

twelvebaskets

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ORDINARY 7C

20th February 2022

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Centreing Prayers

God of yesterday, today and for ever, we thank you for your loving care, protection and strength. As Joseph, once abandoned into slavery, was able with confidence to state that every part of his life was lived according to your will, so we ask that the whole of our lives might be testament to your eternal love, mercy and grace.

[Pause]

Use the following words to help centre yourself in the moment. Say them out loud, or speak them in your mind

Jesus, open my heart

Prepare yourself to hear God's word in a new way

Jesus, open my heart

Listen for God's voice, calling you to serve others and love radically

Jesus, open my heart

Hold the joys, regrets and frustrations from the week, and look ahead to the opportunities next week will bring

Jesus, open my heart

Hold the people you share your life with, and the challenges that come with relationships and friendships

Jesus, open my heart

Rest a moment in the quiet

Jesus, open my heart¹

Hymn:

545 STF – Be Thou my vision - [YouTube](#)

Readings: [Luke 6:27-38](#)

Responding to the reading

I have so much to be thankful for, and so do you.

And I know that I don't always take the time to give thanks, to recognize the blessings I have received, to be grateful. Do you?

Shall we do it right now? Why not write down one or two things you are thankful for today. Perhaps it's a hard day, and you can only think of one or two, or perhaps you've got hundreds to choose from, but just try to name something for which you can be grateful.

¹ Centreing prayers written by Emma Dobson

You might like to tell someone – perhaps talk about it if you are working through this with others, or give someone a call to tell them what you are thankful for, and ask them what they are grateful for too.

There is plenty of evidence that little practices of gratitude make a huge difference in terms of our mental health and wellbeing. The ability to notice that there are things to be thankful for can be transformative for how we interact with the world, especially in the midst of anxiety, pain and grief.

And yet, we take a great deal for granted, don't we?

As the theological Mister Eckhart once said, 'if the only prayer you ever say is "thank you", that will be enough.' Not because our lives end with thank you, but because in the act of thanking, we are changed into more grateful, more loving people. That is why we teach our children better manners. That is why it's helpful to keep a 'gratitude journal'. That is why we give thanks for God's love for us.

The Northampton District of the Methodist Church are pioneering a campaign in the next few months, simply entitled, 'Love Is _____'. It's kind of an invitation – to fill in the blank, but also to simply give thanks that love is. Love is here. Love is with us. That's the story we celebrate at Christmas, as we give thanks that 'love came down', it's the story we celebrate at Easter, when Love Wins. But it is also the story we celebrate every single day. Love is.

So, as Jesus says in Luke 6 – we have to practice love. Love for our 'enemies'. Love for those who curse us. Love is not just a comfortable blanket that we can wrap our friends and family in – that's easy, that's not difficult (at least, not most of the time!). Love, in the Jesus imagination, is radical – it reaches across boundaries and breaks through borders. It punches a hole in the walls of exclusion and exclusivity. It bridges the gulf of social order and institutional segregation.

Let's be a grateful people this week. A giving people. A loving people, who know that God is at work in the world, sharing love, being love. Love is. And there is only one thing we need to say in response to that: thank you.

Wherever you are right now, why not say those two simple words aloud: Thank you.²

Prayers of intercession

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

I come before you, imperfect as I am, to thank you for the week just gone; for good or bad it has added to my experience of life and given me opportunity to encounter glimpses of you.

Your Kingdom come, your will be done.

Attune my heart to how your spirit is moving in my community, how I can help build your kingdom here and lift up those who need to know the love of God.

On earth, as it is in heaven.

Keep me mindful to the needs of the planet, to be dutiful stewards of the environment.

Give me today my daily bread,

² Reflection written by Tim Baker

I am thankful for the food on my table and the nourishment of my soul. Keep me mindful of those who have not, and my hearts open to sharing what I have with those around me.

Forgive me my sins, as I forgive those who sin against me.

Forgive me for the times I have not been the reflection of Christ's teachings, have been swift to judge and quick to anger. Strengthen me to forgive those who harm me or others, and that in that act I know the presence of Christ.

And lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil

For the Kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Amen.³

Blessing

Give love to your enemies, do good to those who hate you;
Live as true sons and daughters of your heavenly father;
The blessing of the one who come, who comes and who will come again go with you.

Amen.⁴

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

Monday 21st February

- This day, your prayers could be for our planet and the world we live in. This day, may you say sorry for all the ways you hurt and pollute the Earth.
- This day, you could use your times of prayer to reconnect with nature and to commit again to climate action, climate campaigning and climate justice.
- For resources and ideas to support your prayers - visit allwecan.org.uk/climate or the [Joint Public Issues](https://www.jointpublicissues.org/) website.

³ Prayers of intercession written by Tim Annan-Hood

⁴ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

Tuesday 22nd February

- Why not spend some time in silent meditation today?
- You could set an alarm – perhaps for 10-15 minutes, and then finding somewhere comfortable, where you can sit and empty your mind.

If it helps, you could use the Headspace app or website, or a similar service, to help you focus on the meditation and get used to the idea of sitting in silence for a length of time.
- Is this a practice you could include in your daily spiritual life?

Wednesday 23rd February

- God of all grace, show me what I have been called to.
- Show me the role I have to play in building your kin-dom here on earth.
- Show me. Show me. Show me.
- Let me open my eyes, my heart and my mind to you, and your call on my life, this day, this week, and beyond.
Amen.

Thursday 24th February

- If you can, go on a prayer walk. Or ask someone to help you make a journey around your neighbourhood – just the few houses near you would be fine, or go on a longer trip if you'd like to take in a whole estate or community.
- As you travel past each house, pray for the people who live there – just in your mind, or under your breath. Hold their situations, whether you know them or not, in your heart.

Friday 25th February

- Today, when you are washing up, you might like to use this mantra:
 - o Wash me clean O God, wash me clean.
- As you do so, you might like to imagine the guilt and shame that you carry around, the burdens and challenges you face each day...you might like to imagine them going down the plughole, along with the dirty water from the dishes.
- If it helps, you could write the words on a piece of paper and stick it up near the washing up bowl so that you can regularly pray this prayer every time you wash up.

Saturday 26th February

- God of all blessings,
Thank you for the gift of food to eat,
For the flavours and the smells,
The energy and enjoyment I can get from the food I eat.
- I'm sorry for all the times I've taken for granted the food on my plate, the ingredients in my fridge, the ready-meals in my freezer.
And for all the other blessings I have received that I often overlook or forget to be thankful for.
Amen.