



# Seek

SEEKING GOD TOGETHER THROUGH FASTING & PRAYER  
LENT 2024 RESOURCE KIT



THE METHODIST CHURCH  
IN IRELAND

[IRISHMETHODIST.ORG](http://IRISHMETHODIST.ORG)

# “It is time to seek the Lord...”

HOSEA 10:12



## INTRODUCTION

Lent has always been an important time of prayer and reflection for the Church as we journey together towards Easter. It invites us into a season of confession and repentance as we seek to be renewed once again by the incredible work of Christ.

Together, as Church, we have the opportunity to fast and pray for renewal and growth, asking that not only our lives would be changed, but that many lives would be changed because of the love of Jesus. Together, we want to confess before God the things that need transformed in us, or that we have held too tightly to, and ask Him to come, by His Spirit, to renew our faith and passion to serve Him for the transformation of the world.

This Lent we want to join together in fasting and prayer to **Seek** God for the Methodist Church in Ireland. We are committing to **40 days of non-stop prayer** and inviting churches across our Connexion to sign up for a specific length of time (e.g. 24, 48 hours or longer) to help cover this whole Lent season in prayer. We are also encouraging a **Connexional Day of Fasting on Friday 1 March 2024** where we are inviting Methodists across Ireland to fast and pray for renewal and growth (see page 5).

Your first step is to decide how your congregation or circuit is going to engage with the 40 days of prayer and sign up to commit to cover a specific time within the Lent season.

Once you have picked a time slot and date, go to [irishmethodist.org/seek](https://irishmethodist.org/seek) to register it. Please note that this registration is for churches rather than individuals. You can then print out a sign-up sheet that you use for your individual participants. For example, perhaps your church decides to cover a specific 12-hour period of prayer, you then go and register on the website for those 12 hours under the name of your church. Then you organise your congregation with a separate sign-up sheet that individuals can volunteer to cover an hour or more of that period (template available to download).

To assist you, we have provided this Resource Kit. In it you will find many suggestions and ideas to aid your congregation in imagining and engaging with this season of fasting and prayer. We appreciate that across our Connexion there is a diversity of experience and context, however, we hope that there will be ideas here that you will be able to adapt and craft to suit your particular congregation. We do not expect for you to use all these resources, rather to choose what will work best in your setting. Together, we want to be attentive and intentional in how we pray and plead that God will come and transform this Island.

Within this **Resource Kit** you will find:

- **Fasting Information** – A guide to our Connexional Day of Fasting. (page 5)
- **Worship Resources** – Some service materials to compliment your Lenten Sunday Worship. (page 7)
- **Prayer Resources** – A range of prayer resources that can help all ages in your congregation to focus their prayers in this season. (page 15)

We invite you to carefully consider how you might be challenged to join in with this call to **Seek** God in prayer, and how you might make this season of fasting and prayer a priority for your church.

Please share with us your stories, pictures, and reflections as you journey through these 40 days.

**Email:** [seek@irishmethodist.org](mailto:seek@irishmethodist.org)

Seek



## A WORD ABOUT HOSEA 10:12 IT IS TIME TO SEEK THE LORD

As we discerned a direction for this season of Lent, we found ourselves dwelling on Hosea 10. At first glance, this may feel like an unusual passage to dwell on. The chapter speaks about judgement as the people of God are called to address their unfaithfulness towards God. They have worshipped other gods, they have ignored or contributed to injustice, and they have forgotten what it means to be a people belonging to God. The book of Hosea has many chapters like this one, however the overall message that Hosea declares is about a God who repeatedly calls His people back to himself. Despite their rebellion, failings, and unfaithfulness, they are invited to return to a God who loves them.

The imagery of such books like Hosea can sometimes be tricky for us to understand, yet the voice of the prophets can still invoke a powerful challenge to us today. We still need to hear a call to holy living, a call to remember what it means to be a people belonging to God. We still need to hear about a God who is rich in mercy and who sacrificially loves us and calls us to himself.

Hosea 10:12 seemed to strike us with an urgency to focus our prayers. To seek God in confession, and to pray intentionally for renewal and growth. The prophet encourages God's people:

'Sow for yourselves righteousness;  
reap steadfast love;  
break up your fallow ground;  
for ***it is time to seek the Lord,***  
that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.'

Amid the verses of judgement, this verse sets before us a call to hope and an invitation to action. It is time to seek the Lord, so sow righteousness, reap love, break up the fallow ground.

What might this mean for your life? What might this mean for the Church?

This is what we **Seek** as we journey together through Lent as wholehearted followers of Jesus for the transformation of the world.



## A CONNEXIONAL DAY OF FASTING: FRIDAY 1 MARCH 2024



Rev David Turtle  
President 23/24

As part of our Lenten journey, the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, is inviting us to join with him on a **Connexional Day of Fasting**. Fasting is a spiritual discipline that is taught to us in Scripture and modelled by Jesus. Through fasting, we can experience the grace of what God has done for us in Christ, to forgive our sins, and we can become more fully open to what God does in us by the Holy Spirit, to help us become more like Jesus.

From as early as August 1739, John Wesley encouraged the early Methodists into the practice of fasting. Wesley himself, throughout his ministry, fasted each Friday (and, for a period of time, on both Wednesdays and Fridays). This fast usually began at sundown on Thursday and typically ended at 3.00pm on Friday. There was nothing particularly special about a Friday, it was simply that Wesley and others followed this as a regular pattern of discipline. In the traditional Christian sense, fasting is abstaining from food (normally not liquids) as a spiritual discipline for a limited period of time. In recent times, the practice of fasting has not been limited to food but has included a fast from activities that consume much of our time. Fasting is therefore an opportunity to lay down an appetite whether that be for food, social media, TV, mobile phone etc. in order that we might pick up a passionate pursuit of God.

The purpose of fasting is to focus our prayers, taking the time we normally spend on our 'appetites' as time in prayer for what God wants to do among us. Many find that fasting intensifies our prayers and that in denying our physical hunger for time, our spiritual sensitivity is heightened. Fasting is not some magical way to manipulate God into doing our will or be an accomplice in our plans, rather, while we are fasting, we offer God the time and attentiveness we might otherwise give to other activities. Through self-denial we begin to recognise what controls us, and fasting helps retrain us away from dependence on earthly things towards a reliance on an almighty God.

For this **Connexional Day of Fasting**, we are encouraging you to follow the Wesleyan model, **beginning your fast at sundown on Thursday and fasting through to 3:00pm on Friday**. Prayerfully consider what 'appetite' you want to lay down during this time, and when you feel the pull toward that 'appetite' offer this prayer:

*Loving and Unfailing God, we seek your face.  
Renew your Church. Strengthen our faith.  
May your Kingdom come. Amen.*



## GUIDANCE FOR FASTING

- Please don't fast from food if you have an illness or feel unwell without speaking to your doctor. Don't fast from food if you are pregnant.
- Always drink plenty of water and fluids.
- Don't attempt prolonged fasts without medical guidance.
- If you decide to fast regularly, give your body time to adjust to new rhythms of eating. You may feel more tired on days you fast. Adjust your responsibilities appropriately.
- For a full day fast, begin after an evening meal and eat a light evening meal the next day. This way two, rather than three, meals are missed.
- Keep your Bible with you and allow periods for prayer when you place yourself in the presence of God.
- Allow space for praising and thanking God as well as bringing requests. Seek that God would draw close.

# Seek Worship Resources

LENT 2024



Included in these Worship Resources you will find:

- Six Lenten prayers that can be included in your Sunday worship as opening prayers or as a moment of response. These link closely to the Lectionary Psalms for Lent 2024, and draw on themes of confession, renewal, and growth as we journey together through Lent.
- A Benediction prayer based on Hosea 10:12 that you may like to use at the end of each service of Lent, to encourage your congregation to engage with this Connexional **Seek** journey.
- A Service of Holy Communion for Lent which is adapted from the Methodist Worship Book.



## LENTEN PRAYERS

### LENT 1

#### **In you, our Lord, we place our trust [Ps. 25:1]**

As this journey of Lent begins,  
We tread carefully into a season of sorrow.  
We know where this journey will lead us.  
Yet, on a road marked with suffering,  
We discover an abundance of joy.  
Lord, help us tread slowly, that we might be captivated afresh.  
Help us tread lightly, that we might let go of what hinders or holds back.  
Help us tread patiently, that we might be attentive to your way.  
In you, our Lord, we place our trust. Amen.

### LENT 2

#### **People everywhere will remember and turn back to God. All families will worship because God is King over all. [Ps. 22:27-28]**

In Lent, we remember, we recall, we rethink.  
In Lent, we put aside, we lay down, we give up.  
Merciful Lord, expose in us the wrongs and bring us to right.  
Reveal any wickedness or dishonesty and renew us in truth.  
Today, as we worship, strip away all that is not of you and clothe us  
once again in your grace.  
Today, as we worship, call us back to you once more, for you are our  
Lord and King. Amen.

### LENT 3

#### **May our words and thoughts please you. Lord, you are our Rock and the one who saves us. [Ps 19:14]**

On this road through Lent, we have much to learn.  
We declutter and strip back as we seek after you.  
Step by step, may our hearts yearn for more.  
More wisdom, more love, more compassion.  
Restore to us the joy of our salvation.  
Humble us with your grace.  
Renew us as your people, for your Kingdom's sake. Amen.



#### LENT 4

**Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures forever. [Ps 107:1]**

God of steadfast love,  
Son of grace and truth,  
Spirit of peace and life,

Come.

God who is rich in mercy,  
Son who welcomes all,  
Spirit who transforms and enriches

Come.

Come into the weariness, into the forgotten, into the hidden and unknown.

Come and renew us we pray. Amen.

#### LENT 5

**With my whole heart, I seek you. Keep me in your ways. I treasure your word in my heart. Keep me from wrongdoing. [Ps.119:10]**

We come, wholeheartedly seeking after you.

Meet with us Living God.

In worship, in prayer and in fasting, we wait on you.

Take our broken offering, reshape, and refashion us.

By your Spirit, grow in us a likeness of Christ.

Germinate our lives with your goodness and love.

Extend your Kingdom here we pray. Amen.

#### LENT 6

**I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. [Ps. 118:21]**

Praise God, the source of all good things.

Praise God, the One who renews and reawakens.

Praise God, the Light to all the darkness.

Praise God, Rescuer, Saviour, King.

Praise God, who was, and who is, and who is to come.

Amen.



## A SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION FOR LENT

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### OPENING PRAYER

*Use the Lenten Prayer for the appropriate week.*

### OPENING WORSHIP

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Let us pray.

**Lord, you are steadfast in your love,  
and infinite in your mercy,  
you welcome sinners and invite them to be your guests.  
We confess our sins, trusting in you to forgive us.**

*Silence*

We have yielded to temptation and sinned:  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

We have turned from our neighbours in their need:  
Christ, have mercy.  
**Christ, have mercy.**

We have resisted your word in our hearts:  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,  
and keep us in life eternal.  
**Amen.**

### MINISTRY OF THE WORD

*Include your readings and Sermon in this section.*

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

*The Apostles Creed*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

## HYMN

*(The elements of Communion are uncovered)*

## THE LORD'S SUPPER

## THE PEACE

In Christ, God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through his blood which was shed on the cross.  
The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
**And also with you.**

## THE THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.  
**And also with you.**  
Lift up your hearts.  
**We lift them to the Lord.**  
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Blessing and praise belong to you, gracious and eternal God.  
Through your living Word you created all things,  
the majesty of the heavens and the glory of the earth.  
In your wisdom and goodness you have made all people in your image and likeness.  
Therefore, with saints and angels and with all creation  
we lift up our voices to proclaim the glory of your name:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy and gracious God,  
we give you thanks and praise that in the fullness of time you gave your only Son,  
to share our human nature and to be tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin;  
to set his face resolutely towards Jerusalem and to be lifted high upon the cross,  
that he might draw all creation to himself.  
When the hour of his glory came, and loving his own to the end, he sat with them at  
supper, took bread and, after giving thanks to you, he broke it and gave it to his  
disciples, saying, 'Take, eat. This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance  
of me.'

In the same way, he took the cup after supper, saying, 'Drink from this, all of you;  
this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, whenever you drink it,  
in remembrance of me.'

**Dying, you destroyed our death.  
Rising, you restored our life.  
Lord Jesus, come in glory.**

In obedience to his command we recall his suffering and death, his resurrection and  
ascension, and we look for his coming in glory.  
Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us the body and  
blood of Christ. In union with Christ's offering for us, we offer ourselves as a holy and  
living sacrifice. Unite us in love and peace with all your people until, with the whole  
company of heaven, we are brought into the presence of your eternal glory, through  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Through him, with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and  
glory are yours, almighty Father, now and for ever. Amen.**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

## THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The bread we break is a sharing in the body of Christ.

**Christ is the Bread of Life.**

The cup we take is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

**Christ is the true Vine.**

*Silence*

**Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us. Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.  
Jesus, redeemer of the world, grant us peace.**

We say together:

**Lord, we come to your table, trusting in your mercy and not in any goodness of our own. We are not worthy even to gather up the crumbs under your table, but it is your nature always to have mercy, and on that we depend.**

**So, feed us with the body and blood of Jesus Christ, your Son, that we may forever live in him and he in us. Amen.**

*The Sharing of Bread and Wine:*

Come to this sacred table, not because you must but because you may;  
Come, not to declare that you are righteous, but that you desire to be true disciples  
of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Come, not because you are strong, but because you are weak;  
not because you have any claim on heaven's rewards, but because in your frailty and  
sin you stand in constant need of heaven's mercy and help.

