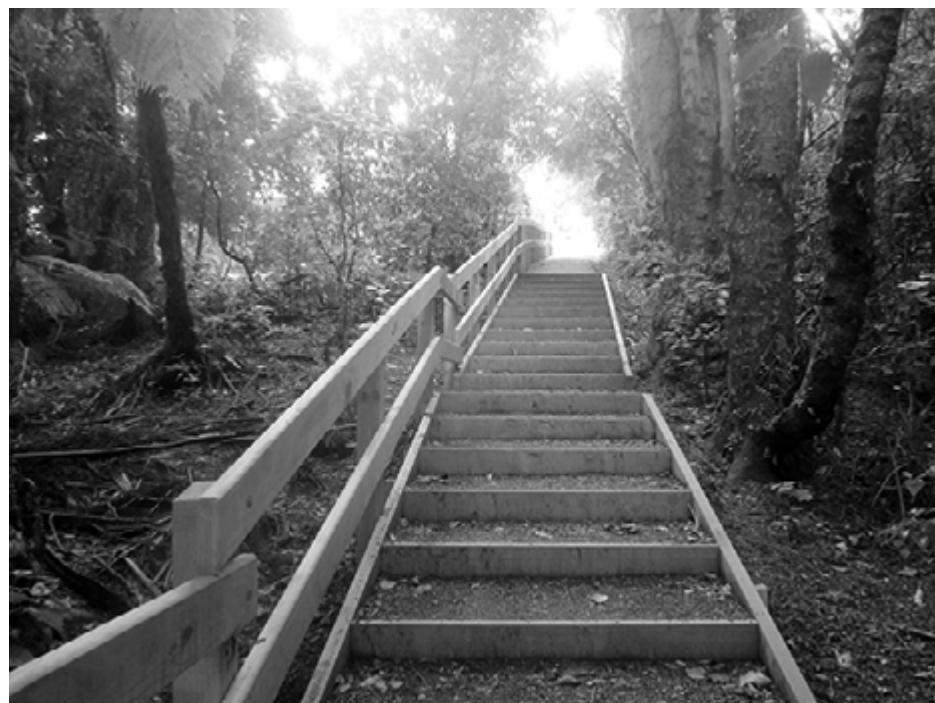


CLARE LIND &
MEMBERS OF TAWA UNION CHURCH

A row of colorful beach huts (sheds) on a sandy beach. The huts are painted in various colors: white, red, blue, green, and yellow. The green hut has a sign that says "SALE". The huts are set against a backdrop of dense trees and foliage. The foreground is a sandy beach with some seaweed and debris.

THROUGH LIVES
LIKE OURS



THROUGH LIVES LIKE OURS

Clare Lind and members
of the Tawa Union Church

AIM & kiwiconnexion zines 2019



Through Lives Like Ours

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Through Lives Like Ours

Editorial Note

For the people who week by week offer prayers for the world during services at Tawa Union Church, (TUC). In particular, for Margaret Jenkins, who, perhaps more than anyone, helped me to realise that TUC people write wonderful prayers, and for Ron Bichan, who has always said we should make a book of them.

Thanks to Wendy Russell for her proof reading, and AIM Publishing for layout design.

The collage illustrations have been done by past members of TUC Youth Group.

7

At their best, prayers are acts of love.

This is a book full of love.

Clare Lind

Through Lives Like Ours



K. Harris

Through Lives Like Ours

The Vision Prayer of TUC

Loving God, we are your people.
You call us by name to be your children.

Jesus, our Saviour,
heal our wounds and our pain, our separateness and our fears,
so that we may find new hope in your saving love.

Draw us into life as you mean it to be,
into loving communities committed to living your ways of love
and peace,
sharing our gifts with those in need.

9

Spirit of God, in your goodness, renew us,
that we may live the Gospel of Jesus Christ
and help renew the face of the earth.



C. Livingstone

Through Lives Like Ours

For Life and Home

Moving House

Loving God, every time I clear a cupboard,
or fill a box, it stirs a memory –
a memory of a person, or a time and place,
or of something that happened.
Sometimes these memories make me smile
or maybe they leave me thoughtful or sad.
You have given me such a rich life here.

Thank you for the living that I have done in this place.
Thank you for the love that has been shown to me here.
Thank you for the times when you have been present to others
through my words or actions.

11

Give me patience with the unexpected,
turning mishaps into experience.
Moving home is a real challenge,
your presence the only constant.

Hold those whom I leave behind gently,
and as I step out on a new path
remind me that you are with me wherever I am,
and that a new community awaits me.

C. Lind & M. Wilson

A Family Under Stress

Living God,
I pray for the people whom I love
and I entrust them and myself to you.

May gentleness curb anger,
courage replace fear,
truth overcome dishonesty,
hope dispel anxiety,
laughter nudge aside tears.

Protect us all from harm this day.
Give us the wisdom to see clearly,
the strength to do what must be done,
and most all remind us
that we are held in your love.

12

C. Lind

Through Lives Like Ours

Arrival of a Grandchild or Great Grandchild

(This prayer is written so that you can personalise it)

A new baby.

I am so glad for the safe arrival of this new bundle of life
and for the strength of her/his mother, ...

The blood of parents past has appeared again in the wonder
of this birth.

May it grow to fulfil our best hopes for ...

May ... develop within the love
of all of us around her/him.

I pray that s/he will always have a good hope for the future,
that s/he will journey through life with courage
and confidence that the best is yet to come.

13

Let faith in Jesus' way for living lead ...

into committing her/his life into faith in our God.

Keep her/him safe from life's dangers, temptations and despair,
and may your peace be upon her/him.

... may faith, hope and love surround you
and come to birth again through you,
by the power of the Spirit of God.

R. Bichan

A Prayer of Thanks

Lord, thank you for the power of the Spirit to support and hold me.

Thank you for my family and friends.

Thank you for the people I love

and for the people who love and care for me.

Thank you for the good times I have enjoyed

and for the things I have learned through difficult times.

Thank you for the knowledge of your never-ending love for me

demonstrated through the sacrificial love of Jesus.

M. Jenkins & C. Lind



Prayer for Starting the Day

Heavenly Father, I am grateful for your love
shown through your Son, Jesus.
I thank you that I am blessed with another day of life.

