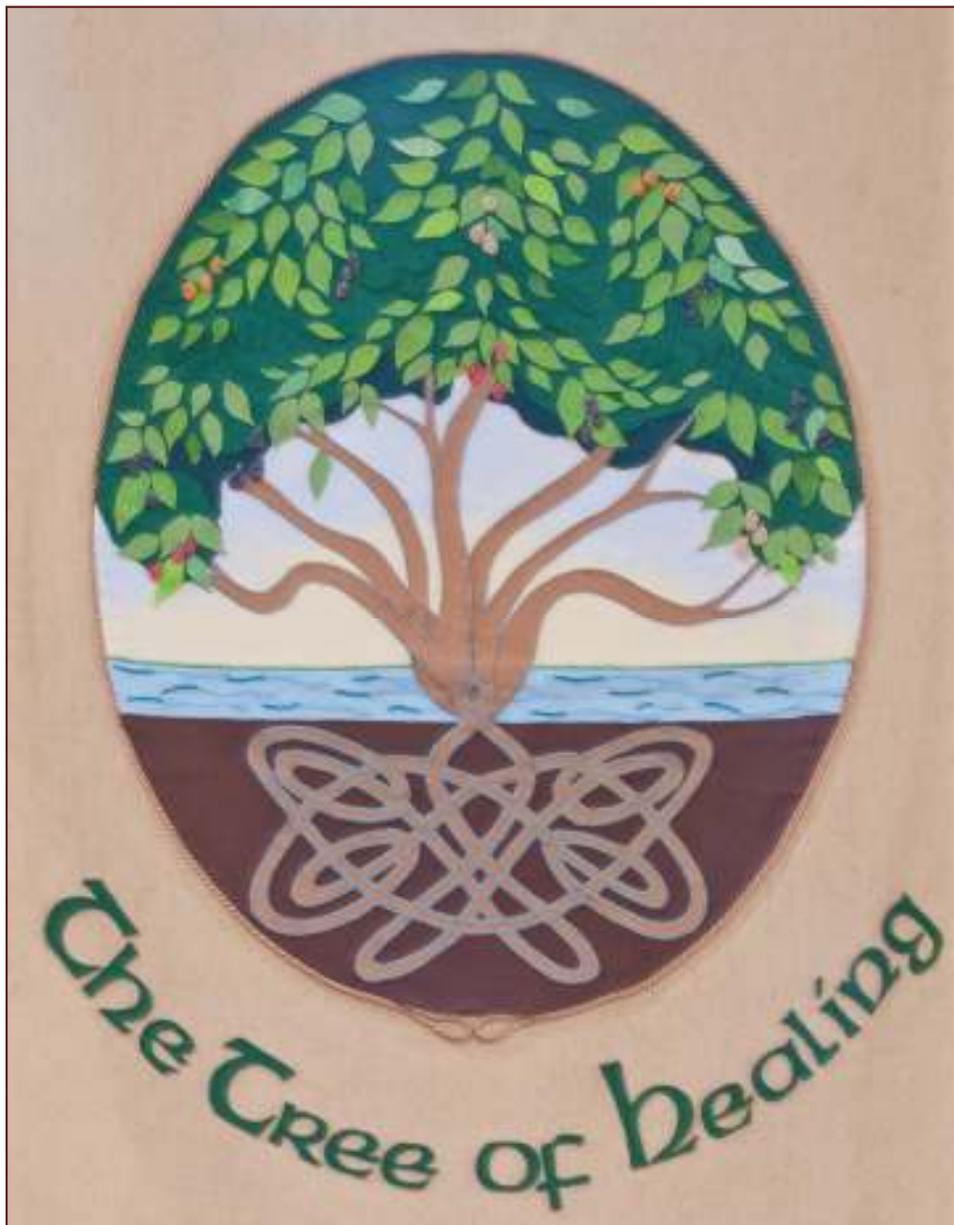


PRAYER GUIDE

St Hilda's Church, Warley Woods

"Prayer is taking silent time to overhear your soul's conversation with God" [John O'Donohue]



This 'Tree of Healing' banner at St Hilda's reflects the restoring quality of prayer

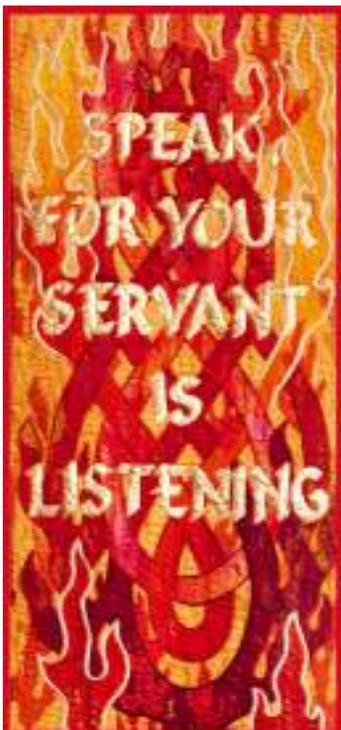
Helping us to pray ...

