

Sample Prayers

A Supplement to the [Prayer Guide](#) for
the National Weekend of Prayer 2018

Overview

The Sample Prayers offered below will help faith leaders prepare to lead public prayers (or readings) that highlight themes of faith, hope, and life; mental health/illness; reasons for living; meaning in life; as well as, the presence and comfort from God (called by the name common to each faith community) and others in the faith community. These do not incorporate the three themes that should be emphasized on the National Weekend of Prayer for Faith, Hope, & Life. These samples may be adopted or adapted as suits the needs of each faith community.

Thoughtfully composed prayers can strengthen *faith*, which brings hope and a pathway toward a fuller life. Conversely, if words are not chosen carefully, great harm can be done to community members who have been touched by suicide. Therefore, we encourage faith leaders to use these examples as a guide. By following the word and phrase selection, faith leader addresses the issues directly and honestly, while also lessening the chances of unintentionally increasing the pain of individuals who are currently feeling alone in intense darkness, are at risk for self-harm, or who have recently experienced a suicide-related tragedy.

Judgmental attitudes and hurtful comments, even if unintended, often cause survivors of a suicide or suicide attempt to leave the faith community they were attending. **Non-judgmental caring is essential.**

The Don'ts—What to avoid in public comments and prayers

- > **Don't reinforce negative stereotypes, myths, or stigma related to mental illnesses or suicidal persons.** Examples: adjectives like “successful” suicide, “unsuccessful” suicide, and “failed attempt;” terms such as “committed suicide” (can reinforce stigmatizing attitudes about people who die by suicide).
- > **Don't present suicide as common or acceptable. Don't imply that suicidal behavior is what most people do in a given circumstance.** The vast majority of people who face adversity, mental illness, and other challenges do not die by suicide, but instead find support, treatment, or other ways to cope.
- > **Don't attribute suicide to a single cause or circumstance. Avoid portraying suicide as having no cause.** Suicides result from a complex interplay of factors.
- > **Don't use data describing suicide as an “epidemic” or language that suggests suicide is inevitable or unsolvable.** Under the right circumstances, many suicides are preventable.

For further explanation and details, click [here](#).

Section Headings

1. Prayers on Faith, Hope & Life
2. Jewish
3. Christian
4. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
5. Muslim
6. Native American Traditions
7. Additional-, Bahá'á or Interfaith

1. Prayers on Faith, Hope & Life

God of all mercy,

From whose love nothing can separate us, we pray this day for all persons dealing with mental illness and those who love and care for them.

Especially this day, we pray for all whose lives have been touched by suicide,
for those who have died by suicide and those who have attempted it.

We pray for those who, because of mental health challenges such as depression, PTSD, or bipolar disorder, live with thoughts of suicide.

We pray for those who live in despair and without hope because of poverty or discrimination.

We pray for families and friends, colleagues and co-workers, who have been touched by the suicide of a loved one,

We pray for counselors and therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists,
for pastors, rabbis, priests, and imams.
and for all who seek to help.

And we pray, too, that you might give us the courage and wisdom to be there for others in distress,

to offer your love and our care,
to help break the silence and change the conversation about suicide,
to be your listening ear, your hands, and your heart for others.

Amen.

~Contributed by Rev. Talitha Arnold, United Church of Christ, Santa Fe, NM

God,

As we pray for those beset by physical illness, we also ask you to comfort and heal those among us and those whom we love who experience various mental health challenges, whether they be depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, dementia, or others.

Lord, we know that at times their suffering is great and their isolation can seem unbearable. May they experience the love and support from their family (or community) here at (Name of Faith Community) that is the hallmark of your Realm as we reach out to them in love.

Also, we ask you to show your hand in helping them experience the effective treatment they need from doctors and caregivers.

There are others among us who carry the weight of an addiction. Some involve alcohol or prescription drugs, some are other addictions. You know them all, Lord. We rejoice that some persons are in recovery, and we ask for your continued grace and mercy for their journey. For those who are still in the powerful grip of their illness, we pray that your good news would, as the prophet Isaiah affirmed and Jesus proclaimed, "bind up the broken hearted and proclaim freedom to the captives."

And Lord, we pray for those who care for and love our brothers and sisters who daily face the many challenges of living with mental illness and substance abuse, in any of the many ways those conditions manifest themselves. Their work can be exhausting. Rise up in us a caring community to help them in their times of need.

