man lives, not by bread alone, but every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God, cause us ever to hunger after this heavenly food and to find it ample provision for us on our way to eternal life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Dedications

Dedication of Christian Educators

Sovereign Lord, you rule the church by your Word and Spirit and you accept the service of gifted and faithful people. We commend to you now all our Sunday School staff whom we dedicate to the teaching of the Word of God among the children of this congregation.

Empower them by your Spirit. May their manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of Christ. Cause them to be pure in heart, unselfish in service, faithful in prayer, careful in preparation and bold in the proclamation of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Enable them to be zealous for the advancement of your kingdom, persevering, so as not to grow weary in well doing. May you be pleased to give them fruit for their labours in young lives devoted to you. And when the chief shepherd appears, may they hear him say: "Well done, good and faithful servant," may they receive from him a crown of glory that does not fade away, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Dedication of Missionaries

Eternal God, you rule over your church by your Word and Spirit, and you accept the service of faithful people. We commend to you ..., whom we now commission as

Fill him with your Spirit. May his manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Make him pure in heart, unselfish in service, and eager for the advancement of your Kingdom. Keep him faithful, so that when our Lord

returns, he may receive a crown of righteousness that does not fade away, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Dedication of Self

Use me, then, my Saviour, for whatever purpose and in whatever way you may require. Here is my poor heart, an empty vessel; fill it with your grace.

Here is my sinful and troubled soul; quicken it and refresh it with your love. Take my heart for your abode; my mouth to spread abroad the glory of your name; my love and all my powers for the advancement of your believing people; and never suffer the steadfastness and confidence of my faith to abate; so that at all times I may be enabled from the heart to say, "Jesus needs me, and I am his", in Jesus' name, Amen.

Dwight L. Moody

Behold, Lord, an empty vessel that needs to be filled. My Lord, fill it. I am weak in faith; strengthen me. I am cold in love; warm me and make me fervent, that my love may go out to my neighbour. I do not have a strong and firm faith. At times I doubt and am unable to trust you altogether. O Lord, help me. Strengthen my faith and trust in you. In you I have sealed the treasure of all I have. I am poor; you are rich and came to be merciful to the poor. I am a sinner; you are upright. With me there is an abundance of sin; in you is the fullness of righteousness. Therefore I will remain with you, from whom I can receive, but to whom I may not give.

Martin Luther

We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your dear Son, that you have protected us through the night from all danger and harm; and we ask you to preserve and keep us, this day also, from all sin and evil; that in our thoughts, words and deeds, we may serve and please you. Into your hands we commend our bodies and souls and all that is ours. Let your holy angels guard us, that the wicked one may have no power over us.

Martin Luther's Morning Prayer

Almighty, eternal God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, creator of heaven and earth and mankind, together with your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, your Word and Image, and with your Holy Spirit: Have mercy on us, and forgive us all our sins for your Son's sake, whom you have made our Mediator. Guide and sanctify us by your Holy Spirit, who was poured out on the apostles. Grant that we may truly know and praise you throughout eternity.

Philipp Melancthon's Morning Prayer

God, our Father, we know how hard it is to serve you, and how often we fail, but it is our burning desire to proclaim Christ crucified and to be faithful. It is our greatest longing to see all those brought to Christ for whom he died. We pray therefore that you will give us a glad heart in serving you, despite the circumstances, a high and bold expectancy, joy in the midst of apparent frustration and defeat and a determination to live before you in confidence and trust, and not before others. Forgive all our sins in your boundless mercy, we pray, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Lord God, our Father, with what weakness and frailty do we serve you. We are so often discouraged, more than we know. At times we have been despairing and have pitied both ourselves and the church. We pray, Almighty God, ruler of heaven and earth, author of life, God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, that once again you will forgive us, cleanse us, strengthen us, refresh us, revive us and empower us.

Grant us a glimpse into the future of all that you have in store for us and for your people. Capture our minds and our spirits always with that great vision that one day the earth shall be filled with your glory as the waters cover the sea, that your Word must prevail, that your Spirit is invincible.

Cause us to see your vision for your church as a spotless bride, unspeakably beautiful in appearance, faultless in character, prepared for and completely pleasing to her bridegroom, the Lord Jesus. Cause each one of us to lay hold of those means you have supplied for transforming us from what we now are into what we shall be at last. As we do so, cause us to keep our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus, no matter how fierce may be the storm. Help us to see not the wind and the waves, not the threats and the dangers, but the Lord Jesus, walking upon them, ruling over them, mighty to save us.

Lord, we believe, help our unbelief. As you accompanied the three in that fiery furnace, so be with us now through every fiery trial. As their hair was not singed, but only their bonds burnt off, so bring us through all our trials delivered and set free to serve you with renewed vision and energy, by your grace. We confess that this is a day of small things. We find ourselves amid inadequate means, a hostile world and little response, yet remind us of our responsibility to be

faithful and of your will and power to bless. These things we pray in the strong name of Jesus, Amen.

Ordination and Induction of an Elder

Eternal God, who has established your Church on earth with the promise that the gates of hell will not prevail against it and who, by your Holy Spirit, has blessed and guided your Church in all generations, we thank you for your church in this land. We thank you especially today for your Church in this parish, and for those whom you have called to serve you here in the past. We praise you for ..., whom we now ordain and induct into the office of the eldership. Bless him with your Holy Spirit. Deepen his faith in you, our God and Saviour. Enable him to set a good example in his daily life. Give him wisdom in the courts of your Church and love in the service of your people. Keep him zealous for the glory of God and the extension of your Kingdom, and grant that when his labours are ended, he may hear the welcoming words of his Redeemer and Lord, saying: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord", through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Close of Worship

Be with us, Lord God, as we go back into the world to love and serve you. May the lips that have sung your praises always speak the truth in love. May the ears that have heard your Word be shut to what is evil. May the feet that brought us to this house of prayer always walk in your ways, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Author unknown

May God give us light to guide us, courage to support us, and love to unite us, now and always.

Go into the world in peace to love and serve the Lord

Let your mighty outstretched arm, O Lord God, be our defence; your mercy and loving-kindness in Jesus Christ, your dear Son, our salvation; your true word our instruction; the grace of your life-giving Spirit our comfort and consolation, to the end and in the end; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

John Knox, Book of Common Order, 1564

Heavenly Father, be pleased to accept and bless all that we have offered to you in this act of worship; and give us grace to show your praise not only with our lips, but in our lives, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Author unknown

Grant, O Lord, that we may live in your fear, die in your favour, rest in your peace, rise in your power, reign in your glory; for your own beloved Son's sake, Jesus Christ our Lord.

William Laud

Charges

Go out into the world in peace; have courage; hold on to what is good; return no one evil for evil; bind up the broken-hearted; support the weak, and help the suffering; honour everyone; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. I Cor 16:13; II Tim 2:1; Eph 6:10; I Thess 5:12-22; I Peter 2:17.

Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous and strong. Let all that you do be done in love. I Cor 16:13,14

Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through him. Col 3:17

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
Micah 6:8

Go forth in the name of the Lord. This is God's charge: to you: "to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us". I John 3:23

Go into the world in peace to love and serve the Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. The second is like it: Love your neighbour as

yourself. Everything in the law and the prophets hangs on these two commandments. Matt 22:37-40

Blessings and Benedictions

Bless all who worship you,
From the rising of the sun
Unto the going down of the same.
Of your goodness, give us;
With your love, inspire us;
By your Spirit, guide us;
By your power, protect us;
In your mercy, receive us,
Now and always.

5th Century

Unto God's gracious mercy and protection we commit you.
The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

Aaronic Blessing Numbers 6:24-26

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord be gracious to you.
The Lord look with favour upon you,
and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

The Grace, II Corinthians 13:14

"May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Hebrews 13:20-21

"May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it."

I Thessalonians 5:23-24

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Romans 15:13

May the grace of Christ our Saviour,
And the Father's boundless love,
With the Holy Spirit's favour,
Rest upon you from above. *John Newton*

The grace of God the Father and the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, dwell in us forever.

John Calvin

The almighty God, Father of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, mercifully protect you, strengthen you and guide you.

Philipp Melancthon

May the great shepherd and guardian of our souls, Jesus our Lord, so strengthen and assist your troubled hearts with the mighty comfort of the Holy Spirit, that neither earthly tyrants, nor worldly torments, may have any power to drive you from the hope and expectation of that kingdom, which for the elect was prepared from the beginning, by our heavenly Father, to whom be all praise and honour, both now and for ever.

John Knox

May the almighty God, Father of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who through his gospel is gathering an eternal church among men and women, strengthen you in body and soul and graciously keep and guide you, world without end.

Philipp Melancthon

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord: and the

blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always.

Book of Common Order

Blessing and honour, glory and power, more than we could ever give
Be unto you, Almighty God, blessed Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit
By all angels, all people, all creatures, for ever and ever, Amen and Amen.
May the love of the Father enfold you,
The wisdom of the Son enlighten you,
The fire of the Spirit enflame you;
and may the blessing of the Triune God:
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
remain with you, both now and for evermore.

Prayers for Special Occasions

Christmas

Christmas: Calls to Worship

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... Through him all the worlds were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.” John 1:1-5

“Christ is the image of the invisible God, the first-born over all creation. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” Colossians 1:15,17

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” John 1:14

“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets, ... but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, ... who is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being.” Hebrews 1:1-3

“... God who said: "Let light shine out of darkness", made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” 2 Corinthians 4:6

Gracious God, our loving heavenly Father, how can we ever thank you enough for the greatest of all your gifts to us, the gift of your Son, eternal and uncreated, to become our redeemer, our sacrifice, our substitute, our Saviour?

How can we ever begin to comprehend what Christ set aside in terms of all the riches and privileges of heaven, in order to humble himself and become one of us, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, and in weakness to be tempted in every way, just like us, yet without sin?

We sense something of the wonder of the coming of Christ: he came below to raise us above; he was born like us that we might become like him; he became a child of men that we might become children of God.

We sense something of the love of God in Christ: for when we could do nothing to lift ourselves out of our sin into the glorious light of your presence, you drew near to us in Christ to raise us up and take us home.

We sense something of your wisdom displayed in Christ: for when we were lost in sin, with no desire to return to the Father, and no ability to find a way, he came, God incarnate, to save us completely and, as a man, to die our death, bear our guilt and suffer our shame.

Lord God, lead us by your Spirit, as you did the watchful shepherds, to hear the good news of great joy, and hearing, to believe, rejoice and worship.

Lord God, lead us by your Spirit, as you did the wise men from the east, to seek after the Saviour, to continue searching until we find and then to lay before him

the best gifts we can possibly offer: our trust, obedience, our very selves in humble service.

Lord God, lead us by your Spirit, as you did the aged Simeon, to embrace the Saviour with undying faith, so to experience the blessing of being able to live in peace, and indeed to depart in peace, for we have seen and known the Lord.

Lord God, lead us by your Spirit, to look into our Redeemer's face, to count ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus, reconciled to you, our Father, by the mediating work of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Prayers for the People

Loving heavenly Father, when we celebrate Christmas, we celebrate your love.

We celebrate the fact that your love for us was so great, that you could not remain aloof from us in the perfection of your heaven, indifferent to our plight in sin and unconcerned about our desperate spiritual need.

We celebrate the fact that in your love, you refused to accept our failure as final.

We celebrate the fact that your love for all your lost and unhappy children led you to send your Son, who left behind the glories of Heaven and took the initiative to help us in our desperate need.

We celebrate your love which led you to act, to come looking, to come to our rescue.

We celebrate your love, which reaches down to us, which meets us at our point of need, which comes to us in our sinfulness and despair.

We celebrate your love, which seeks and saves lost people. We were once lost, but now we are found. This is all because you sent Jesus to come looking for us and to rescue us. How we celebrate your love!

When we remember what we once were, we celebrate your love so much more. We had foolishly wandered astray, we had each one gone our own way. We had cut ourselves off from your gracious presence, and become isolated from your tender care. We had thrown off your authority and lived life on our own terms. We had become completely lost, wandering aimlessly through life, with no direction, no purpose, no joy, no fulfilment and no hope.