As I start my day, I ask that you will be with me.
Whatever the circumstances, whatever the difficulty,
I pray for a renewal of my mind and my life
from the inside out.

Remind me of your presence
and continue to reveal your purpose for my life.
May my actions be a reflection
of what you intend me to do.

15

As Jesus did with his disciples
may I be able to share the word of God
In whatever situation I am in.
I give myself to you as an instrument of your work. Amen.

L. Nuku

Prayer for the End of the Day

Lord, thank you for walking me through another day.
Thank you for your never-ending love and for guiding me in your will.
I give you thanks for what has gone well today
And I ask your forgiveness for any wrongdoing.

Thank you for this life.
Help me to see its beauty.
As I come to the end of this day,
Remind me that your care for me and for the world
Does not stop, as I sleep. Amen.

T. Fifita

Loneliness

I feel deeply alone, Lord.
Remind me that you are here as I travel this valley.
I feel an emptiness within me,
fill the void with your Spirit's warmth and gracious love.

Sometimes I am surrounded by people–
just like you in the crowds–
and still I am lonely.

Shepherd me towards the people you know will cherish me.
Let me be open to situations where we may connect.
Give me courage to reach out and befriend a stranger,
Just as you reached out to strangers on your journey.

Even in my solitude, you walk beside me,
all the days of my life.

S. Scannell

Starting a New Job

Dear God, thank you for your presence
through the seasons of not knowing what will come next.
Thank you for your continued guidance in times
when my faith was stretched, and I questioned your timing.

As I begin this new season in a new job,
I ask that you will continue to stay with me and guide me
through every conversation, challenge and milestone
that I negotiate in this new role.

May the workplace be a friendly one.
May it be easy to make connections.
May I quickly become part of the team. Amen.

A. Nuku

17

Leaving Home

Lord, in the heavens above, thank you for all the love
that you have for me.
You knew me before I was even born.
You have provided everything I needed.
You have given me the blessing of my parents,
Who have taken care of me for as long as I have known this world.
For that I thank you!

Now I am about to embark on a journey by myself,
leaving the family that you have blessed me with.
I come before you asking you to be my guardian and protector.
Do not let me forget the teachings that I have received.

18 I ask these things for I know that I cannot do this by myself.
Give me the strength to overcome every obstacle and distraction
on my path,
that would take my focus from you, my family
and the reason I am leaving home.
Bless me. Be with me.
I give you all the honour and glory, in Jesus name.

J. Mwarehwa

Hands

I am thankful to you, God, for hands: -
the hands I am able to use, to touch, to feel, to grasp and to hold,
the hands of parents and grandparents, that I have watched
and learnt many skills from, and still do,
the hands that have taught me right from wrong,
the hands that have helped me up while I was down
and then comforted me,

the hands that have sown seeds
so that we can reap the rich fruits of the harvest,
the hands that have prepared food
and kept me from starvation,
the hands that stitched the clothing on my back,
the hands that built the roof over my head
and provided shelter,

19

the hands of people, whom I have been able to reach out to –
to lead, to guide and protect them,
the many hands that gave friendly handshakes,
which have since turned into lifetime friendships,

the hands that help heal and cure the sick,
that care for the old and the fragile,
the generations of hands that have shared
your gospel,
in word and deed,
and still do so.

These are the hands I give you thanks for.

S. Fifita



***For I, the Lord, your God am holding your right hand.
It is me saying to you, 'Don't be afraid, I will help you.'***
Isaiah 41:13

Through Lives Like Ours

Mealtime Graces

Samoan grace before a meal

Le Atua e,
Faafetai tele I Lou alofa ma Lou agalelei.
Faaafetai i meaai ua e foa'i mai mo'i matou.
Ua matou talia ma le faafetai.
I le suafa o Iesu

K. Poasa

Tongan grace

'Eiki 'oku mau fakafeta'i atu 'I he me'atokoni kuo foaki
Tapuaki mai 'a e me'atokoni pea mo kimautilu kotoa pe
Ke ma'u ai ha ivi mo ha malohi
'Oku mau kole ni 'I he Huafa 'o Sisu Kalaisi. 'Emeni.

21

English grace

God, for good food and good company,
We give you thanks.



For Services of Worship

Calls to Worship

Let us worship the Living God.
May our ears be open to hear what we need to hear.
May our hearts be open to respond as we need to respond.
Remember always, God is love.

Come to the one you say you follow.
Listen for his voice
In the silences and in the singing.
Hear his word to you
In the word and in your conversations.
In all of these Christ is with us.

23

Gracious God, as you have called us,
make us worthy of our calling.
Guide us,
that we may become the people you would have us be.
Direct us,
that we may do what you would have us do;
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

It is just after Easter.
We come in the company of all God's people
to worship God who loves extravagantly and at great cost -
God present in Jesus Christ,
Building bridges, offering healing,
Renewing creation, calling us to follow.

Through Lives Like Ours

Sentences based on Psalm 133

It is a balm for the soul, to have kindness shown.
It is recognising that love and care are freely offered.
It is being aware that the fruits of the Spirit are ours to share.

How wonderful it is to share friendship and chatter over food.
How wonderful to acknowledge and enjoy produce
from God's gifts of rain and sun,
to be thankful for the abundance of life-giving foods.

It is indeed good to acknowledge and nurture friends,
to feel blessed and warmed by greetings,
to be aware of and accept interest and concern when offered.

24

Give thanks for friendships.
Give thanks for thoughts that become winged prayers.
Treasure quiet moments for peaceful reflection.

F. Delaney

It is a wonderful thing when members of a community
get along with each other and live at peace.
It is beautiful and right, like the anointing of a new ministry.
It is life-giving, like refreshing rain.

It is a wonderful thing when justice is done.
It is like clear ground after the rubble has been removed.
It is like a brand new start in a brand new place.

C. Lind

Through Lives Like Ours

Gathering Prayers

At Christmas

We come
bearing loads that need to be put down,
bearing the scars of loss and grief
the anxieties of looming hurdles and decisions,
the worries for those whom we love.
Help us to place these at the stable door.
Help us to entrust them to you
and this baby, whom you sent to heal and make whole,
this Saviour of the world.
Help us to entrust him with our world.
As we do that, may we begin to see the signs of promise and hope.

