
LET US PRAY

A DIGITAL COLLECTION OF PRAYERS



Volume #1 & 2
Now Available

By Jane Doull

LET US PRAY PROJECT

DESCRIPTION

Let Us Pray: A Digital Collection of Prayers is a compilation of prayers for worship organized into four packages that cover various seasons in the church year and special occasions. The prayers are written in a simple and accessible language, without abstract theological language.

There will be at least 150 prayers in each package, including:

- Gathering Words
- Opening/Centering Prayers
- Prayers of Confession/Searching
- Offering Prayers
- Prayers of the People
- Words of Blessing/Parting

Volume #1

Prayers for Creation/Ordinary, Advent & Christmas.

Volume #2

Prayers for Epiphany, Lent & Easter.

Volume #3 (available by February 1, 2024)

Prayers for Later Easter season, Pentecost & Ordinary Times.

Special Occasions Volume #4 (available by April 1, 2024)

Prayers for Advent candle lighting, Lent rituals, Communion prayers, Prayers for Solstice & other Earth-based Seasonal Prayers, Blessings of Animals, Prayers for other Dedications and Blessings.

A PRAYER BENCH COLLABORATION

The Prayer Bench, hosted by Janice MacLean, provides online resources for deepening spirituality. Visit the Prayer Bench at www.prayerbench.ca The Prayer Bench is delighted to collaborate with Jane in providing this collection of prayers.

We trust the prayers will offer you support and nourishment. Once you invest in Volume 1, you are invited to purchase the remaining three packages for \$50 instead of \$75. We'll honour this even if you purchase Volume 2. Email Janice for information.

Volume 2, 3, & 4 will also be available individually for \$25.

Email Janice at Janice@prayerbench.ca for further information.

OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION

Volume #1 (available now in the Prayer Bench Shop)
Prayers for Creation & Ordinary Time, Advent & Christmas for each Sunday from September to the end of December.

Volume #2 (available now in the Prayer Bench Shop)
Prayers for Epiphany, Lent & Easter Sunday.

Volume #3 (available before February 1, 2024)
Prayers for Easter season, Pentecost & Ordinary Times.

Special Occasions Package #4 (available by March 2024)
Prayers for Advent candle lighting, Lent rituals, Communion prayers, Prayers for Solstices, Blessings of Animals, Prayers for other Dedications and Blessings.

SUMMARY OF VOLUME 1

There are more than 175 prayers in Volume 1.

In the **Prayers for Creation and Ordinary Time**, there are:

- 8 Invitations for Gathering
- 20 Opening/Centering Prayers
- 17 Prayers of Confession/Searching
- 22 Offering Prayers
- 14 Prayers of the People
- 17 Words of Blessing & Parting

In the Prayers for **Advent**, there are:

- 9 Invitations for Gathering
- 10 Opening/Centering Prayers
- 7 Prayers of Confession/Searching
- 10 Offering Prayers
- 5 Prayers of the People
- 9 Words of Blessing & Parting

In the Prayers for **Christmas/New Year**, there are:

- 3 Invitations for Gathering
 - 6 Opening/Centering Prayers
 - 4 Prayers of Confession/Searching
 - 4 Offering Prayers
 - 3 Prayers of the People
 - 6 Words of Blessing & Parting
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SUMMARY OF VOLUME 2

There are more than 180 prayers in Volume 2.

In the **Prayers for Epiphany**, there are:

- 10 Invitations for Gathering
- 8 Opening/Centering Prayers
- 6 Prayers of Confession/Searching
- 9 Offering Prayers
- 12 Prayers of the People
- 13 Prayers of Blessing & Parting

In the Prayers for **Lent**, there are:

- 9 Invitations for Gathering
- 14 Opening/Centering Prayers
- 9 Prayers of Confession/Searching
- 12 Offering Prayers
- 12 Prayers of the People
- 16 Prayers of Blessing & Parting

In the Prayers for **Easter season**, there are:

- 8 Invitations for Gathering
- 14 Opening/Centering Prayers
- 5 Prayers of Confession/Searching
- 10 Offering Prayers
- 6 Prayers of the People
- 10 Words of Blessing & Parting

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCING JANE DOULL

Jane Doull, a writer, adult educator, and spiritual seeker, has been leading worship mostly within rural prairie and Maritime churches for almost four decades. She lives in the small coastal resort town of St Andrews, New Brunswick, with her two cats. Her passions include creation, languages, literature, music, art, justice-seeking, theology, and good conversation.



Jane says, "I started writing my own prayers when printed resources did not say what I wanted said. I try to write simply, without abstract theological language. I try to open safe space for various life situations and spiritual paths. I try to write from an expansive, creation-centred, justice-seeking perspective. Our words always fall short of expressing the Divine, and so I vary my language and imagery, to allow various points of connection with

Divine Presence.

