

PRAYING

Jesus Christ, Saviour and Redeemer, You came to live among us and we hardly recognized you. Clear our vision, that we might see those who are overlooked. You came to die among us and we scarcely understood it; Through our rescued lives, tell the story of your saving grace to a broken world. You were raised to life, and we only grasp the tiniest fraction of all that your rising unlocks; Stir in us the faith to believe for many resurrections, And send us out to carry the good news of hope to the world. **Amen.**

We meet your word in stories of redemption and resurrection. *(Pause)*
Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We give thanks for those who accompany people through the valleys of addiction and trauma. *(Pause)*

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

We offer you our fragile faith as we pray for our churches to grow in number and in depth. *(Pause)*

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

We bear before you those who are struggling to make ends meet as the cost of living rises. *(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 ever greater joy in our salvation.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with the courage to trust you in all things.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with wisdom to know how to lead others towards hope.**

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: 4

LISTENING

This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (1 John 4:9-11, NIV)

REFLECTING

Imagine you can't swim. For some of us that may not be very difficult. Imagine you are in deep water, you can't touch the bottom, you are exhausted, scared and beginning to panic. What do you need? Imagine somebody offers to read out the introductory lessons from 'Teach yourself to swim'. Another friend offers to swim near you so that all you have to do is copy how they do it. Neither would be much help. You don't need a book of instructions and ideals you can't follow, and seeing someone else apparently doing it perfectly will not be any use either. What you need is a lifeguard. You don't need educating, you don't need inspiring, you need rescuing. St John is quite clear that this is the whole point. This is why God's Son came into the world. The motive was love, the purpose was eternal life, and the means was the cross. For two thousand years Christians have found different ways to express what the Lord Jesus' death on the cross means. Like facets of a diamond, the various ways of looking at God's actions in making us right with Himself reflect a different colour of the spectrum of God's love. In these verses, John uses language that would have been very familiar to his audience: the sacrifice. All the background of the Old Testament comes into focus. There, people offered sacrifices of animals to God in order to find forgiveness. They show that the sacrifice died so the worshipper lived. The cross works, not because we can ever fully understand it or perfectly explain it, but because our holy and loving God says it does. The person in the sea doesn't need to know the physics of swimming or where the lifeguard learned to swim, he just needs to trust himself to the rescuer. As St John puts it in his gospel, we need to believe into Jesus. We give up self-reliance or trying to be good enough for God and allow ourselves to be rescued. The thief who turned to Jesus as he hung dying on a cross next to the cross of Jesus and simply said: 'Lord, remember me', didn't know much theology but he knew his need. In response, Jesus promised him paradise. Pray that your five will allow Christ to rescue them and find that peace that comes from knowing you're safe in someone else's arms. As we Live out the Kingdom, there can be nothing of imagining we are better than anyone else. Instead, our lives and our words are, as the great theologian Paul Tillich put it, 'One beggar telling another beggar where to find food.'

PSALM 40 1-13 (NRSV)

- 1 I waited patiently for the Lord;
he inclined to me and heard my cry.
- 2 He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.
- 3 He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.
- 4 Happy are those who make the Lord their trust,
who do not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after false gods.
- 5 You have multiplied, O Lord my God, your wondrous deeds and your thoughts towards us; none can compare with you.
Were I to proclaim and tell of them, they would be more than can be counted.
- 6 Sacrifice and offering you do not desire, but you have given me an open ear.
Burnt-offering and sin-offering you have not required.
- 7 Then I said, 'Here I am;
in the scroll of the book it is written of me.
- 8 I delight to do your will, O my God;
your law is within my heart.'
- 9 I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation;
see, I have not restrained my lips, as you know, O Lord.
- 10 I have not hidden your saving help within my heart, I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;
I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation.
- 11 Do not, O Lord, withhold your mercy from me;
let your steadfast love and your faithfulness keep me safe for ever.
- 12 For evils have encompassed me without number; my iniquities have overtaken me, until I cannot see;
they are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart fails me.
- 13 Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me;
O Lord, make haste to help 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.