25

We come
teased out from our workplaces,
still with our phones in our hands and our diaries in our heads,
still solving problems,
still planning what we will do to fix that situation or tell that person,
still wondering what to get, what to do,
how to fit everything in.
As we pause at the stable door
let your peace break in on us. Deeply.

May the crimson of the pohutakawa
and the starry night,
and the glimpse of parents with a little baby
bring us to a place where we are once again aware

Through Lives Like Ours

of the larger rhythms of our lives,
and of your story of the world- the largest rhythm of the lot.
May we drop our lists, at least for a while,
and smile and wonder and give thanks,
and may the effect of that linger long after we are back at work again.
May it never quite leave us.

We started
travelling, bringing presents.
We have spent too many nights on the road,
and have been lured off on a few dead ends and unhelpful side tracks.
But the Christmas star is still there, and you call us on to the stable.
Somewhere on the road, in some tangled forest,
in some palace we would have been best to stay away from,
we have lost the presents we brought and gained only experience.
As we apologise at the stable door
you laugh and say, 'Wonderful. You are here just as you should be.
For you are my Christmas present
and I am yours.'

C. Lind

AGM Sunday

Living God, we thank you for your life among us.
We thank you for the ways that you enlarge our living;
Clearing our vision to see with your eyes—
the injustice and the good, the hurt and the beauty,

Unblocking our ears to hear your voice,
in silence, in nature, in the people around us,
Softening our hearts as you teach us
generosity, kindness and love,
sharpening our minds,
pushing us to conclusions that may be uncomfortable,

Helping us to recognise our connectedness—
that we do not have all the answers,
in fact, we do not have many answers at all,
all we do have is this sense that you hold all things,
and 'All will be well, and all manner of things will be well'.

27

We thank you for the ways you enlarge our living:
challenging our egos and inviting us to trust,
getting our hands and feet moving
for the sake of your kingdom and your love for the world.

You are the one who is among and behind all things.

So, on this AGM Sunday we come in celebration and prayer,
giving thanks for your company
and one another's company over the past year,
giving thanks for those who have joined our community
and for all that they bring,
giving thanks for those who have departed
from our community this year
and for all that they taught us,
and above all giving you praise.

C. Lind



B. Pannett

God of Change and Movement

Living God, you are the pioneer change maker and
the ultimate change master.

In the beginning your creating Word brought change.
You spoke and form rose from what was formless.
Life sprang up where there had never before been life,
And in the powerful creative making it was variety you loved
over sameness.
We are all, in our uniqueness, proof of that.

In the beginning there was letting go and bringing forth.
There was increasing and diminishing, the phases of the moon,
The spinning of the Earth, the movement of the stars,
The flux of the tides on the edge of land and sea.
There was the passing of one day
and the fresh beginning of a new day,
There was the surrender of the old year to the new year.
There was action and rest, waking and sleeping.
God our Maker, you did not bring this world into being
to stay exactly the same.
From the beginning you gifted it with change and movement.

29

We thank you for the gift of boredom-
For its part in pushing us out to engage in new ways
With you and the world around us.
We thank you for holy dissatisfaction
That will not let us settle for a life that is less than what it could be,
That keeps us searching and longing and hoping,
That knows that there is more, that senses you are more than we will
ever grasp or understand,
That you are too big and too awesome and too wonderful
For any box we try to put you in.

Through Lives Like Ours

We thank you for your boundless love,
a love that you allowed to change you.
For in Jesus you wrapped your arms around our hurting,
fearful, foolish world.
And we should know, for in our own hurt and fear and foolishness
we find ourselves in his embrace.

Thank you for placing your Holy Spirit within us to change and
transform us,
To nurture that part of us that reflects you,
That is our glory and your glory in us.
Help us to trust you and to allow your love to change us,
So that we might show your love and light
Amid the hurt and fear and foolishness that we meet in the world
around us.
We ask this in the name of Jesus.

C. Lind

Hope

Living God, we thank you for the richness of life,
And for the knowledge that you are there for us through all of it.
Help us to keep our eyes open for you,
To cultivate that ability to see you even in places where we least expect
you.
For the reality is that you are there already.
There is no place where your light does not reach.
Jesus has seen to that.

Through the fulcrum of his cross and the resurrection
You have pivoted human history from tragedy to comedy.
There is no sadness or hurt that cannot ultimately
Be transformed by your love and your kindness.
There is always hope.
It may come in a different form to what we expected
And we may take a while to recognise it for what it is,
But it is there because you are there.

31

Loving God may that redemptive hope transform our living
And the ways we interact with one another.
May our lives be marked by the gracious freedom
And hospitality that you have extended towards us.
Gracious God, we know we have a long way to go.
In the silence now we make our confessions to you

Forgive us, Lord, and help us to live toward you.
In Jesus' name we pray.

C. Lind

Legacy

Living God, you have set us in the middle of a very big story.
Even though the present grabs our attention
And its noise and action side-track us
From the long view back and the long view forward,
That does not mean it isn't so.
Whether we are conscious of it or not,
We are influenced by those who have gone before us
And we influence those who follow us.
This morning we acknowledge that we are not self-made
And autonomous.
We are not islands.
You have created us for relationship with you and with one another.

32

For those who have opened doors and removed barriers,
Who have rewritten our understanding of what is fair,
And what is possible and what is just, we give you thanks.

For the ways we are strong
Through the courage of those who have gone before us,
For the ways we are wiser because they shared their life experience,
For the ways we are rich through the generosity of others,
We give you thanks.

Thank you for our mentors and teachers,
For our mothers and fathers in the Faith.
Most of all we thank you for Jesus' legacy,
For his revelation of who you are and what you are about.
His observation is your observation,
His compassion, your compassion,
His life, death and resurrection, your Word to a hurting world.

Through Lives Like Ours

We thank you for the knowledge that resurrection follows death,
That all our deaths may be places where life may spring forth again.

Living God, today we also acknowledge
That not all that we have received is good legacy,
And not all we have passed on is good legacy.

Through the power of your Spirit
Bring healing and forgiveness,
In Christ's name.

C. Lind



B. Livingstone

Through Lives Like Ours

Spiritual Journeys

Living God,
we all have our own stories
of how you have made yourself known to us.

