

# Prayer diary

5 September 2021–1 January 2022



## Pray with us



*Enabling all ages to grow in faith*

Anna Chaplaincy

Living Faith

Messy Church

Parenting for Faith

**‘The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.’**

PHILIPPIANS 4:5–6

It’s been exciting in recent years to see the rise of interest in prayer for the ministry and mission of BRF. Prayer posts on social media have been shared widely and used in church services; our books on prayer have provided encouragement for those seeking to deepen their prayer life; and this Prayer Diary, alongside the weekly online prayer points, have meant that God has raised up an army of pray-ers to support the work of BRF. We are especially grateful to those of you who use this Prayer Diary regularly. Each week’s prayer focus, alongside quotes, thoughts and set prayers, are, we trust, also a blessing to you personally, helping you deepen your experience of prayer, as you ‘pray with us’.

And your prayers have never been more needed than over the past 18 months.

Next year we celebrate BRF’s centenary. Founded as a movement of both Bible reading and prayer, we are excited that this renewed emphasis on prayer has come at this time, helping us not only to rediscover our roots but also to refocus our commitment to resourcing prayer.

Do be in touch with your ideas for how we can further develop the prayer ministry of BRF, and in the meantime please share the prayers in this diary widely, as well as the stories of what God is doing in answer to your prayers.

With prayers for you,



Martyn Payne  
BRF volunteer prayer advocate

## *A prayer for one another*

Teach us, Father God,  
how to listen to one another,  
so that we might discover your wisdom;  
how to serve alongside one another,  
so that we might model your love;  
how to receive from one another,  
so that we might reflect your glory;  
how to pray with one another,  
so that we might grow your kingdom,  
as co-disciples of Jesus  
on our journey of faith.  
Amen

# For new beginnings in mission

**Prayer is one of God's greatest gift to us – the ability to communicate directly with the Almighty. Prayer is the first sign of new life.**

*Mentoring Conversations* by Tony Horsfall  
(BRF, 2020)

## Thought for the week

Faith is believing that our prayers are heard. The truth that a God who loves us hears every prayer is itself an answer to our prayers and possibly the best answer we need.



## Pray with us for

- Those in the office managing customer calls as a new set of BRF Bible reading notes will begin to be read
- Rachel Turner and the **Parenting for Faith** team as they support for Christian mission in the home
- Lucy Moore and Jane Butler in their encouragement of **Messy Church** leaders who are deciding when and how they might safely meet again in person
- The **Anna Chaplaincy** team re-establishing relationships with the elderly at home and in care, after the disruption of the past 18 months
- Renewed vision and energy for mission supported by BRF's **Living Faith** publications and resources, online and through training and events

Father, just as the dawn brings hope after a sleepless and fear-filled night, may your light, shining in and through our lives, bring dawn for those we meet this day, offering them hope and blessing, new strength and peace.  
Amen



# For creativity through the ministry of Messy Church

**Eugene Peterson writes that ‘waiting in prayer is a disciplined refusal to act before God acts.’**

Quoted by Mark Bradford in *The Space Between* (BRF, 2021)

## Thought for the week

Each day this week, let us begin our devotions not with ‘Oh, good Lord, it’s morning,’ but with ‘Good morning, Lord.’



Barry Brand demonstrating crafts from the book *Extreme Crafts for Messy Churches*

## Pray with us for

- Fresh creativity for Messy Church teams as they seek to blend online and face-to-face ministry in their outreach to their communities
- Inspiration for the writers of the monthly sessions in the *Get Messy!* magazine
- God’s blessing on the international creative community that has grown around the Messy Church Facebook Live sessions each week
- Jenny Smith, Maddie Jane, Jane Butler and Lucy Moore as they meet regularly to plan Messy Church events this autumn
- Members of the ten colourful volunteer teams that support Messy Churches nationally with creative ideas, support and training

Stir us up to serve you, Lord,  
that in our serving, others may see you;  
and, as others see you in us,  
we may meet with you afresh in them,  
so that we, in turn, are stirred again  
to serve you with joy,  
day after day. Amen

# For thanksgiving and generosity at harvest time



**Dear Lord, help us to nurture the good soil of our lives and trust you when we find ourselves on more difficult ground. Give us roots to our faith that will keep us close to you. Amen**

*Green Reflections* by Martin and Margot Hodson  
(BRF, 2021)

## Thought for the week

‘My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ declares the Lord... ‘As the rain and the snow come down from heaven... watering the earth... so is my word... it will not return to me empty.’

