

**Prayers of approach and confession** (from the URC Prayer handbook, adapted)

Dearest God,  
transform us, that we may love generously.  
It is by your love that you call us together as your people,  
and invite us to bear your grace in all we do.

Dearest God,  
transform us, that we may see your grace.  
It is by your grace that you call us together as your people,  
to share your word with those we meet.

Dearest God,  
transform us, that we may understand your word,  
and play our part in the body of Christ.  
It is by your word  
that you call us together, gathered to worship,  
and sent out to serve as Christ served.

Dearest God,  
sometimes we are like the disciples who tried to protect you,  
forgetting that your coming had a specific purpose.  
Sometimes we disregard the challenges of your work,  
and look for the easy path - the path of least resistance.  
We act like a people eager to save our lives and the life of the Church,  
yet, oftentimes, we deny our own cross and relegate your cross to the wall.  
Help us to face the reality that Christian living is challenging.  
Forgive us when we use our freedoms as stumbling blocks to your purposes:  
when we think only of what concerns ourselves rather than the good of all,  
and when we neglect those things which concern you, God.

Dearest God,  
we ask that you forgive what we have got wrong and refresh us in our discipleship as  
we seek to love You and love others in the way that Jesus taught us.

Hear now the Good News: that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.  
To all who truly repent He says: 'Your sins are forgiven'.  
He also says; 'Take up your cross and follow me.'

Thanks be to God,  
Amen.

**Prayers of intercession** (David Clowes, adapted)

Let us pray for those who build their lives on the things they can see,  
hear, touch or prove:

for those who demand proof before they will believe

for those who fail to comprehend that though love, compassion and forgiveness,  
like God's presence, cannot be proved, it is the evidence of them that really matters.  
May the holy God hold them, love them, guide them still.

The Lord hears our prayer.

***Thanks be to God.***

Let us pray for those who, because of their treatment by others  
find it hard to trust anyone ever again:

for those who are broken and damaged by the spiteful words and deeds of others  
and for those who have spent their days not knowing who they are or if they really  
matter;

for those who feel desperately alone and vulnerable

especially those anxious about their health if they venture outdoors now.

May the holy God touch them, hold them and listen to them still.

The Lord hears our prayer.

***Thanks be to God.***

Let us pray for those overwhelmed by superstition and fake news.

for those who place their hopes in their possessions and power

and for those who seek to further their own lives by dominating the lives of others.

May the holy God challenge and change and hold them still.

The Lord hears our prayer.

***Thanks be to God.***

Let us pray for those who feel unloved and uncared for by the rich nations, especially  
those who face famine or the devastating effects of war.

May the holy God shake the world community to love and to care.

The Lord hears our prayer.

***Thanks be to God.***

Let us pray for any we know to be in special need:

those who need to feel deeply loved right now

for anyone facing serious illness

and for any who are troubled for themselves

or for those they love.

May the holy God comfort, encourage, bless and hold them still.

The Lord hears our prayer.

***Thanks be to God.***

Let us pray for ourselves and for our church,  
offering up all we must face and all we must do this week.  
Let us ask that the God whose holiness shook the mountains will hold us when the  
foundations of our lives are shaken and hurting.  
May the holy God heal us, strengthen us, hold us still and guide us in the way of  
genuine love.

We ask these prayers in the precious name of Jesus, who taught us to pray together:

Our Father.....