Some of us have travelled in far places,
sometimes quite purposely keeping you at a distance
and sometimes doing so without much thought at all.
Then something has happened that has made us retrace our steps
and there you were, waiting for us.

Some of us have been brought up
within the community of your people,
and have never been all that far from it.
Yet at some point we have realised
that we needed to decide to follow you for ourselves;
that it is not enough
to be involved with your community.
We need to be involved with you.

Living God, we all have our own stories
of what life is like with you.
Our stories are as diverse as our lives,
yet your Spirit has woven your thread through all of them.
At times it is obvious,
at times it is harder to see,
but it is always there,
and an honest search will reveal it.

You are our true home.
We are only happy and fulfilled
when we are in relationship with you.

Through Lives Like Ours

Some of us carry obvious hurt,
some of us seem relatively unscathed,
but none of us are whole. We need you for that.

We bring you those things
for which we need to seek your forgiveness...

We bring you those things
for which we need healing...

We bring you our fears
and our hopes...

You know our need,
and your name is Love.
Hear our prayers,
we ask in the name of your son, Jesus, Amen

35

My sisters and brothers, never forget that God is Love.

C. Lind

Never Alone

Loving God,
we give you thanks for the ways you are present
in the world around us and within us.
When the structures of our lives
have become shaky for one reason or another,
and we have to leave behind
cherished and familiar places and activities and things,
you are with us wherever we are.
You are our roof and walls,
our shelter and protection.
We thank you for your comfort and your love.

36

God, our Saviour,
For the times when you have brought us in
When things might have overwhelmed us,
For your care when we have needed space
To regain perspective and to reconnect with you
And with those who ground us,
We give you thanks and praise.

We thank you too, for those occasions
When you have been our doorway out into things
We never dreamed of getting into,
When your Spirit has nudged us outside into things
That have forced us to grow and to lean on you.
Thanks for the things you have shown us,
For the joy you have shared with us,
For the wisdom you have taught us.
Thanks for the wideness of your world and your love.

Through Lives Like Ours

Because of you we are never alone.
Because of you we are never without love.
Because of you we are never without a home.
For these things we give you glory and praise.

And in the silence now we make our prayers and confessions...

You know what is in our hearts,
And you know, better than we do, what we need.
Help us to leave these things with you
Trusting to your grace and mercy through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

In Jesus we are never alone. We are never without love.
We are never without a home.
Thanks be to God.

37

C. Lind



Through Lives Like Ours

Prayer of and for the people

For the Church

God of Love, we pray for your Church
for places where it suffers danger and persecution,
where you are not recognised, and your voice not heard.

We remember all who minister to your people in your name.
We remember members of our own congregation
who are working both in the church, and in the communities
around Tawa,

to extend your word and your love to all people.

39

We give thanks for all who have followed your way of love,
for those from this parish, whom we hold dear
and for others who have had a big influence on us.

Lord, put a new spirit in us,
that we may walk in your way of love with renewed energy.
Remind us, Lord, that those who trust in you for help will find
their strength renewed.

They will rise on wings like eagles.

They will run and not get weary.

They will walk and not grow weak.

M. Jenkins

For Those Who Suffer

God of Love, we bring before you those who are struggling.

We pray for all who suffer in body.

We pray for those who cope with constant pain

and for all who live with disability.

We pray for those in hospital and for those waiting on results
and appointments.

We pray for those who are dying and for those who are at their side.

We pray for all who suffer in mind.

Our prayers are for those for whom learning is a struggle,

for those who find it difficult to concentrate.

Our prayers are for those whose minds are failing

and those whose memories are going.

We pray for all who suffer in spirit,

for the anxious, for the abused,

for those who have lost hope,

for those who live with deep regrets.

Lord Jesus, you healed the sick and welcomed the unwelcome.

You gave peace to the tormented and hope to the hopeless.

We remember your promise to us

that you will be with us to the end of time.

Help us to believe your promise to us and to live in confidence.

May your love be at work among these people

and may your compassion be present to us and through us.

C. Lind & M. Jenkins

At a Time of National Tragedy

Lord God, we think of the people involved in this...tragedy.
We think of those who waited for long periods of time to be rescued.
We also think of the rescue and recovery teams
And the terrible sights they have encountered;
Help them to cope and do their work.
We pray for the hospital staff who must be getting very tired,
Dealing with the demands of the emergency.
Amid the tiredness and the shock,
Come Lord Jesus.

We pray for those people who have lost
Family members, friends and workmates.
We pray for those who provide support for these people in their grief.
We think of the ministers, counsellors,
Funeral directors and welfare groups.
We ask that you sustain them as they do their work
And through their work we pray that people will recognise
The support and warmth of the community.
Into the stress and the grief,
Come Lord Jesus.

41

We pray that the media would be sensitive and respectful
In their coverage of the disaster.
We thank you for the way they have helped to get across
Essential information about where people can go for support.
Give those who are still waiting for news a sense of calm,
And a feeling that they will be given strength
To accept whatever the news is, and to carry on.
Help them to be assured of others' care.
To those who can only wait,
Come Lord Jesus.

Through Lives Like Ours

We pray for people who are afraid,
Coping with the mental stress of the unknown,
Worried about what is still to come,
Wondering when life will return to normality.
We pray for children who do not understand what is happening,
Who are fearful of the dark and of being alone.
Into this stressed and worried community,
Come Lord Jesus.

Tawa Union Women's Group



42

‘The task of religion is to give us courage and strength
to commit ourselves wholeheartedly to life.’

Don Cupitt

Through Lives Like Ours

Reflection

This moment of prayer and silent reflection is an invitation to be calm in the midst of the noise of the world and our over busy lives...

A moment to bring together thought and feeling, mind and spirit, and to find some centre, some still point of perspective and peace.

We remember we are called to be in relationship with each other, living and working with one another, supporting and healing one another...

We remember we are called into a community, working for the common good of all, making choices that bring hope, justice and freedom to our world. And we know we need help, to understand those choices and to realise what is required of us.

43

So, we pray for those who offer advice, those who are called on to help us and to help others. May they honour each person as they reach out to those in need. May they value and appreciate those who are different. And may we appreciate the advice we are given, as well as those who give advice to us...