*The elements are distributed and then a time of silence is observed.*

## PRAYERS OF DISMISSAL

**Gracious God, we thank you that you have nourished us with the bread of life  
and with the cup of salvation. May we who have received this sacrament  
be strengthened in your service;**

**we who have sung your praises live in your glory;  
and we who have known the greatness of your love**

**see you face to face in your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## CLOSING HYMN

## BENEDICTION

The God of all grace who has called us to eternal glory in Christ,  
make us perfect, confirming and strengthening us;  
and to him be the power for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The almighty and merciful Lord,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us,  
now and always. **Amen.**

# Prayer Space Outline

## Seek

### INTRODUCTION

*'Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.'*  
(Hosea 10:12)

As you enter this space be mindful of His presence and the peace that comes from spending time with our Creator. The season of Lent invites us into a place of confession, renewal, and growth.

As you spend some time here, we want to seek Him in all things, we want to confess before God the things that need transformed in us, or that we have held too tightly too, and ask him to come, by His Spirit, to renew our faith and passion to serve him in this world.

There is so much hope available to us and spending some intentional time in His presence will help to open our eyes and hearts to the invitation to seek Him.

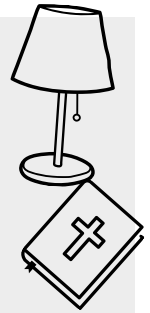


# 1

## SEEK PRESENCE

### Items needed...

Lamp  
Paper  
Noticeboard/pins  
Pens  
Bible



### Switch on the lamp and sit for a while.

Think about how easy it is to bring light into a space by the flick of a switch. Where God is there is no darkness – He is the creator and the light of His presence shines through even the heaviest of darkness.

Spend some time thanking God for His presence. He promises to never leave us or forsake us. Even on days that are long and leave us feeling weary and empty, we know that He has not left us. On the days when our circumstances have consumed us, God holds us.

God is with us and will not let us go.

**Read:** Psalm 139: 1-18

**Why not write prayers of thankfulness for God who is with us. Welcome his peace and presence. Pin them on the board so that those who follow after you can read them and together, we can be inspired and encouraged. Read for yourself some of the prayers that have already been pinned to the noticeboard.**

\*Before you move on, pray for those who may need the assurance of God's presence.

*Father, may those in our community who are tired and overwhelmed find you to be a close comfort. Show them that you are walking beside them, carrying them through today and every day. Lift their heads to see the ways that You are present. Thank you for being Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.*



## 2

### SEEK FORGIVENESS

The gospel is this:

*"We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope."* (Tim Keller)

Have you lost your temper today, forgotten your identity, worried about tomorrow, or walked in the flesh? Remember that Jesus is faithful to forgive. "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8). He poured out his blood, scrubbed us clean, and won the victory. He exchanged our worthless, tattered rags for abundance and purity. This is the Good News of Christ for you! Once the gospel has captivated your heart, it grows and flourishes, transforming us from the inside out.

**Pick up a piece of string/wool. As you hold it in your hand, consider what you seek forgiveness for. As these come to mind, simply make a knot in your string. Continue this process until you have 4-5 knots.**

**Go back to the first knot, holding the confession that knot represents. Hear God's assurance that you are forgiven. You are loved. As you feel each knot, hear God's assurance, your sins are forgiven.**

**Don't walk away taking the thoughts of those knots with you, instead tie your string to the end of another knotted string. Together we can't undo those knots but together we can seek forgiveness and find it in Christ.**

\*Before you move on, pray this prayer of confession for the church. We are, after a gathering of imperfect people, but yet perfectly loved by God.

*Almighty Father, forgive our sins. Forgive the wrong doings that we remember and the ones we have forgotten. We confess that we approach you with our mouths and our lips, yet our hearts are far from worship. We confess that sometimes what we offer costs us little, we often bring to you the leftovers of our time, gifts, energy and worship. Forgive us.*

*Forgive our failures in the face of temptation, and those times when we have been stubborn in the face of correction. Forgive the times we have boasted our church achievements rather than acknowledge your work. Forgive the harsh judgements we make of others, and the leniency we show ourselves. Forgive the pain we cause and the self-indulgence we favour. Forgive us when we have disregarded our neighbours' needs, yet wondered why other people don't meet ours. Cleanse us as church and give us the mind and heart of Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve. Amen.*

#### Items needed...

Cut lengths of string or wool

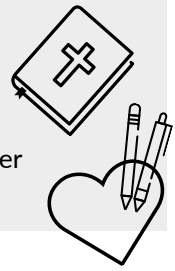


# 3

## SEEK LOVE

### Items needed...

- Bible
- Pens
- Heart shaped paper



God wants you to see yourself the way he sees you, and then in turn to see others through His lens of love.

### What is filling your heart?

There are many things that can fill our hearts, some good things and some not.

Do you ever find yourself resenting your family or friends, or any one, perhaps for something they may or may not have done; if unforgiveness and bitterness have taken hold of your heart; if the stress and burdens of life have you so weighed down that you find it hard to enjoy simple pleasures with those who love and care about you; if you have lost sight of your purpose, and are just living from day to day, then it's time to see with new eyes.

God wants you to see yourself the way He sees you, and then in turn see others through His lens of love. Yes, it's a difficult task if you try to do it on your own, but with His help, you can.

Looking at ourselves through our human lens does not give us a full view. When we look at ourselves through the lens of God's love, we are able to see as he sees, love as he loves and serve as he serves.

Take some time to remind yourself how much you are special and loved by God. He sees you! He wants to renew your heart with His special and unique love so that it grows and overflows from you.

**God's written Word holds wonderful reminders of how He sees us and loves us. Sit for a while and read from the pages of His precious book. Reflect on these words and ask God to write them on your heart. If one of these verses stands out to you as you read them, write it on a paper heart and take it with you.**

1 John 3:1  
Psalm 139: 13-16  
Colossians 3:12

Ephesians 2:10  
Romans 5:8  
1 Corinthians 3:16

1 Peter 2:9  
Romans 8:38-39  
Romans 15:13

Psalm 138:8  
Psalm 33:18  
1 John 4:16

*continued...*

\*God wants the church to see itself the way that He sees it, and then in turn for the church to see the world through his lens of love. When God's love overflows in us it is so that His love can reach others. Together let's seek God's love for others.

Think about how your church already shows God's love to others.

Pray thankfulness over those things that come to mind and ask God to continue to be at work.

Now take a moment of silence and ask God to speak to you about what more He wants to do in and through your church.