JANE'S WORDS INTRODUCING THE COLLECTION OF PRAYERS

I began writing prayers 40 years ago, for occasional chapel services at St Andrews College, a United Church of Canada seminary in Saskatchewan, and then, for Sunday worship in United Church communities and other community events. I began writing, because the United Church of Canada does not have a set Sunday liturgy, and the printed resources available to me did not always express what I was trying to say.

For me, the words we say and sing convey a spiritual message just as much as the words we put into a sermon or reflection. I have tried to use words and images which resonate with the communities I have served. In so doing I consider the life situations and spiritual needs within these communities, primarily small rural communities in the Canadian prairies and Maritimes, while keeping us mindful of peace and justice and environmental issues in the wider world.

I always ask myself: would these prayers speak to and for someone who had not attended a church service recently or at all? Are they inclusive of people of all ages, family situations, ethnic background, income level, abilities, orientations, and genders? The worship I grew up with and the education I received in my youth were not. Even though my communities are not as diverse as some, I still try to model as much inclusivity as I can, trying myself to learn and evolve beyond my biases.

My understanding of prayer has shifted over four decades, as has my way of speaking of or to the Divine. My prayers, even with revisions, reflect these changes. Some may speak to you more

than others. Time and space prevent me from exploring my understanding of prayer at length. However, in the introductions to each section, I say more about what each type of prayer is trying to do, at least from my perspective.

I speak to, or of, God/the Holy/the Divine in more varied, expansive language than that I grew up with. Our language can never capture all of the Divine, the I Am, the Great Mystery, and if we use only one or two time-honored names, we risk thinking that that's really who God is. There are many words, and many names, and each expands our awareness of the Holy. In Judeo-Christian tradition, we see ourselves as created in the image of the Divine. For myself, to honour humanity - and all of creation- in its wondrous diversity, I need to imagine a Divinity both infinitely One and infinitely Diverse, as well as infinitely beyond my naming.

In the words and intentions of my prayers, I write within Christian traditions, but I am also shaped by wisdom from other spiritual paths. In my experience, the deeper we go in contemplation, the more we find common ground.

I wrote many of these prayers while using the Revised Common Lectionary for my Sunday readings and reflection. These days however we don't all use the same lectionary or necessarily any lectionary at all. So, I mostly do not specify particular Sundays, except with reference to a particular seasonal event or a high liturgical season. In Volume 4, we move even further away from lectionary, as we offer special worship, such as communion, and extend our reach into other community spiritual gatherings.

Please feel free to adapt as suits your community and context, but please credit these prayers as "by Jane Doull" or "adapted from Jane Doull." Most unison prayers can be made responsive, most responsive ones can be made unison - also you can decide what goes in the bulletin or power point and what is said only by the worship leader. We follow the practice in these prayers of using bold for unison voice.

Since COVID some Sunday worshippers may be joining by Zoom and Facebook or by an emailed order of service. In addition, some of my readers may wish to use these prayers in your own personal prayer and reflection time, along with your other spiritual practices - some of which require no words at all.

SEASONAL INTRODUCTIONS

Jane introduces each season in the circle of the church year and each category of prayer with her understanding and theology and how this shapes the prayers she writes. These are valuable reflections.

SAMPLE PRAYERS FOR CREATION AND ORDINARY TIMES

INVITATIONS FOR GATHERING

These words help settle minds and hearts, that we may become present to this sacred time and place. As the Sufi poet Rumi puts it, we are like fish in the sea, always immersed in the Divine. Personal or community prayer is a way of intentionally becoming aware of this. If we are intentionally present to the sacred in times and places of prayer, we will be more deeply aware elsewhere...

1. Come and rest a while.
Pause from the busyness of this new season.
Breathe in the Love which surrounds you.
Listen for the still small voice speaking to your inmost heart.

2. Today, may we be open to the unexpected,
question the normal
and sit loosely to what we think we know!
As we let go of what we think we know,
let go our attachment to the way things are,
may we make room for Hope to work wonders
in our life and our world.

OPENING & CENTERING PRAYERS

These reflect the context and theme of your worship service, acknowledging something of where we are, where we've come from, what we might be looking for in this worship time. These prayers can help set the tone for the day's readings, suggesting what we might be listening for ...

Holy Wisdom, we hear you in a reminder to share our bread, a story about what that sharing means, and a challenge to love and honour those who live on the edge and at the margins. Help us not only share your word but do it. In the name of Jesus, who showed us the path. Amen.

Prayer for Peace Sunday

Compassionate God, we long for a safe and peaceful world for all. We are not there. We do not know how to get there. We gather in search of the wisdom, courage and hope we need. As we reflect and listen and pray, may we draw always on the deep wellspring of your Peace, beyond our speaking, beyond our knowing. May this deep Peace restore and refresh our spirits. May your Light show us our place in the peacemaking, justice-seeking and healing work of your beloved community, here and around the world. May there yet be hope and healing for all beings. Amen.