ISAIAH 55:9–11

## Pray with us for

- Julie MacNaughton, BRF’s head of fundraising, and the team she leads – David Cowan, Sarah Dunkley-Smith, Martin Gee, Judith Moore, Tracey Silvermore and Alice Willington – as they work with supporters and trusts
- Jane Butcher, BRF’s volunteer advocate, who networks supporters of our ministries and encourages people to become BRF champions
- Good stewardship of the gifts from regular BRF donors and grant-giving bodies who have helped BRF through recent challenging times
- Julian Hills, a new trustee of BRF, who takes over as treasurer from Peter Lloyd, for whose faithful service we give thanks
- All who have generously responded to BRF’s fundraising initiatives

Hope-giving God,  
thank you for creating a world full of seeds  
that testifies to your loving investment  
in the land and in our lives.

Just as you rejoice to see those seeds bear fruit,  
we come to you at this festival time,  
full of joy and thanksgiving  
for your goodness and faithful love. Amen

# For households and the ministry of Parenting for Faith

**I've found a real liberty in drawing on the wealth and richness of prayers written by others and prayed through the centuries, which draw on scripture, particularly the book of Psalms.**

*The Space Between* by Mark Bradford (BRF, 2021)

## Thought for the week

Our priestly calling in prayer is to turn up before God 'wearing the ephod', on which are named all those 'from our tribe' who God has put on our heart.



## Pray with us for

- BRF's Parenting for Faith ministry and its work supporting families at home to share their faith creatively with children
- Parenting for Faith team members – Rachel Turner, Becky Sedgwick, Anna Hawken, Kate Irvine, Mary Douglas and Iona Gray, as they support Christian parents
- Rachel Turner, who is invited to speak at major Christian events as well as recording podcasts and Facebook Live sessions
- Plans for future gatherings of 'The Forge', which offers an opportunity for parents and carers to think through their role as Christians in the home
- Strategic planning of resources and special seminars in 2022 that will inspire churches to support those seeking to bring up children in the Christian faith

Loving God,  
 from whom every family in earth and heaven is named,  
 may our homes and households  
 be places of faith and friendship,  
 freedom and fun,  
 as we each learn to give and receive from the other,  
 inspired by the community of family  
 found in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

# For the ministry of Living Faith around the world

**Dear Lord, help us to love you more through the love we share to others... and to respect your creation as love-filled and love-giving. Amen**

*Green Reflections* by Martin and Margot Hodson  
(BRF, 2021)

## Thought for the week

Our belief in God may falter, but God never stops believing in us. In the same way Jesus is always praying for us, even when we stop praying.



São Paulo, Brazil

## Pray with us for

- Olivia Warburton as she manages the content creation team, editing and designing books, resources and video content under our Living Faith ministry
- The relationships with international mission organisations and publishers
- God's blessing on John Hardwick's holiday club resources and Rachel Turner's Parenting for Faith published in Romanian
- That the Spanish editions of Tony Horsfall's and Mags Duggan's books, published by Asociacion Civil El Alfarero in Bolivia, will prove an encouragement to many
- That God would speak creatively through the many translations of Messy Church resources which have inspired Christians around the world

Dear Lord, you invite us to pray.  
Help us to know that  
when we don't know what to ask,  
when we struggle to find the words,  
when we become distracted and fall silent,  
nevertheless, our very desire to pray for ourselves and others  
is precious to you,  
and is used to grow your kingdom  
in ways beyond our imagining. Amen

# For Anna Chaplains and their ministry of prayer

**Prayer can be seen as something of an unfolding adventure. Our understanding of prayer deepens over time and reflects a growing intimacy with God.**

*Mentoring Conversations* by Tony Horsfall  
(BRF, 2020)

## Thought for the week

### PRAY:

Pause in the presence of God...

