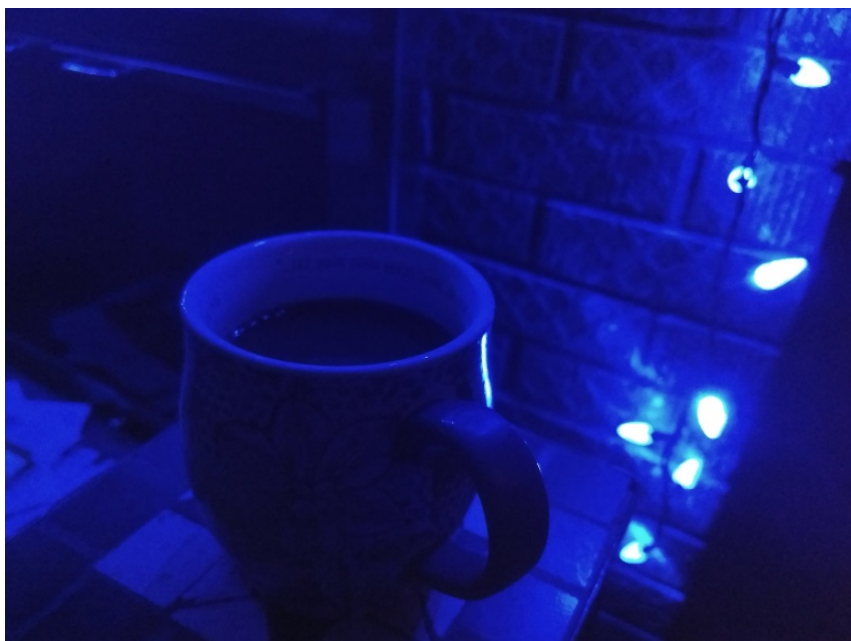


Prayers

for parents of babies on the way
and in the NICU



We know that the time that parents and other family members are here with us is full of so much love and also so much worry.

We care about you and your baby and all that is occurring for you. May this little book of prayers offer a sense of comfort, presence, and strength.

Please feel free to ask for a chaplain if you are in need of further spiritual support.

Prayers and photos by Chaplain Christine Wagner-Hecht, Dept. of Spiritual Services, UIHC.

Prayer for Coming in Too Early

Oh, God, we didn't want to be here yet.

We don't know what will happen.

We don't even know what to ask for

But for your help.

Right now that's what we know to ask for:

your help.

This baby, mine, ours

A child or children, more than one

For whom we have longed for

and prayed

Breathe with us, help us to hold on,

Breathe with us. Help us. Be here with us.

Amen.



Prayer for this Child to Grow Inside

We know you know about children, God.

We know your love is with us.

Right now, we pray in this waiting time,

for this little one to stay inside

to grow to stay to hold on.

Help the days go by,

one by one, week by week,

help me rest

help me hope

help me laugh

even when there is such worry.

O gracious one, who knows about long waiting,

and longing, and fierce love

we pray we pray be very near.



Prayer for Delight

You, God, made us for joy.

Help us to notice

the beautiful things here and now.

The warm eyes and caring smile of a nurse.

The tender voice of a spouse or friend,
on the phone.

The pictures the other kids send

that are so sweet and full of love.

This tiny foot. This soft hair. This curled fist.

Help us to celebrate and rejoice in this child
in this moment

whatever comes

Help us to laugh at small little jokes.

Give us some delight

to help us through these days.

Amen.



Prayer for Presence

God, you are the Great Heart of the Universe.

I am trying to be patient. I am trying to trust.

I am trying not to too afraid.

I am trying for my heart to be calm.

Give me your strength.

Be the ground under my feet.

With your heart, help my heart to be steady.

With your breath, help me to breathe, too—

in and out, in and out—

I pray for rest. I pray to let the prayers of others

hold me up.

Be here, with me, with us.

Be present with us, Lord.

Be here. Abide with me.



Prayer for Staff

O Caregiver God, thank you for the people here—

the nurses, the doctors, the social workers

the ones who answer the phones
at all times of night

the ones who clean the rooms
where our babies sleep

the ones who hold and feed and sing to them
when we must be away

the ones who come to bless and pray
the ones who come and go
whose names we can't always hold on to
but who keep us going

and who both celebrate and mourn with us
who care about each small victory

thank you for them

give them rest, give them time,
give them blessing
we thank you for them, so much

Amen.

Where Are You?

Are you there? Are you real?

How can this be happening?

We have so much rage and loss

and longing

and love and doubt and fear

and grief.

