

**St. Columba's
United Reformed
Church
Oxford**

**Hymns and Prayers
for Lent 2017**

Introduction

Welcome to this collection of hymns and prayers for Lent 2017. These hymns and prayers are offered for private devotion, and will be shared with people leading worship at St. Columba's between Lent and Easter Day, so that they may consider incorporating them in public worship.

All the prayers in this collection have been written by members of the church, who have also chosen hymns inspired by the Gospel reading for each day. I would like to thank everyone who has contributed, and hope that as each reader reflects on the readings, poetry and prayers below, they will be stimulated and supported in their journey through Lent.

Hymnody is a precious thing – it brings us together, and it lodges in our mind. So much so, that at the end of life, we may still be able to remember familiar songs when we find so much else has gone. Some of the hymns will be familiar, and are often sung in morning worship at St. Columba's; others will be new to many people. They range from ancient Irish words to modern writers from our own and other traditions – I believe that at least five were written by Ministers of the United Reformed Church (or Congregational Church before that). In each one, the writer attempts to capture something of our faith, and you may well find new resonances or insights into a familiar story.

I hope that, as you read these readings over the period of Lent, you will be inspired to know that you are sharing them with friends near and far, as we all journey to Easter together.

Gordon Woods

Bible readings are taken from the New Revised Standard Version (Anglicised version), copyright 1989, 1995 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. St. Columba's CCLI licence number is 216154. R&S refers to hymns that can be found in Rejoice and Sing; CG to hymns in Common Ground.

1 March 2017 – Ash Wednesday

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

R&S 29: Father, we adore you

Prayer

Dear God,

Let us be still.

Let us be calm.

Help us find a place and time to focus on you and to feel your presence.

Listen to our hopes.

Enjoy our dreams with us!

Hear our fears and comfort us.

Let us marvel at the wonders you have created. Your greatness is glimpsed through natural wonders from the austere beauty of a snow capped mountain to the powerful torrent of a raging waterfall, from the delicate geometry of a spider's web to the insistent hope of a flowering spring bulb. We see your wonders not only the natural world but also in the infinite variety of human experience. We remember all those people who need your loving presence.

Let our presence in this world fulfil your will in ways that reflect your glory rather than ours.

Father, we adore you.

In Jesus' name.

Amen

Healey family

5 March 2017 – First Sunday in Lent

Matthew 4:1-11

R&S 524: Give me, O Christ, the strength that in thee lies

Prayer

Lord, you took on our humanity. You knew human temptation. Indeed you knew it in a way that far exceeds how we can know it. Yet you resisted it. You turned your back on all that is superficial, facile, inconstant, and false, and you did so for our sakes, paying an unimaginably high price. How then can we not likewise turn our back on these things and heed your call, with gratitude and with love?

Adrian Moore

12 March 2017 – Second Sunday in Lent

John 3: 1-17

CG 21: Christ, be our Light

Prayer

Loving God, through the gift of your Son you have brought us from darkness into your marvellous light. Help us to use that light to spread your love in the world.

Ruth and Wilson Sutherland

19 March 2017– Third Sunday in Lent

John 4: 5-42

Viešpatie, tu viską žinai

The image shows a musical score for the hymn 'Viešpatie, tu viską žinai'. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has a tempo marking of quarter note = 78. The melody is written in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: 'Vieš - pa - tie, tu vis - ką ži - nai. Tu ži - nai, kad ta - ve my - liu.' The second system is a continuation of the melody, with lyrics 'O _ _ _ _ _ O _ _ _ _ _'. Above the second system, there is a small instruction 'Da Capo' with a double bar line and repeat sign.

♪ Tu sai tu-tu, O mi-o Si-gnor, tu lo sai i-o ti a-mo. / All my heart lies o-pen to you, and you know, Lord, that I love you.

(Seigneur, tu sais tout ; tu sais que je t'aime. / Señor, tú lo sabes todo; tú sabes que te quiero. / Herr, du weißt alles; du weißt, daß ich dich liebe. / Panie, Ty wiesz wszystko; wiesz, że Cię kocham. Jn 21, 17)

Music: Taizé
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Prayer

Loving God, Jesus Christ,
In this space, in this moment,
Help us to know
That we may draw close to You.

That we may come to You fearful,
Angry, or confused.
We may be living right on the edge,
Feeling rejected, care-worn, or alone.

Yet, in stillness, and no matter what,
You invite us in,
To sit with You, as we are.

You hold all that we bring,
And all that we have been,
In Your arms.

And look at us in love.

You gently release the ropes that bind us;
You know us completely,
And love us completely.

As we are loved,
Help us to see that all people belong to You;
Give us the courage to dismantle
The ropes of hate and division
That we see.

And instead -
To draw up for others,
Your gift of Living Water.

Amen

Sian Jones

26 March 2017 – Fourth Sunday in Lent

John 9: 1-41

R&S 489: Be thou my vision

Prayer

As we recall the story of Jesus giving sight to a man born blind, and of the way that some religious leaders rejected this loving act of healing, we pray for greater humility and compassion in our journey together. Lord, open our eyes, ears and hearts to the good news that you bring and give us both the vision and the courage to act upon it in our daily lives.

Blundel-Fawcett family

2 April 2017 – Fifth Sunday in Lent

John 11: 1-45

R&S 354: Come, living God, when least expected

Prayer

When we find that all is dark, may your light break through.
When we cannot see through our tears, may your hope restore.
When we have lost our way, may we hear your voice.

Come out!

Amen

Herring-Johnson family

9 April 2017 – Palm Sunday

Matthew 21: 1-11

R&S 391: Stand up and bless the Lord

Prayer

Lord God,
Help us to trust you as sincerely as the disciples who fetched the donkey.
Help us to recognise your praiseworthiness as the people did when you rode into Jerusalem.
Help us to be open to look for you everywhere, even when you don't appear as we expect you to.

Let our shouts of praise be audible to everyone we meet.

Fill our hearts with joy and give us strength to follow you on your journey to the cross even as those around us turn against us.

Renew our commitment to your way.

Amen

Katherine and Ian Haigh

10 April 2017 – Monday of Holy Week

John 12: 1-11

Said Judas to Mary

Said Judas to Mary, "Now what will you do with your ointment so rich and rare?"
"I'll pour it all over the feet of the Lord, and I'll wipe it away with my hair," she said, "I'll wipe it away with my hair."

²"Oh Mary, O Mary, O think of the poor. This ointment, it could have been sold; and think of the blanket and think of the bread you could buy with the silver and gold," he said, " You could buy with silver and gold."

³"Tomorrow, tomorrow, I'll think of the poor; tomorrow," she said, "not today; for dearer than all of the poor in the world is my love who is going away," she said, " My love who is going away."

⁴Said Jesus to Mary, "Your love is so deep today, you may do as you will. Tomorrow, you say, I am going away, but my body I leave with you still."
he said, " My body I leave with you still."

⁵"The poor of the world are my body," he said,
"to the end of the world they shall be.
The bread and the blanket you give to the poor
you'll know you have given to me.
he said," You'll know you have given to me."

⁶"My body will hang from the cross of the world
"Tomorrow," he said, "and today.
And Martha and Mary will find me again and wash all the sorrow away,"
he said," And wash all the sorrow away."

Sydney Carter (1915-2004)

Tune: Judas and Mary

Prayer

Holy Jesus, your expansive love for all creation moved Mary of Bethany so deeply that in her humility and devotion she poured out her most expensive perfume and anointed your feet with her hair. Teach us to freely give of ourselves, to anoint this broken world with your compassion, your unbounding hope, your triumph over death and your promise of life everlasting.

Siobhan Grimes

11 April 2017 – Tuesday of Holy Week

John 12: 20-36

R&S 275: God's glory fills the universe

Prayer

Almighty Lord God,
We come before you trembling in awe and wonderment,
how Your Son, Jesus Christ, foretold his own death
and, though he feared and dreaded it, remained resolute.
Let us each one serve Him by following him,
so that we who walk in the darkness
might believe in the light, so becoming the children of light.

Amen

Andrew Baker

12 April 2017 – Wednesday of Holy Week

John 13: 21-32

R&S 522: The Servant King

Prayer

Lord, in this ever-challenging world in which we live, we often fail to recognise our role as Christians. The Bible demonstrates the amazing example set by Jesus as he walked upon this planet yet we struggle to get to grips with that which we can achieve - both individually and also collectively with our church community - in a society where the majority appear to shun our faith and view our cause as worthless. We question how we can make any significant difference and we can lack in trust. The responsibility upon us can feel like a great pressure from which we can have a tendency to shy away, staying safe within the confines of familiar buildings and surrounding ourselves with only those in a similar place. The mountain we have to climb can therefore feel like mission impossible.

Help us to discern your will so that we are faithful disciples even when the going gets tough, serving our neighbour as intended: with unconditional love.

May your voice be loud so we hear it above the noise of this busy and distracting world. May we make time to sense your presence and listen to your word. And may we use the opportunities around us to make the necessary bold moves to carry out your mission, following in the footsteps of the rebellious, counter-cultural Nazarene who founded our faith and put others first no matter the consequence.

Amen.

Tim Llewelyn and Lucy Ette

13 April 2017 – Maundy Thursday

John 13: 1-17, 32b-35

R&S 648: Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love

Prayer

Lord God,

As we approach the end of our time of reflection in Lent, help us to remember and reflect on Jesus' ministry of service, thinking about how and who we might serve. In this Holy Week and throughout the year, help us to serve people who are marginalised by society so that they might know that your love is for all, not just for those we might consider good. We ask that through the influence of your Spirit on us we will know how and who to serve, showing your love in their lives, through our actions in response to your love for us.

Amen

Tony Brett

14 April 2017 – Good Friday

John 18: 1 – 19: 42

R&S 215: Ah, holy Jesus, how hast thou offended

Prayer

Jesus, as we meditate upon your death on the cross, make us aware of the suffering and injustice in the world, of our share and complicity in it. Let your example make us compassionate and your sacrifice for us move us to act on this compassion. Let us go out into the world to speak of the freeing power of your passion and resurrection, and to stand up against death and darkness.

Henrike Lähnemann

15 April 2017 – Holy Saturday

Matthew 27: 57-66

CG 148: Will you come and follow me?

Prayer

Loving God, on this the day the friends of Jesus were utterly bereft in the loss of the one they believed had power to transform the world. In their time they saw so much that was wrong in their world. The world about us could be so different if followers of Jesus speak and act as witnesses to His life, death and resurrection.

Bring us, Lord to the confidence and courage of Joseph of Arimathea. He bore witness to his discipleship by taking the initiative to care for the body of Jesus. Help us, we pray, to be alert for how we can share our belief in your ways in our actions as well as in our words.

Rosemary Knagg

16 April 2017 – Easter Day

John 20: 1-18

R&S 607: This is the truth we hold

Prayer

Lord, Our God, we celebrate with joy the resurrection of Jesus our Saviour. Help us to make Easter faith a deeper reality in our lives; that we may know his peace, lay hold of the victory Christ has won for us over sin and death; be bonded together in His love, rejoicing in the hope of life eternal, which is ours in him, our Risen Lord. To him be all glory and praise, dominion and power, now and for ever, Amen.

Margaret and Malcolm Yee