



Points for Prayer during Thy Kingdom Come 2021

As Christians and churches pray during Thy Kingdom Come, they will be lifting before God people they know – family and friends, colleagues and neighbours – that they would come to know the love of God through faith in Jesus. There are many other ways in which God’s Kingdom comes, as grace and hope, justice and peace are brought to a troubled world. Here are Points for Prayer for the days of Thy Kingdom Come, appropriate to the circumstances and needs of our diocese.

Thursday May 13th Ascension Day Emerging worship

‘While he was blessing them, he left them and taken up into heaven. And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.’ Luke 24:52-3

Today we pray for our churches, that they would know and enjoy the blessing of the risen and ascended Jesus. In particular we pray for our worship as we look forward to the easing of restrictions and new possibilities in the forms and patterns that we use. We pray for prayerfulness and creativity, and that Christ would be at the centre of all of our thinking. May the spiritual longings of those newly connected to church be honoured, as well as the fears and pains of those recently distanced.

Almighty God, whose blessed Son our Saviour Jesus Christ ascended far above all heavens that he might fill all things: Mercifully give us faith to perceive that, according to his promise, he abides with his Church on earth, even to the end of the ages; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

Friday May 14th Recovery and re-engagement

‘Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.’ Psalm 150: 2

We ask God to work in his wisdom, love and power to help recovery and reengagement as we look towards the ending of the pandemic. May our economy be productive and sustainable and provide opportunities for all; may our communities be cohesive, and places where the most vulnerable are protected and nurtured; may our churches discover new ways to honour God as they make Jesus known and show His grace and compassion to all.

Merciful God, we ask that you give our leaders the wisdom to guide our nation and the world out of the current economic and humanitarian crisis. Help us to protect the poor and all who are struggling during this difficult time. Provide for the needs and give them hope, in this country and in many places overseas. Open new opportunities for them and furnish the resources they need to live with dignity. And bless your church we pray, that in these times of change we would be constant in our faith and creative in our witness to your unfailing love.

Saturday May 15th

Peace and the Dioceses of Aru and Boga

'For you Lord have delivered me from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before the Lord in the land of the living,' Psalm 116: 8-9

In our link Dioceses of Aru and Boga churches and communities have suffered greatly over many years through violence and persecution. As we pray for those we know, asking that they would be recognise the goodness of God in their lives, we pray as well for the churches and communities of Aru and Boga Dioceses in Congo, that they would themselves experience this goodness, as God delivers, comforts and sustains them. May God show his love for them through our growing prayerfulness and practical care.

O God, loving parent of all, comfort your children displaced, wounded or orphaned by conflict in Congo; and give the people of that country courage to seek enduring peace with justice and freedom, that their children might grow up without fear, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sunday May 16th The Sunday after Ascension

A diverse Church

'Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love' Psalm 51:1

We are being made increasingly aware of the challenge our church faces in being properly representative of our communities, and welcoming to the diverse people who form them. At this time we acknowledge our wrongdoing and guilt in this, but also trust and receive God's forgiveness and freedom. May we live in a new way in our homes and in our churches, a way of truth and peace, and may we nurture belonging in all of our communities.

Lord God, creator of all, who loves and calls people of every nation, tribe, people and language; we confess to you the distortions and prejudices of our hearts and pray that you would forgive and change us. May our churches be places that reflect your unconditional love and goodness, places of welcome where all can flourish. We pray this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Monday May 17th

Evangelism

'He leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul.' Psalm 23: 2-3

In these days of Thy Kingdom Come we pray for those who have newly connected with church and also for those who have become distanced from church, and perhaps from God, in this difficult time. We pray for them and for all those who have been anxious or dulled, confused or grieving in these days, that they would know Jesus Christ as the Good Shepherd, the one who brings us true peace and refreshment. May churches be humble and bold in making this Jesus known to those around them.

We thank you, Lord, for the gospel – the good news of Jesus, and His life, death, resurrection and ascension. We pray that the message of love, hope, forgiveness and salvation in Him may come to all parts of our diocese in the power of your Spirit. Lord, we ask that many will encounter you for the first time and that others may have a fresh knowledge of your love and grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Tuesday May 18th

Those unjustly imprisoned

'I cry out to God Most High, to God who vindicates me.' Psalm 57:2

We who believe pray in confidence that God will act. We pray that he would act to vindicate those who are imprisoned unjustly, particularly prisoners of conscience or those whose detention serves the political ends of others. We remember particularly Nazanin Zaghari Ratcliffe and others held in captivity at the moment: may they find justice, and soon, and have hope in dark times. We pray that all family and friends and those who campaign for political prisoners would know strength to persevere.

Lord Jesus, you experienced in person torture, imprisonment and death, though you had done no wrong. Be now with all who suffer unjust detention and punishment throughout the world. Be with them in their fear and loneliness: stretch out your hands in power to break their chains. Be merciful to the oppressor and place a new heart within them. Forgive us, we pray for the injustice that we commit, and transform us to be instruments of your peace, for by your wounds we are healed. Amen.

Wednesday May 19th

Climate security and the Diocese of Melanesia

‘God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea.’ Psalm 46: 1 – 2

We lift to God our link diocese in Melanesia as they face the direct effects of the climate emergency. We pray that their voice would be heard and their serious and pressing needs would encourage people across the world to take steps to limit carbon emissions. May we grow in our care for the creation, that we might honour the creator and show love to others, in areas immediately impacted by climate change and in generations to come.

God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight. Enlighten those who possess power and influence that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, and care for this world in which we live. In particular may we care for our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Melanesia, and show our solidarity in our prayers and through our lives. Amen.

Thursday May 20th

Vocations

‘My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.’ Psalm 84: 1 – 4

The reflection attached to the Novena asks that God would use us as letters of invitation. Today we pray that we would all see ourselves in this way, and that we would be attentive to the call of God on our lives. May some be drawn to serve God in new ways, and others find growing confidence in the situation to which they are already called. May God grow the numbers of people seeking training in licensed lay or ordained ministry, and of those called to community roles and workplace witness, that the body of Christ may be built up and that the people of our communities may be increasingly blessed.

Lord of all, you have called each of us to serve you in your world and in your church; strengthen and equip us by your Spirit to recognise your call to us, and give us grace and courage to fulfil that calling. We pray for those to be ordained deacon and priest in June and July, that they would know your peace and your equipping as they begin new ministries. May their service enable stronger proclamation of Christ in word and deed, by the whole people of God. For we ask this through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

Friday May 21st

Children and young people

‘Sing to the Lord a new song’ Psalm 149: 1

We are aware of the many ways in which life has been particularly difficult for children and young people though the pandemic. We pray for those who have struggled with home life, with learning, or with separation from wider family and friends. May they recover quickly and fully, and may our churches be places where love, stability and the good news of Jesus Christ are evident to them. We pray particularly that churches would work persistently to be places that are safe for all.

Lord God, loving Father, we thank you for family life, for the care and guidance that it can provide. We ask that you would go before our children and young people and enable them to flourish, despite this great disruption. May parents, teachers and all committed to them have the energy and creativity they need. May a new generation know and delight in you, for the blessing of our world and the glory of your name. Amen.

Saturday May 22nd

Bishops of the diocese

'Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him; For God is our refuge.' Psalm 62:8

We pray for the diocese as a whole, for Bishop Mark and the two new suffragan bishops as they lead us in these times of disruption and opportunity. Pray that they would be prayerful, faithful to God and his word, and united in the faith and service of Christ.

Almighty God, who sent Jesus Christ to be the cornerstone of your Kingdom and to call us to follow him; guide your church, by the Holy Spirit, to show love and mercy as we honour your loving rule. We pray for those you are calling to be bishops of Birkenhead and Stockport; bless guide and strengthen them as they answer your call; in the name of Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Sunday May 23rd

Pentecost

Enduring worship

'Praise the Lord O my Soul! Lord my God you are very great! You are clothed with splendour and majesty.' Psalm 104:1

We pray for our worship in church and throughout our lives. These past months have required a great deal - resourcefulness, perseverance and patience - from those who have made collective worship possible. We thank God for all that they have enabled us to share. As they have worked, so God's Spirit has worked in them, and in us through them. The Spirit that gave birth to the Church at Pentecost enlivens it today.

Loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, blow your fire of grace and truth through your Church today. May our words, sung and spoken, reflect the splendour and grace of God; may our lives show the Holy Spirit's continuing presence with us; may our unity bear witness to the world-wide call of God; and may our mission be shaped by His redeeming purposes. Amen.