Amen.

~Contributed by Dr. David Litts, Faith.Hope.Life

Dear Gracious and Merciful God,

We come to you to give thanks for this day, which provides us with another opportunity to bask in the glow of your love. We thank you because you are so gracious and kind; we thank you for your abundant love, your loving kindness.

God, we ask right now that you heal the hearts of those who are emotionally wounded, that you allow those who feel alone and abandoned to feel your Spirit. For those of us who feel so lost and forlorn that we can no longer sense your presence, we ask that you send someone to be your eyes, your ears, your arms and your heart so that they can experience your love in the physical realm right now.

When we are at the point where our faith tank feels like it's on "E", send someone who is willing to loan us a little faith until we can experience your love for ourselves again. We ask that you send us an angel, be it in the form of a friend, a counselor or a pill so that our spirits can be lifted once again.

We ask that you help all of us have compassion and love for those of us suffering through the throes of depression, anxiety and other emotions that sometimes try to snuff out our spirit.

Help us to be ever mindful that we are more than conquerors in the God who loves us, that weeping may endure for the night but joy really does come in the morning, and that nothing can separate us from your love. Hear our cries, hear our petitions, hear our prayers today.

We offer up this prayer in the name of the One who promises to love us with an everlasting love, **Amen.**

~Contributed by Rev. (Dr.) Sherry Molock, Beloved Community Church, Accokeek, MD

Lord,

We pray for those affected by hopelessness as well as people dealing with suicidal thoughts. We ask that you provide them with comfort and guidance, and the placement of a support system in their life to let them know that they are important and that they matter and that they're not alone. We also pray that you use us, members of this congregation, to be a support, a listening ear, and a comfort to those in pain, hopeless, and alone. Move our feet, Lord, and help us not only to pray but to take action. We thank you for the support and guidance you have put in our lives, and we ask that if or when the time comes and a wave of hopelessness or suicidal thinking comes over one of us here today, that we'll find the capacity and the bravery to speak up, speak out, and ask for help from a friend, a loved one, a counselor, or a member of our congregation.

Amen.

~Contributed by Josh Rivedal, I'Mpossible Project

God our Creator, you give breath to each person you made.

You treasure the gifts of each unique person.

But when life becomes a burden rather than a gift,

God of life, hold us.

When darkness strangles the will to live, when days become endless nights,

God of light, shine on us.

When no one seems to understand, when we walk and wait alone,

God of love, embrace us with your presence.

Where there is despair, bring hope; where there is shame, give value and worth; where there is emptiness, bring fulfillment; where there is suffering in mind and body, bring healing. God of hope, hear our prayer for life.

~Contributed by Cindy Holtrop, Pathways to Promise

A Litany of Naming for Mental Health

Leader: Let us join in a Litany of Naming

People: As a Congregation, we are glad to lift up our voices and our spirits to break the silence that often happens when we are confronted with mental illness.

Leader: As a faith community, we name the gifts and the often, un-named experiences which come to those who live with a mental illness such as major depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder, schizophrenia, and eating disorder. We name:

People: The Hope which upholds our spirit through honest sharing;

Leader: The Pain when people turn away because of fear;

People: The Courage to speak in a safe place your truth with love;

Leader: The Strength from being with others who listen compassionately;

Leader: The Isolation that comes when no one knows what to say;

People: The Realization that mental illnesses and brain disorders can be managed;

Leader: The Exhaustion that comes with living with a mental illness as well as for those who are caregivers;

Leader: The Welcome of mental health as part of our congregation's ministry and outreach;

Leader: The Wisdom that comes when we become educated about mental health;

Leader: The Spirituality that comes when we walk alongside those who show both resilience and vulnerability in their lives affected by mental illness;

All: We receive these gifts that we have named, those which are welcomed and those that are challenges. We come before you, our God, knowing we are not alone and that You will show us a way to be and live. In your name, we pray.

Amen.

~Contributed by Rev. Alan Johnson, Interfaith Network on Mental Illness

Jewish Prayers

*In traditional Jewish liturgical practice, it is very unconventional to craft new prayers. However, when praying for an individual who is ill, it is customary to recite the following thirty-six chapters of Psalms: 20, 6, 9, 13, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 37, 38, 39, 41, 49, 55, 56, 69, 86, 88, 89, 90, 91, 102, 103, 104, 107, 116, 118, 142, 143, and 148.

