



# **Common Problems Common Prayer**

**St. Paul & the Redeemer Episcopal Church**

**O God of unchangeable power and eternal light:  
Look favorably on your whole Church,  
that wonderful and sacred mystery;  
by the effectual working of your providence,  
carry out in tranquility the plan of salvation;  
let the whole world see and know  
that things which were cast down are being raised up,  
and things which had grown old are being made new,  
and that all things are being brought to their perfection  
by him through whom all things were made,  
your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Amen.**

**- The Book of Common Prayer, 291**

# Introduction

The original Book of Common Prayer was designed with the principle purpose of “edifying” the people: to teach them the doctrines of the faith, to inspire them into deeper contemplation of God, and to support and guide them in their daily living, so that they might grow into the full stature of Christ – that is, to not merely exist but to be fully alive.

The purpose of this group is to open ourselves to that “edifying” by taking all the contents of this prayer book as opportunities for facing the crises of everyday life with courage, with faith.

That means that during the course of this group we will be reading the words of the BCP simultaneously in two ways:

**1) For Enhancing Private Prayer:** The BCP contains services specifically designated for individuals and households, with the rest of the services meant for public worship. Nonetheless, the poetry of all the liturgies in the BCP can be a strong comfort in affliction and therefore useful to be read and prayed by us in our private practices.

**2) For Bookmarking Public Worship:** At the same time, the full power of these words is realized when the community gathers to praise God with them in all their various occasions, from the weekly Eucharist to the occasional baptism, marriage, burial, ordination, and the rest. In this group we will also be giving careful attention to these liturgies so that when we celebrate them as a church, they will have even greater meaning to each of us.

## Group Expectations

I agree to ...

1. participate in all group meetings and to arrive promptly at 7:30p. If circumstances arise that cause me to miss a meeting, I will notify Dan in advance.
2. to spend time each week reading the selections listed in this guide.
3. to keep confidentiality.
4. to honor each voice, to listen generously, to respect differences, to reserve judgment, and to be fully present to each other in this space.
5. to keep each other in prayer.
6. to bring any questions or concerns to Dan’s attention.

## Week 1

# Introduction to the BCP

### The Table of Contents

*Pay particular attention to the bold headings of the different sections.*

*We will not spend a lot of time talking about the history of the BCP – we could do an entire group just on that! So, you don't need to read these historical readings in detail unless you're particularly interested in that.*

<b>Preface to the 1549 Book of Common Prayer (England)</b>	<b>Pages 866-867</b>
<b>The Preface to the 1789 Book of Common Prayer (USA)</b>	<b>Pages 9-11</b>
<b>"Concerning the Service of the Church"</b>	<b>Pages 13-14</b>

## The Body's Betrayals

### Before Opening the Prayer Book

This week's topic is the struggles we all have with our own bodies. Our embodied lives are a gift from God, and yet they come also with much that can feel more like a curse than a blessing: battling with disease, keeping fit, struggling with limitations and disabilities, and just the inescapable process of getting older.

Before reading, call to mind a time when you felt at odds with your own body.

### Open the Prayer Book

<b>Holy Eucharist, Rite II, Prayer B</b>	<b>Pages 367-369</b>
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*Note all the different ways this Eucharistic Prayer draws on bodily words and imagery.*

<b>Ministration to the Sick</b>	<b>Pages 453 - 457</b>
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*You don't need to read every word; instead, note the actions that are described for this service.*

<b>Prayers for the Sick</b>	<b>Pages 458-460</b>
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<b>Prayers for Use by a Sick Person</b>	<b>Pages 461</b>
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## Week 2

# Conflict and Guilt

### Before Opening the Prayer Book

This week's topic is relationships that are breaking or are broken. The fights we find ourselves fighting are often tied to some wrongdoing or perceived wrongdoing on our part or the on the part of the other or, usually, both. Relationships crumble when recrimination and guilt take over. Relationships are mended and thrive when forgiveness is eagerly sought and freely given. We all know this, and yet it remains so difficult, perhaps especially with those closest to us. What might we need in order to live through conflict and overcome guilt?

Before reading, call to mind those of your relationships that feel like they are strained, breaking, or broken.

