
Ecumenical Prayer of Lament and Hope

*For the victims, survivors and rescue workers
Of the Queensland and Victorian floods, Christchurch earthquake,
Japanese earthquake and tsunami
and for those in civil wars in the Middle East.*



WELCOME

GATHERING HYMN

BE STILL, MY SOUL ¹

(please stand)

1. Be still, my soul: the Lord is on your side.
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
leave to your God to order and provide;
in every change God faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: your best, your heavenly friend
through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

2. Be still, my soul: your God will undertake
to guide the future, as in ages past.
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake;
all now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know
the Christ who ruled them while he dwelt below.

3. Be still, my soul: when dearest friends depart
And all is darkened in the vale of tears,
Then you shall better know his love, his heart,
Who comes to soothe your sorrow, calm your fears.
Be still, my soul: for Jesus can restore
The trust and hope that strengthened you before.

4. Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on
when we shall be forever with the Lord,
when disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past,
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.



¹ "Be Still, My Soul." Music: Jean Sibelius, 1899; Tune: FINLANDIA; Text: Katharina von Schlegel, 1752; trans. by Jane Borthwick, 1855 (Ps. 46:10) Public Domain

OPENING PRAYER ²

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

**We come to you, O God,
in shock and grief,
with our hearts full of sorrow
for the suffering of our brothers and sisters.**

When willows bow and snap under the weight of the wind
Lord, we come to you with broken hearts.

When the words "catastrophe" and "disaster" describe current events
rather than the movies of the week.....
Lord, we come to you with broken hearts.

When congregations of raindrops become inland torrents flowing where
they will.....
Lord, we come to you with broken hearts.

When the things that we have built crumble like sand about us.....
Lord, we come to you with broken hearts.

When the streets are littered with wet teddy bears, broken dishes and
shattered dreams.....
Lord, we come to you with broken hearts.

When the villages and towns are filled with wails of grief and longing....
Lord, we come to you with broken hearts.

Comfort us, O Lord, we pray,
Stay close to all who are grieving,
guide those working to find the lost,
strengthen those tending to the living,
and energise those building new hope from the ruins.
We make our prayer through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

² Prayers adapted by Sophy Morley from "A Service of Prayer and Reflection for Victims and Survivors of the Earthquake and Tsunami". Anglican Diocese of Rockhampton, Qld.; and from "When the Wind Blows" by Lyne Stull-Lipps, Worship Resources for the Hurricane Katrina Disaster, USA. Image: "Lament" Self portrait by Kathe Kollwitz, 1938-1940.

GOD'S WORD FOR US TODAY

Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13 ³

Pious voices utter platitudes:
"Trust in the Lord. It's God's will. God knows best."
People say with certainty:
**"The Lord gives and the Lord taketh away."
"With faith, all things are possible."**

"Silence!" I want to shout.
"Take your frozen formulas and leave me alone!
Let me listen for what God has to say.
For God will not let a broken heart bleed by itself in the night.
When wounds cut to the bone,
only God can sew together the torn edges of a shattered life.
Only God can soothe such throbbing pain."

Surely goodness and mercy will grow again,
and sunshine return to the sky.
Sorrow is holy ground;
walk on it only with feet bared to the pain of every pebble.
Through the storms, the Lord of life
comes walking on the salt sea of tears.



Silence

³ Based on Psalm 85 in "Everyday Psalms" by James Taylor (Kelowna BC, Canada: Wood Lake Books) 1994, 2005, p102.

IN SUFFERING LOVE ⁴

(please stand)

1. In suffering love the thread of life
is woven through our care,
for God is with us, not alone
our pain and toil to bear.
2. There is a rock, a place secure
within the storm's cold blast;
concealed within the suffering night
God's covenant stands fast.
3. In love's deep womb our fears are held;
there God's rich tears are sown
and bring to birth, in hope new-born,
the strength to journey on.
4. Lord, to our hearts your joy commit,
into our hands your pain;
so send us out to touch the world
with blessings in your name.
5. In suffering love our God comes now,
hope's vision born in gloom;
with tears and laughter shared and blessed
the desert yet will bloom.



