

PRAYERS OF HOPE

IN THE TIME OF COVID-19



FAITH AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

GOD OF LIFE

Heavenly Father,

We come to You as the source and sustaining power of our life and the God of eternal life who overcame death and forever destroyed the stranglehold of fear of death for us. We are surrounded by changed and challenging circumstances which we were unprepared for. The media has bombarded us with frightening images of sickness, suffering and death. We hear rumours and counter-rumours, our children are confused, and the forced changes in our lives have brought with them a grave sense of insecurity and heightened anxiety. The continual uncertainty feeds our fears.

Help us to remember that You are with us. Over and over again, You reassure us that: *“Lo, I am with you always.”* When the waves threaten to overwhelm us, remind us that You are as close as our prayer and that Your love enfolds us, You will never leave us and You are and will be with us through whatever circumstances we face.

Help us find a balanced perspective as we sift through media stories, as we seek new priorities in our life style; as we find ways to deepen our faith and be supportive to those around us who are feeling over-burdened. Help us celebrate that the vast majority of persons who may contract Covid-19 will, in fact, recover well and that life will continue through and past these times.

Thank you that trusted medical sources have provided us with guidelines to simple but effective precautionary measures that will dramatically reduce our risk of infection. Help us to be responsible for ourselves and those around us in following such guidelines, and preserve us from an arrogance that dismisses such advice because it is so simple.

Thank you for heroic front-line workers, availing their professional services as and when needed. We pray for their special protection and for extra blessings on them and their families for their selfless contributions.

Thank you for your constant love and presence throughout the long season of Covid-19 that we have already been through, and the days that still lie ahead. Thank you that we have had the opportunity to come to value the precious gift of life and in so doing, have been able to rediscover ourselves. As we continue to be transformed, help us to embrace kindness and mercy, to find courage and trust, to grow in faith and hope, and to learn to give more freely of ourselves. May your divine love be made more manifest in each one of us each and every day.

To your greater glory,

AMEN



**LIFE IS
A GIFT
OF GOD
THAT WE
HAVE THE
PRIVILEGE
TO SHARE,
PROTECT
AND
CELEBRATE
WITH AND
FOR OUR
BROTHERS
AND
SISTERS.**

GOD OF HOPE

Dearest Father of light in our darkness, of love that casts out fear, and of that glorious hope that comes with knowing you, we ask you to be with us.

Thank you for your continued reassurances that you are always with us and for the guidance to *'Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer'* (Rom 12.12).

May we join in solidarity with one another and our brothers and sisters across the world who are also faced with these new challenges. Keep us ever mindful of our neighbor, especially those for whom lockdown has made them more vulnerable: economically and, for some, physically and emotionally. Grant us the courage we need to move out of our comfort zone and reach out to others who may have special needs and for whom a call, a note, or an offer of practical assistance may serve to reduce their sense of isolation and make a practical difference for them.

Help us also to share accurate information about the virus and ways to protect all against it, dispelling myths and irrational fears. May we be responsible advocates to our peers, families and communities to follow health guidelines to lessen the chances of contracting or transmitting the virus, and may we always offer comforting hope to all those in most need.



Make us ever mindful of children around us who may find it difficult to understand or process what is happening around them, who miss being able to freely interact with their friends, who may be cooped up in homes where tensions are high – help us find ways to show them extra love, find joy and laughter in the mundane and strengthen relationships during this opportune time for greater interaction with them.

Help us to value the elderly amongst us and to make a concerted effort to let them know this, sharing love and affirmation and hope with them.

Above all, may we never hold you hostage to our desired outcomes but trust you for whatever happens. Teach us to *'Trust in the Lord with all your hearts and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will make your paths straight.'* (Proverbs 3: 5) and to remember that *'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble'* (Psalm 46:1).

And may the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

AMEN

**FOR I AM THE GOD WHO HEALS YOU.
EXODUS 15:26**

**BE THE
MESSENGER
OF HOPE
AND
SOLIDARITY
IN YOUR
FAITH
COMMUNITY.**

GOD OF CONNECTION

Dear Lord,

The Psalmist of old declared: *'Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good, His mercy endures forever'* (Psalm 136). Thank you that your word is as relevant today as it was in days gone by.

During this time of isolation, physical distancing and protective separation, help us remember that you are the God of community as well as the God of our deepest self. It is in times like these that the reality of our connectedness has become so much more apparent.

Thank you for the bonds of human kindness, for those strangers who go the extra mile, for the frontline health service providers and for all those who quietly carry on sacrificially and with great compassion. The real heroes and heroines are right in our midst and we pray for your special blessings and protection on each and every one.

Though we may have to practice physical distancing, may we strive to remain socially connected and to utilize each and every social media platform that is availed to us to maintain this connectedness and to strengthen bonds of relationship and friendship and may we search for and reach out to the isolated.

