

PRAYING

God, breath of life,
Awaken us to the wonders of your world; Renew in us a love for one another; Fill us with compassion for all you have made.
Draw near to those whose lives are most affected by our disregard for creation; May their cries for help be heard, in a world where profit so often trumps justice. Creator God, teach us to be bringers of life to your world. In the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who came that we might have life in abundance.

Amen.

We meet your word with a longing for new life. *(Pause)*

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We give you thanks for the beauty of creation. *(Pause)*

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We offer to you our prayers for King Charles and Queen Camilla, their family and staff, as this new season begins. *(Pause)*

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We bear before you all those involved in campaigning for action on climate change. *(Pause)*

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

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

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in
heaven. Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
Now and for ever. Amen.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with childlike wonder at all you
have made.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with wisdom in stewarding our
resources.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with courage to choose life.**

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

CHANGING LIVES



CHANGED LIVES



NINE DAYS OF PRAYER 2023

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 2023 Novena booklet by the Very Reverend Bob Keys.)

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

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

(1 John 1:1-2, NIV)

REFLECTING

First things first! ‘In the beginning God’ are the first words of the Bible. ‘In the beginning was the Word’ starts St John’s Gospel. In the opening verses of his first letter John brings the two together. Eternal Life is God’s good news. It is the free gift of God: Father, Son, and, as John makes clear in this Letter, the Holy Spirit.

God is complete love. As Billy Graham, a well-known proclaimer of the Christian faith, put it: ‘God didn’t create mankind because He was lonely; but because He is love.’ God loves us and loves relationship.

Creation is pictured in Genesis as God speaking. He speaks and things happen. Universes expand, worlds take shape. Light, darkness, colour, and texture combine in the beautiful wonder of creation. Microorganisms too small to see, galaxies too vast to comprehend, all have their place in God’s plan. Scientific theories may help us with the how of creation, but the Bible tells us the who of it. God created the world. He created us. As the lens of Genesis focuses in on one planet and one species, we see that God makes human beings in His image to love and be loved. We are made for relationships – not only with each other but also with God.

After relationship comes responsibility. We are to be responsible for the creation that God places in our care, within the context of our relationship with God. God loves us and created us for deep communion with Him. This is why, in the picture-book of Genesis, God comes looking for Man and Woman in the garden, ‘in the cool of the evening’ (Genesis 3:8). After all, that is the time of day when work is over and friends gather to share and to talk. John doesn’t present God as an interesting ‘add-on’ to life for those who enjoy religion. God is God. The Great ‘I AM’ from the beginning (the title He used to introduce Himself to Moses in Exodus) to the end (Jesus applies it to Himself in John 8.58). He is the one who made us, loves us, welcomes us home in Jesus and is there whether we like it or not, believe it or not, want Him or not. He is the God who IS.

Take time today to pray for five people you know and love to know God’s love for them. As you pray for them remember we are the pictures of Christ in the

world; icons of His love in the way we care for creation and minister to the needs of those around us.

PSALM 148 (NRSV)

- 1 Praise the Lord!
**Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights!**
- 2 Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his host!
- 3 Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars!
- 4 Praise him, you highest heavens,
and you waters above the heavens!
- 5 Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for he commanded and they were created.
- 6 He established them for ever and ever;
he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.
- 7 Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps,
- 8 fire and hail, snow and frost,
stormy wind fulfilling his command!
- 9 Mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars!
- 10 Wild animals and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds!
- 11 Kings of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the earth!
- 12 Young men and women alike,
old and young together!
- 13 Let them praise the name of the Lord,
**for his name alone is exalted;
his glory is above earth and heaven.**
- 14 He has raised up a horn for his people,
**praise for all his faithful, for the people of Israel
who are close to him. Praise the Lord!**

**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.**