

LENT DEVOTIONAL



Faithful through Lent





Prayers from St. Stephen's & Holy Trinity



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This is our sixth edition of a Lenten devotional composed by our two parish communities. Those from London who have visited New York and those from Holy Trinity who have visited St. Stephens have noticed the many things we have in common. We are diverse congregations, parishes that have loose boundaries around those who are “members” and those who are “friends,” clergy who love to laugh, strong lay leaders who juggle family, work, community, and faith; and finally, both our parishes grew from the vision of strong women: Angela Burdett-Coutts (St. Stephen’s) and Serena Rhineland (Holy Trinity).

Many of us remember praying with one another through the pandemic, unsure how things would unfold, anxious for our loved ones, and grateful for mutual support even through the distance. Today, with political and societal pressures in both countries, we again give thanks for common prayer, common values, and faith in a God who is always making things new.

Let us pray that during this season, as we seek to hear one another’s voices through shared prayers, and hear the Holy Spirit praying within us, our sense of God’s movement in our lives and in our world would be heightened.

As you move through Lent, preparing for a new sense of the Resurrection, we invite you to take some time and create an appropriate space in your homes or work for prayer and reflection. Take a few moments of silence before you read and pray the reflection offered to us by one of our communities. Perhaps you might like to conclude by praying the Prayer of the Week, or another special prayer for Lent. Some of us will be incorporating this devotional into our usual practice of Daily Prayer, folding these thoughts into Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, or Compline.

Thanks to all who have contributed to this booklet, and especially to Jessie Campbell, Parish Administrator at St Stephen with St John, Westminster, who has done most of the assembly and production of this booklet and has (as always) been patient with the clergy she helps so very much.

John Beddingfield
The Church of the Holy Trinity



Graham Buckle
St. Stephen’s, Westminster



Ash Wednesday, March 5

Let us begin our Lenten Journey together with the prayers given by members of our communities for everyday of Lent, by praying the Collect for Ash Wednesday together:

Almighty and everlasting God,
you hate nothing that you have made
and forgive the sins of all those who are penitent:
create and make in us new and contrite hearts
that we, worthily lamenting our sins
and acknowledging our wretchedness,
may receive from you, the God of all mercy,
perfect remission and forgiveness;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.


Revd Graham M Buckle, vicar St Stephen's

Thursday, March 6

Heavenly Father

Thank you for the churches that help
us pray and the priests that bless us
with God's blessings
Please give us love so we can
love other people with that love,

Sorry that Jesus, your son, our saviour, the lord crist,
had to die on the cross to forgive us our sins.
We are grateful for nature and we respect your love of nat.
Amen.

Allegra 

Friday, March 7

Psalm 46

Be still and know that I am God.

Be still and know

Be still.

Be.

NRSV and Erlinda Brent, Parish Secretary

Saturday, March 8

A Prayer for Altruism

Loving God,

We thank You for bringing us together as a school community.

You have shown us through Jesus how to care for one another with love and kindness.

Help us to notice the needs of others—

our friends, classmates, teachers, and those we may not yet know.

Teach us to put others first,

To share what we have,

And to treat everyone with respect and compassion.

When we feel tempted to think only of ourselves,

remind us of Your call to serve,

And give us the courage to act with generosity, even when it's not easy.

May our school be a place where kindness grows,

Where every word and action reflects Your love.

We ask this in the name of Jesus,

Our Teacher and Savior.

Amen

Kate Jefferson, Master of Westminster Under School

First Sunday in Lent

My Lord God,

I have no idea where I am going.

I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end.

nor do I really know myself,

and the fact that I think I am following your will

does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you
does in fact please you.
And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road,
though I may know nothing about it.
Therefore will I trust you always though
I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

"The Merton Prayer" from [Thoughts in Solitude](#)

Revd John Beddingfield, Rector Holy Trinity

Monday, March 10

Ernest Hemingway once said,
"In our darkest moments, we don't need advice."
What we truly need is the power of human connection: a quiet presence, a gentle touch, or the smallest gesture that reminds us we're not alone. These acts of love and solidarity become the anchors that hold us steady when life feels overwhelming.
Pain is a deeply personal burden, and difficulties are uniquely ours to face—but your silent presence tells me I don't have to face them in isolation. It's a quiet reminder that, no matter how lost I feel, I am still worthy of love and connection.
Sometimes, words aren't necessary; your silent support speaks louder than anything else. Love, in its purest form, has the power to help us rediscover ourselves, even when we've forgotten who we are.
Let's remember the importance of simply being there for one another. ❤️

Phil Perkins, PCC member St Stephen's

Tuesday, March 11

To Keep a True Lent
Is this a fast, to keep
The larder lean?
And clean
From fat of veals and sheep?