Help us, Adonai, to lie down in peace, and awaken us again, our Sovereign, to life. Spread over us Your shelter of peace; guide us with Your good counsel. Save us because of Your mercy: Shield us from enemies and pestilence, from starvation, sword, and sorrow. Remove the evil forces that surround us. Shelter us in the shadow of Your wings, O God, who watches over us and delivers us, our gracious and merciful Ruler. Guard our coming and our going; grant us life and peace, now and always. Praised are You Adonai, Eternal Guardian of Your people Israel.

~Traditional Jewish Prayer

Blessed are you, oh Lord, who has given me the strength to know that I am not alone, that there are many people who understand me and care, and who enable me to see the hope through these difficult times.

Amen.

~Contributed by Miriam Ament, No Shame On U

To my creator I pray. I pray for the strength you have given to those who champion the cause of life and goodness. I pray for the hope you provided an exiled people to believe that the darkness is only temporary. I pray for the comfort you have shown to those in need.

Like David I call to you from the depths. I look to you for guidance. I seek your light through this darkness. I pray that your attribute of mercy has not been overstated. I pray that your love for me is everlasting.

I know that the night will end, I ask you for the strength to see the light in the darkness. Let your light guide me to live another day and may I feel your love and your closeness more tomorrow.

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart reach your compassion and your mercy, and may my prayer be heard.

Amen.

~Contributed by Rabbi Ben Goldstein, Temple Alijah



Christian Prayers

Father, help me to see treasures of joy in the darkness of my life. I want to believe that you have “gold” hidden in secret places when I go through hard times.

Forgive me for believing the lie that suffering is nothing but an enemy to harm me, instead of believing that you are my friend.

You are there to walk with me and show me treasures that I wouldn't have seen any other way. Keep me from rejecting the gift of joy that sorrow brings.

May I seek you as the one who is close, who is intimate, who calls me by name.

May the pain I am in, push me toward a great passion for you and a greater joy in you. In the name of Jesus, **amen**.

~Contributed by Kay Warren, Saddleback Church, Lake Forest, CA

Loving God, you are always near to us, especially when we are weak, suffering and vulnerable. Reach out to those who experience mental illness. Lift their burdens, calm their anxiety, and quiet their fears. Surround them with your healing presence that they may know that they are not alone. We ask this through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes and in the name of your Son, Jesus and the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

~Contributed by The Catholic Health Association of the United States

Let us pray to the Lord of Mercies:

We pray for the unity and mission of the holy Church of God; that it may welcome and serve those who live with a mental illness.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Guide us, the citizens and leaders of this land, this state and this city ... that we may unite to provide for and protect the poor, the homeless and those who suffer in mind, body and spirit.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Forgive us when we knowingly or unknowingly ridicule, look in disgust, neglect or discriminate against those who are mentally ill.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Comfort and relieve those who are troubled in mind and spirit. Bring them hope, peace and the consolation of a loving community.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Grant patience and courage to the families and friends of those who are ill. Increase their perseverance as they face challenges to recovery for their loved one.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Protect and defend those living with mental illness from exploitation, addictions and abuse.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Walk with the homeless and missing persons, those who are destitute and have no one to care. Forgive us for our indifference.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We commend to your mercy and defense all who are contemplating suicide today, right now. Bring someone or something to intervene.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For the families who have lost a loved one to mental illness, bring them comfort in trusting that your grace accepts their ill loved one, despite the final desperate act that brought them into your loving arms.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Empower us to speak up for those who do not have a voice; save us from making peace with the injustices in the social systems that have failed them.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Guide those who do research for the prevention and treatment of mental illnesses; uphold them with your compassion and diligence.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who are in recovery and for treatments that enable them to return to full and rewarding lives, we give you thanks.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, Giver of life and health, we trust that in your time and way, you will dispel all darkness with your light, all confusion with your order, all fear with your peace. Through Jesus Christ, who intercedes for us and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

~Adapted from and patterned after Prayers of the People from the Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church.

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank you for the gift of life. Your Holy Word says, "According to your divine power you have given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of you who has called us to glory and virtue." (2Peter 1:3) We come in agreement with your word and declare that even in the midst of brokenness, be it depression, sadness, guilt, feelings of hopelessness, or addictions, you are calling us to know you in a deeper way and, through your power, giving us increased joy, freedom from addictions and vices, hopefulness, and a renewed sense of vitality. Give us the courage to trust you and hold fast to your unchanging hand in the midst of any storms, difficulties, and trials we may experience. Give us the strength to affirm life. Show us daily the way to take, the decisions to make, and the path to experiencing wholeness in you. We thank you for answering our petition and ask in your son, Jesus Christ's name.