However, while we rejected you, while we turned our backs on you, while we had no love for you, you continued to love us, you never gave up on us, you were determined to find us and save us and bring us home once again.

How we praise you for your unwavering commitment to us! How we praise you that you were willing to keep on searching until you found us, no matter how long or costly the search! We praise you too for your concern for each and every one of your lost and unhappy children. We are amazed by the thought that there is great rejoicing in Heaven over one sinner who repents, we are amazed by the thought that you should take pleasure in us, that you should rejoice over us, that you should go to so much trouble because of us.

We praise you, Father that you delight to show mercy. We praise you that you take no pleasure in the death of the wicked. We praise you that there is no sin so black, no past so dark, no life so lost as to be beyond your love and care.

Today, we celebrate your love. Accept our stumbling phrases, our feeble words, our imperfect expressions of thankfulness and gratitude for all that you have done for us your people, in the person of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Loving heavenly Father, as we come to celebrate the Saviour's birth once again, help us to realise that salvation does not come cheaply or easily. It comes at a cost, by way of the cross. Help us to understand then that the beauty and simplicity of the birth must give way to the brutality and cruelty of the cross. Help us to see Christ's birth as part of your even greater plan of salvation, which was finished at the cross and which has now been applied to our hearts by faith. Help us to capture the awesome moment of Christ's birth: the Creator God became a man; the creator of men became a man; the author of life came to share life with us on equal terms.

Help us also to understand in Christ's birth the outworking of your ancient plans and purposes: the long awaited Messiah had come to save his people from their sins; the King of kings and Lord of lords had come; the Master was here-- yet he willingly rejected the life of a master.

We praise you for the humility of Jesus: he set aside his heavenly glory; he took upon himself our humanity; he submitted himself to human authorities; embraced the vocation of a servant; he grew up in the house of a working class

man; by hardship and suffering he learnt obedience; he lived life at our level and, as he did so, learnt to sympathise with us in our weaknesses.

We praise you for the perfection of Jesus: that as a man, he lived the one solitary perfect life that has ever been lived, the life we have all failed to live; that though he was tempted in every way, just like us, he did not give in, he remained without sin.

We praise you that Jesus then voluntarily offered up his perfect life to you, our God as an acceptable sacrifice for sins. There at the cross what happened to him should have happened to us. When he died, he died for us. When he suffered, he suffered in our place. When he hung upon the cross, he hung there as our substitute.

Father, we celebrate the birth of Christ, because he is our mighty Saviour, the bringer of forgiveness, the one who has made peace through his blood shed on the cross. In Christ, you have provided a way for sinful people to return to you, our Holy God. Friendship with you is what we now enjoy, indeed adoption into your family as one of your own sons and daughters.

Glory be to you, our Father, for such a great deliverance achieved in the sending of your Son to be our Saviour, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Heavenly King, yet born of Mary; Jesus Christ, Son of God, we praise and worship you.

Eternal Word, yet child without speech; Jesus Christ, Son of God, we praise and worship you.

Robed in glory, yet wrapped in infant's clothes; Jesus Christ, Son of God, we praise and worship you.

Lord of heaven and earth, yet laid in a manger; Jesus Christ, Son of God, we praise and worship you.

We thank you for being our Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. At this Christmas season, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness. As you sent your messengers, the prophets, to prepare the way of salvation, so prepare our souls to meet you, and help us to pursue those things that will nurture faith in you. Make us conscious of your presence with us now as we celebrate the coming of your great salvation, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Prayers for the People

Dear Lord Jesus, there is a lot about your birth that we do not understand, but we understand enough to be amazed, just as the shepherds were amazed out in the fields that night. Forgive us for not marvelling more at such a gift, for not pondering more this great message in our hearts. Help us to remember you and help us to notice someone who needs to be told about your love for them. Give

us the courage to spread the good news, just as the shepherds did when they first heard it, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Almighty God, you are the author of history. You created the heavens and the earth, all that is seen and unseen. In the fullness of time, your Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. Open our eyes so that we cannot overlook the coming of your only begotten Son. Purify our hearts as we await his coming in glory, in his name we pray, Amen.

Heavenly Father, forgive us for seeking to remove your influence from our lives today. We confess our rebellion against your absolute sovereign lordship, and ask that you would create in us, instead, a deep desire for you to rule over us. Enable us to delight in this little child who is now King of kings and Lord of lords, and to show our love for him through our obedience, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Lord God, thank you for visiting your people with salvation. How you have cared for us, as a shepherd over his sheep, as a father with his children! Look upon our joy this day as we celebrate the Messiah's birth and cause us to look upon Jesus, the shepherd and guardian of our souls, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Great God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you sent your Son to preach good news to the poor, to bring sight to the blind, to announce freedom to the captives and salvation to your people. Come to us now by your Holy Spirit and break down the barriers which divide, that we may truly love one another:

We remember the selfishness of those in Bethlehem who would not give up their bed for Mary to give birth, who remained indifferent to her need and who slept in ignorance as the Christ child was born. Lord, help us to break free from indifference so as to respond to you with integrity and sincerity of faith and genuinely to care for people in need. In particular, we pray for the starving, the homeless, the unemployed and the poor.

Heavenly Father, whose children suffered at the hands of Herod though they had done no wrong: help us to defend all your children from cruelty, oppression and exploitation, to defend the defenceless and speak up for those who have no voice.

Heavenly Father, as the family of Jesus was forced to flee to Egypt and so escape the hatred of Herod, so we remember today all refugees, victims of political, racial or religious hatred, bigotry and prejudice. We pray for persecuted minorities, all oppressed by sectarian or cold religious attitudes, all oppressed by racist politics, force or intimidation. Our God and Father, we bring these before you.

We also pray for those who seek to remove oppression by patience, persuasion, courage and love. For all who work towards the alleviation of suffering and misery, who fight for justice and fairness for all, we ask your grace.

We pray for those who feel compelled to resort to violence in order to oppose violence, that they may not be corrupted or oppressive themselves, but rather leave room for faith, for you to avenge, and for you to repay.

For all who give their lives to bring to others wholeness and salvation, we ask for strength. For us all in this country, who have more than enough of everything, we ask for compassion towards the plight of those in far off places who do not have enough of anything.

For families united in faith and love, we pray that you will strengthen the ties that bind us together.

For families divided and fractured, we pray that you will bring healing, wholeness and reconciliation.

For families to whom has been added the gift of new life, we rejoice with them and commend them to your grace and favour.

For families who, this Christmas, feel the empty space left behind by a loved one departed, we ask your comfort and your peace.

We ask your presence, protection, and power to be upon us all, and all whom we love, both near and far, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Prayers for the People

Lord God, we rejoice again this Christmas time at the coming of your Son. We ask that our celebration will be marked by our giving rather than our receiving, by joy rather than indulgence, by true peace rather than stress.

We recognise that the story of Christmas reveals your character and values: awesome power and breathtaking simplicity, gracious love and unfailing mercy.

Help us, our Father, to demonstrate the reality of the presence of Christ in our lives. Help us to have a faith like that of Mary, trust like that of Joseph. Help us to know the obedience of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men and the joy of the angels.

Above all, Father, we pray that we may know the experience this Christmas of your coming to us in the person of your Son, in the power of your Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

O God, our loving Father, help us rightly to remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds and the worship of the wise men. May Christmas morning make us happy to be your children and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.

R. L. Stevenson

Gracious Father, how we worship you for your indescribable gift of Emmanuel: God with us. We thank you for promises that foretold his coming, preparing the way of the Lord. We honour you for his miraculous conception and birth. Indeed, the King has come. We celebrate Messiah's birth, for he is the radiance of your glory, the exact representation of your being. You were pleased to have all your fullness dwell in him. We have beheld the glory of you, our God, in the face of Christ, who is full of grace and truth.

We thank you for the mystery and the simplicity of his birth. We honour you for the meekness and majesty of his person. And we praise you for the humility and the glory of his work. We remember with deep gratitude in our hearts how you, the Creator of men, became a man, how you, the Almighty became a helpless baby, how the King of kings and Lord of lords became the servant of all.

We remember, Father, that when Jesus was born, all Heaven and earth rejoiced. We remember how the angels sang: "Glory to God in the highest," because the bringer of forgiveness had come, and we realise that they continue to rejoice each time Christ's forgiveness is received. May the angels have cause to rejoice again today.

We remember how the humble shepherds worshipped, and we realise that we can only worship you still with a humble and contrite heart. Give us humility to worship you this day in spirit and in truth.

We remember how the wise men sought him and we realise that wise men seek him still. Give us wisdom to seek after the Lord Jesus with our whole heart and to go on seeking until we find.

Grant us grace so to respond to the Saviour's birth, that we may rejoice with trembling and stand in awe of the dignity of the person who came into the world to save sinners. Grant us the faith to receive him and to believe in his name, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Lord Jesus, we thank you for being our Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace. At this Christmas season, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness. As you sent your messengers the prophets to prepare the way of salvation, so prepare our souls to meet you and help us to pursue those things that will nurture faith in you. Make us aware of your presence with us now as we celebrate the dawning of your everlasting light, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Year's End

Gracious Father, we worship you as Sovereign Lord, Ancient of Days, Eternal God. Lord Jesus Christ, we honour you as the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

With you a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like one day. You rule over time and history. You rule with infinite wisdom, scrupulous justice and unbounded love. You are good when you give and when you take away, when you cause the sun to shine and the rain to fall.

You have loved your people with an everlasting love and your love continues toward us still. Your goodness has been with us throughout another year and as your goodness has been with us in the past, so also, your goodness will continue to be with us in the coming year.

We are so grateful that in the year past, you have kept us from doubting or distrusting you. You have kept us from being ashamed of you or your Gospel. You have kept us from rebellion and sin. Thank you for keeping us in your love, within your will and purpose. When we have strayed, you have brought us back. When we have erred, you have corrected us. When we have been in want, you have provided for us. When we have been in despair, you have lifted us up. When we have wept, you have comforted us. When we have rejoiced, you have delighted in us. When we have cried out to you, you have heard us. You have been so good and gracious towards us.

As we prepare to launch into what is to us an unknown future, we praise you, Father, that you are the Captain and Guardian of our souls. We ask that you will guide our future as you have our past, for you know the end from the beginning. So, we praise you that if you have appointed trouble or hardship, you will be with us in it; if you have appointed testing or temptation, you will provide a way of escape; if you have appointed that we depart this life, then we shall sooner see your face and behold your glory; if you have appointed pain or suffering, then your grace will be sufficient for us, and our faith will not fail; if you call us to some new service for you, then we know that you will gift and equip us for the task. Our humble prayer is that you will bring glory to yourself in us, whether through comfort or hardship, as an instrument in your hands, suitable for your use, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Valley of Vision

New Year

Loving Father, at the beginning of this new year, we pray that you will establish more firmly in us a right heart attitude toward you.

Give us first a sense of our spiritual poverty before you. Bring us low. Make us humble. Break our pride and our independent spirit for you send the rich away empty, but you grant your kingdom to the poor in spirit.

Give us tender hearts that are grieved by sin in ourselves and by injustice in the world. Grant us true repentance. May our spirit be ever broken and our heart ever contrite before you, for you give grace to the humble; you comfort those who mourn; you bind up the broken-hearted.

Give us faith to accept your will with patience and contentment. Grant to us a meek and gentle spirit that does not struggle or strive, but that waits patiently for the Lord.

Father, increase in us our one great spiritual purpose in life--which is to seek first your kingdom and your righteousness. May this be our chief motive and our constant goal throughout the coming year. May we hunger and thirst after righteousness. May we grow in godliness and holiness. May we grow in maturity of faith and become more conformed to the image of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Lord, if we are ever to know peace and joy throughout the coming year, we realise that first our hearts need to be right with you, our God. Help us in these areas of our relationship with you. May we do everything in our power to walk closely with you through faith in Jesus and may we allow nothing and no one to distract us or turn us aside from that.

Also Father, at the beginning of this new year, we ask your grace to be better servants, to be more faithful stewards, more courageous witnesses for you in the world.

Give us a heart full of compassion for the lost. Enable us to show mercy to those in need. Enable us to break free from apathy and complacency. Help us to show we care and so show the love of Christ.