**St Augustine said that he looked everywhere for God:
at last he found him within himself.**

Private prayer does not require the use of words; all you need is a heart open to the voice of God. You may wish to pray aloud, but it is often easier to recall your troubles and your joys inwardly in the quietness of your heart, particularly when praying alone. Lay them at God's feet ... and listen, for God will speak to you.

If you are facing difficulties or decisions you may feel the need to pray about your own situation. If you are concerned about someone else, you may wish to pray for them. If you are troubled by situations around you, you may wish to pray about these events. Bringing any concern before God will lighten the burden, and be the start of finding the right way forward. Trust and you will receive strength and guidance.

You may simply wish to offer a prayer of thanks to God for the good things in your life, or simply seek a blessing on yourself or someone else.



We offer the following fragments as starting points for opening your heart, each followed by a short prayer to start your conversation with God ...

The illustrations are some of the cloth banners displayed at St Hilda's.

PRAYING FOR OURSELVES

For those in doubt - reassurance in coming to God

"For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me, and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you." [Jeremiah, c 29, v 11 & 12]

Words of Jesus: *"Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you".* [Matthew c 7, v 7]

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going, and I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end, nor do I really know myself. ... Therefore, I will trust you always, though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. [Thomas Merton]

Loving God, I do not always know how or where to find you. I seem so far away from you. My life feels empty, and I do not know what the future brings. Let me be patient in my search for you. I know that I can find your loving presence, and receive the help that I need. Lord, speak to me and dispel my doubt. Amen.

For the bereaved or lonely - God is with you always

"Nothing can fill the gap when we are away from those we love and it would be wrong to try to fill it ... since leaving the gap unfilled preserves the bonds between us." [Dietrich Bonhoeffer]

Let my soul learn in solitude the lesson of your presence. [A Book of Private Prayer]

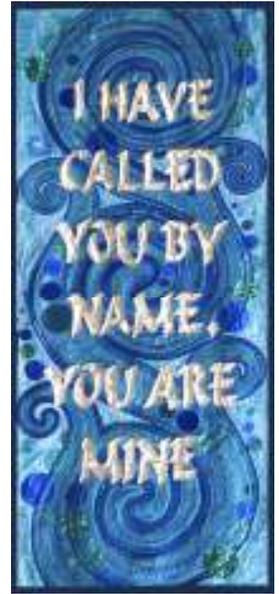
Ever present God, sometimes I feel forgotten by everyone around me, without friends to greet or comfort me. But I know I am not alone, and you are always with me. Lord, fill the void I feel within, and give me the courage to seek companionship and to be open to those whom I meet. Show me how to love and accept and welcome those whose lives touch mine on the daily journey. Amen.

For the fearful - God gives strength

*Let nothing disturb you, nothing alarm you.
All things are passing, but God does not change.
Patiently striving you'll achieve all things.
Know God securely and you'll need no more.
Raise your thoughts upwards and cast fear away.*
[Based on St Teresa of Avila]

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I will fear nothing,
for you, Lord, are with me.* [Psalm 23]

Strong God, when I am disturbed and alarmed by events in my life, let me feel you near me. When I am afraid of what lies ahead, calm me. Make me confident that you are with me whatever I have to do and whatever is the challenge I face. Let me draw strength from your presence within me, and be reassured that you know my future, and that it is good. Amen.



For those with an unclear conscience – God forgives and releases

*If you, O Lord, should count our failures
Who would not be condemned?
But you do forgive us
So that we can serve you with reverence.* [Psalm 130, v 3 & 4]

*Take my will and make it thine
It shall be no longer mine.* [Frances R Havergal]



Merciful God, forgive me all the times when I try to ignore or defend my wrong actions. I know now that I must change what I do and how I live. I need to make amends for the hurt I have caused others in the past. Lord, forgive what I have done before, and free me for a better future. Fill me with love anew, and release me to follow your way, not my way, in future. Lord, lift me up. Amen.

PRAYING FOR OTHERS

For someone you know in difficulty

Think about the person or persons, their situation, and the outcome you would like. It may be illness, a difficult relationship, loss of a loved one, money worries or other problems.

