

## Church of the Holy Spirit, Mossley



**“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.”**

**(Jeremiah 33:3)**

**“Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.”**

**(Psalm 62:8)**

As we continue our journey through this difficult and uncertain season, and as we enter Advent, I would like to encourage each of us to take a short period of time each day to be still before God and pray. Advent is, traditionally a time of preparation when we prepare to celebrate Jesus’ first coming and look forward to His glorious return. It is also a time of personal reflection, an occasion for each of us to draw close to God, discern His leading and guiding, and experience the fullness of His peace and presence. Finally, Advent is also a time of celebration, reminding us that God dwelt among us and lived our experiences.

Advent 2020 will be significantly different for each of us. But the ability to pour out our hearts to God, to draw close to God, has not been taken away from us. I am consistently encouraged by James 4:8 **“Come near to God and he will come near to you.”** This is the core message of the Christian faith. We can know the God of Heaven and Earth personally, and we are reminded that He wants to guide us to a place of blessing and spiritual maturity. Even in this uncertain and anxious season, God really can offer us hope because He, and only He, is everlasting hope. The challenge for each of us is to turn our eyes upon Him, spend time in His presence, and trust Him completely. Someone once said, *“It is an undeniable fact that the closer you draw your heart to God, the closer he draws to you. He gives you joy that’s unspeakable. He gives you love that’s unshakeable. He gives us grace that’s immeasurable.”*

In the days and weeks ahead, please use this resource and let us commit ourselves to seeking God and spending increased amounts of time with Him. There are a series of prayers that you may find helpful, suggested prayer topics for each day, and a number of encouraging Bible verses.

May God richly bless you as you seek to draw close to Him.

Your friend and Rector,

Rev Peter Jones

## Suggested Daily Prayer Topics

There are a series of possible prayer topics outlined below. Please join with us as we seek to pray specifically for these topics each day. We have included some guidance, below, to help lead us as pray.

Day	Topic
Sunday	Family, friends and loved ones
Monday	Schools, children, and young people
Tuesday	Elderly, isolated and vulnerable
Wednesday	Businesses, workplaces, and the economy
Thursday	The NHS and other key workers
Friday	National and local government
Saturday	All who are grieving and all suffering with physical and mental ill-health. Also pray for our churches today.

### **Sunday (Family, friends and loved ones)**

We lift to God those we hold in our hearts – praying for their health, their well-being, and their sense of hope. We pray that even when loved ones cannot physically be together, they would not feel apart. We ask for God’s help in our communicating, our connecting and our caring.

### **Monday (Schools, children, and young people)**

We pray for all those involved in the shaping of young lives. We give God thanks for the sacrifice and commitment of teachers and all those involved in serving children and young people in education. We pray that all might be nurtured and cared for and that every needful resource would be made available – that all lives can flourish even in these difficult times and that no-one would be overlooked.

### **Tuesday (Elderly, isolated and vulnerable)**

We echo God’s commitment to those most at risk of this virus by praying today for those who are particularly vulnerable and isolated: praying for their deliverance, protection and comfort. We hold before God those who care for them – that they would be strengthened and encouraged in this work.

### **Wednesday (Businesses, workplaces, and the economy)**

In this time of great challenge, we pray for the economic wellbeing of the country. We remember before God those who face great uncertainty in their work. We lift before God those who have lost their jobs and face an uncertain and difficult future. We pray for a renewed commitment to our common life together.

### **Thursday (The NHS and other key workers)**

Our God is the great healer – and the agent used more than any other is the NHS. Today we voice our gratitude for those who serve this country in the National Health Service and pray for that God would prosper the work of their hands – that they would all be encouraged in their continued work of sacrifice and care amongst us.

### **Friday (National and local government)**

We pray for those who are in positions of authority with responsibility for decision making at national and local level at this difficult time. We ask that God would give great wisdom, deep commitment to all and right judgment.

