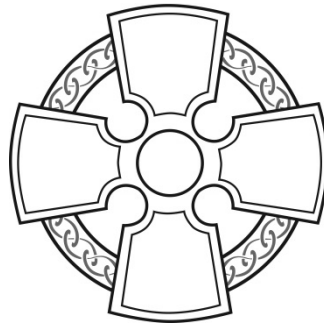


The Church in Wales



PRAYERS FOR A CHILD
~ BOOK ONE ~

Prayers of Thanksgiving
for the Birth of a Child

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INTRODUCTION

The Liturgy included in this booklet has been approved by the Bench of Bishops (June 2015) and produced by the Standing Liturgical Advisory Commission for use in services within the Church in Wales.

Prayers of Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child

This liturgy may be celebrated in the home, at hospital or in church. It is not an alternative to Holy Baptism but may be suitable for occasions when the baptism is delayed or if particular issues exist between the parents concerning baptism.

Gathering

In the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Greeting

Grace and peace be with you.
And also with you.

Introduction

We gather with great joy in thanksgiving to God for the safe birth of this child, praying for *him/her* that *he/she* may grow in God's love. Rejoicing with *N* and *N.* for the gift of new life, we pray that they may be strengthened in their responsibilities of parenthood and always experience the joy that comes from knowing Christ Jesus our Lord.

Readings

One of the following or another appropriate reading may be used. However, the Prayers of Thanksgiving provided on page 7 are related to the first reading.

Luke 1. 39-45 (46-56)

'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.'

Luke 1. 67-80

The Canticle of Zechariah

Luke 1. 39-45 (46-56)

39-45

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.'

(46-56)

And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

And Mary remained with her for about three months and then returned to her home.

Luke 1. 67-80

Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favourably on his people and redeemed them.

He has raised up a mighty saviour for us in the house of his servant David, as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.

Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors, and has remembered his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.’

The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

Prayers of Thanksgiving

Let us thank God for his goodness and proclaim his greatness in our lives.

The gift of new life has brought joy to *N* and *N*.
May they always know your fatherly care.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.

You have done great things and holy is your name.
May this family always know your grace in their lives.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.

You have looked upon this family and blessed them
with new life.
May they always thank you for the good things you do.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.

N and *N* have been given the responsibility of
parenthood.
May their lives always be filled with your goodness.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.

[We pray for *N* (*and N*) who celebrate the birth of a
new *brother/sister*.
May they grow together from age to age.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.]

We pray for this child, *N*.
May *he/she* grow in love and come to know you as
his/her Lord and God.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.

We pray for all who delight in the birth of this child
(*especially...*)
may every generation know the power of your love.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.

Concluding Prayer

Lord God,
our hearts sing out as we rejoice in your fatherly care.
May this family and all your people
proclaim the good things you have done for them
and the everlasting greatness of your love.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

We are children of the same heavenly Father.
Let us pray as Jesus taught:

Either

**Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

or

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

Presentation of the Gospel

The celebrant may present a gospel, New Testament or Bible to the family, with the following words:

This is the gospel (or word) of the Lord.

May the good news of Jesus brighten the path before you and guide you through life.

Prayers of Blessing

We bless you, God our Father,
creator and sustainer of all that exists.

Before he was born, John the Baptist leapt for joy
at the presence of Jesus your Son.

As we rejoice in the birth of this child
we pray that *he/she* may grow into the fullness of
your love and come to know Jesus as *his/her* friend
and Saviour.

Protect this family from all that would harm them.

Overshadow them with your Holy Spirit,
so that Jesus, Son of God and son of Mary,
may dwell with them and bring them happiness
and joy:

Blessed be God for ever!

The Lord bless you and keep watch over you;
the Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you;
the Lord look lovingly on you and give you peace;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Appendix

The following introduction may be used when the birth has been difficult

We gather with great joy at the birth of this child and with relief that the pains and difficulties of childbirth are over. We pray for *his/her* parents, especially *N* as she recovers, and for the whole family whose concern and anguish are known by the Lord. May the days to come be filled with joy and happiness.

Prayer after a difficult childbirth

God our Father,
you hear the anguish of your people
and you know our pains.
You have brought *N*. through the difficulties of
childbirth.
Give her strength, raise her up
and help her know the fullness of life
and happiness for ever,
which comes from knowing Christ Jesus your Son
who is alive and reigns with for ever and ever.
Amen.

Acknowledgements

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