

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2026

“One Body,
One Spirit”



Introduction to the theme for 2026

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling." (Ephesians 4:4)

This year, the suggested prayers and reflections for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity have been prepared by the faithful of the Armenian Apostolic Church, along with their brothers and sisters of the Armenian Catholic and Evangelical Churches. These resources draw upon centuries-old traditions of prayer, petitions and hymns used by the Armenian people, dating as far back as the fourth century. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2026 extends an invitation to draw upon this shared Christian heritage and to delve more deeply into our fellowship in Christ, which unites Christians worldwide. Unity is central to our mission and is sustained by the profound love of Jesus Christ, who has set before us a unified purpose amidst our diversity.

Throughout Scripture, God's call to unity resonates from the earliest times. Starting with the Old Testament, Abram's plea to Lot highlights the divine desire for peace and harmony among the faithful: 'Let there be no strife between you and me, and between your herders and my herders; for we are kindred' (Genesis 13:8). Abram's call for harmony and mutual respect, despite their eventual parting of ways, emphasises the importance of living peacefully.

The Psalms celebrate the beauty of unity among God's people, declaring, 'How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!' (Psalm 133:1).

In the New Testament, Jesus' prayer in John 17:21 calls for believers to be one, as He and the Father are one, demonstrating that our unity is grounded in our relationship with Christ and our collective mission of sharing the good news. The foundational command of Jesus to love one another as He has loved us (John 13:34-35) reinforces that this love is the essence of our unity.

Paul's epistles stress the importance of unity within the Church, urging us to live lives worthy of our calling with humility, gentleness, patience and love (Ephesians 4:1-3). Ephesians 4:4 summarises the teachings of Paul about unity, emphasising here, too, that the followers of Christ represent 'one body and one Spirit', united in a single hope. This metaphor signifies the Church as a unified entity transcending barriers of geography, nationality, ethnicity and tradition. Paul uses the metaphor of the Church being the Body of Christ to describe its unity within the diversity of its members.

Emphasising the importance of Christian unity, Paul adds 'one Spirit', referring to the Holy Spirit who sustains this fellowship and empowers the Church to fulfil its mission. The Holy Spirit is the source of spiritual life and guidance among believers, ensuring that the diverse members of the Church are together in faith and purpose. The Spirit fosters a deep, spiritual connection between believers, transcending differences and creating a bond that reflects the unity of the Holy Trinity. This shared spiritual bond is a basis for reconciliation, guiding believers globally and equipping them for effective witness and ministry.

In a world with diverse and often divided traditions and expressions of Christian faith, Ephesians 4:4 reminds us that all believers are part of the 'one body' of Christ. This unity is not about uniformity but a common commitment to the core truths of the Christian faith. It serves as a powerful witness to the transformative power of the Holy Spirit when Christians of varied backgrounds come together with a shared goal and vision.

Through its practices and teachings, the Armenian Apostolic Church offers us a profound reflection on the essence of unity within the universal Body of Christ. In affirming the Creed, the faithful declare their belief in 'one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church', thereby professing the centrality of this unity to their spiritual life. This commitment to unity finds its fullest expression in the Church's Eucharistic gatherings. Every Sunday, in the Liturgy, the faithful embrace one another and sing, 'The Church has become one', a tangible manifestation of their collective faith and shared purpose. The rich, martyrdom-filled history of the Armenian Church and her leaders speaks of their unwavering efforts and resilience to maintain the Christian faith in the land of Armenia and the surrounding region. Unity within the Church should transcend doctrinal affirmation; it is a lived experience that deepens their spiritual identity and strengthens their collective witness. In embracing and living out this unity, the Armenian Apostolic Church not only honours its sacred traditions but also contributes meaningfully to the broader unity of Christ's universal Church. This reflection invites us to recognise and cherish the transformative power of unity, both within our own faith communities and in the wider Church.