Whilst we may no longer be able to attend normal public church services, help us embrace the

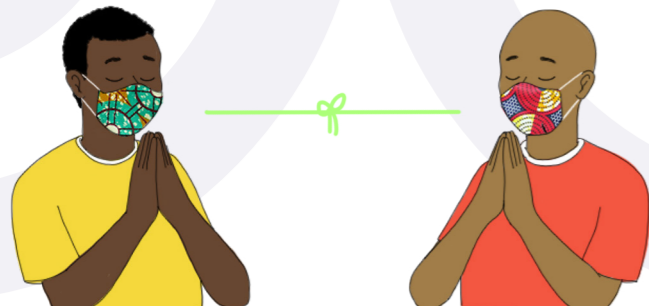
extra-ordinary tools that are available through social media and the internet to beam such services right in our homes and into the homes of others who, for one reason or another, are seldom able to attend church under normal circumstances. Though the structural buildings may be closed, the church is not shut down for the real church is the mystical body of Christ made up of all the various members. Faith, solidarity, and service does not cease, it finds other ways of expression and connection as we continue to reach out, to pray for one another and to support each other and all those in most need.

Help us to remember that as members of the faith community, we are also part of a network of fellow believers that stretches from the lowliest and most isolated communities to the international level and into the halls of global policy makers. May we faithfully use our comparative advantage to speak for those who are unable to raise their voices to ensure there is justice and fairness, equal access to needed services and compassionate support in times of hardships. May our connectedness be strengthened during these times that we may truly seek out opportunities for love – to love our neighbor as our self - making our efforts as practical and life-giving as possible.

In your precious name we ask all these things as we give thanks to you Lord, for your mercy truly endures forever.

AMEN

**WE CAN
BE BOTH
PHYSICALLY
DISTANT
AND
SOCIALY
CONNECTED
– USING
PHONES,
DIGITAL
AND
VIRTUAL
OPTIONS.**



GOD OF ROLE MODELING

Dear Lord,

When we think of role-models, it is easy to focus on the success factor, success as measured by our materialistic society today. You Lord are our divine role-model. You came to share in our humanity that we might find our divinity in you and a loving relationship with God the Father. You showed us what love means in action as over and over again, you demonstrated compassionate care for those around and you commanded us; 'Whatever you do to the least of my brethren that you do unto me.' Most profoundly, you showed us this through your self-offering on the cross.

As you walked this earth, you experienced all that we do and more, going through a life journey touched by all our infirmities, temptations and trials but even more, your road led to immense suffering and death and a resurrection, overcoming death that we might find redemption. There is nothing in life that we face which does not touch the heart of God and you have promised: 'Lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world.'

As we are faced with the challenges of Covid-19, help us as people of faith, to be responsible for ourselves and for those around us as well as the wider community, by responding in the most appropriate way possible. May we be diligent in setting an example in personal hygiene through hand washing, sanitizing and protecting against our sneezes; in physical distancing whilst still maintaining real social connection; and in wearing appropriate protective clothing such as masks when required. Let us do more than the barest minimum as an example to others. May we make the effort to become

well informed and share accurate information, dispel myths and unfounded theories, and encourage one another that this time will pass, how soon and how conclusively depends on all of us. Help us do our part to speak out against domestic and gender based violence that has been exacerbated during this time, and grant us a greater understanding of the challenges experienced by youth and children. Let them experience that they are valued and loved in spite of the circumstances.

May we learn from you, as our role model to reach out in love and compassion, going the extra mile, and always sharing that hope that comes from you.

In your precious Name

AMEN



**LOVE THY
NEIGHBOUR
AS YOURSELF!
PROTECT THE
VULNERABLE
MEMBERS
IN YOUR
COMMUNITY
BY WASHING
YOUR HANDS,
WEARING A
MASK AND
PRACTICING
PHYSICAL
DISTANCING.**

GOD OF ROLE MODELING

Dear Lord,

More than ever, we need trust-worthy role models. Help us recognize the unique gifts we each have to contribute to keeping others safe and to providing encouragement and hope in this time of Covid-19.

The men amongst us have enhanced opportunities to demonstrate a positive masculinity; help them to be protectors of society and role models for families, friends, peers and colleagues.

To women, as mothers, aunts, sisters, colleagues, and often time as the principle care-givers – grant special graces to impart love, care and compassion as well as informed advice and a sound example.

For our youth, the hope of today and of the future – imbue them with wisdom and courage to act co-responsibly and not behave in a cavalier manner that may compromise their own health and safety or that of others.

Our professionals in all walks of life are facing challenges and changes for which life experience and training did not necessarily prepare them. Grant them vision to cope wisely; to encourage colleagues and to positively learn from the experiences to create new ways of working till this time has passed.

