

Almighty God, in our hour of need we turn again to you, for we have nowhere else to turn. We put our faith in you, because you have proved your faithfulness time and again. We reaffirm our love for you because you have never let us go. We thank you that you are not distant from us, but have drawn near, in your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. He has shared our life, tasted our death and defeated it; He understands our worries and our fears. Help us to respond as your children now. We pray for this pandemic spreading across our world, remembering all who have lost loved ones, and praying for those seriously ill at this time.

We uphold the National Health Service as it responds to this added pressure on its already overstretched services. We pray for doctors and nurses and all in the caring professions, who work to help and support people as best they can. We remember those working behind the scenes testing samples, confirming results, giving information to patients. We uphold others trying to understand this virus better working to create an effective remedy.

We pray for our Governments as they work with the best medical advice to guide us on how we should respond and what action we should take. We pray that these guidelines might be taken seriously and that all would put them into action. May this crisis bring out the best in us, not the worst. Help us to live by faith and not by fear; to build bridges not barriers, and to resist all who would speak ill of any other group. May we not forget our responsibility to one another, not least to the vulnerable and voiceless in our communities. Help us to find ways of keeping in touch and offering reassurance to those with underlying health issues; for any who feel particularly vulnerable or in danger at present.

As the virus spreads, we pray for the disruption it causes to normal life, bringing new fears and anxieties. We pray for those who have been laid off as their work disappears; for financial hardship for individuals and businesses; for the impact on the economy and pensions, when austerity has already left its mark. We pray for those whose trips, both for business and pleasure, have been cancelled; and others where events, long anticipated and planned for, have been postponed; for those making contingency planning for home-based work or child care or exams. May our inconvenience not blind us to others' loss. We remember those who cannot visit loved ones in locked-down care homes; for the elderly whose social contacts have been severely curtailed; help us to find creative ways of keeping in touch, of assuring them they are not forgotten or ignored.

May congregations find new ways of living though this time. May we not forget our faith, but draw strength from it. So may our worship be heartfelt, our fellowship deepen and our service increase.

God of grace and God of mercy, hear our prayers at this time. Strengthen us, by your Spirit, so that: we may carry on our lives as best as we are able, looking out for others, showing love in action, being faithful in prayer, and bringing encouragement, hope and peace; always trusting in you our Rock and our Redeemer.

These prayers we bring to you in Jesus' name.

Amen

Rt Rev Colin Sinclair, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland