

**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, God, Creator and Saviour.

We pray for the Holy Spirit to energise our churches.

May the flame burn bright, to show us the way to make your kingdom a reality for everyone.

May we be strong but compassionate like Jesus,

And like him, may we choose the Father's way not the way of the world.

We pray in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*(Prayer written by Janice Willett - Licensed Lay Minister in the Canonry Benefice)*

We meet your word with attentive hearts, ready to hear your voice.

*(Pause)*

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

We give you thanks for the gift of Scripture to shape and refine us.

*(Pause)*

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

We offer to you our prayers for families and tribes stuck in cycles of vengeance.

*(Pause)*

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

We bear before you all who are doing the work of peace-making.

*(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 joy at the sound of your voice.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with hunger to feed on your Word.**

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

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.*

### LISTENING

'I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, "Write in a book what you see and send it to the seven churches..."' (Revelation 1:10-11, NRSV)

### REFLECTING

From the Ugandan trumpet horn known as the eng'ombe, through the great brass trumpets in wedding processions in India to the Maori trumpet of welcome, the Pūkāea, wherever and whenever they are blown, trumpets demand our attention. In other cultures, including the Dinka people of South Sudan, drums play a similar role. They are not to be ignored. They may sound a warning, celebrate a long-awaited happy event, proclaim a welcome, or be a call to readiness for battle; but they are never to be ignored.

John, in exile on Patmos, cut off from his friends and church family, no doubt wondering what possible ministry he could still exercise, suddenly has the peace of his Sunday worship shattered by the most glorious noise; the precious sound of the voice of the glorified Lord Jesus. The same Jesus, who was both his saviour and his best friend, reassures the apostle that, far from his work being over, there is new ministry to do.

The result of his listening is the book of Revelation which says in its opening verses 'God blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says.' In some parts of the world, that is deeply counter-cultural. As a note in the African Study Bible puts it: 'In many places, Christians are ridiculed, and the Bible is disparaged.'

The trumpet of the Bible, what the Reformation martyr, Archbishop Cranmer, called 'God's Word written', never stops sounding. But whilst it can never be silenced, we can stop listening. It is so easy to find that making time each day to read the Bible and to ask the Holy Spirit to apply it to our lives, gets crowded out by all the other things that press in on us. These things are often good in themselves – sport, children's activities, time with friends, and the hours many need to work to balance the family budget – but they can't be allowed to take the place of God's word.

In some cultures, the world around us wants us to take a scalpel to Scripture and cut out the bits it doesn't like: the parts that challenge our selfishness and sin. Let us place Scripture above our culture. For example, where the culture encourages revenge and also the idea of 'an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth', we need to teach that God's word says we should never avenge ourselves but leave it to the wrath of God, for He says that 'vengeance is

mine' (Romans 12:19). The reality about vengeance is that it promotes a cycle of vengeance. Mahatma Gandhi is quoted as saying, 'An eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind'.

As we pray for our five friends today, pray that, for them and us, we would hear God's word to us distinctly and definitively. As Archbishop Cranmer put it 'Wherein whatsoever is found, must be taken for a most sure ground and an infallible truth.'

Psalm 29 (NRSV)

- 1 Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings,  
**ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.**
- 2 Ascribe to the Lord the glory of his name;  
**worship the Lord in holy splendor.**
- 3 The voice of the Lord is over the waters;  
**the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over mighty waters.**
- 4 The voice of the Lord is powerful;  
**the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.**
- 5 The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars;  
**the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.**
- 6 He makes Lebanon skip like a calf  
**and Sirion like a young wild ox.**
- 7 The voice of the Lord  
**flashes forth flames of fire.**
- 8 The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness;  
**the Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**
- 9 The voice of the Lord causes the oaks to whirl and strips the forest bare,  
**and in his temple all say, "Glory!"**
- 10 The Lord sits enthroned over the flood;  
**the Lord sits enthroned as king forever.**
- 11 May the Lord give strength to his people!  
**May the Lord bless his people with peace!**

**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.**