prayers and petitions

surrounding conception, pregnancy, loss of a child, birth, and adoption

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Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV)

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introduction

Purpose
At Restoration, we believe that the Lord calls us to pray. The season surrounding hoped-for conception, pregnancy, birth, and adoption offers a particularly intentional time of waiting and preparation in which we as humans have almost nothing to do but pray. It is a time when the futility of our efforts is most apparent, leaving room for us to experience acutely the presence of the Spirit. We believe women, men, and families in this season of life—which can hold loss and disappointment as well as expectation and hope—should be covered by intentional and focused intercession.

Our hope is that this resource would help you to focus or structure your time as you intercede for those not yet conceived or born, as well as for all of our congregation's children, families, and those desiring family. This booklet is meant to be a flexible tool that supports a rich Spirit-led prayer life, and we hope that you continue to listen to the Spirit—a vital part of your time of intercession.

How To Use This Guide
This guide is designed to be used by individual intercessors and intercessory prayer teams during times of quiet prayer as they intercede on behalf of those seeking God's blessing in the gift of children, as well as those seeking God's presence and peace in the aftermath of losing a child. Accordingly, the guide is arranged by section, each intended to cover a different season related to pregnancy. Each section includes prayers and scriptures to guide intercessors through the range of emotions both couples and individuals might experience—from rejoicing to lament. Select sections also include litanies, should intercessors desire longer, more poetic forms of prayer.

At the end of the guide, there are several blank pages for intercessors to journal, doodle, or write their own prayers. These are only a few suggestions for possible uses; intercessors, please feel free to use this space however might enrich your time of prayer. And may the Holy Spirit be your ultimate guide.

A prayer, for the answering of prayer

Almighty God, you have promised to hear the petitions of those who ask in the Name of your Son: Mercifully incline your ear to us as we make our prayers and supplications to you; and grant that what we ask faithfully, according to your will, we may obtain effectually, for the relief of our necessities and the setting forth of your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (From *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 675)

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words.

Romans 8:26

prayers

From Scripture, Hannah's Vow
O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life. *1 Samuel 1:11*

For marriage
O God, you have so consecrated the covenant of marriage that in it is represented the spiritual unity between Christ and his church: Send your blessing upon these your servants, that they may so love, honor, and cherish each other in faithfulness and patience, in wisdom and true godliness, that their home may be a haven of blessing and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (From *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 667)

For those who are married and hoping
Lord, giver of life and of every good gift, we thank you for bringing these two hearts together to form one family. Lord, it is their desire, and may it be your will, to expand their family. They have known the good gift that you have provided to them in marriage, and they long to know the good gift that you provide in parenthood. Hear their prayers, and fulfill the desire of their hearts—the desire to be mother and father as well as husband and wife. May they know patience in the waiting, comfort in the heartache, and blessing in being brought into a new season of life. Amen. (VR)

Of dedication
Almighty and eternal God, so draw their hearts to you, so guide their minds, so fit their imaginations, so control their wills, that they may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated to you; and then use them, we pray, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. (Based on a prayer by William Temple, from *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 668)

For those who are single and hoping
Lord, giver of life and of every good gift, we thank you for preparing these hearts for service to you. It is the desire of each of these hearts, and may it be your will, Lord, to know the good gifts that you alone provide in marriage and parenthood. They have known singleness, and though it is also a blessing, it is often painful,

and we pray that it is only for a season. Hear their prayers and fulfill their desires. May they know patience in the waiting, comfort in the heartache, and blessing in being brought into a new season of life. Amen. (VR)

For Motherhood

Hear our prayer as you heard Hannah's prayer for a child. Lord, we know that you give everyone life and breath and have determined our appointed times. (Acts 17: 24-27) Jeremiah 1:5 says, "I chose you before I formed you in the womb." We give thanks that you already know the babies these women will have. Let these women conceive and be blessed with healthy pregnancies.

If there is anything preventing these women from getting pregnant, we ask for your healing. You know all things, and you are still doing miracles today. We ask that these women would meditate on your promises instead of worry. We pray that they would receive your peace that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7) and faith to trust in you for the blessing of pregnancy. May they rest in the knowledge that "weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning" (Psalm 30:5b).