Amen.

~Contributed by Dr. LaVonne Ortega, Centers for Disease Control

A Prayer to the Theotokos (Prayer to the Mother of God) for Healing

Where bitter sorrows overcome us, there will Patience and Rest be revealed. Where the torment of despair dwells in the soul, there will shine the ineffable Light of Divinity! Console the fainthearted, strengthen the weak, bestow softening and enlightenment upon embittered hearts. Heal Thine ailing people, O All-merciful Queen! Bless the minds and hands of our physicians, that they might serve as instruments of the All-powerful Physician, Christ our Saviour. We pray before Thine Icon, that Thou mightest truly live with us, O Sovereign Lady! Stretch out Thy hands, filled with healing and cures, O Joy of the sorrowful, Consolation in afflictions, that having speedily received miraculous help, we may glorify the Life-creating and Undivided Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages.

Amen.

~From the Eastern Orthodox Tradition

Creator God, each day, we live on the threshold of above and below, of inside and out. We live in spaces in between knowing and never knowing. Between believing and questioning. Between clarity and ambiguity. These spaces create confusion in us. Back and forth we meander along a winding road that begins to feel like a labyrinth with no center. No exit. No way out. Too often we live in stuck places like these. Gently and then violently we rock back and forth back and forth craving something that feels certain.

It feels as if there is no space for us to rest except within the vast universe of your love. In you – the feeling that no one accompanies us into the darkness diminishes. Instead, complete darkness is replaced when the tiniest ray of hope - Hope - found in a speck of light feebly shines through reminding us that you when we fall to the ground You will sit with us there. And when we finally feel able to stand up You will steady us then slowly, you will walk with us. In all times, you will be with us. For this, God of bright, shining light we are grateful.

Thank you for the questions the ambiguity and for the disbelief. Through them we travel closer to you. Thank you for clarity for knowing and for answers when they come. Through them we are assured of your presence. And now, may you bless all of those who suffer today in mind, body and spirit, Indeed, may you bless us all with your healing ministry of love.

Amen.

~Contributed by Rev. Lorraine E. Leist

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Prayers

Our Heavenly Father,

As we bow our heads we give thanks for the many blessings bestowed upon us by thou bounteous hands. We ask for help for those that struggle with mental health or substance abuse issues. We also ask to comfort those that battle with the feelings of hopelessness, depression and suicidal thoughts. Would thou ease their burdens this night that they may find peace? May we be guided by thee and remember the scripture found in the Book of Mormon, "are we not all beggars." Let us judge less, love more, and find ways to serve our fellowmen, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, **Amen.**

~Contributed by Dr. Greg Hudnall, Hope4Utah

Muslim Prayers

In the name of God, The Beneficent, the Merciful. All praise is due to God, Lord of the worlds - The Beneficent, the Merciful. Sovereign of the Day of Recompense. It is only You we worship and You we ask for help.

Our Lord, we thank you for the endless blessings You bestow upon us. We are grateful for teaching us who You are and how to connect with You, for what greater blessing is there than the tranquility of being emotionally attached and committed to the Most Compassionate.

The Quran speaks to the heart - our vessel of emotions - for we humans are filled with many emotions. Our emotions allow us to empathize with each other, to love and feel loved, to appreciate beauty and goodness. But our emotions also challenge us at times. Some of us are overwhelmed with feelings of pain and frustration, an endless darkness with no sign of light. Some of us have lost all hope.

So, we turn to You to replenish our hope. We know you love us when we do that. You are our source of peace and tranquility. It is reassuring to remember that You are all-powerful, compassionate and responsive to our prayer. At the same time, we also recognize the value in seeking help from mental health professionals and look to them to be your agents of healing.

You, our Lord and Creator, the one who revives the lifeless barren desert with rain from the sky; we pray, revive our hearts and replenish our well-spring of hope. Heal our pain. Give us the strength to bear the challenges that we face. Make us whole and filled with inner peace. Shower us with your mercy and compassion and guide us along the straight path.

