**PRAYERS**

*These prayers are from ‘Rites and Resources for Pastoral Care’ prepared by the Commission of Worship of the Lutheran Church of Australia, and distributed by Australian Church Resources.*

***During pregnancy/before birth***

Gracious heavenly Father, you are the creator of life, the giver of every good gift. We thank you that you have blessed N and N and gladdened their heart with a child whom they look forward to seeing. Protect them and their unborn child from sickness and every evil. Let the child develop under your care, and, when the time for delivery comes, give the child a safe birth. Give N (the mother) joy and peace as she carries, nourishes, protects, and gives birth to her child. Grant her good health, a calm mind, and a firm faith in you. As you nourish her with the spiritual food of your word and sacrament, so nourish the child through her. Help N (the father) to be a caring and supporting husband and father. As you have given this child to N and N, accept the child from them, so that he or she may be yours forever; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***After the birth of a healthy child***

Lord God, you are like a loving parent, caring for your children. You watch over us and protect us. We thank you for sustaining N during her pregnancy and labour, for comforting N and N during times of anxiety, and for giving them a new son/daughter. Help them to be wise, strong, and loving, as you love them. In your love, bring N (the child) to your family in holy baptism. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***After the birth of a child with special needs***

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the life of N. Be with N and N as they face the challenge of caring for him/her. Grant them patience, courage, and wisdom. Comfort them when they are frustrated, and lift them up when they feel low. Remind them always of your love, and help them to bring up N as one of your dear children. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***For those who have had a miscarriage or stillbirth***

Heavenly Father, surround N and N, their family and friends with your love and grace. Comfort them in their sorrow and fill them with your peace. Strengthen their faith in you and bless them with confidence and courage to face the future; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(From Service to follow the birth of a stillborn child or the death of a newly born child, Uniting Church in Australia, National Commission on Liturgy.)*

Lord of all life, thank you for your work in creation, for nourishing life in the womb, for your love even in death. Thank you for the life of this child N, whom you gave to us and have taken to yourself. Thank you for the arms of your love, embracing both us and N in your family. Thank you for your presence in our sorrow, your strength as our life goes on. Take our sadness, and fill us with your Spirit to serve you on earth, and join your saints in glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Heavenly Father, our hopes have been turned to sorrow. You gave, and you have taken away. Your ways are higher than our ways, and your thoughts than our thoughts. Help us, Father, also in this time of sadness, to trust in you. Reassure N and N that you care for them and that Jesus has taken their child into his arms. Take all of us at last into your heavenly home; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***For a woman who has had an abortion***

Heavenly Father, have mercy on N. Forgive her all her sins (and for having had an abortion), make her clean from her sins, and reassure her of your love for her in Jesus Christ and your acceptance of her as your dear child. Protect her from the accusations and condemnations she may face. Help her to trust in your grace and rest on your support. Remind her that all things are in your hands. Uphold her in the days ahead, and give her strength to cope with her difficulties. Carry her through her grief, and shine on her darkness with the light of your presence; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

***For someone who has attempted suicide***

Lord Jesus Christ, you know the distress that N is suffering. You yourself descended to the depths of human suffering and despair. Be with N in his/her need and sustain him/her with your presence. Thank you for preserving his/her life at the time when he/she was near to death. Lift from him/her the burdens and cares that weigh him/her down. Kindle hope in N and make him/her optimistic about the future. Forgive us all our sins and failures, heal our sicknesses, strengthen our faith and our bond of union with you. Help N to see that you love him/her and value him/her as your dear child. Reshape his/her life and the circumstances beyond his/her control, so that he/she may experience the peace and joy that only you can give. Lead him/her into a future full of joy and blessing, and help him/her to live a useful life of service to you and other people. We put N in your care and protection. Send your holy angel to be with him/her, so that the devil will have no power over him/her. Amen.

***For those whose loved one has committed suicide***

Merciful heavenly Father, be with N, N, and N in their deep sorrow and distress. Sustain them in their grief and comfort them. For Jesus’ sake forgive us all our sins and failures. Remove our heavy burden of guilt and regret. Reassure N, N, and N (and us all) that you are a loving, compassionate God, and convince us that through your dear Son you know our weakness, understand our pain, and suffer with us in our troubles. Do not remember our sins or refuse to hear our prayers. For Jesus’ sake remember N and have mercy on him/her. Consider the troubles, pain, and despair that overwhelmed him/her. We entrust him/her to your fatherly care; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***For the dying***

Lord Jesus, our good Shepherd, be with N as he/she passes through the valley of death. Light up the way before him/her. Comfort him/her and strengthen his/her faith with your promise of salvation. Protect him/her from despair, doubt, and unbelief. Sustain him/her with your power, and bring him/her home, rejoicing with all the saints and angels, to our heavenly Father.

Amen.

Heavenly Father, Lord of life and death, our journey begins with you, and our journey ends with you. Be with N and protect him/her from despair and all the powers of darkness as he/she passes through the valley of the shadow of death. Assure him/her of your forgiveness and take away the fear of death. Surround him/her with your love and uphold him/her with your Spirit, so that as he/she dies he/she may fall asleep in faith and rest in peace. Guide him/her on this journey and receive him/her into your kingdom. Let your light shine perpetually on him/her, so that he/she may shine like a star in your glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

*(For an unconscious person)*

Lord God almighty, the hearts of all people lie open to you, and the darkness is as light with you. Remember N as he/she lies unconscious and dying, and sustain him/her as his/her senses fail. Pardon all his/her offences, and strengthen his/her faith in Christ. Protect him/her from the evil one, and take him/her to yourself in glory. Remove these dark shadows from him/her, so that he/she may find himself/herself forever in your light; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

*(For a dying child)*

Dear heavenly Father, you love little children and welcome them warmly. Be with N and light up his/her way as he/she passes through the darkness of death. Let your holy angel be with him/her, so that the devil will have no power over him/her. Take him/her in your arms and bring him/her home with you forever; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.