Lord, we pray that you would be preparing these women to be the best mothers they can be. Give them wisdom to raise their children according to your ways, so that their children would grow to fall in love with you and be hearers of the word, obedient to the word, and proclaimers of the word.
(Based on "A Mother's Prayer for Week 1," from *Praying Through Your Pregnancy*, pages 12-13)

scriptures

O Lord my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me. *Psalm 30:2*

Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the Lord. *Psalm 31:24*

For God alone my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation. *Psalm 62:1*

I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. *Psalm 121:1-2*

He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him. *Psalm 126:6*

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. *Psalm 130:5-6*

for those deciding whether to have a child

prayers

For guidance
Heavenly Father, in you we live and move and have our being. We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (From *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 23)

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light rises up in darkness for the godly: Grant *N* and *N*, in all their doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what you would have them do, that the Spirit of wisdom may save them from all false choices; that in your light they may see light, and in your straight path they may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (From *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 669)

For help in deciding whether to have a child
God of all wisdom, bless *N* and *N* as they pray whether to conceive a [another] child. Help them understand their own capacities and discern your will for them, through Jesus Christ in the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 63)

For those who fear becoming parents due to personal family history
Father, so many of your children have carried the wounds of growing up in broken homes and broken families into adulthood. As this history now threatens *N* and *N's* future as a couple and as parents, we ask that you free them from the chains of these childhood experiences. Alleviate any fear, anger, resentment, or doubt they may be carrying. Guide them toward the freedom of knowing that, in Christ, we are made new. We are transformed. And our lives, too, can be transformed. Help them to embrace the future you have planned for them, a future that we hope includes joyfully guiding their own children towards that same freedom. May this be the end of a painful legacy and the beginning of something new and beautiful. In Christ, it is possible. And in His name we pray. Amen. (VR)

For guidance in decision-making

Compassionate God: you have blessed your people with the capacity for discernment. Fill our hearts and minds with your peace as you come to *N* and *N* now in their time of need. Cleanse the thoughts of their hearts that they might perfectly love you in this moment. Grant them wisdom, grace, and courage as they listen for your voice. Fill their hearts with calm and strengthen them in the assurance of your never-failing love. Help them decide wisely. We ask this through Christ our Savior who, with you and the Comforter, abides with us always. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 56)

For help in deciding whether to adopt

O God, as a loving parent you have made *N* and *N* your own children through adoption into Christ. Guide them as they decide whether to adopt, to share the love you have given them with a child. Give them humility to make this decision wisely, for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Child, in the grace of your Holy Spirit. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 62)

scriptures

I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. *Psalm 18:1-2*

Hear my prayer, O Lord, let my cry come to you! Do not hide your face from me in the day of my distress! Incline your ear to me; answer me speedily in the day when I call! *Psalm 102:1-2*

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. *Proverbs 3:5-6*

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. *Romans 11:33-36*

The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. *Philippians 4:5b-7*

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. *1 Peter 5:6-7*

for those expecting a child

prayers

For trustfulness in times of worry and anxiety
Most loving Father, you will us to give thanks for all things, to dread nothing but the loss of you, and to cast all our cares on the One who cares for us. Preserve us from faithless fears and worldly anxieties, and grant that no clouds of this mortal life may hide from us the light of that love which is immortal, and which you have manifested unto us in your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (From *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 670)

For quiet confidence
O God of peace, who hast taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be our strength: By the might of thy Spirit lift us, we pray thee, to thy presence, where we may be still and know that thou art God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (From *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 670)

For peace
O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to you you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries, through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (From *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 23)

For blessing in pregnancy
Loving God, giver of life, hear our prayer for these women and for the children they have conceived, that, by your grace, they would all come in safety to a timely and healthy birth, and rejoice in your gracious providence. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Blessed are you, gracious God. May this time of pregnancy for these couples be a time of drawing nearer to you and to each other. Amen.

Blessed are you, holy God. May these couples' experience of birth be full of awe, wonder, and the joy of sharing in your creation. Amen.
(From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 20)

In a difficult pregnancy
He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep. *Isaiah 40:1*

Good shepherd of the flock, tender Jesus, carry *N* and *N* through the perils of this pregnancy. Strengthen their trust that you are at work in this and every circumstance, and encourage them with your grace. Keep alive the flame of hope that you are present with them and with this child you knit together in the womb. Fill them with confidence in God the Creator and comfort in the Holy Spirit, for your tender mercy's sake. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 68)

When the decision has been made to adopt
Heavenly Father, all the peoples of the earth are one family in you: Bless *N* and *N's* decision to adopt. Help them freely and gladly share their lives, their love, and their home with a child who needs them. Remind their family in times of doubt or frustration that every moment is filled with your grace. Surround this decision and those to come with your steadfast love; through Christ who took little children to himself. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 67)

scriptures

The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him. *Exodus 15:2*

Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. *Joshua 1:9*

For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. *Psalm 139:13-15*

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. *Romans 8:28*

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. *1 Corinthians 13:7*

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. *Philippians 4:13*

for those grieving or healing from the loss of a child

prayers

For help to bear bereavement
Heavenly Father, help us to entrust our loved ones to your care. Though sorrow darkens our lives, help us to look up to you, remembering the cloud of witnesses by which we are surrounded. And grant that we on earth, rejoicing ever in your presence, may share with them the rest and peace which your presence gives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (From *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 670)