**Then pray:**

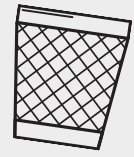
*Loving God, you are a God of abundance, we pray for you to be abundantly at work here. Within this church let your love overflow. Beyond this church let your love transform. Renew us. Grow in us. Let your Kingdom come. Amen*

# 4

## SEEK PEACE

### Items needed...

Pens  
Paper  
Small bin



*"To safeguard your contentment in Christ is to ask the Holy Spirit to whisper Psalm 119 into your ear every now and then: 'Turn my eyes away from worthless things.'"*  
(Joni Eareckson-Tada)

The world is shiny and glittery - full of all kinds of 'stuff' that competes for our attention on a daily basis. Without even thinking, we often pursue peace and contentment in our lives through these things. We turn our eyes to the world and let it alter our expectations and dictate our moods. We so often place our value and contentment in 'things,' and often we are let down. It happens the most when we let the world creep in where Jesus should reside instead.

*"Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain!  
Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways."*  
**Psalm 119:36-37**

If we spend a lifetime looking for peace, happiness and contentment in the things of the world it will amount to nothing. Why?

True and full contentment is only achievable through seeking God. To seek God's will, desires and plans for our lives will lead to a God focused peace and contentment which is immeasurable to the things the world offers.

When culture declares contentment in self, let's be a people who declare contentment in Christ.

### **Are you looking for contentment in the wrong places?**

As you read these words, did your mind flicker to things that take your focus off God? Do you sometimes feel like there is something missing in your life? Or are there things that you are trying, that aren't working?

### **Seek peace by focusing on God, cast aside those things that distract you!**

Write a list of the things that you need to focus less on, things that are worthless to gaining true contentment. As you write, pray that your loving Father will help to keep these things from you. Continue praying as you write, that your focus will remain on Him and that contentment will come and remain in you.

Once you have finished, simply tear up the paper and place it in the bin provided. These things are rubbish and worthless, they hold no value for you, let God renew you in His peace.

As you finish pray, **Psalm 119:36-37** over yourself.

*continued...*

\*As followers of Jesus, we find peace and safety in the knowledge of Christ. However, this knowledge is not shared by everyone. Our world is filled with anxiety, worry, oppression and fear, peace feels distant. God invites us to be a people of peace, a non-anxious presence, just like Christ.

Using your hand, use your fingers to help you to pray:

- Hold your thumb and pray for people who are unwell and need to find peace within waiting, illness and recovery.
- Hold your index finger and pray for leaders around the world that they may seek peace for the people they lead.
- Hold your tallest finger and pray for people to come to know the peace of Christ across our world.
- Hold your ring finger and pray for those that are vulnerable and need peace against oppression or addiction.
- Hold your baby finger and pray for children and young people asking for peace in their many worries and stresses.
- Thank God that He hears and answers our prayers.

# 5

## SEEK JOY

*"The joy of the Lord is my strength." (Nehemiah 8:10)*

It is His Joy that enables us to thrive not just survive!

The joy of the Lord is our strength. Not a second cup of coffee, not our own abilities, time at the gym, or a full night rest.

It is His joy that surpasses any trial, any feeling, and any emotion. His joy is a fortress of rest, a shelter from the sun, and a shield from the enemy's attacks. It keeps us going when we want to quit, strengthens weary bodies and souls, and transforms our perspectives.

God's plan for mankind has been to bring us joy and peace, we read this throughout the Bible. It teaches us that joy is a gift from God, and that it is something to be celebrated and shared with others.

Joy is rooted in who God is. It is not fleeting or based on circumstances, it is sturdy and unbreakable. This type of joy isn't primarily a feeling. If it was, then it would be impossible to experience it in moments of grief or in the depths of trials.

When life is good and stable, we seek joy and find it easily. How easily do we lift our heads and speak prayers of joy when trials loom large and stormy seas threaten to overwhelm us?

Ultimately, this joy comes from Jesus himself. We experience the joy of the Lord specifically because we are united to Jesus Christ.

**Sit for a time and reflect on all that you are thankful for, contemplate the joy you feel and that is available to you every day because of what Christ has done for you.**

### **Pray:**

*Heavenly Father, thank You for the unending joy that comes from lingering in Your presence, this joy is available to me every day. Please draw my heart ever closer to Yours. Help me always to seek joy in all circumstances of my life, whether in overwhelming and difficult times or in good news and celebration. Renew in me the joy that comes in the knowledge of your love and sacrifice. Amen.*

Showing real and heartfelt joy is necessary and significant in our lives and that of the church. It is a sign of our salvation. This unending joy should be shared and shown by the church to everyone.

As we seek joy we are trusting God in all circumstances. If we think of our opening verse from Nehemiah, he is teaching us that joy is found in persistence and the relentless pursuit of God.

*continued...*

It can be easy to be disheartened when we look at the world and see many people who turn away from God. For many the church feels irrelevant, yet we hold the good news of Christ that speaks freedom and joy.

Spend time now praying for the impact of the church in your community. That in joy it would show Christ to many.

**Pray:**

*Heavenly Father, as a church may we show your joy to others in our words and actions. May we be a church that represents your joy to the fullest, that those who see it and feel it may seek the same joy for themselves. Grow and renew us for your Kingdom's sake. Amen*

# 6

## SEEK RENEWAL

### Items needed...

Pens  
Paper



This prayer space has brought you through some stages; confession, renewal, and growth, praying for these things on a personal level, in a relational way and as church. Our prayers have helped us think and reflect on how to action out being followers of Jesus and knowing and feeling His transformative power for ourselves, the church and the world.

God's expectation of us as individuals and as church is not perfection but rather of doing our best under His guidance. Having an awareness of our limitations and in recognising them, seeking Him so we can discern His will.

**Pause now and take a look at a community prayer for waiting by Dan White. As you read, invite God to be at work in your own life, bringing renewal and prompting growth.**

A Community Prayer for Waiting  
by Dan White  
(adapted)

*When we are heavy with sorrow,  
let us cling to a whispering hope.  
When we are deep in the night,  
let us not forget the light we've once seen.  
When we are exhausted from waiting,  
let us find strength in each other.*

*When we are hardened by conflict,  
let love interrupt our bitterness.  
When we are frightened by scenarios,  
let us receive wisdom from each other.  
When we are haunted by failures,  
let grace heal our self-inflicted wounds.  
When we are dismal and defeated,  
let faith be our nourishment.*

*When we are weary and complaining,  
let our hearts discover perspective.  
When we are apathetic and clumsy,  
let deep apologies flow from our lips.  
When we are dashed by disappointments,  
let us find footing to press forward.*

*We are sheep who wander in the waiting,  
but the Shepherd knows our names.  
We are strangers without a country,  
but the Kingdom of God is our true home.*

*In this time of great meaning,  
In the stillness of Lent,  
Give us grace for the days before us.*

*Amen*

As you prepare to leave this space focus your mind to pray specifically for the Methodist Church in Ireland. How would you want God to renew and grow His people on the island of Ireland?

