

# **St Michaels Highworth and St Leonard's Blunsdon**

**Worship and prayer resources to  
use during the Covid-19 pandemic.**



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## **Worship at home**

The Archbishops of the Church of England have taken the step of suspending public worship until further notice owing to the Coronavirus pandemic.

As they wrote in their letter to the church on March 17<sup>th</sup>:

*“We urge you sisters and brothers to become a different sort of church in these coming months: hopeful and rooted in the offering of prayer and praise and overflowing in service to the world.”*

We want to ensure that prayer and worship continues, even though churches have had to suspend their services and activities.

Many of us already pray and study our Bibles at home, but it is hard to keep doing this without meeting with other Christians. There are many ways in which we can continue to share in worship together, even if we are not in the same room. As churches, we have created a Facebook group to share information and prayer requests you can find it by searching St Michaels Church Highworth.

This booklet contains a range of resources to help you pray and worship at home:

Places to find worship and prayer while at home

Prayers written especially for this outbreak

Prayers for children

Helpful Bible passages

May the peace of God give you renewed hope  
and wisdom,  
May you find the strength you already carry  
within you to be enough,  
May the grace of God be sufficient,  
May you find a deep breath when the air around  
you is thin,  
May you grow in compassion in these days,  
May you love well, not in spite of these anxious  
times,  
But because of them.

- Sarah Bessey

You might find it helpful to set aside specific times of the day and week to pray and worship. Find a quiet place in your home and enable other members of your household to join you. You might want to light a candle to create a prayerful atmosphere and to use as a focus for your prayers.

You could also try praying with others while still physically distant – for example, over the phone, text messaging, or using video calls.

If you are able to leave the house, many places of worship will be open for personal prayer at certain times – as long as people sit well apart. Currently St Michael's Church will be open from 9.30am – 3.30pm each day and St Leonards will be open on Sundays.

We will update you on Facebook and on the church website if this changes.

If you don't already receive the weekly bulletin by email and you would like to please email [office@stmichaelshighworth.co.uk](mailto:office@stmichaelshighworth.co.uk), let us know which church bulletin you would like to receive and request being added to the list. There will be a summary of the sermon, news and prayer encouragement. If you would like to join us on Sunday morning via the internet this is the web address

<https://www.stmichaelshighworth.co.uk/live-stream>

## **Places to find prayer and worship while at home**

There is a daily service on **Radio 4** every morning at 9.45am.

**Premier Christian Radio** broadcasts Bible studies at intervals throughout the day. At noon and at 2.30pm they have “worship hours” which include worship songs, prayer and Bible readings.

**BBC One** broadcasts Songs of Praise every Sunday at 1.15pm.

If you have access to the internet, there are many churches that are broadcasting their services, either on their website or using Facebook Live.

Some clergy are also sharing daily prayer in this way too.

Holy Trinity Brompton church records their Sunday service each week and that recording is available until 9pm that Sunday evening.

<https://www.htb.org/sundayonline>

### **Luke 12:22-34**

*“Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?*

*Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?”*

(Verses 25-26)

### **Philippians 4:4-9**

*“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*

(Verses 6-7)

## Bible Passages

(Extracts are given where readings are longer.)

### Psalm 23

*“Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your  
staff, they comfort me.”*

(Verse 4)

### Psalm 91

*“Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest  
in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, ‘He  
is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.’”*

(Verses 1-2)

### Psalm 139

*“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and  
know my anxious thoughts.”*

(Verse 23)

### Isaiah 41:10

*“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed,  
for I am your God.  
I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with  
my righteous right hand.”*

### John 14

*“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not  
give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be  
troubled and do not be afraid.”*

(Verse 27)

Online, there are countless resources and apps for your phone or tablet that provide daily prayer & Bible readings.

Church of England Daily Prayer:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/common-worship/daily-prayer>

Pray As You Go

<https://pray-as-you-go.org/>

24-7 Prayer

<https://www.24-7prayer.com/>



## Prayers about the outbreak

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and fearful and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Amen.**

Lord Jesus Christ, you taught us to love our neighbour, and to care for those in need as if we were caring for you. In this time of anxiety, give us strength to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick, and to assure the isolated of our love, and your love, for your name's sake. **Amen.**

God of compassion, be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.

In their loneliness, be their consolation; in their anxiety, be their hope;  
in their darkness, be their light; through him who suffered alone on the cross, but reigns with you in glory, Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## A prayer at bedtime

Before the ending of the day, Creator of the world, we pray

That you, with steadfast love, would keep Your watch around us while we sleep.

Tonight we pray especially for *(names family or friends who are affected by Covid-19)* and the people of *(country or place which is affected by Covid-19)*.

Please give skill and wisdom to all who are caring for them.

**Amen.**

## A prayer remembering God is with us

Lord God, you are always with me. You are with me in the day and in the night.

You are with me when I'm happy and when I'm sad.  
You are with me when I'm healthy and when I am ill.

You are with me when I am peaceful and when I am worried.

Today I am feeling *(name how you are feeling)* because *(reasons you are feeling this way)*.  
Help me to remember that you love me and are with me in everything today.

**Amen.**

## Prayers with Children

### A prayer for when a friend is ill

Dear God, (*name of friend*) is ill.

They are not allowed to go to school or come over to play.

I'm sad because I miss them.

They must be feeling miserable and lonely as well.

Please be close to them.

Please be with the people who are looking after them.

Please help them to get better and to know that you love them.

**Amen.**

### A prayer for the world

God of love and hope, you made the world and care for all creation,

but the world feels strange right now.

The news is full of stories about Coronavirus.

Some people are worried that they might get ill.

Others are anxious for their family and friends.

Be with them and help them to find peace.

We pray for the doctors and nurses and scientists, and all who are working to discover the right medicines to help those who are ill.

Thank you that even in these anxious times, you are with us.

Help us to put our trust in you and keep us safe.

**Amen.**

### For those who are ill

Merciful God, we entrust to your tender care those who are ill or in pain,

knowing that whenever danger threatens your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe. Comfort and heal them, and restore them to health and strength; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### For hospital staff and medical researchers

Gracious God, give skill, sympathy and resilience to all who are caring for the sick,

and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.

Strengthen them with your Spirit, that through their work many will be restored to health; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### From one who is ill or isolated

O God, help me to trust you, help me to know that you are with me,

help me to believe that nothing can separate me from your love revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### For the Christian community

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.*

## Prayers of Intercession

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...

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Let us pray to the Lord, who is our refuge and  
stronghold.

For the health and well-being of our nation,  
that all who are fearful and anxious  
may be at peace and free from worry:  
Lord, hear us, **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For the isolated and housebound, that we may be alert  
to their needs,  
and care for them in their vulnerability:  
Lord, hear us, **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For our homes and families, our schools and young  
people,  
and all in any kind of need or distress:  
Lord, hear us, **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For a blessing on our local community,  
that our neighbourhoods may be places of trust and  
friendship,  
where all are known and cared for:  
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...