For endurance
Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: Mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the Cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen. (From *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 23)

For comfort
Lord, I come to you on behalf of those whose hearts have been made heavy, whose minds have been burdened, and whose bodies have been weakened by grief. As each day passes, and with each breath they take, may they remember you, Lord, and turn to you, laying their sorrows at your feet and depending on your strength to carry them through. May the darkness give way to light, may their souls find healing in you, Lord, and may their sorrows surrender to the joy of knowing you. Give them comfort, grant them peace, fill them with your love. Amen. (VR)

For hope
Lord, as *N* and *N* seek healing from grief that seems too difficult to bear, would you restore their hope? Help them to see you in all their journey has brought them through and to look with hopeful anticipation rather than fear towards what is yet to come. Lord, it's not easy to look to a future that seems so far ahead, especially when we're hurting in the here and now. As *N* and *N* journey on, lift their spirits, help them to trust you, and strengthen their faith. Amen. (VR)

For lament, healing, and hope
God of Life, you give us life and hope. Be with this family in the chaos of this time. Calm their fears, be the light for their path, and strengthen their trust in

your promise never to leave or forsake us. We pray through Christ, in the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 18)

Gracious God, the comfort of all who sorrow, the strength of all who suffer: Let the cry of those in misery and need come to you, that we may find your mercy present with us in all our afflictions; give us strength for the sake of him who suffered for us, your son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 34)

Lord of all mercies: Abide with us when the darkness deepens and we suffer loss, pain, and grief. Help us to know and understand you are with us even when we cannot feel your presence. Let your saving help shine through the shadows as you hold your cross before our eyes, reminding us that you share our sufferings and have overcome death so that we might rise again with you. Let morning break upon our sorrowing hearts; abide with us in life and in death, Lord, so that we may live in your peace and rejoice in your love. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 37)

Compassionate God, Father of our Savior Jesus Christ, you know our deepest pain and sorrow. Behold the anguish of our broken dreams, and let our cry come to you. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 42)

Most holy God, in your compassion and mercy, you carry us in our afflictions, heal us, and nurture us. Holy One, hear our cry and renew us in your love, through Christ who has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows, in whom all things are redeemed for eternal life. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 50)

Following a miscarriage

O God, who gathered Rachel's tears over her lost children, hear now the sorrow and distress of this woman for the death of her expected child. In the darkness of loss, stretch out to her the strength of your arm and renewed assurance of your love; through your own suffering and risen child Jesus. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, pages 22-23)

Heavenly God, the Rock of Ages, you sustain the universe with the power of your love and hold us in the tenderness of your unfailing care. Support *N* and *N* who mourn the loss of their child. Comfort them in their pain and heal them in your grace. Hold their little one in your everlasting arms. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ who has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows from death to eternal life. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 59)

For those who trust in God, in the pain of sorrow there is consolation, in the face of despair there is hope, in the midst of death there is life. As we mourn *N's* death, we place ourselves in the hands of God and ask for strength, for healing, and for love.

Father and Creator, in whom all life and death find meaning, we bless you at all times, especially when we have need of your consolation. We entrust to your care a life conceived in love. May your blessing come upon them now. Quiet the anxiety of their minds and strengthen this love so that they may have peace in their hearts and home. We ask this through Christ our Lord. May the almighty and merciful God bless and protect us, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Adapted from Global Catholic Network)

Following a stillbirth, or death shortly after birth
Heavenly Father, your love for all children is strong and enduring. We were not able to know *N* as we had hoped. Yet you knew her growing in her mother's womb, and she is not lost to you. In the midst of our sadness, we thank you that *N* is with you now. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 59)

For delivery of a stillborn baby
Lord, in our earthly lives, some losses are too great to comprehend, some pains too severe to endure. Draw near to *N* and *N* as they suffer. Give *N* strength and carry her safely through the delivery of their little one. Short though *N's* live may have been, she remains so very precious to this couple. Through your presence, may they be reminded of the promise of everlasting life, and may they be comforted knowing their precious little one is now safe in your loving arms. May hope be restored as they look forward to the day they will be reunited with *N* Amen. (VR)

Following an abortion
Holy and life-giving God, we thank you for being with *N [and N]* through this difficult time. Help her to accept that you love her as you love the young life who is now held in Christ's arms. Fill her heart with your mercy. Heal her in body and mind that she may trust in your goodness. Guide her in the days to come, that she may know herself to be your beloved child. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 61)

