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## Coronavirus: Calls to prayer

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**The presidents of Churches Together in England (CTE) have issued a [call to prayer and action](#) in the light of the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic.**

On Mothering Sunday (22 March) the presidents are asking churches and people of prayer to light a candle in the windows of their homes at 7pm.

In light of the fear and uncertainty that people may be experiencing because of the pandemic, this is an opportunity for Christians to be reminded of our dependence on our loving Heavenly Father and the future that he holds.



In a statement, the presidents write:

"Whether you are continuing to worship as congregations or not, we have the great privilege and freedom to be able to call upon God, wherever we are, individually and corporately, for healing in our nation. We would pray for all in leadership at this time, making decisions about the containment of the COVID-19 virus, for those working in health and social care, and especially for the most vulnerable, whether elderly or those with underlying health conditions.

"There are already stories being told of wonderful acts of kindness across neighbourhoods. Alongside your prayers, take the opportunity to telephone or email someone who is isolated, buy some additional food for your local foodbank, or offer to deliver shopping for an elderly neighbour. We may not be able to touch physically, but we can make connections in so many other ways.

"In the meantime, do please attend to all the government health advice that will be issued, and look out for resources from your specific church governing bodies. At least for those of us in the global North, we do seem to be in unusual times, and wisdom and flexibility about worship gatherings are a key part of our Christian discipleship during this period.

"We note that this call to prayer and action comes on Mothering Sunday: a time of thankfulness, remembering especially mothers who have served us, often in very costly ways. It is also a very mixed day for many. For some the remembrance is painful, and for others Mothering Sunday is a reminder of disappointment or loss. In many ways, this period under the shadow of the coronavirus will be prompting similarly diverse reactions and so it seems especially appropriate that the call to prayer is made this Sunday. At this time of uncertainty join in with the National Day of Prayer and Action, lighting a candle of hope.

'Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you'. " 1 Peter 5:7.

The Presidents of Churches Together in England are: the Archbishop Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, the Revd Dr Hugh Osgood, The Free Churches Moderator, the Archbishop Angaelos of London, CTE President for the Orthodox Churches, and Pastor Agu Irukwu, CTE Pentecostal President.

In response, Churches in Scotland came together to [sign a letter](#) commending the call to prayer.

Along with the Revd Dr David Pickering, Moderator of the URC National Synod of Scotland, signatories include the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Roman Catholic Church, the Church of Scotland, the United Free Church, the Baptist Union of Scotland, the Methodist Church, the Society of Friends (Quakers), Congregational Federation in Scotland, the Salvation Army, the Church of the Nazarene, and Redeemed Christian Church of God.

The letter asks that we "join in prayerful solidarity with this witness", describing the candle as "a visible symbol of the light of life, Jesus Christ, the source of hope in this life."

The following prayer can be used when lighting the candle:

*For all that is good in life, thank you,  
 For the love of family and friends, thank you,  
 For the kindness of good neighbour and Samaritan stranger, thank you.*

*May those who are vulnerable, hungry or homeless, experience support,  
May those who are sick, know healing,  
May those who are anxious or bereaved, sense comfort.*

*Bless and guide political leaders and decision-makers, with wisdom,  
Bless and guide health workers and key workers, with strength and well-being,  
Bless and guide each one of us, as we adapt to a new way of living.*

*And may the light shining from our windows,  
across road and wynd, glen and ben, kyle and isle,  
be reflected in our hearts and hands and hopes.*

*Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*

*Pictures: Candles being lit. Rebecca Peterson-Hall/Unsplash*

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It is with deep sadness that the #URC announces the death of the Revd Robert Waters. Mr Waters, widely known as Bob, died peacefully in his sleep at home on 3 July, just four days shy of his 90th birthday. His funeral takes place on 16 July. Details here: [bit.ly/URCrevdwaters](http://bit.ly/URCrevdwaters)



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 Church House  
 86 Tavistock Place  
 London  
 WC1H 9RT  
 United Kingdom

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