We find it hard to continue to hear stories of war and civil strife And see again and again the pictures of human slaughter and human sadness.

We long for peace.

In the deserts of war, in the streets and in the homes of our community,

We would pray for the growth of the human spirit and a growth of goodness.

Through Lives Like Ours

In the councils of our nation, with elections promised,
in bureaucracies and offices, in universities and schools,
we pray for a growth of tolerance...

Answering God, we pray for all earnest and compassionate teachers,
whose openness shows us hope and grace.
Give them the courage to show us your creativity
with honesty and originality, wisdom and imagination.

Empowering God, help us to challenge the abuse of authority
wherever it is to be found,
including in ourselves.

44 Still, small voice of God, may we learn to listen to one another,
and may those in authority understand the strength
that comes from true consultation.

May we all in our own way, come to discover,
in the same way that Nicodemus did,
that there are resources within us, and beyond us,
that are as hidden but as real as our secret doubts and fears.
Help us to see.
In Jesus' name we pray.

J. Melville

Through Lives Like Ours

A United Church

Lord, we give thanks today for so many things,
a thousand miracles we take for granted every day.
Thank you for the vitality and diversity of the natural world.
Train our hearts to be thankful so that we live daily
out of a deep sense of gratitude and humility.

We know that the world is both wonderful and flawed at every point.
We see symptoms of a disordered world in every news broadcast.
How we need innocence at the moment, in a world so harsh.
Where are integrity and honesty and compassion?
In the Church we hope to find a different way of living
and sharing together.
Yet the flaws of the wider human community, are also in the Church.
Forgive us for distorting your gospel with our own prejudices,
for dividing the Church into many denominations
and groups within these denominations.
Unite us to work together with joyful and generous hearts
that allow you to work through us,
to bring meaning and beauty into your Church and world.

45

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
gentleness and self-control are in short supply.
Nurture and develop these things in us.
Commit us to them for they remain the only vital, long term solutions
for the creation of peace, wellbeing and harmony in the world.

We thank you for those followers of Christ who have lived and died
in quiet daily faithfulness and whose prayers have sustained the world.
Continue their work through our prayers,
We ask in Jesus' name.

M. Jenkins

Through Lives Like Ours

For a Combined Churches' Service

Lord Jesus, we know that children have a special place in your heart and you are keen to make them welcome.

We pray that wherever children and young people are involved in our churches and wider activities, that our welcome will reflect your welcome, and your delight in them and your care for them.

We pray for the children and young people of this suburb and the surrounding area.

We thank you for the gifts they have and the gifts they are.

We pray that everyone of our children will have someone who thinks the world of them, and gives them space and opportunity to develop into the person you have put it in them to be.

46

We pray for those whose home situation is not what it could be.

We pray for these children, in particular, that the community will be all that it should be.

Give them role models and mentors

to fill the gaps and to teach them the skills they will need in life.

Help these young people to see the value of making good choices.

Give them the vision and the courage

to break unhelpful and destructive patterns.

Wake them up to their worth,

the worth that we all have, by being your handiwork.

We pray for parents as they negotiate that demanding task.

Help them to recognise when they need to pull back

and give their children space,

And to recognise when they need

to underline the boundaries and the rules.

Through Lives Like Ours

Help them as they balance this role with work and other roles,
And give them the courage to seek help and advice when they need it.

We pray for those who work with children and adolescents.
We pray for the teachers and support staff at the College here
And at the other schools and childcare centres of this suburb.
We pray in the coming week that enough things will go right
To remind them of why they took up their job in the first place,
And that the hard work will be worth it.

We pray for those who share the gospel stories with young people,
For CRE teachers, for our children's church and youth leaders.
Give them wisdom and sensitivity in their ministry.
May their own delight in you shine through their work.
May the seeds of the gospel that they sow
Bear fruit in the hearts and minds of those they work with.

47

In silence now, we bring our prayers for a family that is dear to us...

Living God, these are our prayers.
We pray them in the name of your Son,
our Lord Jesus Christ.

C. Lind

Prayer for ourselves and others

We pray that people keep on their own track on life
regardless of other's judgement.

We pray that people let down barriers
and let friends and family in.

We pray that we all grow spiritually.

We pray that people get what they need and appreciate it.

We pray that we don't fade out of our loved one's lives.

We pray that we can always find beauty within ourselves.

We pray that people appreciate what they see.

We pray that we find the light during the darkness.

We pray that life will find its way to God.

We pray people have good food and good company.

We pray that children are protected while free to have fun.

We pray that people are included.

We pray that people are accepted and free to be themselves.

We pray that people can stand tall, strong and together
even in their difference.

We pray that people can feel connected.

We pray that people take time to pause
and appreciate things in life.

We pray that people can find colours with every step.

We pray for those who have difficulty with gambling.

We pray that those who volunteer feel appreciated.

We pray that people with authority give and receive respect.

We pray that we find friendship.

Thank you for those who came before us to create the suburb

May we leave it in good condition for those who come after us.

Tawa Union Church Youth Group,
written after a walk around the neighbourhood.

For Those Who Help Us to See

Loving God,
We like to think that we are good citizens of our society
and that we live responsibly.
But we read stories of Jesus' activities without seeing
how much he challenged the society of his day.
It is hard for us to understand how radical he was
And even harder to understand what you are saying to us
in our society.

We thank you for those who challenge our thinking
And call into question our assumptions about who
and what is important—
researchers who open our eyes to what is happening,
advocates for justice, for the environment, for children, for peace,
the people who see the importance of the issues behind the 'facts',
theologians who clarify meaning
and challenge our understanding of your kingdom,
poets, musicians, mystics, film makers and other creative people
who challenge society's values through their work.
We hold them in our prayer.

49

Challenging God, you know how we have come
to accept the standards of our culture and our day,
and how we have been shaped by popular notions of success,
so that we fail to see as you see.

We pray for insight to see significance in the ordinary,
glory in the vulnerable,
Greatness in self-giving, worth in faithfulness,
distinction in tenderness.

Through Lives Like Ours

May we recognise you at work with the peacemakers, the merciful,
the humble, the carers.
We hold them in our prayer.

