



Prisoners Week Launch 2022 Worship Resources

Theme: A story of grace

For by grace are you are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: It is God's gift not of works lest anyone should boast. Ephesians 2 verse 8

For many, 2022 has been a story of pain - Covid-19, the situation in Ukraine, the cost of living, the environmental crisis, etc.

Imprisonment – the pain of separation, the anguish of loved-ones, the trauma of victims – hurts too.

My story hurts: Why am I here (again)? Whom have I hurt? How can I stop this? How can I get well? Can I be trusted again? Do my family still love me? I am sorry. I want to write a different, better, story!

When we reflect on all that has happened, our painful stories, we can also see glimmers of Grace – moments when we glimpse the heavenly kingdom, the hand of God at work in our lives and those we know and love. These glimpses weave into our life's story, our own Story of Grace.

I am hopeful. I am free. I belong. I am loved.

STORIES OF GRACE

Our 2022 theme invites us to listen to grace-filled stories of those affected by imprisonment in Scotland, of their families and of the victims of crime. This year we are celebrating these Stories of Grace.

Find Stories of Grace along with videos to download on the Prisoners Week website to use as part of a service of worship. → www.prisonersweek.org.uk/stories

PRAYER SHEET

A prayer sheet of daily prayers is available to encourage prayer during Prisoners Week and to help us ask whether there is one thing we can do to help any of the people that we are praying for. Most prayers have a link to some item on the website to provoke further thought and action.

Download the prayer sheet here
→ www.prisonersweek.org.uk/prayer



SUGGESTED HYMNS

Amazing Grace (My chains are gone) – various versions available on YouTube

Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine CH4 561

Deep Within (David Haas) – available on YouTube

God will make a way - www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/donmoen/godwillmakeaway.html

Grace is when God gives us things we don't deserve CH4 163

I will offer up my life CH4 503

Spirit of God come dwell within me CH4 722

Your Grace is Enough (Chris Tomlin)

We cannot measure how you heal CH4 718

We seek a love that sets all people free CH4 622

Hymns from Church Hymnary 4 (CH4) can be found online

→ www.hymnary.org/hymnal/CH4

CALL TO WORSHIP

God of Justice, God of Grace

Set us free today

Lord of the rich and Lord of the poor

Open our lives to your Grace

Spirit of Love, Spirit of Truth

Fill up our hearts with Praise

PRAYER OF ADORATION

Loving God, we gather as your people, your children, your family,
To give you our worship and adoration, we wonder
Who is there like you? Who heals with such tenderness,
Who loves with such gentleness, who pours grace upon grace
Upon our lives. You are a God who walks with us knowing our
Weaknesses, our worries, our cares, our joys and our dreams.
And in Jesus you show us your love in action in the world,
Grace personified, love crucified, our lives sanctified.



Holy Spirit, forgive us when we stop you from bringing about the transformation we so badly need in our lives.
Come now and change us, make us more Christ like,
Witnesses to all you have done and are doing in our lives,
Healing, restoring, forgiving.
Your kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven,
AMEN

THE PRISONERS WEEK PRAYER

Lord, you offer freedom to all people.
We pray for those who are held in prison.
Break the bonds of fear and isolation that exist.
Support with your love:
prisoners, their families and friends, prison staff,
chaplains and all who care.
Heal those who have been wounded by the activities of others,
especially the victims of crime.
Help us to forgive one another.
To act justly. To love mercy.
And walk humbly together with Christ.
In His strength and in His Spirit.
Now and every day, Amen.

Download the video version of the Prisoners Week Prayer here
→ www.prisonersweek.org.uk/prayer

CHILDREN'S TALK

Get a child (might work better with an adult who could ham it up a bit) to tip a basket of toys on the floor and then walk off.
Ask the other children who should clean it up?
It should be the person who tipped out the toys...
Is there anyone who is kind enough to come and put the toys back in the basket?
When the child/adult returns ask them how they feel?
Did they deserve to have their toys cleaned up?
Did someone else have to tidy up for them? No.
What do you think the person might do if they see some toys tipped on the floor?
Do you think they might go and help pick them up?



Jesus is like the person who comes and sorts out the mess we have made – we don't deserve it – but he does it to show how much he loves us. But once he has done it for us – he hopes we will be kind to others – especially when they don't deserve it!

Today in the service the grownups are listening to stories of how Jesus helped people in prison to sort out the mess they had made and how these people are now helping others.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION & THANKSGIVING

Loving God, we want to thank you for your gracious love no matter who we are. Thank you that you hear us when we cry to you. We pray for all those who feel stuck in a place they don't want to be – in a place of imprisonment, or of unforgiveness, or of despair or of isolation, or of injustice. Come, Lord Jesus, and by your grace, grab outstretched hands and set each of us on solid ground.

We pray for all who have been harmed. For **victims** of violence and crime, of abuse and neglect, of prejudice and marginalisation. We pray especially for those who feel that their voice is not heard or justice has not been done. May justice be restored through grace-filled conversation, forgiveness and understanding. Let those who have harmed see what pain they have caused – and may those harmed find the grace to forgive.

We pray for all who **support** people on release and beyond – for organisations and faith communities who journey with people as they seek to resettle into the community. And for the families of people in prison and all who support them. Pray that we as a church in Scotland would be communities of grace, where people feel welcomed, whoever they are.

Loving God, you sent your Son Jesus to live among us and to show us your infinite grace. We thank you for all those who make themselves present in your name in our prisons. For the chaplains who provide pastoral, spiritual and religious care, for the volunteers who regularly go in to support chaplains as they journey with those on remand, on short-term and on long-term sentences and all those who visit or write letters.

Faithful God, we give thanks today for all who have experienced your transforming grace in and out of prison. Our hearts are filled with joy when we read the stories of lives transformed, of brokenness healed, of lives restored. We could not survive without your grace.

God of justice, we pray for all those involved in our justice system – for the police, for those in the courts who decide the punishment, for all prison staff who care for those sent to



prison, for the press who report on cases and for the attitude of the public towards to some of the most vulnerable in our society. Help us all to see things through your eyes ministering each day to bring your kingdom here on earth, in your name we pray, Amen