Is it to quit the dish
Of flesh, yet still
To fill
The platter high with fish ?

Is it to fast an hour,
Or ragg'd to go,
Or show
A downcast look and sour ?

No; 'tis a fast to dole
Thy sheaf of wheat,
And meat,
Unto the hungry soul.

It is to fast from strife,
From old debate
And hate;
To circumcise thy life.

To show a heart grief-rent;
To starve thy sin,
Not bin;
And that's to keep thy Lent.

By poet and priest Robert Herrick

Thomas Kinservik, choir member and parishioner, Holy Trinity

Wednesday, March 12

Most gracious Father,
We pray for your holy Catholic Church:
fill it with all truth
and in all truth with all peace;
where it is corrupt, purge it;
where it is in error, direct it;
where anything is amis reform it;
where it is right, strengthen and confirm it;
where it is in want, furnish it;
where it is divided, heal it

and unite it in your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Revd David Hobden, retired hospital chaplain, St Stephen's

Thursday, March 13

O God of unchangeable power and eternal light, look favorably on your whole Church, that wonderful and sacred mystery, and by the tranquil operation of your perpetual providence carry out the work of our salvation: and let the whole world feel and see that things which were cast down are being raised up and things which had grown old are being made new and that all things are returning to perfection through him from whom they took their origin, even Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer from at least the 8th century used during Holy Week

Submitted by Paul Chernick, secretary of Vestry, Holy Trinity

Friday, March 14

In the times of greatest challenge, there can be so much for us to learn about ourselves, which in turn helps our dynamics and relationships with people around us. When we're presented with the difficulty of someone with whom we don't agree, or we feel is making bad decisions, or even worse, with malign motivation, what does it stir in you? You can hold your faith in your fair beliefs, your values of love and kindness, your ethic of peace for all. We don't need to be knocked over by the strongest surges of emotions, but can instead learn to sway in difficult winds, and still come back to our deeper faith in the goodness, love, and compassion of humankind. We do not need to be swept up into another's envy, fears or greed, even when they push and pull hard and fast, or relentlessly. We can observe them and not condemn, but stay absolutely true to our faith and our roots. One of the best ways is to join in community, in the allegiances of shared value and meaning with other people, borne out of mutual respect, curiosity and joy. Some of those amongst us may make brave stands against those who lead without kindness, some of us may wish we could but instead we are best served by supporting those who do champion the freedoms we hold so dear, the shared humanity and most importantly at these times, empathy for our fellow humans. We all have the potential for so much good, so much positive energy.

We can extend this gratitude for the sanctity of life and love out to all beings, and our broader environments, mindful of the world we live in and share together.

Charlie Smith, Yoga teacher

Saturday, March 15

Keep watch, dear Lord,
with those who work, or watch, or wait this night,
and give your angels charge over those who sleep.
Tend the sick, Lord Christ,
give rest to the weary, bless the dying,
soothe the suffering, pity
The afflicted, shield the joyous,
and all for your love's sake.
Amen.

Prayer attributed to St. Augustine of Hippo, used in Evening Prayer and Compline

Patsy Weille, poet and parishioner, Holy Trinity

Second Sunday in Lent

Almighty and most merciful God,
Who created the heavens and the earth,
And entrusted us with the care of your magnificent creation:
We humbly confess our sins of injustice and neglect.
Grant us Your forgiveness, we ask you,
For our harms to our fellow beings,
And our failure to protect and cherish the world you have given us.
Strengthen us, O Lord, with Your grace,
That we may act justly, love mercy,
And walk humbly with You.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Rev'd Lee Barford, Self-Supporting Deacon, St Stephen's

Monday, March 17

Prone to wander, Lord I feel it.
Prone to leave the Lord I love.
Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it.
Seal it for thy courts above.

From "Come thou font of every blessing"

Liz Poole, parishioner & yoga teacher, Holy Trinity

Tuesday, March 18

Loving God,
Our hearts are cold until warmed by your Holy Spirit,
Our prayers are lifeless until imbued with your holy fire,
Stir us up into prayer and action
That our lives may be filled with your will and your love,
Your reign be brought closer with our souls and bodies,
To your praise and the good of this world.

Amen.

Revd Denise Yeldham, Priest & parishioner, St Stephen's

Wednesday, March 19

The time that has gone with happiness does not come back with grief and nothing the future may bring can wither a day or wipe out an hour in the life that has been lived." — Jens Peter Jacobsen

Andy Achsen, parishioner, Holy Trinity

Thursday, March 20

Dear Lord, we worship you in our music in school :
In hymns and songs of joy: 'Give us joy in our hearts, keep us praising'.
In psalms and chants of thanksgiving: 'Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world'.

And in Rounds and Rhymes of love: 'Father we adore you, Jesus we adore you, Spirit we adore you, Lay our lives before you. How we love you'.
Amen

Derek Carden, Teacher of Music, Burdett-Coutts Primary School

Friday, March 21

Dear Lord, may we stand together with all who are suffering and live in fear.

Alden Prouty, parishioner, Holy Trinity

Saturday, March 22

Dear Father,

You have gifted us all with curiosity and talent. Please help us to develop and utilise them for the benefit of others, as well as for ourselves.

Please help those, who, for whatever reason, are unable to reveal their talents. Those who are stuck in unfulfilling work and as a consequence are denied feelings of fulfilment and wholeness. We pray for those who have been struggling in unsuitable jobs. Those, who now, may have feelings of bleakness, bitterness, or inferiority.

Please help parents and teachers to spot the aptitudes, interests, and talents of the children in their care, ever encouraging them towards their own, individual goals.

Amen

Sally Ricketts, Creative art teacher and Church gardener, St Stephen's

Third Sunday in Lent

A meditation on St. Patrick's Breastplate

In Ireland then, near the spring equinox, in the month of March,
An evening still cold enough you could see your breath,
The king of Tara declared no fires would be allowed to compete with his.
His estate on the Hill of Tara, the greatest, his flock of sheep, the finest.
His role as chosen king among all kings of Ireland was unchallenged,
wasn't it?

On this night, foolish Christians lit bonfires to celebrate their king,
An ordinary man so crazy with love, he died of it.

Should the light of Christ

Illuminate this dark, chilly countryside? No.

The King of Tara, the greatest king of Ireland,

Would have none of it. No.

So that night of Easter, he banned all fires but his own,

His, the only flames to burn so high, compelling, drawing

All attention toward himself,
Until, off in the distance...but No!
Who dared?
A pinpoint of light not so far away, on the hill of Slane,
Growing fiercer, behind the trees, beckoning,
More beautiful than his fire, higher, and brighter then,
That singing relentless as the forbidden fire,
“Light of Christ, Thanks be to God,” taunting him, No.
He summoned soldiers to find the culprits and douse the flames.
By now the errant fire glowed and beckoned.
Who had done this? Where is it?
It seemed to move further away the closer they got.
It took an eternity to arrive at it, hours
That felt like days, and then,
There were only a few deer scattered on the trail.
And that stubborn light of Christ, the fire for that other king,
That ordinary man so crazy with love that it killed him,
Would not be put out.

(For the text of St. Patrick's Breastplate, see the prayer for Holy Saturday.)

Susan Valdes-Dapena, vestry member, Holy Trinity

Monday, March 24

FACES

I saw this man hanging on a cross
And felt terrible because of his face
His face contained all the faces that died
For greed and power hunger
All the faces that let the weak go hungry too,
And the cold and the naked,
And the rich and powerful
I saw in his face too
This man's face was glowing in pain and majesty
And the velvet of his love kept me looking
I stroked his hands and feet
And I felt his pain
And his water flowed from my side
And then I saw my own face mirrored in his
And the velvet of his love covered us both

And I was lost and found
In there
And then I could forgive the rich and powerful
And feed the hungry, warm the cold and clothe the naked.
Then, in my poverty, I was the one he made rich.
And the velvet of his love embraced us all.

Tamara Katzenbach, parishioner, St Stephen's

Tuesday, March 25

Others may do a greater work,
But you have your part to do,
And no one in all God's family,
Can do it as well as you.

Frank Doyle, Morning Prayer parishioner, Holy Trinity

Wednesday, March 26

Lord Jesus, you gave us health not as an inheritance to be wasted, but as a gift to be cultivated & a talent to be multiplied. We thank God for the strength, the will, the motivation & the ability to move our mind, body & soul. May we find joy in the dance that is life with you as our partner and guide. Amen

Amanda Kershen, Zumba teacher and parishioner, St Stephen's

Thursday, March 27

One of my favorite hymns is "Here I am Lord". It was written by Dan Schutte, an American composer, based on scripture from Isaiah (6:8) and 1 Samuel (3:4) as they respond to God's call. The first time I heard this hymn I was on my first Cursillo weekend. It brought tears to my eyes, and even now, many years later, I can only get through one verse before the tears start to flow. The words encourage us to answer God's call to help and serve others even with our own frailties, knowing God will be with us.

Iris Doyle, Morning Prayer parishioner, Holy Trinity

This is a meditation of thanks for the moments that bring me contentment in life and connection to the universal interdependence of every part of every one of every thing.

Helen Price, Junior Church Teacher, St Stephen's

Monday, March 31

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Prayer for the Human Family, Book of Common Prayer

Yvonne O'Neal, parishioner, Holy Trinity

Tuesday, April 1

'My Father, I abandon myself to you. Do with me as You will. Whatever You do with me I thank You, provided Your will is fulfilled. I ask for nothing more.'

This is a prayer that moves me and one which I find, on a personal level, relatively easy to pray when life is going well. The aspiration and challenge remains for me to pray this consistently, when darkness or adversity closes in.

Revd Alwyn Webb, School Chaplain The Grey Coat Hospital

Wednesday, April 2

Supper Prayer

O Gracious God,
We break from the doings of our day and give thanks. Jesus, we meet you in worker and friend, stranger and pilgrim, the needy and the needed.
When we meet you, may we deepen trust, deepen life, deepen justice, and deepen joy.

Help us approach our lives with presence and power, with love and humility, with courage and dignity. For the love shared, we are grateful. For provision and nurture, we are grateful. For kindness given, we are grateful.

For the encounters today, in stranger and friend, we bid you welcome. For the encounters missed today, we know that you always see us, even when we don't see you.

For tomorrow, may we see you in ways expected and unexpected.

For a peaceful night, we pray.

For a hopeful day, we pray. For a deeper generosity, we pray.

Amen.

A prayer used at the HTNC Saturday dinner combining prayers of Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer that I siphoned from the book "Daily Prayer from the Corrymeela Community" by Padraig O Tuama.

Joe Lipuma, parishioner, Holy Trinity and HTNC Board Member

Thursday, April 3

Almighty and loving God, who has made us creatures of intelligence and imagination, we ask you to help all teachers whose life is given to helping develop the minds and understanding of children and young people.

Give them patience, O Lord, sensitivity and humour. Help their imagination enlarge and encourage that of their students. Help them help those who are disruptive and difficult, especially those who suffer from poor parenting and unhappy home life. And let them rejoice in every student, however varied their cleverness, in realising their potential.

I ask this for thy sake and for the sake of the younger generation growing up in a sometimes frightening and increasingly difficult world.

Amen.

Margaret Duggan, parishioner, St Stephen's

Friday, April 4

God grant me the Serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And the Wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time,
Enjoying one moment at a time.
Accepting hardship as a pathway to peace,
Taking, as he did, this sinful world as it is,
Not as I would like it.

Trusting that he will make all things right,
If I surrender to his will.
That I may be reasonably happy in this world
And supremely happy in the next.

The Serenity Prayer (longer version)

Chris Abelt, Warden, Holy Trinity

Saturday, April 5

Notre Père,
Die in de hemelen zijt,
Santificado sea tu Nombre,
Venga il tuo Regno,
Fiat voluntas tua,
Sicut in caelo et in terra,
Unser tägliches Brot gib uns heute,
En vergeef ons onze schulden,
As we forgive those who trespass against us,
Och utsätt ass inte för prövning utanrädna ass från det onda.
Amen

Dear God,
please guide all those people who are having problems,
whether emotional, financial or physical,
out from the darkness and into the light.
Amen.

Nadine De Keyser, volunteer at St Stephen's

Fifth Sunday in Lent

On a dark night,
inflamed by long-longing--
O exquisite risk!--
Undetected I slipped away.
My house, at last, grown still.

Secure in the darkness,
I climbed the secret ladder in disguise--
O exquisite risk!--
Concealed by the darkness.
My house, at last, grown still.

That sweet night: a secret.
Nobody saw me;
I did not see a thing.
No other light, no other guide
Than the one burning in my heart.

This light led the way
More clearly than the risen sun
To where he was waiting for me
-- The one I knew so intimately--
In a place where no one could find us.

O night, that guided me!
O night, sweeter than sunrise!
O night, that joined lover with Beloved!
Lover transformed in Beloved!

From "Dark Night of the Soul" by St. John of the Cross, trans. Mirabai Starr

John Beddingfield, Rector at Holy Trinity

Monday, April 7

Lord God, root the thirst for peace within the hearts of us all, and throughout the world. Turn the hearts of those who seek violence towards understanding and compassion, and bless and inspire peacemakers. Amen.

William Bickley, weekend verger St Stephen's

Tuesday, April 8

Eternal God, heavenly Father,
you have graciously accepted us as living members
of your Son our Savior Jesus Christ,
and you have fed us with spiritual food
in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood.
Send us now into the world in peace,
and grant us strength and courage
to love and serve you
with gladness and singleness of heart;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer after Communion

Virginia Lambert, parishioner, Holy Trinity

Wednesday, April 9

Lord Jesus, may we make this Lent a period in which we fix our eyes anew on you, as we follow your journey towards Calvary.
As we do so, I pray that you remind us above all that you are the God who loves his people.
Therefore, as we wait with hope for your Easter glory, may you inspire us also to love all those we meet on our own journeys.
Amen.

Steve Rolfe, parishioner, Holy Trinity

Thursday, April 10

God of Eventide: Green Pastures

After each salutary experience of life, each blow it may deal you, separate yourself from the world for a time. Walk in My Green Pastures and Wander with Me beside the Waters of Comfort, until your soul is restored.

This is necessary so that you may readjust yourself to life. For you are a new being; you have had a new experience. Learn a new lesson. Your Union with Me will be the closer for your experience.

This is the time when My Love can whisper new meanings to you, can make the Friendship between us a closer, more holy Union.

Come with your Lover into the stillness of My Green Pastures and walk with Me beside hushed waters.

God Calling/God at Eventide by AJ Russell

Lydia Colon, parishioner, Holy Trinity

Friday, April 11

Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance

This was one of the adages I brought with me from my past career in management development to apply to my ministry as a rabbi.

As you read this, Jewish households around the world are finalising their preparations for one of the best known and widely observed ritual of Judaism, namely the Passover (Pesach) Seder. A lot has to be done in order to make the ritual both meaningful and enjoyable, though the exact formula will depend on which 'brand' of Judaism people follow.

Many will clean their homes with great care to remove any traces of leavened food or fermented food or drink, in keeping with the command in Exodus 12: 18 – 20:

In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. No leaven shall be found in your houses for seven days. For whoever eats what is leavened, that person—whether a stranger or a citizen of the country—shall be cut off from the community of Israel. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your settlements you shall eat unleavened bread.

Some sources suggest that the origins of spring cleaning lie in this practice, and many people feel they and their homes benefit from that sort of deep clean and or thorough sort out. In my family's experience, there is value in the act of going through our cupboards, fridges and freezers, and checking and sorting what can be consumed during Pesach week and setting aside what can't.

It is also possible that the practice of cleaning the Church altar on Maundy Thursday in preparation for Good Friday might be linked to these verses.

What we know is that Jews and Christians are in a time of preparation for a high point in the year. As a different adage goes, "If we fail to prepare, we prepare to fail."

So may our time spent in preparation be valued by us as the essential precursor to meaningful holy days.

May we show our gratitude to those in our families and in our communities who put in the work behind the scenes or when the church or synagogue is empty that enable us to have the spiritual experiences that enrich our lives.

May we reach our special days feeling better prepared and better able to receive and put to work the messages of this season.

Rabbi Richard Jacobi, East London and Essex Liberal Synagogue

Saturday, April 12

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we thank you for the gift of technology, for writing, electricity, mobile devices, markets, and all other technics making life humane for so many. Help us be responsible with these gifts, using them wisely and to the advantage of others. Amen.

Calvyn du Toit, parishioner and Sunday night music director, Holy Trinity

Sunday of the Passion: Palm Sunday

Loving God,

Give us joy in our hearts as we shout Hosanna, welcoming Jesus our King with palms, celebrating all that we hope for as the Easter story unfolds.

Then, as the journey of Jesus turns towards Good Friday, help us know that you are with us when celebration turns to sadness.

Give us the faith we need to follow you on the way of the cross, which leads to life. Amen.

Revd David Jones, Assistant Curate at St Stephen's

Monday in Holy Week

"Life is short, and we do not have much time to gladden the hearts of those with whom we travel the way. So, be swift to love, and make haste to be kind. And may the blessing of God Creator, Liberator, and Sustainer be with you this day and forevermore. Amen"

Henri-Frédéric Amiel, a Swiss poet and moral philosopher

by Jeanne Blazina, warden, Holy Trinity

Tuesday in Holy Week

Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi (Prayer for Peace)

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Offered by St Stephen's

Wednesday in Holy Week

Dear Lord,

In these uncertain times, we turn to You for grace and comfort.

Please calm our anxious hearts and help us, in this Lenten season, to renew and strengthen our faith in You and to trust in Your plan, even when we cannot see the way forward.

Fill us with Your peace that passes all understanding and guide our steps so that we follow Your will, remembering Your gift to us of love and Your commandment to us to love one another as You have loved us.

In Your name, Amen

With liberal credit to Ann McNeals on graceandprayers.com

Betty Whelchel, parishioner, Holy Trinity

Maundy Thursday

Prayer of Saint Richard of Chichester

Thanks be to thee, my Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits thou hast given me,
for all the pains and insults thou hast borne for me.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know thee more clearly,
love thee more dearly,
and follow thee more nearly, day by day.
Amen

Offered by St Stephen's

Good Friday

Lord,
it is night.
The night is for stillness.
Let us be still in the presence of God.
It is night after a long day.
What has been done has been done;
what has not been done has not been done;
let it be.
The night is dark.
Let our fears of the darkness of the world and of our own lives
rest in you.
The night is quiet.
Let the quietness of your peace enfold us,
all dear to us,
and all who have no peace.
The night heralds the dawn.
Let us look expectantly to a new day,
new joys,
new possibilities.
In your name we pray.
Amen.

A New Zealand Prayer Book He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa (page 184)

Susan Hulton, parishioner, Holy Trinity

Holy Saturday

I arise today
Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,
Through belief in the threeness,
Through a confession of the oneness
Of the Creator of Creation.

I arise today
Through the strength of heaven:
Light of sun,
Radiance of moon,
Splendor of fire,
Speed of lightning,
Swiftiness of wind,
Depth of sea,
Stability of earth,
Firmness of rock.

I arise today
Through God's strength to pilot me:
God's might to uphold me,
God's wisdom to guide me,
God's eye to look before me,
God's ear to hear me,
God's word to speak for me
God's hand to guard me,
God's way to lie before me,
God's shield to protect me,
God's host to save me
From snares of devils,
From temptation of vices,
From everyone who shall wish me ill,
Afar and anear,
Alone and in multitude.

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ on my right, Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

I arise today
Through a mighty strength, the invocation of the Trinity,
Through belief in the threeness,
Through confession of the oneness,
Of the Creator of Creation.

St. Patrick's Breastplate, St. Patrick, according to legend, recited "The Breastplate of Saint Patrick," for protection on Easter Eve around 433 CE, when the King of Tara had decreed that no fires be lit but his own.

Patrick lit the Paschal bonfire anyway. When king's soldiers came to arrest Patrick, they saw only deer on the path. The Paschal fire he had lit refused to be put out! I hope my meditation on these events can inspire you to your own experience of the legend or the prayer.

Easter Sunday

I was reading Prof James K Smith brilliant book 'How to Inhabit Time'. Towards the end he used this prayer from a liturgy developed by the Anglican Church of the Province of Kenya, forged in the late 1980s - an expression of an ancient faith which speaks of the needs and sorrows and hopes of East Africa.

In some ways it is our prayer too. I was so struck by it I would like to offer it as my contribution, gathering up all our histories in what Prof Smith calls "an expression of spiritual timekeeping":

O God of our ancestors, God of our people, before whose face the human generations pass away:

We thank you that in you we are kept safe forever, and that the broken fragments of our history are gathered up in the redeeming act of your dear Son, remembered in this holy sacrament of bread and wine. Help us to walk daily in the Communion of Saints, declaring our faith in the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the body. Now send us out in the power of your Holy Spirit to live and work for your praise and glory. Amen.

Revd Graham Buckle, vicar at St Stephen's