

Praying through a Pandemic



Book 1 - Our Initial Confinement

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Dear Reader,

These prayers did not start out as a book of prayers. They were prayers I posted on my Facebook wall beginning on March 18, 2020, shortly after the governor of Rhode Island ordered everyone who could stay at home or work from home to do so. This was the beginning of our confinement that lasted until May 8, 2020. On May 9, 2020, Rhode Island and other states began phase 1 of the work of returning to some sense of life outside of stay-at-home orders (although May 9 looks like May 8, in truth.) This is Book 1 because the daily prayers continue on my Facebook wall through the next phase. However, I am closing out this initial book of prayer because hopefully, we will not return to the severe isolation we have endured through these last weeks.

I pray these prayers will continue to be prayed both now and in future times of trial. I encourage you to use these prayers as the Lord leads. You may print copies of this book to share with others or you may share individual prayers as long as you reference this book. I further pray that these prayers will give words, comfort, and hope to all who call on the name of Jesus Christ. He will, of course, have the last word on this pandemic and on all our lives. May each one who reads these words place their faith in Him alone.

Mercy and grace,

Lori

“They had taken to complaining, to critiquing the sermons, to nit-picking the musicians, to judging the congregation, to settling for an appearance of unity in worship without doing the work of uniting. They took on the roles of performers and spectators and so God, in His mercy, gave them over to those roles for a time, not to punish but to open their eyes. And they missed the presence of others and they missed coming before God under one roof, and they missed the opportunity to participate beside one another. And performing and spectating fell short of the worship to which He called them. So they repented of their complaints and the times they had secretly judged their brothers and sisters and thus began the work of true unity before God that would carry them into the next phase of kingdom building that could only be accomplished and endured by those ready to worship beside others in spirit and in truth.” - March 22, 2020,

Facebook, Lori Roeleveld

March 18, 2020

Father God,

Grant us courage equal to our times. Grace equal to the challenges ahead. Provision for our needs. Generous hearts toward our neighbors. May we conduct ourselves with such faith and love that generations behind us find their hearts strengthened and may they one day remember these times as the days they knew that Jesus was real because of what they saw in us when we were tested. You walk with us every moment of this we are sure. In Jesus' name, Amen.

March 19, 2020

Father God,

Today, when we feel small against current forces, help us remember that the virus which has brought the world to a halt is microscopic. Help us remember that with so much outside of our control, we can still exercise faith, speak truth, offer love and compassion, and serve others in need. Yes, life is short, hard, and unpredictable but You are everlasting, merciful, and unchanging. Your steadfast love will anchor us in Christ so we remember this moment is a gift with more power than we can see and more potential than we can even imagine. What was true before the virus remains true. May we be present with God and with one another through this. We are not alone, in Jesus' name. Amen.

March 21, 2020

Father God,

It's starting to get real here, as You are well aware. As numbers climb, as businesses close, as our lives are altered, as the faces of the dead are shared and their stories told, the bravado we've mustered threatens to fail. And yet, You have not changed. You see us. Even in isolation, not one of us is invisible to You. Your mercies are still new every morning.

Lord, be our courage, our protection, our refuge in the hours, the days, the weeks to come. Show us how to live and love for You in these times. Show us how to care for the most vulnerable. Show us how to live for You, not for ourselves. Show us Yourself.

We praise You for all You are about to teach us about the sufficiency of Your grace to see us through what looks like an impossible time. We praise You for Your wisdom in putting us into a family called Your church. We praise You that eternity stretches before us and extends beyond these days.

Open our mouths to speak Your truth into these times. Increase our faith to shine Your light into every dark moment. Open our hearts to deliver Your love even when it becomes the hardest thing to do. Remind us that many who loved You before us have faced severe testing and now they stand with You, a great cloud of witnesses, spurring us on to faith during this, our time, of trial.

You are greater than our fears, than this trial, than our doubts, than our isolation. We rejoice in You and take refuge in Your great heart. In Jesus' name, Amen.

March 22, 2020 (our first weekend worshipping apart)

Father God,

Today (and for some yesterday), across the country, we worship like the Hoos in Hooville. The enemy cannot stop our worship by stealing all the trappings. We cannot gather but You are not stopped. We are hard-pressed on every side, but Jesus reigns. We will worship online or unplugged or in our hearts from rockers and sofas and hospital beds or first responder vehicles. And our voices will reach Your throne and merge there as a sweet incense received because of the work of Christ on the cross. Even alone in our homes, each of us matters to You. You see us and we are secure in Your care. We will lift our voices, release our prayers, know that the worship of each heart is unconfined, free, and powerful to testify that we will carry on because You carry us in Your great heart. In Jesus' name, Amen.

March 23, 2020

Father God,

How long, O Lord, how long will the headlines of our days be filled with fear and impending death? And if we are so stretched and tested already, Lord, how will we endure longer isolation, less money, growing numbers? We cry out to You because You alone can save – not by our own wisdom, technology, political might, or personal sacrifice will we be delivered to the other side of this outbreak but by You, alone.

Give your wisdom to our scientists, our leaders, and to those on the frontlines of this pandemic. Grant courage, stamina, and protection for all who care for the sick and dying. Let generosity, patience, creativity, kindness, faith, and steadfast love be more infectious than this virus. Have mercy on us, O Lord, because until now, many of us trusted only in our own power.

For those separated from loved ones, suffering alone, may they know Your presence as never before. For those shepherding children and youth through this time, may they hear Your voice shepherding them as shepherds. For those suffering financial strain, may they know Your provision and the generosity of Your people. For those who are sick, may they experience Your comfort and healing.

In the name of Jesus, arrest this virus in its tracks, we pray. Keep us from the temptation to find outlets for our fear through blame. Help us sort through the ever-wagging tongues so that by Your power, we can tune out the foolishness and only hear what is wise, what is true, and what is worthy. Hold us back from violence and hateful speech, even when we are sorely tested, and protect those most vulnerable through this time.

You, O Lord, designed us and assigned us to these times. Help us to trust You. Let us rise to our calling in Christ and in His name, continue the work of speaking truth, delivering love, and representing Jesus in our homes, over social media, in our workplace, with our neighbors, with strangers, and in our hearts. You have the final word over all our lives, I pray that word would be Jesus who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Have mercy on us and let us know Your steadfast love better than we know our own hearts, in Jesus' name. Amen.

March 24, 2020

Father God,

This is the day You have made and I believe it just as surely as I believe You made the ones that were not marked with threats of death, disease, and financial disaster, so I will rejoice in it. I don't feel like rejoicing. I feel beset by stresses from without and within. But I know this

is a moment for You to show us how often we follow You hoping more for health and wealth than we hope for You. You are all we need.

Have mercy on us, O Lord, and open our eyes today to the joy You are that is our strength. Let our enemy, who hopes this will break us, wither at the sound of laughter rising from our homes, from the songs of joy we use in daily worship to lift You up in our midst, and from the words of encouragement and faith we speak and post as, worldwide, people seek a Higher Power, which we know is Jesus Christ.

Let our joy remind the enemy he is defeated, death is defeated, and because of Jesus, we are eternal so this moment in time will become just another story we tell around His great banquet table when we swap stories about what we did during the great war for souls. From this outpost of glory, Lord, we lift our eyes to You. Shine on us and grant us your joy and the courage to display it amid this trial. In Jesus' name, Amen.

March 25, 2020

Father God,

We marvel at your patience with us! We confess we run short and it is easy these days to sit in front of a screen and criticize anyone who is speaking whether they're hopeful or panicked. Give us Your heart for others and let us see one another through Your eyes.

You loved the world so much You sent Your only begotten Son Jesus and it is to Him that we have given our lives. Fill us with the same spirit that filled Him as He walked the earth. He spoke truth, He demonstrated love, and He reflected You. This is what we pray for ourselves today.

When we are tempted to impatience, to critical spirits, to panic, or to judgment, remind us of Your patience with us, Your enduring love through every misstep, and Your power to transform.

We pray for our leaders – grant them wisdom and uncommon unity. We pray for our health care workers, first responders, truckers, and everyone working essential jobs interacting with the public, protect them and give them stamina. We pray for those overseeing children confined to their homes – for joy, for patience, and for peace. We pray for all the extroverts who are suffering from lack of interaction with others and we pray for those for whom this isolation does not bring a needed break but leads them to depression, fear, and concern they'll be forgotten. We pray for those facing their last days without the comfort of family beside them.

We pray for those at risk of abuse or neglect. Your eyes are everywhere. We are never isolated from Your presence. Be our protector, our deliverer, our healer, our counselor, our leader, our shepherd through this time and may we, Your church, represent You well so that others see Your light and are guided home to Your great heart. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

March 26, 2020

Father God,

In the face of this pandemic, we can no longer deny that each person impacts countless others. We can no longer ignore how potent each of us really is, even if we feel invisible. We can no longer live under the illusion that perhaps our lives are too insignificant to matter. A microscopic virus has reminded us that size is no barrier to global impact.

Grant us courage to live in the truth that our testimonies can spread like wildfire if we speak them aloud to those with whom we are in contact. Free us from every deception that has

kept us silent or encouraged us to limit the scope of our influence for the gospel of Jesus Christ. Fill us with the love that is stronger than death and multiply our efforts through the power of the Holy Spirit so we can flood the world with Your truth. We trust You to have the last word on this moment in our lives and that that word will be Jesus. In His name, Amen.

March 27, 2020

Father God,

This morning we come before You with grateful hearts. Grateful that You are in control, even if we are not. Grateful that You will never leave us, even if we are isolated from everyone we love. Nothing – not even COVID19 – can separate us from Your great love.

Grateful that in Christ, we are more than conquerors. Grateful that through technology, our children are still able to connect with their schools and friends, that we can join in worship, and that we can testify to the truth of Christ even while keeping a safe distance.

Grateful to see so many acts of generosity, cooperation, kindness, and sacrifice from people all over the world. Grateful that in this moment Your people have the greatest opportunity to share the truth of Christ across the globe. Grateful to have Your Word and the words of Christians who came before us and suffered great trials to bolster and embolden us.

Grateful that we can trust that You designed us for this and assigned us to it, so we are right where You want us to be. Grateful for those who are risking their lives to care for the most vulnerable – protect them and free them from fear. Let them feel Your presence in powerful ways and let them see You at work alongside them. Bring miracles where miracles are needed but let us, Your people, be Your hands and feet and the living representatives of Jesus in our times – not by our power or efforts but by Your Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.

March 28, 2020

Father God,

Fear takes our breath away. This virus leaves some of us alone, gasping for air. You are the Breath of Life. Breathe Your life into us again. We pray for mercy for those living in the cities. We pray for order, for peace, for provision, for protection, and for stamina – especially for those on the front lines. Forgive us for every breath we've taken for granted. Let us not waste another on complaining or grumbling or scorn or critical spirits or fearmongering or hate. Instead, fill us with the power of Your Holy Spirit to use every breath to speak truth, love, light, and life into our times, every breath devoted to redemptive speech, every breath committed to the name of Jesus. Inhale the mercy of God, exhale grace to the world He loves. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

March 29, 2020

Father God,

Help! Help us in every way. We remember how fragile life is, how easily our lives can be dismantled, how near we live to death. And yet, we find strength in You. We trust You to bring order on the other side of chaos. We lean into Jesus who conquered death. Grant us rest from distress, joy even as we grieve losses of every kind, and Your presence to comfort, to instruct, and to deliver us safely to the shore of life on the other side of this pandemic. Shine through our brokenness and burst through our efforts to show the world who You are with our words and with our lives in our times. In Jesus' name, Amen

March 30, 2020

Father God,

This morning we remember that You loved us so much that You sent Your only Son, Jesus, to die for us. Honestly, we're realizing there are things on the horizon we fear more than death.

We do not welcome death, but it does release us home to You. What we are beginning to fear are things like financial ruin, watching loved ones suffer, community violence, long-term unemployment, a widening division in our country on multiple levels, people getting accustomed to sitting out church at home, losing loved ones to mental health problems from the stress, missing important moments with loved ones, knowing that someone we love may have to suffer and die alone. We are feeling how small we are – even if we unite – and we remember how much we need You.

We know who we are before You alone in our homes watching the news and we confess we will need the power of Jesus to exhibit faith for this hour. We remember that even in this time, we are more than conquerors in Christ. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit so that we can walk through these times demonstrating Your power just as the early church did when they faced trials and hardships of every kind.

Jesus, we will rise to this occasion by Your power alone. Help us feel Your presence with us. Hold our hearts in Your loving, nail-scarred hands. Our eyes are on You and in Your strength, we will walk through fire speaking truth and exhibiting love beyond what we ever imagined capable. We look forward to seeing You work in our midst. In Your Name, we pray, Amen.

March 31, 2020

Father God,

You were right that it is not good for us to be alone. Even though Adam had You, You knew He also needed a companion. We pray today for those who have had to social distance completely alone. Bring them to our minds and show us how to love them and remind them they still matter to us.

Thank you for creating the church. For all our faults (and we have many) it is still good that we are not alone. This social distancing reminds us to pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters who have endured isolation and separation from their families through labor camps, imprisonment, and fear of further persecution. Bring them to our minds in these times and show us how to love them.

We pray for Christians who must social-distance with families who don't understand or are hostile to their faith. Let them feel Your presence and help them hold onto You. We also remember, Jesus, that You left Your throne to be with us. We remember that on the cross, You endured an unimaginable isolation so that we never have to know that kind of aloneness. You rose triumphant and conquered death so that we do not fear death because we know You are the door through which we step into eternal life. There, we will be forever connected, forever belonging, forever with You.

Give us strength to endure and help us create new ways to connect so that we remember we are not alone. In Jesus' name, Amen.

April 1, 2020

Father God,

This morning, we take a stand, here with You in prayer. While the enemy would have the world revolve around his agenda of disease, fear, and death, we will not go along. Just as Jesus came to You daily to learn Your will for His day, so will we.

We will not allow our spirits to rise and fall with the daily news briefings or the numbers that rise. We will ask You for the headlines. We will ask You what matters most. As the gospel is preached through the airwaves and millions of worshipers gather online, we will believe that the numbers of souls sealed for eternity with You rises every day.

Give us strength to headline hope for others when we post, speak, and pray. Give us vision that extends beyond this one moment in our times. Give us faith that You are at work and eyes to see what You are about, so we can be part of it. Give us love for others that transcends our differences, our fears, and this situation.

Let us not miss the opportunity to experience Your presence and depend on You in ways we would never have had the chance to learn outside of a pandemic. Everything is changing so we want to change in ways that make us more like Jesus – according to Your plan, Your provision, and Your power, in the name of Jesus, Amen

April 2, 2020

Father God,

Our words fail us but Yours never will. Our strength pales as the wave of this pandemic breaks over our hearts and those we love, but Your strength is eternal. Help us hear your voice above all the voices streaming over the airwaves. Help us remember that You sing over us and

Your voice is greater than the storm. Together we pray for the heroic, exhausted men and women in hospitals across our land sacrificing themselves to care for our loved ones, to save their lives or to comfort them in death. Be their strength, be their comfort, and for their sake, come against this virus and end its onslaught by Your mercy and in the name of Jesus. In His name we pray, Amen.

April 3, 2020

Father God,

Have mercy on us. We confess, we have had precious little mercy on one another, especially in the months leading up to this virus. We were a nation divided, a people who condemn leaders and strangers with quick clicks. But You are not like us. You are merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

King David asked to fall into your hands and not his enemy's because of Your mercy. Have mercy on us now, in the name of Jesus. We know deliverance will come from You and You alone, and so we wait on You and trust Your faithfulness and Your great heart. In Jesus' name, Amen

April 4, 2020

Father God,

We want to be the brave, encouraging, faith-filled people we show ourselves to be on Facebook and Instagram. But there are moments - sometimes painfully long moments - when we feel and think darker things we don't want to put out so as not to discourage others. Be with us in the hours when we are afraid, when we despair, when we are angry, lonely, disheartened, and

beginning to doubt Your plan for this time. Respond to the cries of our hearts with Your presence.

We love the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego but we have no desire to face this fire and we will surely not endure it without You with us. As you were with Sarah, Ruth, Deborah, Miriam, Mary, Mary, Priscilla, Lydia, Noah's wife, Jochabed, Abigail, and all women who have walked with You through great tests of faith, sustain our hearts, show us Your great heart, and bring us through whole, singing Your praise, and speaking testimonies of deliverance we struggle to imagine now. You are our hope and joy! Thank you, Jesus, for Your living presence with us. In Your name we pray, Amen.

April 5, 2020 (Palm Sunday)

Father God,

You are on Your throne. You have us in Your view, in Your heart, in Your plan. We are Your redeemed but now we worship You apart. Thank you for using this dark time to remind us how dear we are to one another, how wonderful it is to belong to a fellowship of believers, and how good it is to gather with Your people. Our hearts resonate with the Psalmist who wrote, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'" We look forward to the day when we will gather again.

This morning, we pray for those for whom our gatherings were a refuge. For those who worship You alone in their homes and are, even now, surrounded by those who are hostile to You, mocking, antagonistic to faith, or unkind. Sustain these solitary souls, by Your grace, and remind them that You love them and so do we.

We pray for those who are so hard-pressed by the demands of this crisis that this day will come and go not even knowing its name. For those on the front lines, for those who are victims, for those who are essential, we know today brings no physical rest, so we ask that You be their rest. Be present with them in a way so powerful and overwhelming that they are refreshed and renewed even as they serve and strive for breath.

