

PRAYING

Silence is kept for several minutes, to allow people to pray for the 5 people they have chosen to pray for throughout the Novena. It may be appropriate to invite people to speak those names aloud if they wish to.

Lord Jesus, as you breathed the Spirit onto the disciples in the locked room, we ask that you would breathe on us today. May your presence, guidance and strength be with us as we move forward as the body of Christ, called to share the good news of salvation and the compassion of the Father. May we as your people be blessed as we serve you and our communities in the realities and stresses of modern life. Bringing your blessing to all. Amen.

(Prayer written by Revd Phil Barnes - PTO Clergy in the Thanet Deanery and Chaplain at Canterbury Cathedral)

We meet your word with gratitude for your unfailing love.

(Pause) Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We give you thanks for Jesus' work of redemption that unites us across races and cultures.

(Pause) Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We offer to you our prayers for all those who feel overlooked or unloved.

(Pause) Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We bear before you all who weep, yet have no one to wipe away their tears.

(Pause) Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We wait upon the work of your Spirit as we say the Lord's Prayer together...

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with expectant faith, as we await your coming.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with love that reaches across boundaries of race and culture.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with liberty.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with yourself.**

**DAILY WAITING**

Jesus ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4).

(This service is for use by individuals or groups and can be adapted to suit your context. Hymns, worship songs and additional prayers may be added as you wish. *Italic text is intended as an instruction, plain text is to be read by a leader, bold text is to be read together.* The reflection is taken from the Thy Kingdom Come 2024 Novena booklet by Bishop Anthony Poggo, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion).

GATHERING

As you begin your time of prayer, take a moment of silence to remember and delight in the promise of the Holy Spirit Jesus gives to all his disciples. Read the following from John 14 together:

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth... On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

Make a sign of being present to God and one another – light a candle, open a Bible, share the peace...

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people
And kindle in us the fire of your love.

Come, Holy Spirit, be with us as we pray

And leave us not as orphans.

Come, Holy Spirit, renew us in body, mind and spirit

And send us out to be your presence in your world.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people

And kindle in us the fire of your love.

Optional hymn or worship song.

DAY: 1

LISTENING

'To Him who loves us and freed us from our sins by His blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.'
(Revelation 1:5-6, NRSV)

REFLECTING

The picture book of Revelation has some challenges for us about how we live for Jesus in a very imperfect world. Some of the pictures can be quite scary. The wonderful truth is that this word to us begins by setting the Lord Jesus before us and this truth puts our hearts and minds at peace: 'To Him who loves us and has freed us from our sins.' What a fantastic combination – love and liberty.

God wants us to know that in Jesus Christ we are loved and freed. Individually, we are loved, as one preacher put it: 'As if there were nobody else to love.' It is easy to feel small and insignificant in today's world. The problems of climate change, hunger, homelessness, war, family breakdown – all of which so often affect the poor most of all – seem so huge.

How can God possibly love us individually? He does. The Bible tells us this great truth again and again; but, if you find it easier to remember stories, then think of the woman in the Gospels who wanted to be healed and just touched Jesus' robe. She was indeed healed; but Jesus, who was on His way to help a little girl, stopped the crowd and made sure the woman progressed from a touch for healing to saving faith for eternal life. (Mark 5:24-34) Despite all the demands on Him, Jesus had time to stop for this woman. How ready are we to answer God's call to minister to others, in spite of our busy schedules?

Some cultures give great respect to older people but pay little attention to the needs of the young. Others invest in opportunities for young people while undervaluing those who have given so much throughout their lives but now need help and support. God loves us no matter what our age, background, nationality, ethnicity, gender, education, job, wealth, or status. 'God is love' is one of the simplest and best foundations for how we view God, the world, and ourselves.

Of course, words can be cheap and sometimes meaningless. A proverb from Senegal puts it like this: 'He may say that He loves you; wait and see what He does for you.' That's why the words that follow the assurance of God's love are so full of power:

'He freed us from our sins by shedding His blood for us'.

The colour of human blood is the same regardless of skin colour and race. The blood shed on the cross is universal, and signifies the power of Christ's redemptive work over all of God's people, regardless of colour or race.

At the end of the book of Revelation, the love of God for us as precious individuals, made in His image, and redeemed in Christ's death and resurrection, is expressed in a very intimate and personal way. We read: 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes.' For someone to wipe our tears we have to let them get close enough.

As you pray for your five people today, hold them in God's presence, and ask that despite whatever challenges they may be facing, that they might allow the Lord close enough to do what He alone can do.

Psalm 63 (NRSV)

- 1 O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
- 2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.
- 3 Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.
- 4 So I will bless you as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands and call on your name.
- 5 My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips
- 6 when I think of you on my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;
- 7 for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.
- 8 My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son,
And to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, is now
And shall be for ever. Amen.**