God of community, you are already at work in the world.
We don't see you, but you are there,
in the generosity of those sharing the little they have
with those in need,
in people committed to a lifestyle not based on consumption,
in people spending their lives caring for others
for little material reward,
in those accepting pain, suffering or sorrow with dignity.

50 We thank you for people who challenge our culture
by choosing to live differently,
by speaking up for justice and fairness,
by giving their energy, skills and time to those in need.
We hold them in prayer.

We pray for the community of this church
and for the communities in which we live and work;
may we see you in all these places and join in with you
to be salt and light.
These are our prayers.

H. Bichan

Through Lives Like Ours

Advent Reflection

Christmas is coming. Keep watch with the housewives. Already she's afraid of Christmas. Afraid the money won't last, afraid she won't have enough food in the house to feed the whole family, afraid the children will be disappointed, afraid of family rows, afraid of being too tired to cope, afraid of it all being too much. Pray for her in silence...

Hear the words of the angel: 'Don't be afraid. I bring you good news, that will be for all people.'

Christmas is coming. Keep watch on the young people who are caught in a culture of excess, living for the moment without regard for its impact on theirs and other's lives. Already they are in overdrive, living to shop, living for the next party, living for 'likes', living for the next thrill and the latest thing. Christmas exposes their emptiness. They have to keep running in case the message gets through to them, and they see themselves as they really are – lonely, scared and very small. Pray for them in silence...

51

Hear the words of the angel: 'Don't be afraid. I bring you good news, that will be for all people.'

Christmas is coming. Keep watch with the elderly, especially those on their own. Already they're fearful. Their family are all away. It's such a lonely time and it goes on so long. Christmas Eve and excited families gather at home, but who will they be with that night—TV and a cup of cocoa? Christmas Day and, if their family haven't gone away on holiday, they'll fetch them for lunch. But are they wanted out of love or duty? Christmas night—memories and regrets, feeling useless and alone. Pray for them in silence...

Hear the words of the angel: 'Don't be afraid. I bring you good news, that will be for all people.'

Christmas is coming. Keep watch with the clergy all over the world. Already they're anxious, all these expectations. Carol services that are supposed to capture people's innocence and nostalgia, sermons that are supposed to send a thrill down people's spines, geniality that's supposed to make them a cross between a TV host and Santa Claus. And then that other anxiety, will the Church be emptier this year, more excuses to think of to cover that sense of failure. Pray for them in silence...

Hear the words of the angel: 'Don't be afraid. I bring you good news, that will be for all people.'

52

Lord, may Christmas be good news for millions of your anxious, lonely, tired people this year. May the angels sing for them. May Christ be born in them. May your love come home to them.

M. Jenkins

Through Lives Like Ours

For a Christmas Memorial Service

Loving God, at this time of the year
when we traditionally celebrate family
we are reminded sharply of those who are no longer with us.
For some of us, we knew the person for such a terribly short time,
and for others, we have lost life-long companions.
In each case their lives have marked us.
We thank you for the gift that they were to us,
for the ways that drew us out of ourselves
and brought out the best in us.
We thank you for the things they taught us in their health
and in their illness
about what is courageous,
and what is truly beautiful and what is precious.
May those insights remain with us and shape our living.

53

We thank you for those who are around us,
for the kindness and the tears, and the hugs and the phone calls,
for the bonds of family and friends and the way they have held us.
We thank you for those who have not fussed
but have given us the space we needed and still need.
We thank you for those who have been gentle with us
and those who have been honest with us.

And we pray that you will help us to be wise
and gentle and patient with ourselves.
Ease the weariness.
In this Christmas season may we find consolation amid the pain,
and some joy amid the sadness.

You know the prayers of our hearts, and you love us.

C. Lind

Through Lives Like Ours

Meditation on Christmas

Jesus, Prince of Peace, who shared with Mary and Joseph the life of an earthly hope, be with us in our homes, as we celebrate the commemoration of your birth.

Holy child, you come as the true gift to a world of presents. The shops are empty, the Christmas stockings full. The Christmas trees could hardly shelter any more presents, and yet only one gift is necessary, as you steal into our lives and offer your love. Help us Lord, both in the Church, and in the World, to recognise that mysterious gift which you place in the crib at our feet. Give us grace to receive that gift and be changed by it.

54

Holy child, you come with peace to a world in pieces. We see with you, the sorrow of the world, torn to pieces by greed, fear and prejudice, those same things that took you from a cradle to a cross. Come with peace that always flows from your wholeness to our brokenness. Fill our world with the joyful hope that there is always a better way. This Christmas may the peace of the young Prince of peace embrace the world.

Holy child, you come with lasting joy to a world full of passing entertainment. As we settle down tonight to watch television, answer our emails or phones, give us the sense that there is a greater joy and a larger dream beyond the flickering images. Let all creation hold its breath at the arrival of a love beyond our calculation. When the Christmas films have gone, may your joy remain, rooted and growing in our hearts.

Holy child, bless our children, our families and our friends. Help us to remember those who have little food and no presents under their trees this year. Let their Christmas be a beginning of better times for

Through Lives Like Ours

them and their families. Fill us all with joy and thanksgiving, deepen our sense of wonder as we understand your great love for us, and teach us to find in you, real happiness in giving, rather than receiving.

May the joy of the angels, the eagerness of the shepherds, the perseverance of the wise men, the obedience of Joseph and Mary, and the peace of the Christ child be yours this Christmas.

M. Jenkins



Mothers' Day

On this Mother's Day, we remember our mothers.
We give thanks for the women who have given us
so much over the years,
preparing us, and helping us to prepare our children,
as to how to live in this world.

We remember and give thanks
for all the women in the church across the centuries—
those who prepared the way for the gospel,
women of quiet, daily faithfulness,
women who undertook to do the tasks that no-one else wanted to do,
women who were little recognised,
women of wisdom and courage, women of oratory,
those who cared for others,
the ones who never gave up and who were the living structure
of our Church, with Jesus Christ as their foundation.

