

## HINTS FOR USING THIS BOOK

Those who use *Seasonal Prayer* to lead a group of people in prayer may find the following points helpful.

- Select an order of prayer beforehand according to the church year season or time of year, and look over it. Does this order suit your needs? It may be that a different order suits your group better. Are there prayers in the 'Other prayers' section that you want to select before you begin?
- Decide which Bible reading you want to use in the order.
- Since the 'We confess our faith' part suggests that you select a creed, scriptural song, or hymn/song of your choice, make these decisions before you start.
- While many people know the Apostles' Creed and Lord's Prayer from memory (and this should be encouraged), these are also printed on the front inside cover of *Seasonal Prayer*.
- If some of the participants are unfamiliar with *Seasonal Prayer*, it helps if you briefly explain that the parts in bold indicate their response, and also that there may be times for silent reflection and opportunities for free prayer. Just before starting may be a good time to find out whether there are any further requests for prayer.
- As leader, you can control the pace of the praying, and manage the unhelpful tendency to race ahead. By pausing briefly before saying the leader's parts, and not rushing through them, you can contribute to a more prayerful and reflective atmosphere.
- This is especially so when leading the intercessions; by pausing just before the common response, you give opportunity for further silent prayer after each petition. Alternatively, it may suit the group that each petition provides the cue for free prayer.
- Consider changing singular form prayers to plural when using in groups.
- In fact, you are encouraged not to see any part of these prayer orders as restrictive or 'fixed' – you can use them in part or in full as flexibly as you please.
- It can help participants follow the prayers if you briefly announce the headings of each section, but this is not always necessary, especially if the group is familiar with *Seasonal Prayer*.
- You may freely copy the prayers and orders in this book.
- You can use parts of *Seasonal Prayer* within your own worship resources as desired.

Apostles' Creed and Lord's Prayer	<i>inside front cover</i>
Hints for using this book	2
1 Introduction to <i>Seasonal Prayer</i>	5
2 Prayer for seasons of the church year	15
Advent (1)	16
Advent (2)	18
Christmas time and Epiphany	20
Time after Epiphany (the kingdom of God)	22
Lent (1)	24
Lent (2)	26
Holy Week	28
Easter season (1)	30
Easter season (2)	32
Easter season (3, including Ascension)	34
Pentecost (and after)	36
Time after Pentecost (general)	38
Time after Pentecost (discipleship)	40
Time after Pentecost (the church)	42
3 Scriptural songs	45
4 Other prayers	55
5 Seasonal Bible reading guide	83
Acknowledgments	174

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## INTRODUCTION TO SEASONAL PRAYER

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### THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER THROUGH THE YEAR

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Christian people and communities have always endeavoured to practise St Paul's words to the Thessalonians, 'pray without ceasing' (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Such ongoing prayer can take any number of forms and can be expressed in countless ways. Nevertheless, over the centuries a number of patterns, or cycles, of prayer have developed among Christian communities, such as the **daily cycle** (see the book *Everyday Prayer*) and prayers accompanying our own **life cycle**.

The most prominent of these prayer cycles is the **weekly cycle**, where every Sunday we gather around our risen Lord as he meets us in his divine service of word and sacrament. It is in this weekly gathering that we also follow the **annual cycle** of prayer. By observing the seasons of Advent, of Christmas and Epiphany, of Lent and Holy Week, of Easter and Pentecost, we are drawn more fully into our Lord's life, death, and resurrection for us.

This book, *Seasonal Prayer*, provides prayer resources for use during the week, linked to the great annual cycle of the church year. It may be used whenever we find the need and opportunity to pray. Whether we pray at bedtime or mealtimes, or hold some kind of devotion or 'quiet time' alone or with our families, or pray together at meetings or in assembled groups, prayer stems from our need to sanctify every moment with God's word and prayer (1 Timothy 4:5), and to 'give thanks in all circumstances' (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

*Seasonal Prayer* is also applicable for occasional use, when the individual or group is not able to pray in a patterned way every day, but perhaps a few times a week or only once a week or even less frequently. It may be used at congregational gatherings apart from the main Sunday service or at church committee meetings.

