

Marking our Communities 2

Prayers of Lament, Thanksgiving and Restoration

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2.1 The re-opening of our buildings for public worship will create a series of possibilities to welcome members of the local community to gather in prayer and reflection. People are grieving the loss of loved ones; they are lamenting the pain and anxiety that so many have experienced; they are giving thanks for the courage and generous spirit of care that is transforming whole communities; and wanting to gather in prayer to the God who sustains us through trauma and offers the hope of restoration and renewal. We carry these themes within us as we pray in our homes, with our families and our neighbours, and as we prepare to re-enter the buildings consecrated for the worship of God's people.

2.2 During the weeks and months ahead, many will be renewed by a welcome return to familiar patterns of public worship, but others with underlying health issues will still be self-isolating even when the current restrictions are eased and in need of special support. Wherever we find ourselves, we will need to find creative ways of exploring our emotions and experiences in the light of the risen Christ.

2.3 **Lament.** Few communities have been unaffected by loss, illness and death. Fear and anxiety have been prevalent in households and communities. In the resources that follow, suggestions for a 'Service of Lament' (as distinct from a bereavement service) are provided. This can be used as a 'stand alone' service or elements of it incorporated into an occasion marking a community's journey in recovery.

2.4 **Thanksgiving.** The emergence of the Thursday 'Clap for carers' was a significant experience both nationally and locally. Thanksgiving binds communities together, turning 'I' into 'we'. The contribution of carers and key workers who have given of themselves sacrificially needs to be honoured. Sharing stories of people and events during the crisis and lockdown is likely to form the kernel of any community celebration. Unsung heroes need to be applauded.

2.5 **Restoration.** Naming the unexpected gifts of this crisis as well as its challenges, celebrating the rediscovery of the importance of the local, and the resurgence of neighbourliness will enable the journey of renewal and restoration. Consideration may be given to bring an act of worship to focus in some sort of symbolic act of restoration, entrusting ourselves to the God who leads us into his future: 'I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope' (Jeremiah 29.11).

2.6 These liturgical resources are offered to help shape worship that will articulate the cries of our hearts and bear them into the presence of God. They are grouped into sections of Lament, Thanksgiving and Restoration, together with prayers of gathering and concluding

but the demarcations are only indicative. The choice and ordering of material are a matter of discretion and will depend on the nature and context of a service, particularly if it includes a recognition of the work of key individuals in the community. Many churches have developed an on-line following whilst their buildings have been closed and, where possible, it would be good to arrange for any service to be live-streamed to allow as many as possible to take part.

+ Robert Exon

Chair of the Liturgical Commission

1 The Gathering

We meet in the presence of God

All who knows our needs,
hears our cries,
feels our pain,
and heals our wounds.

As people gather for worship, the Paschal Candle may be lit in witness to the presence of the risen Christ in our midst (see Annex 1: Re-entering our church buildings). One or more of the following prayers may be used.

Lord God, the maker and redeemer of all,
as we come before you
in grief and praise this day,
comfort us with your presence,
make us attentive to your voice,
and sustain us with the hope of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Free us, God of mercy,
from all that keeps us from you;
relieve the misery of the anxious and the bereaved,
and fill us with the hope of peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

O Christ, Son of the living God,
help us when we are too cast down to pray,
and grant that we may trust you all our days,
for you are with us in our living and our dying,
Jesus, Lord and God.

All Amen.

In the darkness of unknowing,
when your love seems absent,
draw near to us, O God,
in Christ forsaken,
in Christ risen,
our Redeemer and our Lord.

All Amen.

2 Lament

Psalm 130

Out of the depths I have called to you, Lord,
Let your ears be open to hear my voice.

All My hope is in God's word.

If you recorded all our sins
who could come before you?

All My hope is in God's word.

There is forgiveness with you:
therefore you shall be feared.

All My hope is in God's word.

My soul is longing for the Lord,
more than those who watch for daybreak.

All My hope is in God's word.

O Israel, wait for the Lord,
for with the Lord there is mercy.

All My hope is in God's word.

*Father, we commend to your faithful love
those who are crying from the depths;
help them to watch and pray
through their time of darkness,
in sure hope of the dawn of your
forgiveness and redemption;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

All Amen.

Scripture Readings

Psalm 23	<i>The Lord is my Shepherd</i>
Jeremiah 8.18—9.1	<i>Is there no balm in Gilead?</i>
Lamentations 3.21—26	<i>The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases</i>
Joel 2.15—19	<i>Spare your people, O Lord</i>
Matthew 11.28—30	<i>Come to me, all you who are weary</i>
John 14.1—8	<i>Do not let your hearts be troubled</i>
Romans 8.31—39	<i>Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God</i>
1 Thessalonians 4.13—18	<i>You need not grieve as those who have no hope</i>

Responsory

Fear not, for I have redeemed you.
I have called you by name; you are mine.

All **Fear not, for I have redeemed you.**
I have called you by name; you are mine.

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you.
When you walk through fire, you shall not be burned.

All **I have called you by name; you are mine.**

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.

All **Fear not, for I have redeemed you.**
I have called you by name; you are mine.

Canticle: A Song of Lamentation

Refrain:

All **Great is your faithfulness, O Lord.**

- 1 Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?
 Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow,
- 2 Which was brought upon me,
 which the Lord inflicted
 on the day of his fierce anger.
- 3 For these things I weep;
 my eyes flow with tears;
 for a comforter is far from me,
 one to revive my courage.
- 4 Remember my affliction and my bitterness,
 the wormwood and the gall!
- 5 But this I call to mind,
 and therefore I have hope:
- 6 The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
 his mercies never come to an end;
- 7 They are new every morning;
 great is your faithfulness.
- 8 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul,
 'therefore I will hope in him.'
- 9 The Lord is good to those who wait for him,
 to the soul that seeks him.
- 10 It is good that we should wait quietly
 for the salvation of the Lord.
- 11 For the Lord will not reject for ever;
 though he causes grief, he will have compassion,

12 According to the abundance of his steadfast love;
for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone.

Lamentations 1.12, 16a,b; 3.19,21–26,31–33

All **Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

All **Great is your faithfulness, O Lord.**

Prayers

Shield us, Lord, from all evil,
and lift us from apathy and despair,
that even when we are terrified
we may trust your power to save
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Lord Jesus Christ,
may the tears shed in your earthly life
be balm for all who weep,
and may the prayers of your pilgrimage
give strength to all who suffer;
for your mercy's sake.

All **Amen.**

From your royal throne, O God,
you sent your living Word
to pierce the gloom of oppression;
so, in our souls' night,
come with your saving help
and penetrate our darkness
with the rays of your glory
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

Lord, you hide your face
when we trust in ourselves;
strip us of false security
and re-clothe us in your praise,
that we may know you
as the one who raises us from death,
as you raised your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

All **Amen.**

Lord Jesus Christ
when fear and anxiety besiege us
and hope is veiled in grief,
hold us in your wounded hands
and make your face shine on us again,
for you are our Lord and God.

All **Amen.**

Come, creator Spirit, source of life;
sustain us when our hearts are heavy
and our wells have run dry,
for you are the Father's gift,
with him who is our living water,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

3 Thanksgiving

Verses from Psalm 46

The Lord is with us, he is our stronghold;
God will help us at the break of day.

**All The Lord is with us, he is our stronghold;
God will help us at the break of day.**

God is our refuge and strength,
ready to help whenever we are in trouble:

All God will help at the break of day.

We will not fear, even if the earth shakes,
and the mountains topple into the sea:

All God will help at the break of day.

Come now and look at the works of the Lord,
the awesome things he has done on earth:

All God will help at the break of day.

Be still and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations;
I will be exalted in the earth:

All God will help at the break of day.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**All The Lord is with us, he is our stronghold;
God will help us at the break of day.**

Scripture Readings

Isaiah 43.1–3a *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you*

Matthew 25.31–46 *What you did to the least of these, you did it to me*

Mark 12.28–34 *Love your neighbour as yourself*

Galatians 6.2 *Bear one another's burdens*

Colossians 3.12–15 *Love binds all in perfect harmony*

Responsory

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul;
All O my God, in you I trust.