Reflect on the love of God...

Accept the forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ... and say

Yes to the power of God at work in you this day



## *Pray with us for*

- The growing number of Anna Chaplaincy volunteers across the country who have been on the front line, praying for and supporting those in care homes
- For the ongoing creativity of Anna Chaplains, who have knitted crosses and made other special gifts to distribute among residents in care homes
- Courage and wisdom for Anna Chaplaincy pioneer Debbie Thrower, as she is invited to speak about older people ministry in national forums
- Inspiration for Anna Chaplain coordinators Julia Burton-Jones, Alex Burn and Wendy Hopkins in their advocacy for the spiritual care of older people
- Guidance and wisdom for the Anna Chaplaincy working group meetings

**Lord Jesus,  
who travelled from heaven to earth  
and back again for our sake,  
sustain us as we journey in faith  
on unknown paths,  
trusting that you are both alongside us  
and also ahead of us,  
ready to welcome us home with joy  
at our final destination. Amen**





# As fellow disciples following the Lord Jesus

**Lord, we know that sometimes our faith can seem very small. Show us how to use that small amount of faith to build your kingdom.**

*Green Reflections* by Martin and Margot Hodson  
(BRF, 2021)



Research report  
on the Deepening  
Discipleship project

## Thought for the week

As disciples, we are urged to seek the spiritual gifts and bear spiritual fruit. These all come from the Spirit, who is the Spirit of prayer who moves us from within to desire these things.

## Pray with us for

- Discipleship initiatives across the ministries of BRF as well as the day-to-day discipleship provided through online resources and books
- Even more positive outcomes to the *Voyage of Discovery* research conducted by the Church of England and Church Army among Messy Churches
- Andrew Roberts and his continuing pioneering of Holy Habits, and the leaders who are using this model of discipleship in their churches
- The daily discipleship resources provided by *Bible Reflections for Older People*
- God's blessing on the many disciples who read *New Daylight*, *Day by Day with God*, *Guidelines* and *The Upper Room*

Lord and Master,  
as your disciples,  
you have poured your love into our hearts,  
so that your image in us might be restored.  
In the same way, link us up with those whom we can disciple  
and into whose lives we might invest our time and prayer,  
so they too may be nurtured into your likeness.  
In Jesus' name. Amen

# As a fellowship of Bible reading and prayer

**F.B. Meyer wrote, ‘The greatest tragedy of life is not unanswered prayer, but unoffered prayer.’**

Quoted by Mark Bradford in *The Space Between* (BRF, 2021)



## Thought for the week

Even the simple act of naming another person before God is prayer. And whenever something good happens for another, it’s because God has heard someone mention that person in prayer.

## Pray with us for

- Churches and Christians finding community and support from engaging in BRF’s work and ministries
- The many new friends of BRF who have found support and blessing in the social media prayers and articles posted online
- The prayer initiatives being planned for 2022
- The growing interest in prayer as part of BRF’s work promoted by this prayer diary and the weekly prayer updates from Richard Fisher
- The staff team meeting daily during the week online to pray, and all those who are joining you today using this week’s prayers

Loving God,  
as we reflect on your words,  
enlarge our vision of your good purposes for our lives,  
extend our trust in your unfailing presence,  
expand our faith in your saving power,  
so that, in us and through us,  
you might scatter the shadows of despair  
with the light of your love,  
through Christ our Lord. Amen



# As stewards of God's endangered creation

**Lord, we pray for all the young people raising the alarm on climate change and for those who are frightened by it. We also pray for world leaders that they will take notice. Amen**

*Green Reflections* by Martin and Margot Hodson (BRF, 2021)

## Thought for the week

When we take seriously the many ills of our world, from climate change to the cries of the displaced and the suffering, it can be overwhelming. But then we remember that 'with God all things are possible' and we pray.