Help us to be completely pure and good and true in all our dealings with others. Purge away all falsehood and deceit. Help us to be completely honest, loyal, faithful and sincere.

Enable us to be channels of your peace. Help us to turn the other cheek. Give us the strength to absorb the shock of bad or unfair treatment without resentment or retaliation. If we experience persecution as Christians, may we count it a privilege to be considered worthy of suffering for the sake of Christ.

So, may our walk be close to you and our lives count for you in the world. You are the potter and we are the clay. Make us and mould us according to your will, in Jesus' name, Amen.

New Year Thanksgiving

For the year that is past: Lord, we thank you.

For your mercies, which are new every morning and fresh every moment: Lord, we thank you.

For new discoveries of your grace, and fresh opportunities to do your will: Lord, we thank you.

For our life in Christ, which gives us hope for the future: Lord, we thank you.

Lord, we thank you that you walk beside us--your mighty hand to hold us up, your heart of love to guide us, and your outstretched arms to meet us at our journey's end, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Lord, Amen.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations; before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are our God.

A thousand years in your sight are like a day gone by, like a watch in the night.

The length of our years is seventy--or eighty if we have the strength: yet they quickly pass and we fly away.

Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Satisfy us every morning with you unfailing love that we may sing for joy and be glad the whole day long. Make up for our bad days with as many days of happiness, with as many happy years as our years of sorrow.

Show us, your servants, your wonderful deeds, show your glory to our children.

O Lord our God, let your favour rest upon us; bless our work and make it endure: yes, Lord, establish the work of our hands, Amen. *From Psalm 90*

Easter

The Cross

O God our Father, you loved the world so much that you sent your only Son to die that we might live through him. We praise you that in the way that he died and in the death that he died, such grace and godliness was seen, that the place of defeat became the place of victory, the place of death became the place of life, the place of despair became the place of hope. Amidst the horror, the cruelty, the injustice, the hate of the cross, we see nevertheless the mercy, the beauty and the grace of Jesus.

For the willingness of Jesus to forgive his persecutors in the face of bitter hatred, Father, we thank you and praise your holy name.

For the promise of heaven given by Jesus to the repentant thief, Father, we thank you and praise you holy name.

For the example of Jesus' compassion to the last in making provision for his mother, Father, we thank you and praise your holy name.

For Jesus identifying with us so completely, and as a man, taking our place, dying our death and suffering our shame, Father, we thank you and praise your holy name.

For Jesus bearing in his own body the full weight of the world's sin and the full force of the your anger against sin, for his willingness to be cursed, forsaken,

despised, rejected, by you, his own heavenly Father, on account of our sins, Father, we thank you and praise your holy name.

For the completion of the saving work of Jesus upon the cross, for the fact that he has paid in full the price of our sins, such that now no sin need remain unforgiven, Father, we thank you and praise your holy name.

For the triumph of Jesus over death and the certainty of eternal life, Father, we thank you and praise your holy name.

Father, as you have loved us, so by your grace, help us to love one another, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Father God, the grace and goodness of our Saviour as he willingly gave up his life of his own accord, as an atonement for our sin, is in sharp contrast with the conduct of those associated with him at the time of his death. As we reflect upon our own lives, we honestly confess that we see so much of ourselves in them.

Lord, deliver us from the disciples' apathy and indifference, who in the garden of Gethsemane, failed to watch and pray with him, but fell asleep three times. Grant us a watchfulness and vigilance that is ever alert to the leading of your Spirit. Lord, in our relationship with you, make us responsive.

Lord, deliver us from the duplicity of Judas, whose heart became captivated by a love of money, whose loyalty could be bought and who sold the Lord of glory into the hands of his enemies for thirty pieces of silver. Grant us an obedience

which seeks first your Kingdom and your righteousness, rather than worldly gain. Lord, in your service, make us faithful.

Lord, deliver us from the High Priests' deviousness, who in the name of religion and piety, demonstrated extreme prejudice and harboured bitter hatred in their hearts toward the promised Messiah, were willing to sacrifice truth and to pervert justice in order to do away with a so called troublemaker. Grant to us a religion of integrity which is open to your Spirit and full of love. Lord, in our religion, make us honest.

Lord, deliver us from Peter's denial, who despite extravagant claims of loyalty, followed at a distance, until the human cost became too great and then three times denied his Lord. Grant us a courage which will not hesitate to acknowledge our Master, may we never be ashamed to own our Lord. Father, in our discipleship, make us true.

Lord, deliver us from Pilate's dereliction of duty, who for reasons of political expediency and personal popularity followed neither truth nor the promptings of conscience, who although he found no wrong in Jesus, nevertheless handed him over to be crucified. Grant us a social awareness that does not wash its hands of justice. Lord, in our care for others, make us merciful.

Lord Jesus Christ, by your cross and precious blood, you have redeemed us. Save us and help us we humbly pray, in your precious name, Amen.

Prayers for the People

Lord Jesus Christ, as we consider the cross on which you died and the sacrifice which you made there, we see the utter sinfulness of sin. We see our wrongdoing, which caused you to be made a curse. We see our rebellion which deserves your Father's righteous anger.

We become conscious of our guilt by your crown of thorns, your pierced hands and feet, your bruised and broken body, your utter forsakenness.

Your blood is the blood of incarnate God, of infinite worth, beyond value. How great must be the evil and guilt of sin that demands so high a price!

Sin is such a powerful enemy within. It is present from birth and it darkens our mind, it hardens our heart, it corrupts our conscience and it tarnishes even our best efforts.

Sinners as we are, why should the sun continue to shine upon us, or the air give us breath, or the earth bear us up, or the fruits of the field nourish us?

Yet your compassion reaches out to us, your heart grieves for us, your love endured our curse, your mercy bore our punishment, your grace grants us forgiveness, pardon and peace.

Help us to walk anew in the light of your grace, broken and humble before you, washed continually in the blood of sacrifice, cleansed of a guilty conscience, raised to a whole new way of life, mighty and triumphant as heirs of salvation, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen. *Valley of Vision*

Lord Jesus, you are my righteousness, I am your sin. You have taken upon yourself what is mine, and given me what is yours. You have made yourself what I was not, by taking to yourself what you were not.

Martin Luther

The Resurrection

Our Lord Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, we praise you for changed lives and new hopes at Easter. You came to Mary in the garden, and turned her tears into joy. For your love and mercy, we give you thanks, O God.

You came to the disciples in the upper room and turned their fear into courage. For your love and mercy, we give you thanks, O God.

You came to the disciples by the lakeside and turned their failure into faith. For your love and mercy, we give you thanks, O God.

You came to the disciples on the Emmaus road and turned their despair into hope. For your love and mercy, we give you thanks, O God.

You come to us in our unworthiness and shame, and turn our weakness into triumph. For your love and mercy, we give you thanks, O God.

Lord Jesus, wherever there are tears, or fears, or failure, or weakness, or despair, come reveal to us your love, your mercy and your risen power.

Lord, you have broken for us the chains of sin and have brought us into fellowship with our Heavenly Father.

You have overcome death and have opened up for us the gates of everlasting life. Now, wherever two or three are gathered together in your name, there you are in the midst. Now you ever live to intercede for us at the Father's right hand.

Your love and mercy have indeed been revealed to us in resurrection power. For these and all the benefits of your resurrection, we give you thanks, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Prayers for the People

We praise and worship you, our Gracious God, for you have caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. We praise and honour you that you have bestowed upon us a rich inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade, kept in Heaven for us. We praise and adore you that you have secured for us a new hope and a new future by means of the decisive victory won by Christ over sin and death.

We worship you that Christ has spoiled the strong man, has defeated the Devil, and has triumphed over him, making a public spectacle of him by the cross. He has crushed the serpent's head, and now all the powers of darkness are in confusion and retreat. We worship you that Christ has risen triumphant from the grave, he has burst open the gates of Hell and the captives may now go free. Indeed, the people walking in darkness have seen a great light. We, who all our lives were held captive by our fear of death, have been released.

We worship you, Lord God, that Christ has broken Satan's dark dominion over us. Our minds once darkened, have been filled with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Our hearts once hardened by

sin's deceitfulness, have now been replaced with hearts of flesh, which are sensitive to sin's slightest touch, which recoil from all evil and which beat with a fervent love for you, our God. Our wills once fast bound and enslaved by sin, capable only of doing the Devil's bidding, have now been set free. We are now bond-slaves of Jesus Christ, our heart's desire is now to do your will, O God.

We praise you, Gracious Father, for such a mighty Saviour you have given to us. We praise you, Jesus Christ, for such a full salvation you have accomplished for us. We praise you, Holy Spirit, for convicting us of sin, for applying to us the saving grace of Christ and for keeping us in the faith, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Ascension

Lord Jesus Christ, you were born of the virgin Mary, suffered and died, rose again from the dead and ascended into heaven all for our sakes.

Your departure from this world when you returned to the Father, was not a token of separation but a pledge of your future return. Your Word, promises, and sacraments proclaim your death until you come again. That great day in the future holds no fears for us, for your Spirit fills us, your love compels us, your Word directs us.

We have trusted you and you have not betrayed our trust. We have waited for you and we have not waited in vain. You will come to raise our bodies from the dust, by the power of your resurrection, by a work of love and power far greater than that which gives life to the earth. You will come to take us to be with you

so that where you are, there we may be also. You will come to take us to that mansion with many rooms, which even now you are preparing for those who love you.

We praise you that then, by your mighty power, we who are corruptible will put on incorruption, we who are mortal will put on immortality; our natural bodies will be changed in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet, and we shall inherit our resurrection body.

We praise you that then all things shall be made new. We praise you that then there will be no more suffering, crying, pain or death. You shall wipe all tears from our eyes. We shall mount up with wings like eagles. We shall run and not grow weary. We shall walk and not faint.

We triumph now in your promises and eagerly await their fulfilment. We realise that there will be a day of accounting for the people of God, but we rejoice in the fact that, even now, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. And we rejoice in the fact that, after judgment, there awaits peace, rest, life, service, employment and enjoyment for the people of God in the perfection of your heaven.

Lord God, keep us ever in the faith and ever looking for Christ's return, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Almighty God, we believe that your only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, has ascended into Heaven and is seated at your right hand, so may our prayers ascend to your throne. Enable us by faith to believe that even now we are seated

with Christ in heavenly place and that one great day in the future, we shall reign with him in glory.

Jesus Christ, King of glory, you have entered through the everlasting gates, you have ascended your Father's throne and have opened up the kingdom of heaven to all believers: grant that, as long as you reign in heaven, we may not bow down to the things of this earth, but that our hearts may be lifted up into the light of your presence, so as to be assured that even now we are seated with Christ in heavenly places as to guarantee our entrance into our heavenly rest, there to be with you, our Redeemer, who has gone before to prepare a place for all who love you.

Pentecost

Spirit of the Living God, as Heaven is full of God's glory, so may our lives be full of you. We ask that you possess us fully: body, mind and spirit. For all God's purposes of love and all Christ's saving power achieve no fulfilment in us apart from your working within us, regenerating us by your power, giving us the gift of faith to receive Christ and his forgiveness, opening up our minds and our understanding to the realities of the spiritual world and to things as yet unseen.

We are ever so mindful of our need for you to fill us with your presence as we remember our coldness, poverty, emptiness, our imperfect vision, our poor service, our faltering prayers, our weak praises. Spare us from grieving you or resisting you.

Come in power to purge away all that is impure and imperfect in us, so as to reign supreme in us and to make us completely yours.

Come as teacher and lead us into all truth, enlighten our mind's understanding to the message of your Word.

Come in love to help us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

Come in joy to move us, enthuse us, energise us in the Lord's service.

Come as sanctifier, so as to conform us more to the likeness of Christ.

Come as helper and guide, to strengthen, to bless and keep, directing our every step.

Come as comforter, to impart assurance of sins forgiven and peace with God and the hope of heaven. Testify with our spirits that we are indeed God's children.

Come move in us, unseen as the wind, to impart your gifts and to bring forth your fruit in our lives. Bring order out of chaos, take away our confusion and replace it with the beauty of your peace.

