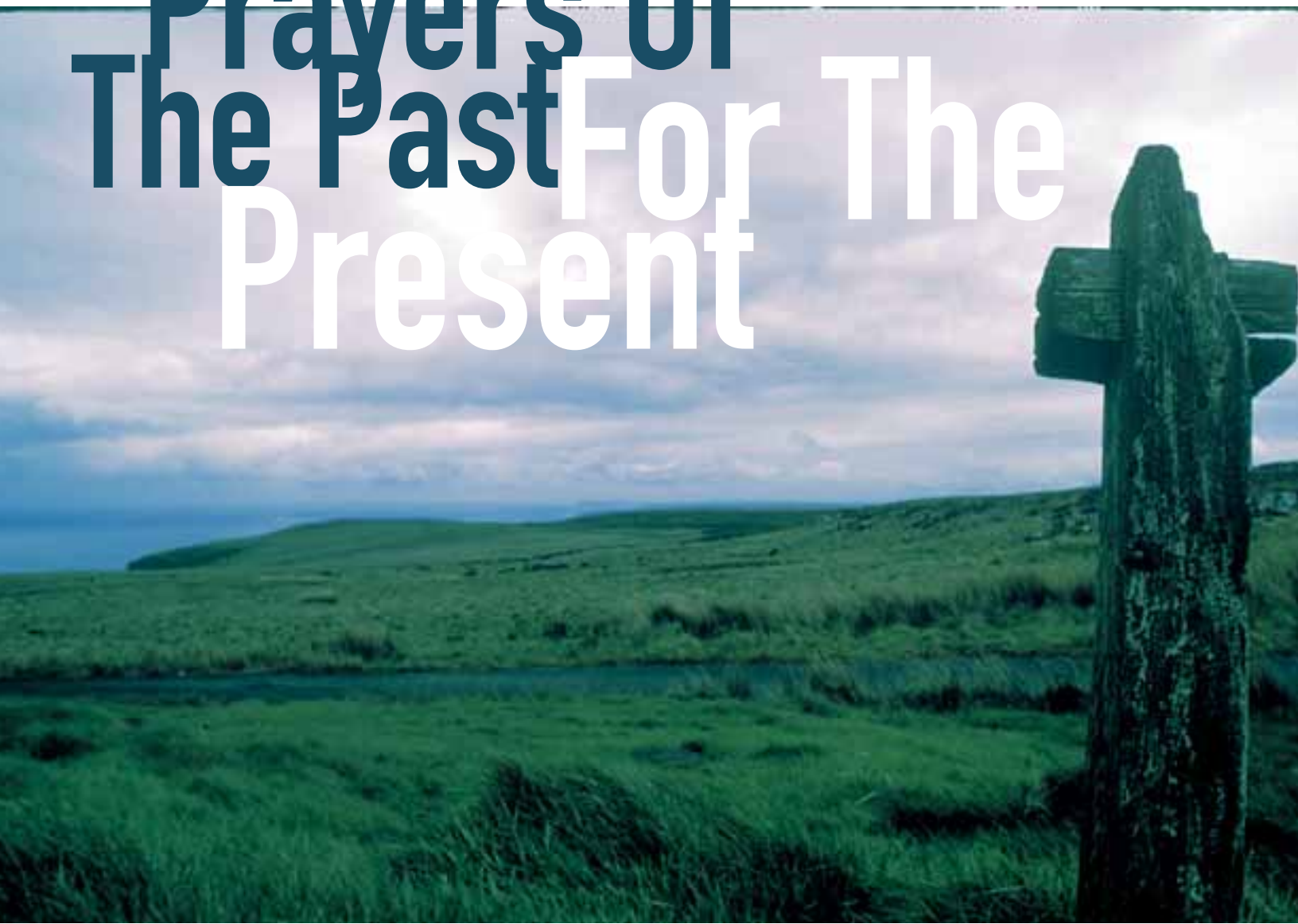
INSIDE WORSHIP

We can live by the subtle notion that the more recent a worship expression is, or the more widely embraced it is by contemporary churches, the truer it must be. Under the thumb of such thinking, today's modern expressions of worship sets and service orders can sometimes ring hollow and leave us disconnected from the Church across time and borders. Sometimes, utilizing rich, profound prayers from ancient and past sources in worship can add weight to the worship experience. Consider thoughtfully integrating some of these corporately spoken prayers into the beginning, middle or end of a worship set – they may enhance your congregation's worship experience in beautiful ways.

Prayers Of The Past For The Present



A Prayer Of Thankfulness

"O God, who has proven Your love for all humanity by sending us Jesus Christ our Lord, And has illuminated our human life by the radiance of His presence,
I give You thanks for this Your greatest gift.
For my Lord's days upon the earth:
For the record of His deeds of love:
For the words He spoke for my guidance and help:
For His obedience unto death:
For His triumph over death:
For the presence of His Spirit within me now:
I thank You, O God."

John Baillie, *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings For Individuals And Groups* (Grand Rapids: Renovare' Inc., 1993). See www.renovare.com
Note: Excerpted from John Baillie's *A Diary Of Private Prayer.*

A Prayer For Protection

"Christ beside me, Christ before me;
Christ behind me, Christ within me;
Christ beneath me, Christ above me;
Christ to right of me, Christ to left of me;
Christ in my lying, my sitting, my rising;
Christ in heart of all who know me,
Christ on tongue of all who meet me,
Christ in eye of all who see me,
Christ in ear of all who hear me.

For to the Lord belongs salvation,
And to the Lord belongs salvation
And to Christ belongs Salvation.

May your salvation, Lord, be with us always. Amen."

Esther DeWaal, *The Celtic Way Of Prayer: Recovering The Religious Imagination* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), p. 21. See www.amazon.com
Note: This prayer is excerpted from *St. Patrick's Breastplate (lorica).*

A Prayer Of Worship (Phos Hilaron)

Gladdening Light
Of His pure glory poured
Who is the Immortal Father, Heavenly Blest
Holiest Of Holies, Jesus Christ Our Lord

Now we are come to the sun's hour of rest
The lights of evening 'round us shine
We hymn the Father, Son and
Holy Spirit Divine

Worthiest art Thou, at all times to be sung
With undefiled tongue
Son of our God, Giver of life alone
Therefore, in all the world Thy glories Lord
Thine own

Phos Hilaron, translated by John Keble, 1834.
Note: The Phos Hilaron, or "Hilarious Light," is considered one of the most ancient of Christian hymns, and tradition has it that it was sung in the catacombs. As a candle was brought forward, signifying the light of Christ, this evening hymn took on a powerfully symbolic meaning.

A Prayer For Guidance

"O God, make clear to us each road,
O God, make safe to us each step,
When we stumble, hold us,
When we fall, lift us up,
When we are hard-pressed with evil,
deliver us,
And bring us at last to Your glory."

Northumbria Community. *Celtic Daily Prayer: Prayers And Readings From The Northumbria Community* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002). See www.amazon.com
Note: Simple Celtic prayers get right to the point and give us simple words for complex feelings.

The Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9–13)

"Our Father in heaven,
Reveal who you are.
Set the world right;
Do what's best—
as above, so below.
Keep us alive with three square meals.
Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.
Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.
You're in charge!
You can do anything you want!
You're ablaze in beauty!
Yes. Yes. Yes."

Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message* (Colorado Springs: NavPress Publishing Group, 2002).
Note: Psalm or scripture excerpts from bible passages can add fresh life to corporate scripture reading. Try a variety of paraphrases or translations.



A Prayer For Forgiveness

"According to the multitude of your mercies,
cleanse my iniquity.
O star-like sun,
O guiding light,
O home of the planets,
O fiery-maned and marvelous One,
O fertile, undulating, fiery sea,
Forgive.

O fiery glow,
O fiery flame of Judgment,
Forgive.

O holy story-teller, holy scholar,
O full of holy grace, of holy strength,
O overflowing, loving, silent One,
O generous and thunderous giver of gifts,
Forgive.

O rock-like warrior of a hundred hosts,
O fair crowned One, victorious, skilled in battle.
Forgive."

Esther DeWaal, *The Celtic Way Of Prayer: Recovering The Religious Imagination* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), p. 21. See www.amazon.com
Note: This prayer is made of excerpts from St. Ciaran's prayer, a sixth century Celtic monk.

A Prayer For Indwelling

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down;
Fix in us thy humble dwelling;
All thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation;
Enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe Thy loving Spirit,
Into every troubled breast!
Let us all in Thee inherit;
Let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning;
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its Beginning,
Set our hearts at liberty.

Finish, then, Thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Charles Wesley, "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" from *Hymns For Those That Seek And Those That Have Redemption By The Blood Of Jesus Christ.*
See www.cyberhymnal.org
Note: Reciting hymns as prayers without music (or singing them with music!) can be an effective way to use these past treasures in modern worship.

A Prayer For The Holy Spirit To Come

Come, true light.
Come, life eternal.
Come, hidden mystery.
Come, treasure without name.
Come, reality beyond all words.
Come, person beyond all understanding.
Come, rejoicing without end.
Come, light that knows no evening.
Come, unfailing expectation of the saved.
Come, raising of the fallen.
Come, resurrection of the dead.
Come, all-powerful, for unceasingly you create, refashion and change all things by your will alone.
Come, for your name fills our hearts with longing and is ever on our lips.
Come, for you are yourself the desire that is within me.
Come, my breath and my life.
Come, the consolation of my humble soul.
Come, my joy, my glory, my endless delight.

Bishop Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Way* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1979). Excerpts from *An Invocation To The Holy Spirit* by St. Symeon.
Note: A favorite cry, "Come, Holy Spirit," gets a fresh facelift in this Orthodox Church prayer.