

Leading Intercessions: Some Guidance

There is a danger in writing a guidance document such as this: guidelines can become tramlines that our wheels get stuck in. We don't want to stifle your creativity.

- 1 If you feel able, praying in your own words is best. But, if not, there are prayers in Common Worship that you may (a) use by themselves or (b) use with your own additions, especially where you see an ellipsis, the three dots “...”. See pages 2 to 5 below for the CW prayers.
 - 2 The Common Worship set prayers have optional congregation responses after each section, prompted by a “cue phrase” from you. Using these responses, even if you do not use the set prayers, keeps the congregation involved. The two responses in our service booklet are:

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer. and Lord, hear us.
Lord, graciously hear us.

If you choose a response that is not one of these two then please keep it simple and rehearse the congregation with it at the beginning, ie explain it then start your prayers with it. Please **do** use the ending response:

Merciful Father,
accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

- 3 If there is something mentioned in your prayers that needs an explanation, please do that right at the beginning, before you start praying, rather than in the prayers themselves.
 - 4 In leading intercessions you are talking to God on behalf of the congregation and yourself. The only time you should address the congregation, rather than God, is at the beginning, for example when starting with “In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father”, as in our service booklet.
 - 5 Because you are praying on behalf of the congregation, please include the concerns you know they will want to bring before God. Normally the pattern is to pray for (a) the Church, (b) the wider world (c) the local community (d) the sick and (e) those who have died and those who mourn. It is usually a good thing to cover all these topics, but please do not feel constrained by them.
 - 6 The intercessions are for bringing our concerns before God, to tell him of our hopes and fears and to thank him too. They're not a shopping list of demands for God to sort out for us.
 - 7 Look at the readings to be used in the service before writing your prayers, so your prayers complement the day's theme.
 - 8 Don't go on too long! Around 500 words for the whole thing, including all congregational responses, is about average, but it depends on how fast you talk and whether you include silence: silence in prayers can be good. Five minutes is the sort of time to aim at. But please don't be too tied down by numbers, treat this as a rough guide.
 - 9 Remember to speak clearly and fairly slowly, into the microphone if there is one, and speak towards the back of the room, so you can be heard.

Useful links from other churches:

www.fosse deanery.distin.co.uk/faith/intercessions3.pdf
<http://www.stmaryst peter.net/staff/index.php?PID=1194>

Set Prayers in Common Worship

Set Prayers 1

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,
let us pray to the Father.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
you promised through your Son Jesus Christ
to hear us when we pray in faith.

Strengthen *N* our bishop and all your Church in the service of Christ,
that those who confess your name may be united in your truth,
live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

[Response]

Bless and guide Elizabeth our Queen; give wisdom to all in authority;
and direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and of peace;
that we may honour one another, and seek the common good.

[Response]

Give grace to us, our families and friends, and to all our neighbours,
that we may serve Christ in one another, and love as he loves us.

[Response]

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit ...;
give them courage and hope in their troubles;
and bring them the joy of your salvation.

[Response]

Hear us as we remember those who have died in the faith of Christ ...;
according to your promises,
grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.

[Response]

Rejoicing in the fellowship of [*N* and of] all your saints,
we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love.

[Ending response]

Set Prayers 2

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,
let us pray to the Father.

O God, the creator and preserver of all,
we pray for people in every kind of need;
make your ways known on earth,
your saving health among all nations ...

[Response]

We pray for the good estate of the catholic Church;
guide and govern us by your good Spirit,

that all who profess and call themselves Christians
may be led into the way of truth,
and hold the faith in unity of spirit,
in the bond of peace and in righteousness of life ...

[Response]

We commend to your fatherly goodness
all those who are any ways afflicted or distressed,
in mind, body or estate;
comfort and relieve them in their need,
give them patience in their sufferings,
and bring good out of all their afflictions ...

[Response]

We remember those who have gone before us
in the peace of Christ,
and we give you praise for all your faithful ones,
with whom we rejoice in the communion of saints ...

[Response]

All this we ask for Jesus Christ's sake.

Amen.

[Ending response]

Set Prayers 3

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

Almighty and ever-living God, who by thy holy apostle hast taught us to make prayers and supplications, and to give thanks, for all men: we humbly beseech thee most mercifully to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thy divine majesty; beseeching thee to inspire continually the universal Church with the spirit of truth, unity and concord; and grant that all they that do confess thy holy name may agree in the truth of thy holy word, and live in unity and godly love.

[Response]

We beseech thee also to lead all nations in the way of righteousness and peace; and so to direct all kings and rulers, that under them thy people may be godly and quietly governed. And grant unto thy servant Elizabeth our Queen, and to all that are put in authority under her, that they may truly and impartially administer justice, to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of thy true religion and virtue.

[Response]

Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all bishops, priests and deacons, especially to thy servant *N* our bishop, that they may both by their life and doctrine set forth thy true and lively word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy sacraments.

[Response]

Guide and prosper, we pray thee, those who are labouring for the spread of thy gospel among the nations, and enlighten with thy Spirit all places of education and learning; that the whole world may be filled with the knowledge of thy truth.

[Response]

And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace; and specially to this congregation here present, that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear and receive thy holy word, truly serving thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life.

[Response]

And we most humbly beseech thee of thy goodness, O Lord, to comfort and succour all them who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity.

[Response]

And we commend to thy gracious keeping, O Lord, all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear, beseeching thee, according to thy promises, to grant them refreshment, light and peace.

[Response]

And here we give thee most high praise and hearty thanks for all thy saints, who have been the chosen vessels of thy grace, and lights of the world in their several generations; and we pray that, rejoicing in their fellowship and following their good examples, we may be partakers with them of thy heavenly kingdom.

Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only mediator and advocate.

Amen.

[Ending response]

Set Prayers 5 modified

(Note that this form uses a different response)

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,
let us pray to the Father.

For the peace of the whole world,
for the welfare of the Holy Church of God,
and for the unity of all,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For N our bishop,
for the leaders of our sister Churches,
and for all clergy and people,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For Elizabeth our Queen,
for the leaders of the nations,
and for all in authority,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this community,
for every city, town and village,
and for all the people who live within them,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For good weather,
and for abundant harvests for all to share,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who travel by land, air, or water,
for the sick and the suffering,
[for ... ,]
for prisoners and captives,
and for their safety, health and salvation,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For our deliverance from all affliction, strife and need,
and for the absolution of our sins and offences,
let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Remembering [... and]
all who have gone before us in faith,
and in communion with [... and] all the saints,
we commit ourselves, one another,
and our whole life to Christ our God.

Merciful Father,
accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.