



The Church of Scotland

Day of Prayer

29 November



Church of Scotland Day of Prayer

The Faith Action Leadership Team offers you this selection of prayers, scripture, suggested activities, and additional commentary that you can use and adapt to your local setting, or personal prayer needs.

Tommy MacNeil, Convener of the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team says this focused Day of Prayer can serve as a powerful reminder that we are not alone—God is with us, and He promises to go before us.

“The last few years have taken their toll on us as a church”, Tommy says. “There is a strength in unity, but we can feel alone and isolated. Throughout the Bible we see the power of God’s people coming together to worship and pray.

“Whether it was Joshua getting the people ready to cross the Jordan into the promised land; or Nehemiah arranging a worship and prayer service on the first New Year after the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt; or the early church gathering with more questions than answers about their future in the upper room, when we’re in a difficult season, there is power and strength for us all to experience in coming together in prayer around God’s word’.

“The beauty and strength of this day is that individuals and groups will be able to gather at different times in their homes, churches, and prayer rooms,” he adds. “Whatever time or times work for us, we’ll worship and pray with the awareness that others throughout our nation and the nations are doing the same.

“Not only will we find strength in our unity, but I believe we’ll get heaven’s attention, and part of the fruit of this day is that your church, my church, our church, The Church of Scotland, will know and experience the blessing of God upon us. Whatever other needs we have as a church right now, there is no greater need than that!”



Gathering Prayer

We gather as a Church throughout this day from places both near and far

Let us focus our hearts and minds on You, O God

We come reflecting on who we are as a Church and as a people of God

Let us focus our hearts and minds on You, O God

We come recognising our need for Your comfort, strength and guidance

Let us focus our hearts and minds on You, O God

We come together in this space, with hopes of what is yet to come, reminded that we are not walking this journey alone

Amen

We are reminded that we are not alone, but rooted deep within Christ as we begin our time of prayer:

Christ beside me,

Christ before me,

Christ behind me,

Christ within me,

Christ beneath me,

Christ above me,

Christ on my right,

Christ on my left,

Christ when I lie down,

Christ when I sit,

Christ when I arise,

Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,

Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,

Christ in every eye that sees me,

Christ in every ear that hears me.

I arise today

Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,

Through belief in the Trinity,

Through our One God,

the Creator of creation. AMEN.

Hymn Suggestions:

CH4 554 – “Rock of ages”

CH4 519- “Love divine”

GWA 58 – “Speak, O Lord, as we come to you”

GWA 59 – “Listen for God”

1. Acknowledging our sins and asking for God's mercy and forgiveness

Matthew 3.2

'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.'

Acts 3.19

'Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord!'

As God's people we are called to be centred on God and God's Kingdom. We often need to re orientate ourselves, turning from that which distracts us and lead us away from God. We often need to ask for forgiveness because we have fallen short of God's expectations either intentionally or unintentionally.

We are invited to take time, in this time together, to repent and turn to God, to notice the movement of the Holy Spirit, and to boldly follow Jesus into the ways of living and being that God desires of us?

1 John 1.5-10

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.



A good example is when Nehemiah received the report from Jerusalem, even though he was not directly involved in the situation at Jerusalem at the time, he went to God in repentance on behalf of himself and the people. (Nehemiah 1).

God commanded Joshua, just as he would do to us today to meditate on his word day and night and observe to do all that is written in it (Joshua 1:8).

Also, in Hebrews 4.12-13, we are told that the word of God searches our hearts. Nothing is hidden before him to which we will all give account. On the strength of these passages and others, let as many as so desire come before the Lord.

Prayer

We remember those areas in which we have fallen short;

as individuals, families, church families,

as congregations, presbyteries and national church;

as a nation and as people of the world.

(silence is held)

We ask for God's forgiveness and mercy.

For our God is merciful and gracious, and will always forgive and restore us to where we should be.

Amen

Or

You may wish to invite 2-3 people to bring prayers of repentance which include our thanksgiving for God's mercy and grace.



2. Prayers for our Church

Hymn suggestions:

GWA 199 – “Oh how good it is when the family of God”

GWA 202 – “God, may our church reflect your grace”

GWA 13 – “Worship the Lord”

GWA 24 – “Your labour is not in vain”

GWA 208 – “Where the river flows”

We take encouragement from the fact that Christ promises that He will build His church in us and through us.

Ephesians 3.14-21

‘For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.’

What is it that God saying to us as a people and a church?

2 Corinthians 1.20 reminds us that God’s promises are sure and dependable:

“For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so, through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.”



1 Corinthians 3.9 reminds us that we are co-workers in God's Kingdom:

"For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building."

Speak out/declare the promises and faithfulness of god.

There are many passages of scripture that remind us of God's presence with us in the midst of our circumstances. Take some time to consider the passages of scripture that speak to you and your community about God's faithfulness, such as Matthew 28.18-20 where Jesus tells the disciples that He will be with them until the very end of the age, or Psalm 36.5 where God's faithfulness is declared throughout the generations.

We take a moment to remind ourselves that we are all part of the Body of Christ and as we do, we recommit to serve Christ where we are called.

1 Corinthians 12.12-20

'The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? But in fact, God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. If they were all one part, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, but one body.'

As you pray – remember God's faithfulness, God's promises, and God's presence with us,

Shared Activity to help focus and gather our prayers for the Church:

On a large piece of paper write the words of Psalm 136.1:

"Give thanks to the Lord, for God is good. God's love endures forever."

Encourage people to add to the paper, in words or pictures, things they are thankful for.

Allow time for those gathered to use these things shared to focus their prayers in gratitude to God.

On a second large piece of paper, write Psalm 141 v1-2:

"I call upon you, O Lord, come quickly to me; give ear to my voice when I call to you."

Encourage people to add to the paper, in words or pictures, things they hope for in the church, the community and the world

Spend some time praying for these things.

End this time together with the following:

God, what would you have me do?

I am listening.

What would you ask of us as your church?

Make us ready.

How can we work to make these hopes real?

Lord, lead us in Your way.

We pray that we always recognise your presence among us,

As with the church throughout the ages. **AMEN.**

Prayer for our church:

Lord our God,

We give thanks that your promises are sure and steadfast, finding their “Yes” in Christ Jesus.

In Christ, all your purposes are fulfilled, and through Him we say “Amen,” to the glory of your holy name.

As your Church, the body of Christ in the world, we stand upon your Word.

Let every promise spoken not return void, but accomplish all you intend—

in our gathering, in our worship, in our witness, and in our work for your Kingdom.

You have called us, as Scripture says in 1 Corinthians 3:9, to be co-labourers with you—

a people planted in your vineyard, stones being built together into a living temple,

set apart for your purposes in the world.

We do not labour alone: we are joined to the communion of saints—

the prophets who proclaimed Your Word, the apostles who established your Church,

the martyrs, the reformers, and all who have faithfully borne witness across the ages.

We remember their courage and conviction,

and we ask for that same Spirit to move within us today.

Let us not shrink back from proclaiming your truth in love,

nor from living lives that reflect the hope of the gospel.

Lord, may your promises be made manifest in the life of this church—

not for our glory, but so that your name may be hallowed in our community and beyond.

Strengthen your people for every good work.

Renew our unity in Christ.

Fill us afresh with your Spirit,

that we may be a sign of the coming Kingdom and a light in the darkness.

Be glorified, O God, in your Church—

now and always,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

3. PRAYERS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Hymn suggestions:

Bind Us Together

CH4 563 – “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know”

GWA 101 – “There is no child so small”

GWA 202 – “God, may our church reflect your grace”

GWA 212 – “A little bit of imagination”

We are all blessed to be known as children of God.

1 John 3.1 reminds us:

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”

As well as knowing the blessing of being a child of God, we know from the ministry of Jesus that children and young people have a special place in God’s heart.

Mark 10.13-16 tells us:

“People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.”

Ecclesiastes 12.1 says,

“Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, ‘I find no pleasure in them’”.



In view of this, we want to take some time to pray for children and young people in our families, churches, and communities.

If you have children in your church, we would invite you to encourage them to participate in this special time of praying with them and for them, using the five-finger prayer below.

We would encourage children (or adults) to choose one of these five prayer points and write out a prayer to say as part of this time.

The Five-Finger Prayer

Thumb - *Pray for those closest to you, closest to your heart, your family and loved ones. (Colossians 4.2)*

Pointer finger - *Pray for those who instruct/teach you, the people who point the way. (1 Thessalonians 5.25)*

Tallest finger - *Pray for those who lead and instruct us including our government and our church. 1 (Timothy 2.1-2)*

Ring finger - *Pray for those who are struggling or are in trouble or pain. (James 5.1)*

Little finger - *Pray for ourselves and our own needs (Philippians 4.6)*

We pray that as in Nehemiah's day, people of all ages and generations will find themselves stirred in their hearts so they join us for the worship of God's name

Nehemiah 8.2-3:

"So, on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law. "

4. PRAYERS FOR OUR COMMUNITY

Hymn suggestions:

All over the world, the Spirit is moving
An army of ordinary people
Father we love you (Glorify Your name)
GWA 174 – “Jesus walks beside us in Scotland”
GWA 221 – “Lord, hear the cry”
GWA 224 – “Sing a new world into being”

Christ promises to build the church in us and through us, a church present and active in the world and in our communities.

Matthew 28.19-20

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 9.35-38

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”



A Prayer for God's desire for us to grow as a church.

Isaiah 54.2-4a

"Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords, strengthen your stakes. For you will spread out to the right and to the left; your descendants will dispossess nations and settle in their desolate cities. "Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame. Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated."

Prayer

Lord, grant us wisdom and spiritual insight, to know how to enlarge the space for you to do a work in our lives—our ministries, our churches, our vision.

Show us how to stretch out without holding back.

Help us discern your will for us—as a denomination, as parishes, and as part of the body of Christ.

Give us the courage, faith, and conviction we need to take bold steps, to take the risks that faith requires, and to spread out on every side in Your name.

You are our Maker, O God—the Lord Almighty.

The Holy One of Israel, our Redeemer.

You are the God of all the earth.

You have promised to have compassion on us, and so we stand and declare:

"Let the compassion of the Lord, our Redeemer, be upon every broken place in the Church."

We proclaim your promises, Lord—that Your unfailing love will never be shaken and Your covenant of peace will not be removed.

We claim these truths over every aspect of our church life, our parishes, our nation, and our communities.

According to your Word, O Lord—renew us.

Build us up with every good thing you have for us: your mercy, your favour, and your grace.

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

You may wish to show the **Vivid Vision** video at this point to encourage the church to be outward looking and to consider how, in praying for our communities, we can become part of the answer to our own prayers.

Shared Activity to help focus and gather our prayers for the Church:

Draw a map of your community. It doesn't need to be a work of art, simply start with the main street and add those things that are significant to your local community – schools, the places where people gather to meet, places of work, parks, new housing estates, doctors, support services etc.

As you start to see the map fill, ask God to guide you in what to pray for. You can use the map as a way of praying for lots of different things – when you see the school, pray for young people; when you see places of industry, pray for the sharing of provision, especially during the cost-of-living crisis, and so on.

You may be inspired to go to these places, and as you walk with God through them and past them in the coming week, ask God to bless them.

The Lord's Prayer for the church and our communities

Below are differing versions of the Lord's Prayer (the first version can be done as a personal reflection, or led as an activity):

The Lord's prayer:

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 debts
as we forgive our debtors.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

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

Amen.

This is the prayer that Jesus taught the first disciples to pray.

It is the prayer that the Church around the world uses to this day, to help us pray together.

We can use this prayer to help us pray in lots of different ways if we take time to notice the words we are saying.



A Reflection on the Lord's Prayer

We cannot say "OUR" if our FAITH has no room for other people, their needs, and their differences.

Take a moment to pray for others, especially those who are different to me.
(a moment's silence is held)

We cannot say "FATHER" if we do not accept others as sisters and brothers in our daily lives, and unless we are prepared to come to God as children.

Take a moment to acknowledge the deep relationship you have with others
(a moment's silence is held)

We cannot say "IN HEAVEN" if all our interests and pursuits are limited to earthly things.

Take a moment to bring your material requests to God, then ask that these may have their right place in life.
(a moment's silence is held)

We cannot say "HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME" if we, whom God has called, do nothing to praise, honour, and glorify God;

Take a moment to speak praises to God.
(a moment's silence is held)

We cannot say "YOUR KINGDOM COME" if we are unwilling to give up our selfishness and accept God's love;

Take a moment to acknowledge that God's ways are not yours, and to ask for the insight to recognise God's kingdom in the world.
(a moment's silence is held)

We cannot say 'YOUR WILL BE DONE' until we do not put God first;

Take a moment to consider how you might act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.
(a moment's silence is held)

We cannot say "ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN" unless we are truly ready to give ourselves to God's service in the here and now.

Take a moment to offer your service to God.
(a moment's silence is held)

We cannot say "GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD" if we expect "to receive and not give" and to continue to ignore the needs of others

Take a moment to offer your time, commitment and resources for God's use in the church and the world.
(a moment's silence is held)

We cannot say FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, unless we are first willing to say FORGIVE MY DEBTORS,

Take a moment to name those whom you need or want to forgive and those whom you hope to receive forgiveness from.
(a moment's silence is held)

We cannot say “LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION” if we deliberately choose to remain in a situation where we are likely to be tempted

Take a moment to name those areas of temptations in your life.

(a moment's silence is held)

We cannot say “DELIVER US FROM EVIL” if we are not prepared to acknowledge those places of evil and injustices in our lives and our world

Take a moment to pray for those areas of injustice and harm in our world.

(a moment's silence is held)

We cannot say “THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER AND THE GLORY” if we are seeking our own glory and are not open to God acting in our lives

Take a moment to remind yourself of the Glory of God present in your life.

(a moment's silence is held)

We cannot say “AMEN” unless we can also say “Cost what it may, this is my prayer. Yes LORD. Your will be done in me.”

(a moment's silence is held)

The Iona Community have a really helpful version of the Lord's Prayer. How might a similar way of praying work with this version?

God in heaven,
Your name is to be honoured.
May your new community of hope
be realised on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today the essentials of life.
Release us from our wrongdoing
as we also release those who wrong us.
Do not test us beyond our enduring;
save us from all that is evil.
For You embrace justice, love and peace,
now and to the end of time, **Amen.**

The **Rose Castle Foundation** also have a beautiful re-translation of the Lord's Prayer from the original Aramaic. How might a similar way of praying work with this version?

O Breathing Life,
Your Name shines everywhere!
Release a space to plant Your Presence here.
Imagine your possibilities now.
Embody your desire in every light and form.
Grow through us this moment's bread and wisdom.
Untie the knots of failure binding us,
as we release the strands we hold of others' faults.
Help us not forget our Source,
yet free us from not being in the Present.
From You arises every Vision, Power and Song
from gathering to gathering.
Amen – may our future actions grow from here

Conclude by either saying the Grace together:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore. AMEN.

Or a sending prayer ...

As we leave this place and time together
We pray that you, O God,
Will be with us in our hopes and in our dreams
In our places of worship and in our daily lives.
May we always be aware of your guiding light as we travel the path together
Knowing that we never walk this journey alone.

Amen

