

Vocations Sunday 2017

Prayers

Call to worship – Revelation 3:20 (NRSV)

Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me. [read three times: softly, then loudly, then normally]

Prayer of approach

Almighty God who breathed life into creation,
we praise you for the wonder of this day,
for the blessings you give us and your promise to be with us at all times.

As you call us to a life of celebration, meeting and feasting with all,
open our ears and hearts to hear your call.

As you call us to walk away from risk, letting go of our security,
open our ears and hearts to hear your call.

As you challenge us to listen to the voices of those who have nothing to lose,
open our ears and hearts to hear your call.

As you call us to follow Jesus, to take up our cross,
where despair will be transformed by the promise of new life,
open our ears and hearts to hear your call.
Amen

Prayer of confession

Creator of all, you call us into relationship with you and each other,
we recognise our need to confess the things that cause our hearts to be heavy.

When we hear your word and fail to let it speak to us...
When we have listened and yet not heard: **Forgive us Lord.**

When we have ignored the teachings of Jesus and gone our own way...
When we have heard and yet not acted: **Forgive us Lord.**

When we behave as if you are completely beyond us, not standing beside us...
When we act on the prompting of your Spirit but fail to share love: **Forgive us Lord.**

Help us to know your forgiveness and share it with others.
Encourage us to listen, hear, act and share you with all people,
as you call us into your glorious future. **Amen**

Offertory prayer

Accept these gifts, the money, the people and their talents:
may they be used for your glory in this place and out in the world. Amen

Prayers of Intercession I

All are called to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom:

Give us the grace to stand for what we believe in, to be true to you even in the face of adversity, to enter the fold by the gate, recognizing the voice that calls us.

Some are called to suffer in their calling:

We hold before you Christians throughout the world who know what it is to be persecuted for their faith.

We pray for those in politics, the media and financial markets, may they be led to behave and speak in ways that reflect you.

All are called to reach and nurture new believers:

Help us to be the voice of the shepherd to those we meet in our daily lives. We pray for the witness of the whole church especially in places where you are ignored or forgotten.

Some are called to preach and baptise:

We hold before you those who bear the responsibility of church leadership, especially within the United Reformed Church.

We pray for those who are in positions of responsibility at Church House, in our Synods and in the local churches.

We pray for everyone who works for the church and those called to serve as Church Related Community Workers and Ministers of Word and Sacraments.

All are called to respond to human need with loving service:

Help us to respond to those in need, our friends our neighbours, those we do not know and those we find difficult to love.

Some are called to care in a professional capacity:

We hold before you those working in the caring professions.

We pray for doctors, nurses, paramedics and all the staff in the care system.

We pray for those who educate and those who listen, for teachers and counsellors.

We pray for those who have the power to make decisions which will affect the lives of others.

All are called to transform unjust structures of society:

Help us to understand the needs of our communities.

Show us the best way to respond, for your Kingdom to come on earth.

Some are called to speak on behalf of those who don't have a voice, the downtrodden, those on the fringes of society.

We pray for all who work to redress the imbalance between the haves and have not's, for those who raise awareness of need, for those who campaign and advocate for justice. We pray for the United Reformed Churches Commitment for Life programme and all who seek to make the world a better place.

All are called to safeguard the integrity of creation:

Enable us to do as much as we can for the world you have entrusted to us.

May we always be mindful of our duty as stewards of your creation in the way that we live.

Some are called to encourage people to live responsibly:

We pray for all who study and nurture the earth, who protect the environment, whose only goal is to work with nature and not destroy it.
We pray for those who try to act responsibly when they shop, when they recycle and when they travel.

We offer these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, your son, our Shepherd.
Amen

Prayers of Intercession II

Loving God,
On this Vocations Sunday we pray for all those who serve you
in the Church and in the world.

We pray for those who are living out their vocation –
for Ministers, Elders, Lay Preachers,
for teachers, those working in healthcare or the emergency services,
for charity workers, volunteers and support workers,
for all who feel called to help those less fortunate than themselves;

We pray for those who are preparing for their vocation –
for students preparing for Ordained Ministry,
for those studying in Universities, or training for work,
for those returning to study after a break,
for those who have never stopped learning.

We pray for those exploring a vocation or call –
for those candidating for Ministry in the United Reformed Church and other denominations,
for those considering a role such as Eldership, within the local church,
for school children and students choosing their future career,
for those who support, encourage and advise.

Finally, Lord, we pray for ourselves,
recognising that in the Priesthood of All Believers
everyone is called to serve you and the world
in all that we do, not just at church, but in our everyday lives.

Help us to find our vocation,
whether that is a specific role,
or offering support to others, with money, time or prayer,
so that Your Kingdom may be found here on earth
as it is in heaven.

We ask all this in Jesus name.
Amen

Blessing

Go from this place into the world where God is at work,
Be ready to respond to your calling for the sake of the Kingdom,
So that you may rest in green pastures and dwell in the House of the Lord forever. Amen