Let us embrace this divine calling to unity, not as an abstract ideal but as a vital expression of our faith. In a world where the Body of Christ is wounded by divisions within and between traditions and confessions, the Apostle's call to unity is addressed to each of us, not only as separated church communities, but also as individuals within our communities. By living in unity, we not only witness to the love and power of our Lord Jesus Christ but also embody the essence of His teachings. As we support one another and celebrate our diverse gifts and talents, let us reflect the heart of Christ and further His work on earth.

The resources which follow include a verse for the day, daily bible readings and commentary, a daily reflection, a daily prayer and some thought provoking questions. You should feel free to pick and choose the resources which you find most helpful throughout the week.

Verse for the Day

'I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called' (Ephesians 4:1).

Day 1 - Our call to unity



Commentary

How often do we consider our own call to unity?

Ephesians 4:1 emphasises the significance of living 'a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called'. The work of Christian unity can be regarded as optional, an 'add-on', but the letter to the Ephesians reminds us that the call to unity is critical to God's mission on earth. Christian unity is a gift from God that enriches the lives of individuals, churches and the wider community. As we work and worship with those of other Christian traditions, we learn more of God and are better equipped to serve others and to challenge injustice. In an increasingly divided world, God calls us all to overcome barriers and become instruments of reconciliation, inviting us to be Christ's hands and feet.

Recognising and humbly embracing this call to unity enables the Church to reflect Christ to the world, as we seek to nurture harmonious and supportive fellowship with others and seek to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

Questions

- **Personal:** How does reflecting on 'the calling to which you have been called' inspire you to greater Christian unity?
- **Local:** How is the call to unity currently expressed within your local context?
- **Global:** What difference can increased Christian unity make to wider society?

Additional Scripture Passages

- Micah 6:6-8
- Psalm 133
- John 15:15-17

Reflection

Calling me out,
releasing my heart.
Ears to hear,
a will to embrace.
Open, and humble.
New perspectives revealed,
a facet of grace unseen.
Growing in love.
Together, becoming worthy of God's call.

Prayer

Loving God,
You have called us to unity.
May our response to Your call lead us to actively
seek justice and reconciliation
and share Your light with the world.
Amen.

Verse for the Day

'... with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love' (Ephesians 4:2).

Day 2 - Bearing with one another in love



Commentary

The author of Ephesians urges us to live in a manner worthy of our Christian calling by providing this profound social guidance: Ephesians calls believers 'with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love' (Ephesians 4:2). This divine calling is not merely a personal journey but is vividly expressed in our interactions with others. The four virtues highlighted – humility, gentleness, patience and tolerance – are all crucial for nurturing loving relationships. To embody these virtues means approaching others with a spirit of genuine humility, extending gentleness even towards those who test our patience, and showing forbearance with those who challenge us. Most profoundly, it involves 'bearing with one another' through our differences, reflecting a love that transcends all earthly divides and embodies the grace of God's boundless compassion. Markus Zusak's *The Book Thief* offers a definition that expresses this grace: 'Not-leaving: an act of trust and love, often deciphered by children.' 'Bearing with' requires a grace that hangs on when the temptation to give up is great.

Questions

- Personal: What are the personal relationships or issues that exhaust your empathy?
- Local: How can the virtues of humility, gentleness, patience and tolerance, as mentioned in the letter to the Ephesians, help us as believers navigate and overcome divisions within our local communities?
- Global: The innkeeper in Luke 10 was called to care, with only the word of a stranger that he would be repaid whatever more he spent. Discuss different interpretations and questions this verse evokes. What might those interpretations lead you to do in your relationships with your global neighbours?

Additional Scripture Passages

- Zechariah 7:8-10
- Psalm 25:6-10
- Luke 10:30-36

Reflection

'Not-leaving: an act of trust and love, often deciphered by children.'

Not-leaving-love: you narrow the road between us, making it impossible to walk by.

Not-leaving-love: you break our hearts with your need, and we find ourselves kneeling beside you.

Not-leaving-love: you carry the world to our door and, if we answer, we see that you're not popping by. You're moving in.

Not-leaving-love: innkeeping can be a thankless, interminable task. May we be part of the body prepared to do the work that never leaves.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
show us how to be patient with one another in humility and gentleness.

May the light You shine on our path lead us towards unity and help us heal the wounds of division and indifference that often break communities apart. Amen.

Verse for the Day

... making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace' (Ephesians 4:3).

Reflection

We learn the get-out,
just to let things be.
And yeah,
that's what I so often want.
An undemanding peace.
A peace where I'm left alone,
when someone else can take care of the
world's troubles.
But that's the peace that the world gives,
the peace which surrenders,
the peace which divides,
the peace of the prince of this world.
Un-peace me of that now,
that I may own
the peace which the world can't give
and which dares to speak its name
where strife and division thrive.

Questions

- Personal:** When you feel you are at peace with yourself, how important is it that you are at peace with others as well?
- Local:** How does the Apostle Paul's teaching that peace is a fruit of the Spirit impact our daily interactions and relationships within our communities, especially where there is a need for reconciliation or forgiveness?
- Global:** 'Peace is a great concept but is not a practicable possibility in the world today.' How would you challenge that assertion?

Day 3 – The bond of peace



Additional Scripture Passages

- Isaiah 11:6-9
- Psalm 86:8-13
- John 14:27-31

Commentary

Peace is a crucial factor in maintaining unity within the Church. In Ephesians 4:3, the 'bond of peace' signifies a vital and dynamic principle that not only connects us as Christians but also sustains the unity of the Christian community. Christ, the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6), preached and lived peace and reconciliation. Peace is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), both a gift and a result of the Spirit at work. The 'bond of peace' is an active force that maintains church cohesion, holding diverse members together despite differences in backgrounds or opinions. Peace fosters meaningful relationships, allowing believers to interact harmoniously and to forgive one another more readily. Peace is both an external power which disempowers the forces of conflict and an inner strength which upholds and challenges us when division threatens. Paul highlights the fact that true unity requires ongoing commitment to peace. It calls for active cultivation and promotion of peace among Christians.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
You are the Prince of Peace.
Strengthen the bond of peace among us and in our troubled world.
Disturb the hearts of all who would make war; touch the wounds of all who are afflicted by war.
We pray especially for the people of Armenia and Artsakh, and their kindred throughout the world.
Let the light of Your love shine in all the dark places of our world, and hasten the day when all peoples may dwell in peace with justice.
Amen.

Day 4 - Called to one hope

Verse for the Day

'There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling' (Ephesians 4:4).



Additional Scripture Passages

- Deuteronomy 6:4-9
- Psalm 24:1-6
- John 17:20-26

Commentary

In our world, 'fracture', 'separation', 'isolation' and 'looking after myself' are some key words that describe our culture. Not so the Apostle Paul who, in Ephesians 4:4, looks at the world with different glasses. His worldview is difficult and demanding, requiring determination, work and the grace, empowerment and nurture of the Spirit of God. Why? Because God longs for us to discover the multi-faceted, bejewelled brilliance of the distinctive unity in the Church made possible by Jesus. This is a unity that seeks to transcend all national and cultural boundaries. As together we place our lives, our very salvation, in the outstretched hands of the risen Christ, we look forward. What do we see? The breathtaking, shared hope of the second coming of our Lord, culminating in a new heaven and a new earth within which we will each have a place prepared. Unity is a jewel beyond price, a lived reality while incomplete, as it is the compelling herald in our world of our future hope.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
You bring us together in all our diversity, as family and church.
In the face of so many situations on earth, where hope has given way to despair and hearts are wounded and emptied by disappointment, renew our strength and unify us.
Help us to share Your hope wherever we find ourselves.
You are the true Light, who casts out the darkness of sin, despair and brokenness, who shines into our hearts, releasing the joy and the true hope of Your eternal love for all.
Amen.