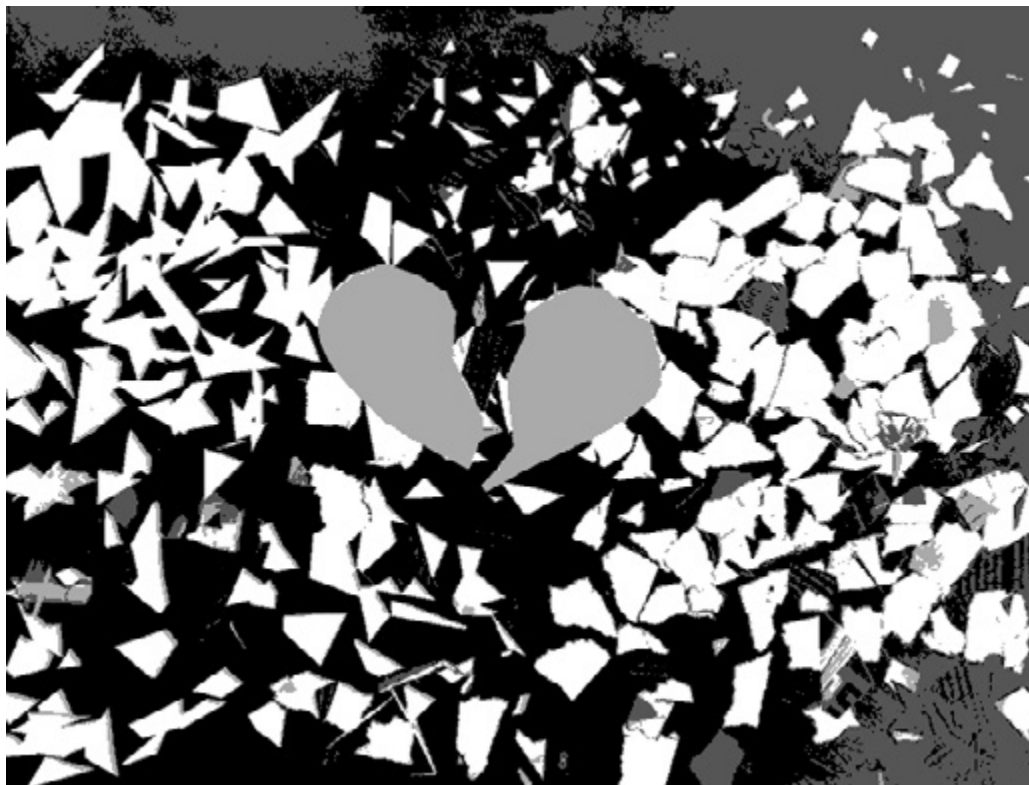
56

And we remember before you, Loving God,
The women of our own time—
women in positions of leadership and great responsibility,
women working several jobs to keep their families fed and clothed,
women celebrating their achievements,
women getting over their disappointments,
those juggling work and childcare,
those holding families together,
those keeping an eye on aging parents and spouses,
those keeping an eye on grandchildren,
the mothers who are raising children solo,
the mothers who are navigating their children's adolescence,
the women we are close to.

Through Lives Like Ours

We pray for them all, wisdom and courage, strength and compassion.
Bless them, we ask in Jesus' name.

M. Jenkins & C. Lind



Through Lives Like Ours

Earth Sunday

Close your eyes and think of a tree that you like.

Think what contributes to its living—air, water, soil, weather, the other living things inside and around the tree, such as fungi and bacteria, that are needed for the health of the tree.

Think of the life that the tree shares—as food for birds, insects, lizards, as support for other plants, resting and nesting places, purifying the air and reducing CO₂, finally in its dying and decay think how it releases nutrients and provides space for new life.

Even the tree's DNA has evidence of eons of interconnectedness, as shown by traces of bacterial and fungal DNA. Yet a tree is only a tiny part of the wonders of God's world in which we live.

58

So, let us pray. Creator God, we thank you that we are not alone, we live in your world. Even one tree reflects the marvels of this world and the interdependence of all living things. So we praise you.

In the tree we see your intention for your creation—
to live in relationship where each has a share
in what is needed for living
and each has a contribution to make.
In silence we hold before you the pollution of air, sea and land,
driven by human carelessness and greed...

Open our eyes to see the practical ways we can care for your creation,
and give us energy to do it.

Loving God, we are called to be the church,
a community that celebrates your presence,

Through Lives Like Ours

Loves and serves others, and seeks justice.
In silence we hold before you the places around the world
where people are in need,
where conflict or famine turns people into refugees,
where the decisions of those in power overturn justice and equity....

Encourage us to speak up for justice,
and share the celebration
and the love wherever we see an opportunity.

In silence we hold before you our own neighbourhood—
Our tree, the natural and built environments,
The people we meet each week,
those who share in the life of this church...

59

You know what is needed before we ask
and you include us in the response when we are willing.
We thank you that we live in your interconnected world.
These are our prayers, in the name of Jesus, who leads us on your way.
H. Bichan

For the World

A photo in the news this week,
Of a small child being carried dead from the surf,
Has haunted the world – a living reproach
Upon how some conduct themselves toward others.
A prolonged cry for action to deal with refugees has been sounded.
Something has to be done, by someone, somewhere.

*Creator God, see our concern and
Send forth your light and your truth, through lives such as ours.*

People are gathering in other places, (from all over the place),
driven by wars, by poverty, by pollution of their space,
by fear of neighbours,
by climate changing where they have lived for ages past.

*Loving God, we cry out on their behalf,
Send forth your light and your truth, through lives such as ours.*

People are searching for work, for a safe home,
for space free from violence for their loved ones,
for someone who will care in a careless world.

*God of peace, let Jesus be found sowing his peace.
Send forth your light and your truth, through lives such as ours.*

Written in the faces of so many we see
Are the dangers they have passed through,
The privations they have experienced and the evil they have suffered.

Through Lives Like Ours

God grant that somewhere on this earth
there may be new life for them.
Send forth your light and your truth, through lives such as ours.

These faces may haunt us for a while, but what next, O God?
Will our response condemn us also?
Will there be some who can open their lives
To the ones who stumble along life's way?

God grant that there will be an inn to shelter them,
a kindly heart to welcome them,
open hands to offer sustenance,
healing and mercy from whatever wrong has been done.
Send forth your light and your truth, through lives such as ours.