For all whose bank accounts are nearing empty or whose emotional reserves are running dry, we pray that we would have faith like Elijah. We bring before You now every empty bank account, every empty cupboard, every empty gas tank, every empty store of strength and we pray that like the widow of Zarephath's endless oil You would fill every account, cupboard, gas tank, and heart to meet their needs until this crisis passes.

As the crowds gathered to usher Jesus into Jerusalem, we send our voices as one to Your throne – Hosanna, Save us! Our souls are eternal, and our hearts are set on Your everlasting glory, but You know we are still trying to survive this moment in this present time. We pray for Your presence with us as we endure today and the days to come. At the triumphal entry to Jerusalem, Your disciples expected You to save them by taking power but You had planned a greater story in which You gave Your life and rose again. Sustain us to endure the greater story now, in Jesus' name. Amen.

April 6, 2020

Father God,

This morning we see the earth awakening to new growth, flowers bursting forth from the broken soil, tree buds pressing forth from their brown housing, birds pairing up after a long gray

winter and we are reminded that everything has its season. This season we endure will also pass and so our hearts resonate with the words of the Psalmist and his are the words we pray.

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.”

Today we remember that You are merciful and gracious. May Your love abound to those who are hard-pressed this week by service, by disease, by loss, by isolation, by despair. We know You hear our prayers in Jesus' name. Amen.

April 7, 2020

Father God,

Our hearts and minds cannot fathom the numbers that scroll across our screens – rising numbers of those who have fallen ill and of those who have died from this virus. We see numbers, but You are far greater than we are, so You see the soul behind each one. You know each life story. You know their beginning and their end. You know those they love – those who are awaiting news and those who grieve already. Comfort those who mourn and bring those who are struggling for breath back from the edge of death.

Keep our hearts from growing hard to those numbers. Remind us that behind each number is a life that touched many others and strengthen us to bear this understanding. Expand

our capacity for compassion and mercy for all whose stories are different from ours – those wrestling with different situations and reacting to this crisis in ways we are not. Make us more like You in love, in mercy, and in willingness to serve others through prayer, through giving, and through being present in hard times. Sustain our hearts as the numbers rise and hold us close to Your great heart, in Jesus' name. Amen.

April 8, 2020

Father God,

Today we'll keep in mind that Jesus is our light. The darkness has tried but cannot overcome Him. His light is within us and we carry it into every encounter with darkness. Darkness doesn't stand a chance with You. We are light sabers in the hands of the Master. In Jesus' name, Amen.

April 9, 2020 (Maundy Thursday)

Father God,

How can we not praise You this morning? How can we not think first of Jesus? We consider Paul's words "that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, 'This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

We think of Him today as He shared bread and cup with His disciples knowing He would be betrayed, knowing He would be abandoned, knowing He would face rejection, scorn, beating,

and brutal, suffocating death alone. Knowing He was taking onto His own self the sins of the whole world. We think of our Lord in Gethsemane asking that the cup would pass from Him and yet, yielding to Your will when there was no other way.

And how we have taken His sacrifice for granted! How we have heard these words so often that we have grown hardened to His suffering! And yet, now as we consider the potential of isolation and death for ourselves or our loved ones, we have renewed gratitude, Jesus, for You and the depth of Your love for the Father and His great love for us.

Our sins sent You to that cross and we acknowledge that now. Your death atoned for us. Your death purchased our lives and so, we surrender our lives to You that we might live forever. Our words, our gratitude, our lives on this outpost of glory could never repay what Your work on the cross did on our behalf, but now, we live for You.

On this occasion of a Holy Week in which we will not gather, in which we will remember You from our isolation, show us those sins from which we must now turn and heal our hearts, our homes, our families, our communities, our churches, our nation, our world. You have the final word over death, and You will have the final word over this pandemic. We pray that word would be resurrection, revival, redemption and for Your deliverance we wait in faith. For the whole world, the one our Father loved so much He sent You and the one for which You died, we pray today, in Jesus' name. Amen.

April 10, 2020 (Good Friday)

Father God,

On this day, of all days, we remember that Your ways are not always easy to understand. There are long, long moments in life and in history when You are telling a greater story than the snapshot we are currently living.

The day our Lord was nailed to the cross appeared to all like a failure, like torture, like death and yet, it was not Your final word on Jesus or on humanity. We cling to the cross of Christ today, not because we're enamored of death, but because by laying down His life, Jesus demonstrated Himself to be the door to eternal life.

For all those who falter in their faith today, we pray that they would be fortified. For all those who turn from the truth, we pray that You would free them from deception and give them eyes that see, ears that hear, and hearts that are fertile soil to receive Your Word planted in it. For all of us who know that Jesus is the only way to salvation and who have been convinced by truth that He lives, embolden us to speak, empower us to live like Christ, and free Your voice to emerge from the small stories of each life to join with the greater story, the eternal story, His story, Your story, ours because of Him.

We know that our Redeemer lives. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

April 11, 2020

Father God,

On this, the day between crucifixion and resurrection, we reflect on the truth that even when we cannot see or understand, You are at work. There is always more happening than we can comprehend. We think about Your mother, brothers, and Your followers as they gathered to mourn, to pray, and to wait. We think about the temptation they may have felt to doubt, to despair, to abandon their hope that the plans that seemed so powerful and real at the last supper were still in play.

We think about Your enemies who rejoiced on this day, believing themselves to be victorious and Your followers to be fools. It is, perhaps, on this day in all our lives that we are sorted out and discover what faith truly means.

You keep Your Word. You hold victory in Your hands. You are the Author of life and the story You tell is one of redemption and eternity. As the disciples awaited Your resurrection, so we await Your return and trust that in this time of waiting, You are more at work than any one of us can see or comprehend. May we all be found in You when You come again, in Jesus' name. Amen.

April 12, 2020 (Easter Sunday)

Father God,

We praise You today for Your plan of redemption, for Your risen Son, Jesus, and for Your steadfast mercy. Awaken our hearts to know and to live the truth of Jesus Christ. May our lives reflect that we trust You for eternity. May we experience the presence of our living Lord today, here in this time and as the resurrection emboldened the first followers to preach the gospel, may we also be free and bold to speak of it to this generation, in the name of Jesus, we pray, Amen

April 13, 2020

Father God,

This morning the rain echoes our sorrow. As life's tragedies occur amid a pandemic, we feel how small we are, how fragile, how limited, how alone. We pray for those devastated by tornados. We pray for those who have lost loved ones without the comfort of being present. We

pray for those giving birth who cannot share their joy by being with loved ones and who must recover in those early days with little help. Protect them, Lord, from depression and be their present help.

We pray for our leaders. Grant them wisdom. Grant them unity. We pray for the most vulnerable among us – those on the frontlines, those facing abuse behind closed doors, the homeless, the mentally fragile, the medically fragile, the spiritually fragile. We ask that You deepen our faith – Lord, help our unbelief!

Fortify our hearts for the week to come when the isolation begins to fray us, when finances begin to fail, when the division of our country rises again to the headlines, when we need You most. Show us the path through this pandemic. We are free in Christ. Show us how to exercise that freedom even now in the name of Jesus. We pray with expectancy because we know You reign and that You will work all this together for good for those who love You because of Jesus, in whose name we pray, Amen

April 14, 2020

Father God,

As this drags on, we turn our faces to you and ask that Your face does, indeed, shine upon us. Have mercy on us, Lord.

Some of us have adapted to this trial but others of us wear thin. Some of us ride out the pandemic in relative ease but others of us are stretched to capacity. As we await the turning of this viral tide, we seek You anew. Hear the cry of our hearts, not just for deliverance from disease but also deliverance from selfishness, idolatry, a busy-ness that robs us of purpose, and anemic love for You.

Do not waste this trial in our lives but use it to refine us and to renew our hearts. Sustain those who struggle and for those at ease, push us to new depths of love and relationship with Jesus. We pray for those who mourn and for the funeral home staffs stretched beyond their limits that they would still see individuals before them and not just another bereaved. We pray for wisdom and protection for law enforcement as patience wears thin and financial strains push some to extreme acts. We pray for protection and endurance for rescue and ambulance personnel responding to crises in their communities.

We pray for our country and for our world that we would pull together and not raise voices of blame and condemnation but of hope, innovation, and love, in the name of Jesus, Amen

April 15, 2020

Father God,

Sometimes words fail us, but You never do. Reality is pressing in as death tolls climb, as leaders begin to talk in terms of the “next year” rather than the next week, as politicians wag accusing fingers, and as China faces a resurgence. We are weary. We are settling into separation.

As the pandemic grows our worlds shrink and our hopes for a quick release fizzle. How do we now live? We dare not find the direction for our daily lives from the daily briefing. Yes, we want to abide by the new rules, but they don’t begin to cover the breadth and depth of what our souls need to survive. So, we turn to You.

When we are tired of our own words and are tempted to stop praying, show us how to be silent but still come into Your presence. When we are tempted to escape more and more into binging on entertainment or food or hobbies, show us, instead, what it looks like to love You and

love our neighbor from the confines of social distancing. When we are tempted to fear or depression or rage or despair, show us Yourself and allow us to experience Your presence anew.

When the dreams we had for this year or for our lives need to be reset, be gentle with us and provide us with a greater vision. Help us see the greater story and our part in it. Keep us from the temptation of resenting China, of seeking to ease our weariness with blame, of allowing our love to grow cold.

Jesus, You know the path through this viral storm. Help us find You and follow You through this so that our souls not only survive but thrive and so that others see You, not just through the faces we show the world but even when we reveal our lowest moments, even then, they see You there. This is a new walk of faith, Lord, and we need You, oh how we need You, but You are with us and will never forsake us. We trust that even now we are more than conquerors in Jesus' name, Amen.

April 16, 2020

Father God, today we will seek you more than we seek information, escape, or relief. We will thank you for every sign of life, beauty, and hope. We will seek You in Your Word and through creation. We will worship You at every opportunity even through sighs or tears. Teach us to lean on You in new ways. We pray for the restlessness rumbling through our country that it will not result in violence or deeper division. You reign in our hearts. We love You and enjoy Your presence even in this storm. In Jesus' name, Amen

April 17, 2020

Father God,

You see the other side of this pandemic and for that, we are grateful. We would ask to see the future but if we'd been able to glimpse it in December, some of us may not have had the courage to step into this year and yet, we are here and You are with us.

We pray for all our spiritual leaders as they look for new ways to lead, to teach, to comfort, and exhort in this time. Strengthen them and keep them from fear. We pray for wisdom as we sort through the lives we had, the lives we live during trial, and the lives that emerge. Show us clearly what should go, what should remain, and what we lack that we should acquire now from You to be Your ambassadors now and in the now to come.

For all those who are just now considering that death comes to us all, we pray that in their seeking they would find Jesus, the door to eternal life, the shepherd who chases after the lost sheep, the King who came down and gave up His life for us. Make us alert to opportunities to testify to the truth we know and quicken our hearts in the moments of fear, doubt, anger, and confusion. How grateful we are for Your presence, Your comfort, Your promises, Your Son Jesus, in whose name we pray, Amen.

April 18, 2020

Father God, today we pray for the children, youth, and young adults living through this pandemic. This will impact their view of the world and perhaps of You. Bring truth into each of their lives. Bring calm into the tiniest heart. Protect them from any plan of the enemy to rob this generation of hope. Help us all place our hope, not in the future of our imaginations, but in a

future designed by You lived in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' Name we pray, Amen.

April 19, 2020

Father God, if Your Joy is our strength, and it is, let it spread to us and through us today. Encourage those who lead and preach and increase their faith that Your Word will not return void. Let those who worship alone in homes hostile to faith and truth feel Your presence, protect them from doubt and let their faith soften the hearts of the scoffers in their lives. Provide for all who call upon Your name what we need today and hold back our country from violence so that as we work through solutions, we remain united and safe. We cry out to You because You are all we need, in Jesus' name, Amen.

April 20, 2020

Father God,

You are truth and light. We're entering a phase in our country of restlessness, fear, and accusation. Deception is on the rise. The corrupt and selfish capitalize on this moment to push darker agendas. Thieves prey on the vulnerable and naïve. Rumors fly. Compassion wanes. And people suffer physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Father, flood us with Your light. Let truth rain down and settle the fires set by wagging tongues and dark souls. May Your people be more attune to the headlines of Your Word and the eternal truth of Jesus than they are to passing lies and news that will be buried in the morning. The enemy likes to focus our attention where he desires so he can operate his sleight of hand

while we are distracted by smoke and mirrors. Direct our eyes to You, Lord. Rule in us beyond COVID19, beyond the politics and the graphs and the numbers and the news.

Show us where You are at work even amid a pandemic and lead us there to walk in Your light and to speak Your truth. Let our minds and spirits be guided by truth alone and may deception recede back into its dark hole. Protect the weak and gullible. Make us wise and keep our eyes open to what You're doing, where You're leading, and what You're saying even now. You are the great Shepherd and we listen for Your voice. Help us to hear it above the roar of lies, in Jesus' name. Amen.

April 21, 2020

Father God,

What are we without commerce, without gathering, without sports and entertainment and haircuts and distractions? What are we when we are left to ourselves and to the bare bones of our lives? Strengthen us to face this mirror. Protect us from the attempts of the enemy to use it to lead us to harm. Guide us through it to a greater understanding of what is valuable in our lives, who we are when we are alone, and all that You dream for us that we may have been missing by running after other things.

Let this time not be in vain or go to waste but help us bring it to You. Reveal the idolatry and the superficial living that was blinding us to Your powerful creative story and engage us anew in exploring the mystery of who You are and the wonder we become in relationship with Jesus Christ in whose name we pray, Amen.

April 22, 2020

Father God,

This morning we pray, not for ourselves, but for children for whom school was their joy, their safe place, the only situation where they encountered adults who looked out for them. For these littles, we ask Your protection and provision. Send neighbors who look out and who care enough to alert authorities about signs of abuse or neglect. Send extended family who fill in the gaps to help with schoolwork, technology, food, respite from arguing, and even some fun.

For the teens living inside homes marked by trauma or complete apathy or worse, trying to hold out hope but feeling so alone, we pray that You would be their hope and that You would send them wise helpers through the Internet and protect them from those who prey.

For social workers, state workers, counselors, pastors, neighbors, family, friends, we pray for eyes that see, ears that hear, and wisdom to act when action is needed. We pray for all those who work with families who live on the edge emotionally, spiritually, and economically - for stamina, strength, creativity, and perseverance. May those who do outreach to children and teens through social media or websites be empowered to reach more than ever before and we ask that their sites rise in the rankings so that when children and teens seek help online, it is Your people they find first.

Lord, You are greater than we have acknowledged with our small lives. Give us faith and belief to match Your greatness and let us not pray small prayers but prayers that honor You as Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and the God of all Love, Mercy, Justice, and Truth, willing to do more than we can even imagine in the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

April 23, 2020

Father God,

Today we pray for those who mourn without the distractions of activity and social events, without close comfort from loved ones, without the inspiration of corporate worship. Be present for them in grief and show us how to be present for them, too.

We also pray for those welcoming new life into the world without the presence and support of family, without the joy of visits from grandparents and friends, and with the fear of bringing a little one into a pandemic. Protect these parents from depression, strengthen them to adjust to new babies on their own, and encourage them that Your plan for their newborn factored in the times into which they would enter the world.

Father, from birth to death, our lives are in Your hands. Deepen our faith through this trial, in Jesus' name, Amen.

April 24, 2020

Father God,

For everyone facing this time without calling on Your name, we pray. Help them find You through the fear, through the anxiety, and even through false security based on bank accounts or status. Break through to them so they can move forward in the strength of Christ.

For everyone facing financial devastation, loss of business, of dreams, of livelihoods, of savings, we pray for provision, the experience of the generosity of those who do have, and enough hope to hold on to the other side.

We sorely miss one another during this time of social distancing but Father let us be unafraid of being alone with You. Help us not to miss this opportunity to shut out all the noise -

the briefings, the screens, the Zooms, the facetimes, the talking heads - and pull away to experience the power and provision that can only be found in Your Word, through prayer, and in relationship with Jesus Christ. Today, we listen for that still small voice to quiet the storms raging within us, in the name of Jesus Christ, we pray, Amen.

April 25, 2020

Father God,

This is the day You have made. We will rejoice in You, and that will be our strength. Teach us how to find You and worship You under duress, separated from one another, and facing an uncertain future. Where is our joy in this time? In quietness, in loved ones, in nature, in every free breath we take without the aid of machines. Teach us to appreciate what we have taken for granted and let our gratitude for all we have in You inform our joy. In Jesus' name, Amen.

April 26, 2020

Father God,

We come before You this weekend to worship You from our isolation and seek Your mercy and grace in these times. We bring You our anxiety about the future and about our ability to endure the changes sure to come. Our peace is in Jesus.

We bring You our fears - of loss, of separation, of suffering, of death. Our courage is in Christ.

We bring You our grief - receive our lament in Jesus' name. We bring You our temptation to doubt Your plan, Your presence, Your goodness. Increase our faith in Your Son.

We bring You our anger, frustration, disappointment, and pain. Receive us as we are in Christ and transform us. In our anger, keep us from sin.

We bring our confession of sins, of false idols, of weaknesses, and failings. Our salvation is in Christ alone, make us more like Him.

We bring You those we love, our family, our neighbors, our friends, the strangers in our midst, and ourselves and ask for protection and an end to this virus.

We bring You our need and ask for provision. We bring You our leaders and ask for wisdom to prevail. We bring You our hearts and ask for greater love for You, for our community, for the world. We seek Your mercy.

