

PRISONS WEEK

Materials for Prisons Week from London Prisons Mission

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About Prisons Week

For forty years Prisons Week has prepared prayer literature to enable the Christian community to pray for the needs of all those affected by prisons. Please pray each day during Prisons Week, but also ask yourself whether there is one thing that you as an individual, or as a church, can do to help any of those people that you are praying for.

For more information and for prayers for Prison Week please visit:

www.prisonweek.org

The Prisons Week Prayer

Lord, you offer freedom to all people.
We pray for those in prison.
Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist.
Support with your love prisoners and their families and friends, prison staff and all who care.
Heal those who have been wounded by the actions of others, especially the victims of crime.
Help us to forgive one another, to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly together with Christ in his strength and in his Spirit, now and every day.

No prison cell is so isolated that it can keep the Lord out. He is there with you. He cries with you, works with you, hopes with you. His paternal and maternal love is everywhere.

- Pope Francis



The Bat Cave, HMP Holloway, Islington Probation, Painting 2017

The London Prisons Mission

London Prisons Mission (LPM) is an independent charity which aims to enable volunteers to work with a vulnerable and often neglected section of society; to inform congregations of churches about issues concerning the criminal justice system; and to support and assist multi-faith Prison Chaplaincy teams.

Many of its key personnel moved away from London during the COVID pandemic and John Plummer, its co-ordinator and founder, had to retire due to ill health. It is now run by Alasdair Mackenzie, a parishioner from St Martin-in-the-Fields, and a team of fellow co-ordinators from churches in Westminster.

This year it has focused on rebuilding links with London prisons and exploring volunteering opportunities for those attending churches in Westminster and beyond. If you are interested in getting involved with its work, please email Alasdair at info@londonprisonsmission.org



“We must learn to regard people less in the light of what they do or omit to do, and more in the light of what they suffer.”

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Mechanical Heart, HMP Send, Painting, 2017

EVENT FOR VOLUNTEERS: Thursday 9 November

There is a London Prisons Mission event for anyone interested in volunteering to work with former prisoners or in support of those currently in prison.

Speakers will include Josh Brettel, CEO of Change For Good ([Home | Change For Good](#)), a mentoring programme working with men leaving prison.

The event will take place at Bloomsbury Baptist Church at 6.30pm on Thursday 9 November. Light refreshments will be provided. If you would like to attend, please email Alasdair Mackenzie at info@prisonsmission.org



Suggested hymns for Prisons Week services

The Spirit lives to set us free – Damian Lundy

Lord the light of your love is shining (Shine Jesus, shine) – Graham Kendrick

Longing for light, we wait in darkness – Bernadette Farrell

Amazing grace – John Newton

The light of Christ has come in to the world – Donald Fishell

Come to set us free – Bernadette Farrell

And can it be – Charles Wesley

God is working his purpose out – A.C. Ainger

Hail to the Lord's anointed – James Montgomery

Hark the glad sound – Philip Doddridge

Jesus shall reign – Isaac Watts

Just as I am – Charlotte Elliott

O for a thousand tongues to sing – Charles Wesley

Songs of praise the angels sing – James Montgomery

Wait for the Lord – Jacques Berthier, Taize Community

Jesus remember me – as above

The Lord is my light – as above



Father of mercy,

*the secrets of all hearts
are known to you alone.*

*You know who is just
and you forgive the
unjust.*

*Hear our prayers for
those in prison,*

*Give them patience and
hope in their sufferings,*

*and bring them home
again soon.*

- Roman missal

Amy 2, Atkinson Secure Unit, Under 18s Special Award for Portrait 2017

Prayers of intercession for Prisons Week services

We pray for those who are in prison. May the light of Christ offer them hope and give them the strength to deal with the situation they are in. May the promise of God's love and mercy encourage them to turn from a way of darkness to a path of light and life.

Lord in your mercy...**hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who have been the victims of crime: those who have had their lives changed forever; those who now live in fear because of the actions of others. May their hearts and minds be open to the healing power of God and allow the grace of the Holy Spirit to restore their trust and confidence.

Lord in your mercy...**hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who work in prisons. May the light of Christ guide all that they do, may they show compassion and understanding to all whom they encounter and be granted the grace and strength to continue their vital work.

Lord in your mercy...**hear our prayer.**

We pray for the families of those in prison and the families of those who are the victims of crime. May the reconciling power of God's love bring healing and wholeness to their lives. May the wider community offer support and acceptance to counter feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Lord in your mercy...**hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who wish to change the direction of their life and those who struggle to break free from the grip of addiction. May they be open to the saving grace of God's love and recognise that the path of light offers hope and renewal.

Lord in your mercy...**hear our prayer.**



HMP Send Pond, Islington Probation, Painting 2017

Prayers for Prisons Week services

Justice surely hopes that there will be a sense of healing, a chance to see things differently, and a new future for all those affected by crime and imprisonment.

To achieve this we need each other, and in particular we need each other's words of encouragement. This Prisons Week let us pray for all those affected by prison, that we may build a sense of hope in each other that life will in some measure be restored .

"So speak encouraging words to one another. Build up hope so you'll all be together in this, no one left out, no one left behind." 1 Thessalonians 5 v11

Closing Prayer: Lord Jesus, help us to have the courage to stand in your light, the light that shatters darkness. Open our ears when we do not hear you, deepen our thinking when we do not respond to you, focus our vision when we get distracted from you, open our eyes when we do not see you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Prisoners' Sunday Prayer

Good and Gracious God, you offer the promise of new life:

We pray for those who feel imprisoned by fear and grief as a result of the actions of others

Help them and heal them, we pray

We pray for those who are imprisoned in gaol and cell as a result of their own actions

Help them and heal them, we pray

We pray for those who can find no other life than in the never ending imprisonment of crime

Help them and heal them, we pray

In your Son You show the way to new life

We pray for all who offer consolation and courage to the victims of crime

Support and encourage them, we pray

We pray for all who offer friendship and example to prisoners and their families

Support and encourage them, we pray

We pray for all who struggle to offer a better way to those trapped in cycles of violence

Support and encourage them, we pray

Sometimes when nobody is looking, there are tears in the night.

It hurts to be here, in spite of all the bravado.

Memories come of family, and of shame too, of what led to this in the first place.

There are tears in prison, and threats, temptations and despair.

Gracious God, we pray for prisoners, their families and their victims.

We ask guidance for the governors and warders, probation officers and chaplains.

We pray for policy makers, judges and magistrates. We remember those in prison today, in the love of Christ. We ask you to remember them too.

Revd Dr Brian Haymes (Baptist)



My Heart Flutters, HMP & YOI Grampian, Craft, 2017



Prayers for Prisons Week services

Lord, we hold before you the plight of those who are serving custodial sentences in prisons that are ill equipped to cater for their spiritual, emotional and physical needs. We pray particularly for any who have been traumatised by the restrictions imposed by Covid 19, and for the families who have been unable to visit in the normal way. For the staff who have put their own health at risk, in order to maintain order. For chaplains who have been called upon, to provide pastoral care and a listening ear. For volunteers, who have been unable to help and have worried about the welfare of the prison population. Grant those in authority wisdom and compassion as they allocate scarce resources. Bless those who keep the Criminal justice system on the political agenda, and help us, with them, to raise awareness of the need for reform, so that the dignity of all caught up in that system is upheld and honoured. We pray this in the name of Christ, Amen.



Organic Tree, HMP Send, Painting, 2017

Revd Penny Seabrook, Vicar, All Saints Fulham

Father in heaven, you sent your son to bring light into the darkness of our hearts and minds. May His light shine upon the sinner and the prisoner, the sick and the suffering, the poor and the outcast. We commend to your fatherly protection all who need that light today, especially those who are in prison and separated from their families and loved ones. We pray that, following your Son's command, those who minister to their needs will be enlivened by the power of your Holy Spirit. Bring the light of Christ once more into all their lives, so that they may experience your love for them always. We make this our prayer through you who are God, living and reigning for ever and ever. Amen.

Canon Paul Douthwaite, the Catholic Church's Senior Prisons Chaplain

Gracious Spirit of God, your presence ranges far and wide, and your loving embrace extends to all peoples, and all places, and through all times. So help us enlarge our own participation in the mission to which we have been called. May we find within ourselves a unity of spirit and purpose with the whole great communion of saints.

May we be anointed as those who proclaim liberty to the captives. All around us there are those who are held prisoner – some as a result of their own actions, others as a result of the actions of others. Some are physically incarcerated, others are imprisoned by the torment of their own minds and souls.

Help us as the Spirit-filled people of God to be those who see restoration where others see vengeance. Help us to be those who see freedom

as the goal of every human soul. Help us to not turn away from those who are hidden from us behind bars and walls. Amen.

Revd Dr Simon Woodman, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church, London



Keeping Fagan Busy, HMP & YOI Low Newton, Mixed Media, 2017

Prayers for Prisons Week services

O God, you rule over your creation with tenderness, offering fresh hope in the midst of the most terrible misery. We pray for our brothers and sisters whose souls are blackened by despair, infusing them with the pure light of your love. As they curse the day they were born and yearn for oblivion, reveal to them the miracle of new birth which shall prepare them for the joys of heaven.

A prayer adapted from the Book of Dimma (Celtic 7th Century)

Be close with comfort, most gracious God, to all who are cast down and defeated amidst the sorrows and difficulties of the world – and especially to all captives and prisoners: and grant that by the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, they may be raised up to you with hope and courage, and enabled to continue upon their way rejoicing in your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Revd Roderick Leece, Rector, St Georges Church, Hanover Square, London

We pray for men and women leaving prison, returning to families that have grown used to their absence and into communities where they can, too easily, be drawn back into the crime network.

We pray for prisoners who have committed sexual offences and who find integration into any employment or voluntary work almost impossible and who often lead lonely lives and find little or no support in rebuilding their lives.

We pray for churches that they may be communities of welcome for ex-offenders who need help with rehabilitation, and may find the gift of hope that comes from Christ.

We do not pray from a position of strength.

We pray for the prisoner knowing

that human divisions are false,

that this is not the innocent praying for the guilty

or the right praying for the wrong

but people praying for people,

the hurt remembering the hurt,

the failure reaching out in love

to the failure in a single community

reaching out in grace.

*Reverend Neil Campbell,
Chaplain at HMP Dumfries*



Rehabilitation, HM Prison Peterborough, Silver Award for Painting

Prayers for Prisons Week services

Father God,
Jesus urged us to use few words as we pray.
Therefore, may we bless the good we see
and draw alongside the outcast.
Particularly in our prisons
where there is good to see
and where outcasts gather.
Empower us to be an incarnation of your love.
Amen.

Jonathan Green, Development Coordinator, The Welcome Directory



Dream Catchers, HMP Send, Mixed Media, 2017

Scripture readings for Prisons Week services

Malachi 4:1-3 (or 3:19-20 depending on the translation) The Day of the Lord is coming

Isaiah 55:6-9 God's offer of mercy

Psalms 26 (27) The Lord is my light & my salvation

Psalms 102 (103) The Lord is compassion & love

Romans 8:31-39 Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ

James 1:2-4, 12 Faith and endurance

Matthew 7:7-11 Ask, seek, knock

Luke 18:1-8 Never become discouraged – the parable of the persistent widow

Jeremiah 29:10-14 I will bring you back from exile

Luke 7:36-50 Be generous with forgiveness

Ephesians 2:1-10 By God's grace are we made alive in Christ

Ephesians 4:1-6 Live a life worthy of the calling you have received

Prayers by Bonhoeffer

Pastor of the German Lutheran Church in London from 1932 to 1935, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was an opponent of Hitler and executed in a Nazi concentration camp in 1945

Morning Prayer

O God, early in the morning I cry to you.

Help me to pray,

and to concentrate my thoughts on you:

I cannot do this alone.

In me there is darkness,

But with you there is light:

I am lonely;

but with you there is help;

I am restless,

but with you there is peace.

In me there is bitterness,

But with you there is patience;

I do not understand your ways,

But you know the way for me....

Restore me to liberty,

And enable me so to live now

that I may answer before you and before me.

Monkey Lady, HM Prison Peterborough

Lord, whatever this day may bring,

Your name be praised.



Prayers by Bonhoeffer

Evening Prayer for Fellow Prisoners

O Lord my God, thank you
for bringing this day to a close;
Thank you for giving me rest
in body and soul.
Your hand has been over me
and has guarded and preserved me.
Forgive my lack of faith
and any wrong that I have done today,
and help me to forgive all who have wronged me.
Let me sleep in peace under your protection,
and keep me from all temptations of darkness.
Into your hands I commend my loved ones
and all who dwell in this house;
I commend to you my body and soul.
O God, your holy name be praised.
Amen

Prayer in Time of Distress

O Lord God,
great distress has come upon me;
and I do not know what to do.
O God, be gracious to me and help me.
Give me strength to bear what you send,
and do not let fear rule over me;
Take a father's care of those I love,
My wife and children.
O merciful God,
forgive me all the sins that I have committed
against you and against my fellow men.
I trust in your grace
and commit my life wholly into your hands.
Do with me according to your will
and as is best for me.
Whether I live or die, I am with you,
and you, my God, are with me.
Lord, I wait for your salvation
and for your kingdom.
Amen



Beach, HMP & YOI Low Newton, Painting, 2017



Two Head & Shoulders, Atkinson Secure Unit, Tina Wallace Under 18s Special Award for Portrait





Images courtesy of Koestler Arts. Koestler Arts has been unlocking the talent inside the criminal justice system since 1962. All the Koestler Arts artworks in this publication were submitted to the Koestler Awards 2019 by women in secure or community justice settings across the UK.



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