For help to conceive or to accept infertility
Merciful Creator, every day you bring new life into this world. *N* and *N* long to share in this generation by bearing a child. Yet their attempts have brought grief, frustration, and fear. Now they feel spent and their hope fades. Give them grace to surrender their longing to you. Hold their hearts' desire in your heart, helping them trust that they're surrounded by your unfailing love, through Christ our Redeemer. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 63)

For letting go the hope of childbearing

Holy God, you offer abundance of life and fullness of joy to your children. *N* and *N* have longed to bear children of their own. As they grieve the loss of this dream, turn their sorrow to hope for a different future than the one they had imagined. Transform the desires of their hearts by your grace that they may bear your love to others in all they do and say, through Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 63)

scriptures

Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am languishing; heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled. My soul also is greatly troubled. But you, O Lord—how long? Turn, O Lord, deliver my life; save me for the sake of your steadfast love…I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping. My eye wastes away because of grief. *Psalm 6:2-4, 6-7a*

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. *Psalm 34:18*

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice! *Psalm 130:1*

My spirit faints within me; my heart within me is appalled…Answer me quickly, O Lord! My spirit fails! *Psalm 143:4, 7a*

For these things I weep; my eyes flow with tears, for a comforter is far from me, one to revive my spirit. . . But you, O Lord, reign forever; your throne endures to all generations. *Lamentations I:I6; 5:19*

My soul is bereft of peace, I have forgotten what happiness is; so I say, "My endurance has perished; so has my hope from the Lord."…But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him." *Lamentations 3:17-18, 21-24*

litanies

Litany of Lament
God, hear our prayer, And let our cry come to you. Merciful God, we come to you in sorrow. Help us to grieve; let our tears flow; and look upon our broken hearts.

God, hear our prayer,
And let our cry come to you.
We have lost children. We have lost hope. We have lost our way.

Consider our losses.
God, hear our prayer,
And let our cry come to you.
Our faith has been shaken.

We are haunted by memories and weighed down with guilt.
We are sick with sadness, weak with despair.
Help us know your presence.
God, hear our prayer,

And let our cry come to you.
In our suffering, we turn away from those who suffer also.
Our bonds have been strained, one with another.
Show us your compassion and help us forgive others and feel their sorrows.

God, hear our prayer,
And let our cry come to you.
We longed for [this child], but our bodies betrayed our hopes.
Help us surrender them, and trust in your faithfulness.

God, hear our prayer,
And let our cry come to you.
Help us envision a future filled with promise,
even if we cannot know what lies in store for us.
Help us have confidence in your love as we take each new step.

God, hear our prayer,
And let our cry come to you.

Lord of all mercies: Abide with us when the darkness deepens and we suffer loss, pain, and grief. Help us to know and understand you are with us even when we cannot feel your presence. Let your saving help shine through the shadows as you hold your cross before our eyes, reminding us that you share our sufferings and have overcome death so that we might rise again with you. Let morning break upon our sorrowing hearts; abide with us in life and in death, Lord, so that we may live in your peace and rejoice in your love. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, pages 36-37)

Litany of Healing and Hope

For the losses we have endured, Hear our cries, O God.
For miscarried babies and unborn hopes, Hear our cries, O God. For those children we will never know, Hear our cries, O God. For broken hearts and broken lives, Hear our cries, O God. For wounded innocence and shattered dreams, Hear our cries, O God.
When we are weary or lost,
O Christ, lead us home.
When we are hopeless and sad,
O Christ, lead us home.
When we are angry and tears become our food,
O Christ, lead us home.
When we are faithless and fearful,
O Christ, lead us home.
When we grieve and despair,
O Christ, lead us home.
Because you have been our companion in sorrow,
Holy Spirit, give us peace.
Because every child you have made lives forever,
Holy Spirit, give us peace.
Because suffering can make us kinder and more courageous,
Holy Spirit, give us peace.
Because nothing can separate us from your goodness,
Holy Spirit, give us peace.

Because you pray within us ceaselessly, Holy Spirit, give us peace.
Reassure our hearts with the hope that, though now we weep, joy will come;
Holy God, we bless your name.
You remove our mourning clothes and dress us in gladness;
Mighty God, we bless your name.
You will turn our lament into dancing;
Loving God, we bless your name.
You forgive all our sins and heal our infirmities;
Immortal God, we bless your name.
You renew us in your loving-kindness;
We are your people, and you are our God.
Hear our cries, O God. Heal and restore us. Fill us with your peace. In all things remind us of your love, for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
(From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, pages 52-53)

Litany of Remembrance

Memories of *N* will come to us, unbidden, sometimes unexpected, in all the various moments of our lives. Although memories may bring pain, they also bring comfort—for as along as we remember, *N* is still part of us.
In the rising of the sun and its going down,
we remember her.
At the blowing of the wind and in the chill of Winter,
we remember her.
At the opening of buds and in the rebirth of Spring,
we remember her.
At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of Summer,
we remember her.
At the rustling of leaves and the beauty of Autumn,
we remember her.
At the beginning of the year and when it ends,
we remember her.
When we are weary and in need of strength,
we remember her.
When we are lost and sick at heart,
we remember her.

When we have joys we yearn to share, we remember her. When we have decisions that are difficult to make, we remember her.
Merciful God, look with pity upon the sorrows of this family for whom we pray. Remember them in your mercy; nourish them with patience; comfort them with a sense of your goodness; lift up your countenance upon them; and give them peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
Give rest, O Christ, to your child with your saints where sorrow and pain are no more, neither sighing, but life everlasting.
(Adapted from the *Reform Jewish Prayer Book*)

for those with a new baby

prayers

For the care of children
Almighty God, heavenly Father, you have blessed these servants with the joy and care of children: Give them calm strength and patient wisdom so to train them, that they may love all that is true, and pure, and lovely, and of good report, following the example of their Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. (From *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 666)

For resurrection hope
Lord God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ triumphed over the powers of death and prepared for us our place in the new Jerusalem: Grant that we, who have this day given thanks for his resurrection, may praise you in that City of which he is the light, and where he lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen. (From *The Book of Common Prayer*, page 49)

After a traumatic birth
Life-giving Christ, be our faithful and loving companion in every moment of our lives. Visit this woman with your healing grace. Heal the pain and trauma she has undergone through this birth. As you labored in agony on the cross, so she suffered in labor. Now bring her the joy of new life that nothing can take away. Let your angels watch over this mother and child as they heal and rest. In the days to come, help her know your promise that weeping may linger for the night, but joy comes with the morning. So may this mother and child rise to give you thanks tomorrow and always, secure in you, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit, reign throughout all ages. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 69)

When a child has been born with special needs
God of creation, you made all peoples of the earth one family; we thank you for *N*, who was created in your love and is a precious gift to his family. Bring *N* fullness of joy. Make him a witness to your compassion for all your creation and a blessing to those who know him. Sustain his family and all those who care for him in their anxieties and questions. Give them grace to love *N* with your love and increase their faith and knowledge of you. Enable us who love them to provide support and comfort, through the power of your holy and life-giving Spirit, through Christ who loves all children. Amen. (From *Enriching Our Worship 5*, page 69)

God the creator of us all, we give you thanks for *N's* life. Grant us accepting and understanding hearts, and the gifts of wisdom, discernment, and faithfulness to love *N* well in accordance with his unique needs. Let your love for us be seen in our lives, that we may create an atmosphere in which he will live a life of dignity and worth. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the compassionate. Amen. (From *A New Zealand Prayer Book*, page 756)

In the midst of postpartum depression

Lord, how can such joyous, beautiful moments so quickly turn to sadness? How can the light of new life so suddenly give way to darkness? Comfort *N* and *N* in the mysterious depths of depression. Guide and protect them as they navigate the chaotic storms of unwanted thoughts and emotions. Bring them peace and calm to carry them through the uncertainty of the days and weeks ahead. And may the beauty and joy in baby's smile and laughter overwhelm the sadness. May the darkness be overcome once again by the light of new life. Amen. (VR)

scriptures

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. *Deuteronomy 6:5-7*

Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. *Psalm 8:2*

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate. *Psalm 127:3-5*

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. *Proverbs 22:6*

And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me." *Mark 9:36-37*

And they were bringing children to him that he might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not rreceive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them. *Mark 10:13-16*

Hannah's Prayer

My heart exults in the Lord; my horn is exalted in the Lord. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation.

"There is none holy like the Lord:
for there is none besides you;
there is no rock like our God.
Talk no more so very proudly,
let not arrogance come from your mouth;
for the Lord is a God of knowledge,
and by him actions are weighed.
The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble bind on strength.
Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.
The barren has borne seven,
but she who has many children is forlorn.
The Lord kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
The Lord makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low and he exalts.
He raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap
to make them sit with princes
and inherit a seat of honor.
For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,
and on them he has set the world.

"He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness,
for not by might shall a man prevail.
The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces;
against them he will thunder in heaven.
The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed.

prayers and petitions

prayers and petitions

Family

LEADERSHIP NETWORK

+

RESTORATION

ANGLICAN CHURCH