And I want to know where you are

and why you can't stop this anguish.

Where are you?

Come to us. We are waiting

and we need you.

Answer our call.



Prayer When There is Nothing More but Love

O God, everything has been tried for this child.
Everything.

So many machines, and tubes,
and medications, and prayers.

This one, so beloved, so wanted

We have to say goodbye

Help us to know as our hearts break

That our child has known all of our love

That love is stronger than death

That nothing can separate us from your love

Help us to say goodbye.

Help us to go on.

Amen.





Prayer for Going On

Hold me. Be a rock, a refuge, a shelter for me.

Give me courage, somehow.

Help me to keep turning toward love,

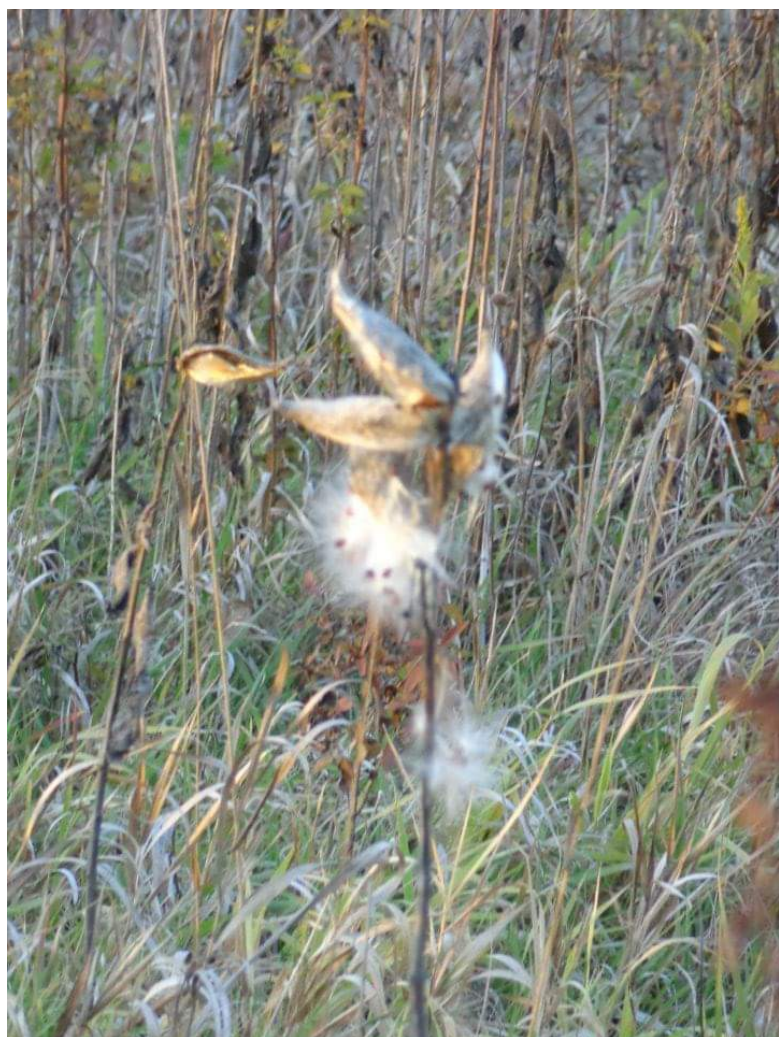
Even when there is grief.

Show me the way to do this.

I trust in you, O God. Amen.

Blessing for Other Families

O God who made us to live in community,
be with all the babies and families here.
Help us to feel connected to one another,
to pray for one another,
to share in small kindnesses and stories
as we live in this strange space of the NICU.
As focused as we are
on the life and well-being
of our child, our children,
we hold the others in our hearts,
knowing that they, too,
are scared with each roller-coaster plunge,
that they, too, rejoice,
with each stronger day.
Give us all your strength
and help us to share it. Amen.



Prayer for Home-Going

It seems like we have been here forever
in some ways.

Time stretches in this place
in ways
only those of us who have been here
can know.

We have so longed to take our baby home.
Now, the time approaches.

We are so thankful. But nervous, anxious.

Steady our hearts. Guide our hands.

Help our love to center us,
so that, once home,
we continue to draw upon the wisdom
shared with us here
about caring for our little ones.

So that we will have room and energy
for ourselves and our other loved ones
who have been missing us.

Give us rest. Give us generosity.

Help us to allow others to step in when needful.

Help us to trust that you will be there
with mercy and grace
in these next days ahead. Amen.