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION & SEARCHING

... In these prayers I focus on the various personal and collective struggles which weigh us down and I express our longing to live more deeply, freely, and compassionately. The list of concerns, struggles and regrets could go on and on. I limit how many I name in any one prayer, otherwise it becomes overwhelming. In my experience people are already easily overwhelmed. You might want to include moments of silent reflection in this time- and then people can individually recall any additional concern that's important to them....

Generous God, you give to us abundantly, but we do not always know how to receive. Sometimes we look for what we do not have and miss what is before us. Sometimes we do not use your gifts to the full; we do not let them transform us and our world. Sometimes we cling to what we know and fail to embrace new ways and life-changing possibilities. We seek forgiveness for what we have not noticed, what we have wasted, what we have missed. May your Spirit enliven and encourage us, that our lives may become prayers of thanksgiving and a sign of hope and good news for all. Amen.

Words of Hope

Hear the good news! Today the Holy One does a new thing within you. Today the Spirit fills you with blessing and frees you to become more fully the blessing you can be.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

OFFERING PRAYERS

.... Gifts in these prayers do take many forms, not only monetary. I find thankfulness motivates generosity, as does a sense that all we have is gift.

Creative, ever creating One, we are humbled, knowing how small we are in this vast universe, how short and fleeting our story in the story of all that is. And yet we are made of the same molecules, the same particles as the most ancient, faraway stars, and as countless life forms, past and present. We are not alone but connected to all that is, in body and in spirit. Knowing this we try to make our connection a good one, offering generously our best gifts and our best selves. In our giving and living may we be worthy citizens of this world, this universe, with your strength, your wisdom, your compassion making it so. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

... I write with the following assumptions: I try to pray for "those of us" and "those among us," unless I'm referring to people in another part of the world. If we pray as if those living with particular challenges or marginalized are other people, as if no one in that situation is among our worshipping community, we risk marginalizing some of our worship attendees, be they in person or online. It's very important not to pray as if everyone among us fits a certain norm, a certain life situation, as if we all experience or have experienced life in the same way....

Loving Creator, we give you thanks:
 for the beauty and richness of our land,
 for the sun and warmth which make our harvest possible,
 for the peace and safety of our country which makes it possible for us
 to live and work on our land,
 for the chance to go to school, or send our children to school, and for the teachers and other staff
 who work with them,
 for all friends and loved ones who have brightened our summer days.

Compassionate God, we remember before you:
 those who do not have a crop to harvest, or enough to eat,
 those who are displaced from their land,
 those whose land has been devastated by war and landmines,
 those children who have no schools or who are prevented from attending school.

May we help to mend your world,
 working with those who seek peace with justice,
 who seek food and independence for the hungry,
 who seek a world where all children can grow and thrive and be all they are meant to be.

God who weeps with those who weep and holds close those who are suffering,
 we remember before you all who are ill at home or the hospital,
 those who grieve the loss of loved ones, all who bear a burden of pain and struggle.
 May we be signs of your compassion, as we listen and care as best we can.
 In a moment of silence, we hold them in Love and Light.

These and all our prayers we offer in the name of your Beloved *one as we say together the prayer he taught his friends: Our Father/Mother...*

WORDS OF BLESSING & PARTING

... As people leave, they need to know they are loved, that they are surrounded and upheld by the Divine, whatever words they would use. They need to know that their words and deeds and way of living matter, that they play a part in the tending and mending of the world when they live with compassion, care, and respect. They need encouragement to include spiritual practices in their week, whatever connects them deeply with God and creation. They need to know they are part of a sacred web of giving and receiving. Of course, no one blessing can cover everything; there will be other weeks and other words of parting and blessing....

Dare to journey forth, even through deep waters and unfamiliar landscape.
 May the spirit breathe through you always.
 May Wisdom light your path.
 May you know that Love travels with you wherever you go,
 and hope lives within you, wherever you may be. Amen.

Thank you for downloading and reading this sample. We hope it gives you a sense of Jane's practice, theology and the creativity in her writing.

This Sample shares a few prayers drawn from the Season of Creation/Ordinary Time.

- The full set of prayers in Volume 1 contains Jane's full introductions and a set of prayers for each Sunday in the season of Creation & Ordinary Time, Advent, and Christmas. There are 60 pages in Volume 1 and prayers for every Sunday from September to the end of December.
- The full set of prayers in Volume 2 contains Jane's full introduction for each season and a set of prayers for each and every Sunday in the season of Epiphany, Lent and Easter. There are 66 pages in this Volume.

To purchase Volume 1 and/or 2, please visit the Prayer Bench Shop at www.prayerbench.ca

If you have questions or need more information, please contact Janice at Janice@prayerbench.ca