

PRAYING

Jesus Christ, our example, our pattern, our transformation,
By your Spirit, help us to clear the grime of selfishness and hypocrisy,
So that the light of your character can shine through us. May we, the
church which bears your name, reflect you in everything we do.
We pray for those in leadership in public life: Grant them courage to
act with integrity, Compassion to advocate for the most vulnerable in
society, And wisdom to make creative, effective decisions. Amen.

We meet your word in the challenge to live Christ-like lives. *(Pause)*
Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We give thanks for heroes of the faith who show us what it means to
live for Christ. *(Pause)*
Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We offer ourselves to be channels of your kindness. *(Pause)*
Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We bear before you all who pay the price of refusing to compromise in
the face of persecution. *(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 the power to live lives of
integrity.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with energy to serve the needs of our
local community.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with delight in making Christ known.**

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: 8

LISTENING

Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did.
(1 Peter 4:6, NIV)

REFLECTING

God, our loving Father, not only wants the best for us, He wants to enable the best in us. He longs that, in the life and power of the Holy Spirit, we live the most productive, most effective Christian lives we can. Today's verse from 1 John seems blunt and hard-hitting, but that doesn't mean it's negative. A football manager roaring encouragement to his team as they battle difficult opponents is trying to spur them on to success. That's what is going on here. St John knows that as the Christians in the churches try to live for Jesus in a very difficult world, he needs to encourage them to remember whose team they are in. It is still true, in the twenty-first century world, that Christian faith does not set the moral guidelines in public life, business ethics, or the way in which governments operate. We need the same encouragement. We are playing in Christ's colours and the standards by which we live must be His and not those of the prevailing culture.

St John's words are powerfully relevant in our world where there are many forces seeking to air-brush Christian faith out of the public arena and to ridicule Christian moral standards as out of touch with modern thinking. What St John calls for is straightforward Christian integrity. There is to be no place for saying one thing and doing another.

Hypocrisy is a real problem for Christian evangelism. As we seek to share our faith with those who know us, it will not help if they know that Jesus' pattern of care for others is not one we follow.

The word John uses means not just 'walk', but 'walk about'. It could be used of the clothes you choose to put on in which to 'walk about'. Paul uses the same word when he encourages us to 'walk in the Spirit' in Galatians 5:16. From John and Paul, the daily challenge is to walk about in the character of Christ produced not in our own strength but by the Pentecost power of the Holy Spirit.

As we pray for our five folk today, pray that the lives of the Christians they meet will be Christlike and attractive in the dynamic power of the Holy Spirit.

Living the Kingdom means that we can't be cardboard cut-outs: looking superficially Christian but with little inner depth and reality.

God has given the world the right to look at us and see the character of Christ.

LUKE 6:20-31 (NRSV)

- 20 ... 'Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.
- 21 'Blessed are you who are hungry now,
for you will be filled.
- 'Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.
- 22 'Blessed are you when people hate you,
and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man.
- 23 Rejoice on that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven;
for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets.
- 24 'But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.
- 25 'Woe to you who are full now,
for you will be hungry.
- 'Woe to you who are laughing now,
for you will mourn and weep.
- 26 'Woe to you when all speak well of you,
for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets.
- 27 'But I say to you that listen,
Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
- 28 **bleed those who curse you,**
pray for those who abuse you.
- 29 If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also;
and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt.
- 30 Give to everyone who begs from you;
and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them
- 31 **again. Do to others as you would have them do to you.**

**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.**