

Easter 2023 - Pray Without Ceasing

Bible Reading: John 19:16-42, Isaiah 26:1-19

Psalms: 22, 23, 40, 42, 43, 100, 118, 139 which can be read to intersperse the prayers.

Call to Action:

The Israelite prophet Micah said:

"What does the Lord require of you? Only to act justly, love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

God of mercy and source of justice,
pour on your people such love and compassion that
we cannot remain silent,
we cannot tolerate injustice and poverty.

As your grace fills our hearts
so may we be stirred into action
to demonstrate your love for all the world
and for all creatures that live and move on this earth. Amen

Please come and sit beside me while I pray Lord.
I need to feel that you are close enough to hear.
Lately, you've seemed distant and far away from the bustle of my busy life
But now I pause, and at last I realise that you have been there all the while.
Throughout all my distractions, you have been with me,
Patiently waiting for my focus to return to you.
You invite me to come and sit beside you,
Not because I am worthy, but because I am in need.
Now I am still, and in the peace that enfolds me, I know that you are God.
Amen

(Methodist Prayer Handbook – Lyn Gennoe, local preacher, Bromsgrove and Redditch Circuit)

Easter 2023 - Pray Without Ceasing

Prayer of Confession

Forgive us Lord for our apathy,
for our lack of courage to speak out.
Forgive us when we walk past and don't offer help.
Forgive us when we get it wrong.

We confess that we are afraid -
we don't want to overcome our hidden doubts and prejudices
in order to be alongside those who are different from ourselves.
We ask that you would lead us into action:
give us strength to be a voice crying for justice and peace.
Help us to step into another person's shoes,
or if they have no shoes
then not to be afraid to take off our own,
peel off our preconceptions and assumptions,
uncurl and spread out our toes, and
tread in their footprints.

May we be a liberating presence
and offer love, compassion and whatever is needed
to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God. Amen

Dear Lord we sit at the foot of your cross in anguish at all of the suffering
which you have borne for us. We cannot begin to express how grateful we are
that you can take on all of this for every one of us, so that you can offer
salvation to all who believe in you. How Great you are!

We look around and we wonder why others cannot recognise you as King.
Why they cannot see just how much you must love us to have taken on such a
burden.

We implore you Lord to show us what we need to do to help them recognise
you and the hope which you offer. We pray that you will give us the power to
bring people closer to you.

We think of all those with broken lives, particularly at this time when there are
more than ever. All of those who really need to draw closer to you, so that
they can see the hope which you can provide and the strength to pull
themselves out of adversity. Help us Lord we pray. Amen

Easter 2023 - Pray Without Ceasing

Easter reminds us that each time we deny you, Lord,
another nail is sharpened;
and each time we defy you, Lord,
into your hand it's hammered.
When faith is weak, temptation strong and courage fails,
forgive us, Lord
and once again become that risen presence within our hearts. Amen

We are often not the Easter People that we should be,
living in the certain knowledge of your great mercy and love.
Distracted by the world around us we fail to hear your voice,
or hide when faith is challenged as we wander off the path.
Forgive us, we pray;
restore the love that we first had,
a faith that can endure.
We will keep our eyes fixed on you, Lord,
and with you at our right hand we shall not be shaken. Amen

How often when weary do we sigh 'The spirit is willing, but the body is weak.'
How often when in prayer are thoughts distracted by sounds or circumstance,
or prayers diverted by trivial concerns.
Baggage carried with us rather than left at your feet.
How often do we find ourselves apologising to you, for our abbreviated prayer
life.
And yet you draw us still to be in your presence,
as you did the disciples at Gethsemane.
You want us to share in your life, to play our part.
You told your disciples to watch and pray
so that they might not fall into temptation.
Do you ask the same of us and do we also fail you,
each time we whisper 'The spirit is willing, but the body is weak'?
Grant us the strength, Lord, of body and of spirit,
to offer you the sacrifice of our lives. Amen.

Easter 2023 - Pray Without Ceasing

A Meditation:

From the beginning you knew the final outcome
watched as the jigsaw pieces were slotted into place
saw the significance of every moment.
As your body was anointed with oil at the table of Simon the Leper
the picture was becoming clearer
not only in your eyes
but to an unknown woman and one of your closest friends.
Judas sensed that this was his moment
sacrificing trust that had been so freely given on the altar of selfish gain
for his fifteen allotted minutes of fame and thirty pieces of silver.
The woman recognised the moment.
She gave generously, unselfishly a costly gift, freely offered.
A fragrant sacrifice of perfume and love remembered forever in your heart.
And as Judas slipped away unnoticed
your disciples saw none of this
failed to see the significance of the moment.
Two sacrifices, one of trust and one of love.
But you noticed, Lord
as you notice each day
our sacrificial offering and betrayal.

God, give us eyes to see
the beauty of the Spring,
And to behold Your majesty
in every living thing -
And may we see in lacy leaves
and every budding flower
The Hand that rules the universe
with gentleness and power -
And may this Easter grandeur
that Spring lavishly imparts
Awaken faded flowers of faith
lying dormant in our hearts,
And give us ears to hear, dear God,
the Springtime song of birds
With messages more meaningful

Easter 2023 - Pray Without Ceasing

than man's often empty words
Telling harried human beings
who are lost in dark despair -
'Be like us and do not worry
for God has you in His care.

Helen Steiner Rice

God of mercy and love let us serve you in our world
We pray for desert people,
who live in a dry, parched land
who lack water
who travel constantly
so that they might live.
Give them living water.
Let the deserts bloom into flower.
We pray that those who work on climate change
may find solutions so that the erosion of soil may be halted or reversed.
We pray that water and other vital supplies might not be used as a weapon of
war
in countries where resources are scarce. Amen

God of mercy and love let us serve you in our world
We pray for countries where justice seems far away,
where human rights are ignored.
Let us remind those in power that prisoners are not forgotten.
We pray that the dignity of life is respected
and remember those who have lost that dignity
through age or infirmity or neglect.
We pray for situations
where the sex of a baby may lead to abandonment,
where women are not offered the same opportunities,
or are actively demeaned or mutilated.
May we act to challenge injustice
and seek to affirm your love for all humankind.

God of mercy and love let us serve you in our world
We pray for those who have no peace –
for those who are troubled and torn apart by lack of self esteem
for those who torment and victimise the vulnerable.

Easter 2023 - Pray Without Ceasing

We pray for men and women affected by violence in the home
and for those who live by violence.

We pray for those who are trafficked
and for those who organise and profit from selling other humans.

We pray for those suffering from addictions of every kind
and for those who feed those addictions.

May they learn of your love
and somehow come to newness of life
even in the midst of despair.

God of mercy and love let us serve you in our world

Loving Lord let us not stand aside and tolerate
lack of basic human resources,

dehumanising practices,

or the use of violence to disempower your people.

Give us strength to act and challenge hatred,
and instead bring your justice and mercy.

In your name we humbly ask that we may be a channel for your peace and
love. **Amen.**

Heavenly Father

We cannot at this time forget all of those people of Ukraine, whether they are
fighting in their own land, are refugees in foreign lands or are desperately tired
of the constant bombardment, or those who have lost their homes and loved
ones. We pray that you will be with them and envelop them in your love and
comfort. Pour out your strength upon them.

We ask that you intervene with your special powers to influence the
aggressors that they might be struck with inspiration of a peaceful way to
conclude the current hostilities.

We ask this in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Easter 2023 - Pray Without Ceasing

We seek revival and reawakening of spirituality Lord.

Psalm 85:6, "Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?"

2 Chronicles 7:14, "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

The Greatest Commandment

Saviour we respond to the gospel of your love and we come in prayer

As we live out our calling

Inspire us to off all that we are in worship to you

As we live out our calling

Make us a joyful community, deepening our love for you and each other

As we live out our calling

Send us as a blessing to our neighbour, opening our eyes to the needs of others

As we live out our calling

Loosen our tongues to proclaim the good news with confidence

As we live out our calling

And accept we pray, all that we think or speak or do in response to your love

As we live out our calling

Amen

Jonathan Hustler Secretary of the Methodist Conference

Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours.

Yours are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world.

Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good.

Yours are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.

Easter 2023 - Pray Without Ceasing

Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours.

God of amazing grace, you entrust to us the gift of your life.

You invite us to notice and treasure you.

May the threads of our lives, mundane and spectacular, speak of you,
that your love may overflow to others and the whole world. **Amen**

Heavenly Father

We live in an age where people wander aimlessly to find something to give
them meaning and life.

What they seek they do not find, because they are not finding it in the true
source of life itself-You.

Father, today we come together as true and sincere followers of You to
ardently ask for a revival of souls here in Swansea

Father, You say in *Matthew 7* to come and ask You as *our Father* for what we
desire.

Lord, we desire for our friends, families, and neighbours to open their hearts
and to seek and find the truth.

We invite Your Holy Spirit to pour out onto the people

We ask You to perform miracles, wonders, and to speak to the people.

It is only by Your Spirit that truth can be truly known (*John 15:26*) and so we
beg this day for such revival of spirits, of nations, and of hearts.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen

Heavenly Father

As we live to be your disciples in this world and share the good news of your
Son Jesus Christ, help us at all times to be faithful witnesses. Grant us your
peace and love to be able to keep strong the greatest commandment, which is
to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with
all your mind." Enable us to be filled with your Spirit as we passionately
devote ourselves to the work of teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread and
prayer with those around us, to whom we may be seen as a light in the world
that you so graciously entrusted us to nurture. We ask this in the name of your
son Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Daud Irfan, Youth President 2021/2022, elected by 3 Generate, the children and
youth assembly of the Methodist Church.*

Easter 2023 - Pray Without Ceasing

We thank you that Easter is not about a people,
but all people,
that your love and your Salvation
are for all who confess with voices, hearts and lives
that the tomb is empty because Jesus is risen,
that we might know forgiveness,
that lives might be reborn
and your name glorified now and for eternity.
Amen.

Three times the cock crowed,
and by the third the whole world knew
that Peter had denied his Lord.
The echo of that moment can still be heard today,
each time we hide our face, afraid not of death,
but a mild rebuke, or at the worst a little ridicule.
The world may never know our silent denial,
for as yet, Lord, it has not known our silent faith.
Help us we pray.
Give us the words and courage to speak of you at the right moments. Amen.

John 20:11-18 (NRSV)

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Easter 2023 - Pray Without Ceasing

The Easter Proclamation:

Rejoice, heavenly powers! Sing, choirs of angels!

Exult, all creation around God's throne!

Jesus Christ, our King, is risen!

Sound the trumpet of salvation!

Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor,

radiant in the brightness of our King!

Christ has conquered! Glory fills you!

Darkness vanishes for ever!

Rejoice, O holy Church! Exult in glory!

The risen Saviour shines upon you!

Let this place resound with joy,

echoing the mighty song of all God's people!

It is truly right that we should praise you,

invisible, almighty, and eternal God, and your Son, Jesus Christ.

For Christ has ransomed us with his blood,

and paid the debt of Adam's sin to deliver your faithful people.

This is our Passover feast, when Christ, the true Lamb, is slain.

This is the night when first you saved our forebears,

you freed the people of Israel from their slavery

and led them with dry feet through the sea.

This is the night when the pillar of fire destroyed the darkness of sin!

Easter 2023 - Pray Without Ceasing

This is the night when Christians everywhere,
washed clean of sin and freed from all defilement,
are restored to grace and grow together in holiness.

This is the night when Jesus Christ broke the chains of death
and rose triumphant from the grave.

Night truly blessed, when heaven is wedded to earth,
and we are reconciled to you!

Accept this Easter candle, a flame divided but undimmed,
a pillar of fire that glows to your honor.

Let it mingle with the lights of heaven,
and continue bravely burning to dispel the darkness of the
night!

May the Morning Star, which never sets, find this flame still
burning.

Christ, that Morning Star, who came back from the dead,
and shed his peaceful light on all creation,
your Son who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.[8]

*8: The United Methodist Book of Worship. United Methodist Publishing House. 1992.
pp. 371–372. ISBN*

Easter 2023 - Pray Without Ceasing

Easter Prayer

This prayer has been written by the Revd Michaela Youngson.

When everything was dark
and it seemed that the sun would never shine again,
your love broke through.

Your love was too strong,
too wide,
too deep
for death to hold.

The sparks cast by your love
dance and spread
and burst forth
with resurrection light.

Gracious God,
We praise you for the light of new life
made possible through Jesus.
We praise you for the light of new life
that shone on the first witnesses of resurrection.
We praise you for the light of new life
that continues to shine in our hearts today.

We pray that the Easter light of life, hope and joy,
will live in us each day;
and that we will be bearers of that light
into the lives of others.
Amen.