While prayer can be as personal or individual as we wish, this book draws on an understanding of Christian prayer as the prayer of the whole church, even if it is prayed alone or at home. Therefore, many of the prayers and devotions you will find here are grounded in the common heritage of the church. The use of psalms, scripture verses, scriptural songs, the Lord's Prayer, and famous prayers of the church helps bring our own prayer into the sacrifice of thanksgiving and prayer offered by the entire church.

What is more, Jesus himself leads us, the whole church, and all creation, in prayer. As one who came as a human being, and suffered, died and rose on our behalf, he now leads our praying as the head of the church. As our great high priest, Jesus takes up all our prayers, praises and thanksgivings in his name and brings them to his heavenly Father. The prayer of his entire church is bundled up, so to speak, in his own perfect and unceasing prayer at his Father's right-hand side. Seen in this light, prayers like those in this book include our personal situation and needs, but also extend well beyond them. With all the redeemed, we pray with Jesus for the healing and restoration of the world. And as a new creation, we join with Christ in voicing the praise of all creation and giving glory to God.

For this reason, there is really no such thing as purely individual prayer – even if we are by ourselves in our room. Even when we pray alone, we are never really alone! So the prayers in this book, while they can be used individually, are given best expression when prayed with others.

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#### THE SEASONAL ORDERS OF PRAYER

The section of prayers for the seasons of the church year is one of the two main sections of *Seasonal Prayer*. It consists of two orders for Advent, one for Christmas and Epiphany, one for the time after Epiphany (focusing on the kingdom of God), two for

Lent, one for Holy Week, three for the Easter season (the third one including an Ascension emphasis), one for Pentecost and the days following, and three for the time after Pentecost (one general which could be used at any time, one emphasising discipleship and one focusing on the church). Many of these orders could be used or adapted for various occasions. For more information about the church year and its seasons, see below, towards the end of this introduction.

Each of the 14 orders follows a basic pattern: psalms and scripture readings are followed by thanksgiving, praise and prayer. Such a pattern reflects the spiritual dynamic at work in Christian prayer. Only because God has first spoken to us can we speak to him in prayer. Just as children learn to speak by listening to their parents, so it is in prayer. By listening to the loving voice of our Father, we learn to return our love, guided by the praying church, our mother.

The individual orders follow these parts.

#### We come to God in prayer

In this opening part we orient ourselves for prayer with a scriptural verse related to the season. Such a verse either invites us to prayer and praise, or announces our intention to pray, or seeks God's help as we pray. This verse is followed by the 'Glory to the Father' (except in Lent and Holy Week), impressing upon us that we pray in the name of the Triune God (just as we do when we begin 'In the name of the Father ...'), and at the same time giving glory to the one who calls us to share in his divine life.

#### We pray the psalms

The psalms in these seasonal orders are linked to the events in the life of Christ. Even though often only a portion of a psalm has been used, the psalms comprise a central component of the orders in Seasonal Prayer, and so it is worth commenting on the importance of psalms in the prayer life of the church.

From biblical times, God's people have used the psalms as the basis of prayer, and have recognised that in the psalms we are provided with a true school of prayer. This is because the psalms are very clearly both the word of God and a human word. On one hand, the psalms are the *divine word* of God. They proclaim God's works

and ways, his law and gospel, and Christ himself. On the other, the psalms are the most human and honest expressions of *prayer* one can find. In them God's people can give expression to praise and thanks, joy and confidence, hurt, anger, fear and distress. In the psalms are found the full range of human experiences, emotions, fears and longings.

Furthermore, because the psalms have been used by God's people in every age, in them one prays with the saints of all time. Countless generations of Christians, together with the faithful people of Israel, have prayed the very same psalms. Saints and sinners, the famous and the forgotten, have taken up the psalms in their life of prayer and worship.

But most profoundly, in the psalms one prays with Christ, the greatest saint of all, the holy one of God. As Jesus himself says in Luke 24:44, they are fulfilled in him, and often the psalms only 'make sense' when he is seen as their subject (as for example when he prays Psalm 22 from the cross.) Christ himself leads his body, the church, in taking up the words of the psalms (so a portion of Psalm 22 is used in one of the Lenten orders). Through the psalms we are drawn into our Lord's praise of his Father, or into his passion, or into his holy zeal and perfect obedience; yet at the same time he draws alongside us and prays with us in our weakness, in our need, and even in our sin. We pray the psalms 'in Christ'. And to emphasise this, the common response which appears between the verses will often be addressed to Christ himself or make some reference to his work for us.

#### God speaks to us

Although we have already encountered God's word in the psalms, here we stop, listen, and meditate on God's word from the wider diet of the Old and New Testaments. Any section of Scripture can be read here: either a few verses, a chapter, or whatever suits the needs of the users. For example, if children are present a children's Bible could be used. On the other hand, the Bible reading guide at the end of this book provides an organised way of reading scriptural selections linked to the seasonal Sunday worship of the church. Further notes about the guide are given below.

After we have read and listened to God's word, a scriptural verse asks that we would live by the word we have just heard, and that it would grow in our lives and direct us.

#### We confess our faith

The life-giving words of God which we have heard or read in the Scriptures now give rise to our response – our confession of faith. By confessing our faith we declare aloud what we believe about the God who has spoken to us and acted in Christ for us, and we praise him for it.

In keeping with the intent to pray and praise with the whole body of Christ, the opportunity is given for responding with the great baptismal creed of the church, the Apostles' Creed (which is printed on the inside cover of *Seasonal Prayer* for those who wish to follow the words).

Alternatively, our confession of faith can be made using one of the many songs (canticles) of Scripture (a number of which appear later in this book). Canticles are hymn-like passages of the Bible, or compositions of the church based on the Bible. They are similar in form and feel to the psalms, by which we lift our hearts and voices to God in response to his gracious word to us. They have been used in the church from earliest times as confessions of faith and expressions of praise.

This is also a good point in the order for singing a song or hymn of choice, using whatever resources are at hand.

#### We pray for ourselves and the world

The second main part of each order in *Seasonal Prayer*, after the psalm and scripture reading, is prayer and intercession. Several important reasons motivate our prayers here. We give thanks to God for his many blessings, particularly those we remember in this season; we seek God's help for our daily needs; and we pray for the needs of those around us in our community and the world.

The prayers usually begin with either the all-embracing prayer for God's help, 'Lord, have mercy', or a verse of Scripture, often a promise of Jesus, that reminds us that we can pray confidently to God in Jesus' name. God commands us to pray, he promises to hear us, and we have the privilege of being embraced within Jesus' own ceaseless prayer (praying 'in his name'), and so we have confidence to bring our requests and needs to our heavenly Father.

The petitions often follow a litany style, a series of short sentences or phrases brought together with a common response. The repeated response gives all who are gathered the chance to give their assent to the prayers. However, before saying the first part of the common

response, the leader may further develop the petition, or briefly pause, allowing for silent reflection and prayer. Once all the petitions are prayed, there is another opportunity for further petitions or free prayer, after which the common response may again be said.

The final prayer in this part is usually a 'collect', a brief prayer drawn from the church's large treasure-store of prayer and liturgy.

#### We pray the Lord's Prayer

We now conclude with the prayer of all prayers – the Lord's own prayer (printed on the inside front cover). In this prayer we are especially aware that Jesus, our brother, leads us in prayer to our heavenly Father. All the prayers we have made so far find their place within this prayer, and anything we have failed to say or have forgotten to mention is now voiced.

#### God blesses us

We have stopped for prayer, but in a few moments we will rise, to continue our daily life or activity. In doing that, we seek God's blessing. Blessings not only talk about God, but take what is said and personally apply it to us. Blessings are God's word 'cut and pasted' into our own lives. The blessings in these prayers are usually twofold: a seasonal blessing imparting a specific promise or 'beatitude' of Christ, followed by a more general blessing which is part of the church's heritage. Sometimes a 'doxology', an outburst of praise and glory given to our Triune God, precedes the blessing.

#### SCRIPTURAL SONGS

In this section, a selection of scriptural songs is given, suitable for use in the different seasons of the church year. While the name 'song' suggests that they are set to music, here they are simply spoken.

Isaiah 35 is a scriptural song which is particularly suitable for Advent, looking forward as it does to God's coming to save his people and renew the whole of creation. It is fairly long, and so if desired a selection of verses may be made.

The Song of Mary, or Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55), is one of the three 'gospel canticles' which commemorate our Lord's incarnation (the Song of Zechariah and Song of Simeon are the other two). This song is occasioned by the greeting given to Mary by Elizabeth: 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will

bear!' The church now takes up Mary's song and sings with her, praising God for the incarnate God in our midst, and thanking him for his mercy that extends through every generation. The Song of Mary is particularly suitable for Advent and Christmas, but may be used also at other times.

Isaiah 9:2, 6, 7 is clearly a song especially for Christmas. The church proclaims and rejoices that this prophecy has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ: light and joy have come to those who lived in darkness, and a wonderful child has been born, who is the Prince of Peace.

Another prophecy, Isaiah 60:1–5, is particularly suitable as a song for Epiphany. It proclaims that the light has come to all the nations.

While not actually in the Bible, the song 'Saviour of the World' is thoroughly biblical in content. It recalls Christ's protection and deliverance of his disciples, and expresses our hope in his glorious return. This song is appropriate for Lent and Holy Week.

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3–10) form the best known collection of Jesus' 'Blessed are ...' sayings. With them Jesus begins his Sermon on the Mount in which we are called to discipleship, and so they are particularly suitable for Lent. In speaking or singing the Beatitudes we seek the blessedness that they describe.

'Worthy Is the Lamb' consists of verses from Revelation 5 and 15, and is a song of praise and worship to the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. It may be used for both Holy Week and Easter.

Another song appropriate for Easter, or at any time of celebration, is the Te Deum. Like the 'Saviour of the World', this is an extra-biblical canticle composed by the church, and it is one of the greatest and most enduring of all the hymns of the church. The name is formed from the first two Latin words of the phrase 'We praise you, God'. In it, the church joins with the apostles, prophets and martyrs to exalt God's glory, praise Christ's saving work, and seek his deliverance. Luther regarded it as the fourth great creed after the Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian Creeds.

Ezekiel 36:24–28 is a prophecy about the Lord cleansing his people and putting a new spirit in them, his own spirit, which was fulfilled at Pentecost. So this is a most suitable song for the church at the time of Pentecost in the church year.

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#### OTHER PRAYERS

A final prayer section, 'Other prayers', provides many individual prayers that can be used alone or to supplement the orders. A number of these are 'classic' prayers, which have been used throughout the centuries and across differing Christian traditions. Some are in 'collect' form and some are hymn verses. A few new prayers recognising the seasons of nature in Australia have been added in this section.

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#### SEASONAL BIBLE READING GUIDE

The Bible reading guide at the back of the book is the second main section of this prayer book; it gives references for Sunday readings plus additional readings. You will find the Bible readings for Years A, B, and C of the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) (see explanation below); and you will also find references for additional readings (generally five per week), related in some way to the 'key' readings of the RCL (usually the gospel). You could choose from any of these for readings during the week. Some of the additional readings could be lengthened or shortened. (If you wish to have continuous daily readings through books of the Bible, see the Bible reading guide in the book *Everyday Prayer*.)

The aim in this book is to provide prayer resources suitable also for occasional, not necessarily regular, use, and so the additional readings are not assigned to specific days of the week but simply listed in biblical order. In addition, all Scripture references are given summary captions to help you select which ones to read. (However, if you do wish to use these selections for everyday reading that is also possible. For example, on the Sunday of a week you could have the RCL gospel, on the Monday to Friday the additional readings provided here, and on the Saturday the next day's RCL Psalm.)

During much of the festival part of the church year a week's additional readings are the same for Years A, B, and C, but for

most of the Sundays after Epiphany and after Pentecost they differ from one year to the next. In selecting the readings, we have attempted not to repeat the same passage in close proximity. You will find if you use the additional readings in conjunction with the RCL that 'Scripture interprets Scripture'. (These readings could also be used by pastors for congregational worship, eg for minor services in addition to the main service for the day or for worship during the week.)