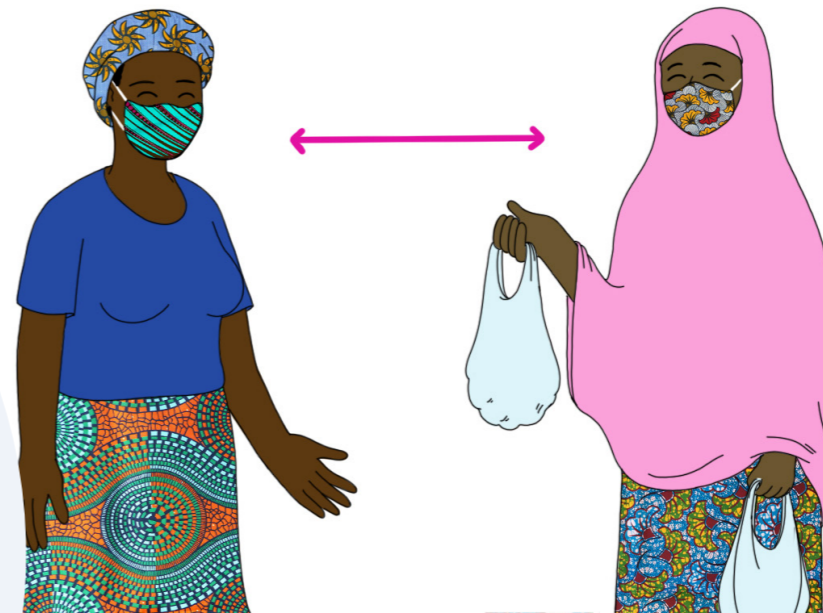
For the multiple service providers, the ‘backroom staff,’ and all those who selflessly put their lives in danger to serve the ill amongst us, bless them all abundantly and cover them with your divine protection.

May our leaders from all walks of life, be motivated by the common good and have the courage to always do what is right in all circumstances.

May we all follow your divine example to love our neighbor as ourselves, even the stranger in our midst, remembering that ‘Whatever we do to the least of our brethren, that we do unto you.’

In your Name

AMEN



**LEAD BY
EXAMPLE!
ENCOURAGE
COMMUNITY
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TO SERVE
AS ROLE
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AND THE
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GOD OF CARING

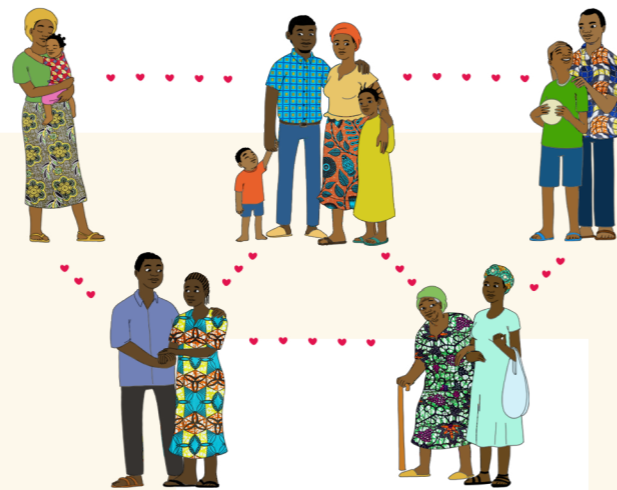
Loving Father,

In Scripture we are told to *'Cast all our anxieties on you because you care for us'* (1 Peter 5:7). We are also told in Psalm 62:8 to *'Trust in you at all times and to pour out our heart before you for God is a refuge for us,'* and *'Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world'* (Matt 28:20). Your care is protective, supportive, empathetic, and reassuring. It is also a care that accompanies us and helps us on our journey.

We are also called to care for one another, *'to love our neighbor as our self.'* Help us as we find ways to do just that during this time of Covid-19.

Help us to be correctly informed about the virus, to be co-responsible, to follow guidelines and to utilize all other means of social connection when physical distancing precludes normal interaction. Through compassionate care, given and received, may all feel Your healing touch.

Our own children have difficulty in understanding and processing the changes, the restrictions on movement and the frightening media images. We pray that your comforting presence may always be with them. Help us



to be present to them, to reassure them, to sensitively hear their fears and frustrations and in reassuring them, help them to discover reasons to be thankful.

Whilst we are not able to worship in the usual way in our churches, may we be a caring, praying people, who render serve in other practical ways to our congregations and our communities. May our collective acts of care and support bear witness to our faith, reach out to our neighbors and become an offering of love to You, our God. As we are encouraged in Philippians 2:4 *'Let each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others,'* help us to make each person's life a little better through our interaction.

In your service

AMEN

YOU WILL KEEP IN PERFECT PEACE THOSE WHOSE MINDS ARE STEADFAST, BECAUSE THEY TRUST IN YOU. TRUST IN THE LORD FOREVER, FOR THE LORD, THE LORD HIMSELF, IS THE ROCK ETERNAL.