May the beauty of your presence and power be increased in us, so that our lives in every part be filled with praise and testify to the indwelling Spirit of God, who gives us life, in Jesus' Name, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Lord Jesus Christ, fill us with your Spirit so that, in every part, our lives may show forth your grace and declare your praise. In our spiritual blindness, send your Spirit that we may see. In our darkness, may he shine your light.

May he grant us the faith to see and to believe that our names are written on the palms of your hands; that our lives have been redeemed by your shed blood; that our sinfulness is now covered by your life of perfect obedience; that we are now the apple of your eye.

Refresh our hearts by your Spirit's grace, that we may realise that nothing can separate us from your love; that you have committed yourself to us in righteousness, mercy and faithfulness; that we are one with you as the head is to the body, as the branch is to the vine, as a building is to its foundations.

May the comforting ministry of your Spirit soothe our sorrows, strengthen us in times of weakness, revive us in our tiredness and cause us to be rich in love and good deeds.

By his might may you establish us in peace and gladness, may you cause us to be powerful in prayer, may you create and grow in us an undying love for you.

Send your Spirit to prick our consciences, by your Word to convict of sin, of righteousness and of judgment to come. May he search our hearts, and so reveal to us more of the deceitfulness of what is hidden there, so may we all the more run to you, lay hold of you and seek forgiveness, pardon and peace in you, as the beginning and end of our salvation.

May we never quench your Spirit by indifference or ignorance. May we never grieve your Spirit by coldness of heart or lack of love. May we never resist your Spirit by rebellion and sin.

Hear and answer our prayer, for your great name's sake, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Harvest Thanksgiving

Gracious Father, we acknowledge your generous provision of all that we need for life in this your world. We honour you as creator and sustainer of all life. We celebrate the open-handed way in which you satisfy the desires of every living thing. You are a promise-keeping God. You are a God of love. You are gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. You uphold those who fall. You lift up those who are bowed down. You give seed to the sower and bread to the eater. You give us our food at the proper time. You open our mouth and fill it. Indeed, you have filled our lives with good things.

Father, we confess that although we have received your gifts freely, we have often used them carelessly, and we have acted as though we were not grateful. When we enjoy the fruits of the harvest but forget they come from you, Father forgive us and help us. When we are full and satisfied but ignore the cry of the hungry and turn a blind eye to those in need, Father forgive us and help us. When we are thoughtless and do not treat with respect or care the wonderful world you have made, Father forgive us and help us.

Almighty God, we offer to you our heartfelt gratitude for your fatherly goodness and care in giving us the fruits of the earth in their season. Stir us up today always to consider our priorities and the way we live. Give us grace to use your gifts rightly, for your glory, for our own well being and for the relief of those in need, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Prayers for the People

Father, how thankful we are to you for creating the world, for sustaining it and caring for it, making it rich and fertile. You cause the sun to rise and set and the rain to fall on the just and the unjust alike. You fill the streams with water. You send rain on the fields to soften the soil and make the young plants grow. You cover the pastures with herds, the hills with sheep and the fields with grain. You give us warm summers ideal for ripening the fruit of trees and vines.

Father, we gratefully acknowledge our dependence upon you for the good things we enjoy: for the fruit of the earth; for the harvest of the seas; for the wealth of the mines; for the beauty of the world in which we live.

Heavenly Father, giver of all things, make us more thankful for what we have received, make us more content with what we have, make us more mindful of people in need and make us more ready to help and serve them in whatever way we can, as good servants of Jesus Christ.

Help us never to take your gifts for granted. Having been so richly blessed in this land with more than enough of everything, help us to live simply and sacrificially so that we can give generously to support those in other places not so

blessed, who do not have enough of anything and who eke out a meagre existence here upon the earth, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Almighty God, Lord of Heaven and earth, in whom we live and move and have our being; who is good to all and whose tender mercies are over all your works, making the sun to rise on the evil and the good and who sends the rain on the just and the unjust alike; look with favour on us your servants, who call upon your name and send us your blessings from heaven, in giving us fruitful seasons, and satisfying us with food and gladness; that both our hearts and mouths will be continually filled with your praise, giving thanks to you always; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

John Cosin

Almighty God, you sustain all things by your word of power. You cause the sun to rise and the rain to fall. We thank you for seedtime and harvest and seasons for planting and reaping. You give seed to the sower and bread to the eater. You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. We thank you for the fertility of the soil, the powerful potential that is contained in a seed, and for the rain which you send from heaven to water the seed, causing it to bud and flourish. We thank you for the warmth of the sun that ripens the fruits of the earth and for those who labour to bring in an abundant harvest. For these and all your mercies, we give you thanks. Give us a fresh understanding of your many mercies and lives which are given back to you in holiness, obedience and love, through all our days, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Gracious Father, you open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing. You are good to all and your tender mercies are over all your works. You show to us your love and kindness in the bountiful harvest of the land and sea. Save us from selfish misuse of your gifts and the exploitation of our natural resources, so that generations to come may yet praise you for your bounty and give you thanks for your generous provision for their needs too. Also, mindful of our bounty and prosperity, save us from becoming so preoccupied with material things we forget those things that are spiritual and eternal. Save us from gaining the whole world, only to lose our own souls.

Marriage

“Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labour in vain.”
Psalm 127:1

“My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.”
Psalm 121:2

“This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”
Psalm 118:24

“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.” I John 4:7

“God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him.”
1 John 4:16b

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear.” I John 4:18a

“We love because he first loved us” I John 4:19

Lord Jesus Christ, who by your presence and power gladdened the wedding in Cana of Galilee, so by your presence now bring joy to this wedding. Bless those about to be married, that there may be truth at the beginning of their lives together, unselfishness all the way and perseverance to the end. May their hopes be realised and their love for each other deepen and grow. And rejoicing today in all your gifts, may they at length celebrate, with Christ, the marriage feast of Heaven, which has no end, Amen.

We thank you, Lord, for the dawning of this day and for your love which is new every morning. We pray for those who are to be married today and ask that you will give them great joy in the fulfilment of their love. We ask you to bless their parents with a sense of your nearness and a great consciousness of belonging to each other; and to all who are called to share their lives in marriage grant faithfulness to their promise, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Gracious God, you have called us to live together in loving families and by your generous love all the families of earth are blessed, We pray today for the parents and families of and We recall the gracious influences and loving deeds that have surrounded them in their homes. For their parents we ask for

continuing health, fulfilment in life and the joy of knowing their children's children, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Gracious Father, we honour you as the author of life and today we celebrate the life which you have given. But you have given us more than life. You have also given us everything good in life so as to enrich our experience of it. In particular, we thank you for the precious ties of kinship and friendship, for the joy of human affection and love. We thank you especially today for the gift of marriage, where husband and wife can be one. We thank you that and have found in each other the qualities which have led them to give their lives into each other's keeping in marriage. Bless their love for each other, cause it to grow and, through their relationship, deepen their understanding of your great love for us all. May their hearts be filled with gratitude to you this day for your gift of their partner in life and for your gift of forgiveness and newness of life in Jesus, which carries all believers through into eternal glory. Now as they pledge their vows, may and know that you are their witness, so in the days to come may they seek wisdom and strength from you to be able to keep their vows and these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

O Lord our God, how wonderful is life! How rich its variety of joy and sorrow! How precious are the lives of those dear to us! But life is your gift. In everything that makes life worth living, it's you we see at work. In every human life we see something of you and, in the end, it is only in you that our lives make sense. O Father in Heaven we praise you for the gift of life!

O Lord our God, how glorious is love! How wonderful are the various aspects of love we have seen, in the parents who brought us into the world, in the family and friends who have cared for us and especially today we rejoice in the love you have set between and But love is your presence. It is you we know, when we know love. It is you we see reflected in everybody who loves us.

It is you whose love will never let us go. O Father in Heaven, we praise you for the gift of love!

Lord, forgive us that we have so often taken life and love for granted, that we have selfishly misused what you gave us, and have hurt those who love us, and have hurt You, dear Lord.

This day, may life and love be renewed in us all, and especially in and in so that the love that joins their lives together may be truly your Spirit working through them. May it be your love that enables them to take their vows and to keep them for the rest of their lives. All this we ask because of what you've shown us of yourself in Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Our loving Father, may and apply themselves to live together in godly love, in Christian joy, as a good example, always keeping faith and trust with one another. May their home be a haven of peace under your good hand. May you bless them with sufficient material prosperity to meet their needs and the glad opportunities to be generous that you will send their way. May the world's riches and pleasures never blind their eyes to you. When trials, illness or sorrow come, may and be drawn closer to you and to each other. For all of us, Lord, who are reminded today of promises we have previously made, enliven our

consciences that we will live up to our vows and seek your grace and help in our home and family life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Lord Jesus, saying “thank you” is such a small way to express the gratitude and must feel for those who worked so hard to prepare for this day and for those who have come to share in their happiness. We thank you for the joy of this ceremony and for the happiness of the reception to follow. We thank you for the promises made and the presents given. May the memory of this day be a source of joy and strength throughout their life together.

O Lord, there are bound to be many demands on and and their resources. They will want to buy a house and set up their family home. They will want to make the most of their personal potential as well as that of their family. Guide them as they make decisions about the use of their time and money. Give them your perspective and help them not to see everything in material terms. As they pursue their chosen path in life, give them confidence and the ability to adapt to changes both outside and in each other. Help them to continue talking with each other and with you in times of mixed emotion. Lord, help them to accept each other’s physical desires and not to take each other for granted. Help them to find and give pleasure and to have patience and understanding when things are not as they would want. Lord, help them to love as you loved and to forgive as you forgave. Help them to be sensitive to each other’s feelings, so that neither partner feels the loneliness and isolation that insensitivity inflicts, and we ask these things in Jesus’ name, Amen.

All grace comes from You, O God, and you alone are the source of eternal life. Bless and , that they may faithfully live together to the end of their lives. May they be patient and gentle, ready to trust each other and to face together the challenge of the future. May they pray together in joy and in sorrow and always give thanks for the gift of each other.

Be with them in all their happiness, that your joy may be in them and that their joy may be full. Strengthen them in every time of trouble, that they may bear each other's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ.

Give and grace, when they hurt each other, to recognise and acknowledge their fault, to ask each other's forgiveness and to know your mercy and love. May your peace dwell in their home and be a sign of hope for peace in the world. Let their home be a place of welcome, that its happiness may be freely shared. Through loving one another in Christ, may they be strengthened to love Christ in their neighbour. May they be creative in their daily work and find fulfilment in the life of their community.

Eternal God, in holy marriage you make your servants one. May their life together witness to your love in this troubled world, may unity overcome division, forgiveness heal injury and joy triumph over sorrow, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, Creator and Father of us all, we thank you for the gift of life--and, in life, for the gift of marriage. We praise and thank you for all the joys that can come to men and women through marriage and for the blessings of home and family.

Today, especially, we think of and as they begin their life together as husband and wife. With them we thank you for the joy they find in each other. Give them strength, Father, to keep the vows they have made and to cherish the love they share, that they may be faithful and devoted. Help them to support each other with patience, understanding and honesty. (Teach them to be wise and loving parents of any children they may have). (We pray for their parents, that at this moment of parting they may rejoice in their children's happiness).

Look with favour, God, on all our homes. Defend them from every evil that may threaten them, from outside or within. Let your Spirit so direct all of us that we may each look to the good of others in word and deed and grow in grace as we advance in years, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O living God, we thank you for showing us just how much you love us by living out a human life in this world.

We thank you for showing us that your love in a human body can stand up to temptation, can master suffering, and can even conquer death.

May and dwell in this love. May this love dwell in them, so that your joy may be in them and their joy may be complete.

May it be your love that is the true foundation of their home, that it may be firmly rooted and grounded in love. May it be your love that is the true light of their home, that everybody who enters it may see something of you in it. May it be your love that is their true treasure and wealth, that their happiness may not depend on outward circumstances. So may their home be a sanctuary of your

love, making them a blessing to neighbours, friends, family and to all the generations that follow.

