



## A Prayer for Bell Let's Talk Day

God of mercy and grace, your Son promised rest to the weary and heavily burdened,  
We pray for those who struggle with mental illness, who bear a heavy burden that wearies them.  
We pray for the six million Canadians and millions more around the world who mental illness affects.  
We pray for those who carry their burden in silence, afraid to tell others. Give them a listening ear they can trust.

We pray for those who live in fear, fear of discovery, fear of rejection, fear. May they find people who are willing to carry some of their fear.

We pray for those who find sadness a constant companion. We pray for those who know the fatigue of “trying to be normal” as their way of life. Give them friends who can gently point to joy, who note the victories that occur, and who quietly encourage reaching beyond the seeming limits.

We pray churches would be places that see beyond the diagnosis and the symptoms, to see people made by God the Creator and loved by Jesus Christ, just as all people are. May churches be places of faithful support, safety and caring community. Shape us, individuals and congregations, to live out this vision.

Guide all who would be a friend, to the discernment of knowing when to speak and when to be silent, that they would discover the beauty of being a friend when friendship is emotionally costly.

May the Holy Spirit give us courage to stand against words, actions and attitudes which stigmatize and demean. Cause us how to challenge the stereotypes by including those with mental illness in our social activities.

Give medical professionals, first responders, teachers, all those in the helping professions, and neighbours, the wisdom, understanding, and grace, that they would be help and not hindrance, offering care and personal interest rather than seeing just one more person in the system.

Give to family members strength and hope that they might walk with their loved ones in grace, wisdom, and the assurance of your loving care, even in moments of heartache and discouragement. By the action of the Holy Spirit carry family members when they have no strength left. Give to family members friends who will be listening ears and shoulders to cry on.

We pray that Jesus will keep his promise to these your children, your beloved, who struggle with mental illness, that their yoke may be easy and their burden light, so they might find rest. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

—*The Rev. Peter Bush, moderator of the 2017 (143<sup>rd</sup>) General Assembly*