You are the God of my salvation,
All To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

In you I hope all the day long.
All O my God, in you I trust.

Remember, Lord, your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.
**All To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul;
O my God, in you I trust.**

Canticle: Te Deum Laudamus – A Song of the Church

- 1 We praise you, O God,
we acclaim you as the Lord;
- 2 all creation worships you,
the Father everlasting.
- 3 To you all angels, all the powers of heaven,
the cherubim and seraphim, sing in endless praise:
- 4 Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
- 5 The glorious company of apostles praise you.
The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.
- 6 The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.
Throughout the world the holy Church acclaims you:
- 7 Father, of majesty unbounded,
your true and only Son, worthy of all praise,
the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.
- 8 You, Christ, are the King of glory,
the eternal Son of the Father.
- 9 When you took our flesh to set us free
you humbly chose the Virgin's womb.
- 10 You overcame the sting of death
and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.
- 11 You are seated at God's right hand in glory.
We believe that you will come and be our judge.
- 12 Come then, Lord, and help your people,
bought with the price of your own blood,
and bring us with your saints
to glory everlasting.
- 13 Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance.
Govern and uphold them now and always.
- 14 Day by day we bless you.
We praise your name for ever.
- 15 Keep us today, Lord, from all sin.
Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.
- 16 Lord, show us your love and mercy,
for we have put our trust in you.
- 17 In you, Lord, is our hope:
let us never be put to shame.

Prayers

How generous is your goodness, O God,
how great is your salvation,
how faithful is your love;
help us to trust you in trial
and praise you in deliverance;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

As we sing of your love, O Lord,
anoint us with the Spirit's seal,
that we may praise your faithfulness
and proclaim your truth from age to age;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

God of our pilgrimage,
you have willed that the gate of mercy
should stand open for those who trust in you:
look upon us with your favour
that we who follow the path of your will
may never wander from the way of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Faithful Lord,
whose steadfast love never ceases
and whose mercies never come to an end:
grant us the grace to trust you
and to receive the gifts of your love,
new every morning,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Jesus, our companion,
when we are driven to despair,
help us, through the friends and strangers
we encounter on our path,
to know you as our refuge,
our way, our truth and our life.

All Amen.

King of the universe,
you show the bright glory of your reign
in acts of mercy and enduring love;
raise the spirits of the downcast
and restore those who have fallen away,
that we may sing for ever of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

4 Restoration

Psalm 84

- 1 How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!
My soul has a desire and longing to enter the courts of the Lord;
my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.
- 2 The sparrow has found her a house
and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young:
at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.
- 3 Blessed are they who dwell in your house:
they will always be praising you.
- 4 Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
in whose heart are the highways to Zion,
- 5 Who going through the barren valley find there a spring,
and the early rains will clothe it with blessing.
- 6 They will go from strength to strength
and appear before God in Zion.
- 7 O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer;
listen, O God of Jacob.
- 8 Behold our defender, O God,
and look upon the face of your anointed.
- 9 For one day in your courts
is better than a thousand.
- 10 I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than dwell in the tents of ungodliness.
- 11 For the Lord God is both sun and shield;
he will give grace and glory;
no good thing shall the Lord withhold
from those who walk with integrity.
- 12 O Lord God of hosts,
blessed are those who put their trust in you.

*Lord God,
sustain us in this vale of tears
with the vision of your grace and glory,
that, strengthened by the bread of life,
in the power of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Scripture Readings

Psalm 126	<i>Restore our fortunes, O Lord</i>
Isaiah 35.1–10	<i>The ransomed shall return</i>
Isaiah 61.1–4	<i>The Spirit of the Lord is upon me</i>
Isaiah 65.17–25	<i>The promise of new heavens and a new earth</i>
Matthew 19.27–30	<i>The renewal of all things</i>

Romans 8.18–30 *The hope of future renewal*

Revelation 21.1–7 *God will wipe away all tears*

Responsory

Trust in the Lord with all your heart;
and be not wise in your own sight.

**All Trust in the Lord with all your heart;
and be not wise in your own sight.**

In all your ways acknowledge him
and he will make straight your paths.

All Trust in the Lord with all your heart.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.

**All Trust in the Lord with all your heart;
and be not wise in your own sight.**

Canticle: A Song of Divine Love

Refrain:

**All Love bears all things
and will never come to an end.**

- 1 Love is patient and kind,
 love is not jealous or boastful,
 it is not arrogant or rude.
- 2 Love does not insist on its own way,
 it is not angry or resentful.
- 3 It does not rejoice in wrongdoing
 but rejoices in the truth.
- 4 Love bears all things and believes all things;
 love hopes all things and endures all things.
- 5 Love will never come to an end,
 but prophecy will vanish,
 tongues cease and knowledge pass away.
- 6 Now we know only in part
 and we prophesy only in part,
- 7 But when the perfect comes,
 the partial shall pass away.
- 8 When I was a child, I spoke like a child,
 I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child.
- 9 But when I became mature,
 I put an end to childish ways.
- 10 For now we see only puzzling reflections in a mirror,
 but then we will see face to face.

- 11 Now I know only in part;
then I shall know fully,
even as I have been fully known.
- 12 There are three things that last for ever,
faith, hope and love,
but the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13.4–13

All **Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

All **Love bears all things
and will never come to an end.**

Prayers

Almighty and eternal God,
to whom we must all give account:
guide with your Spirit the ... of this (*city, society, etc.*),
that *we/they* may be faithful to the mind of Christ
and seek in all *our/their* purposes to enrich our common life;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

Heavenly Father,
whose blessed Son came not to be served but to serve:
bless all who, following in his steps,
give themselves to the service of others;
that with wisdom, patience, and courage,
they may minister in his name to the suffering and the needy;
for the love of him who laid down his life for us,
your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever.

All **Amen.**

Lord Jesus Christ,
you taught us to love our neighbour,
and to care for those in need
as if we were caring for you.
In times of anxiety, give us strength
to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick,
and to assure the isolated
of our love, and your love,
for your name's sake.
Crown us, O God, but with humility,
and robe us with compassion,
that, as you call us into the kingdom of your Son,
we may strive to overcome evil
by the power of good
and so walk gently on the earth
with you, our God, for ever.

All Amen.

God of our pilgrimage,
may your kingdom come,
with deliverance for the needy,
with peace for the righteous,
with overflowing blessings for all nations,
with glory, honour and praise
for Christ, the only Saviour.

All Amen.

Jesus, Lord of time,

All hold us in your eternity.

Jesus, image of God,

All travel with us the life of faith.

Jesus, friend of sinners,

All heal the brokenness of our world.

Jesus, Lord of tomorrow,

All draw us into your future. Amen.

5 Concluding Prayers

God of love,
passionate and strong,
tender and caring:
watch over us and hold us
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

O Christ, door of the sheepfold,
may we who have entered your gates with praise
go from your courts to serve you
in the poor, the lost and the wandering,
this day and all our days.

All Amen.

Creator God,
may every breath we take be for your glory,
may every footstep show you as our way,
that, trusting in your presence in this world,
we may, beyond this life, still be with you
where you are alive and reign
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

**All In darkness and in light,
in trouble and in joy,
help us, heavenly Father,
to trust your love,
to serve your purpose,
and to praise your name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

An Acclamation

The Lord God almighty is our Father:
All he loves us and tenderly cares for us.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour:
All he has redeemed us and will defend us to the end.

The Lord, the Holy Spirit, is among us:
**All he will lead us in God's holy way.
To God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be praise and glory today and for ever.
Amen.**

Blessings

The Lord bless you and watch over you,
the Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you,
the Lord look kindly on you
and give you peace.

(or)

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted; honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing ...