



**Women in Fellowship National Prayer Hour  
Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021**

**Message from Ann Constable: WF National Events Secretary.**

**Good morning. Thank you for joining this special prayer hour, which gives us an opportunity to pray together across our fellowship, in these challenging times. We are absolutely delighted that over 35 branches are taking part today in some form or another.**

**This is a conversation of prayers, kindly suggested by branches rather than a service with prayers. If you wish to, please have a candle ready to light at the end of the prayer hour.**

**WOMEN IN FELLOWSHIP PRAYER**

***Lord we beseech Thee, watch over our Fellowship; exalt its purposes, bless its undertakings and fulfil its prayers.***

***Grant to its members to be of one mind concerning its aims.***

***May the Father's power govern and sustain us, the energy of the Holy Spirit renew and quicken us, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen***

**CONFESSION**

Lord, it isn't easy to face the truth, for there is much we prefer to hide from ourselves and others.

In our frustration and doubt we have rejected you although you never fail us.

We have not listened to your word, or responded to your call.

We talk of strength, but show weakness.

We speak of serving others, but have time only for ourselves.

We preach forgiveness, but are swift, in practice, to judge.

We are truly sorry and are ashamed of all our failings.

Forgive us Lord. **Amen**

**THE RAVENSBRUCK PRAYER – suggested by Shrewsbury Branch**

The following prayer was found at Ravensbruck death camp where 92,000 women and children died. It was scrawled on wrapping paper near a dead child.

Lord, remember not only the men and women of good will, but also those of ill will.

But do not only remember the suffering they have inflicted on us.

Remember the fruits we have brought, thanks to this suffering-our comradeship, our loyalty, our humility, the courage, the generosity, the greatness of heart which has grown out of all this.

And when they come to judgment, let all the fruits we have borne be their forgiveness.

**Amen**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come; thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. **Amen**

### **BRING US PEACE- suggested by Bath Branch**

We come to you anxious, worried and fearful, for ourselves, for others and for our troubled world.

In this time of difficulty, we pray that your healing power will fill us, body, mind and spirit and your grace will bring us peace. **Amen**

### **MAY WE BE A SOURCE OF BLESSING – written by Jackie Heaton, Executive and Scattered member**

Dear God,

Who watches over us wherever we are, and carries us when we cannot bear the strains of life. Be with us now as we pray for our nation and our world in this time of pandemic.

We pray for healing for our bodies, minds and our souls. Give us the strength to endure illness and loneliness, and bring us peace. May we be sources of blessing to those we are in contact with, and we pray especially for those finding this time particularly difficult.

Watch over our fellowship and comfort those of our members who need our prayers today.

Be with those caring for the sick, in hospitals, hospices, care homes and private dwellings.

Give them the strength they need to discharge their duty with love and compassion.

We pray for an end to our time of trial, for success of treatments and vaccinations, that we may return to in person get-togethers and fellowship, and come together to worship you, our Father through Jesus Christ your son.

**Amen**

**A PRAYER FROM CAMBRIDGE – written by Virginia Walker and Katherine Temple-Cambridge Branch.**

As we represent Cambridge and its surroundings we are mindful of and grateful for the enormous contribution that the City, the University, our famous Addenbrooke's Hospital and the many bio-tech companies nearby give to the scientific community. We pray that all those who work in this field may show courage, perseverance and integrity in all their research activities and a better understanding of medicine and the miracle that is the human body.

We are thankful of our Fellowship and the compassion that has been engendered during this pandemic. We appreciate the steadfast friendship, love and support within our branches and the spirit of togetherness which brings encouragement and hope to many members at this challenging time.

In Jesus' name, **Amen**

**A PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR. Suggested by Tunbridge Wells Branch.**

Lord, You are alpha and omega, the beginning and the end.

Our world has tilted on its axis and thrown us off our feet;

As this year turns, our hearts are muddled with anxiety and hope;

Faith and fear.

Settle us as you calmed the raging storm on Galilee, that we may share this peace with those who are swamped.

May our communities find healing and unity, and our nation be shaped more fully in the character of Jesus, as we find our strength and purpose again.

For His glory we pray. **Amen**

*Bishop Simon Burton-Jones, Bishop of Tonbridge. Used with his permission*

**FOR THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY – suggested by Jackie Heaton, Executive and Scattered member**

We are not people of fear:

we are people of courage.

We are not people who protect our own safety:

we are people who protect our neighbours' safety.

We are not people of greed:

we are people of generosity.

We are your people God,

giving and loving,

wherever we are,

whatever it costs

For as long as it takes  
wherever you call us. **Amen**

*Barbara Glasson, President of the Methodist Conference*

## **INTERCESSIONS IN A TIME OF PANDEMIC**

Let us pray to God,  
who alone makes us dwell in safety:  
For all who are affected by coronavirus,  
through illness or isolation or anxiety,  
that they may find relief and recovery:

Lord, hear us,

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

For those who are guiding our nation at this time,  
and shaping national policies,  
that they may make wise decisions:

Lord, hear us,

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

For doctors, nurses and medical researchers,  
that through their skill and insights  
many will be restored to health:

Lord, hear us,

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

For the vulnerable and the fearful,  
for the gravely ill and the dying,  
that they may know your comfort and peace:

Lord, hear us,

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray,  
to the mercy and protection of God.

Merciful Father,

**accept these prayers**

**for the sake of your Son,**

**our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

*Church of England website*

## **THE PRAYER OF ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI. Suggested by Weybridge Branch**

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
Where there is injury, pardon; Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope; Where there is darkness, light;  
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, Grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled, as to console;  
To be understood, as to understand; To be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive; It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

#### **Psalm 46 Suggested by Weybridge Branch**

God is our refuge and strength,  
an ever-present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way  
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,  
though its waters roar and foam  
and the mountains quake with their surging.  
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,  
the holy place where the Most High dwells.  
God is within her, she will not fall;  
God will help her at break of day.  
Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;  
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.  
The Lord Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.  
Come and see what the LORD has done,  
the desolations he has brought on the earth.  
He makes wars cease  
to the ends of the earth.  
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;  
he burns the shields with fire.  
He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;  
I will be exalted among the nations,  
I will be exalted in the earth."  
The Lord Almighty is with us;  
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

#### **THE MASK PRAYER – suggested by London Branch**

Creator, as I prepare to go into the world, help me to see the sacrament  
in the wearing of this cloth -

let it be "an outward sign of an inward grace" -  
a tangible and visible way of living love for my neighbours,  
as I love myself.

Christ, since my lips will be covered, uncover my heart,  
that people would see my smile in the crinkles around my eyes.  
Since my voice may be muffled, help me to speak clearly,  
not only with my words, but with my actions.

Holy Spirit, as the elastic touches my ears, remind me to listen carefully -  
and full of care - to all those I meet.

May this simple piece of cloth be shield and banner,  
and each breath that it holds, be filled with your love.

In your Name and in that love, I pray. May it be so. May it be so. **Amen**

*Permission to share given by The Right Reverend Richard Bott, Current Moderator of the  
United Church of Canada*

### **LORD OF FAITHFULNESS – suggested by Middle Thames Branch**

Lord of all faithfulness, Lord of all light, as we struggle with our human frailty of mind and  
body in these difficult times, You tell us not to be anxious about anything,  
but in all situations by Prayers and petitions to present our requests to You.  
We pray that you give us peace in our hearts and for those who are facing difficult times  
that we show compassion and love.

We ask for wisdom for our leaders and scientists as they face the challenge of daily  
decisions and we pray in gratitude for all who are caring for the sick and to keep us safe  
As a Fellowship, just as the Magi made their journey from knowledge of the star to belief  
when they saw the Christ child, so may we make that journey through the coming year  
whatever it may bring. **Amen**

### **A PRAYER OF ST. AUGUSTINE – suggested by Bristol 3 Branch**

Watch, O Lord, with those who wake,  
or watch, or work or weep tonight,  
and give your angels charge over those who sleep.  
Tend your sick ones, O Lord Christ.  
Rest your weary ones.  
Bless your dying ones.  
Soothe Your suffering ones.  
Pity your afflicted ones.  
Shield your joyous ones,

for your love's sake. **Amen.**

St Augustine

**A PRAYER FROM SHERBORNE BRANCH- written by Pauline Walker**

Direct, O Lord, and guide and influence all that is happening in our hearts and minds during this time of prayer; all our thinking and longing and fears; our moods and feelings and ever-changing attitudes; our rememberings and hopes and desires; our repugnances and resistances; our sense of depression and boredom – or joy – or helplessness. Direct and influence all this to your great service and to our growth in the spirit. **Amen**

**THE PRAYER OF JOHN HENRY NEWMAN - suggested by London Branch**

My God, you have created me to do you some definite service. You have given some work to me which you have not given to any other. I have my place in your plan. I may never know what it is in this life, but I will know it in the next. Therefore, I will trust you in all things. If I am sick, my sickness will serve you. If I am worried, my worry will serve you. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow will serve you. You do nothing in vain; you know what you are doing. You may take away my friends; You may put me among strangers; You may make me feel forgotten; You may make my spirits sink; You may hide my future from me-still, you know what you are doing, and I trust you. **Amen**  
*St John Henry Newman.*

**PRAYERS FOR WF – written by Janet Wright, Chichester Branch**

I am reminded of when I went on a WF holiday to the Holy Land. We visited the Wailing Wall and a group of us stood in the women's section, not quite knowing what we should do. So we stood together, with our hands resting on the wall and recited the WF Prayer. I would like to remind you of this prayer and how it resonates today

**Lord we beseech Thee, watch over our Fellowship.**

Our Founders wrote this in the middle of the First World War. They all knew family, friends or neighbours who had been killed or injured and were concerned. We are living through a similar time of national crisis and heartbreak, we too plead with God to take care of our Fellowship, that it will survive this pandemic and emerge stronger than before.

**Exalt its purposes, bless its undertakings, and fulfil its prayers.**

Our Founders wanted something to belong to, somewhere they could meet together, share their faith and recharge their batteries, so as to be able to serve God better in the wider world. We are missing this at the moment; branch meetings and national activities have been curtailed and we cannot see our friends. Some branches are using Zoom but many aren't, as they do not have the necessary skills to do so. Let us strengthen our resolve to care and pray for one another and to find fresh ways of supporting each other, in a unique way.

**Grant to its members to be of one heart concerning its aims.**

We thank Emily and our Executive members for trying hard to keep us together, even if they are booking events one minute and cancelling them the next. When this is over and we look to the future, we ask that God will guide our thinking. May we will find new ways of running WF to fit our changed circumstances and to be prepared to adapt and change accordingly.

**May the Father's power govern and sustain us, the energy of the Holy Spirit renew and quicken us for Jesus Christ's Sake.**

We know that we need God's help in all of this and that only in His strength can we achieve anything. We ask that we can show the same spirit as our Founders did many years ago.

**SUCCESS – suggested by Wimbledon branch**

Success is speaking words of praise  
In cheering other people's ways  
In doing just the best you can  
With every task and every plan  
It's silence when your speech would hurt  
Politeness when your neighbour's curt  
It's deafness when scandal flows  
And sympathy with others' woes  
It's loyalty when duty calls  
It's courage when disaster falls  
It's found in laughter and in song  
It's in the silent time of prayer  
In happiness and in despair  
In all of life and nothing less  
We find the thing we call success.

*Author unknown*

**PAUSE AND PRAY – written by Ann Constable: WF National Events Secretary, Shrewsbury Branch**

“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength and will soar on wings like eagles”  
Isaiah 40:9

As the frenzy of life in a pandemic whirrs around us  
The News is full of harsh reality and sad tales,  
Our strength and positivity is often depleted and reduced to uncomfortably or unhealthy low levels.

Yet there are, once more, many heroes emerging and many positive stories and actions.  
There are constantly so many people needing our prayers.  
As we join today across our fellowship in prayer, hear us Lord we beseech you.

Pause and pray for all in the medical professions, emergency services, Social Care, charities and local Councils who are working so hard to help and heal and keep us safe.

Pause and pray for scientists, pharmacists and pharmaceutical industry not only with the vaccines but all other medications and medical advances to treat us in our hours of need.  
Pause and pray for the animals keeping us company and the work of all the vets, nurses, animal feed production and animal medicine producers.

Pause and pray for all involved in feeding this nation. Spare a thought for all food growers, packers, transporters, markets, and food shops of all sizes in this country. We thank all their staff for their amazing hard work and pray that they can stay safe.

Pause and pray for the work of food banks and all helping feed those whose lives have been dramatically changed by the pandemic.

Keep safe all workers in the food industry spread across the world. Pray for crops and harvests as other pandemics hit the industry. We pray especially for all those affected by Avian bird flu.

Pause and Pray for all our loved ones; our families, our friends, our neighbours and all who we hold dear to us. Help us to support them in whatever way we can, as we face the ongoing challenges together, never alone.

Pause and pray for our Women in Fellowship members, for those praying with us today and for all our friends across the branches. We are stronger together and we can support each other in so many different ways just as WF have been doing since its foundation in 1916.

Help us strengthen our faith in this our time of need.

Help us strengthen our friendships in this our time of need.

Pause and pray. **Amen.**

**PANDEMIC PILGRIMAGE – *written by Geraldine Mc Illmurray, Lancaster Branch.***

Lord show me the best route to walk this stony path of life.

I have more time now to contemplate, to listen to your voice

To see the beauty and suffering in our world

To understand that my comfort zone and material trappings can be the distraction which blocks my way forward.

I am headstrong. I want my own way.

I find it hard to submit my will to Yours even when I have the desire to be different.

With Your love shown through the kindness of friends and family I pray for the strength to do this.

Please God help me. Amen

**THE KINGDOM – *suggested by Shrewsbury Branch***

It's a long way off but inside it

There are quite different things going on;

Festivals at which the poor man

Is king and the consumptive is

Healed; mirrors in which the blind look

At themselves and love looks at them

Back; and Industry is for mending

The bent bones and the minds fractured

By life. It's a long way off, but to get

There takes no time and admission

Is free, if you purge yourself

Of desire, and present yourself with

Your need only and the simple offering

Of your faith, green as a leaf.

*by R S Thomas - Welsh poet and Anglican priest*

**INTERLUDE: WE LISTEN TO SOME MUSIC, TO REFLECT ON OUR PRAYERS SO FAR**

**One suggestion is**

**"The Lord Bless You and Keep you" performed by Belle Voci.**

**(This can be found on YouTube- WF has their permission to use this.**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k8wV3WCdfjM>)**

### **THE RAINBOW PRAYER – *Written by Janet Adamson, East Cheshire Branch***

Lord we thank you for presenting the wonder of the rainbow to us.

Let us think of its significance in our Christian faith through the ages.

During the dark days of the pandemic it has become a sign of our hopes for the future as it was in the past.

It is a symbol of serenity and peace.

It also offers thoughts of happier times ahead.

Let us hold the beauty of nature's rainbow in our hearts.

Think of it in quiet moments with God. **Amen**

### **CASTLE OF DREAMS – *suggested by Solihull Branch***

Let me do my work each day; and if the darkened hours of despair overcome me, may I not forget the strength that comforted me in the desolation of other times.

May I still remember the bright hours that found me walking over the silent hills of my childhood, or dreaming on the margin of a quiet river, when a light glowed within me, and I promised my early God to have courage amid the tempests of the changing years.

Spare me from bitterness and from the sharp passions of unguarded moments. May I not forget that poverty and riches are of the spirit.

Though the world knows me not, may my thoughts and actions be such as shall keep me friendly with myself.

Lift up my eyes from the earth, and let me not forget the uses of the stars. Forbid that I should judge others lest I condemn myself.

Let me not follow the clamour of the world, but walk calmly in my path.

Give me a few friends who will love me for what I am; and keep ever burning before my vagrant steps the kindly light of hope.

And though age and infirmity overtake me, and I come not within sight of the castle of my dreams, teach me still to be thankful for life, and for time's olden memories that are good and sweet; and may the evening's twilight find me gentle still.

*by Max Ehrmann*

### **A WEAVER'S PRAYER – *suggested by Bristol 2 Branch***

My life is but a weaving between my Lord and me,

I cannot see the colours He weaveth steadily.

Oft times He weaveth sorrow and I in foolish pride forget He sees the upper and I the underside.

Not till the looms are silent and the shuttles cease to fly shall God unroll the canvas and explain the reason why,

the dark threads are as needful in the Weavers skilful hands as the threads of gold and silver in the pattern He has planned.

He knows He loves, He cares; nothing this truth can dim,  
He gives the very best to those who leave the choice to Him. **Amen.**

### **WHATEVER DID NOT FIT IN WITH MY PLAN DID LIE WITHIN THE PLAN OF GOD. –**

#### **suggested by Wimbledon Branch**

I have an even deeper and firmer belief that nothing is merely an accident when seen in the light of God, that my whole life down to the smallest details has been marked out for me in the plan of the Divine Providence and has a completely coherent meaning in God's all-seeing eyes.

So I am beginning to rejoice in the light of glory wherein this meaning will be unveiled to me.

When night comes and you look back over the day and see how fragmentary everything has been and how much you planned that has gone undone, and all the reasons you have to be embarrassed and ashamed; just take everything exactly as it is, put it in God's hands and leave it with Him.

Then you will be able to rest in Him – really rest – and start the next day as a new life.

*St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross – Edith Stein*

*Can be found in 'Edith Stein Essential Writing' – edited by John Sullivan OCD - pages 64-67*

### **MEDITATION FROM HOLY ISLAND – suggested by Newbury Branch**

Help me Dear Lord  
to care too much.  
to love too freely,  
to pray unceasingly,  
to forgive endlessly,  
to laugh fearlessly,  
to question,  
to live,  
to be who I am,  
to be where I am,  
to be what I am,  
to hope,  
to believe,  
to reach out my hand

*Mary Fleeson (the author reserves the moral right to be identified as the author)*

## **TOGETHER WITH NATURE- suggested by Ann Constable**

Together, let us pray for the natural world

As it helps us heal in so many ways.

Lord, Your creations help us keep motivated, inspired, positive, calm and at peace in this pandemic. Help us all to see and appreciate what nature has done and will continue to do for mankind.

Let us together give our thanks.

Thank you Lord for all the seasons and the different weathers which sustain our lives: such as grey skies, wet winter days, snow and frost, freezing fog all bringing valuable water or blue skies and bright sunny days bringing sunlight and warmth for growth.

Help us pause more, breathe slowly and calmly and see nature in its full winter glory.

Together, Lord, let us never stop praising and admiring Nature's colour palette. In this time when there are so many negatives around us, help us to once more see the natural beauty and all its positives and help others to feel the healing power that it can bring.

Thank you Lord for the Winter sunsets and sunrises; Hoar frost on trees against a blue sky; Icicles in a stream; Foxes in the garden; Goldfinches on our bird feeders; Deer in neighbouring parks and Winter Views across gardens or our local area.

Thank you Lord for the healing power we find in Nature's Cathedrals, in our woods; And for all the medicines that are derived from the natural world. Together we pray for all the work of scientists as they strive to find more medicines.

Please help us to take a break from the electronic world all around and open our eyes and hearts so we can see and feel the healing power from simple sights happening around us: the beauty of the first snowdrop flowers opening or bright yellow of the Aconites against the bare ground; seeing a flash of blue as we glimpse a kingfisher, watching a black and white Dipper, dipping by rocks in a fast flowing stream or having the privilege to see a Starling murmuration.

Together, as we stay at home, staying apart from those we love, Lord help us care for and cherish the natural world which you created. We pray for wisdom and guidance for our government's decision making towards a greener future, so it can be one in which we can preserve and nurture what you have created and not destroy further.

Together, let us pray for the coming of spring. Pause and pray for your help to get us to a different place, a better place, when the peaks of the pandemic have passed. Let us pray for patience as we wait for the light at the end of the tunnel to get brighter and a time when more interactions can take place together with the magic of hugs. **Amen**

**OUR SUSTAINER – suggested by Bury St. Edmunds Branch**

Lord, we beseech thee watch over our fellowship and fill our hearts with compassion as we pray together during this time, for communities in our country and beyond, facing the devastating repercussions of Covid 19.

Bless those who mourn the passing of loved family members or friends because of the virus.

Grant healing and wholeness to those currently ill at home or in hospital. Strengthen the resilience and skills of all in the medical and care services as they work, under relentlessly exhausting conditions, to meet the challenges of bringing comfort and healing to those who are unwell.

Give hope to those who have lost livelihoods and employment because of lockdown restrictions.

Inspire all who bear the responsibility of governance and leadership with a spirit of wisdom, that they may be guided to effect the greatest good and safety for their communities in their making and implementing of decisions.

Enfold us all in your love and peace that enables us to be of one heart and mind in our friendship and support of one another.

May God our Father, renew in us a vision of His love that enables us to bring light into the darkness of this present time;

May God our Redeemer, comfort us with the hope of our eternity;

May God our Sustainer, nurture our faith so that our lives continue to reflect the light of God's love, now and forever. **Amen**

**A PRAYER FROM WALTON ON THAMES BRANCH- written by Caroline Oldroyd.**

Dear Lord Jesus

It's been a tough year but we have so much to be thankful for: Our warm comfortable homes, family and friends whether near or far who love us, enough money to pay our bills and put food on our tables.

But most of all we thank you for the gift of yourself, whose birth we celebrated recently at Christmas. Emmanuel, God with us. Thank you that you came to earth for our sakes and died in order to make us right with God. And you have promised us "an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled and unfading". How awesome and amazing you are!

Help us to remember your gifts of grace during this time of lockdown, loneliness, sadness and uncertainty. And to echo St Paul when he says "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Thank you, Jesus. **Amen.**

## **A PRAYER FOR TIMES OF ISOLATION suggested by Tunbridge Wells Branch**

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come... will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.' (Romans 8:38-39)

God of heaven and earth, in these times of isolation, apart from loved ones distant from friends, away from neighbours. Thank you that there is nothing in all of creation, not even coronavirus, that is able to separate us from your love.

And may your love that never fails continue to be shared through the kindness of strangers looking out for each other, for neighbours near and far. All recognising our shared vulnerability, each of us grateful for every breath, and willing everyone to know the gift of a full and healthy life.

Keep us all in your care. **Amen.**

*Reproduced with permission of Christian Aid.*

## **DARKNESS – written by Berry Northen, East Cheshire Branch**

I am on a journey, a long journey.

The train goes so fast

I don't have time to look at the fields, the hills and trees.

To see the beauty of life.

We go into a tunnel, still whizzing along

Then the train slows, and stops - and the lights go out.

We are in complete darkness.

The man beside me gasps and his breathing is fast I think he's afraid of the dark.

A baby cries - soothed by his mother

As she puts him to her breast.

We wait and wonder - time seems to stand still.

Then, a flickering light is coming

Someone has candles - one for each table!

"These candles, I bought them as gifts, But the need is greater here"

Says the donor coming nearer.

What is your name? I ask

"I have two names" she smiles "They are Faith and Hope" she says as she passes me by

And continues on her way.

## **A PRAYER FROM EASTBOURNE BRANCH**

Heavenly Father,

Our ever present help in trouble, our fortress and our God, calm the anxious fears of all who turn to you during these troubling times of the Covid pandemic. Give strength and healing to those who are sick, those in hospital, hospice, or care home - without family to visit them, or alone at home; for those with the virus, and for others who are awaiting or undergoing treatment for other medical conditions. Have mercy on them all and in their days of weakness strengthen their faith. Comfort the dying and the bereaved and surround them with your love and compassion.

We thank you, Lord, for all those working in the NHS and the care sector for their selfless dedication and sacrifice. Grant them and all keyworkers who work in essential services, whether paid or volunteers, protection and strength for each day's challenges and the ability to work with skill, courage, patience and compassion.

We pray for those with mental health problems experiencing anxiety for the first time, or those with long term issues, that the right care and support is provided for them, and we give thanks in particular for the air ambulance, coastguard search and rescue and the chaplaincy service at Beachy Head. We pray for all who are facing unemployment or whose business is failing under Lockdown. We commit to your care all those who are under stress at work or in the home: those with poor housing; those with young children and trying to home school; those who are caring for the sick or disabled, especially carers who are still children; those whose marriage or partnership is going through difficulties and those who are abused with no means of escape; for teachers trying to educate schoolchildren and students in whatever way they can. You know all these people, Lord, in your mercy hear our prayer.

We call on you to grant wisdom and clarity to those in authority, and pray for the Prime Minister, the Health Secretary, and the chief medical and scientific officers, and the police, that they and those who work with them will have sufficient understanding and insight for the decisions they continually need to make at this difficult time, and likewise the leaders around the world.

At this time of great uncertainty in our country and around the world, we pray that people would turn to you for stability and comfort. We pray for those who don't yet know Jesus, that, through some means in the midst of all that is happening, they would hear the good news of the Gospel and put their trust in Him.

Finally, Lord, we give thanks for our Fellowship and pray that it will be strengthened as we reach out to support each other and others in the community, and that we remain inspired and guided by your Holy Spirit. We pray all these things in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen**

**AS WE GO OUT – suggested by Winchester 1 Branch**

O Lord God, who called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending,

by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown:

give us faith to go out with a good courage, not knowing where we are going

but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us to the

glory of your name.

**Amen**

*Attributed to Eric Milner White and GW Briggs.*

**THE GRACE –**

**Please join in.**

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,**

**be with us all evermore.**

**Amen**

**AND FINALLY: A MESSAGE FROM EMILY HUTCHINGS**

**Yesterday was the Feast of Candlemas when Jesus was presented to the Temple.**

**Traditionally candles are lit in our churches and they serve as a symbol of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World.**

**The prayers we have listened to this morning have acknowledged the tough year we have experienced, but have overwhelmingly looked for the hope and joy our faith brings us.**

**Light your candles and use them as a beacon of light to go forward into the coming months with the knowledge that spring is on its way and whatever God challenges us with, we can rise and follow with a joyful heart.**

**Thank you to everyone who has taken part in this hour, to all branches who have contributed prayers, and to all readers.**

**A most sincere and huge thank you, goes on your behalf, to Jackie Heaton who helped collate all these prayers and to Ann Constable for organising the event. Thank you must go to Madeleine Tattersall, London Branch, for the inspiration behind this national event using our combined praying power!**

**We are very grateful indeed to Jill Bell from Haywards Heath branch and to Chris Bell for all his technical help in the running of the Zoom conferencing event.**