

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.

Let us remember and delight in the promise of the Holy Spirit that Jesus gave His disciples and gives to us today. Our counsellor and advocate, our comforter and friend, To be with us and in us forever. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit fills our hearts with all the fruits of the Spirit, renewing in us our faith, hope and love, so that we can go out into the world to be Christ's presence, filled with the Spirit's abundance, to do God's will. Amen.

(Prayer written by Sally Murray - Chaplain and Authorised Lay Minister in the Sandwich Deanery)

We meet your word with curious hearts, intrigued to explore beyond our open doors.

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

We give you thanks for the promise of new openings and fresh opportunities.

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

We offer to you our prayers for societies caught up in consumerism and throw-away culture.

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

We bear before you those who are exploited to manufacture the cheap goods we buy.

(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 courage to walk through your open doors.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with discernment to invest in what has real value.**

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

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

"These are the words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, who shuts and no one opens: "I know your works. Look, I have set before you an open door, which no one is able to shut." (Revelation 3:7-8, NRSV)

REFLECTING

'Free gift!' is one of the great promises of advertising. Even if it is something you don't need or don't want, the idea that it is free often holds a magnetic attraction. All through history many have promised God's favour if only the worshipper will make certain sacrifices, perform particular acts or travel to selected 'holy' places. The Christian Good News is utterly and wonderfully different.

One of the best loved verses in the whole Bible, John's Gospel 3:16 says, 'This is how God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.' God gives and gives and gives again.

If we are Christians, we have received the greatest free gift in the world. We have been given eternal life in Jesus Christ, and we have done absolutely nothing to earn it or deserve it. We can rest; we can relax in the truth that it is not about what we do, but what God has done.

Today's verse from Revelation is from the message to the church in the city of Philadelphia in modern-day Turkey. It was a great centre of trade, where buying and selling was at the heart of everyday life. Jesus writes to give them another free gift. He assures them that they can rest in His character. He is not going to give them something that will do them harm, but rather a gift that will grow and develop the church... He is giving them an open door!

Does that sound a strange gift? They might have preferred more answered prayers, more gifts of the spirit, a closer sense of His presence, or a whole host of other things. What they get is an invitation to share Christ Himself with their friends, their culture, their city.

Thy Kingdom Come is simply about praying 'Come Holy Spirit' on the lives of people we know, perhaps just five people, so that they come to know the saving love of God in the Lord Jesus. Christ tells us that He has opened the door, what we have to do is go through it.

Whenever we speak or act with God's love in our hearts for those around us, then we are going through the door that Jesus holds open.

Sometimes we feel that our efforts will make little or no difference. There is a humorous African proverb which sets us right. It says, 'If you think you're too small to make a difference, try spending the night with a mosquito.' This proverb is real to me this week as I am writing in Juba in South Sudan, with many mosquitoes.

As you continue to pray for your five friends, ask God to open more doors for you to share His word with other people so that they come to a personal knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Psalm 112 (NRSV)

1 Praise the Lord.

Blessed are those who fear the Lord, who find great delight in his commands.

2 Their children will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.

3 Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.

4 Even in darkness light dawns for the upright,
for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous.

5 Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely,
who conduct their affairs with justice.

6 Surely the righteous will never be shaken;
they will be remembered forever.

7 They will have no fear of bad news;
their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord.

8 Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.

9 They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor,
their righteousness endures forever; their horn will be lifted high in honor.

10 The wicked will see and be vexed, they will gnash their teeth and waste away;
the longings of the wicked will come to nothing.

**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.**