Prayer

Corporate Prayers

**Prayer of commitment**

Father God, as I have committed myself today to living in covenant with you, I ask first that you will forgive me those times when I have failed to keep my promises. I thank you that you are a God who forgives and who keeps on forgiving. Help me to receive your forgiveness today.

Father, I thank you that as Jesus entered the Most Holy Place, he did so in order for me to have a conscience cleansed, and that I can enjoy the promised eternal inheritance into the future and today as I work out my calling here on earth.

I thank you, Lord, that Jesus’ death has set me free in order to live a life of freedom, experiencing something of the fulness of life which you have promised to us.

I thank you that even in the midst of the pain and suffering of the past year, you are alongside me, helping me to make it through each day. I pray now for those people known to me who continue to find these times a struggle. Help them to see a glimmer of your presence in their lives.

Father, I thank you that when you saved me you also called me to service. Help me to work out what serving the living God looks like for me. Help me to live the life of holiness to which you call me, to serve others in such a way that they cannot fail to be pointed to you.

Father, on this day I commit myself to living in covenant with you. I know that you will never fail to hold your side of the covenant I make today. Help me to be faithful to what I promise this day.

I pray this prayer in the precious name of Jesus.

Amen.

**Meeting Prayer**

We are met in the presence of God,

**And we do not meet alone.**

With the angels in the highest Heaven,

**We gather to worship the Lord.**

With the saints of every age,

**We gather to worship the Lord.**

We embark on our own journey of faith;

**God’s holy name be praised.**

God makes of us a great people;

**God’s holy name be praised.**

In the desert and in the den, in barrio and basilica,

**God’s holy name be praised.**

We journey in the presence of God,

**And we do not journey alone.**

(Rev Daniel B Randall, <http://www.ucc.org/worship/worship-ways/>)

**Prayer of supplication**

Speak, Lord! We want to hear from you.

Make us aware of your presence.

We long for you to pierce the darkness of our hearts,

The darkness of our world.

In you we find the fulfilment of the covenantal promises you made to your people.

In Jesus we find life, and life in abundance!

May this wondrous life overflow out on to the streets of our towns,

To the offices and schools, to our homes.

As we bear witness to your life-giving love at work in us,

Make us ready to discover –

Discover how this life to the full is lived out with each other.

How can we not celebrate together the fulness that is found in you?

Speak, Lord! We want to hear from you.

**Prayer of gratitude**

Heavenly Father, as I read through your word and see the wonderful plan of salvation which you purposed to carry out through your chosen people, Israel, I thank you that despite their disobeying the conditions of your covenant, you never gave up on your people, and used them to be your witnesses – through whom was born the Messiah, who became the sin-offering for the world.

Thank you that today you are carrying out your plans and purposes through the Body of Christ, which is the Church, and thank you that by faith in him I am also your precious possession – through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you that the day is coming when you will ratify your New Covenant with the house of Judah and the house of Israel and that Christ will return to set up his Kingdom on earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. We praise your holy name, for Jesus’ name’s sake. Amen.

(<https://prayer.knowing-jesus.com/Exodus/19/5>)

**A Franciscan Benediction**

May God bless us with a restless discomfort about easy answers, half-truths and superficial relationships,
so that we may seek truth boldly and love deep with our hearts.

May God bless us with holy anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,
so that we may tirelessly work for justice, freedom, and peace among all people.

May God bless us with the gift of tears to shed with those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation, or the loss of all that they cherish,
so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them

and transform that pain to joy.

May God bless us with enough foolishness to believe that we really can make a difference in this world,
so that we are able, with God’s grace, to do what others claim cannot be done.

Amen.

Creative Prayer Ideas

**Lectio Divina**

Use this ancient spiritual practice for listening to a Scripture passage. This can be done individually or as a wider group:

* Read John 10:1-18 out loud two to three times.
* Meditate on the word or phrase that stands out. What thoughts or feelings arise? What is God saying to you? What is God asking of you as a response?
* Share aloud the word or phrase that spoke to your heart.
* Read the passage again.
* Conclude with a final prayer.

**Group prayers**

Use the following prayer points or create some of your own.

Encourage the congregation to choose one of the prayer points to pray together in small groups during worship. Some congregations may feel comfortable doing this – for those who are not, introduce a ‘fun element’. Hand out *Celebrations* chocolates, asking those who have a certain colour of wrapper to sit together.

* May we each become true disciples of Jesus, following him in every aspect of his life and living. May we have the grace and strength to say that all we have is given to him, knowing that all he has is given to us.
* May we become one with God, through prayer, Bible reading, obedience, repentance, Christlike living and repentance – and one with each other, through enthroning Christ as Lord of our individual lives and this worshipping community.
* As people enter these doors during the week, may they see and sense Christ here. May every activity be about Jesus and the abundant life that he offers – and may his name be spoken freely in this place, where we live, work, study and socialise.
* May the broken, fragmented lives within this place, this community, this country and this world be healed. May God gather us, and all he has laid upon our hearts, to himself.

**‘Take my life’**

Play *‘*Take my life (I am yours)’ – <https://vimeo.com/765675234> – by Laura Rowsell and ask people to reflect on the lyrics as they listen, thanking God for a covenant that allows us to give our life to God in exchange for his eternal life. You may also want to play the song while people sign their Covenant cards.

**Celebrate together**

Ask people to share out loud something that they are grateful to God for and that can be celebrated with the whole church congregation. After each person speaks, ‘cement’ their spoken prayer by saying together in affirmation, ‘AMEN. WE CELEBRATE WITH YOU!’

**Bunting Prayers**

Prepare bunting templates out of card or paper. Provide pens and ask people to write or draw life-giving words or prayers either for themselves, for the church or centre or for the community around them. Hang these up at a later moment in a visible place as a reminder of these blessings.

**Half full or half empty?**

You will need a jug, glasses, water and a basin for this – and possibly towels! Ask who is a ‘glass half full’ and who is a ‘glass half empty’ type of person. Fill up a glass halfway. Ask why we settle for less? What stops us from enjoying a full glass? Pour more water into the glass and watch mindfully as the water continues to pour (overflowing endlessly into the basin). Emphasise that this is what Jesus wants for us – abundant living, a never-ceasing flow of his presence. Where could this extra water go? Who could it flow out from and into? Ask people to spend time reflecting on this and open up for prayer.