



ST. JOHN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH
TOORAK
EST. 1859

Book *of* Prayers



INTRODUCTION*

Welcome to the beauty and quiet of St John's church. If you wish to pray, you may find one or more of the prayers within this booklet helpful. These prayers have been chosen from *The Book of a Thousand Prayers* compiled by Angela Ashwin.

We do not always need another person's words when we pray but sometimes a prayer written by someone else expresses our concerns and desires better than we could do ourselves. Or, using another's prayer can help us to grow into the aspirations of the prayer. And a written prayer links us not only with its author but with all the other people that have used it, so that, in a sense, we are never alone when we pray.

The prayers are arranged in sections by themes, so you may find it useful to browse the headings of each section to find the ones that are closest to your current situation.

Prayer is even more than an offering we make to God. Prayer is God's gift to us, a banquet of good things to feed our inner life as we respond to the invitation to God's feast of peace, forgiveness, challenge and love.

**Paraphrased from The Book of a Thousand Prayers, Angela Ashwin, 2002.*

CONTENTS

PART 1: PRAISE & THANKSGIVING

- + General & Specific Thanksgivings _____ Pg.4

PART 2: IN TIMES OF DIFFICULTY

- + Trouble & Conflict _____ Pg.6
- + When Busy & Over-Tired _____ Pg.9
- + Fear, Anxiety & Doubt _____ Pg.10
- + Inner Darkness _____ Pg.12
- + When Tempted _____ Pg.13
- + Being Ill _____ Pg.14

PART 3: PRAYERS FOR FORGIVENESS

- + For Forgiveness _____ Pg.16
- + Announcement of Forgiveness _____ Pg.19

PART 4: PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD

- + For victims of War, Oppression & Disaster, and for Refugees __ Pg.20

PART 5: DEATH AND DYING

- + For those who have died _____ Pg.22
- + Bereavement _____ Pg.23

PART 6: BLESSINGS

- + Blessings _____ Pg.24

PART 1
PRAISE & THANKSGIVING

GENERAL & SPECIFIC THANKSGIVINGS

*Praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord from heaven:
O praise him in the heights.*

PSALM 148.1



How can I tell of such love to me?
You made me in your image
and hold me in the palm of your hand,
your cords of love, strong and fragile as silk
bind me and hold me.
Rich chords, to family and friends,
music and laughter echoing in memories,
light dancing on water, hills rejoicing.
Cords that found me hiding behind carefully built walls
and led me out,
love that heard my heart break, and despair, and rescued me
love that overcame my fears and doubts and released me.
The questions and burdens I carry you take,
to leave my hands free - to hold yours, and others,
free to be caught up in the dance of your love,
Finding myself in surrendering to you.
How can I tell of such love? How can I give to such love?
I am, here am I.

Catherine Hooper

As a needle turns to the north when touched by the magnet, so it is fitting, O Lord, that I, your servant, should turn to love and praise and serve you; seeing that out of love to me you were willing to endure such grievous pangs and sufferings.

Raymond Lull (1235-1315)

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me,
praise his holy name;
Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.
For he forgives all your sins, and heals all your diseases;
He saves your life from destruction, and crowns you with mercy
and loving kindness .

Psalm 103.1-4

Blessing and honour, thanksgiving and praise, more than I can
utter, more than I can understand, be yours, O most glorious Trinity,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, by all angels, all people, all creatures,
now and forever.

Lancelot Andrews (1555-1626)

You are holy, Lord, the only God,
and your deeds are wonderful.
You are love, you are wisdom.
You are humility, you are endurance.
You are rest, you are peace.
You are joy and gladness.
You are all our riches, and you suffice for us.
You are beauty, you are gentleness.
You are our protector,
You are our guardian and defender.
You are courage
You are our haven and hope
You are our faith, our great consolation.
You are our eternal life, great and wonderful Lord,
God almighty, merciful Saviour.

St Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) (abridged)

Lord, you have given me so much;
I ask for one more thing -
a grateful heart.

After George Hubert (1593-1633)

PART 2
IN TIMES OF DIFFICULTY

TROUBLE & CONFLICT

*Why are you so full of heaviness, my soul,
and why so unquiet within me?
O put your trust in God, for I will praise him yet,
who is my deliverer and my God.*

PSALM 42.11



Heart of my shattered heart,
Who will soothe the buried lament?
Who will pour oil on the biting pang that never dies?
Christ, do you hear the words held back?
You are there, a love most healing.

Brother Roger of Taizé (1915-2005)

Lord,
I am tearing the heart of my soul in two.
I need you to come and lie there yourself
In the wounds of my soul.

Mechtild of Magdeburg (1207-1294)

I will face this pain.
I will accept its full impact
silently
turning my gaze
onto the crucified Christ
who is in this hell with me.
Even here
I am held in love of Jesus
who is both Love-in-death
and Love-Risen.

A.A

O Father God,
I cannot fight this darkness by beating it with my hands.
Help me to take the light of Christ right into it.

Prayer from Africa

Lord,
Through weariness and hurt,
Through disaster on the news,
Through headaches and depression,
I am still yours.
I do not understand,
but I believe that you are here
in the dark places of human life,
and that nothing can take us out of your hands.

A.A.

From the depths of my despair I call you,
O Lord, hear my voice.
I look for the lord, my soul waits for him,
in his word is all my trust.
My soul waits for the lord,
more than those who watch for the morning.
O Israel, trust in the Lord!
for with him is steadfast love,
and great is his power to save and redeem.

Psalms 130.1-2,5-7

Calm my troubled heart; give me peace.
O Lord, calm the waves of this heart, calm its tempests!
Calm thyself, O my soul, so that the divine can act in thee!
Calm thyself, O my soul so that God is able to repose in thee,
so that his peace may cover thee!
Yes, Father in heaven, often have we found that the world cannot
give us peace, but make us feel that thou art able to give peace;
let us know the truth of their promise:
that the whole world may not be able to take away thy peace.

Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

When all we are and everything we do
is called into question,
Grant us dignity and direction,
Grant us patience; Jesus, be there.

A New Zealand Prayer Book (adapted)

Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on;
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
Lead thou me on.
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
the distant scene; one step enough for me.

John Henry Newman (1801-1890)

O Lord, hear my voice when I cry unto you;
have mercy on me and answer me.
Do not hide your face from me;
nor thrust me aside in your displeasure:
For you are my helper: cast me not away;
do not forsake me, O God of my salvation.

Psalm 27.7, 9

Lord Jesus, kind heart,
Through the storms of the day
Guide me to the shore.

Lord Jesus, kind heart,
I am weary with travelling,
Let me rest in you

Lord Jesus, kind heart,
When darkness comes over me,
Give me your light.

W. Mary Calvert

Creator God, you know what we need without our words.
Hear our prayers and hear also our silence.
Give us strength,
and grant us those things we cannot or dare not voice.
We make all our prayers through our brother Jesus. Amen.

Oxford Women's Liturgy

*I trust in you, O Lord, I say, 'You are my God.'
My times are in your hand; save me in your steadfast love.
PSALM 31.14-15*



Lord, I am poured out,
I come to you for renewal.
Lord, I am weary,
I come to you for refreshment.
Lord I am worn,
I come to you for restoration.
Lord I am lost,
I come to you for guidance.
Lord, I am troubled,
I come to you for peace.
Lord, I am lonely,
I come to you for love.
Come, Lord,
Come revive me
Come re-shape me
Come mould me in your image.
Re-cast me in the furnace of your love.

David Adam

God who is with us
at our beginning and ending,
be with us now.
Help us to find you
in the chaos in our lives.
Let your light be guided
to walk in your ways all the days of my life.

Ulla Monberg

*Hear my prayer, O God, and do not hide yourself from my petition;
the terrors of death and trembling have come upon me,
and horror overwhelms me.*

PSALM 55. 1, 5



The Lord is my delight and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
Even if an army encamp against me, I shall not be afraid;
and if war should rise against me, yet will I trust.
One thing I have asked of the Lord, which I will seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.
For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble,
and set me high upon a rock.

Psalms 27. 1, 3-5

Lord of life
Why do I anticipate the worst
When time and time again
The worst never happens?
Even when it does, life goes on
And every day comes to an end.
Lord help me to overcome my fears
In this brief moment of reflection.
Calm my mind
Help me relax
Let your comforting Spirit
Enter into me
And fill me with peace.

Frank Topping

O God, you know we are often filled with fear and foreboding.
Give us courage and deepen our trust.
You are a rock which nothing can shatter.
On you we can place the whole weight of our lives.

Richard Harris

Lord, I know that, however fearful I may be,
Nothing can separate me from your love:
neither death, nor life,
angels, nor principalities,
things present, nor things to come,
evil powers, heights and depths,
nor anything else in all creation -
nothing at all!

Based on Romans 8.31-9

FEAR OF DEMENTIA

If one day I should lose my mind,
Lord let me still be yours,
even if I cease to understand
What being 'yours' may mean.
I fear the indignity of people saying 'Poor soul, she's not the person
that she used to be.'
Lord, if this should happen,
let my condition be
an offering to millions of others
who have faced inner confusion and loss of self.
O God, even my fear of 'going mad'
is outstripped by your love
into eternity.
So help me to forget about tomorrow,
and concentrate on living in today.

A.A.



INNER DARKNESS

*Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil,
for you are with me, your rod and your staff comfort me.*

PSALM 23.4



Spirit of comfort, and longing,
enfold my fear,
unclothe me of of my pride,
unweave my thoughts,
uncomplicate my heart,

And give me surrender:
that I may tell my wounds,
lay down my work,
and greet the dark.

Janet Morley

Lord, come as sweet, healing oil
into my weary mind,
my bruised heart
and my dried-up soul.

A.A.

Lord, where can I escape from your spirit:
or where can I flee from your presence?
If I ascend to heaven you are there:
if I make my bed in the grave, you are there also.
If I spread out my wings toward the morning
and dwell in the farthest parts of the sea,
Even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.

Psalms 139.7-10

When on life a darkness falls,
when the mist flows chilling,
paths and signposts lost in doubt,
loveless, unfulfilling,
reach us, Jesus, from your cross,
though we feel forsaken;
keep us through the aching night
till new dawns awaken.

Brian A. Wren (1936 -)

*Incline my heart to your commands, and not to selfish gain;
Turn away my eyes from looking at vain things:
as I walk in your way, give me life.*

PSALM 119.36-37



Stay at the centre of my soul, O God:
be in my longing and my hurting;
be in my hoping and my emptiness
be in my eyes lips and heart,
so that my desire to be true to you
and to myself
may prevail over everything else.

A.A.

Fix the centre of my heart in yourself,
O Lord, for only thus will I resist temptation
and live according to your will.

after Meister Eckhart (1260-1327)

*Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed;
save me and I shall be saved; for you are my praise.*

JEREMIAH 17.14



I hate being ill,
I hate the helplessness,
I hate the vulnerability,
I hate myself for being like this,
I hate you for letting this happen to me.

Soothe me down, God.
Help me hear your voice in the midst of your anger.
Help me to trust the caress of your fingers.
Help me not to push you away when you come near.
Help me to let go into your love.

Ruth Burgess

Today, I feel isolated.
Like an island in the middle of a great ocean.
No one really understands my feelings, and I hesitate to burden
others with my troubles.
'If only' things could change.
Living Jesus, please continue to Love me through this illness and
gloom.
Penetrate my loneliness with your divine presence.

Ann Shepherdson

Lord, grant me the gift of patience when I am well, so that I may
use it when I am sick. When I am healthy, and relying on myself
alone, I often discover how weak I am. Help me, when I am ill, to
find the strength which comes from depending solely on you.

after Thomas Fuller (1608-1661)

Lord, hang on to me,
because I don't feel well enough to hang on to you.

A.A

Christ, You are behind me to protect me from evil,
defending me from all that would creep up on me.
You stand between me and all that seeks to defile me.

Christ, You enter through the door of the past
with Your love and forgiveness.
You can come where doors are closed
and bring light and peace.

Christ, I put my hand in Yours, for I am afraid;
I bring memories that hurt and a past that pains,
for Your healing and renewal.

Christ, come enter through the door of the past;
into the remembered and the forgotten
into the joys and sorrows
into the recording room of memories
into the secret room of sin
into the hidden room of shame
into the mourning room of sorrow,
into the bright room of love,
into the joyful room of achievement.

Come, Christ.

David Adam



PART 3
PRAYERS FOR FORGIVENESS

PRAYERS FOR FORGIVENESS

God be merciful unto me, a sinner.

LUKE 18.13



How could I ever imagine,
That I would cope without praying?
How could I keep going
unless I knew
that I could return my heart to you
And soak my darkness in your light?
Pour your mercy into my madness
and your Spirit into my will,
and make me know
in my heart as well as my head
that only in you
am I found forgiven and free.

A.A.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord hear my voice!
If you should keep account of our sins,
Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with you,
So that you may be revered.
I wait for the Lord, my soul waits for him,
And in his word is my hope.

Psalm 130.1-5

O God, you desire truth in the inmost heart; forgive me my sins against truth - the untruth within me, the half-lies, the evasions, the exaggerations, the lying silences, the self-deceits, the masks, I wear them before the world. Let me stand naked before you, and see myself as I really am. Then, grant me truth in the inward parts and keep me in truth always.

George Appleton (1902-1993)(adapted)

Christ our friend,
you ask for our love
In spite of our betrayal.
Give us courage to embrace forgiveness,
know you again,
and trust ourselves in you

Janet Morley

Lord Jesus,
forgive us for failing you,
as even the disciples did.
Through thoughtlessness
we betray you;
through fear
we run away from you;
through cowardice
we deny you,
not wanting people to know that we are your followers.
Have mercy on us,
as you had mercy on Peter and the others,
and when the cock crows in our hearts
and we realise what we have done,
help us to bear your gaze of love.

A.A.

From the cowardice that dare not face new truth,
From the laziness that is contented with half truth,
From the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,
Good Lord deliver us.

Prayer from Kenya

We need your healing, merciful God;
Give us true repentance.
Some sins are plain to us;
some escape us,
some we cannot face.
Forgive us;
set us free to hear your word to us
set us free to serve you.

A New Zealand Prayer Book

God help us to find our confession;
The truth within us which is hidden from our mind;
The beauty or the ugliness we see elsewhere
But never in ourselves;
The stowaway which has been smuggled
Into the dark side of the heart,
Which puts the heart off balance and causes it pain,
Which wearies and confuses us,
Which tips us in false directions and inclines us to destruction,
The load which is not carried squarely
Because it is carried in ignorance
God help us to find our confession.
Help us across the boundary of our understanding.
Lead us into the darkness that we may find what lies concealed;
That we may confess it towards the light;
That we may carry our truth in the centre of our heart;
That we may carry our cross wisely
And bring harmony into our life and our world.

Michael Leunig

Father eternal, giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought,
in what we have said and done,
through ignorance, through weakness,
though our own deliberate fault.
We have wounded your love,
and marred your image in us.
We are sorry and ashamed,
And repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your son Jesus Christ, who died for us,
forgive us all that is past;
and lead us out from darkness
to walk as children of light.

The Alternative Service Book 1980 (adapted)

ANNOUNCEMENT OF FORGIVENESS

The Saviour of the world, Refuge of the repentant,
forgives and strengthens all who truly seek his grace.
He accepts you as his sons and daughters,
and sets you free from the bondage of your past.
For Christ died and rose to new life
that we might all share his wholeness and abundant life.

Worship in Indian Context



PART 4
PRAYERS FOR THE WORLD

FOR VICTIMS OF WAR OPPRESSION & DISASTER, & FOR REFUGEES

*Give justice to the weak and the orphan:
vindicate the lowly and the oppressed.
Rescue the poor and the needy:
deliver them from the hands of the wicked.*

PSALM 82.3-4



O God, you bring hope out of emptiness,
energy out of fear,
new life out of grief and loss;
comfort all who have lost their homes
Through persecution, war, exile,
or deliberate destruction.
Give them security, a place to live,
and neighbours they trust to be, with them,
a sign of peace to the world.

Janet Morley (abridged)

We pray,
for all who have been maimed or murdered,
and those who were traumatised
through watching the brutality of others.

We pray,
for people buried under bombed buildings,
and the victims of earthquakes,
fires and mining accidents.

We pray,
for those with smoke in their nostrils
and dust in their mouths,
lost and perhaps unremembered.
Lord, in your tenderness, hold them.

A.A.

Give comfort, O Lord,
to all who are torn away from their homes and their loved ones
by war, famine or the cruelty of their fellows;
grant that we who dwell secure in this insecure world
may be generous in caring for our displaced sisters and brothers.

Quarterly Intercession Paper, No. 322.

O Lord, our God, whose compassion fails not:
support, we entreat you,
the peoples on whom the terrors of invasion have fallen;
and if their liberty be lost to the oppressor,
let not their spirit and hope be broken,
but stayed upon your strength till the day of deliverance;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Eric Milner-White (1884-1963) & G. W. Briggs (1875-1959)



PART 5
DEATH AND DYING

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED

*God will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more,
neither shall there be mourning or crying nor pain anymore,
for the former things have passed away.*

REVELATION 21.4



Welcome, Lord, into your calm and peaceful kingdom those who, out of this present life, have departed to be with you; grant them rest and a place with the spirits of the just; and give them the life that knows not age, the reward that passes not away; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

St Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556)

We commend into your hands, O Lord,
those whom we have loved...
You gave them breath,
and loved them through their lives.
Receive them now in your infinite tenderness,
And give them peace.

A.A.



BEREAVEMENT

*O my son Absalom, my son, my son, my son!
Would to God I have died for you, my son.*
KING DAVID, 2 SAMUEL 18.33



O God who brought us to birth,
and in whose arms we die;
in our grief and shock
contain and comfort us;
embrace us with your love,
give us hope in our confusion,
and grace to let go into new life,
through Jesus Christ.

Janet Morley

God of life and love, we come to you in our need. Be with us as we experience the abyss of death and grief. Be there in our sorrow and pain.; be with us in our fear, that we may find light in darkness, comfort in your word; in the name of Jesus, who by death has conquered death.

The Service Book of The United Reformed Church



PART 6
BLESSINGS

BLESSINGS

*Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace,
at all times and in all ways; the Lord be with you all.*

2 THESSALONIANS 3:16



Be thou a bright flame before me,
Be thou a guiding star above me,
Be thou a smooth path below me,
Be thou a kindly shepherd behind me,
Today - tonight - and for ever.

St Columba (c.521-597)

On our heads and our houses the blessing of God;
On our coming and going,
The peace of God;
In our life and believing,
The love of God;
At our end and new beginning,
The arms of God to welcome us and bring us home.

John L, Bell

Blessing and laughter and loving be yours.
The Love of a Great God
who names you and holds you
while the earth turns and the flowers grow;
this day
this night
this moment
and forever.

Ruth Burgess

The blessing of God, the eternal goodwill of God, the shalom of God, the wildness and warmth of God, be among us and between us, now and always.

Jim Cotter

The peace of God
which passes all understanding,
keep our hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God Almighty
The Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be upon us and remain with us always.

based on Philippians 4.7

Bless to us, O God, the road that is before us,
Bless to us, O God, the friends who are around us,
Bless to us, O God, your love which is within us.
Bless to us, O God,
The light that leads us home.

Ruth Burgess

Peace of the running waves to you,
Deep peace of the flowing air to you,
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you,
Deep peace of the shining stars to you,
Deep peace of the shades of night to you,
Moon and stars always giving light to you,
Deep peace of Christ, the Son of Peace, to you.

Traditional Gaelic blessing

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith
and may you be rooted and grounded in love,
and comprehend, with saints,
what is the breadth and length and height and depth
of the love of Christ,
So that you may be filled with the fullness of God.

based on Ephesians 3.17-19

The Love of the Lord Jesus
draw you to himself,
the power of the Lord Jesus
strengthen you in his service,
the joy of the Lord Jesus fill your hearts;
And the blessing of the God almighty,
The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
Be among you and remain with you always.

*The Alternative Service Book 1980
Based of an original by William Temple (1881-1944)*

May the warmth of Christ heal you,
the eyes of Christ gaze in you,
and the peace of Christ shine through you,
today and evermore.

A.A.

May the road rise up to meet you,
may the wind be always at you back
may the sun shine upon you face
the rains fall soft upon your fields
and, until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

Ancient Irish Blessing



ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST ANGLICAN CHURCH TOORAK
86 CLENDON ROAD TOORAK, VICTORIA, 3142 AUSTRALIA

9826 1765 enquiries@saintjohnstoorak.org www.saintjohnstoorak.org

ABN 32 359 171 071