"My yoke is easy and my burden light" [Words of Jesus in Matthew 11, 30]

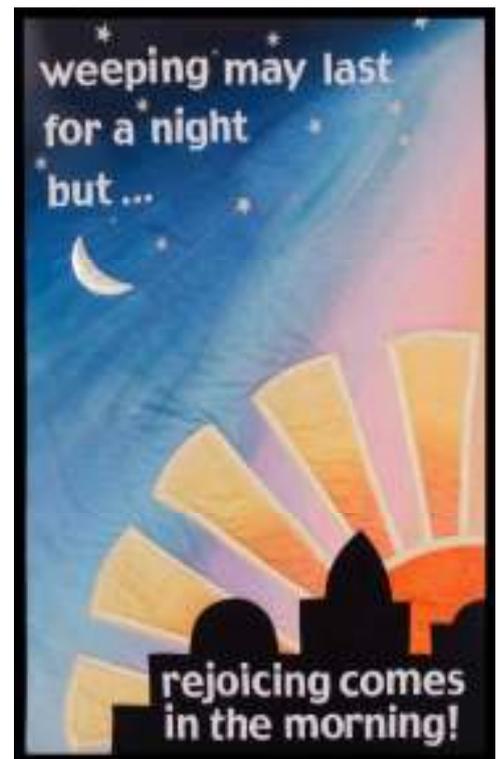
Healing God, at this time I bring before you Lord, make them aware of your comfort and healing that they are strengthened to face all difficulties. Let them feel you near them, so that they find new hope, and a way forward with their burdens lightened. And use me, Lord, in whatever way you will, to bring them help and understanding at this time. Restore and renew them. Amen.

For a social or world situation

Reflect on the event or situation that troubles you. Perhaps it is an accident or natural disaster. Perhaps it involves injustice, oppression, warfare or violence. Perhaps it is a trend in our society or in another country. Think what change you would like to see, but remember that God will answer prayer in his own way.

God of truth and justice, I am troubled by

I do not know how or why such things happen, and I pray for understanding. I thank you for all the men and women who risk their own life or freedom to help the victims and relieve the suffering. Strengthen and bless them as they work in love for justice and a fairer world. Show me too what I may do in my life to support all who give their lives in service, and help to overcome division, cruelty and suffering. Plant your love in the hearts of all men that they may be led by compassion in all they do, O Lord. Amen.



THANKSGIVING AND BLESSING

Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come into his presence with singing. [Psalm 100, v 1 & 2]

Lord, you have sent me joy! I leap .. I skip .. it is good to be alive. You give life; you give the spirit of gladness to feed it. ... It is good to be alive, and you have made it so. [Hubert van Zeller]

Generous God, you have given me so much to enjoy in my life and in the world around me. I come now with thanks in my heart for all your blessings, and particularly for May I truly appreciate all the kindness I receive and the good things I have, and be ready to share my joy with others that I meet. Especially, Lord, I thank you for the gift of Jesus, sent to live as one of us and to show us how to live. Give me joy and hope to face the future. Amen.

When you see trees [Jane Upchurch]

When you see trees – think of God.

When love throws you a line

or friends warm your heart – think of God.

When you are lonely or in pain – think of God.

**When your day is blessed by sunshine or insight
forgiveness or laughter– think of God.**

Old Testament Blessing [Numbers 6, v 24-26]

The Lord bless you and keep you

**The Lord make his face shine upon you
and be gracious to you**

**The Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.**

A Celtic Blessing [from Carmina Gadelica]

The guarding of the God of life be on me.

The guarding of the loving Christ be on me.

The guarding of the Holy Spirit be on me.

**Each day and each night of my life
to aid me and enfold me. Amen**



Caedmon of Whitby Abbey

WELL-LOVED PRAYERS

There is a thread of Christian prayer reaching back to the first followers and Jesus himself, represented by these enduring prayers.

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 forever. Amen.

13th Century Prayer [St Richard of Chichester]

O most merciful friend, brother and Redeemer;

**may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly.**

Amen

Prayer of St Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your 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,

not so much to be understood as to understand,

not so much to be loved, as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

it is in dying that we awake to eternal life.



Hilda of Whitby Abbey

The Twenty-third Psalm

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;

he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I fear no evil;

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff—they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

The Serenity Prayer [Reinhold Niebuhr]

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;

courage to change the things I can;

and wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;

enjoying one moment at a time;

accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;

Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is,

not as I would have it;

trusting that He will make all things right

if I surrender to His Will;

that I may be reasonably happy in this life

and supremely happy with Him forever in the next.

Amen.