### Open the Prayer Book

#### Holy Eucharist, Rite I, Prayer II

Pages 340-343

*This is an older form of the Eucharist than 9:15 and 11:15 folks are used to. How does this Eucharistic Prayer address the problems of guilt and forgiveness?*

#### Holy Eucharist, Rite I, Confession of Sin

Pages 330-332

#### Holy Eucharist, Rite II, Confession of Sin

Page 360

#### Enriching Our Worship, Holy Eucharist, Confession of Sin

In this booklet, page 6

*What are the differences and similarities between these three Confessions?*

#### The Reconciliation of a Penitent

Pages 446 - 452

*Be sure to read the "Concerning the Rite" page for this service on page 446: Compare the different bodily postures and settings available for receiving this rite. Also compare Form One and Form Two of this rite.*

## Confession of Sin (Enriching Our Worship)

*The Deacon or Celebrant says*

Let us confess our sins to God.

*Silence may be kept.*

*Minister and People*

God of all mercy,  
we confess that we have sinned against you,  
opposing your will in our lives.  
We have denied your goodness in each other,  
in ourselves, and in the world you have created.  
We repent of the evil that enslaves us,  
the evil we have done,  
and the evil done on our behalf.  
Forgive, restore, and strengthen us  
through our Savior Jesus Christ,  
that we may abide in your love  
and serve only your will. Amen.

## Absolution

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins  
through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness,  
and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.  
*Amen.*

## The Peace

*Celebrant*    The peace of Christ be always with you.  
*People*        And also with you.

Week 3

# Money and Debt

## Before Opening the Prayer Book

This week's topic is the limitation of resources in all the ways we experience that, especially when it comes to our own finances. Is there ever enough? As residents of the U.S., all of us are among the richest people on the globe, no matter where we fall in relation to this country's poverty line. At the same time, so many of us have little in the way of actual wealth, what with our mortgages, student loans, auto loans, and credit cards. Do we need to work harder? Do we need better financial planning? Or is there something else we might need?

Before reading, call to mind your own financial troubles, current or past.

## Open the Prayer Book

**Holy Eucharist, Rite II, Prayer C**

**Pages 369-372**

*Look for words, phrases, and images that might have something to say about how we think about money.*

**Prayers and Thanksgivings, Prayers #30, #35, #36**

**Pages 824, 826**

*What might these prayers be saying is the answer to the problems of economic hardship?*

*(These three prayers we're reading are obviously about the topic at hand. But also have a look at pages 810-813 to see all of the different circumstances for which the BCP has prayers available.)*

**Ordination of a Deacon, The Examination**

**Pages 543-544**

*What do these vows made by new deacons (and, by extension, all clergy) say about the place of poverty in the life of the church?*

**The Great Litany**

**Pages 148-155**

*What is the Great Litany about, and what might this have to do with money and debt?*

## Week 4

# Loneliness

### Before Opening the Prayer Book

Loneliness is, of course, not the same as the mere state of being alone. Rather, it is that common crisis of life wherein we feel cut off from the rest of the world – adrift, abandoned, atomized. Loneliness at its worst is when we feel like no one can see us, no one hears what we are saying, or no one knows us as we truly are. Many people try to cure their loneliness by simply surrounding themselves with people in social activities. To what extent does that help? Might there be something else that feelings of loneliness are telling us to do than merely be around other people?

Before reading, call to mind situations or relationships in which you feel lonely.

### Open the Prayer Book

#### Holy Eucharist, Rite II, Prayer D

Pages 372-375

*Read this Eucharistic Prayer carefully for the parts where “we” show up, that is, humanity. What roles does humanity play in this quite dramatic prayer?*

#### The Psalter, Psalm 22

Pages 610-612

*The BCP contains all the Psalms from the Bible because of their frequent use in the services. Moreover, the Psalms are, in a way, the prayer book of the ancient Israelites – or, more accurately, their hymnal!*

#### Marriage, The Prayers

Pages 429-430

#### Holy Baptism, The Baptismal Covenant

Pages 304-305

#### Daily Devotions for Individuals and Families

Pages 136-140

*And in those moments of actually being alone and needing a liturgy to practice, these are here for you.*

## Week 5

# The Frustrated Future

### Before Opening the Prayer Book

In this last week together, we look at the plans we make: the plans that bear fruit and the plans that fall short. We look at our hopes and dreams, our fears and our doubts. Perhaps the one crisis we always face in our everyday lives is the uncertainty of our days ahead and our powerlessness to fully shape our own destinies. And of course, the greatest frustration to our futures we will ever experience is our own deaths. Moreover, knowledge of our own mortality can cast a shadow of futility over everything we do. Thought, might facing death in some way help us to be more fully alive, even through the uncertainty of the days ahead?

Before reading, reflect on how you see your future.

### Open the Prayer Book

#### Enriching Our Worship, Holy Eucharist, Prayer 1

In this booklet, pages 10-11

*How is this Eucharistic Prayer different from the many we've read in this group? How does it face the uncertainty of the future?*

#### Holy Baptism, The Thanksgiving Over the Water and ff.

Pages 306-308

*What does this prayer say is happening at a baptism?*

#### Burial II

Pages 490-505

*Be sure to read the "Concerning the Service" on Page 490.*

*How does this service relate to Holy Baptism?*

#### The Great Vigil of Easter, the Liturgy of the Word

Pages 288-291

*Read through this carefully. Note each biblical story, as given in the bold headings. If you don't know the story, crack open a Bible to read it over. Then, read the Collect that is given for it.*

*Reflect on the relationship between the stories and the prayers.*

## Enriching Our Worship, Holy Eucharist, Prayer 1

*Celebrant* The Lord be with you.  
*People* And also with you.  
*Celebrant* Lift up your hearts.  
*People* We lift them to the Lord.  
*Celebrant* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
*People* It is right to give our thanks and praise.  
*Celebrant* It is truly right, and good and joyful,  
to give you thanks, all-holy God,  
source of life and fountain of mercy.

*The following Preface may be used at any time.*

You have filled us and all creation with your blessing  
and fed us with your constant love;  
you have redeemed us in Jesus Christ  
and knit us into one body.  
Through your Spirit you replenish us  
and call us to fullness of life.

*In place of the preceding, a Proper Preface from the Book of Common Prayer  
may be used.*

Therefore, joining with Angels and Archangels  
and with the faithful of every generation,  
we lift our voices with all creation as we sing (say):

*Celebrant and People*

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

*The Celebrant continues*

Blessed are you, gracious God,  
creator of the universe and giver of life.  
You formed us in your own image  
and called us to dwell in your infinite love.

You gave the world into our care  
that we might be your faithful stewards  
and show forth your bountiful grace.

But we failed to honor your image  
in one another and in ourselves;  
we would not see your goodness in the world around us;  
and so we violated your creation,  
abused one another,  
and rejected your love.  
Yet you never ceased to care for us,  
and prepared the way of salvation for all people.

Through Abraham and Sarah  
you called us into covenant with you.  
You delivered us from slavery,  
sustained us in the wilderness,  
and raised up prophets  
to renew your promise of salvation.  
Then, in the fullness of time,  
you sent your eternal Word,  
made mortal flesh in Jesus.  
Born into the human family,  
and dwelling among us,  
he revealed your glory.  
Giving himself freely to death on the cross,  
he triumphed over evil,  
opening the way of freedom and life.

*At the following words concerning the bread, the Celebrant is to hold it, or lay a hand upon it; and at the words concerning the cup, to hold or place a hand upon the cup and any other vessel containing wine to be consecrated.*

On the night before he died for us,  
Our Savior Jesus Christ took bread,  
and when he had given thanks to you,  
he broke it, and gave it to his friends, and said:  
"Take, eat:

This is my Body which is given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me."

As supper was ending, Jesus took the cup of wine,  
and when he had given thanks,  
he gave it to them, and said:

"Drink this, all of you:  
This is my Blood of the new Covenant,  
which is poured out for you and for all  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
Whenever you drink it,  
do this for the remembrance of me."

Therefore we proclaim the mystery of faith:

*Celebrant and People*

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

*The Celebrant continues*

Remembering his death and resurrection,  
we now present to you from your creation  
this bread and this wine.  
By your Holy Spirit may they be for us  
the Body and Blood of our Savior Jesus Christ.  
Grant that we who share these gifts  
may be filled with the Holy Spirit  
and live as Christ's Body in the world.  
Bring us into the everlasting heritage  
of your daughters and sons,  
that with [ \_\_\_\_\_ and] all your saints,  
past, present, and yet to come,  
we may praise your Name for ever.

Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
to you be honor, glory, and praise,  
for ever and ever. AMEN.

# **Common Crises and Common Prayer**

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