**Write your prayer on a piece of paper and leave it for others visiting this space to read and join in your prayer.**

**Take a picture of your prayer and send it to: [seek@irishmethodist.org](mailto:seek@irishmethodist.org)**

Together let's pray boldly and expectantly for God to be at work in the Methodist Church in Ireland. Amen.



# Prayer Space Outline

for Children and  
Young People

Seek

1

## SEEK PRESENCE

### God Around Us

#### Items needed:

Cushions or a soft carpet for children to sit on, a scented sachet or equivalent, sweets or chocolate. (Be aware of allergies and potential choking. It is best to avoid anything that contains nuts or can't be easily chewed).

*'God wrote, "I love you" – he wrote it in the sky, and on the earth, and under the sea. He wrote his message everywhere! Because God created everything in his world to reflect him like a mirror – to show us what he is like, to help us know him, to make our hearts sing. The way a kitten chases her tail. The way red poppies grow wild. The way a dolphin swims.'* (Jesus Storybook Bible, p12)

*"The revelation of God is whole and pulls our lives together. The signposts of God are clear and point out the right road. The life-maps of God are right, showing the way to joy. The directions of God are plain and easy on the eyes. God's reputation is twenty-four-carat gold, with a lifetime guarantee. The decisions of God are accurate down to the nth degree. God's Word is better than a diamond, better than a diamond set between emeralds. You'll like it better than strawberries in spring, better than red, ripe strawberries." Psalm 19:7-10 (MSG)*

So, let's take a moment, to use our senses, and to focus on God all around us.

continued...



**Sight**

Look around the room, what colours can you see? How many different colours are there? As we see all the different colours, they remind us that God created things to be filled with colours. As we see the colours we are reminded of his presence.

**Smell**

What can you smell in the room. As we smell we are taking breathes in and out. God gave us our lungs to breath in and out. Practice doing that now a few times, in and out. It is God who gives us lungs so we can breathe and take in smells. It is God who breathes life into us.

**Touch**

Keep your eyes closed. Feel how soft the cushion is underneath you. Imagine someone giving you a hug. Know that however you are feeling, God has his arms wrapped around you in an invisible hug.

**Hear**

What sounds can you hear? Are there birds chirping? Is there traffic going past? Are people shuffling? Maybe you can just hear your own gentle breathing. God loves to talk to us through sounds. What might he be saying to you?

**Taste**

Open your eyes and take one of the sweets. Eat it. How does it taste? God created all the ingredients which go into making food so yummy.

Sight, smell, touch, hear, taste – God is all around us.

Thank you, God.

# 2

## SEEK FORGIVENESS

### Sorry Bubbles

Items needed...

Tubes of bubbles



If possible, purchase enough bubbles so that children can take a tube home.

At one last dinner Jesus had with his disciples, only a couple of days before he died on the cross, Jesus explained why he would have to die. Jesus said, 'This is how God will rescue the whole world. My life will break and God's broken world will mend. My heart will tear apart - and your hearts will heal ... I will die instead of you. My blood will wash away all of your sins. And you'll be clean on the inside - in your hearts. So whenever you eat and drink [during communion], remember I've rescued you.' (Jesus Storybook Bible, p292).

Hold the tube of bubbles in your hand (an adult can hold and blow the bubbles if needed.) Think of the words you have said, the things you have done, and the thoughts you have had that have hurt other people and hurt God. In your head, say sorry to God. Blow the bubbles. Watch them as they float. Imagine that each bubble carries all the words, actions, and thoughts you have just said sorry for. As the bubbles burst and disappear, know that God forgives and forgets the bad things you have said, done and thought. Thank you, God.

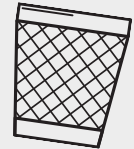
For Older Children or Young People:

## SEEK FORGIVENESS

### Rubbish Bin

Items needed...

Bin  
Pens  
Paper



Think of the things you have said, the things you have done and the thoughts that you have had that have hurt people in the past. Write down some of the things that you feel you have done wrong. Sin hinders our relationship with God, but the bible is clear that God forgives our sins. Write down some things that you want God to forgive you for. Spend some time praying and asking God to forgive your sins. When you are finished tear up the paper and throw it in the bin. Thank God that he has forgiven you through Christ.

# 3

## SEEK JOY

### Joy from Jesus

Jesus said to Mary Magdalene, *“Go and tell the others that I’m alive!”* Mary ran and ran, all the way to the city. She had never run so fast or so far in all her life. She felt she could have run forever. She didn’t even feel like her feet touched the ground. The sun seemed to be dancing and gleaming and bounding across the sky, racing with her and shining brighter than she could ever remember in the clear, fresh air. And it seemed to her that morning, as she ran, almost as if the whole world had been made anew, almost as if the whole world was singing for joy – the trees, tiny sounds in the grass, the birds ... her heart.’ (Jesus Storybook Bible, p316).

I wonder how the disciples might have been feeling when Jesus died. Point to the Mr Men or Little Miss which shows this feeling.

Now think about Mary, running to tell her friends that Jesus was alive. Which of the Mr Men or Little Miss might show how Mary was feeling?

I wonder how you are feeling today. Which of the Mr Men or Little Miss best describe you? Whether you are feeling worried, or happy, or grumbly, or brave, or however you are feeling, you can have joy deep in your heart from knowing that Jesus is alive, that he loves you, and he wants to be your friend.

Take a moment to thank God for the joy he gives us.

#### For Older Children or Young People:

## SEEK JOY

### Picturing Life

What is your relationship with God like?  
There are a handful of photos around you spend some time and pick one that connects with you and helps describe your relationship with God.  
What made you pick this photo?  
How does it describe your faith?  
Maybe the photo makes you feel proud, maybe you feel alone, maybe you feel happy or maybe there is something that is holding you back?

*continued...*

#### Download & Print pictures:

Mr Happy, Mr Strong, Mr Good,  
Mr Worry, Mr Grumble,  
Little Miss Brave,  
Little Miss Shy, Little Miss Tiny



#### Download & Print pictures.



Whatever photo you picked, spend some time focusing on the photo and how it makes you feel. Spend some time praying. If the photo you picked described you as happy, or exciting then spend some time thanking God and think of the joy that He has brought to your life.

If the photo you have makes you feel angry, annoyed, or maybe sad. Spend some time with God, be open and honest about why you might feel like this. Ask God to give you more of His joy.

# 4

## SEEK RENEWAL

# Prayer Through Colour

Download & Print  
colouring pages.



*'A few days later, as they walked together, Jesus told his friends, "It's time for me to go home to my Father ... Go everywhere and tell everyone the happy news! Tell them I love them so much that I died for them. It's the truth that overcomes the terrible lie. God loves His children. Yes, He really does!" Suddenly the whole sky was filled with a dazzling light. "Now everyone can come home to God," Jesus said. "Death is not the end of you. You can live forever with your Father in heaven because I have rescued the whole world!"*  
(Jesus Storybook Bible, p332-333).

When we become friends with Jesus, we become part of his family which is called the Church. Jesus wants everyone to be part of His family, so He asks us to tell all our friends and family about how much he loves them. Then they can choose to be a part of his family too, and his family will grow and grow. Take one of the colouring pages. Think of a friend or a family member who you would like to tell about God's love. As you colour the page in, maybe you could pray this prayer for that person, and for everyone in God's family:

*Dear God, you are all around us, and you know everything about us. You know how sometimes we don't like change, and sometimes we rush to change things. You know how sometimes our thoughts can feel very messy, or like there are lots of knots in our head. Help us to focus on you in everything we do. Holy Spirit, help us to see people around us who we can be a friend to. Jesus, help us to remember that we are part of your family. Amen.*

# One Hour of Personal Prayer

*Seek*

## INTRODUCTION

Before you begin this time of prayer, think about the space that you are sitting in. Is it a comfortable space, free from distraction? Think about switching your phone off or playing some peaceful music. Maybe mark the moment by lighting a candle to signify that in this time and space there is a priority for the presence of God. Do whatever feels helpful for you to make this a sacred space for prayer.



## BE STILL (5 MINS)

As you begin your time, take some moments to be still. To set aside the distractions of your mind and to welcome God into the space. Take some deep breaths and pray the verse from Psalm 46:10:

*'Be still and know that I am God.'*

As you breathe deeply, and repeat this verse for a few moments, you are acknowledging that God is present, and that He is able.



## CONFESS (10 MINS)

Confession is important in our relationship with Jesus. Firstly, it helps us to be accountable before God for our own brokenness and sin. Acknowledging our sin helps us to embrace humility and reject pride. Secondly, it is in confession that we are reminded of the grace of God shown to us in Christ.

Scripture tells us that: *'If we confess our sins, He who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'* (**1 John 1:9**). Such assurance means we can come to confession with a sense of peace knowing that we meet a God who is gracious and loving toward us.

In silent prayer, talk with God about the things in your life that fall short of his ways. Areas that you want Him to bring transformation in. Then pray:

*O God of grace and truth, you are rich in mercy.  
You lavish your love upon me.  
Forgive me and renew me, that I may be changed further into the likeness of Christ. Amen.*



## READ (15 MINS)

Read **Hosea 10**.

At first glance, this may feel like an unusual passage to dwell on. The verses speak about judgement as the people of God are called to address their unfaithfulness towards God. They have worshipped other gods, they have ignored or contributed to injustice, and they have forgotten what it means to be a people belonging to God. The book of Hosea has many chapters like this one, however the overall message that Hosea declares is about a God who repeatedly calls his people back to himself. Despite their rebellion, failings, and unfaithfulness, they are invited to return to a God who loves them. The imagery of such books like Hosea can sometimes be tricky for us to understand, yet the voice of the prophets can still invoke a powerful challenge to us today. We still need to hear a call to holy living, a call to remember what it means to be a people belonging to God. We still need to hear about a God who is rich in mercy and who sacrificially loves us and calls us to himself. As you read the chapter again, stop and dwell on **Hosea 10:12**.

*'Sow for yourselves righteousness;  
reap steadfast love;  
break up your fallow ground;  
for it is time to seek the Lord,  
that He may come and rain righteousness upon you.'*

*continued...*



Amid the verses of judgement, we find this verse. It sets before us a call to hope, an invitation to action. It is time to seek the Lord, so sow righteousness, reap love, break up the fallow ground.

What might this mean for your life? What might this mean for the Church?

Spend some time in prayer, inviting God to speak to you through this passage. Use the time to pray both for your own life, and for the life of the Church. How might we respond to this call to hope, and this invitation to action?



### DWELL (10 MINS)

Now turn to **1 Peter 2:1-10** and spend some time reading it slowly.

Dwell particularly on verse 9:

*'But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.'*

What questions does this verse raise as you think of the Church today? What is God calling the church to be in this time and place? Spend time in prayer as you respond to these questions. Maybe you want to write down what God is saying to you so you can share it with others in your Church.



### PRAY (15 MINS)

Begin with thankfulness. Thanking God for how He speaks in his Word, and how He reminds us of his mercy and steadfast love for us.

Then spend some time praying for the Church in Ireland. Ask God to bring renewal as we seek Him in this season. Allow the Spirit to guide your prayers, praying for all that comes into your mind as you reflect on the verses you have read. Maybe it's prayers for people, or for situations. Be bold in inviting God to be at work.

Invite God to stir up within you a passion to intercede for the needs of others, and an excitement at trusting that he will be at work.



## BLESSING (5 MINS)

As you come to finish your hour of prayer, spend a few moments being still in the presence of God. Breathe deeply and invite his peace to rest upon you. When you are ready, close in prayer:

*Lord, here I am. I am seeking after you.  
Show me your ways.  
Consume me with your steadfast love.  
Break up my fallow ground and bring your new life.*

*Lord, here we are. We are seeking after you.  
Renew your people.  
Call us back to you.  
Break up our fallow ground that your Kingdom may come.*

*Lord, you are here.  
Holy are you.  
Come and rain righteousness upon us.  
Amen.*

# A Six-day Personal Journey

*Seek*

“Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap steadfast love; break up your fallow ground; **for it is time to seek the Lord**, that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.” (Hosea 10:12)



## INTRODUCTION

During this season of Lent, we want to encourage you as a Church Family to pray together as we approach the Cross of Christ.

This Prayer Journey gives you the opportunity for 6 occasions of prayer, these relate to the SEEK prayer space resource that has been produced for churches to use.

Together, we want to seek God, whether this is physically in a prayer space in church or from our own homes. For many the season of Lent is a one of fasting, confession, and praying for change, renewal and growth. Together, we seek to intentionally set aside time for self-examination and reflection as individuals and as church.

Set out for you are some reflections and guidelines, these will hopefully help you focus on the different areas in which we want to seek God during this Lent season. There are simple actions and items that should be easy to find in your home that may help you focus when you are praying.



DAY  
1

## SEEK PRESENCE

### In preparation:

Sit by a lamp and have paper and a pen close by.

### Read:

Psalm 139:1-18

Turn the lamp off and on a few times, watch as the light fills the room each time you switch it on.

Think about how easy it is to bring light into a space by the flick of a switch.

Where God is there is no darkness – He is the creator and the light of His presence shines through even the heaviest of darkness. Spend some time thanking God for His presence. He promises to never leave us or forsake us. Even on days that are long and leave us feeling weary and empty, we know that He has not left us. On the days when our circumstances have consumed us, God holds us. God is with us and will not let us go.

Read again Psalm 139: 1-18

Write some prayers of thankfulness for God who is with us. Welcome his peace and presence. Why not tuck these prayers into your bible or set them on your bedside table. God understands that some days can feel darker than others, use these prayers to start and finish those dark days so you can be encouraged.

**Now**, pray for those who may need the assurance of God's presence:

*Father may those in our community who are tired and overwhelmed find you to be a close comfort. Show them that you are walking beside them, carrying them through today and every day. Lift their heads to see the ways that You are present. Thank you for being Emmanuel, God with us. Amen.*

DAY  
2

## SEEK FORGIVENESS

### In preparation:

Get a piece of string/wool/ribbon or an old shoelace.

### Read:

Romans 5: 1-11

The gospel is this: *"We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope."* (Tim Keller)

Have you lost your temper today, forgotten your identity, worried about tomorrow, or walked in the flesh? Remember that Jesus is faithful to forgive. *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* (Rom. 5:8).

He poured out his blood, scrubbed us clean, and won the victory. He exchanged our worthless, tattered rags for abundance and purity. This is the Good News of Christ for you! Once the gospel has captivated your heart, it grows and flourishes, transforming us from the inside out.

*Pick up your piece of string/wool. As you hold it in your hand, consider what you seek forgiveness for. As these come to mind, simply make a knot in your string. Continue this process until you have 4-5 knots.*

*Go back to the first knot, holding the confession that knot represents. Hear God’s assurance that you are forgiven. You are loved. As you feel each knot, hear God’s assurance, your sins are forgiven.*

*Just as God will forget these sins as surely as he forgives them, the knotted string is not a reminder that we are sinners but a reminder that when we confess our sins God will always, always forgive us.*

*Together we can’t undo those knots but together we can seek forgiveness and find it in Christ.*

**Now**, pray this prayer of confession for the church. We are after all, a gathering of imperfect people, but yet perfectly loved by God:

*Almighty Father, forgive our sins. Forgive the wrong doings that we remember and the ones we have forgotten. We confess that we approach you with our mouths and our lips, yet our hearts are far from worship. We confess that sometimes what we offer costs us little, we often bring to you the leftovers of our time, gifts, energy and worship. Forgive us.*

*Forgive our failures in the face of temptation, and those times when we have been stubborn in the face of correction. Forgive the times we have boasted our church achievements rather than acknowledge your work. Forgive the harsh judgements we make of others, and the leniency we show ourselves. Forgive the pain we cause and the self-indulgence we favour. Forgive us when we have disregarded our neighbours’ needs, yet wondered why other people don’t meet ours. Cleanse us as church and give us the mind and heart of Jesus, who came not to be served but to serve. Amen.*

DAY  
3

## SEEK LOVE

### In preparation:

Get a pen and paper.

### Read:

Isaiah 43: 1-4

God wants you to see yourself the way he sees you, and then in turn to see others through His lens of love. **What is filling your heart?**

There are many things that can fill our hearts, some good things and some not. Do you ever find yourself resenting your family or friends, or any one, perhaps for something they may or may not have done; if unforgiveness and bitterness have taken hold of your heart; if the stress and burdens of life have you so weighed down that you find it hard to enjoy simple pleasures with those who love and care about you; if you have lost sight of your purpose, and are just living from day to day, then it's time to see with new eyes.

God wants you to see yourself the way He sees you, and then in turn see others through His lens of love. Yes, it's a difficult task if you try to do it on your own, but with His help, you can.

Looking at ourselves through our human lens does not give us a full view. When we look at ourselves through the lens of God's love, we are able to see as he sees, love as he loves and serve as he serves.

Take some time to remind yourself how much you are special and loved by God. He sees you! He wants to renew your heart with His special and unique love so that it grows and overflows from you.

God's written Word holds wonderful reminders of how He sees us and loves us. Sit for a while and read from the pages of His precious book. Reflect on these words and ask God to write them on your heart. If one of these verses stand out to you as you read them, write it down.

1 John 3:1	Ephesians 2:10	1 Peter 2:9	Psalms 138:8
Psalms 139: 13-16	Romans 5:8	Romans 8:38-39	Psalms 33:18
Colossians 3:12	1 Corinthians 3:16	Romans 15:13	1 John 4:16

\*God wants the church to see itself the way that He sees it, and then in turn for the church to see the world through His lens of love. When God's love overflows in us, it is so that His love can reach others. Together let's seek God's love for others. Think about how your church already shows God's love to others.

**Now**, pray thankfulness over those things that come to mind and ask God to continue to be at work. Take a moment of silence and ask God to speak to you about what more He wants to do in and through your church. Then pray:

*Loving God, you are a God of abundance, we pray for you to be abundantly at work here. Within this church let your love overflow. Beyond this church let your love transform. Renew us. Grow in us. Let your Kingdom come. Amen*

## SEEK PEACE

### In preparation:

Get a pen, paper, bin.

### Read:

Psalms 119: 36-37

*"To safeguard your contentment in Christ is to ask the Holy Spirit to whisper Psalm 119 into your ear every now and then: 'Turn my eyes away from worthless things.'"*  
(Joni Eareckson-Tada)

The world is shiny and glittery - full of all kinds of 'stuff' that competes for our attention on a daily basis. Without even thinking, we often pursue peace and contentment in our lives through these things. We turn our eyes to the world and let it alter our expectations and dictate our moods. We so often place our value and contentment in 'things,' and often we are let down.

It happens the most when we let the world creep in where Jesus should reside instead.

*"Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain!  
Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways."*

**Psalm 119: 36-37**

If we spend a lifetime looking for peace, happiness, and contentment in the things of the world it will amount to nothing. Why?

True and full contentment is only achievable through seeking God. To seek God's will, desires and plans for our lives will lead to a God focused peace and contentment which is immeasurable to the things the world offers.

**When culture declares contentment in self, let's be a people who declare contentment in Christ.**

Are you looking for contentment in the wrong places?

**As you read these words, did your mind flicker to things that take your focus off God? Do you sometimes feel like there is something missing in your life? Or are there things that you are trying, that aren't working?**

Seek peace by focusing on God, cast aside those things that distract you!

**Write a list of the things that you need to focus less on, things that are worthless to gaining true contentment. As you write, pray that your loving Father will help to keep these things from you. Continue praying as you write, that your focus will remain on Him and that contentment will come and remain in you.**

**Once you have finished, simply tear up the paper and place it in the bin provided. These things are rubbish and worthless, they hold no value for you, let God renew you in His peace. As you finish pray Psalm 119: 36-37 over yourself.**

\*As followers of Jesus, we find peace and safety in the knowledge of Christ. However, this knowledge is not shared by everyone. Our world is filled with anxiety, worry, oppression and fear, peace feels distant. God invites us to be a people of peace, a non-anxious presence, just like Christ.

DAY  
5

**Now**, using your hand, use your fingers to help you to pray:

- Hold your thumb and pray for people who are unwell and need to find peace within waiting, illness, and recovery.
- Hold your index finger and pray for leaders around the world that they may seek peace for the people they lead.
- Hold your tallest finger and pray for people to come to know the peace of Christ across our world.
- Hold your ring finger and pray for those that are vulnerable and need peace against oppression or addiction.
- Hold your baby finger and pray for children and young people asking for peace in their many worries and stresses.

Thank God that He hears and answers our prayers.

## SEEK JOY

**Read:**

Nehemiah 8:10

It is His Joy that enables us to thrive not just survive! The joy of the Lord is our strength. Not a second cup of coffee, not our own abilities, time at the gym, or a full night rest. It is His joy that surpasses any trial, any feeling, and any emotion. His joy is a fortress of rest, a shelter from the sun, and a shield from the enemy's attacks. It keeps us going when we want to quit, strengthens weary bodies and souls, and transforms our perspectives.

God's plan for mankind has been to bring us joy and peace, we read this throughout the Bible. It teaches us that joy is a gift from God, and that it is something to be celebrated and shared with others. Joy is rooted in who God is. It is not fleeting or based on circumstances, it is sturdy and unbreakable. This type of joy isn't primarily a feeling. If it was, then it would be impossible to experience it in moments of grief or in the depths of trials.

When life is good and stable, we seek joy and find it easily. How easily do we lift our heads and speak prayers of joy when trials loom large and stormy seas threaten to overwhelm us?

Ultimately, this joy comes from Jesus himself. We experience the joy of the Lord specifically because we are united to Jesus Christ.

Sit for a time and reflect on all that you are thankful for, contemplate the joy you feel and that is available to you every day because of what Christ has done for you.



DAY  
6

Pray:

*Heavenly Father, thank You for the unending joy that comes from lingering in Your presence, this joy is available to me every day. Please draw my heart ever closer to Yours. Help me always to seek joy in all circumstances of my life, whether in overwhelming and difficult times or in good news and celebration. Renew in me the joy that comes in the knowledge of your love and sacrifice. Amen.*

Showing real and heartfelt joy is necessary and significant in our lives and that of the church. It is a sign of our salvation. This unending joy should be shared and shown by the church to everyone.

As we seek joy, we are trusting God in all circumstances. If we think of our opening verse from Nehemiah, he is teaching us that joy is found in persistence and the relentless pursuit of God.

It can be easy to be disheartened when we look at the world and see many people who turn away from God. For many the church feels irrelevant, yet we hold the good news of Christ that speaks freedom and joy.

**Now**, spend time praying for the impact of the church in your community. That in joy it would show Christ to many.

Pray:

*Heavenly Father, as a church may we show your joy to others in our words and actions. May we be a church that represents your joy to the fullest, that those who see it and feel it may seek the same joy for themselves. Grow and renew us for your Kingdom's sake. Amen*

## SEEK RENEWAL

**In preparation:**

Get paper and pen

**Read:**

Isaiah 43:18-21

These individual days of prayer have brought you through some stages; confession, renewal, and growth, praying for these things on a personal level, in a relational way and as church. Your prayers have helped you think and reflect on how to action out being a follower of Jesus and knowing and feeling His transformative power for yourself, the church, and the world.

God's expectation of us as individuals, and as church, is not perfection but rather of doing our best under His guidance. Having an awareness of our limitations and in recognising them, seeking Him so we can discern His will.

Pause now and take a look at a Community Prayer for Waiting by Dan White. As you read invite God to be at work in your own life, bringing renewal and prompting growth.

## **A Community Prayer for Waiting**

by Dan White  
(adapted)

*When we are heavy with sorrow,  
let us cling to a whispering hope.  
When we are deep in the night,  
let us not forget the light we've once seen.  
When we are exhausted from waiting,  
let us find strength in each other.*

*When we are hardened by conflict,  
let love interrupt our bitterness.  
When we are frightened by scenarios,  
let us receive wisdom from each other.  
When we are haunted by failures,  
let grace heal our self-inflicted wounds.  
When we are dismal and defeated,  
let faith be our nourishment.*

*When we are weary and complaining,  
let our hearts discover perspective.  
When we are apathetic and clumsy,  
let deep apologies flow from our lips.  
When we are dashed by disappointments,  
let us find footing to press forward.*

*We are sheep who wander in the waiting,  
but the Shepherd knows our names.  
We are strangers without a country,  
but the Kingdom of God is our true home.*

*In this time of great meaning,  
In the stillness of Lent,  
Give us grace for the days before us.  
Amen*

**Now**, spend some time focusing your mind to pray specifically for the Methodist Church in Ireland. How would you want God to renew and grow His people on the island of Ireland?

**Write your prayer on a piece of paper, why not share it with others in your church over the next few days and invite them to write a prayer too.**

**Take a picture of your prayer and send it to: [seek@irishmethodist.org](mailto:seek@irishmethodist.org)**

Together let's pray boldly and expectantly for God to be at work in the Methodist Church in Ireland.

# At Home Family Prayers

## Seek



### SKITTLES PRAYERS

**Items Needed:**

Large bag of skittles.

Sit together as a family and invite each member of the family to take a small handful of skittles. Each person then has to take it in turns to think of an item for prayer based on the colour of sweets. Younger family members may need some extra help.

**Yellow:** Give thanks to God for something good in your life.

**Red:** Say sorry to God for something you have done wrong.

**Green:** Ask God for his help with something.

**Orange:** Pray for your Church.

**Purple:** Pray for someone in your life that you would like to know Jesus.

As you finish, pray together:

*Thank you, God, that you hear our prayers and are close at hand to help us. Amen.*



## OUR CHURCH FAMILY PRAYER

### Items Needed:

Print out of an outline of a church building or draw one that looks like your own church.  
Colouring Pens.

Together as a family, think about what you would like to see more of in your church.  
Colour the church with the colours that match what you would like to see. Once you are finished, pray together for your church that God would bring renewal and growth.

**Red:** Pray for more love

**Yellow:** Pray for more laughter and joy

**Green:** Pray for more families, children & young people

**Purple:** Pray for more people to know Jesus

**Orange:** Pray for more work to happen beyond the church walls

**Blue:** Pray for more of the Holy Spirit

Add your own colours for other ideas you have.



LIVING WHOLEHEARTEDLY AS FOLLOWERS OF JESUS FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD



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IN IRELAND

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