We bring You this moment in our lives and ask that You use it for our good and for Your glory. Teach us to worship, to trust, and to lean on You anew and let us shine like stars with the light of Christ to this whole generation that they may know Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

We ask to more than survive - we ask to thrive because of Your greatness in our midst and Your steadfast love. In Jesus, we are more than overcomers. In His Name we pray, Amen.

April 27, 2020

Father God,

On another Monday that all of us awake to some version of social distancing, we are grateful that You do not hear us because of our many words because we have few. We are grateful that the Holy Spirit groans to You on our behalf and that You know what we need even better than we do because we are at a loss.

We are so thankful that Jesus intercedes for us before Your throne because we are keenly aware of how far we fall short of Your call on our lives. How deeply grateful we are that You are merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in love because we need You, more than ever we are aware that we need You.

For all we need, for understanding, provision, wisdom, kindness, stamina, love, and more we look to You today and know that we will receive all this, generously and without reproach, because of Jesus, in whose name we pray, Amen.

April 28, 2020

Father God,

Today we remember there is a greater story being told through our lives than is spoken by this pandemic. We are more than overcomers. We are the redeemed. We are loved, we are known to You. In Christ we are eternal, and we are filled with Your Holy Spirit.

Let our prayers be about Your work, Your plan, Your agenda. We urge You, Father, to come against everything that defies Your plan for our lives and deliver us from all evil. Help us not be like the false prophets of old who "healed the wound of my people lightly, saying 'Peace, peace,' where there is no peace." Enlarge our faith and our vision to include healing, not just from this pandemic but also from the sin that plagues our planet.

Free the truth of Your gospel to spread amongst us like cleansing fire, like fire that fights fire, like holy fire on the altars of our lives. Start with Your church. Lead us to true repentance and revival. But, let this repentance and revival move beyond our known borders and expand them to include many who don't know You even today.

You are still on Your throne and Your work continues in us and through us no matter what lesser story threatens to rule the hour or the day. Keep our eyes on You, Lord, and give us eyes that see You and ears that hear as we work out our salvation even now in Jesus' name, Amen.

April 29, 2020

Father God,

Today we rejoice in Your unchanging nature. You are good, You are powerful, You are merciful and wise. And yet, You don't remove Yourself from us when we struggle nor do You reject us in our moments of sorrow or weakness. Rather You are our refuge and strength, a very present help in times of trouble for all who call on Your name.

And so today, as spring awakens, as the sun shines, and as some states begin to reopen, we pray for those who mourn, that You would comfort them especially when it feels as if the world is moving on.

We pray for health care workers, first responders, business owners, clergy, teenagers, young adults, and lonely seniors sinking into depression, feeling an isolation that is internal, standing on the edge of life wondering if they should end theirs. You are not a God who stands removed. You are there with them standing on the edge and we pray that they would sense Your presence, that they would draw strength from Your life, that they would cry out to You in their despair and find just enough strength to take one step back from the edge and tell someone they need help.

Open our eyes to our loved ones, our neighbors, and those who serve our communities sacrificially during these times and help us know how to reach out in meaningful ways, how to

intervene when someone despairs, how to be present with others in sorrow, and how to interject hope into personal darkness in ways that aren't judgmental, condescending or ineffective. Show us how to love one another in this time of coronavirus. You are infinitely creative, and we are made in Your image. Show us how to create a path forward and not leave anyone behind. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

April 30, 2020

Father God,

We need You, Lord, we need You. Every hour, we need You. As You work all things, including this time, together for good for those who love You, fortify our hearts, increase our faith, deepen our trust in You, and broaden our understanding of what our lives are about. We know our greatest problem is not that our lives are insignificant, it is that our significance is hidden from us. Give us eyes to see what You see and courage to respond as You do. Our times are in Your hands. Lead us through in Jesus' name, Amen.

May 1, 2020

Father God,

Today is another hard one. We trust You are active and working on our behalf, but watching all the events of summer called off, thinking of all the families coping with cancelled trips or weddings, and hearing the rising anger and protests is unsettling our spirits. There is much in our culture that needed to change - so much we had idolized above You. We confess this is true but living through cultural upheaval, deaths by illness, deaths by suicide, failed businesses, and permanently altered traditions is not easy.

We have moments of joyful faith and moments of pressing gloom. We cry out to You. We lean on the eternal truth of Your Word. We seek Your presence. We call on Jesus' name. We ask that You fill us with Your Holy Spirit so we can bear up. Lord, come against the evil one as He comes against Your work in us and through us. Keep our nation from destructive division, heal our sick, send immediate help to those who despair, soothe the hearts of families with altered celebrations and altered mourning, and give us generous helpings of hope, wisdom, and creativity. In Jesus' name, Amen.

May 2, 2020

Father God,

We sure are tired here.

Tired of separation, of sickness, of our own worrisome thoughts, of daily briefings and take out, of working so hard with small relief, of talking heads, of waiting, of money woes and timelines, of our own prayers.

We remember your warning to Jeremiah that if he wearied so easily racing with men, how would he run with horses? Increase the stamina of our faith that we can run the race and prevail against this stubborn trial. Deepen our desire for You, our hunger for righteousness, our thirst for Living Water. Now that we've exhausted Netflix and Zoom and other distractions, turn our focus to Your Word, to prayer, to true repentance, and to transformative worship. We look to You with weary but expectant hearts in Jesus' name, Amen.

May 3, 2020

Father God,

When we rose from sleep, You were already dressed, wrapped in light, and exercising Your awesome powers to go before us, travel with us and have our backs all at once.

To the One who stands outside of time. To the Beginning and the End. To the Author of Life who has the final and authoritative word on our stories that will continue into eternity because of Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection, thank You for who You are! You make every moment an adventure. You are our portion and our inheritance. You are our lives and we are richly blessed. May we be found in You today and every day and may Your kingdom come - Your will be done in us, in Jesus' name, Amen.

May 4, 2020

Father God,

You are not just the God of past generations, but You are also the God of the generation on the rise.

Today we pray for those graduating from college and from high school during this monumental global event. At a time when they should feel accomplished and hopeful, their process has been disrupted and they are receiving less than hopeful messages about the future. Turn their hearts to You. Let this be the opportunity the next generation needs to know right out of the gate that You are all they need, that You are their hope, that Yours is the voice they can trust, and that You hold their futures in Your hands.

Give them creative ideas and opportunities not one of us who has gone before has imagined. As society reinvents itself, help them hold on, to know who they are based on Your

idea of them, and to embrace life even as the headlines are full of death. Prepare them for a future like nothing their parents have experienced and grant them pioneering hearts, inventive minds, and enduring spirits. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

May 5, 2020

Father God,

Today we will inhale spring like a hit of pure oxygen and let it remind our souls that "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning" (Lam. 3:22-23a). Great is Your faithfulness!

We lift to You today all those enduring this pandemic who have limited, clouded, or no understanding about why we're distancing. The very young, those who have special needs, or those with dementia may be spared an understanding of the facts but they still experience the separation and the loss of "normal." Speak to their hearts, calm their spirits, be near to them in the way only You can.

We pray for special grace for their caregivers - for strength, stamina, patience, joy, and respite. Give them words for their charges and the will to repeat them often. For parents who are suffering from the strain of being everything for their young ones, we also pray for respite, for grace, and for renewed strength and a strong creative inspiration in managing their children and their own needs. As we endure what we see as a life-altering interruption in our lives, remind us that most of the incredible moments we read in the gospels of Jesus' life happened when He was "interrupted." Keep us hopeful in You, in Jesus' name, Amen.

May 6, 2020

Father God,

Today we praise You that while this is our first pandemic, it isn't Your first-time leading people through one. Help us to properly order our fears so that we are focused on You. We are fools when fear reigns and we pray, instead, to have the wisdom of people who fear You alone.

It's clear now that our entire year will be impacted by this disease and the decisions made around it. We are sobered by this thought. You know our lives are but a whisper and that one year is to us a lifetime. But we know that You are the One who redeems.

You are the One who restores the years the locusts have eaten (and the coronavirus, murder hornets, tornadoes, and hurricanes). You are the God of Ancient Days, of this moment right now, and of tomorrow.

Refresh our perspective on this year which will be what we did not anticipate it being. Renew our hope that Your ways are still at work in us and through us. Show us where You are at work and help us to bring our hearts to that place where You are.

We can bear anything if we know You are present with us. Restore our vision for our lives in a year that will not be what we imagined. Show us something greater than our imaginations could devise. Show us Yourself and Your power and Your mercy and Your peace reigning over a year in which our enemy sought to destroy us with tribulation. Show us ourselves as more than conquerors in Jesus Christ. Fill us with renewed hope, deeper love for You and for others, and unexpected joy in the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

May 7, 2020

Father God,

You are the living Word and so we come to You for words that are meaningful and authentic in an unprecedented time. Teach us to pray through a pandemic and let our prayers be in response, not as much to the headlines, as to You - revealed in Your Word.

There is so much anger, discord, deception, disagreement, sorrow, fear, and despair. These are the waters in which we swim and yet, we hear Your call to be set apart, to be holy, to be different, to trust You in every storm. As we run out of distractions, as we weary of entertainments, as we reach the end of ourselves and our coping strategies, lead us to You and a deeper experience of what it means to be in relationship with the Living God.

You promise to be with us through fire and flood. Show us where You are through pandemic, financial disaster, and social disruption. We don't feel like light in every moment - we flicker like candles. Rekindle Your holy fire in our hearts and let us be living sacrifices on the altar of worship so that our lights rage like bonfires in the darkness of our times and draw others to You. You are a consuming fire, Lord. Burn off all that we don't need, all that has been holding us back - holding us down, and show us who we are as You intended us to be in redemptive relationship to the One, Jesus, in whose name, we pray, Amen.

May 8, 2020

Father God,

Today we praise You that You made us in Your image - creative, inventive, pioneering, and full of hope. We praise you for problems to solve, mysteries to explore, ideas to express, and

connections to make through faith, through science, through industry, through technology and the arts. May all our labor in these fields serve You and not become our idols.

Revive our hope in our future even though it may not appear on the horizon looking the way we had wished. You are the greatest adventure, the most amazing pursuit, and so we have faith that walking with You into an uncertain future is more desirable than walking without You into a future of our own design. This future will stretch us, fuel our inventiveness, and release our creativity. Our present trials prepare us for the challenges of tomorrow. We walk forward with You by the power of the Holy Spirit in Jesus' name, Amen.

The message of the gospel is this: We are not okay. God created a good world and humans were the pinnacle of that creation. But, we chose sin over His way. We fell and took the world with us. The evil, the diseases, the violence, the futile suffering are symptoms of this fallen state. This pandemic will pass, but we are NOT okay.

Still, we are not without hope. God didn't abandon us to sin. He sent His Son, Jesus, to live a sinless life and pay the price -through death on the cross - for our sin. He rose again and is the only true living God.

By acknowledging our inability to save ourselves and by trusting in Jesus' sacrifice as our salvation, we receive eternal life and are free to live as we were designed to live in fellowship with God.

We should not live in fear of these passing trials, but we should fear missing out on this plan of salvation. We should fear worship without wonder, religion without loving-living sacrifice, repentance without transformation, preaching without power, and assurances without challenging, biblical truth.

Jesus followers must represent Him fully so that in seeing Him, others are drawn to repentance, to redemption, and to complete restoration. Jesus doesn't enter our lives as an enhancement - He steps through the doorway of our souls and commences a complete renovation. It isn't painless, it's powerful, and it's the only path to freedom. The world is plummeting toward greater labor pains as God's plan comes to fruition. We are not okay, but He receives all who come in Jesus' name.

“Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, ‘Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.’ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.” Hebrews 10:35-39 ESV