## Pray with us for

- Those attending the Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow over the next two weeks, and that important planet-saving decisions will be taken
- Inspiration for those who speak up for the care for God's world
- Christians to become better informed about green issues through reading *Green Reflections* and *A Christian Guide to Environmental Issues* by Martin and Margot Hodson and *Changing the Climate* by Debbie, David and Jamie Hawker
- Writers and editors of *Messy Church Goes Wild*, addressing a range of environmental issues relevant to Messy Church and beyond
- Articles and social media that BRF post this week supporting the theme of COP26

Lord God, because of Christ Jesus,  
we know you are with us in the storms of each day  
and in the crisis facing our world.  
Steady our hands to do good,  
strengthen our wills to put others first,  
stir up our minds to act wisely  
and help each one of us by your grace  
to play our part with you in rescuing the world. Amen

# At this time of remembrance

**Prayer is so simple that a child can do it. And yet so profound that the greatest theologians cannot fully comprehend how it works.**

*Mentoring Conversations* by Tony Horsfall  
(BRF, 2020)

## Thought for the week

On earth, prayer may sometimes seem unanswered, but it is definitely never unheard. And often, beyond our understanding, God's best answers come in heaven rather than on earth.



## Pray with us for

- All those who have lost loved ones, not only in wars but also during the pandemic of the past two years
- Those leading acts of remembrance in churches and in public during this next week
- Editors Sally Welch, Helen Paynter, Jackie Harris, Daniele Och and Eley McAinsh, as they choose themes and authors for future editions our BRF Bible reading notes
- Martyn Payne, Karen Laister and Iris Jenkins as they decide on appropriate online prayers and articles that will help people honour the memory of those who have died
- Anna Chaplains who work in hospitals and care homes where issues of bereavement and death will be particularly poignant at this time

Remembering God,  
you never forget to keep promises and show mercy.  
Thank you that the death of those dear to us matters to you.  
And just as Jesus promised the dying thief  
that he would be remembered in heaven,  
so we can be sure those we love will be remembered,  
because your memory never fails;  
and whether we live or whether we die,  
we and they will be with you forever. Amen

# As we respond to God's calling

**Loving God, open our hearts to your love, open our ways to your will, open our actions to your compassion, open our pain to your peace, and in so doing open our world to your hope.**

*Opening Our Lives* by Trystan Owain Hughes  
(BRF, 2021)

## Thought for the week

Pray as you can; pray as you are; pray as you speak. Don't try to imitate others or be intimidated into praying like someone else. It is *you* God wants to meet when you pray.



BRF's Advent book 2021  
and author Jo Swinney

## Pray with us for

- BRF friends, volunteers and supporters around the country as they seek to respond to God's love for them and for the communities they serve
- Readers of BRF's resources, that they will respond to God's call for their lives
- Richard Fisher, Jay Elliott, Karen Laister, Julie MacNaughton, Sara Sheerin and Olivia Warburton – in their vocation as BRF's senior managers
- God's blessing on readers of this year's BRF Advent book *The Whole Christmas Story*
- Debbie Thrower, Lucy Moore and Rachel Turner, as they respond to God's call each day in the BRF ministries they lead

**Patient God,**  
we say that we are waiting for you,  
when the truth is more often you are waiting for us –  
you wait for us to open our ears to your voice;  
you wait for us to open our eyes to your presence;  
you wait for us to open our hearts to your love;  
you wait for us to open our minds to your truth.  
As we wait for you this day,  
may we encounter you  
waiting for us. Amen

# For BRF's trustees and council

**There is no magic formula that guarantees we get what we want in prayer... A mature understanding of prayer is a re-orientation towards praying according to God's will.**

*Mentoring Conversations* by Tony Horsfall  
(BRF, 2020)

## Thought for the week

Maybe we should focus less on how we should pray to God and instead remind ourselves regularly that God is always praying for us and that we are being invited to join in with those prayers.



## Pray with us for

- Wisdom for Richard Fisher, BRF's CEO, in the many decisions he takes each day on behalf of the welfare of staff and God's kingdom work through BRF
- Guidance for the BRF council as they plan and pray for the work of the charity
- God's blessing on BRF council members: Bishop Colin Fletcher (chair), Christina Baxter (vice-chair) and new members Julian Hills (treasurer) and Andrew Howard
- God's wisdom and discernment for BRF council members Andrew Barton, Alistair Booth, Paul Cox, Sarah Hayes, Jane Whittington and Mike Wilkinson
- A growing sense of community among all who work for and serve BRF in a voluntary or paid capacity

Covenant God,  
you promise to bring to fulfilment  
the gift of faith you have sown in our lives.  
Prompt us daily  
to get a move on spiritually  
and to keep our eyes on Jesus,  
throughout our lifelong journey of following you. Amen

# For BRF's centenary



**Lord of the years, we bring to you our past and recognise your support and presence in seasons of joy as well as sadness. And whatever we are facing in the future, we ask your help to notice your light illuminating the path of our journey ahead.**

Adapted from *Opening Our Lives* by Trystan Owain Hughes (BRF, 2021)

## Thought for the week

Crying out that you simply have no words to pray is itself a prayer. An honest shouting in the darkness is in fact 'calling on the name of the Lord', without our even realising it.

## Pray with us for

- Planning for next year's BRF centenary under the title 'Sharing the Story', being marked, among other things, by special publications and the gift of a rose
- The publication of a special centenary book of 365 devotional readings from a range of BRF writers and supporters
- Planning for next year's Messy Church international conference, which will take place in May
- Online and in-person seminars introducing people to Anna Chaplaincy and inviting them to find out about this BRF ministry among the elderly
- New resources and online materials being prepared to support BRF's Parenting for Faith ministry

Lord, you always come when the time is right, neither too soon nor too late.

Help us to live through the mean-times of life, becoming attuned to the whisper of your word, growing accustomed to the sense of your presence and being attentive to the signs of your coming into our homes and into our communities. Amen

## For the BRF staff team



**Lord, give us strength to keep going when things get difficult. Give us wisdom to make courageous decisions when we know they are right.**

*Green Reflections* by Martin and Margot Hodson (BRF, 2021)

### Thought for the week

Prayer is ultimately not really about words or how long you spend on your knees. Prayer is simply about being there for God with your hand up to volunteer, saying, 'Here I am. Use me.'

### *Pray with us for*

- The office team at BRF at the end of another busy and unpredictable year, that a strong sense of calling and purpose might continue to inspire their work
- Staff members John Chapman and Tabitha Griffiths, who maintain the office systems
- Staff member Kirsty Yu, who works with the BRF finance team
- Staff members Alison Beek, Rachel Tranter, Daniele Och, Adrian Serecut and Felicity Howlett, who are part of BRF's content creation team
- Staff members Lisa Bell, Matthew Duval, Claire Proudman and Taura Wood, who work in the supporter services team

Absent God, you are always present.  
 Silent God, you are always speaking.  
 Distant God, you are always close.  
 In our waiting, grow our faith.  
 In our listening, rekindle our hope.  
 In our longing, deepen our love for one another,  
 as we look for the light of your appearing.  
 Amen





# For our ministries that bring the generations together

**‘A fawning etiquette of unctuous prayer is actually foreign to the Bible. Biblical prayer is impertinent, persistent, shameless and indecorous. It is more like haggling in an outdoor bazaar than the polite monologues of the church.’**

Walter Wink, quoted by Mark Bradford in *The Space Between* (BRF, 2021)

## Thought for the week

When you can't settle to pray and the words won't come; when God seems silent or remote – know that your experience is not unique but that the Spirit is praying within you with groans too deep for words.



