

January Prayers

New Year's Day

Lord we thank you, in the year's dark season, that hope is not lost. We thank you for the rhythm of seasons, for the lengthening of days, for the Sun's course returning from southern skies.

We celebrate the beauty of your creation, and our part within it.

May our celebrations be life-giving, and our prayers reach your heart.

For those who regard themselves as land-owners rather than stewards.

For those who exploit people and planet.

For those whose labour for luxuries robs others of daily bread.

For those whose labour at the soil,

For those who sweat in the factory,

For those who scavenge from waste,

May the earth yield its fruit, in season,

May that fruit be fairly shared,

May your church live and preach the message of Jesus,

Good news for people and planet.

In this dark season, may your light grow,

Bringing life and hope and fairness,

To all who inhabit the world you made.

Encountering God

Lord God, we praise you as the God whose love is active in this world. We ask that in your mercy we might overflow with a love for you that spills out into our world as living proof of your life-giving presence.

Help us to hear your voice in the conversations we have, in the news reports we hear, in the strangers we fear, in the brothers and sisters we dislike.

Help us to see your face in the war-stricken refugee, in the hungry and the homeless, in our close friends, in our worst enemies.

Help us to do your will, even when no-one sees it but you, even when we feel overcome by the world's problems, even when we feel we can make little difference.

And by hearing your voice, seeing your face and seeking your will, make us instruments of praise, whose words and actions and lives become a living example of the forgiving, healing, life-giving love of the risen Christ, in whose name we pray.

Holocaust Memorial

God of love and truth,

As we look back upon the enormous genocides of the twentieth century, we shudder with horror at our capacity for evil, at the human ability to destroy others in the name of justice. But we shudder because history repeats itself, beating the rhythm of genocide through the centuries and even through the back streets our civilised world today. And we ask why such atrocities continue.

When we presume that such evil is the exclusive property of a single nation, or race, or generation, or religion, forgive us our pride and awaken us to the realities of human sin.

When the media allow the reporting of evil atrocities to be eclipsed by fascinating trivia, may the truth be known and the pain be shared.

When governments fail to defend justice because of commercial pressure or diplomatic risk, give them wisdom to perceive and courage to act.

When indifference, ignorance or hopelessness silences the prophetic ministry of your church, pour out your Spirit afresh and revive in us a Christ-like compassion.

God of love and truth, in a world where human hearts are so vulnerable to evil, bring your healing touch in all its fullness, beauty and hope.

Wise Men's Gifts

(By Richard Bowers, to the tune of "Good King Wenceslas")

Bringing gifts from lands afar,
Gifts that tell a story,
Wise men, guided by a star,
Found the prince of glory.
Living not in palace courts,
But in humble dwelling,
Each bestowed a royal gift,
Of his future telling.

Gold, fit for a kingly throne,
Nations would adore him.
Even nations not his own
All would kneel before him.
Frankincense brought from the east,
Scent of adoration.
Offered only for a priest,
He would heal the nations.

Newly from his mother's womb,
Myrrh was laid before him.
Oil for those laid in the tomb,
Such would be his calling.
When the boy became a man,
Kings and Priests were Cru-el,
Crucified the Son of Man,
This is our Immanuel.

Jesus left his throne above,
Came to earth to save us,
Your great gift of human love,
One true gift You gave us.
Help us give our lives to You,
Serving sisters, brothers,
Love of Jesus shining through,
We, your gift to others.