### **Saturday**

#### **(All who are grieving, and all suffering with physical and mental ill-health)**

We bring to God all those who suffer in body, mind, spirit or with grief. We ask that in God's great loving kindness they might know God's sustaining presence amidst their pain. We pray for those who are stretched beyond their own capacity to cope and remain hopeful – that in the roar of these waterfalls God would bring a sense of comfort and strength.

#### **(A prayer for our churches)**

Lord of all, I ask You to pour out Your blessing on the Church which You have planted in this land. I commit into Your care and keeping all who give of their time in Your service, ordained and lay people, and ask that Your will may be done. I ask for your blessing on our Church, its members, and our local community during this testing and anxious season.

## **Prayers about the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. 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 this time 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. Amen.

### **A prayer for the world**

God of love and hope, you made the world and care for all creation, but the world feels strange right now. The news is full of stories about Coronavirus. Some people are worried that they might get ill. Others are anxious for their family and friends. Be with them and help them to find peace. We pray for the doctors and nurses and scientists, and all who are working to discover the right medicines to help those who are ill. Thank you that even in these anxious times, you are with us. Help us to put our trust in you and keep us safe. Amen.

### **A prayer for those who are ill**

Merciful God, we entrust to your tender care those who are ill or in pain, knowing that whenever danger threatens your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe. Comfort and heal them, and restore them to health and strength, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **A prayer for hospital staff and medical researchers**

Gracious God, give skill, sympathy, and resilience to all who are caring for the sick, and your wisdom to those searching for a cure. Strengthen them with your Spirit, that through their work many will be restored to health, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **A prayer for when we feel lonely and isolated**

O God, help me to trust you, help me to know that you are with me, help me to believe that nothing can separate me from your love revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Some Personal Prayers

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples, 'I am with you always'. Be with me today, as I offer myself to you. Hear my prayers for others and for myself, and keep me in your care.

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

*from St Patrick's Breastplate*

I am giving you worship with all my life,  
I am giving you obedience with all my power,  
I am giving you praise with all my strength,  
I am giving you honour with all my speech.  
I am giving you love with all my heart,  
I am giving you affection with all my sense,  
I am giving you my being with all my mind,  
I am giving you my soul, O most high and holy God.  
Praise to the Father,  
Praise to the Son,  
Praise to the Spirit,  
The Three in One.

*adapted from Alexander Carmichael,  
Carmina Gadelica (1900)*

O gracious and holy Father, give us wisdom to perceive you, diligence to seek you, patience to wait for you, eyes to behold you, a heart to meditate upon you, and a life to proclaim you, through the power of the spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **Other Suggested Prayers**

### **A Concluding Prayer for Each Day**

Loving God, you know us and all that we are facing. We thank you that we can come to you as we are – with all our fears and concerns, our difficulties, and challenges. Please draw close to each of us and those we remember before you now. Bring to us your peace and comfort. And fill us with your Spirit that we may be bearers of your grace and hope to others. As a country protect us, encourage us and keep us. In the name of your Son Jesus we pray. Amen.

### **A Prayer for our Journey through the Coronavirus Pandemic**

God of the good news that spreads faster than fear, God of the courage that comes from the heart: be with us as anxieties rise and with us as uncertainty grows. Remind us that to be a community does not always mean to be physically present beside those we know well. It also can mean being spiritually present with those who feel very alone; and that you as our God, the God made flesh, are also the God who calls us from the tumult and tells us to be still and to know that you are God with us. Amen.

### **The Caleb Prayer**

O High King of heaven, have mercy on our Land. Revive your Church; Send the Holy Spirit for the sake of the children. May your kingdom come to our nation, in Jesus' mighty name. Amen.

### **Day by Day**

Day by day, dear Lord, of Thee three things I pray: to see Thee more clearly, love Thee more dearly, follow Thee more nearly, day by day. Amen.

## **A Selection of Bible Verses**

### **Psalm 23:4**

*“Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”*

### **Psalm 91: 1-2**

*“Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’”*

### **Psalm 139:23**

*“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.”*

### **Isaiah 41:10**

*“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*

### **John 14:27**

*“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

### **Philippians 4:6-7**

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*