R. Bichan

61



Your Kingdom Come

Let us pray for the breaking in of God's kingdom in our world today.
Lord God, because Jesus taught us to trust you in all things,
We hold to his word and share his plea:
Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

Where nations budget for war, while Christ says, 'Put up your sword!'
Your Kingdom come; your will be done.
Where countries waste food and covet fashion,
While Christ says, 'I was hungry...I was thirsty...'
Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

62

Where powerful governments claim their policies are heaven blessed,
While scripture states God helps the powerless:
Your Kingdom come; your will be done.
Where Christians seek the kingdom in the shape of their own church,
As if Christ had come to build, and not to break, barriers:
Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

Where women who speak up for their dignity
Are treated with scorn or contempt:
Your Kingdom come; your will be done.
Where men try hard to be tough, because they are afraid to be tender:
Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

Where we, obsessed with being adult, forget to become like children:
Your Kingdom come; your will be done.
Where our prayers falter, our faith weakens and our light grows dim:
Your Kingdom come; your will be done.
Where Jesus calls us:
Your Kingdom come; your will be done.

Through Lives Like Ours

Lord God, you have declared your kingdom is among us.
Open our ears to hear it, our hands to serve it, our hearts to hold it.
This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

R. Bichan



Through Lives Like Ours

A Prayer for Others

We wait on you, Lord,
you are our hope and the hope of the world.

For the new and the very young
we pray for space and support
that they may grow well and true.
For those who have been entrusted with their safe keeping
we pray for patience and love.

For those who have come to a place where they need to step back
we pray for wisdom and grace.
For the weary and exhausted,
we pray for refreshment and strength.
For those in between places,
we pray that their journey may fulfil its promise.

For those waiting on news or for something to happen,
we pray for steadiness and perseverance.
For those preparing to leave and those planning to arrive,
we pray for a peace that comes from knowing
that you will be with them wherever they are.

For those who are wanting to turn over a new leaf,
we pray for firm resolve and support.
With all those whose ache for you has them working and praying
for a better, kinder, fairer, more peaceful world,
we pray 'Your Kingdom come'.

*We wait on you, Lord,
You are our hope and the hope of the world.*

C. Lind

Through Lives Like Ours

For the Mission of the Local Church

Creator God, you call us to feed your lambs.
Help us and our families strive to make our homes
Places where our children can hear you call them by name,
places where we may fully accept our responsibility
to be an example of the love that has been shown to us.
We pray for our young people, that they may persevere in hope,
trusting in your faithfulness to them
as they search for deeper meaning in their lives.

*Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.*

Loving God, you call us to take care of your sheep.
Help our parish communities to provide a safe
and welcoming harbour for people in need,
a place of respite in times of hardship and loneliness and grief,
so that our communities can become further involved
in providing the human responses and the active services
that those in need require,
giving witness to your loving action in the world.
Help our daily living to make a difference
in transforming our suffering world
into a place of love, justice and peace.

65

*Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.*

Living God, you call us to feed your sheep.
We pray for your Church,
that you will continue to uphold and support
women and men of faith as they accept your call to serve as ministers

Through Lives Like Ours

and to show their faith in their works.
We pray that you will guide parents and volunteers
in homes, in schools and in churches,
that they may know how to hand on a faith in you
to the people in their care.

*Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.*

Caring God, today and every day you call us to feed your sheep.
We pray for the willingness to respond
and for the grace to constantly remain alive
and open to your call to serve.

66

*Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.*

J. Melville

Through Lives Like Ours

For Here and Over There

We pray for people in the isolating circumstances of their lives.

We pray for children living in poverty
here in New Zealand—suffering in their health, their education,
and often in the deprivation of loving relationships,
and over there, beyond our shores, where their poverty
Is exacerbated by war, or famine or flood
or by disease and climate change.

(Light a candle)

Send forth your help and your truth; through lives such as ours.

We pray for busy parents here—
Both working to pay their bills
and anxious about sickness or loss of a job.
And over there, beyond our shores, shut up in refugee camps.

(Light a candle)

send forth your help and your truth; through lives such as ours.

We pray for people living on inadequate benefits,
here, at home, struggling to balance a precarious family life,
and over there, living on Aid supplies, when they arrive.

(Light a candle)

Send forth your help and your truth; through lives such as ours.

We pray for teachers in low decile schools, here,
often committed to their jobs with missionary-like enthusiasm,
and over there, where teachers are often untrained.

(Light a candle)

Send forth your help and your truth; through lives such as ours.

We pray for the lonely, here,
Who, in their illness, have cut themselves off from family and friends
And over there, where they are afraid of their neighbours
And shut themselves away from their community.

(Light a candle)

Send forth your help and your truth; through lives such as ours.

We pray for the rich and the powerful,
the decision makers here in New Zealand,
that they may not lose touch with the common folk,
and over there, let not corruption undermine society.

(Light a candle)

Send forth your help and your truth; through lives such as ours.

R. Bichan



The Healing of the Earth

Think of the sights and sounds of our own neighbourhood.
Of bush, hill and stream, birds and harbour and people.
Here in Tawa Flat and the Porirua Basin there are many communities
going about their living—not all of them human.

All around us there are things that threaten the balance of these communities and even threaten the future of the communities themselves.
In silence let us bring our thanks and our concerns to God...

*God of Creation,
may we become agents for the healing of the earth.*

Think of a coastline familiar to you.
Think of the feel of rock or sand beneath your feet.
Think of the tang of the salt spray and of the light on the water
and the great expanse of the Tasman Sea or the Pacific Ocean.

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We know that all is not well with the earth's coastlines and oceans.
Overfishing and pollution endanger species
And rising sea levels endanger nations.
In silence let us give thanks for our coastal playground
And bring our concerns to God...

*God of Creation,
May we become agents for the healing of the earth.*

Take a deep breath.
Here in New Zealand we have air that is so 'pure'
that some people are putting it in cans and exporting it to China.
We breath air to take in the oxygen necessary for life
and we release carbon dioxide.

Through Lives Like Ours

And the trees complement us. In their own breathing, respiration, they absorb carbon dioxide storing carbon and releasing oxygen through photosynthesis—moderating the effects of climate change across the earth. Plant and animal kingdom supporting one another.

But we know that there are places where the air is polluted, and we know that greenhouse gases are having a detrimental effect on our environment. In silence let us bring our thanks and our concerns to God...

*God of Creation,
May we become agents for the healing of the earth.*

C. Lind





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