

A Gathering for Prayer on Good Friday, 2020

Undertaken as a Telephone Conference Call

Hosted by the North Coventry Group of United Reformed Churches

Revd Debbie Brown; Revd Bill Young

In preparation for these prayers, requests and concerns were sought earlier today by email. In our prayers we have sought to cover all of the topics and people who have been mentioned, including some individuals, and in some cases the words come directly from the emails.

I should say thank you to all those who have been praying for Debbie and Clive, Erica and myself in recent days and weeks. It's been a real source of strength.

Debbie

Today we remember that Jesus stood in the darkness experiencing the collapse of life, and the death of God's plan. Only for a short time!

I wonder what does it mean to redeem time?

Well, we can redeem time by setting our priorities right and devoting our precious time to things that matter. Jesus said love God and love one another. As we seek to support and love one another, in whatever ways we can in this present situation, God wants us to lay down our burdens and place them at the foot of the cross; to surrender all our burdens to God.

Let us meditate on Christ's sacrifice *(a short moment of silence)*

Ever-present God,

your Son Jesus Christ knows what it is to feel far from you.

We are sometimes loaded down by the weight of your silence.

So we ask, we pray.

Come alongside us in the darkness and help us to recognise your

presence with us in Jesus' name who taught us when praying to you to say these words together...

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

Bill

In a time of anxiety and frustration for many, danger and stress for those trying to pursue their occupations in the face of real and potentially deadly risks, grief and desolation for those families who have lost loved ones and friends, we turn once again to God in our prayers.

On a day when God's son, having put himself in danger, having refused to avoid or minimise his risks, died on a cross in atonement for all, and when even he seemed to lose sight of God, we put our trust in God and lay our concerns and requests before him.

As we pray, to '*God in your mercy*' please respond with the words '**hear our prayer**'

God, in your mercy... hear our prayer

We pray...

God our heavenly Father, during this time of crisis, of lockdown and self-distancing, shielding and isolation, help us to know that wherever we are, you are too. You have not forsaken us. The God who has searched us and known us all our lives will not desert us now.

We bring our needs and our concerns before you.

So many are suffering, Lord - be with your people – we remember before you all those who are ill. Those who are lonely and anxious, those who have had treatment postponed because of measures taken to manage Covid-19. We pray for strength for those who, if admitted, already know that they will not be priority recipients of ventilators.

Hear our prayers for those who have lost loved ones and who have not been able or allowed to see them in their final days, whose funeral plans have to be pragmatic and involving only small numbers.

God, in your mercy... hear our prayer

We remember before you Maurice Markham who was a minister at Meredith Road Baptist church for many years and who died of the virus a few days ago. We pray for his widow Helen and his family, and the many others whose lives have been so shocked and shattered in a similar way.

We pray for Nora's daughter-in-law's parents Martin and Gill Norton. Martin is currently in New Cross hospital in an induced coma on a ventilator and we are praying for his recovery and for strength and courage for his family through this difficult time.

We remember Tracey, girlfriend of Mark, the son of Jenny Roberts. She was taken ill on Monday with Covid-19 and taken to hospital last night. We praise you she has been discharged to care in her home and pray for further recovery.

And we pray for the family and friends of John, friend of Margaret and Des who has died of the virus. His funeral is on Tuesday and under the current constraints that limit family contact and mutual comfort his family are finding it difficult to cope.

God, in your mercy... hear our prayer

We pray for NHS staff in all disciplines and at all levels, to keep them safe in the face of danger. The people supporting the NHS from both ends of the career journey. The student doctors and nurses swapping the classroom for work on the front line, and the recently retired, returning to the workforce to boost the numbers.

We pray for those who keep us supplied and connected in so many ways, for all who work to keep systems critical to our lives going.

We pray for those seeking longer term solutions, vaccine research, better and more widely available methods for testing, protection and containment. Those who have redirected their businesses' output to help.

We pray for everyone who's on the frontline in every different field of work, voluntary or paid. And we pray that the care and help that's around, and the enthusiasm for helping others, (especially in the community) will continue when our lives return to some normality.

*God, in your mercy... **hear our prayer***

We pray for decision makers in our area, our country and all across the world. May the principles of peace and justice, equality and fairness rule in all of their hearts.

*God, in your mercy... **hear our prayer***

We are grateful for the telephone and technology which allows us to keep in touch with others and to share prayers and worship time together. We pray for those whose circumstances mean that they rely on more traditional means of contact and communication. We pray for those preparing worship materials this special Easter weekend, in such challenging times.

*God, in your mercy... **hear our prayer***

Lord, we pray for ourselves and for all your people. In this country where we are so rarely obliged to live our lives to an onerous set of rules we ask for patience and acceptance of how best to look after ourselves and others.

We remember before you Debbie and Clive, newly arrived in our fellowship and welcome, and pray that even in this time of enforced distancing Debbie may find a way to come to know us, one by one.

*God, in your mercy... **hear our prayer***

...and let our cry come unto you.

In the name of Jesus who share in human suffering to the full, and rose triumphant.

Amen