Lord, we come with caution, doubts and some fear. Our world is facing a crisis of unknown proportions. And we wonder what next week and next month will bring.

Most of us live comfortable lives. We are well-blest in a country of plenty and safety. We don’t suffer for lack of food, shelter, safety and opportunity. We are shown the world’s wars, oppression, economic ups and downs on TV and newspapers daily, but these issues often seem far away. Our own problems seem more real than the ones out there. Now Lord, the world has a problem and it has become ours. We cannot keep our distance anymore.

As people we crave certainty, Lord. We are easily afraid of the unknown. Many of us are not even sure how seriously to take this; others fear for their lives or their loved ones. But we fear the impact on our lives, our jobs, on our mobility. We are concerned about an overwhelmed health care system. So here we are Lord, before a great unknown. Give us patience and peace. Remind us that the only real certainty we have is that you hold us in your loving hands. We know we that we will have hard times, with viruses and other difficulties, but by your grace, all will be well. You will not abandon us.

So now we offer our prayers for our world and for ourselves as we live with a disease that seems to know no boundaries. So while we give thanks for the lives that we have been given, we pray for your deliverance for this world.

* As each of us deals with the possibility of contracting this disease, we pray that we will not lose sight of those who suffer for other reasons and for whom this will be an additional burden: the poor, the lonely, the hungry and the oppressed, wherever they live.
* Please protect the most vulnerable among us, the aged and those in compromised health. Help each of us, as we are able, to be the hands and feet of Jesus, wherever you have placed us.
* God of Mercy, be with those who have contracted the virus around the world. Comfort those whose loved ones have died. Give patience to those who are quarantined and unable to move freely in their communities.
* We pray for health care providers. Protect them from this disease and from despair. Give them courage and patience as they must provide healing and comfort. Be with governments and employers, as they have to make difficult decisions to address this virus.
* We pray for those whose jobs and businesses are at risk and worry about how they will manage financially through this time. Give wisdom to government and business leaders as they work to reduce the impact on our economic life.
* We pray that this church can continue to be a loving and supportive presence to each other and to the neighbourhood in which we live. Bless all staff and volunteers, as decisions about our ministry need to be made.
* We pray for all people, and for ourselves, that we will not succumb to panic and unnecessary fears. Please free us all from the bondage that anxiety creates within. Help us to hold on with clarity and confidence, to you, our God who loves and will always keep us in your hands, regardless of the troubles that we may face.

Thank you Lord that, even in times of uncertainty around us, we see signs of your faithfulness in the creation. We see growing signs of spring. The air is warmer, the sun brighter, tree buds are swelling and tulip leaves are showing. Help us to see these as signs of your faithful presence, that you remain the God of all creation and of the lives that we live within it.

Bless us as we continue our worship and fellowship. Bless in the week that lies ahead in all that we do. Help us as continue to live lives of love and service.

In your name we pray, Amen