Reflection

True Hope
Hope is not a butterfly, careless, compulsively fluttering, anxiously mating, time spare.
Hope is more than optimism that yoyos like the weather mercury.
Hope is not relentless positivity, requiring endless, exhausting, bolstering.
Hope is bejewelled with wonder, cascading with light, and reigns in Personhood within, without, unboundaried.

Questions

- **Personal:** What must you lay down in order to embrace the unity of all God's people?
- **Local:** What are the most challenging issues facing your locality that threaten to undermine the unity and well-being of all?
- **Global:** Does your church unity transcend all national and cultural boundaries?

Day 5 - One faith, one baptism



Verse for the Day

'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'
(Ephesians 4:5).

Additional Scripture Passages

- Zechariah 14:6-9
- Psalm 100
- Matthew 28:16-20

Commentary

In Ephesians 4:5, the Apostle Paul emphasises the act of baptism as marking the entrance of individuals into the Church's fellowship, affirming their shared commitment to the same Lord. In baptism, the collective identity of the Church is celebrated, since we are one in the Body of the Lord. While members may come from varied backgrounds, their unity in faith as declared in baptism transcends all divisions. By focusing on these unifying elements, the Church can celebrate its diversity while remaining steadfastly united. This challenges us to prioritise our shared identity in Christ over our differences, reinforcing the bond that unites all Christians.

Reflection

Pilgrims,
whether we know ourselves as that or not,
we've reached the well.
And as we test its waters
we all will, know it or not, engift its healing,
whatever our ailment.
Somehow,
whenever,
wherever,
the living water unites.

Prayer

Spirit of God, and true God,
who descended on the River Jordan and entered into the upper room;
who enlightened us by the baptism of the water of life,
we have sinned against heaven and before You.
Purify us again with Your divine fire,
as You did the Apostles with fiery tongues.
Have mercy on us and all Your creatures.
Amen.
St Nersess the Gracious (adapted)

Questions

- **Personal:** What does reflecting on your own baptism or Christian initiation mean for you today?
- **Local:** How does your church community celebrate the unity of all creation within a local context?
- **Global:** Given the diverse understanding of baptism among Christians, how can this sacrament still be an expression of unity?

Day 6 - One God over all

Verse for the Day

'One God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all' (Ephesians 4:6)



Additional Scripture Passages

- 1 Kings 8:56-60
- Psalm 148:7-13
- Matthew 5:44-48

Commentary

Paul emphasises the profound oneness of God, declaring that God is 'above all and through all and in all'. The same God who made the world crafted human beings and loves and knows each of us by name. This is the God who entered into a covenant relationship with His people, calling them to worship Him in spirit and in truth. This is the God who gives us a future beyond death, promising eternal life and the hope of a new heaven and a new earth. This unique story begins and ends with love, servanthood and devotion. Unity expresses God's nature and makes visible the invisible to all people, redefining true power through humility, love and suffering. May we seek after and allow the living God to take hold of us for God's purposes in this world.

Questions

- **Personal:** How do we understand God as a loving presence in our lives?
- **Local:** Who can we honour in our community with kindness and love?
- **Global:** How do we recognise God's loving presence in the world?

Reflection

Walking into the gallery, on the far wall you see a stunning picture of a herd of elephants in the African tundra. The group of animals are gathered on the edge of a large water hole. Shading them is a spreading tree, behind which the blue, blue unending sky. You step closer into the gallery. You notice the baby elephant wallowing in the red, watery mud, a mother's tender trunk resting on its flank. A little closer and you spy the two monkeys in the tree. A little closer still and you realise the picture is not one, but many – it is a mosaic. Closer still and each of the smaller pieces is revealed as an individual portrait of a person. You realise that this huge, wonderful, expansive wildlife extravaganza is actually composed of tiny pictures. Unity, diversity, visionary, extraordinary, breathtakingly beautiful. The power of the Artist's vision!

The unified Church is God's chosen mosaic.

Prayer

Loving God, we worship You as our Creator, for Your presence in the heavens beyond words and Your presence on earth beyond understanding. Through Your Son Jesus Christ we yield to Your tender care as the beginning and fulfilment of everything. Help us to fulfil Your will in our lives. Glory for ever to You, God our Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Verse for the Day

'But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift' (Ephesians 4:7).

Day 7 - Christ's gift



Additional Scripture Passages

- Jeremiah 1:4-9
- Psalm 131
- Luke 4:17-19

Commentary

The Church and all its local expressions and communities are unique in their God-given diversity. This gift is granted by one God, for one purpose, with one hope. As the Church united, we can realise Christ's gift of grace which empowers us to work as co-creators with God as we imagine and manifest God's dream for all people: God's Kingdom here on earth. It begins with us recognising our Maker's richness and power in the midst of our diversity. It moves us to come together, centred in Christ and emboldened by the Holy Spirit, in unity and purpose glorifying God. As the Church, resolutely united and wonderfully diverse, we make the invisible God visible to the world as we share the gift of Christ unselfishly for all whom He calls kin.

Reflection

But I am just a little child,
how else would you expect me to act?
What else did you think I was going to do,
other than play and delight in who I was made to be,
to dance between the pillars of wisdom and hope,
to make up rhymes and sing at the top of my lungs?!
That God as my witness,
with words so profound anointed not just my lips,
but tenderly set alight in my very soul:
Oh Church,
hope in the Lord for ever
from this time on and ever more...

Questions

- **Personal:** What are Christ's gifts to you?
- **Local:** Where do you recognise the richness of God's Dream/Kingdom expressed in diverse ways in your local context?
- **Global:** How can we as the Church live out the ideals of diversity, inclusion and equality – in ways that uphold them in this time?

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
You have bestowed wonderful graces and multiple gifts upon us
for the sake of building up Your Body, the Church.
Help us to embrace and recognise our individuality,
so that we may be caught up in the childlike wonder of Your
diverse making and creating.
Breathe in us with Your creative Spirit,
that we may respond and spread Your word, Your dream, Your
grace and Your beauty,
to every place that we can reach,
as we play and pray in Your name.
Amen.

Verse for the Day

'The gifts he gave were ... for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ'
(Ephesians 4:11-13).

Reflection

Your word lingers in me like the taste of sweet honey,
rich and full bodied.
I savour Your aroma,
drink in the delights of Your ways
deepening the flavour of my soul.
As Your presence enriches my very being,
Your Spirit
poured over and permeating
my innermost thoughts and feelings.
You woo me
 towards a better path,
 paved with Your riches,
 populated with Your children –
all of us
journeying
delighting
following
becoming.

Questions

- Personal:** Where have you experienced 'stretching' as you strive for the full stature of Christ? Reflect on what you learned.
- Local:** Who do we need to stretch us a bit more in our loving and serving in our local context?
- Global:** Who do we need to journey with to stretch us in our loving and serving in a national and global context?

Day 8 - Growing into Christ



Additional Scripture Passages

- Proverbs 9:10
- Psalm 119:97-103
- Mark 12:28-34a

Commentary

In Ephesians 4:13 we are shown a vision of the wholeness of the unified Body of Christ – through unity in faith and maturity into the fullness of Christ's stature. We are invited into a reality that is more than knowing; it is embodied. Knowing that you do not know everything is the beginning of wisdom. As we humbly explore in awe (a different definition of fear), we can discover paths to maturity that are life changing and renewing not just for us personally, but also for the Church and, through the Church, for the world. It means becoming more like Jesus in every way: loving as Jesus loves, serving as Jesus serves and reflecting His character. We are called to share our spiritual journey, seeking unity with each other, growing in our lived experience of the Son of God and striving for the full stature of Christ.

Prayer

May I rise with You, Light of the World,
called to bring grace and mercy.
May I journey in the wake of Your Spirit,
called towards righteousness and peace.
May I rest with the hope of good things
in the places of Your creation that You, O God, call me to
bring healing.
May we all, with courage and joy,
work faithfully for the coming of Your kingdom.
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
Now and always and unto the ages of ages.
Amen.