

**An Act of Prayer to mark 23 March:
the beginning of the first lockdown**

Welcome to a short service of prayer as we mark a year since the start of the first lockdown, and remember all that we have lost, and all those who mourn at this time. As we begin we light a candle.

A candle is lit.

A leader says

Lord God, the maker and redeemer of all,
as we come before you
in thanksgiving for the gift of health and life,
we grieve for the thousands who have died:
comfort us with your presence,
sustain us with the hope of your kingdom,
and give us grace to live our lives well;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

One or more of the following Scripture passages is read.

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd;
therefore can I lack nothing.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He shall refresh my soul
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his
name's sake.

- 4 Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
- 5 You spread a table before me
in the presence of those who trouble me;
you have anointed my head with oil
and my cup shall be full.
- 6 Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Psalm 23

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying
heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke
upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble
in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke
is easy, and my burden is light.’

Matthew 11.28-30

A prayer remembering the departed

Lord of all, we praise you
for all whom we love but see no longer,
who have entered into their rest.
Give us grace to follow in their footsteps
as they followed in the way of your Son.

Thank you for the memory
of those you have called to yourself:
by each memory, turn our hearts from things seen
to things unseen,

and lead us till we come to the eternal rest
you have prepared for your people,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

*We keep a minutes silence in memory of those who've
died.*

A prayer for all who mourn

Gracious God,
as we remember before you
the thousands who have died,
surround us and all who mourn
with your strong compassion.
Be gentle with us in our grief,
protect us from despair,
and give us grace to persevere
and face the future with hope
in Jesus Christ our risen Lord.
Amen.

A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus

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 Jesus Christ our Lord.

Father God,
Be with us
as we think about all that has changed this year,
And help us to trust that you are always with us.
Be close to us as we remember those who have died,
And help us to trust they are at peace with you.
Show us how to reach out to others
with kindness and care,
So that hope shines out in every heart and home,
Amen

**Lord Jesus Christ,
when fear and anxiety besiege us
and hope is veiled in grief,
hold us in your wounded hands
and make your face shine on us again,
for you are our Lord and God.
Amen.**

All join in praying 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 sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

Christ the Good Shepherd
enfold us with love,
fill us with peace,
and lead us in hope,
to the end of our days;
and the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.

All **Amen.**