ISAIAH 26: 3-4

REACH OUT TO SHOW COMPASSION TO OTHERS DURING TIMES OF LOCKDOWNS AND LIMITATIONS ON MOVEMENT.

GOD OF CELEBRATION

Heavenly Father,

We give You heartfelt thanks for the recovery of so many from this Covid-19 virus. In the midst of all the media portrayals of those precious lives lost, we may forget to celebrate the lives of all those who have survived and recovered and who have regained their place in our communities. Let us not forget that the vast majority of people who contract Covid-19 will recover. We are thankful to You for this.

We continue to lift up in prayer all those who have been more severely affected by the virus and we thank You for the dedication of the health staff, doctors and scientists who are working so hard to mitigate the effects of this virus and to find a more lasting solution.

Life is a precious gift and we cherish our lives and the lives of those who have recovered. May we stand in solidarity with them and actively confront any unnecessary stigma they may face from others who have less understanding of the condition.

At the same time, we pray that those who have recovered will be positive witnesses to the care, compassion and love they have experienced on their journey back to health. May their experiences make them credible advocates for a responsible guided life-style to avoid contracting Covid-19 and let them help others to better understand the necessity for the added hygiene precautions, physical distancing and appropriate protective gear. Let them share their experiences and help dispel many myths associated with such an illness.

As we celebrate life in all its fullness, grant us the humility to appreciate the recovery in nature that we are experiencing all over the world – the clearer waterways, the cleaner air, the restored vegetation and the re-appearance of wildlife, birds and insects which are enjoying the reduction in human interference with the atmosphere and environment. We celebrate restored creation and pray that, as our lives return to familiar patterns, we may be more respectful of our world and of each other. Bring to mind where we are failing, and have failed, and may we be mindful of always making this world a better place because we have been and are nurtured by and through it.

Our loving God of life and joy, we thank You.

AMEN



**LIFE IS A
PRECIOUS
GIFT FROM
GOD. SEIZE
EVERY
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TO CHERISH
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OF THOSE
WHO HAVE
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FROM
COVID-19.**

GOD OF INFLUENCE

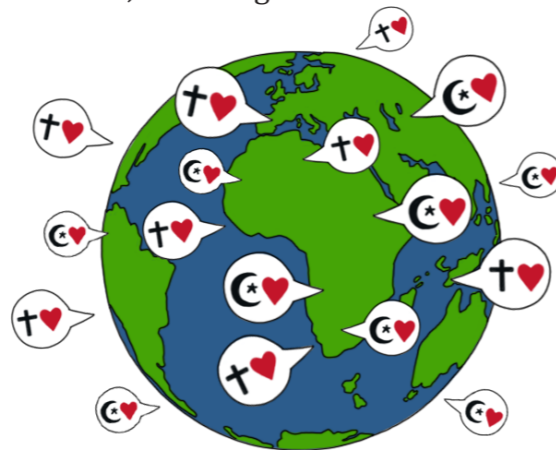
Heavenly Father,

We pray for all leaders, in particular our religious leaders, that they might have commitment, passion and courage, to go the extra mile, show the way and stay the course. May they be recognized by their action, innovation and vision, their personal example and engagement of others and their perseverance in the face of challenges and obstacles. For this pandemic to be halted, in the absence of a cure or preventative vaccine, we recognize that there is need for teamwork, informed leadership and real social mobilization.

Help us play our part to be positive influencers, utilizing all possible networking channels whether through virtual sermons and meetings, through messages on radio or TV, or through social media platforms.

There is much for which we can be thankful and it is the responsibility of us all to share the hope that You alone give us; guide us to do this.

Help us also to encourage and spend times of reflection. This pandemic has forced us to stop in our frenetic tracks; it has resulted in most of us being forced to remain at home to which our children's schooling and our jobs have



re-located; it has impacted our economies and for many people rendered them very vulnerable in numerous ways. It has also made us re-evaluate our relationships and challenged us not to take the other for granted. Thank you for this.

As we look to a time post- Covid-19; let us reflect on how we can play our part in being positive influencer: in providing diaconal care and support; in preserving our environment; in being kinder people one to the other; and in expressing greater gratitude to those around us.

Fill us with your everlasting hope and joy, whatever the circumstances and help us to see and experience the many blessings for which we need to be thankful.

In Your precious Name we ask all these things,

AMEN

THEREFORE MY BELOVED BRETHREN, BE YE STEADFAST, UNMOVABLE, ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD, FORASMUCH AS YE KNOW THAT YOUR LABOR IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD.

I CORINTHIANS 15:58

**MAY HOPE,
TRUTH,
EMPATHY
AND
KINDNESS
REMAIN OUR
STEADFAST
ROCKS.**