

It matters little what form of prayer we adopt or how many words we use. What matters is our faith which lays hold on God, knowing that He knows our needs before we even ask Him. That is what gives Christian prayer its boundless confidence and its joyous certainty. ~ Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Loving, all knowing God, we thank you that we can come into your presence with confidence and the assurance of your love for us, your forgiveness for our sins, your desire to help guide us into that abundant life Jesus promised us. It is sometimes overwhelming to know that you do know all things about us. That you know our needs before we ask, that you know our motivations in asking, that you alone know what is best for us and for those we love. And so Lord, help us to have faith that you will answer us according to what is best. Forgive us when we ask you to change the laws of medicine, the laws of science, the laws of nature, to suit our desires for healing, for change. Forgive us when we become frustrated when we despair at the happenings we continue to hear about in the daily news, and we start to feel hopeless. Help us to remember that the world is like it is because of the sinfulness and disobedience of all humanity, including ourselves. And so we live a world where accidents happen, where disease strikes, where tragedy sometimes occurs, and where people sometimes act in ways that are hurtful and even harmful. May it remind us to pray for our world. Forgive us when we want to ask the question, why? For in reality, when we ask that, we do not want an answer, we want an argument. An argument about why it shouldn't be. And so help us always to remember that it is our boundless confidence and joyous certainty that when we have faith in you, when we turn to you, trusting in your sovereignty, in your love, in your will and way, that we know you will always answer us and support us, you will strengthen us, comfort us, and you will be there with us to get through in your will and your way.

And Lord, we pray not only for ourselves but for others. You have heard those on our prayer list, but hear us now as people in this congregation lift aloud the names for whom we ask your blessing.

Lord, we are here this morning to come away from the world, and refocus our lives and priorities. But we have to go back out into the world, and we want to go out and feel like we can make a difference. We can be a voice of reason and hope and love. Not only as individuals, but as a church, and so hear us now as we pray together our John Wesley prayer...

*Dear Lord, we want John Wesley to be a strong and vital church in our community. And we want to be guided by your vision and plan for us. As we move into the future, please lead us all in our thoughts, our discussions, and our decisions. Show us what you would have us do and how you would have us do it. And help us always remember that John Wesley is your church, not ours – may your will be done. In Christ's name we pray. Amen*