Ameen

~Contributed by Tarik Ata, Imam of the Orange County Islamic Foundation, Mission Viejo, CA

"So verily, with hardship, there is ease." (Quran 94:5)

Oh Allah! God of the universe, the most merciful and the beneficent. We are weak and seek your strength. Help us like you helped all before us. May our tribulations be short and our tests never beyond our endurance. May our burdens be never heavier than our ability to carry them.

May our despair be never too dark as not to see the light of your love. May we never reach a point of loneliness as not to feel your presence.

May we never give up on your most precious gift of life and remain steadfast in our faith.

Ameen!

~Contributed by Dr. Farha Abbasi, Muslim Studies Program, Michigan State University

In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate,

All Praise and Thanks are due to Allah, the Lord of Creation

We send peace and blessings on Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah

O Allah, You are Peace, and You are the Source of Peace, grant us peace in our hearts to accept Your Divine ordainment and to feel rested in knowing that everything comes from You. You are the Wise, grant us the serenity to see the wisdom in what You have chose to ordain for us, and allow us to accept that which we do not understand.

O Allah, You are the Strong and Almighty, grant us the strength to persevere through this beautiful life You have ordained for us so that we may collect all the good provisions we need to meet You and know that we lived our life to it's fullest. Give us the strength to turn to You, and not turn to substances.

O Allah, You are the One Who brings the hearts together, allow us to never stray from our fellows, especially in times of need, and to ask their help when I need it.

O Allah, You are the One who hears the call of those in dire need, please allow us to call on you when we are in need and do not allow us to feel there is no one who can help.

O Allah, You are then One we can all depend on and You work through Your servants, allow us to depend on You and to reach out to Your rope of assistance Your servants hold when we need it.

O Allah, grant us the praiseworthy modesty you have granted the righteous servants that draws us closer to You, and save us from the blameworthy modesty that would prevent us from seeking that which we need to save our faith and our lives. Allow us to never feel too shameful to speak with others of our problems and to seek the help of our fellows when we need them.

O Allah, You are the One Who guides and teaches, allow us to learn the warning signs of suicide and to not have shame or shyness prevent us from learning and teaching those signs.

O Allah, You are the One Who all can have hope in, allow us to never despair from Your Mercy and to never feel as if there is no hope.

~Contributed by Shaykh Rami Nsour, Tayba Foundation

Native American Traditions

Creator, we thank you for a new day.

Blessings to all throughout this day, give us peace and harmony as we walk in the beauty of the world you created for us.

*~Contributed by Rev. Dorothy Natonabah Saucedo,
Navajo and Episcopal Priest*

“Let no harm come to the one for whom this prayer is meant. Shield them from any danger, retrieve them from any harm. Let your holy light be their protection, your great mercy their defender. No illness nor accident will befall them, no anxiety nor fear will assail them, but only the calm assurance of your love open before them, as though they saw a wide and placid sea. So this prayer becomes the eye of any storm. It encircles the one who is cherished, whether infant or elder, within the safety of angels, holding them secure against all alarms. Here these words, great God of peace, for in you is all our trust, our confidence and our devotion.”

~Contributed by Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, Choctaw and Episcopal Bishop

Additional Prayers – Interfaith, Baha’i

O Holy God,

Open unto me
light for my darkness,
courage for my fear,
hope for my despair.

O loving God,
open unto me
wisdom for my confusion,
forgiveness for my sins,
love for my hate.

O God of peace,
open unto me
peace for my turmoil,
joy for my sorrow,
strength for my weakness.

O generous God,
open my heart
to receive all your gifts.

*~Contributed by Rev. Dr. Howard Thurman,
20th c. African-American Theologian*

From chaos and emptiness,

From loneliness and
lifelessness,
Come, Creator, Come.
From darkness and
shapelessness,
From the abyss and awfulness,
Come, Creator, Come.
From fearfulness and
hopelessness,
From weakness and dreadfulness,
Come, Creator, Come.

~Contributed by A Celtic Prayer - David Adam

Do Thou ordain for me through Thy most exalted Pen, O my Lord, the good of this world and of the next. I testify that within Thy grasp as held the reins of all things. Thou changest them as Thou pleasest. No God is there save Thee, the Strong, the Faithful.

Thou art He Who changeth through His bidding abasement into glory, and weakness into strength, and powerlessness into might, and fear into calm, and doubt into certainty. No God is there but Thee, the Mighty, the Beneficent.

~From Bahá'u'lláh



The Faith.Hope.Life. campaign is an initiative of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention.