



Nine Days of Prayer 2017

Conversations in the In-Between

26 May - 3 June



Welcome to the 2017 Pocket Prayers

Some days I find that prayer comes easily. On others, it's a struggle. But I'm always mindful that prayer – the act of meeting with God in conversation, silence, longing - is not just another thing we do. It's the breath that sustains us. The thing that God calls us to before we think or do anything else. It's not a Church of England thing, it's not an Anglican thing, it's a Christian thing.

Prayer is the place where change begins. As the apostles waited and prayed together following Jesus' ascension, so we pray. That same Holy Spirit that enlivened, excited and enriched the disciples on Pentecost is given to us today also. We live in challenging times and sometimes it is hard to know how to pray. Our prayer for these nine days – “Come Holy Spirit: Thy Kingdom Come” - expresses our need and desire for the healing presence of Christ in the ‘in-between’ places where we find ourselves.

These nine days are a dedicated time to prayerfully wait in the ‘in-between’ time from Ascension to Pentecost. In it we choose to align ourselves with the love of God, so that those around us may come to know more of Him. May our waiting and our praying make us more open to receiving the Holy Spirit and more capable of showing the grace of God in all that we are and do.

I invite you to join me and Christians across the globe as we pray together for God to renew us for the transformation of both ourselves and our world.

Archbishop Justin Welby

How to use these Pocket Prayers each day

LOOK at these scenes, and meet the characters caught up in ‘in-between’ moments. Here, past and future meet in the present moment. These situations invite new possibilities for the Word of the Lord to bear fruit.

WAIT prayerfully for the Holy Spirit, who between ‘one thing and another’ can offer a Word that leads to renewal.

Pause to receive, during these nine days, unexpected gifts of grace.

READ the Bible text, and allow the story to spark your imagination.

LISTEN with attentiveness asking God for a word or a picture, a gift of insight that points you and your community towards a greater compassion, a deeper wisdom, a simple insight.

RESPOND to the prompting of the Word; discover the next step of action.

Let the words of the collect gather up and bless both this time, and the next stages of your conversation on the journey with God.



Friday 26 May

Between Generations

LOOK... and be curious.

WAIT... with prayerful expectation.

Come Holy Spirit: Thy Kingdom Come.

READ... the text with an open mind.

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed - and a sword will pierce your own soul too." When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

(Luke 2:33-35, 39-40, 51-52)

LISTEN... for a word with a willing heart.

RESPOND... with prayer and action.

Ageless God
who weaves together the experience of generations,
teach us what it means to increase in wisdom and years
through our encounters with one another and with you;
may we learn what it is
to meet you in old and young alike
and to honour your Son wherever we find him,
Amen.



Saturday 27 May

Between Seeking and Finding

LOOK... and be curious.

WAIT... with prayerful expectation.

Come Holy Spirit: Thy Kingdom Come.

READ... the text with an open mind.

When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi, where are you staying?” He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah”. He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter). The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.” Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.” Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”

(John 1:38-46, abridged)

LISTEN... for a word with a willing heart.

RESPOND... with prayer and action.

Jesus, who spoke words of invitation
to young men still uncertain of their way through the world,
may we hear your voice today -
challenging, welcoming, calling us to abide.
Help us to listen well and respond faithfully,
drawing others with us
into your loving, life-changing Kingdom, Amen.



Sunday 28 May

Between Bystander and Game-Changer

LOOK... and be curious.

WAIT... with prayerful expectation.

Come Holy Spirit: Thy Kingdom Come.

READ... the text with an open mind.

Mordecai told them to reply to Esther, “Do not think that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father’s family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this.” Then Esther said in reply to Mordecai, “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I and my maids will also fast as you do. After that I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish.”

(Esther 4:13-16)

LISTEN... for a word with a willing heart.

RESPOND... with prayer and action.

God of the redeeming moment
of the right people in the right places,
we pray to be attentive to your Spirit
so that we may be agents of your change;
full of steadfast purpose and holy action,
risk-takers in the face of apathy and death,
speakers of truth in the face of silence.
Jesus, grant us courage. Amen.



Monday 29 May

Between Chaos and Courage

LOOK... and be curious.

WAIT... with prayerful expectation.

Come Holy Spirit: Thy Kingdom Come.

READ... the text with an open mind.

As Pharaoh drew near, the Israelites looked back, and there were the Egyptians advancing on them. In great fear the Israelites cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, “Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us, bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, ‘Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians?’ For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.” But Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today; for the Egyptians whom you see today you shall never see again. The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to keep still.”

(Exodus 14:10-14)

LISTEN... for a word with a willing heart.

RESPOND... with prayer and action.

Redeemer God,
when we look back in fear and forward with trembling,
uncertain of what tomorrow will bring to our world;
may we see your deliverance coming to us,
may we keep still and wait for it,
may we trust that a way will be made
for your saving grace and healing love
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Tuesday 30 May

Between Us Two

LOOK... and be curious.

WAIT... with prayerful expectation.

Come Holy Spirit: Thy Kingdom Come.

READ... the text with an open mind.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

(Luke 1:39-45)

LISTEN... for a word with a willing heart.

RESPOND... with prayer and action.

God of ever-changing life,
who knit me together in my mother's womb:
you are with me even when I feel alone,
and you know my thoughts before I speak.
Help me to seek out your marvellous works
in the shadows and in plain view,
and let me leap for joy at their appearing!
Amen.



Wednesday 31 May

Between Breaths

LOOK... and be curious.

WAIT... with prayerful expectation.

Come Holy Spirit: Thy Kingdom Come.

READ... the text with an open mind.

And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

(Genesis 1:30b-2:3)

LISTEN... for a word with a willing heart.

RESPOND... with prayer and action.

God, who in goodness and wonder shaped the world
may we find rest and renewal with you,
preparing in your presence
for all the beautiful and mighty work that is to come,
rising up with you to greet the next day
and work for a new world
with Jesus, your creative Word.
Amen.



Thursday 1 June

Between Sunset and Sunrise

LOOK... and be curious.

WAIT... with prayerful expectation.

Come Holy Spirit: Thy Kingdom Come.

READ... the text with an open mind.

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, though a secret one because of his fear of the Jews, asked Pilate to let him take away the body of Jesus. Pilate gave him permission; so he came and removed his body. Nicodemus, who had at first come to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews. Now there was a garden in the place where he was crucified, and in the garden there was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. And so, because it was the Jewish day of Preparation, and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

(John 19:38-42)

LISTEN... for a word with a willing heart.

RESPOND... with prayer and action.

God of the darkness,
in the time of lament and loss
and at the apparent ending of all dreams,
as we come face to face with the night,
help us to sense the hope of life within the tomb.
We pray in the name of Jesus,
our dying and rising Lord.
Amen.



Friday 2 June

Between Despair and Thanksgiving

LOOK... and be curious.

WAIT... with prayerful expectation.

Come Holy Spirit: Thy Kingdom Come.

READ... the text with an open mind.

Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish, saying, "I called to the Lord out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me. Then I said, 'I am driven away from your sight; how shall I look again upon your holy temple?' The waters closed in over me; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped around my head at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the Pit, O Lord my God. As my life was ebbing away, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple.

(Jonah 2:1-7)

LISTEN... for a word with a willing heart.

RESPOND... with prayer and action.

God of the stormy waters,
who brought hope to Jonah
when he was in despair and far from home;
when we call to you from the depths of our lives
we ask to know your saving help;
bring us safely to new shores
so that we may travel on
with Jesus who is the Way. Amen.



Saturday 3 June

Between Endings and Beginnings

LOOK... and be curious.

WAIT... with prayerful expectation.

Come Holy Spirit: Thy Kingdom Come.

READ... the text with an open mind.

Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.” Elisha said, “Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.” He responded, “You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.” As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended. Elisha kept watching and crying out, “Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” He took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, saying, “Where is the Lord, the God of Elijah?” When he had struck the water, the water was parted to the one side and to the other, and Elisha went over. When the company of prophets who were at Jericho saw him at a distance, they declared, “The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.”

(2 Kings 2:9-15, abridged)

LISTEN... for a word with a willing heart.

RESPOND... with prayer and action.

God, you know that we get so anxious about endings and the whirlwind of loss feels so difficult to us.
Help us to recognize the end from the beginning,
Help us to identify potential new leaders
and to pass on the word of life to a new generation
through honest conversation,
through tears and transformation,
through hope in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Meet the artist



Caleb Simmons is an illustrator based in Canterbury, Kent, working with traditional mediums such as paint, charcoal and ink. The works are honed and finished digitally. Caleb has been capturing movement, depth and story with his illustrations for over 10 years.

He holds an MA in Illustration and a BA in Fine Art from the University of the Creative Arts.

The Novena project has been a unique opportunity for Caleb to produce work that combines his enthusiasm for prayer and storytelling.

www.calebsimmons.co.uk

These pocket prayers are provided to help you pray daily, whenever and wherever you can, between Ascension and Pentecost. You will be joining individuals, groups, schools, churches and deaneries praying together throughout the world.

Pray expecting the Holy Spirit to empower us in new ways; wait for a renewing experience of God's strengthening to us and our Christian communities.

Additional prayer resources can be found at:

www.thykingdomcome.global

www.canterburydiocese.org/novena

With grateful thanks to Caleb Simmons for giving permission to reproduce his paintings.

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