

DAILY WAITING

NINE DAYS OF PRAYER 2021



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DAY 8: CELEBRATE

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

God's Word cultivates joy

¹⁰ For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. ¹² For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

(Isaiah 55:10-12, NRSV)

REFLECTING

The month of May begins with May Day. In simpler, earlier times, this was an excuse for a day off in the village, the crowning of the May Queen, dancing around the maypole, weaving miraculous patterns in rainbow colours. And now, nearly upon us, we come to Pentecost – commonly known as Whitsun, which in living memory was much celebrated with walks and processions and picnics – so, another time for a party!

Perhaps when you hear this reading you also hear the song ‘You Shall Go Out With Joy’, and can picture people joining together in a circle to dance to its irresistible tune. There is much more to this reading than an excuse to dance at a party, pleasurable as that is. Our cause for celebration is focused on us being part of creation’s praise to the creator, as a celebration of fecundity, new life bursting with song, not tidy or timid at all, so we should not be, either! Must we also give thanks for weeds? As we join in the song, we are compelled to celebrate our faith in our generous creator.

Next, let’s celebrate ‘the word’, which accomplishes God’s purposes, and ask ourselves how we can join in God’s project. And finally, we learn that joy and peace are co-dependent – there can be no joy in a place or time of conflict.

We should ask ourselves, in humility and trepidation, what are ‘God’s purposes’ for us and his creation at this particular time? Surely it is the urgent need for us to tackle the climate crisis, to help the healing of creation, and not its destruction. As a church, let us be part of the solution to over-consumption and pollution, and not part of the cause.

Near the end of George Herbert’s poem ‘The Flower’, which has been accompanying us in this series of reflections, the poet reaches this wonderful understanding: ‘And now in age I bud again’. Can we – tired and strained as we are, after a year like no other – proclaim this as our truth? Can we find celebration within us, even in times of illness, old age or pandemic? Can we celebrate nature’s splendour, if we live in a house or flat with no garden, no birdsong, only the roar of traffic and a very long walk to the nearest park?

PSALM

- 1 Praise the LORD!
Sing to the LORD a new song,
his praise in the assembly of the faithful.
- 2 Let Israel be glad in its Maker;
let the children of Zion rejoice in their King.
- 3 Let them praise his name with dancing,
making melody to him with tambourine and lyre.
- 4 For the LORD takes pleasure in his people;
he adorns the humble with victory.
- 5 Let the faithful exult in glory;
let them sing for joy on their couches.
- 6 Let the high praises of God be in their throats ...
(Psalm 149:1-6, 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

God of beautiful purposes,
You overflow with life.
May we complete your circle of love,
Holding hands with strangers and friends,

Excluding no-one from the song.
Bring us to our feet in a dance of joy,
Joining hearts and wills until,
Together, we accomplish your plan for creation.
Amen.

We meet your Word in the rhythm of life's cycle;
(Pause)
Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**
We express our thanks for the wild diversity of creation;
(Pause)
Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**
We offer you lives led in harmony with your will;
(Pause)
Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**
We bear before you lands and countries threatened by the climate crisis;
(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 excitement in our faith.**
Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with awe at signs of your presence.**
Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with cause to celebrate.**
Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with yourself.**



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