

Friends

Impossible though it seems, it is now five years since a global pandemic plunged us into the most tumultuous time that many of us had ever experienced, upending the economy, destroying the mental health of many and stretching a struggling NHS almost to breaking point. Of the 24,910,387 reported cases, 22,954,691 recovered, but it is the 232,112 who died who leave us feeling so bereft and underline our helplessness in those early days. By March 2023, according to the House of Commons Library, an estimated 1.9 million people in the UK reported that they were experiencing long covid, and of course, there were all the people who didn't get the medical interventions and operations that they would have had otherwise. It was a terrible time and this Sunday, the 9th of March has been allocated by the government as a Day of Reflection to remember the pandemic and its impact on communities across the UK.

The Methodist Church has offered this prayer to support our reflection:

Holy God, you are worthy of all praise, in times of sorrow and loss as well as in times of joy and celebration. As we recall and mark five years since the outbreak of the Covid pandemic in the UK we hold before you all who died, often without contact with those they loved most dearly; all who mourned under restriction and limits; all who died in care homes, those who gave birth alone and all those who lost their jobs and livelihoods.

We give you thanks for the selfless care of so many in the NHS and care sectors and local services who supported and upheld us at great cost to themselves.

We thank you for all we have learned as a consequence of all that was endured: the importance of relationships, the value of touch and face to face contact, and access to green spaces and fresh air.

We pray for all those who live with the impact of long covid, for children and young people whose lives were impacted in so many ways, and for local churches.

Hold us in your love and care, God of love, now and forever. Amen