You will notice that for each week a Bible verse is printed out, usually from the gospel for the Sunday or a related passage. This verse may help to focus on one of the key emphases running through the readings for the Sunday and the week – although the scripture passages always have a wider range than can be compressed into a narrow 'theme'. The verse may be used for meditation throughout the week; it may be said in the prayers, perhaps at the beginning of the order, before or after the selected Bible reading, or before the closing blessing. This can be another way of linking your own prayer life with the public Sunday worship of the church.

#### The church year and the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL)

The Bible readings follow the church year rather than the calendar year. The church year begins with Advent, goes through Christmas, Epiphany, the time after Epiphany, Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost, and the time after Pentecost until the last Sunday of the church year. Some dates (Christmas day, 25 December; Epiphany, 6 January) are fixed, while others such as Easter vary from year to year. This means that the lengths of the times after Epiphany and after Pentecost also vary.

To help you fit the church year in the current calendar year, the dates of the Sundays up to 2019 are given in the Bible reading guide. The following is a summary of how it works.

**Advent** always has four Sundays, the Sundays immediately before Christmas. During this time we look forward to the coming of our Lord. The first Sunday of Advent (Advent 1) falls on either one of the last four days of November or the first three days of December. The number of weekdays after Advent 4 and before Christmas varies; sometimes in fact Christmas day is the next day.

**Christmas** celebrates the coming of our Lord as a human being. The Christmas season lasts 12 days, finishing with 5 January, before Epiphany. There are either one or two Sundays after Christmas.

The day of **Epiphany** is 6 January, which may be a Sunday or a weekday; Epiphany commemorates the showing of our Lord to the wise men and to the whole world. Epiphany 1 celebrates the baptism of Jesus. The number of Sundays after Epiphany varies from three to nine, the last one always being Transfiguration. If Easter is early in a particular year, then the time after Epiphany is short.

The Wednesday after Transfiguration Sunday is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of **Lent**, a time for repentance, renewal and walking the way of the cross. Lent has six Sundays in it, the last one being Palm/Passion Sunday, leading into **Holy Week**, a special time of remembering our Lord's suffering and death. Holy Week contains Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, and ends at the Saturday evening before Easter.

**Easter** celebrates the resurrection of our Lord and the new victorious life he brings us. There are seven Sundays (including Easter day) of the Easter season. On the Thursday of the sixth week of Easter we celebrate the Ascension of our Lord, and the season ends 50 days after Easter day with **Pentecost** (celebrating the coming of the Holy Spirit).

The first Sunday after Pentecost is Trinity Sunday. There are between 23 and 28 Sundays after Pentecost.

The Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) gives Bible readings for each Sunday and church festival in a three-year cycle. The sets of readings for a particular Sunday after Pentecost vary from year to year, depending on how many Sundays there are after Pentecost for that year. Each set of Sunday readings (sometimes called Propers) is given an inclusive date range, eg 'Sunday between 26 June & 2 July [Proper 8]'. The last Sunday of the church year is always between 20 & 26 November [Proper 29].

Year A of the three-year cycle begins in November/December of 2007, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2019... If you have difficulty finding which week of the church year we are in, please check with your congregation.

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## PRAYER FOR SEASONS OF THE CHURCH YEAR

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# Advent (I)

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## WE COME TO GOD IN PRAYER

The Lord, our God, is coming.

**Come, let us worship him.**

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
**as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.**  
**Amen.**

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## WE PRAY PSALM 24

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,  
the world, and all who live in it;  
for he founded it on the seas  
and established it on the waters.

**Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!**

Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?  
Who may stand in his holy place?  
Those who have clean hands and a pure heart,  
who do not put their trust in an idol or swear by what is false.  
They will receive blessing from the Lord  
and vindication from God their Saviour.

**Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!**

Lift up your heads, you gates; be lifted up, you ancient doors,  
that the King of glory may come in.  
Who is this King of glory?  
The Lord strong and mighty,  
the Lord mighty in battle.  
He is the King of glory.

**Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!**

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## GOD SPEAKS TO US (see seasonal Bible reading guide, or other Bible reading)

The time has come for us to wake up from our sleep.

