

Pause . . . for Prayer

April 24th 2020
12 noon

Theme: The NHS and all who work in, or use, our
health and social care systems

As we can't meet together in our usual way at the moment, this is a suggested outline for some prayers at this difficult time in our lives, the life of the nation, and indeed the whole world. In normal circumstances we would meet together at 12 noon on Friday 24th April so you might like to use these prayers at that time in your own home. Please add your own prayers, as you feel appropriate.

We take a few moments of quiet to come into God's presence

I weave a silence on to my lips, I weave a silence into my mind, I weave a silence into my heart. I close my ears to distractions, I close my eyes to attractions, I close my heart to temptations.

Calm me, O Lord, as you stilled the storm; Still me O Lord, Keep me from harm.
Let all tumult within me cease; Enfold me Lord in your peace. *David Adam*

Today we think about the health-care and social-care systems in this country, facing the unprecedented challenges of the coronavirus pandemic.

A reading from Matthew, chapter 4, verses 23,24

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, and he cured them.

Loving God, you hold all peoples within your loving care: no colour, race or gender curbs your graciousness; time does not weary your love; there are no barriers, no boundaries to your kindness.

In Jesus you touched the sick, and bandaged the broken with love, and you healed them. We believe that your power is still present in our world, and so we pray to you now.

We give thanks for all those whose work sustains our health services, restores our well-being and gives us an improved quality of life.

We give thanks for those who work in the front-line services, whether in hospitals, hospices or in social care settings; all doctors, nurses and ancillary staff who have direct contact with the Covid-19 patients and in doing so put their own health at risk. Give them courage and resilience as they work selflessly for the healing of others. Give them also compassionate and understanding hearts, skilful and tender hands, listening ears, and mouths that speak words of comfort.

Our health and well-being is dependent on the work of many hands and minds, the majority of them working behind the scenes and rarely coming in direct contact with the users of the health-care system. Although we may frequently forget them, and overlook their contribution, we remember them now with grateful thanksgiving.

We pray for administrators and policy makers. Give wisdom to those who bear the burden and the responsibility of allocating funds and resources, that they may be used fairly and wisely.

We pray for scientists and technicians. Give diligence and creative imagination to those seeking cures for diseases, and advancements in techniques and drugs, remembering especially those developing treatments and a vaccine for Covid-19. We pray that their skills may be used for the benefit of all.

We pray for those whose manual labour keeps our hospitals and care systems working; remembering cleaners and cooks, plumbers and electricians, laundry and maintenance staff, and so many other vital workers we rarely see or acknowledge.

Loving God, send your continued blessings on all those whose work is in health or healing or social care, that they may know that their labours are valued

Today we also remember those who have developed symptoms of Covid-19, those who are now seriously ill with the disease, and family and friends who love them.

Loving God, be with all who are ill at this time, and with those who love them. Let your presence be felt through the support of friends and in the care they receive from the medical staff. Ease their pain and heal the damage done to body, mind or spirit. Surround them always with love and care.

In this time of crisis, when so much attention is focused on the virus, we remember all those with other illnesses.

Loving God, in this time of additional stress and anxiety, surround the frightened with your tenderness; give strength to those in pain; hold the weak in your arms of love and give hope to all those who worry what the future may hold.

In this time of social distancing, we remember the importance of contact with one another, even if that is by phone or the wonders of modern technology.

Loving God, you come to us in one another, in a sister or a brother, a stranger or a friend. We know your healing powers through the words of others and through the reassuring presence of others. Let us never forget that you are with us in our darkest moments as well as in our times of joy.

And so we finish our time of prayer, as we started, with a prayer by David Adams.

Lift us, Lord,

out of fear into hope; out of frailty into strength; out of foolishness into sense.

Lift us, Lord.

You came down to lift us up; you descended to hell to lift us to heaven; you entered death to raise us to life.

Come, Lord, raise us up, we pray.

We ask all these our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen