

Liturgical Resources
for
Services of Lament and Loss
Related to Coronavirus

Prepared by the Bishop of Southwark's
Advisory Group for Liturgy

All Saints-tide 2020

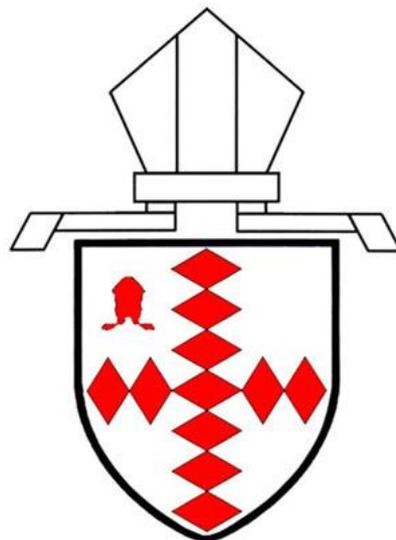


Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Propers for a COVID-19 World	4
Propers for a Memorial Eucharist during the COVID-19 Pandemic	8
A Short Liturgy of Lament.....	12
A Longer Liturgy of Lament	13
A Liturgy of Loss and Fragility	19
Further Prayers	24

Introduction

This document has been prepared at the Bishop of Southwark's request by his Advisory Group for Liturgy, in the early autumn of 2020.

Its purpose is to gather together in one place a wide range of liturgical resources that may be useful to parishes in the particular times in which we find ourselves. As the current pandemic develops, and as the nights draw in, there may be a growing sense of need for collective prayer and worship connecting with themes of loss and sorrow: this document is intended to help in meeting that need.

We profess the Easter Faith. We are thus at root and in the eternal perspective joyful. Yet we in no way deny the reality of sorrow and pain. It is to give a voice for engaging honestly with the latter, that these materials are intended.

They may be particularly useful in the period from All Saints to Remembrance Sunday, when the thoughts and prayers of many naturally turn to those we love but see no more, and to the reality of death and suffering. They may also have wider application.

This is an intentionally diverse collection. It includes materials that speak in many different accents. It is hoped that most churches, in whatever tradition of worship they stand, will find something here they can use with integrity. It may even be that some will find material here they would not otherwise have used.

By the same token, for any given church there will be much here that will not be of use. We have thought it better to put in too much rather than too little, so that those responsible can make their own selection. If anybody reading this would like to contribute additional resources for consideration for inclusion in a future edition, this would be very welcome. Please e-mail the Chair of the advisory group, The Revd Joshua Rey, mail@joshuarey.com.

Lastly, a word on copyright. Much of this material has been composed by the Advisory Group, but some, where noted, has been borrowed or adapted from online sources or from Common Worship. No formal requests for permission to use this latter material have been made. The view has been taken that materials available online may be fairly used for liturgical purposes in a parish context. However it is for each parish to make its own decision in this regard.

Propers for a COVID-19 World

Collect

Faithful God,
In times of sorrow you are our comfort
When we find ourselves in need, you provide;
In this season of separation you have held us together;
by your Spirit renew our strength
and give us the words of eternal life
to offer hope to a suffering world,
through Christ our lord.
Amen.

Introduction to Confession from CW All Saints to Advent

Let us confess to God the sins and shortcomings of the world;
its pride, its selfishness, its greed;
its evil distortions and hatreds.
Let us confess our share in what is wrong,
and our failure to seek and establish that peace
which God wills for all his children.

Confession

In a world disordered by sin and death
we bow our heads and humble our hearts before you.

When our ears have been deaf to the cries of the poor and suffering
Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy

When our eyes have been blind to injustice in the world
Christ have mercy
Christ have mercy

When our hands have torn down rather than healed
Lord have mercy
Lord have mercy

Gospel Acclamations

Alleluia, alleluia,
Christ came as the light; those who follow will never walk in darkness.
Alleluia.

Alleluia, alleluia.
Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Alleluia.

Matthew 5.3

Alleluia, alleluia.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Alleluia.