**Let the word of Christ dwell in us richly.**

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## WE CONFESS OUR FAITH (Apostles' Creed, scriptural song, or hymn/song)

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## WE PRAY FOR OURSELVES AND THE WORLD

In joyful expectation of the coming of our Lord Jesus to help us,  
let us pray to him.

Come to us, Lord: **and hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, you have called us to follow you. Keep the whole  
church in your truth until you come again as our Lord and king.

Come to us, Lord: **and hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, you came to be the Prince of Peace. Bring peace to  
the world, to our land, and to our lives.

Come to us, Lord: **and hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, creation groans for your coming. Come and redeem  
the world and all that is in it.

Come to us, Lord: **and hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, direct our thoughts, words and actions, so that we  
know and do your will.

Come to us, Lord: **and hear our prayer.**

*(Other prayers may follow)*

Cleanse our consciences, Lord God, and enlighten our hearts,  
through the daily presence of your Son, Jesus Christ. Make us  
ready when he comes again in glory to be our judge. For he lives  
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

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## WE PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER

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### GOD BLESSES US

May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine on us and make us  
ready to meet him when he comes in glory.

And the blessing of almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be  
with us always.

**Amen.**

# Time after Epiphany (the kingdom of God)

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## WE COME TO GOD IN PRAYER

The Lord is king forever and ever.

**Come, let us worship him.**

Glory to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
**as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever.**  
**Amen.**

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## WE PRAY PSALM 97

The Lord reigns, let the earth be glad;  
let the distant shores rejoice.  
Clouds and thick darkness surround him;  
righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.  
His lightning lights up the world;  
the earth sees and trembles.

**Your kingdom come.**

The heavens proclaim his righteousness,  
and all peoples see his glory.  
All who worship images are put to shame,  
those who boast in idols.  
For you, Lord, are the Most High over all the earth;  
you are exalted far above all gods.

**Your kingdom come.**

Let those who love the Lord hate evil,  
for he guards the lives of his faithful ones.  
Light shines on the righteous  
and joy on the upright in heart.  
Rejoice in the Lord, you who are righteous,  
and praise his holy name.

**Your kingdom come.**

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## GOD SPEAKS TO US (see seasonal Bible reading guide, or other Bible reading)

The kingdom of God is among us.

**His word is on our lips and in our hearts.**

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## WE CONFESS OUR FAITH (Apostles' Creed, scriptural song, or hymn/song)

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## WE PRAY FOR OURSELVES AND THE WORLD

Our Lord Jesus told his disciples, 'The kingdom of God is near'.  
Let us pray to him for God's kingdom to come.

Come, Lord Jesus: **and rule over us.**

Thank you for sending your Holy Spirit to produce faith. Fill our hearts with the fire of your Spirit.

Come, Lord Jesus: **and rule over us.**

Thank you for giving your holy word, the message of salvation.  
Help us gladly hear your word and trust it.

Come, Lord Jesus: **and rule over us.**

Thank you for feeding us with your body and blood. Strengthen our faith in you and our love for others.

Come, Lord Jesus: **and rule over us.**

Thank you for wanting all people to be saved. Send your followers to proclaim your message throughout the world.

Come, Lord Jesus: **and rule over us.**

**(Other prayers may follow)**

Lord Jesus, our loving redeemer and king, live and rule within us.  
Take possession of us by your Holy Spirit, and reign where you have the right to reign, and spread your kingdom throughout the world; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

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## WE PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER

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### GOD BLESSES US

To the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory forever and ever.

And may the almighty Lord guide us and all we do in his peace.

**Amen.**

# Lent (2)

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## WE COME TO GOD IN PRAYER

God's Servant was oppressed and afflicted,  
**yet he did not open his mouth.**

The Lord has become my stronghold,  
**and my God the rock of my refuge.**

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## WE PRAY PSALM 22

My God, you are enthroned as the Holy One;  
you are the praise of Israel.  
In you our ancestors put their trust;  
they trusted and you delivered them.  
They cried to you and were saved;  
in you they trusted and were not disappointed.

