

Church Together

Jesus Is Anointed At Bethany

10th March 2024



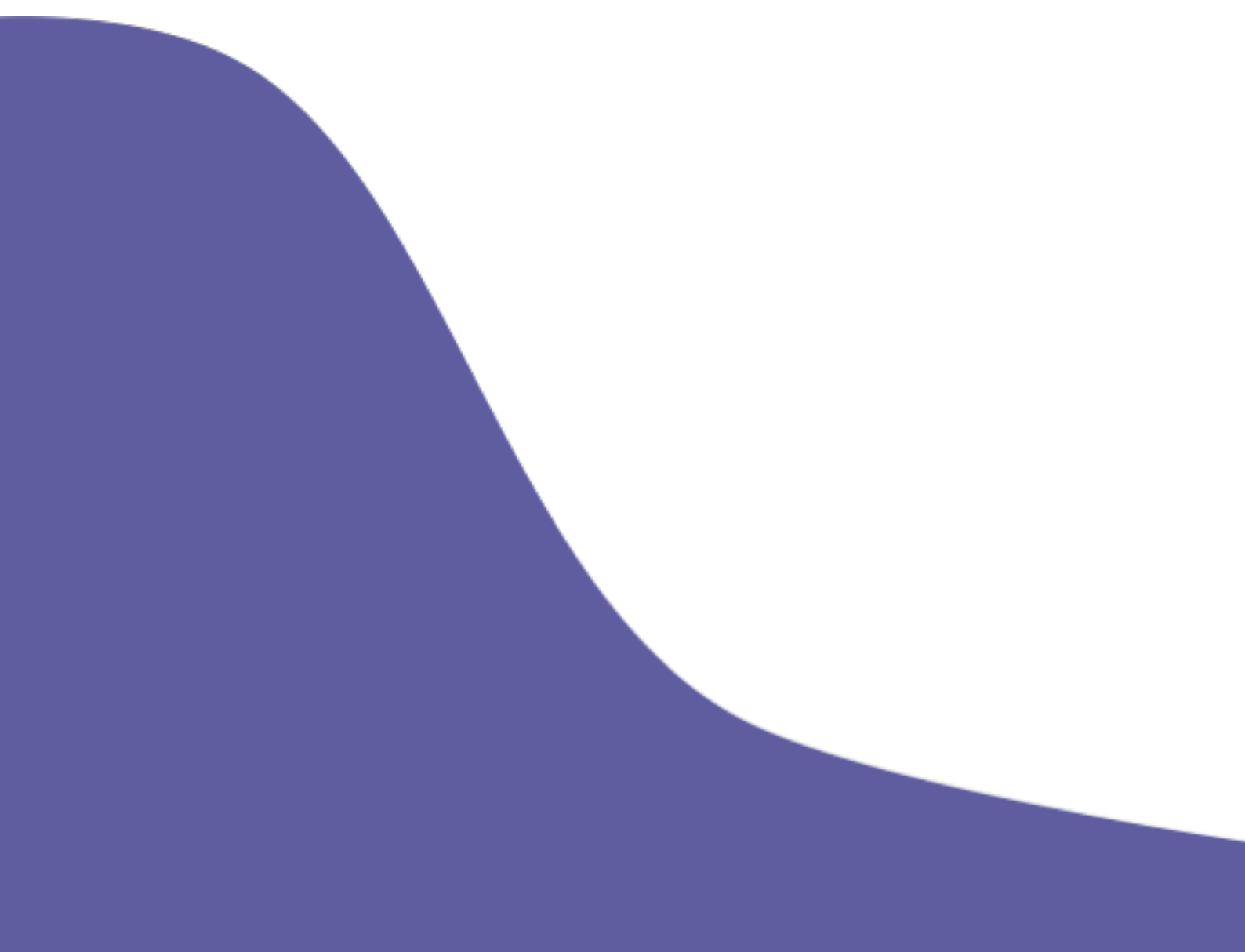
Welcome

The Bible Reading for today's service is: **John 12 v. 1 - 11**

The theme for our service today is: **Jesus Is Anointed At Bethany**

Our service today will also include: **Communion**

We hope that you will be able to engage with everything that has been produced for this service and that you would be able to **Know The Blessings That Come From Jesus When You Give Everything To Him.**



Introduction

Mothering Sunday gives us the opportunity to show our appreciation for our mothers and for all those who have cared for us, and to thank God for them. In today's service we see the care given to Jesus, by Mary, while Jesus is at the home of Lazarus in Bethany; a reminder to us that God cares for individuals and families.

Call To Worship

Responsive Reading (Based on Psalm 34)

Leader: Proclaim with me the Lord's greatness.

All: Let us praise his name together.

Leader: I will always thank the Lord; I will never stop praising him. Proclaim with me the Lord's greatness.

All: Let us praise his name together.

Leader: I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me, He freed me from all my fears. Proclaim with me the Lord's greatness.

All: Let us praise his name together.

Leader: The helpless call to him, and he answers, He saves them from all their troubles. Proclaim with me the Lord's greatness.

All: Let us praise his name together.

Leader: Find out for yourself how good the Lord is; Happy are those who find safety with Him. Proclaim with me the Lord's greatness.

All: Let us praise his name together.

Prayers For All Those Who Care For Us

Father God, we thank you for those who have cared for us; for our mothers who brought us into this world; for all who have helped to feed and clothe us; for those who have looked out for danger and kept us safe; for those who have stretched our imaginations, challenged us and enabled us to grow into the people we are today. We thank you Lord.

We pray for those who are caring for children now. Help them to provide a secure and loving home where trust can both grow and develop. Give them the strength to be faithful encouragers when things are tough and give them wisdom, so that those in their care will grow into the people you want them to be.

Amen

Song Suggestion

Blessed Assurance, Jesus Is
Mine!



**Have I given
everything
to Jesus?**



What Is Mothering Sunday

Mothering Sunday historically was an opportunity to visit the mother church, for people living away from home, who wished to return to visit the mother church, to visit family, to visit their mother, maybe even with a Simnel cake in hand. It can be good to return home and reconnect with one's roots and family. Why not take a moment to reflect on your roots and family and the visits you have made 'home', both good and bad. Take time to give thanks for good times and take time to seek forgiveness for difficult visits.

Mothering Sunday has over many years become an opportunity to give thanks for mothers, and to celebrate the caring, the giving, the sacrificial qualities of mothers, mothering, and motherhood. We often think of these in the light of the narratives of Biblical women, like Miriam and Mary that can be found in Bible passages, such as **Exodus 2 v. 1 - 10** and **John 19 v. 25 - 27**. In quietness take a moment to read these passages and reflect on their love and care in difficult circumstances, it wasn't easy to be Moses' mother or Jesus' mother. Take time to give thanks for your own mother, or the person who mothered you. If you've been a mother, take time to give thanks for

your child / children.

As caring people, we are aware that for some Mothering Sunday is not an easy day. There will be those who never knew their mother's love, there will be those who have lost their mother in tragic circumstances, or had a difficult relationship with their mother. There will be some who longed to be mothers themselves and were denied that opportunity, have been bereaved or had their children taken away. For a moment, take time to think of folk in these situations and offer up a prayer for comfort and healing from their pains and struggles. If this is your situation, pause to remember that you are loved and are being prayed for today, and take comfort in God's love for you today.

Often, we think only of God as Father, but there are also many beautiful images of God as being portrayed with Motherly attributes in Scripture, and we finish with an image of God as a mother figure, as we can see in **Hosea 11 v. 3 - 4** which says: 'Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I who took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them. I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them'. When thinking about this take some time to sit quietly and ponder on God's love towards us as our Mother.

Song Suggestion

Dear Lord And Father Of Mankind



Tithes, Gifts & Offerings

No matter wherever you are, whatever you do, whoever you are, together we can grow as Church Together here at Salendine Nook.

If you feel that your are able to, then please keep on giving with a cheerful and grateful heart, praising God for all that he has given to you and share in the finances of the church.



