

## Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray to the Father, through Jesus Christ his Son, who brings Light to the World. As we approach the time in our Church calendar when we cast a glance back to the crib scene and wonder at the birth of your Son at Christmas and begin to turn our eyes towards the cross and beyond, let us pray.

Let us begin our prayers with a time of reflection...

Father, as we close our eyes and pray, in the darkness... Let us bring to mind the things in this world that define and embody light for us. It may be the voice of a loved one, a friend or a relative... the beauty of this world all around us as the days lengthen... watching someone we know grow in faith and love... witnessing an act of kindness or charity in your name... spending time prayerfully and being enfolded in your presence... [PAUSE]

Lighten our darkness, Lord, we pray.

Lord, hear us...

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Father God, the people of Jesus' time were asking 'Who is this man?' Astounded at what he was capable of they noticed his tone, his authority, his abilities and his power.

Let us remember the two people who believed in Jesus by faith without these visible signs when he was a small child. Both Simeon and Anna welcomed your Son when he was presented in the Temple by Mary and Joseph. An extraordinary encounter where an infant of only 40 days old was recognised by their wizened eyes.

Help us to show such faith in you and listen for your voice. Be with us all in the darkness of these days, let us still recognise the hope and light that you offer to us.

Your light that restores.

Your light that overcomes.

Your light that heals.

Your light that redeems.

Inspire our faith, Lord, we pray.

Lord, hear us...

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

At forty days old, Jesus would have started to respond to Mary and Joseph more with smiles, eye contact and recognition. They would have been settling into being a family with those early bonds of love growing between them. In these early days of childhood, Mary and Joseph must have wondered what Jesus' future would hold. They were amazed by what they were being told about him by the angels, the wise men and now Simeon.

We pray now for all children and those who care for them. We pray for all children's charities, at a time when this sector is struggling so hard to obtain funds.

Mary and Joseph said thank you to God for their son, Jesus. We thank you for all of the children who bless our lives.

Strengthen our love, Lord, we pray.

Lord, hear us...

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

We bring to you now all of the information that we have absorbed this week, which has stayed with us.

[PAUSE]

We pray especially for:

All figures of authority and leadership in our world and particularly the United States of America as a new presidency commences.

Those who work in the emergency services.

Those who have been evacuated from their homes due to flooding.

Your Son, who for our sake became poor:

look in mercy on all those who are in need of any sort

Those who suffer in pain and illness.

Those who suffer in despair and anxiety.

The loved ones of those who have died.

Deepen our wisdom and understanding, Lord, we pray.

Lord, hear us...

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Father, you kept faith with Simeon and Anna and showed them the infant King.

Give us grace to trust your promises and patience to wait for their fulfilment.

Lord Jesus, Light of the World, we pray to you,

Light up a little candle today. Remind us, we are together as we pray:

For healing and strength

For peace and forgiveness

For friendship and kindness

For families and togetherness

For love and fellowship

For helpfulness and caring

For compassion and faithfulness

For sincerity and hope

In a world that can be dark and lonely, may we shine like lights bringing faith and hope into each other's lives. Send your light, the brightest light of all, to lead us...

Light up and shine in our lives today. Remind us, you are with us, now and always. Amen.

*Merciful Father,*      **Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son  
Our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**