**Let the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus.**

But I am a worm, not a human being;  
I am scorned by everyone, despised by the people.  
All who see me mock me;  
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.  
'He trusts in the Lord', they say,  
'let the Lord rescue him.'

**Let the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus.**

But you, Lord, do not be far from me.  
You are my strength, come quickly to help me.  
Deliver me from the sword,  
my precious life from the power of the dogs.  
Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;  
save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

**Let the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus.**

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## GOD SPEAKS TO US (see seasonal Bible reading guide, or other Bible reading)

Our delight is in the law of the Lord,  
**and on his law we meditate day and night.**

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## WE CONFESS OUR FAITH (Apostles' Creed, scriptural song, or hymn/song)

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## WE PRAY FOR OURSELVES AND THE WORLD

Lord, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.** Lord, have mercy.

Thank you for your long-suffering with the sins of humankind;  
for your redemption of the world through the shame of the cross;  
for all who have suffered for love of you and of others;  
for all saints and people of prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ: **hear our prayer.**

Keep us from complaining about our own suffering;  
from refusing to share the sufferings of the world;  
from forgetting the pain and sorrow of others;  
from seeking comfort and pleasure above your will.

Lord Jesus Christ: **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who suffer from injury or illness;  
for those who are in doubt and anguish;  
for those who are unemployed or overworked;  
for children who have no parents to care for them.

Lord Jesus Christ: **hear our prayer.**

**(Other prayers may follow)**

Lord Jesus Christ, when we are tempted, help us to resist the devil. When we are worried, help us to cast our care on you. When we are weary, help us to seek our rest in you.

**Amen.**

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## WE PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER

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### GOD BLESSES US

May the Lord God strengthen us and help us; may he uphold us with his powerful right hand.

And the blessing of almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with us always.

**Amen.**

**LENT 5**

29 Mar 09, 25 Mar 12,  
22 Mar 15, 18 Mar 18 ...

*Having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.*  
Hebrews 5:9

**Choose from the RCL and additional readings below.**

**Revised Common Lectionary (RCL)**

Jeremiah 31:31–34

*God promises a new covenant*

Psalm 51:1–12 or  
Psalm 119:9–16

Hebrews 5:5–10

*Jesus the high priest made perfect through suffering*

John 12:20–33

*Jesus announces that his hour has come*

**Additional**

John 7:1–14

*Jesus' time not yet come*

John 11:45–57

*The plot against Jesus*

2 Corinthians 1:3–11

*Paul thanks God for all his help*

Hebrews 3:1–8

*Jesus our high priest greater than Moses*

Hebrews 7:23–28

*Jesus our eternal perfect high priest*

**PALM/PASSION SUNDAY & HOLY WEEK**

5 Apr 09, 1 Apr 12, 29 Mar 15,  
25 Mar 18 ...

**Revised Common Lectionary (RCL)**

Palm

*'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord – the King of Israel!'* John 12:13

Mark 11:1–11

or John 12:12–16

*Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem*

Psalm 118:1, 2, 19–29

Passion

*'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.'*

John 12:23

Isaiah 50:4–9a

*The obedience of the Lord's servant*

Psalm 31:9–16

Philippians 2:5–11

*Christ – obedient servant and exalted Lord*

Mark 14:1 – 15:47

or Mark 15:1–39 (40–47)