Video shots from Messtival

## Pray with us for

- The work of Parenting for Faith, supporting families with creative ideas for sharing the journey of Advent at home
- Messy Church sessions this month, aiming to share the wonder of God becoming human with families new to faith and the Christmas story
- Special events this month in care homes led by Anna Chaplains, using materials from *Messy Vintage* by Katie Norman and Jill Phipps
- Churches planning truly intergenerational events around this time of year, helping old and young to learn from and celebrate with each other
- The Messy Church online adventure videos that are being shared each day in these weeks leading up to Christmas

Come, O welcomer of children,  
 who blessed babes in arms,  
 who placed a child in the midst,  
 who meets us as one of your little ones,  
 inviting us to the necessity of new birth.  
 Amen

# As we celebrate the birth of Christ



Illustration from *Celebrating Christmas* (BRF, 2021)

**God of the everyday, we know that you come to us disguised in our lives. Help us to take time daily to look out for you in the apparent ordinariness of our existence.**

*Opening Our Lives* by Trystan Owain Hughes (BRF, 2021)

## Thought for the week

‘The incarnation of God is an infinitely greater thing than anything I could dare to write.’

The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien, Letter 181

## *Pray with us for*

- The reach of BRF’s social media posts in this final week of Advent
- BRF’s marketing and communications team at this busy time of year – Karen Laister, Debbie Clayden, Iona Gray, Stuart Holley, Felicity Howlett, Iris Jenkins, Eley McAinsh and Hannah Moger
- God’s blessing on the readers of this week’s Advent reflections
- Those using BRF’s resources, as Christmas draws near
- Our own personal renewal of wonder and commitment, as we encounter again the miracle in the manger at Bethlehem

**Come, O lover of the undeserving,  
who welcomes home  
the foolish, the fearful and the failure  
with extravagant celebration.**

**Come, O healer of the diseased,  
who mends the broken, sets free the imprisoned  
and soothes the troubled  
with words of life and hope.**

# With thanks for all God has done this year

**Hark, hark, the wise eternal word  
like a weak infant cries.**

**In form of servant is the Lord,  
And God in cradle lies.**

Thomas Pestel, 1584–1659

## Thought for the week

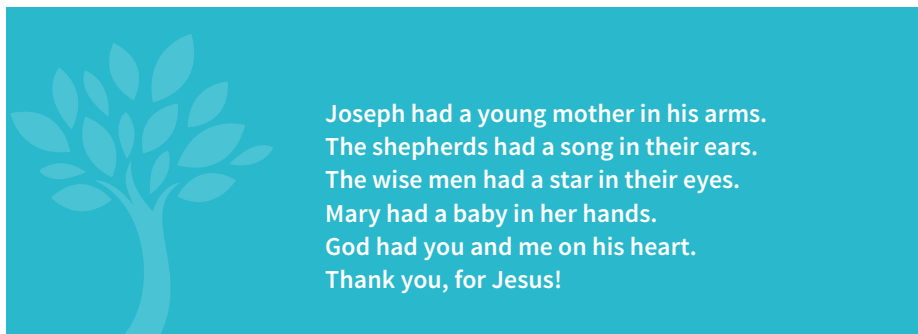
‘Once in our world, a stable had something in it that was bigger than the whole world.’

C.S. Lewis in *The Last Battle*



## Pray with us for

- Families as, hopefully, they enjoy a Christmas together for the first time in two years
- Times of refreshing in the presence of the Lord for those who have battled through a difficult past year
- Sabbatical rest for BRF’s ministry leads, Lucy Moore, Debbie Thrower and Rachel Turner, after the busyness of the past twelve months
- BRF staff as they take time out from day-to-day work routines
- BRF volunteers, friends and prayer supporters, like you, who make BRF a true fellowship of prayer and Bible reading



Joseph had a young mother in his arms.  
The shepherds had a song in their ears.  
The wise men had a star in their eyes.  
Mary had a baby in her hands.  
God had you and me on his heart.  
Thank you, for Jesus!

# The BRF prayer

Almighty God,  
you have taught us that your word is a lamp for our feet  
and a light for our path. Help us, and all who prayerfully read your word,  
to deepen our fellowship with you and with each other through your love.  
And in so doing, may we come to know you more fully, love you more truly  
and follow more faithfully in the steps of your Son Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forevermore.  
Amen

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