Matthew 5.4

Prayers of Intercession (adapted from CW Praying Together on Remembrance Sunday)

Let us pray for all who suffer as a result of COVID-19
and ask that God may give us peace:
for the children and adults
who have died in the violence of this strain of Coronavirus,
each one remembered by and known to God;
may God give peace.

God give peace.

For those who love them in death as in life,
offering the distress of our grief
and the sadness of our loss;
may God give peace.

God give peace.

For all those who feel in danger of contracting COVID-19
and all who worry about them;
may God give peace.

God give peace.

For all whose lives are scarred by this virus,
calling to mind in penitence
its disproportionate impact on the poor
and on particular ethnic communities;
may God give peace.

God give peace.

For medical professionals, care workers and health visitors
who seek to heal and restore this world's citizens affected by COVID-19;
may God give peace.

God give peace.

For all who bear the burden and privilege of leadership at this time,
National, local and religious;
asking for gifts of discernment, wisdom and resolve
in the search for a containment of this virus;
may God give peace.

God give peace.

O God of truth and justice,
we hold before you those whose memory we cherish,
and those whose names we will never know.
Help us to lift our eyes above the torment of this broken world,
and grant us the grace to pray for those who suffer pain and loss.
As we honour the past
and strive to live well in the present,
may we put our faith in your future;
for you are the source of life and hope,
now and for ever.

Amen.

Introductions to the Peace

Jesus preached peace to you who were far away
and peace to those who were near.

“I will comfort,” says the Lord,
“as a mother comforts her child, and you shall be comforted.”

Isaiah 66.13

I will turn their mourning into joy;
I will comfort them and give them gladness for sorrow.

Jeremiah 31.13

Jesus said, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.
I do not give to you as the world gives.”

John 14.27

Short Preface

And now we give you thanks for your presence with us
in this church building and in our own homes,
and all other places from where we join in worship,
that by your Spirit we are united in Christ,
Gathered and scattered, yet one body.

Post-Communion Prayer

Faithful God,
we are truly grateful for the invitation
to gather at your table.
We thank you for the bread of life we have shared,
and we pray for those who hunger still.
Empower us by your Spirit
to go into the world
as witnesses to your Gospel,
sharing signs of hope and words of peace.
Amen.

Blessing

May the God of grace and power
strengthen your arm and
refresh your spirit that you may
run and not grow weary,
walk and not grow faint.
And the blessing of God Almighty...

Propers for a Memorial Eucharist during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Penitential Rite

Christ calls us to share the heavenly banquet of his love with all the saints in earth and heaven. As we remember our departed loved ones, and especially those who have died as a result of the current pandemic, let us ask from him both mercy and forgiveness.

Lord, you are gracious and compassionate to all your children:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

You are loving to all and your mercy is over all your creation:

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Your faithful servants bless your name and speak of the glory of your kingdom:

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Collect

O God, our refuge and strength,
meet us in our sorrow and lift up our eyes
to the peace and light of your constant care.
Help us so to hear your word of grace
that our fears may be dispelled by your love,
and our loneliness eased by your presence,
as, together with those whom we remember this day,
we wait in hope for the coming of your Kingdom
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

Jesus Christ is the firstborn from the dead;
to him be glory and power for ever and ever.

Alleluia. Alleluia.

Prayers of Intercession

Drawn together in the compassion of God, let us now pray for the Church, the world, and all who are in need:

Gracious God, you uphold us when we are in need of faith. We pray for all Christian people and Church leaders of all denominations. As we pray for the Church throughout the world, we ask, Lord, that you will uphold it, making it a place of hospitality, welcome, and compassion, especially for the lonely, the grieving and those who are suffering most in this pandemic.

Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

Creator God, the heights of the heavens show us the vastness of your steadfast love. We pray for people in parts of the world where there is any kind of distress, strife or political instability. We continue to remember those places where COVID-19 infections are rising, and especially parts of this country under local lockdown or new restrictions. Lord, have compassion on your creation, and where there is hopelessness, damage and destruction, bring hope, healing, renewal and redemption to your world.

Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

Gracious God, you make your ways known to all peoples. We pray for all the leaders of the nations, and especially Elizabeth our Queen, her Prime Minister and Government, and all who hold any kind of authority in this and in all lands. Grant to them, O Lord, the gifts of discernment, wisdom and compassion that their service may be marked by integrity and directed towards promoting the common good.

Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

Father God, you are unfailing in showing us your generosity and love. We pray for our friends, our families and our local communities. We give thanks for the work of our National Health Service, for all carers and health workers, for all volunteers who help those unable to help themselves. Lord, may we all come to experience in our hearts the promise of your eternal grace.

Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

Compassionate God, we pray for the sick, especially those gravely ill with COVID-19 at home, in hospital or in our care homes. As we pray for an end to the current pandemic, we ask that the Spirit may bring healing to those who are ill, protection for those who are vulnerable, and insight to those working on a vaccine. In a few moments of silence, we remember before

you all for whom we would wish to pray at this time. Lord, grant that they may find consolation through Christ's healing presence.

Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

Merciful God, nothing can ever separate us from your constant love for us in Christ. We remember before you all those who have died and those who are bereaved by their passing, especially those whom we now bring before you. Grant, Lord, that they may share in the joys of eternal life.

Lord, in your mercy:
hear our prayer.

God of all ages, we give you thanks for the whole company of your saints in glory, with whom in fellowship we join our prayers and praises; by your grace may we, like them, be made perfect in your eternal love.

Blessing and glory and wisdom, thanksgiving and honour and power, be to our God for ever and ever. Amen.

The Peace

Jesus said: Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives, give I unto you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Extended Preface

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should always sing of your glory,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
For you are the hope of the nations,
the builder of the city that is to come.
Your love made visible in Jesus Christ
brings home the lost,
restores the sinner,
comforts the grieving,
and grants peace to the departed.
In his face your light shines out,
flooding lives with goodness and truth,
gathering into one in your kingdom
a fragile, divided and broken humanity.

Therefore, with all who can give voice in your creation
we glorify your name,
for ever praising you and saying:

Post-Communion Prayer

Grant to us, Lord God,
to trust you not for ourselves alone,
but also for those whom we love
and who are hidden from us by the shadow of death;
that, as we believe your power to have raised
our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead,
so may we trust your love to give eternal life,
together with all the saints,
to all who believe in him;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Blessing

May God give to you and to all those whom you love
his comfort and his peace, his light and his joy,
in this world and the next;
and the blessing of God Almighty ...

A Short Liturgy of Lament

A brief prayer and liturgy which can be used individually in the home or as part of a service in a corporate setting, intended to be a quiet moment of stillness and reflection, and offering a simple language of lament.

A candle is lit

Gracious God:
you are the love that created the world;
you are the light which shines in the dark;
you are the one who is here with me now.

A brief silence is kept

Holy God:
there are times when we cannot feel your love;
times when we struggle to see your light,
times when you seem absent and we feel empty.

The candle is extinguished: we watch the smoke dissipate

Loving God:
where the pain is raw, send relief;
when fear paralyses, pour out peace;
where anger festers, have mercy;
when doubts overwhelm, hold us fast.
Amen.

A Longer Liturgy of Lament

THE GATHERING

We meet in the presence of God
who knows our needs,
hears our cries,
feels our pain,
and heals our wounds.

INTRODUCTION

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation;
to you be praise and glory for ever.
Through baptism we become members one of another in Christ,
members of a company of saints, whose mutual belonging transcends death.
As we bring before you our loss, our fears, our anxiety,
strengthen us by your grace,
renew us in your faith,
and enfold us in your love.
So, may we be made ready to see your face
in the heavenly city where night shall be no more,
and all hurt and pain are dispelled.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Blessed be God for ever.

One of the following prayers may be used:

Lord God, the maker and redeemer of all,
as we come before you
in grief and praise,
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.
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.
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.
Amen.

RESPONSORIAL 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.

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 my hope is in God's word.

READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE

Some suggested Scriptural passages

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

RESPONSORY

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

Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit.
Fear not, for I have redeemed you.
I have called you by name; you are mine.

CANTICLE: A SONG OF LAMENTATION

Refrain: Great is your faithfulness, O Lord. Alleluia!

- 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.

**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.**

Refrain: Great is your faithfulness, O Lord. Alleluia!

Other liturgical actions may be incorporated before the Prayers

PRAYERS

Some of these, or other prayers, may be said. Additional prayer resources are provided further below in this compendium

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.

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.

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.

Amen.

Lord, when we are tempted
to trust in our own strength
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.

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.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer may be said

CONCLUDING PRAYERS

One or more of the following may be said

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.
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.
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.
Amen.

BLESSING

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;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be with you and remain with you,
now and forever.
Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

A Liturgy of Loss and Fragility

A liturgy from a contemplative tradition which seeks to offer space for honesty about ourselves and our situation and invokes God's comfort and presence.

INVOCATION

We gather in the name the Triune God who brings hope and centredness in the fragility and brokenness of our world:

God the Source, the Creator, the Father, who brings all existence into being;

A candle is lit

God the liberator, the Redeemer, the Son who brings us salvation showing us a better way to live, and who calls us to follow;

A candle is lit

God the Sustainer, the Guide, the Spirit, who sustains all life and enables us to grow and find peace and wisdom;

A candle is lit

God who is present to us now and always.

+ We meet in the name of God the Source, God the Liberator, and God the Sustainer. Amen.

SCRIPTURE NAMING THE REALITY OF OUR SENSE OF FRAGILITY AND LOSS

Some words from Ecclesiastes 3:

¹ For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:

² a time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;

³ a time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
⁴ a time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
⁵ a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
⁶ a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away;
⁷ a time to tear, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
⁸ a time to love, and a time to hate;
a time for war, and a time for peace.

INTRODUCTION

Who is it that we worship?
We gather to worship the Lord our God.

How do we worship?

We worship you God
with the whole of our minds
with all of our strength
and with all our being,
and to love our neighbour as ourselves.

**May the prayers of our mouths
and the meditations of our hearts
be acceptable in your sight, O Lord.**

CONFESSION

As we come before God, let us pause and remember the reality of all that is going on for us in this present moment, remember our sense of sadness, loss of control, trauma, all that we are facing and the pain we carry, and as we do so, offering it back to God, both the good and the challenging and our need for God to forgive all our shortcomings.

Silence is kept

So easily we put ourselves before others. Too easily we allow our emotions and pains to overtake us and hurt others. We use mouths and tongues given to us to build people up, to push people too high or knock people too low. We have poisoned our planet, our nations, and our souls.

Lord, forgive us our selfishness,
Lord forgive us.

Lord, forgive us for our false delusions,
Lord forgive us.

Lord, heal us from our brokenness,
Lord heal us.

Lord, free us to be the human 'becomings' you call us to be,
Lord restore us.

A form of absolution as appropriate to the congregation is pronounced

Let us affirm our faith, trusting in God's love for us:

May our attitude be as that of Christ

Who being in very nature God,

did not consider equality with God

something to be grasped,

but made himself nothing,

being in the very nature of a servant,

and became obedient to death,

even death on a tree.

Amen.

Scripture or other readings with response activity if appropriate

Some time may be spent in silent meditation or prayer, or some other form of contemplation.

INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Let us pray for our community, and for the world.

Feel free to pray aloud or silently.

At the end of each prayer let us say

Lord in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

A time of open prayer

We pray for all those known to us,

those for whom life is difficult

and those who have difficult tasks to face,

those who find it difficult being themselves,
those who have difficult people to work with
or difficult situations to work in,
those who live in fear, loneliness or in pain,
those who are ill, oppressed or poor.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

ENDING

In God we find hope to envision us today and tomorrow.
In God we find life, sustenance and a future.
In God we join in with the whole of creation
giving thanks for all that is good.
In God we may struggle in life, but we will not be overcome.

As we leave this place and this time,
teach us to care for all that is entrusted to us.
Motivate us to devote times of silence to encounter you.
Help us to share with others that which you have abundantly given us.
Lead us to see what is possible
when all seems impossible.
Enable us to stand up for justice
when all seems to oppress.
Help us to love generously and to give unconditionally.
Give us hope and joy so that we can keep walking
this Christian road less travelled.
Teach us, help us, lead us, enable us, give us, love us.

BLESSING

May we see and know God
In the world that's around us.
May God take us through desert
and take us through storms.
May God guide us,
protect us,
and give us a purpose.

Lord, give us your peace
wherever you take us.
Bring us joyfully home,

Bring us joyfully home.
+In the name of God, Source, Liberator and Sustainer
Amen.

Further Prayers

TWO PRAYERS COMPOSED BY THE DEAN OF SOUTHWARK

A Prayer in Lockdown

*The doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked.
(John 20.19)*

Ever-present God,
be with us in our isolation,
be close to us in our distancing,
be healing in our sickness,
be joy in our sadness,
be light in our darkness,
be wisdom in our confusion,
be all that is familiar when all is unfamiliar,
that when the doors reopen
we may with the zeal of Pentecost
inhabit our communities
and speak of your goodness
to an emerging world.
For Jesus' sake.
Amen.

A Prayer for All Involved in the Response to This Crisis Worldwide

Loving God,
source of healing and comfort,
fill us with your grace,
that the sick may be made whole,
that those who care for us may be strengthened,
that the anxious may be calmed,
and those most vulnerable be protected
in the power of Spirit
in the faith of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PRAYERS REFLECTING GENERALLY ON LOSS AND SORROW

A Prayer for Strength in Sorrow

God, our friend and companion,
we thank you that you travel with us through dark times.
We bring you our feelings trusting that you accept us just as we are.
We bring you our thoughts and questions,
asking you to help us find peace of mind.
We bring you our hurts and pains,
knowing that you are a God who can heal.
Give us the strength to keep travelling forward
until we step out into the sunlight again.
Amen.

Prayers in Difficult Times

God of all wisdom,
We can't always understand what is happening around us,
Or see you at work in difficult times,
But we choose to trust in you.
Please grant us understanding.
Through Jesus Christ our teacher and our Lord.
Amen.

God of the wilderness,
We are not always sure how to endure these testing times,
Or where to find nourishment for our souls,
But we choose to trust in you.
Please grant us refreshment.

God of all strength,
We don't always have the capacity to keep going,
Or the ability to see a way through,
But we choose to trust in you.
Please grant us perseverance.
Through Jesus Christ our teacher and our Lord.
Amen.

Questioning Prayer

When the question is "Why?"	Be the voice that I hear.
When the question is "Where?"	Be the guidance I need.
When the question is "When?"	Be the wisdom I seek.

When the question is “How?”
When my answer is “Yes!”
Amen.

Be the strength I require.
Be the peace that I feel.

From Rebuilding Community, Jane Whittington, Diocese of Guildford

Accompanying Others

God of all compassion and healing,
We pray today for those who have lost loved ones:
May they know your loving presence as they travel through the varied
landscapes of grief.
In their pain and sadness, surround them with your comfort;
In their anger and bewilderment, speak words of peace;
In their anxiety and fear, help them feel safe again.
We give you thanks that you hold all of us in your love, wherever we are on
our journey through life.
In these difficult days, help us to travel together in friendship,
Trusting that you will lead us to the sunshine of new hope.
Amen.

PRAYERS AT TIMES OF BEREAVEMENT

Three Collects from Common Worship Resources for the Funeral of a Child

God of all mercies,
you make nothing in vain
and love all that you have made.
Comfort us in our grief,
and console us by the knowledge of your unfailing love,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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.
Amen.

God of love,
you have bound us together in life with *N / those we love*
and opened the door of heaven
through the suffering and resurrection of Jesus;
look upon us in your mercy,
give us courage to face our grief
and bring us all to the fullness of the risen life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Personal Grief

Loving God, you travel with us through all of life's landscapes;
When the skies are dark with pain and sorrow,
When the path ahead seems impossible and we're frightened of the future,
When storms of anger rage in us because of life's injustices,
And when the sun breaks through with sudden, joyful warmth.
As we grieve for those we've lost, help us know your nearness today:
Comfort us in our sadness;
Reassure us in our uncertainty;
Keep us company in our anger;
And lead us into healing and hope.
Amen.

Prayer for a Church Community That Has Lost One of its Members

Father God,
thank you for the community
you have called us to be.
As we travel through these dark days,
may we know the light of your presence as our hope for the future.
We give thanks for all that *N* brought to the life of this community
and pray you will bring comfort and hope to his/her family and to us.
Rebuild us into a community that is stronger than before,
as we look up to you in faith and reach out to each other in love,
in Jesus' name,
Amen.

*Adapted from
Lyndall Bywater, Changing Lives Prayer Network Coordinator and
Hilary Hills, Assistant Chaplain at the Living Well.*

Prayer After the Loss of a Loved One

Heavenly Father,
Thank you for **N** and all that they mean to us.

If appropriate encourage people to share short sentences of what they are thankful for, e.g. her big smile, his caring nature, etc.

The Bible says you love all that you have made,
and whilst we may never understand, in this earthly life,
why bad things happen,
we ask that we will know
your comfort and peace in the midst of our sadness.
Amen.

Adapted from 'Never the Same.' Faith at Home, The Church of England

Prayers of Mourning and Thanksgiving

Dear God,
Thank you for **N**, for all that they mean to us and to others.
Thank you that you promise your love is stronger than death,
nothing can separate us from you,
even though we can't see **N**
we trust that you are holding him / her and us today.
Amen.

God of love, you love everything you made,
the whole universe, including each one of us.
You made us to live with you.
Please be with us and everyone who is sad
because the person they love has died,
help us all to know that without you we have nothing to hope for;
with you we have nothing to fear.
Please be with us and bring us Light and Peace
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Adapted from the Church Army

**PARTICULARLY SUITABLE FOR PERSONAL USE OR SILENT
REFLECTION IN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNAL WORSHIP**

Honest to God, a Prayer in Difficult Times

Dear God,
Today is not a good day.
I don't even know if I have the words
And if I did, I don't know if you would hear them.
Today I can't smile or laugh or pretend I'm okay,
I don't have the energy for it.
I can't even describe how I feel,
How stupid is that?

But you promised that I didn't have to have the words.
You promised you would understand anyway;
That the Holy Spirit just knows all that,
It's OK that all I have are groans.
So here they are God,
And if you could do something with them,
and send me a little something back, that would be great.
Amen.

Prayer and Reflection on Personal Loss

Sometimes I'm sad.
It's heavy and grey in me, like a freezing, rainy day.
Sometimes I'm angry.
It's like a raging storm in me. I feel like I might explode. I don't understand
why I had to lose *N* and I'm not OK with it.
Storm-calming God, please help me feel peaceful again.
Sometimes I feel scared.
The path ahead looks so dark and I'm worried about the future.
I don't know what life will be like without *N* and that frightens me.
Rock-solid God, please help me feel safe again.
And then sometimes I feel happy - like the sun has just come out.
It's great, but it confuses me.
I want to be happy, but I don't want to forget *N*.
Gift-giving God, help me to remember
 all the good times we had and help me to be thankful.
Sometimes the sadness creeps in like a rainy winter's day.
Sometimes I'm raging in anger like an unstoppable storm.
Sometimes I'm scared of what's ahead,
 because the future is too dark to see.

Sometimes I'm just sick of life; and sometimes I feel nothing.
Layer your love around me when the cold of sadness creeps in.
Speak your words of peace when the storms of anger rage in my soul.
Keep me safe when fear makes the darkness even darker.
Help me keep travelling till the sunshine of hope breaks through.
Amen.



Pietà by Gillian Kaufman, Chapel of Jesus College, Cambridge