When all goes well with them and their cup of happiness overflows, shield them lest they take their blessings for granted. When they face problems, guide them by your Spirit that they may find your way through. When they come to suffering and to sorrow, may they be drawn closer together and closer to you. So, through green pastures and through dark valleys alike, may their journey through life be a journey into God, led at each step by the good Shepherd.

What we ask for these your servants, Father, we ask for each family represented here today: that those who pledged love to each other long ago may find their love deepened today, that those who took vows to each other long ago, may renew those vows today, that new love may radiate out from each life creating new joy and new strength.

Eternal God, in whom we live and move and have our being;
bless and that they may live together in marriage according to the vows they have made before you.

Bless them with your love, that their love for each other may grow even deeper and that their love for you may shine forth before the world.

Bless them with your mercy, that they may be patient and caring, willing to share each other's joys and sorrows, to forgive and to be forgiven, in their life together and in the world.

Bless them with your peace, that they may be calm and sure, trusting in you with confident hearts and living in harmony and concord within their family and among all people. Bless them with your presence, that within their hearts and their home Christ may reign as head, and that they may acknowledge His Lordship with praise and thanksgiving now and through all their life together, to the glory of your holy name! Amen.

O God, Creator of life, author of salvation and giver of all good gifts; look with favour upon and who have covenanted to live together in marriage. Bless their union and sustain them in their devotion to each other and to you.

Grant them the desire to order their lives according to your will that, in their relationship with each other and those around them, they may show forth the joy and peace of Christ.

Sustain them in the seasons and conditions of their lives by the power of your Holy Spirit, that in joy and sorrow, leisure and labour, plenty and want, they may give thanks for your steadfast love and show forth the reconciling love of Christ before this troubled, broken world.

Give them a deep appreciation of the unity of all persons within your creation, that their love for each other may be reflected also in their desire for justice, dignity and meaning for all your children.

Keep ever vivid in their hearts a vision of your kingdom and enable them to live in the hope of its fulfilment. By the power of your Spirit, O God, accomplish

these petitions as they accord with your will, for we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Faithful Lord, source of love, pour down your grace upon and....., that they may fulfil the vows they have made this day and reflect your steadfast love in their lifelong faithfulness to each other. As members with them of the body of Christ, use us to support their life together. From your great store of strength give them power and patience, affection and understanding, courage, and love toward you, toward each other and toward the world, that they may continue together in mutual growth according to your will in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Almighty God, giver of life and love, bless and whom you have now joined in Christian marriage. Grant them wisdom and devotion in their life together, that each may be to the other a strength in need, a comfort in sorrow and a companion in joy. So unite their wills in your spirit, that they may live and grow together in love and peace all the days of their life.

Almighty God, you have created all humankind to glorify you in body and in spirit. Give these your children joy in each other as living temples of the Holy Spirit and bring them by this joy to know and share in your creative and redeeming love.

Father in Heaven, give today your blessing upon the marriage of and We thank you for the promises they have spoken and the love in which they are now united. Keep them faithful and strong in every trial. Sustain their joy and affection throughout a long life together.

We pray, Lord Jesus, that you will be the acknowledged Head of their home and Master of their lives.

Equip them, Holy Spirit, with patient endurance, sacrificial service, unflinching tenderness, endless trust, and lasting love. Grant that their home will often be a place of laughter and, in times of difficulty or trouble, a haven of healing and forgiveness.

May they and any children given them, constantly praise you, eternal Father, who with the Son and the Holy Spirit, blessed and exalted forever. Amen.

O gracious and merciful Father, by whose appointment marriage has been given to the human race and by whose blessing it is strengthened and sustained, we pray for and, now joined as husband and wife. Keep them loyal and steadfast to each other. May their love know no doubt or change, but may shared tasks, trials and joys bind them ever more closely in heart and mind.

O God, whose Son, Jesus Christ, shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home, we pray that he may be acknowledged as head of the household of these your children. As he found his authority in serving, so may they learn to serve one another in love. We remember, too, the homes from which they have come and pray that you will bless those who have given them to each other.

O God, by whom, in the Gospel, we are all invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb, so move in the hearts of these your servants that they may give obedience to your call. Bring them, at the end of their days to your banqueting house and

may your banner over them always be love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

O God of love, you have established marriage for the welfare and happiness of mankind. Now the joys of and will be doubled since the happiness of one shall be the happiness of the other. Their burdens will be halved since they now will share them.

Bless this husband. May he so live that his wife may find in him the security for which her heart truly longs.

Bless this wife. Give her the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit that is of great worth in your sight.

Give them a great spiritual purpose in life. May they seek first your Kingdom and your righteousness. Loving you best, may they love each other more, and being faithful unto you, may they always be faithful to each other.

May they not expect that perfection from each other that belongs only to you.

Now order their lives in such a way as will bless them and will develop their character as they walk together. Give them enough tears to keep them tender, enough hurts to keep them human, enough need to keep their hands clenched tightly in yours, and enough blessing to be sure that they walk with God. May they never take each other's love for granted but always experience that breathless wonder which exclaims that: "Out of all the world, you have chosen me!"

Then, when life is done and the sun is setting, may they be found then as now, still hand in hand, still thanking you for each other. May they serve you happily and faithfully together until, at last, one shall lay the other in your arms. This we ask through Jesus Christ, the great lover of our souls, Amen.

O God, in your Word you have compared marriage to the perfect union between Jesus your Son and the church, his bride; be present we pray with all those newly married as they establish a home together. Grant them lasting faithfulness to you and to each other; true unity with you and with each other; increasing love for you and for each other: that they may know that unless you build the house, the builder's work is all in vain. Be pleased to make their home a place where others may meet you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, giver of life and love, bless and, whom you have now joined in Christian marriage. Grant them wisdom and devotion in their life together, that each may be to the other a strength in need, a comfort in sorrow, and a companion in joy. So unite their wills in your will and their spirits in your Spirit, that they may live and grow together in love and peace all the days of the lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Eternal God, in holy marriage you make your servants one. May their life together bare witness to your love in this troubled world; may unity overcome division, forgiveness heal injury and joy triumph over sorrow; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Most holy and merciful God, by whom the solitary are set in families, we pray that your blessing may remain with and, now joined together in your name. May their marriage be for them a source of great and lasting good. Spare them long to each other, and keep them faithful, tender and true, so that they may live together in peace and holiness. Bless them in their home and in all the works of their hands, supplying their needs and defending them from all that would harm. In prosperity may they be grateful to you the giver of all good: in trouble may they find that you are their refuge and strength. So lead them through this life that, when they have served you faithfully in their day and generation, they may be received into the presence of your glory and be numbered with those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Eternal God, author of harmony and happiness, we thank you for the gift of marriage in which men and women seek and find fulfilment, companionship, and the blessing of family life. Give patience to those who look forward to marriage.

Give courage to those who face trials within their marriage.

Give comfort to those whose marriage has broken.

Give gratitude to those whose marriages are successful and fruitful,

and so, in all circumstances, let our lives reflect your love and your glory, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Eternal God, we pray that marriage may be held in honour everywhere: that husbands and wives may live faithfully together and that members of every family may grow in mutual love and understanding, courtesy and kindness; that they may learn to forgive one another as you forgive them; that they may bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Wedding Grace

Lord Jesus Christ, who by your presence and power gladdened the wedding in Cana of Galilee, so by your presence now bring joy to this wedding. Bless those who have this day been joined in marriage, that there may be truth at the beginning of their lives together, unselfishness all the way and perseverance to the end. May their hopes be realised and their love for each other deepen and grow. And as we now celebrate with them their wedding banquet, so may we all at last feast with you at the marriage supper of the Lamb, through faith in Christ, in whose name we pray, Amen.

Birth

Loving Heavenly Father, here and now we dedicate this little child to you. We commit him/her into your hands, trusting in your good grace and favour. As you have generously given this precious young life, so we give him/her back to you to love and care for. Cause him/her to grow in wisdom and in stature, in favour with God and man. In your great mercy, bring him/her safely through the dangers of childhood, deliver him/her from the temptations of youth and lead him/her to witness a good confession and persevere in it to the end. By your great grace, may you own this little child for yourself and may his/her name be found written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Heavenly Father, we remember how the Lord Jesus grew up in a home at Nazareth. May that same Lord Jesus be present to bless this home. Guide these parents as they seek to discharge the sacred trust and responsibility that has been given to them. May their home be filled with love and laughter, peace and happiness as they look to you and trust in you for all that lies ahead. May their home be a house of prayer as together they seek your help and strength.

May you be pleased to bless all our children and, in turn, cause them to be a blessing, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Heavenly Father, you sent your own Son into this world and entrusted him as a child to the care of Mary and Joseph. We thank you for the life of, a precious gift, now entrusted to the care of these dear ones. May they so nurture and train this child in the way he should go, that when he is old he will not depart from it. Spare us from in any way causing this little one to stumble. Grant that by word and deed, and may set such a consistent, godly example for, that he will seek after the Lord, come to a saving faith in Christ, witness a good confession and persevere in it to the end. Cause this precious young life to grow in wisdom and in stature, in favour with you and man. May he reach his full potential, achieve the purpose for which you created him, grow to full maturity in Christ and attain the full stature that you purpose for him in your eternal kingdom. And all this we ask for Jesus' sake, Amen.

Graces

Lord God, Heavenly Father, bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your generous hand, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Martin Luther

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and may our meal by you be blessed, Amen.

Martin Luther

Bless me, O Lord, and let my food strengthen me to serve you, for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.

Isaac Watts

Be present at our table, Lord,
Be here and everywhere adored,
These mercies bless and grant that we
May feast in paradise with Thee.

Wesleyan Grace

Visiting the Sick

Lord, bless all means that are used for's recovery, and restore him to health in your good time; but if you have appointed that it should be otherwise, then your will, not ours, be done. Draw each one of us away from a love of this world, set eternity in our hearts and fill us with a fervent desire for heaven. Prepare us to meet you face to face and then, at your appointed time, just when it pleases you, call us to yourself, where there is no more sickness or pain, suffering or death, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Lord God, whose grace is boundless and who has promised to work all things together for the good of them that love you and are called according to your purposes; hear our prayer for , whose needs are known to you. We humbly pray that as you have placed him/her on a bed of suffering, so he/she may look up and live. Cause this trial to be an opportunity for faith to be strengthened and purified and for your promises to be proven true. We thank you that you never leave nor forsake your people, that underneath always are the everlasting arms and that your strength is made perfect in our weakness. We honour you as the God for whom nothing is impossible. We believe that you have permitted this trial for a good and gracious purpose. Cause all that you have planned for in this testing to be realised. May they miss nothing that you desire to teach them. Deliver them from self pity and keep their eyes fixed on Jesus, until you are pleased to send them deliverance from all their troubles, we ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

Heavenly Father, we believe that our life is in your hands and our times are in your hands. We believe that you are sovereign in the affairs of your people. We are convinced that every circumstance that you call upon your children to endure is permitted, shaped and limited by you, our all wise God, for our good, and for your glory. Even when bad things happen to your people, we refuse to believe the devil's lies. You love us as much as you ever did. Indeed, you have said that you discipline those you love as a father the son he delights in. We accept this illness as a token of your love and your fatherly discipline. We believe that you intend good for your child in this and not harm. So, we pray, fulfil your gracious purposes in and through this suffering. Cause your child to submit to you without doubting your love or distrusting your care. Deliver us from seeking some short cut solution to this need. Grant patience and perseverance under trial until you are pleased to bring healing and release. You are the God who turns bad into good and who has promised to restore the years that the locusts have eaten. Be with throughout the length of their trial and grant to them your peace.

Eternal God, our Heavenly Father, we confess you as Lord of grace and glory. Glorify yourself in the midst of this needy circumstance. We would never have chosen this situation if, in fact, we had a choice, but we do have a choice regarding how we shall respond to it. We choose to believe that your hand is in this, you have permitted it, you have some good that you want to accomplish by it that perhaps we could learn no other way. We believe that our times are in your hands and that the very number of our days was written down, recorded in your book before one of them came into being. We therefore rest in the certainty that our life is hidden with Christ in God and that we cannot die a moment too soon or a moment too late. You, our sovereign God, will keep us in

this life until such time as you have determined to take us out of it and into your immediate presence. We praise you that whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord, that nothing can snatch us out of your hand, and that no one can separate us from your love. Grant faith and hope to in the midst of this crisis. Keep his/her eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. Send your Holy Spirit, the comforter, to draw along side, to minister grace, and to impart that peace of God, in the midst of this trying circumstance, which passes all understanding. Deliver us from striving after our own plans and schemes. We submit to you fully and await your good purposes to be accomplished, to the praise of your great name, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Lord God, as you were with the three when they endured the fiery furnace, so be with your servant as he/she faces this fiery trial. Fulfil all you purpose for them by this. Prevent them from suffering any touch of the evil one. Protect them and keep them by your almighty power. As you kept those three even when the heat was turned up, such that not even a hair of their head was singed, but only their bonds were burnt off, so be with your servant now. Bring them through this fiery trial free from harm, their faith renewed and strengthened and their bonds burnt off. Deliver them from anything which may presently hold them, any bondage, any oppression, any guilt or fear. Set them free to be able to walk with you amid the flames, to be far from destroyed, but rather released to receive all the blessings you have purposed for them to experience through this. Sovereign Lord, have your way with us, your people. Be glorified in us and all that is ours. We remember that you call us by your grace, not to be happy, or healthy, or wealthy, but to be holy, set apart to you, Lord, eager to do what is good. Cause the refiner's fire to purify your servant, to burn away the dross of sin and

impurity, and cause them to emerge from this trial with their faith purified and refined, like gold in the fire. To you be all glory and praise, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Prayers for Healing

Prayer of Anointing for Healing James 5:13-16

We ask great things of you, our great God.

We ask what neither personal care nor modern medicine have been able to achieve - health and wholeness for

We ask this of you, our God, who is the great Physician, who gives life, who gives health. We acknowledge that all health and healing comes from you. It is yours alone to give and yours to take away.

We do not ask contrary to your will, but according to your Word. We give you thanks for this provision made in your Word. We seek to be obedient to it. We, the elders have responded in faith to's request which in turn was made in faith.

We believe your Word. We believe your power. While from a purely human point of view, this may be considered too much to ask, yet we know that we can never ask too much of you. In fact, what we are asking is a relatively small and simple thing for you to do. For you are the God who spoke worlds into being,

you are the God who raises the dead, you are the God who commands sickness to depart.

And so we ask:

Command's sickness to depart.
Restore to full health and strength.
Free of this debilitating affliction.
Give full use and freedom of bodily functions
and movement.

We know that sickness is appointed by you for a purpose. May your purpose in's affliction be that you bring glory to yourself by restoring him/her back to full health and strength. May your purpose be to cause others to stand still and know that you are God. We think particularly of and's relatives/children who have wandered away from the faith.

We believe your Word. We are weak but you are strong. Even our faith, which comes from you, is weak and wavering. Yet even though it be as small as a mustard seed, it can move mountains, when it is in you. So we ask you to move this mountain - this mountain of illness and discouragement from Give him/her health. Give him/her courage. Give him/her peace.

Be pleased to forgive all our sins and failures. Hear our prayer.

For we ask it in the strong name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord, Amen.

Lord God of our salvation, to whom no sickness is incurable, we pray that in your compassion you will drive away from your servants, who look to you for your heavenly medicine, all illness; show forth in them the might of your healing power. Make them whole, both in body and soul, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Mozarabic Psalter

Death

O my blessed and glorious Creator, who has fed me all my life, and redeemed me from all evil; seeing it is your merciful pleasure to take me out of this frail body, and to wipe all tears from my eyes, and all sorrow from my heart, I do with all humility and willingness consent and submit myself wholly to your sacred will.

My most loving Redeemer, into your saving and everlasting arms I commend my spirit; I am ready, my dear Lord, and earnestly expect and long for your good pleasure. Come quickly, and receive the soul of your servant who trusts in you.

Henry Vaughan

We give back to you, O God, those whom you gave to us. You did not lose them when you gave them to us, and we do not lose them by their return to you. Your dear Son has taught us that life is eternal and love cannot die, so death is only a horizon, and a horizon is only the limit of our sight. Open our eyes to see more clearly and draw us close to you that we may be nearer to our

loved ones, who are with you. You have told us that you are preparing a place for us: prepare us, that where you are we may be also.

William Penn

Funerals

Scripture Sentences

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in times of trouble. Therefore we will not fear” Psalm 46:1, 2a

“The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.” Deuteronomy 33:27a

“Show me, O Lord, my life’s end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life.” Psalm 39:4

“... We brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised.” 1 Timothy 6:7; Job 1:21

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” 1 Peter 1:3

Jesus said: "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." John 5:24

"The Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."
Revelation 7:17

"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."
Revelation 21:4

"He tends his flock like a shepherd: He gathers the lambs in his arms and he carries them close to his heart" Isaiah 40:11

"... no eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him." 1 Corinthians 2:9

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand." John 10:27-28

"Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:38-39

Jesus said: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go there and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.” John 14:1-3

“Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.” Psalm 116:15

Eternal God, our heavenly Father, who has loved us with an everlasting love: Help us now to wait on you with reverent and submissive hearts, that we, through patience and the comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope and be lifted out of our distress into the light and the peace of your presence; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Author Unknown

O Lord, the giver of all life, we thank you for the love we have known, for the joys and sorrows shared. We accept, Lord, that you have taken the life that you once gave. Please bring your gentle healing to the hurt that comes with parting. Thank you, Lord Jesus, that you care about us.

Eternal God, our loving heavenly Father, we come before you, the creator of heaven and earth, the one who brought forth this new day. You are the source of all life. You brought us into this life. What a wonderful God you are--you formed us in our mother's womb, you filled us with life and breath, you cared for us in our mother's arms, yes, and you sustain us right through this earthly life.

But as you gave, so you have taken away, that we may be mindful of our frailty and realise how short life here is. Draw near to us then, we pray, in this time of our loss, for you alone are our consolation and comfort in the face of death. Speak to us words of assurance from the Scriptures that our hope might go beyond this material world, so that we might understand that you provide us with eternal life in your Heavenly Kingdom, if only we would trust in Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Eternal God, our Creator, and the Father of all who believe in your Son, Jesus Christ, help us to wait upon you now with reverent and submissive hearts. In the quietness of this moment speak to us of eternal matters, so that through patient faith and encouragement from your Word, we might have hope and be lifted above our darkness and grief into the peace of your holy presence. We pray this with the forgiveness of our sins, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Book of Common Order

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we thank you that, in this hour of sorrow, your children can call upon you. There are so many questions that remain unanswered, yet we acknowledge you to be the only wise God, our Father, and seek refuge and strength in you. We believe you, Jesus Christ, to be the resurrection and the life, and with you as our only Mediator before the Father, you who have been touched with our infirmities and are able to sympathise with us in our weaknesses, so we boldly approach your throne of grace to seek your help for our souls in this time of our great need. In this time of grief, we seek an outpouring of the Spirit of God, the Comforter, so as to draw along side of each person, so as to fill every believing heart with the peace of God which passes all understanding.

Gracious Father, we want to thank you for the life of , for every word and act of his/her love, for all the joys and sorrows shared, for the privilege of giving and receiving, for the happiness brought to the lives of so many.

We thank you for his/her vibrant faith, his/her unwavering commitment to Christ; for his/her patient hope, as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure; for his/her uncomplaining spirit, his/her sweet surrender, his/her calm acceptance of your will for him/her, whatever that meant, which delivered him/her from bitterness and imparted to him/her a wonderful inner peace and courage in the face of such fiery trial; for his/her thoughtful and practical concern for others, his/her selfless generosity, and the way he/she ministered to us all and put our minds at rest.

We thank you for his/her quality of life over the last several years; for the medical treatment he/she received, for the loving support of family and friends;

for the fact that you kept him/her alive and spared him/her to us for those many precious days filled with love and prayer; for the way you worked through this crisis to bind the family together even more strongly in the bonds of love for one another and for you; for the fact that he/she did not suffer unduly; and for the sure and certain hope of heaven.

We pray for's grieving relatives: for husband/wife, we uphold him/her amidst the heartache of the tearing apart of that one flesh bond of marriage, and the loneliness he/she is bound to feel in days to come. We uphold him/her in facing up to the practical difficulties of managing the family on his/her own and in coming to terms with his/her grief and loss. We pray for the children. We thank you for the rich heritage, values and beliefs they have received from their father/mother. We ask that you will strengthen them to live as fully as they can, so as to honour the memory of their father/mother, by building their lives on the strong foundation of what their father/mother taught them. Guard them and keep them we pray.

Almighty and most merciful Father, the giver of every good and perfect gift, we thank you for your blessings to us, new every morning, fresh every moment and more than we can number. We thank you for the gift of life itself, for the precious ties of kinship and friendship, and for the joy of human affection and love. In particular, we thank you today for , whom you have taken out of this world. Enable us to see through the tears of sorrow things for which we can genuinely thank you. Keep fresh in our memories the many happy occasions shared together, in Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Heavenly Father, we thank you that in this hour of sorrow, your children can call upon you. We remember the infinite compassion of your love made known to us in Christ. For his kneeling in the shadow of Gethsemane, for his death upon the cross, for his risen life, and for his calling us to share in his perfect life, we praise and bless your holy name.

All generations rise and fall before your gaze. Father, we worship you for all your servants who have departed this life in faith and reverent fear of you, and especially for , whom you have now taken to your side. For all your loving-kindness towards him throughout his earthly life, we thank you, our Father. For every memory of him, for every word and act of his love, and for all the common experiences of everyday life which were shared together, we thank you. And we praise you for your mercy in that all sickness, suffering and pain are now ended and even death itself is past.

Gracious God, we ask that we may run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking always unto Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, so that when this mortal life is ended we may be gathered with those whom we have loved, and reunited forever in that kingdom of heaven, where there shall be no more death, or mourning or tears or pain, for all the former things shall have passed away and all things made new through Jesus Christ, who is our resurrection and life, Amen.

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Eternal God, you superintend all generations; thank you for your strength and encouragement throughout this time of sorrow and loss.

We praise you for your compassion in sending your only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer and to die to secure eternal life for all who believe in him. We thank you for his victory over sin on the cross of Calvary. We acknowledge his triumph over death and his victorious resurrection that has brought life and immortality to all who believe his glorious gospel. Give us the assurance to know that as Christ rose from the dead, so too those who fall asleep with Christ will rise with him at the last day. Remind us, O Lord, that we shall have to give an account to you for all our thoughts, words and deeds.

We thank you for the life of - for those he/she influenced and served. We celebrate the life and love he/she gave and received as a son/daughter, a brother/sister, a husband/wife and father/mother, a grandfather/grandmother and friend. We thank you, O Lord and giver of life, for the love we have shared. We surrender ourselves to your perfect will, together with our friends and loved ones, and all our possessions and aspirations. May your will be done in our lives as it is done in Heaven.

Hear us, O gracious God, for we pray in the name of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, who is our Resurrection and our Life, Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, we come to you. Yet words cannot express our feelings. You know how desolate, how devastated and must feel right now. Feelings of emptiness, helplessness, disappointment, even anger, threaten to overwhelm

them. Their worst fears as parents have come true. For them, it must be like a nightmare, yet their pain testifies that what has happened is real. Lord, give them strength for this day, for each day, to weep when they should weep, to accept the comfort that memories bring, to face the future with courage, and to meet people--those who love them, those who want to help them, those who want to comfort them, but don't know what to say. Lord God, help them to know your peace, so that they in turn may be able to bring peace to others. Amen.

Loving Father, you have allowed and to share both joy and sorrow in your work of creating life. Help them to accept the pain and disappointment of this precious life taken away. Fill their emptiness with hope and trust. Heal the pain that comes with parting. May the love that brought them live in their hearts and from your own fullness repay all you've taken away. Loving Father, we give this baby into your loving care. Amen.

Almighty God, who has revealed your one and only Son to be the resurrection and the life, raise us up through him, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, that when we shall depart this life, we may at last receive the blessing "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of the Lord" and rest in him.

O God whose days are without end and whose mercies cannot be numbered, make us deeply sensitive to the shortness and uncertainty of human life, and let your Holy Spirit lead us through this present world in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. When we have served you in our day and

generation, may we be gathered to our fathers, having the testimony of a good conscience, in the confidence of a certain faith, in the comfort of a holy hope, in favour with you, our God, and in perfect charity with all mankind; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Anniversaries

Gracious Father, we confess that forgetfulness is a great enemy of faith. It is our heart's desire never to forget all your benefits toward us. Yet, just as the birds of the air swooped down and snatched away the seed that fell along the path so, too, the evil one would seek to rob us of a holy remembrance of all your goodness and grace toward us in times past. The evil one would seek to silence us, so that we do not have a testimony to bear of your steadfast love and faithfulness. The evil one would seek to make us ungrateful to you for all your benefits toward us. Lord, deliver us from such evil. Deliver us from a complaining spirit. Deliver us from failing to return thanks to you. Grant to us a lively remembrance of your many mercies. Enable us to count your blessings, to tell of your mighty acts, to boast about what you have done and to declare to generations yet unborn your mighty acts.

Lord God, as your ancient people erected a heap of stones on the eastern side of the Jordan to mark your faithfulness to your promise, made to Abraham, in bringing them into the land of promise; so enable us in our day to mark your faithfulness to us and to declare your goodness by means of holy remembrance. Keep fresh in our memories the great things you have done for your people. Deliver us from forgetfulness, from presuming upon your grace, from taking your love for granted, from boasting in anything save what you in your grace have done for us your people. Enable us to be thoughtful and reflective in commemorating the various ways in which you have demonstrated your goodness to us as a people. Cause our remembrance of your mighty acts to make

us a more humble, grateful and dependant people, who trust you more completely in the present, because of the history of your gracious dealings with us in times past.

Lord God, you gave your holy people feast days to celebrate the anniversary of your mighty acts of deliverance in times past. It was your will that a perpetual remembrance of these redemptive acts be observed, lest your people forget, and fall away from the foundations of their faith. You have given to us the Lord's Supper for a similar purpose. As time passes and a vast gulf of time is placed between us and the exact moment of your saving work in Jesus Christ, cause the perpetual remembrance of his death and resurrection to be to us a continual feast, which marks afresh such a mighty deliverance and brings it home with power to our own experience.

Grant us the grace so to maintain a true, pure and holy remembrance of your gracious dealings with us as the years pass, that our gratitude may not fade, our love for you may not fail, but that, enlivened by a clear remembrance of your grace, we may go forward in faith, confident that you are the God who never changes, who is the same yesterday, today and forever. Indeed, you are as faithful as ever you were. You are as trustworthy and dependable as you always have been. You have not failed us yet and you are not about to, either now or in the future. Cause a lively remembrance of your grace to strengthen us for obedience to you in the pursuit of that narrow road that leads to life, for we ask these things in Jesus' name and for his sake, Amen.

Schools

Dedication of Christian Educators

Sovereign Lord, you rule the church by your Word and by your Spirit and you accept the service of gifted and faithful people. We commend to you now all our School staff whom we dedicate to the teaching of the Word of God among the children of this school.

Empower them by your Spirit. May their manner of life be worthy of the Gospel of Christ. Cause them to be pure in heart, unselfish in service, faithful in prayer, careful in preparation and bold in the proclamation of the unsearchable riches of Christ. Enable them to be zealous for the advancement of your kingdom, persevering, so as to not grow weary in well doing. May you be pleased to give them fruit for their labours through young lives devoted to you. Then, when the chief shepherd appears, may they receive a crown that does not fade away, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Almighty God, grant that our schools and colleges may be houses of faith and fruitful study; grant that their students may so learn truth as to bear it lightly along all their ways, and so to learn Christ as to be found in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end, Amen.

King's College, Cambridge

O God, our heavenly Father, by whose Spirit people are taught knowledge, who gives wisdom to all who ask you; grant your blessing on this school and help us in all the work you have given us to do. Enable us all to work diligently, not so as to gain a reputation, but with an undivided heart that seeks after you, remembering that without you we can do nothing and that the fear of you is the beginning of wisdom. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

F.D. Maurice

Grant, O Lord, to all students, to know what is worth knowing, to love what is worth loving, to praise what delights you most, to value what is precious in your sight and to reject what is evil in your eyes. Grant to each one the discernment to distinguish between God's truth and the Devil's lies. Above all, may we search out and do what is most pleasing to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Thomas a Kempis

O God, make the door of this school wide enough to receive all who seek love and fellowship and a Heavenly Father's care; and narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride and hate. Make its threshold smooth enough to be no stumbling block to children, nor to straying feet, but rugged enough to turn back the tempter's power: make it a gateway to your eternal kingdom. *Thomas Ken*

Presentation Night Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your faithfulness to our school over the past year.

May we ever remain faithful to you.

May we never be ashamed of Christ or his Gospel, which is your power for the salvation of all who believe.

May our lives be begun, continued and ended in you.

May Christ continue to be both the source and the goal of our faith.

May the outcome of this past year's learning and endeavour be that each one of your children will increasingly and continually live well for you in your world.

So, send us out into the world to love and serve you.

And now, may the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and for ever more, Amen.

Eternal God, be pleased to bless all schools, colleges and universities, that they may be places of sound learning, new discovery, and the pursuit of wisdom; and grant that those who teach and those who learn may find in you the source of all truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, you have entrusted to us the care of children. As we teach and train them, give us a calm strength and patient wisdom, that we may teach them to love whatever is just and true and good, following the example of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, Amen.

Mother's Day

Heavenly Father, we each one want to thank you for the gracious influence of our mother. In your presence, we rise up and call her blessed. We remember with affection, honour and admiration her life-giving, child-bearing work. We give thanks to you for her countless hours of tireless devotion to provide, care for and nurture us, all for love, not money. Surely such sacrifice displays the noblest and the best in human nature.

For the investment of her life in us, for the pouring of her life into ours, for the way in which she has touched our lives perhaps more profoundly than any other person, for the influence she has had, for the impression she has made, we give you thanks.

For the way she passed on to us a rich heritage, values and beliefs upon which we have been able to build our lives, we give you thanks. For the preparation for life she imparted, for the grounding in the faith she gave us, we give you thanks. For a mother who trained us up in the way we should go, not the way we would go, we give you thanks.

We thank you for her sacrifice, dedication, careful correction, wise counsel, love and understanding.

So we pray that you will give power and strength to all mothers, especially in hours of loneliness and little recognition. Enable mothers to be satisfied with the noble and significant task of depositing their children into society as mature and

responsible adults, who are well-adjusted and walking with the Lord, who in turn will make a valuable contribution to society, and so pass on the faith to the next generation.

Give power and strength to mothers in their work of forging personality, building strong character, developing talent, instilling graces and virtues and teaching the faith. Fill mothers with faith, love and holiness for the high calling to which you have called them. Uphold mothers who labour under difficulty: missionary mothers; sick mothers; bereaved mothers; expectant mothers; new mothers; single mothers; mothers of prodigals; mothers of sick children; and those who would be mothers but who cannot. These things we ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

Heavenly Father, we want to thank you today for the positive blessings of family life, and in particular, for the good and godly influence of mothers.

From our mother, we have received the most precious gift, the gift of life. You knit us together in our mother's womb, you caused us to be fearfully and wonderfully made, each life an unrepeatably miracle. Then, having brought us into this life, you gave us a mother's arms to cradle us from the dangers of childhood, and a mother's love to guide us through the temptations of youth. The strength, stability, generosity, and compassion of a mother's love are what we have received, for which we give you thanks today.

We have received a rich heritage, values, and beliefs upon which we have been able to build our lives. In particular, we thank you for the heritage of faith, taught us from infancy by a godly mother. Many of us have a similar testimony

to that of young Timothy, who was taught the faith by his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice. For a caring, praying, Christian mother, we thank you, our Father.

For expecting mothers, we seek your protection.

For young mothers, we seek your wisdom.

For working mothers, we seek your patience and strength.

For single mothers, we seek your support and encouragement.

For those who this day feel the pain of infertility, who have so much to give but who as yet remain childless, we ask for contentment and fulfilment, for patience and faith.

For those who have experienced both the joys and the sorrows of motherhood, who have given life, only to see that life taken away, we seek your comfort, healing and peace.

Lord, hear the cries of those who mourn for a wayward son or daughter. Restore and renew relationships soured by selfishness and sin.

Enable children to obey the Lord, and honour their mother, not just today, but every day. May you cause mothers to excel, such that husband and children will rise up and call her blessed.

Father, strengthen our love for one another and our love for you, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Father's Day

Heavenly Father, we want to thank you today for the positive blessings of family life, in particular, for the good and godly influence of fathers. We have received the precious gift of life by your grace, and also by a father's will. And having brought us into this life, you gave us a father's arms to cradle us from the dangers of childhood and a father's love to guide us through the temptations of youth. The strength, stability, generosity and compassion of a father's love are what we have received, for which we give you thanks today.

From our fathers, we have received a rich heritage, values and beliefs upon which we have been able to build our lives. In particular, we want to thank you for the heritage of faith taught us by a godly father. We thank you for all faithful fathers who boldly take their stand and declare: "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

We thank you for the love they have given us, for the provisions they have made for us, for the interest they have shown in us, for the time they have invested in us. For a caring, praying, Christian father, we give you thanks, our God.

We give you thanks for fathers on earth and in heaven. We pray for new fathers, asking for wisdom and joy to fulfil their responsibility. We pray for working fathers, asking that they will be able to give the time and attention to their children that they so desperately need. We pray for fathers estranged from their children. With life so short, we pray that it will not be too late before reconciliation occurs.

Father, fulfil your redemptive purposes given through Malachi, and turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Restore and renew relationships soured by selfishness and sin.

Enable fathers not to exasperate their children. Enable children to obey the Lord, by honouring their fathers, not just today, but every day.

So bless our families we pray. Strengthen our love for one another and for you. May we, in our homes, live faithfully together and may the members of every family grow in mutual love and understanding, courtesy and kindness, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Baptism

Prayer Before Baptism

Almighty and everlasting God, who has appointed this sacrament, give us grace to realise your presence here. Set apart this element of water from a common use to a sacred use and grant that what now we do on earth may be confirmed in heaven. Bless this little child, we pray; let his/her name be found written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Being baptised outwardly with water, let him/her be baptised inwardly with your Holy Spirit; let him/her receive your grace in all its fullness and remain forever in the number of your faithful children; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Prayer after Baptism

Loving heavenly Father, who in your great mercy has promised that you will not only be our God, but the God and Father of our children also: we humbly pray for and his/ her parents. Here and now we commit this little child into your hands, trusting in your good grace and favour. As you have generously given this precious young life, so we give him/her back to you to love and care for. Send you Holy Spirit upon him/her and live in him/her forever. Enrich him/her in every way with your heavenly grace. Cause him/her to grow in wisdom and in stature, in favour with God and man. In your great mercy, bring him/her safely through the dangers of childhood, deliver him/her from the temptations of youth, and lead him/her to witness a good confession and to persevere in it to the end. By your great grace, may you own this little child for yourself, and may his/her name be found written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Heavenly Father, we remember how the Lord Jesus grew up in a home at Nazareth. May that same Lord Jesus be present to bless this home. Guide these parents as they seek to discharge the sacred trust and responsibility that has been given to them. Give to them the assurance of your unfailing care, protection and provision. May their home be filled with love and laughter, peace and happiness as they look to you and trust in you for all things. May their home be a house of prayer as together they seek your help and strength.

May you be pleased to bless all our children and, in turn, cause them to be a blessing, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

The Lord's Supper

God of all grace, we worship you for all the means you have appointed for building us up in faith. Teach us to see in them your loving purposes and to find joy and strength for our souls.

Father, you have prepared a table before us and, although not one of us is worthy to attend as an invited guest, yet we rest completely in the merits and mercy of Christ and hide ourselves under his righteousness. So when we hear your tender invitation and see your wonderful grace, we cannot help but come to you in love.

When we receive the symbols of our Saviour's death, enable us to contemplate that death in which:

he gave his life to purchase ours;
he offered himself an atonement for our sins;
he shed his blood to blot out our guilt;
he was pierced that we might be made whole;
he endured our curse, that we might be set free;
he bore our condemnation, that all your justice could be satisfied.

Here, may we more firmly grasp the length and breadth and height and depth of the love of Christ. as we reach out to receive the bread and wine, may that act truly declare to all that we have received the Lord, who is our life, our strength, our joy and our delight.

Grant us your mercy to remember here something of his eternal love, boundless grace, infinite compassion, agony, cross, redemption and so receive assurance of pardon, adoption, life and glory.

As we take these elements into our bodies, so may your Holy Spirit give life to our souls, until the day when we shall hunger and thirst no more, but sit with Christ at his heavenly feast, the marriage supper of the Lamb,
In whose name we pray, Amen.

Valley of Vision

Our Father, enlarge our hearts to love you, warm our affection towards you, anoint our lips with grace to praise you and may our praise ever find focus in the cross of Christ.

For there, you in your grace rolled away our burden of sin and guilt and laid it on your Son, who was made to be sin and a curse for us. There, the full force of your anger against our sin was felt by him. There the punishment for sin fell due, and was endured.

There, Christ suffered anguish that we might know joy;
Christ was cast off, that we might be brought in;
Christ was trodden down as an enemy, that we might be welcomed as a friend;
Christ surrendered to Hell's worst, that we might attain Heaven's best;
Christ was wounded that we might be healed;
Christ was tormented that we might be comforted;
Christ was made a shame, that we might inherit glory;

Christ entered darkness, that we might inherit eternal life;
Christ wept, that all tears might be wiped from our eyes;
Christ wore a crown of thorns, that we might wear a crown of righteousness.

Gracious Father, you who did not spare your own dear Son, but gave him up for us all, we worship you for this wonderful transfer and exchange of our sin and guilt to Christ and of Christ's righteousness to us. We acknowledge that it was designed by your great love, accomplished by your almighty power and applied to our hearts by faith.

Help us to ever adore you for your redeeming love and by both word and deed to worship you. May we use every breath to praise you. With every step we take, may there be that confidence which comes from knowing that Satan has been defeated, sin is paid for, our hearts are washed clean of a guilty conscience, Hell's gates are closed to us, and Heaven's doors are swung wide open to greet us.

We praise you, Father, for giving us your Son, whose finished work upon the cross has the power to save completely those who put their trust in him, in Jesus' precious name, Amen.

Valley of Vision

We praise you, our Father, that your love reaches to the heavens, and your faithfulness to the skies; that your justice is like the great deep. Without price are your unfailing mercies; we feast on your goodness, we drink from the river of your blessing, and we draw freely from the well of your salvation.

We thank you, our Father, that you sent your Son, Jesus Christ to die for us and by His blood to ransom us from every tribe and tongue, people and nation; and to make us a kingdom of priests to serve our God.

We thank you, O God our Father: that in your great mercy you have given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Be pleased to accept our thankfulness and praise, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Your death, O Lord, we commemorate, your resurrection we proclaim, your coming again in glory we anticipate: glory be to you, our living Saviour and Lord.

Jesus Christ, we come to this your table, not because we are strong but because we are weak; not because any goodness of our own gives us the right to come, but because we need your mercy and help; not because of anything we have achieved, but because you died for sinners. Glory be to you, our living Saviour and Lord, Amen.

Lord God our Father, we thank you for the riches of your wisdom and knowledge. How unsearchable are your judgments, your paths beyond tracing out! Who has known your mind or been your counsellor? Who has ever given anything to you that you should repay them? For from you and through you and to you are all things. To you be the glory for ever and ever.

You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honour and power. For you created all things and by your will they exist and were created. You are worthy, O Christ, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed us for God. From every tribe and tongue, people and nation, you made us to be a kingdom of priests to serve our God. To him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might, for ever and ever, Amen.

Romans 11:33-36; Rev. 4:11;5:9-10,13

Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things and judge of all people: we humbly confess before you our many sins and failures which we have committed these past days, in thought, word, and deed, against your divine majesty, thus grieving your Holy Spirit and creating a barrier to true fellowship with you. We do earnestly repent and are genuinely sorry for all our wrong doing. We are ashamed of the offence we have caused you by them and the burden of guilt is too much for us to bear. Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; for your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past and grant that, from this day forward, we may serve and honour you in newness of life, to the praise and glory of your Holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Thomas Cranmer

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, in your tender mercy and love, you gave your only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for us. We praise you that he made there a full, perfect, and complete sacrifice for sins by the once and for all offering up of himself as our substitute and sin bearer. We praise you that the outcome of Christ's sacrifice has been that your justice is now satisfied and

your anger is now turned aside from all who repent and believe the Gospel. We also give you thanks that Christ has instituted, and in your Word has commanded us, to continue a perpetual memory of his death until he comes again. As we seek now to be obedient to your command, grant us the grace to receive these elements of bread and wine according to your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's institution, in memory of his death and resurrection, so that we may share in the benefits of his broken body and his shed blood. Amen.

Eternal God and Father, we bow before you now and acknowledge your wisdom in creating us in your own image. We thank and praise you that even when we had corrupted your image by sin and had fallen far short of your glory, you still loved us and sent your Son to seek and to save the lost.

We thank you for the life of our Lord; for prophecies that foretold his coming; for his miraculous conception and birth; for his life full of perfect obedience even though he was tempted in every way, just like us.

Our thanks today focus upon his death on the cross where he took upon himself all the punishment due to us for our sin and rebelliousness against our Maker. We thank you that on the cross, Jesus offered up once and for all, the perfect sacrifice for sins. Oh, how deep for us your love must be, to send the spotless Lamb of God, to die on Calvary's tree! He poured out his blood in death, the just for the unjust, the sinless for the sinful.

At your invitation, Lord, we come to your table to remember you. We declare before the world that through Christ alone we have received forgiveness of sins

and eternal life and all the rich benefits in this life and the next which flow from being born again by the grace of God as a child of God. To you our Father we lift up our hearts in thankfulness and praise. Amen.

Merciful God, our loving heavenly Father, we do not come to this table trusting in our own goodness or virtue. We come because Christ has invited us. We come because we are sinful people in need of forgiveness. We come because we are hungry for life and need to be fed. Father, forgive us and feed us.

We come, in wonder and gratitude, to offer our very selves to you in worship and praise. Above all we thank you for sending Jesus, your Son to deliver us from the way of sin and death by the obedience of his life, by his suffering upon the cross and by his resurrection from the dead. Father, accept our praise, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Lord Jesus, the feast is yours, not ours. It is your table to which we come to be your guests. It is your presence we seek, your body and blood of which we partake. Help us to draw near with expectant hearts and a living faith, to receive as from your hands the bread of life, the cup of salvation and to find refreshment, strength and peace, for your name's sake, Amen

Merciful God, our loving heavenly Father, in the strong light of your Word we see the dark stain of sin upon our lives. Against the straight edge of your Word we see our lives to be crooked and broken. All we, like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned, everyone, to his own way. We honestly and openly acknowledge before you our sins and failures. We cannot hide them from you and we dare

not. For you look beyond the mere outward appearance. You look upon the heart. Everything is open and laid bare before you to whom we must give an account, in knowledge of which we now humbly confess to you our sins. We repent of them, we hate them as you hate them, we grieve over the offence we have caused you by them and we plead your grace in the name of Jesus. Forgive us, remove our sins from us, as far as the east is from the west. Wash us and we shall be whiter than snow.

In faith, we claim your promise that if we confess our sins, you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Conscious therefore, Gracious Lord, of the nature of our own hearts, we do not presume to come to your Table trusting in our own righteousness, but in your great mercy. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs from under your table, let alone to feast at your table as one of your invited guests. However, you are the same Lord whose nature is always to show mercy. Grant us therefore, Gracious Lord, so to partake of the body and blood of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, that we may ever more live in him and he in us. Amen.

Book of Common Prayer, 1549

Loving and Heavenly Father, be pleased to accept this our sacrifice of praise, and grant that by the all-sufficient merits of your Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his name, we may receive forgiveness of sins and all the other benefits of his passion. We now present to you our bodies as living sacrifices, which is our spiritual worship, humbly praying that you will fill us afresh with your grace and your Holy Spirit. Be pleased to accept this our sacrifice of praise, with the forgiveness of all our sins, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

We give thanks, our God, that we have again been privileged to sit at your table and to dwell upon your rich, undying love for us. We thank you too, for the testimony of those who have proclaimed your death in days gone by and who now feast at your table in that home with many rooms, which Jesus is preparing even now for those who love Him. By your Holy Spirit, strengthen us. Preserve us against all the assaults of the evil one. Rekindle within us a deep love for you. Stir up our zeal for godliness and, in true spiritual fervour, may we serve you all the days of our earthly life until you call us home to see you face to face and to live eternally with all the redeemed saints in your heavenly kingdom.

Great God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we bring you glory, thanks and praise, for all that we have seen and heard, tasted and handled of the Word of Life; for fellowship with you and with your Son, and with your people, too. We humbly ask you to accept us as we dedicate ourselves to you again. Help us with your daily grace, that we may continue in this fellowship, that our hearts may be filled with new courage and hope; that we may live to your glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

We give you thanks, our God, that we have been privileged once again to sit at your table and to dwell upon your rich undying love for us. As we have considered afresh all that it cost you personally to accomplish our salvation, that salvation which comes to us free of charge, we stand in awe of you and give you glory.

We uphold before you all Christ-centred, Bible-believing churches, and especially the Presbyterian Church of Australia. We ask that your Word may be truly preached, your sacraments rightly administered and discipline uprightly maintained. Visit us by your grace and awaken us by your power.

We pray for our country, for our Queen and all the royal family, for those in positions of authority in this land, for the parliaments, for the High Court, for all judges and magistrates, for leaders in agriculture, industry, commerce and education. Be pleased to bless us with righteousness, justice and truth.

In our prayers for the world, we ask that you will give to those who are suffering because of war, disease, persecution or disaster, patience, faith and endurance until you are pleased to send them deliverance from all their troubles.

We give you thanks for our families and friends, for the joy of human affection and love. Grant that we may be united in our faith in you and in our love for one another.

We remember before you those who are suffering in body, mind or spirit. Restore to health and strength, according to your will, our sick, give peace to the troubled in mind and bind up the broken-hearted.

We pray finally for those who will not pray for themselves; for those who have never known you, for those who are back-slidden, for those who are enslaved by error. Turn them we pray, from darkness to light, that they, with all your faithful people, may worship and serve you, our God and Saviour.

Almighty God, you provide the true bread from heaven, your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant that we who have received the sacrament of his body and blood may abide in him and he is us, that we may be filled with the power of his endless life, now and forever.

Gracious Father, we bow in reverence before you and thank you for the cross. We thank you that our Saviour's precious blood has sealed our pardon. By faith, we look to him who was pierced for our transgressions, who was bruised for our iniquities, and rejoice that it was by his wounds that we now are healed. We see Jesus, pierced with nails and spear and crown of thorns, parched with thirst, despised, rejected, bleeding, dying, cursed and forsaken, all for our redemption. Lord God, we see your only begotten Son, crucified for us, made sin for us. We see how you made him who knew no sin to become sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him. He was the Passover lamb, who was sacrificed for us. By the shedding of his blood, the new covenant was sealed. So we take up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. We worship you that you have redeemed us, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus. We confess that we are now no longer our own, we have been bought with a price. Our desire is to glorify you in our bodies and in our lives.

We worship you that Christ has been made for us wisdom, righteousness, holiness and redemption. In him, our sin is pardoned, our sinful nature is subdued, we have a perfect righteousness, we have an immortal life, we have a sure hope and we have an immovable foundation. We forsake all other means. We trust Christ completely. We confess that there is no other way, and no other

name, by which we must be saved. We desire to walk with you in grateful thanks for the finished work of Christ, for redemption accomplished, which is now applied to our hearts by faith in him.

We praise you for your sovereign grace and respond by offering up to you our whole bodies as living sacrifices, our acceptable worship, in Jesus' name, Amen.

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