*Christ's suffering and death*

**Monday of Holy Week**

Isaiah 42:1–9

*The Lord's Servant*

Psalm 36:5–11

Hebrews 9:11–15

*The blood of Christ, our high priest*

John 12:1–11

*Mary anoints Jesus for burial*

**Tuesday of Holy Week**

Isaiah 49:1–7

*The Lord's Servant*  
Psalm 71:1–14

1 Corinthians 1:18–31

*The message of the cross*

John 12:20–36

*The hour has come*

**Wednesday of Holy Week**

Isaiah 50:4–9a

*The Lord's Servant*  
Psalm 70

Hebrews 12:1–3

*Jesus endured the cross*

John 13:21–32

*The betrayal of Jesus*

**Maunder Thursday**

Exodus 12:1–4 [5–10] 11–14

*The institution of the passover*

Psalm 116:1, 2, 12–19

1 Corinthians 11:23–26

*The institution of the Lord's supper*

John 13:1–17, 31b–35

*Jesus washes his disciples' feet*

**Good Friday**

Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12

*The suffering Servant of God*  
Psalm 22

Hebrews 10:16–25

*Jesus, our priest and sacrifice*

or Hebrews 4:14–16; 5:7–9

*Jesus, our great high priest*

John 18:1 – 19:42

*The passion according to St John*

**Holy Saturday**

Job 14:1–14

*We all lead the same short, troubled life*

or Lamentations 3:1–9, 19–24

*God's steadfast love remains*  
Psalm 31:1–4, 15, 16

1 Peter 4:1–8

*The gospel proclaimed even to the dead*

Matthew 27:57–66

or John 19:38–42

*The burial of Jesus*

**Easter Vigil**

Exodus 14:10–31; 15:20, 21

*God's great victory over the Egyptians*

Exodus 15:1b–13, 17, 18

**Other readings for the Easter Vigil are also provided in the full RCL.**

**EASTER DAY**

12 Apr 09, 8 Apr 12, 5 Apr 15,  
1 Apr 18 ...

*(Jesus says:) 'I was dead, and see, I am alive forever and ever; and I have the keys of Death and Hades.' Revelation 1:18*

**Choose from the RCL and additional readings below.**

**Revised Common Lectionary (RCL)**

Acts 10:34–43

*Summary of Jesus' life and ministry*

or Isaiah 25:6–9

*God prepares a banquet for the nations*

Psalm 118:1, 2, 14–24

1 Corinthians 15:1–11

*The good news of Christ's resurrection*

or Acts 10:34–43

*Summary of Jesus' life and ministry*

John 20:1–18

*The empty tomb; Jesus appears to Mary*

or Mark 16:1–8

*Christ has risen!*

**Easter Evening**

Isaiah 25:6–9

*God prepares a banquet for the nations*

Psalm 114

1 Corinthians 5:6b–8

*Remove the old yeast of sin, and be pure*

Luke 24:13–49

*Jesus recognised when he broke the bread*

**Additional**

Isaiah 45:5–8

*The Lord sends salvation*

Ezekiel 36:24–28

*The Lord will give Israel new life*

Acts 13:16a,26–33

*Paul tells how Jesus was raised from death*

1 Peter 2:1–10

*Come to the Lord, the living stone*

1 Peter 3:18–22

*Saved through the resurrection of Jesus*

**EASTER 2**

19 Apr 09, 15 Apr 12, 12 Apr 15,  
8 Apr 18 ...

*Jesus came and stood among them ... Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. John 20:19,20*

**Choose from the RCL and additional readings below.**

**Revised Common Lectionary (RCL)**

Acts 4:32–35

*The believers share their possessions*

Psalm 133

1 John 1:1 – 2:2

*We have life and light through Jesus*

John 20:19–31

*Thomas sees the risen Christ and believes*

**Additional**

Genesis 32:22–32

*Jacob wrestles with God and is blessed*

Isaiah 33:13–24

*The Lord will show his glory*

Jonah 2:1–10

*Jonah's prayer from inside the fish*

2 Timothy 1:5–10

*Christ has revealed immortal life*

1 John 5:4–12

*The witness about Jesus Christ*

**EASTER 3**

26 Apr 09, 22 Apr 12, 19 Apr 15,  
15 Apr 18 ...

*[Jesus] opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, '... You are witnesses of these things': Luke 24:45,48*

**Choose from the RCL and additional readings below.**

**Revised Common Lectionary (RCL)**

Acts 3:12–19

*Peter's message in the temple*

Psalm 4

1 John 3:1–7

*We are children of God*

Luke 24:36b–48

*Christ has fulfilled the Scriptures*

**Additional**

Micah 7:14–20

*The Lord's compassion*

John 5:31–40

*Witnesses to Jesus*

Colossians 2:6–15

*God has brought you to life with Christ*

1 Timothy 1:12–17

*Gratitude for God's mercy*

2 Timothy 2:1–8

*Be a loyal soldier of Christ*