Bible Reading

John 12 v. 1 – 11 NIV

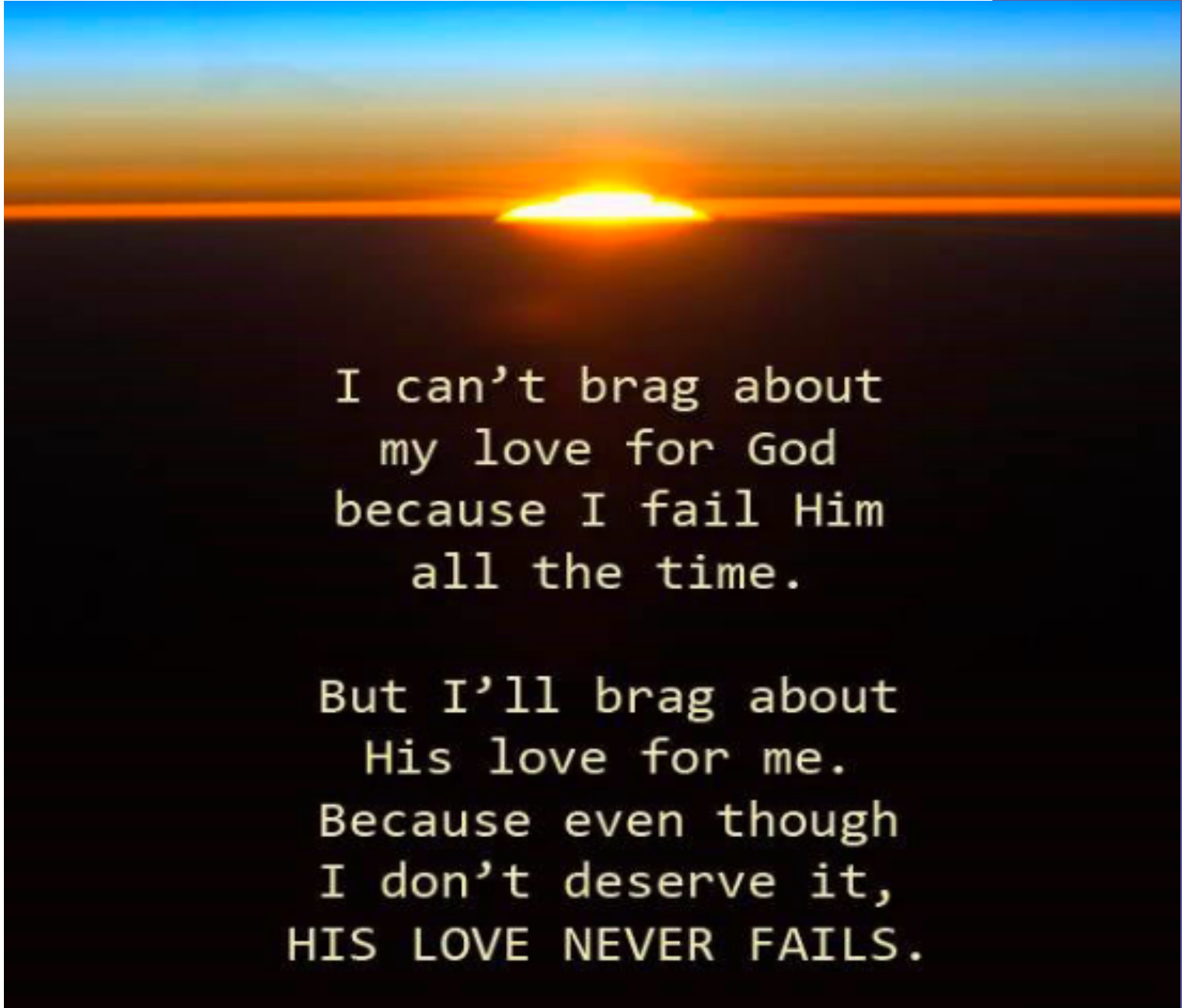
Jesus Anointed At Bethany

12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. 3 Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

4 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 5 "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." 6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

7 "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. 8 You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

9 Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 10 So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, 11 for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.



I can't brag about
my love for God
because I fail Him
all the time.

But I'll brag about
His love for me.
Because even though
I don't deserve it,
HIS LOVE NEVER FAILS.

Song Suggestion

How Deep The Father's Love For
Us



Church Together

Thought

Mary's faith in Jesus is a testimony to us all. Scripture tells us that three times she knelt in humble faith at Jesus' feet. We are told in **Luke 10 v. 39** that she sat at Jesus' feet listening to what he taught. Then we are told in **John 11 v. 32** that she threw herself at his feet crying and seeking comfort. And then we read, here in this passage **John 12 v. 3** that she knelt to clean and anoint Jesus' feet with expensive perfume. Jesus was first in her heart, and she surrendered herself to him.

Whenever you have someone special come to your home you always seem to go the 'extra mile' so that they are made to feel welcome. For those in the home of Lazarus – the man who Jesus had raised from the dead – a dinner was prepared in Jesus' honour.

Firstly, we are told in **John 12 v. 2** that Martha served Jesus and that Lazarus sat at the table with Jesus. Martha used her gifts and abilities to serve the Lord. Maybe we need to ask the question of ourselves: '**What are we good at?**

What could we do for Jesus?

Have you ever thought about all the good things we do for different causes: sponsored walks, parachute jumps, etc; but what is it that we do for Jesus? Here in the passage from **John 12**, we see that Lazarus gave him shelter, Martha gave him a meal and Mary anointed him. Secondly, we can see from **John 12 v. 3** that Mary anointed Jesus' feet with an extremely expensive jar of

perfume made from the essence of Nard. The value of the nard was more than 300 denarii. Since a denarius was the wage for a day's labour, the value of Mary's perfume was equivalent to nearly a full year's wages.

Following three years of ministry in which observers responded to Jesus in such oppositional and awkward ways, what a remarkable picture this is of true adoration and devotion that Mary does. Mary's unashamed, humble, extravagant gesture resembles nothing of grudging, half-hearted religious engagement with Jesus; rather it is a whole-hearted adoration by an individual to her loving Lord. However, the scene in the story, turns noticeably chilly.

Judas's response sounds reasonable at first, a concern for both social justice and financial prudence. Wouldn't it have been better to take the full year's wage that purchased the perfume and give it to the poor instead.

John 12 v. 7 quickly tells us though that Judas's words do not ring true. Jesus rebukes him with the words: 'Leave her alone. She did it in preparation for my burial'.

The contrast between Mary and Judas could not be more pronounced: Mary is generous; Judas is greedy. Mary is humble; Judas is arrogant. Mary is selfless; Judas is self-centred. Mary kneels in humble adoration; Judas is aloof.

Together, they both serve as a vivid contrasting illustration of Jesus' own teaching, when he says in

Matthew 6 v. 21: 'Where your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be'.

Most of the story that we read from **John 12 v. 1 - 11** focuses on Mary's extraordinary act, and it can show us on this Mothering Sunday that in society today we need to learn from someone like Mary because:

FIRSTLY, MARY WAS GENEROUS (John 12 v. 3, 5)

The perfume as we have said cost about one year's wages. Mary had worked and saved hard for this, and she gave it away freely. We know that giving to Jesus often costs us something, but in Mary's case it displays her extravagance. It was an act of gratitude, love, and thanksgiving. There are different ways in which we can be extravagant for Jesus, e.g., giving up of our leisure time to work for church or charitable activities, giving a higher proportion of our income. There are many ways that we can give to Jesus, but the important aspect is that we do it with a generous heart and spirit.

SECONDLY, MARY WAS CRITICISED (John 12 v. 4 – 6)

For doing something good, Mary was criticised by those who should have known better. As we have already seen in this case it was Judas. Similarly, when we read in

Matthew 26 v. 6 – 9 we see another occasion when this happens.

Matthew 26 v. 6 – 9 says: 'While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, 7 a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table. 8 When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. 9 "This perfume could have been

sold at a high price and the money given to the poor'.

Often our actions can and will be misunderstood or misrepresented by others when we do things for Jesus,

and it is at times such as these that we need to be

prepared. We shouldn't then judge others' actions for

God, even if we don't understand them at that moment in time.

FINALLY, MARY WAS COMMENDED (John 12 v. 7, 8)

Jesus understood what Mary had done as pointing to his death. Other women waited until after his death as we see in **Luke 23 v. 55 – 24 v. 1** which says: '55 The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. 56 Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb' to anoint Jesus. Our actions may be prophetic in what we do. Jesus acknowledged its suitability. Some opportunities must be grasped at once or they can be lost for ever. Let us look for opportunities to do something special for Jesus this week because the decision to surrender all we are and have to God is crucial. When we do this, God is able and willing to help us with the problems we face.

If we were to stop here, then we miss an essential dimension of the passage that we have read – and of the gospel itself. Mary's lavish gift is not just any perfume; it is perfume that was meant for Jesus' burial. Jesus tells us this in **John 12 v. 7**.

In a couple of weeks' time, we will be celebrate together in Holy Week, a time when we remember and commemorate the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. This passage from **John 12 v. 1 – 11** shows us that so imminent is Jesus' death that he blesses Mary's gesture as perfectly acceptable. As the Gospel of John repeatedly tells us, Jesus knew he was going to die. For Mary, there is the sense that she may as well have sensed the impending fate of Jesus. She had purchased a burial perfume fit for a King!

Mary in her knowing devotion of Jesus, seems to accept the unnerving truth that her Lord will work his wonders in an unfathomably countercultural, even scandalous way through his death and ultimate resurrection.

For all those who follow Jesus, there is the temptation to be attracted by a vision of the Christian life that is filled with warm hospitality and even extravagant worship, but the stark reality is that this has no real room in it for a suffering and dying Lord.

