

***Gathering
And
Closing Prayers***

Spirit of Wisdom

We gather, conscious that the Spirit of Wisdom moves in each of us as it has moved in all people since the beginning of human life, working in and through whom and with what the Spirit has to work.

May we be wise in our sharing, ready to listen, open to learning where new insights and knowledge may take us, drawing on wisdom that stands the test of time, and courageous enough to discard whatever can no longer sustain our faith.

We pray that our gathering may allow the Spirit of Wisdom to be expressed here as graciously and as clearly as is humanly possible.

In Our Midst

God, we open our eyes and strain to see you; we raise our voices in prayer and hope that you will hear our call and heal us.

We know that you are ever with us, yet far too often we seem to be alone.

Our vision is dulled by our stubborn insistence that you come to us as we expect, that you speak to us the words we put on your lips.

Help us now to seek only you, and not the image of you which we have made, to welcome your many surprises and listen to the language you speak.

Shake the scales of blindness from our eyes that we may see you and your healing power and recognize the touch of your hand whenever you are pleased to enter our lives.

Thus may we know and believe that you, our God, are in our midst today and every day, forever and ever.

God of Love

You are a God of love, holy One.
You are our hope and our peace.
We bring you all our needs.
We trust your saving power.
Let your Spirit open our eyes and touch our hearts
that we may know the healing of your presence with us.
We ask this through Jesus our brother.

God of All Life

God of all life, we give you thanks for the signs of your love that surround us;
for sun and warmth and all that comes to life within creation;
for all that sleeps within the earth awaiting birth.
We praise you for the wisdom of your touch: water on the earth, sunlight on
spirits, hands on blinded eyes, continue to touch us.
Reach out to us with compassion and forgiveness, that knowing ourselves to
be loved and graced, we might bring about your Reign.

Gathered Together

Loving God, we meet here today in your name.
You are our wellspring and omega point.
Your spirit binds us together in respect, dignity and service,
gather our community together now and in the future.
Give us the grace to look beyond all divisions,
but while we look to the future let us not forget the past.
Show us the continuity of the past, the present and the future.
Guide us to see the oneness to which all your people belong.
We gather here to extend the thread that binds together the past,
the present and the future.
Help us to do our part in maintaining the continuity of the kingdom.
We are a holy people for all generations.

Hearts and Minds

God, you know our hearts and minds, yet you love us.
So, we come together here - as your people, to praise you for such goodness and thank you for such kindness.
Let your Spirit unite us with all your people, wherever they are.
Open our minds and hearts to you and helps us grow in your Spirit and truth.
We ask this through Jesus our brother.

Every Good Gift

Lord, you provide every good gift and bless us with the overflowing abundance of the earth.
You invite us to enjoy these gifts, but also to be good stewards of them.
Help us today to be generous and compassionate to all who need help.
May we never use our giving or service to others to pretend that we are superior to them, but rather remain humbly aware that we are no less needy in our own ways.

Keep Us O God

Keep us, O God, from all pettiness.
Let us be large in thought, in word, in deed.
Let us be done with fault-finding and leave off all self-seeking.
May we put away all pretense and meet each other face to face, without self-pity and without prejudice.
Grant that we may realize that it is the little things of life that create differences, that in the big things of life we are as one.
And, O God, let us not forget to be kind.

Source: Prayer of Mary Stuart

God of the Hungry

God of the hungry and of the full, God of the poor and of the rich, you have spoken a strong word, a beautiful and terrible word of liberation and salvation, of freedom and unity, to all your children, through Jesus, in the Spirit's power. May your Spirit move us to stop resisting, so that we may really will to live and exercise the freedom you have given us: freedom from our idols and property and plenty, freedom from our worship of a social order in which others starve while we have our fill. Teach us to take our lives and our institutions in hand, making them serve you through serving our neighbors, reshaping them for world-wide sharing. We pray clearly and surely in Jesus' name.

Gracious God

Gracious God, thank you for the gift of today.

Refresh me – invite me – to discover Your Presence in each person that I meet, and every event encountered,

In moments of challenge and decision, attune my heart to the whisperings of your wisdom.

As I undertake ordinary and unnoticed tasks, gift me with simple joy.

When my day goes well, may I rejoice, when it grows difficult, surprise me with new possibilities.

When life is overwhelming, call me to Sabbath moments to restore your peace and harmony.

May my living today reveal your goodness.

New Beginnings

Blessed are you, Creator, God of new beginnings,
for you challenge us to constantly move beyond our pasts
and call us into fresh possibilities for the future.

Blessed are you, Lord of the impossible,
for you never get discouraged and never cease to hope,
believe and strive for a happier, fairer and wiser world.

Blessed are you, God of the covenant,
for you make promises and never break them,
for you trust us to do good and love us when we fail,
and you daily renew our confidence and courage.

God of unconditional love, help us to believe in ourselves
as you believe in us.

Help us to see our potential as you see it.

Constantly provide us with the new opportunities which your
covenant promises, and inspire us with the dreams to
follow new paths of potential growth and goodness.

Joy and Trust

Lord God, as you sent forth your Spirit,
so too you send us forth
as agents of your kingdom.

Clarify your call to us.

Give us courage to do whatever is asked.

May we come to realize the dignity of our unique
vocation and rejoice in its entrustment.

Show us the heart of Mary as we attempt
to emulate her commitment.

Send us forth with joy and trust.

In the Beginning, Wisdom

In the beginning, Wisdom with God, within God eternally.
From the beginning, Wisdom is God.
Through Wisdom all life came to be,
born of light and darkness and rich diversity.
Into the midst of God's world, Wisdom came and mingled among us.
God came, calling us by name.
God came to those ready to receive.
Wisdom made flesh the dwelling place, giving us fullness, grace upon
grace, intuitively living in the hollow space within as in the beginning.

Commitment To Life

To be peaceful and joyful, there is but one commitment to make.

It is to live, one second at a time, as if it is an eternal moment.

It is to make the decision, regardless of the behavior we observe, no matter
where we are, nor whom we are with:

To be a vehicle of God's perfect love,
To be totally accepting and defenseless,
To give all of ourselves away in love.
To give total, maximal and unconditional love to everyone, ourselves
included, excluding no one.

It is to make the commitment with every thought, with every breath, with
every heartbeat:

To be helpful to those in need, who are crying out for help and are suffering
because of lack of love.

It is to make the decision to have the fire of compassion in our hearts, to
love the universe and all that is in it.

It is to make the decision to trust and accept God's boundless love for
ourselves, and thereby become a messenger of God's love.

It is to demonstrate and teach only love, for that is what we are.

Our Gentle Friend

Hear us, we pray, God, our gentle friend.

We have searched for you and seen our own shadow on the ground.

O God, persistent friend, we have need of your compassion, power and wisdom.

Be strong in us. Deepen our commitment.

Be our eternal friend.

In the Presence of a God

Leader: In the presence of a God whose word has called the earth and the stars into being.

ALL: We stand in awe.

Leader: In the presence of a God whose arms have held children.

ALL: We stand in trust.

Leader: In the presence of a God whose breath has stirred within us and caused our hearts to thirst for justice,

ALL: We stand in need.

Leader: Before you, Giver of Life, we come in faith, in search of love and justice and wholeness.

ALL: Be with us, hear us, we pray.

Source: Banquet of Praise #4

God of Our Hope

God of our hope, we give thanks for this day and these people, and for your gospel that gives this day meaning, and provides your people direction.

Stay close to us. Do not pass from our view lest we lose our way, and our heart. Encourage us, root us in you. Make us desire your life in us that our only fear is your absence, and our greatest joy is your love.

Source: More Than Words

Good and Gracious God

We pray to you, our good and gracious God, as a people who cherish the memories that are ours, and who claim a common history as a sacred gift. We ask you to renew your grace in us, that we might recognize your presence in our midst and hear the call of the gospel in the human needs that surround us.

Through the power of your compelling Spirit may we grow in courage, that our actions might reflect the love we profess.

We ask this in the name of your child, Jesus.

Source: More Than Words

Hear Us

Hear us, we pray, God, our gentle friend. We have searched for you and have seen many images of you. O God, persistent friend, we have need of your closeness, your wisdom, your trust. Be strong in us. Bring us to a fullness in you through these prayers we have offered today.

Beloved

Beloved, now is the time to remember. . .

By our seeing the unseen, by our listening to the fullness of silence,
by our merging with the Spirit-presence, we open ourselves to the energies
emanating from on high.

Each of us becomes a lantern which illuminates all with starry light.

Our deepest yearnings wash away the dam of worldly illusion, take root
and begin to flower.

Our heart expands to embrace the God-power, the Spirit-presence, one
radiant Star of Love, floating upon the celestial seas.

Source: The Star Borne by Solara