

DAILY WAITING

NINE DAYS OF PRAYER 2021



CHANGED LIVES → CHANGING LIVES

DAY 4 OFFER

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.*)

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

Jesus appears to his disciples after the resurrection

⁴ Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ Jesus said to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” They answered him, “No.” ⁶ He said to them, “Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish.

⁹ When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. ¹⁰ Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” ¹¹ So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. ¹² Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.”

(John 21:4-6, 9-12, NRSV)

REFLECTING

Uninvited, unbidden, the resurrected Jesus appears to his disciples on the shore of Galilee. He's prepared the barbecue in advance – there's a glowing fire and he's brought fresh bread. Now all they need is more fish. Smell the firewood, see it crackling; taste the delight of new-baked bread; hear the fish sizzling on the flames. This is an invitation – an offer – made by Love, once incarnate, now risen. Knowing our lack, Love invites us as guests, eager to nourish us. And the cycle of being fed and being called to feed others continues later in this passage, when, after the meal, Jesus sends out Peter to 'feed my sheep'. This cycle of offering and receiving is foundational to our faith.

Here, a table is prepared by God, who offers us restoration, comfort and a place at the banquet. All these elements are included in George Herbert's most famous poem, 'Love III', with its memorable first line: 'Love bade me welcome'. In this poem, God serves at a table for those who believe themselves to be undeserving – as Peter, in this Gospel reading, most surely knew himself to be. 'I cannot look on thee' says the poet; but 'Quick-eyed God' reminds the reluctant guest 'who made the eyes, but I?'

It is God/Love who in this poem makes the first move, as it was Jesus who came to the disciples on the beach. The poet knows himself to be 'unkind, ungrateful', but Love smiles and serves the reticent sinner, reaching out and embracing us till we land on the short, stunning last line: 'So I did sit and eat'.

Many of us, lucky enough to live in Kent, really appreciate our long, varied coast-line. As we look ahead to summer's warmth, we will relish – this year more than ever – the chance of walking, swimming, fishing and picnicking on the beach, maybe even having a barbecue with trusted friends and family. But what if, while you are sitting there, a ragged group of refugees washes up in an over-crowded dinghy and the poor and persecuted stumble out and come towards you. What have you to offer them?

PSALM

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
- 3 he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.
- 4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—they comfort me.
- 5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
- 6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.
(Psalm 23:1-6, NRSV)

**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.**

PRAYING

Love, you meet us uninvited and help us in apparent failure:
Come and meet us where we are.
You preside at all the meals we share;
prepare, we pray, a feast for all in famine:
Come and feed us where we are.
You support all endeavours carried out in Jesus' name:
Come and love us where we are.
Amen.

We meet your Word in the work of psalmist and poet;
(Pause)
Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**
We express our thanks that you welcome us to the feast;
(Pause)
Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**
We offer you our promise to tend your sheep;
(Pause)
Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**
We bear before you the work of Christian Aid, and our Diocesan Kent Refugee Project;
(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 trust in your invitation.**
Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with the eyes to recognise Jesus in unexpected places.**
Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with nourishment for our souls.**
Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with yourself.**