True, we are not called to lavish burial perfume at the feet of a Saviour on his way to the Cross and tomb. What we are called to, is to worship a risen Saviour. The extravagant, humble way of devotion set before us is still profoundly shaped by the simple way in which we approach Jesus. We worship a Lord whose power is made perfect in weakness, whose glory shines especially brightly as he washes his disciples' feet and offers himself on the cross. This is the Lord who calls us to follow him on this Mothering Sunday.

A Prayer On Mothering Sunday

Lord we pray on this Mothering Sunday for Mothers all over the world including our own. We pray for mothers where life is difficult, trying to protect their children in places of strife, famine, and war, for mothers despairing in poverty, for mothers facing illness or bereavement.

We give thanks for mothers and all their love and care.

We give thanks for new mothers and pray for strength and grace in caring for their children.

We grieve for those who have not known their mothers, have had difficult relationships with their mother, or lost their mother. We pray for those who have been unable to be mothers or had opportunities to mother snatched from them.

Lord we pray your love and grace, comfort, and healing into all the places and situations it is needed.

Amen

Communion

As we gather today we come to share in this act of Communion together, remembering the love and sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the Cross. We remember the price that he paid for our sins and for our forgiveness. We gather together here in Church as the body of Christ in order to share the bread and the cup together. We come in faith, conscious of our weakness, seeking to renounce our sin, humbly putting our trust in Christ, and seeking his grace, as we look forward to the day when he will come again.

A prayer of Thanksgiving:

Heavenly Father, we offer you this day our praise and thanksgiving; we thank you for raising Jesus to life again and exalting him so that we might call him 'Lord', as we offer our faithfulness to him and seek to share in his ways. Loving Lord, we thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit, powerfully present in your people and your world, for the fellowship of your church, and for all the means of grace and the hope of glory. Living God, fill us with your Spirit, that as we share this bread and this cup we may feed on the body and blood of Christ, and be empowered for service in your world. Heavenly Father, accept our prayers and thanksgiving in the name of Jesus, the light of the world and the life of your people.

Our normal practice is to say these words:

For I received from the Lord what I also pass on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of

me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 11 v. 22 - 26

After all have received the bread and the cup and after a period of silence, we end with these words in a Prayer of Thanksgiving for the blessings received at the Table:

Leader: Your death, O Lord, we commemorate. Your resurrection we celebrate. Your final coming we await. May the glory be to you, O Lord.

Response: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Loving Gracious God, we praise you for what you have given and for what you have promised us here. You have made us one with all who know you as Lord and Saviour. You have fed us with the bread of life and renewed us for your service. Now we give ourselves to you and we ask that our daily living may be part of the life of your eternal kingdom, and that our love may be your love in the world where we find ourselves., through Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray these things.

Amen

Prayers Of Intercession

Heavenly Father, as we celebrate and worship together today, we bring to you in the precious name of Jesus the needs of the church, the needs of the world, the needs of others around us and our own needs.

We pray for the church: for the way in which we can worship you in different ways; and for those who dare not celebrate you openly. We pray for Christians in countries where there is persecution and fear. Help them to know the loving presence of your Holy Spirit. Help us to be glad of your presence, and to rejoice in your Son. Give to us the help we need to be loyal and faithful as your church here on earth.

We pray for peace in the world: for countries where there is war; for places where there is hatred between races; for the leaders of nations. By your Holy Spirit among us may bitterness and hatred be cast out, and the peace and goodwill of your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus, find a place in the hearts of all peoples.

We pray for people in need: for those who are ill, for the lonely and bereaved; for the refugee and the homeless; for the hungry and the poor. Be near to all who especially need your love today; let your Spirit be with those who care for them, and give to all of us the desire to help when and where we can.

We pray for our family and our friends: for those away from us today; for those who have asked for our prayers;

for those that we are able to meet with and be with. In all of our life, in our giving and receiving, in all that we are able to do at this time, may we remember that we are part of your heavenly family here on earth.

Finally, we pray for ourselves: we ask for strength to serve others; we ask for deepening love; we ask for adventuring faith and a boldness of thought; we ask for a depth of courage to face the tasks ahead and we ask that you would be present in all the days that are ahead of us.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in Heaven
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
On earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power
And the glory, forever and ever.

Amen

Song Suggestion

Lord The Light Of Your Love Is
Shining



Blessing

Lord, would you be within us to
strengthen us,
Without us to keep us, above us to
protect us,
Beneath us to uphold us, before us to
direct us,
Behind us to keep us from straying,
Around about us to defend us,
Blessed be your Holy name,
O Lord our Father,
For ever and ever.

Amen