Romans 8:31-39

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Romans

What then are we to say? If God is for us, who is against us?

He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else?

Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

Who will separate us from the love of Christ?

Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered."

⁴ "In Suffering Love": Text: Rob W. Johns (1941-1987) © E. Johns. [*Together in Song*]

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Pause

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

Silence

Psalm 23 Crimond⁵

(please stand)

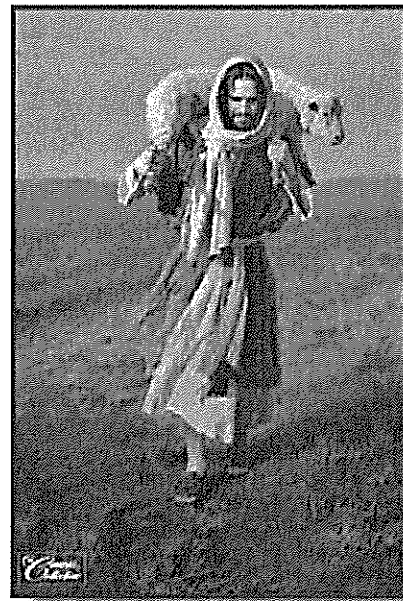
The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green; He leadeth me
The quiet waters by.

My soul He doth restore again;
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
Even for His own Name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill;
For Thou art with me; and Thy rod
And staff me comfort still.

My table Thou hast furnished
In presence of my foes;
My head Thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me;
And in God's house forevermore
My dwelling place shall be.



⁵ Crimond; Text: Psalm 23, *Scottish Psalter*, 1650. Music: Jessie Irvine 1836-1887.

Matthew 5:1-16

(please stand)

A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

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

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

“Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

“You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot.

“You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Pause

The Gospel of the Lord!

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

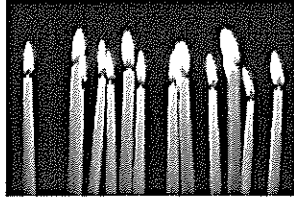
Silence

WORDS OF REASSURANCE:



RITUAL OF HOPE

You are invited to light a candle as a symbol of hope of the light of Christ that shines in the darkest hours of life



*"The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it."
(John 1:1-5, 14)*

**Chant 1: ⁶ Be still and know that I am God,
Be still and know that I am God**

**Chant 2: ⁷ O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer,
when I call, answer me!
O Lord, hear my prayer, O Lord hear my prayer,
Come and listen to me!**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION ⁸

God the Father,

have mercy on us.

God the Son,

have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit,

have mercy on us.

Holy and blessed Trinity, one God,

have mercy on us.

In these days of shock and mourning,

have mercy on us.

In the pain of lost life and shattered hopes,

have mercy on us.

In our compassion for all who are bereaved,

have mercy on us.

⁶ "Be Still and Know" Text & Music: John L Bell © WGRG, Iona Community.

⁷ "O Lord, Hear My Prayer" Text & Music: Jacques Berthier © Ateliers de Presses det Taizé.

⁸ From "The Ministry of Prayer" adapted by Sophy Morley & Tom Kirchner from "A Service of Prayer and Reflection for Victims and Survivors of the Earthquake and Tsunami". Anglican Diocese of Rockhampton, Qld

For aid agencies and their personnel responding with practical care and compassion,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For medical teams treating the injured,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For people still finding, identifying and burying the bodies of the dead,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the leaders of all the nations, offering sympathy, support and assistance,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For our generous response to appeals for medicine, food and shelter,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For wisdom for those planning the future for devastated communities,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For the survivors who now face the future without their loved ones,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For shattered communities that have lost their homes and livelihoods,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For our solidarity with the suffering, dispossessed and refugees,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For Christ to gather the peoples of the world into one flock with one shepherd,

Lord, hear our prayer.

For Christ to bring us, with all who have died in faith, to a joyful reunion in the life of the resurrection,

Lord, hear our prayer.

And now, with confidence in God's loving mercy and goodness, we pray:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**



HYMN: WHEN HUMAN VOICES CANNOT SING ⁹

1. When human voices cannot sing
and human hearts are breaking,
we bring our grief to you O God
who knows our inner aching.

2. Set free our spirits from all fear –
the cloud of dark unknowing,
and let the light, the Christ-light show
the pathway of our going.

3. Make real for us your holding love,
the love which is your meaning,
the power to move the stone of death,
the hope of Easter morning.

Prayers of Commendation ¹⁰

Presider: Brothers and Sisters, we commend the souls of those who have
died into the loving embrace of their Creator. We commend
into God's care, the wounded, the broken and the heartsick.

Presider; All our laughter, all our tears

All: Safe now in God's hands

⁹ "When Human Voices Cannot Sing" Text: Shirley Erena Murray © Hope Publishing Co. USA, 1992. [*Together In Song / Gather Australia*]

¹⁰ Prayers of Commendation: Ruth Burgess, Iona Community, Wild Goose Publications, Scotland.

Presider: All our anger, all our gladness
All: **Safe now in God's hands**

Presider: All our stories, all our memories
All: **Safe now in God's hands**

Presider: Those we remember, those we love
All: **Safe now in God's hands**

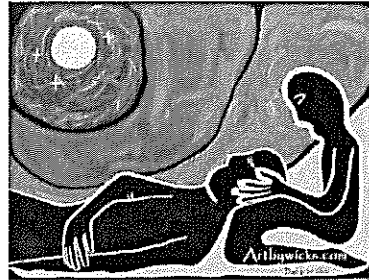
Blessing

Presider: We ask for the love of God
All: **and the messages of angels**

Presider: the laughter of Jesus
All: **and the stories of the saints**

Presider: the power of the Spirit
All: **and the strong hands of friends**

Presider: to bless us on life's journey
All: **and lead us safely home, Amen.**



Sending Forth

Presider: May you go now in the love and peace of your loving God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
All: **Amen.**

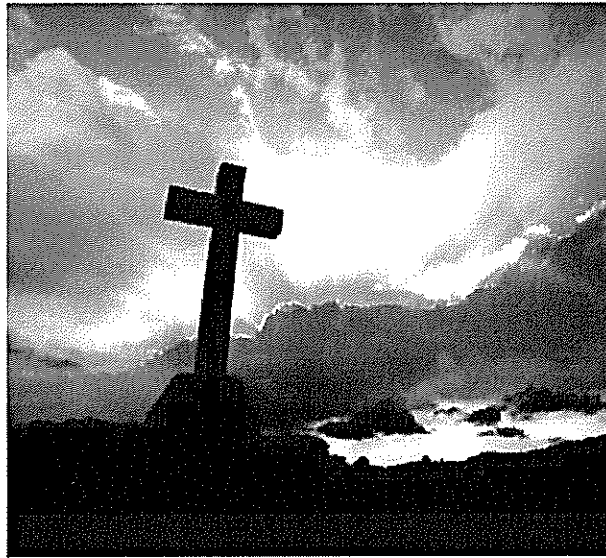
HYMN: GOD IS LOVE ¹¹

(Please stand)

1. God is love, let heav'n adore him; God is love, let earth rejoice;
let creation sing before him, and exalt him with one voice.
God, who laid the earth's foundation,
He who spread the heavens above,
and who breathes through all creation,
God is love, eternal Love.

¹¹ "God Is Love" Text; Timothy Rees (1874-1939, alt.) © Community of the Resurrection, UK. Music: ODE TO JOY, Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) [*Together in Song*]

2. God is love, and gently enfolding all the world in one embrace,
with unfailing grasp is holding every child of every race.
And when human hearts are breaking under sorrow's iron rod,
then they find that self-same aching deep within the heart of God.
3. God is love, and, though with blindness sin affects our human hearts,
God's eternal loving kindness holding, guiding, grace imparts.
Sin and death and hell shall never o'er us final triumph gain;
God is love, so love for ever o'er the universe must reign.



Thank you for sharing our prayer tonight.

You are invited to stay for some supper and fellowship.