

Guidelines for submitting prayers to the 2020 United Reformed Church Prayer handbook

General Information

The 2020 United Reformed Church Prayer Handbook has the theme 'Prayers from the Heart'. As new editors, we are very aware that there are plenty of prayer anthologies available for use in public and private worship. In addition to that bank of resources we would like to encourage writers, many of whom will be skilled at crafting fine words, to pause before putting pen to paper or fingers to keyboard. In that pause we invite you to listen unhurriedly to the readings for a particular Sunday, but also to be attentive to how the readings resonate with your own life experiences, questions, discoveries and hopes. Having listened to both readings and life, then see how the Spirit can use your thoughtfulness and creativity. As editors we shall be delighted to receive finely worked prayers, but we shall be listening out even more keenly for authentic voices.

1. Submitted prayers should relate to one or more of the set lectionary readings (see separate document). Please include the Biblical reference(s) and date your prayer relates to; (e.g. 1 March 2020, First Sunday in Lent, Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Psalm 32; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11). As we publish two prayers for every Sunday, please consider submitting two prayers for the Sundays you choose, using different readings. We encourage you to consider writing one prayer for use in public worship, and the other suitable for personal devotions.
2. Prayers should not exceed 30 lines, each line a maximum of 50 characters (ensuring you include punctuation, spacing, and any desired indentations in the character count). Shorter prayers are welcome.
3. Prayers must not be idiosyncratic and should be suitable for use in a wide variety of settings.
4. Prayers must not be written in rhyme.
5. Please do not submit more than four prayers for consideration.
6. We warmly welcome prayers from children and young people.
7. While your prayer(s) may be prompted by specific needs or issues in the UK and wider world, they should be readily usable by a wide breadth of potential readers, and relevant for use in 2020 and beyond. If you feel it is necessary please include a short information paragraph detailing the specific needs that have prompted your prayer.
8. When submitting prayers, please include your full postal address, your full name and how you would like to be described (e.g. Jane Jones, local preacher, Townton).
9. If we publish your prayer in the Prayer Handbook we will send you one complimentary copy of the 2020 prayer handbook; no fee will be paid.

Copyright

All prayers submitted must be your copyright. They can have been used or published elsewhere, provided you have retained copyright. Unless otherwise agreed, your prayer will become shared copyright with the United Reformed Church. Extracts from the Prayer Handbook may be used on the URC website and in other online media; by submitting a prayer it is assumed you agree to this additional use. If you do not wish to have your prayers used in these ways, please let the editors know.

If you use phrases from another source within your prayer, please indicate that you have done so and give the source, even if it is out of copyright: plagiarism is theft.

Editing the prayers

Please note that it will not be possible to include all prayers submitted in the prayer handbook. Certain seasons – e.g. Easter, Christmas - are expected to attract a higher volume of submissions. Your prayers are more likely to be published if you choose dates outside of these periods. **Please also note that we reserve the right to edit your prayers but the editorial team will liaise with the author to ensure that the author is content with any suggested changes.** You have the option to withdraw your prayer for publication if you do not approve the suggested changes.

Submitting your prayers

Deadline for submissions: 10 December 2018

We would prefer to receive prayers by email to: phb@urc.org.uk with the words 'Submitted prayer' in the subject field.

If posting: Please send to: The editors, The Prayer Handbook, The Communications Department, United Reformed Church House, 86 Tavistock Place, London, WC1H 9RT. Please keep a copy of your prayer for your records; we are unable to return prayers.

If you have any queries, please contact us by emailing email phb@urc.org.uk including the words 'PHB query' in the subject field.

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