

Christ Church, Ipswich
Sunday 10th March 2024
Family Worship for the Fourth Sunday of Lent
Mothering Sunday
Minister: The Revd Neil Coulson
Organist: Mr Stephen Hogger

Hello, I hope you are well. Let us worship God together:

Call to worship

Jesus was lifted up on the cross so that all could come to him.
 Let us choose to seek God in our worship today,
 keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus
 and choosing to follow him.

A gathering prayer

Wonderful God, in the very beginning,
 the first thing you gave us was your light,
 your heavenly light,
 even before you made the sun.
 In your light we flourish.
 And we call your Son, Jesus Christ,
 the light of the world.
 He reaches into our darkness,
 and heals us, and makes us whole.
 Today, help us to learn how
 to be children of your light.
Amen.

BPW 29 All hail the power of Jesus' name!

1 All hail the power of Jesus' name!
 let angels prostrate fall;
 bring forth the royal diadem,
 and crown Him Lord of all.

2 Crown Him, ye martyrs of our God,
 who from His altar call;
 extol the stem of Jesse's rod,
 and crown Him Lord of all.

3 Ye seed of Israel's chosen race,
 a remnant weak and small,
 hail Him who saves you by His grace,
 and crown Him Lord of all.

4 You Gentile sinners, ne'er forget
 the wormwood and the gall;
 go, spread your trophies at his feet,
 and crown him Lord of all.

5 Let every kindred, every tribe,
 on this terrestrial ball,
 to Him all majesty ascribe,
 and crown Him Lord of all.

6 O that with yonder sacred throng
 we at His feet may fall,
 join in the everlasting song,
 and crown Him Lord of all!

Edward Perronet (1726—92)
 John Rippon (1751 — 1836)

A prayer for Mothering Sunday

Lord, on this day set aside to honour and remember mothers,
we give you thanks for our mothers.

We are grateful that you chose to give us life through them,
and that they received the gift of life from you, and gave it to us.

Thank you for the sacrifices they made in carrying us and giving us birth.

We thank you for the women who raised us, who were our mothers in childhood.

Whether birth mum, adopted mum, older sister, aunt,
grandmother, stepmother or someone else,

we thank you for those women who held us and fed us,
who cared for us and kissed away our pain.

We pray that our lives may reflect the love they showed us,
and that they would be pleased to be called our mums.

Nurturing God, who gave us an example of unconditional love, we give thanks for parents, families and friends. Thank you for those who care for us, who sit by quietly, supportively and let us make our own mistakes, who are willing to forgive and encourage us.

Loving God, we pray for those who find Mothering Sunday a difficult day, those who have had difficult experiences of their mother or father, or whose family life is full of conflict, bitterness and recrimination, assure them of your love and bring them peace.

Empathetic God, we pray for those who find Mothering Sunday difficult because they have lost a child, or because they are unable to have much-wanted children.

We pray for those who struggle to bring up children alone.

Loving God, whose son died on a cross, be with all those who need you and assure them of your love.

Caring God, we pray for those throughout the world who live in conditions like those experienced by the prodigal son when he lost his money, those who do not have enough water or food or shelter, those whose children die of starvation.

Show us how to care. **Amen**

A prayer of praise and thanksgiving

Almighty God, we praise and thank you
for being always with us by our side and within us.

Almighty God, in the darkness of night you are with us.

Almighty God, in the light of dawn as sun breaks on the horizon,
you are with us.

Almighty God, in the noonday sun, its heat and brightness,
you are with us.

Almighty God, in the fading light of dusk when shadows fall,
you are with us.

Almighty God, in the darkness of night, in the stillness it brings,
you are with us.

Almighty God, we praise and thank you. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

R&S 72 Now thank we all our God

1 Now thank we all our God,
with hearts and hands and voices;
who wondrous things has done,
in whom his world rejoices;
who from our mother's arms
has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.

2 O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us;
and keep us in his grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills
in this world and the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given,
the Son, and him who reigns
with them in highest heaven,
the one eternal God,
whom earth and heaven adore;
for thus it was, is now,
and shall be ever more.

Martin Rinkart. (1586-1649)
tr. Catherine Winkworth. (1827-78)

Old Testament Reading Numbers 21:4-9

⁴ From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. ⁵ The people spoke against God and against Moses, 'Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food.' ⁶ Then the Lord sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. ⁷ The people came to Moses and said, 'We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us.' So Moses prayed for the people. ⁸ And the Lord said to Moses, 'Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live.' ⁹ So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

Epistle Reading Ephesians 2:1-10

2 You were dead through the trespasses and sins ² in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. ³ All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. ⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us ⁵ even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ^[a]—by grace you have been saved— ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— ⁹ not the result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

Gospel Reading John 3:14-21

¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.
¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.
¹⁷ Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. ²¹ But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.'

R&S 503 It is a thing most wonderful

1 It is a thing most wonderful,
 almost too wonderful to be,
 that God's own Son should come from heaven
 and die to save a child like me:
 and yet I know that it is true;
 he came to this poor world below,
 and wept, and toiled, and mourned, and died,
 only because he loved me so.

2 I sometimes think about the cross
 and shut my eyes, and try to see
 the cruel nails and crown of thorns,
 and Jesus crucified for me:
 but even could I see him die,
 I could but see a little part
 of that great love, which, like a fire,
 is always burning in his heart.

3 It is most wonderful to know
 his love for me so free and sure;
 but still more wonderful to see
 my love for him so faint and poor;
 and yet I want to love thee, Lord;
 O light the flame within my heart,
 and I will love thee more and more,
 until I see thee as thou art.

W. W. How (1823-97) altd.*

Reflection based on today's readings***A moment for personal reflection*****R&S 422 *Lift high the Cross***

*Lift high the Cross, the love of Christ proclaim
 till all the world adore his sacred name!*

Here we display God's foolishness, which came
 to put the wisdom of this world to shame.
 (1 Cor. 1:18)

Our only boast is Jesus crucified;
 we die with him and shall be glorified.
 (Gal. 6:14)

Bearing our human likeness as his own,
 in death and suffering Christ took up his throne.
 (Phil. 2:8)

Sin's deadly bond which sealed our total loss
 he set aside and nailed it to the Cross.
 (Col. 2:13)

All nameless powers that human life betray
 are led as captives on his triumph day.
 (Col. 2:15)

May we, baptized according to his word,
 take up his cup and drink it with our Lord.
 (Mark 10:38)

Refrain: George W. Kitchen (1827-1912)
 and M. R. Newbolt (1874-1956)
 Verses: Stephen Orchard (1942-) and compilers
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Our prayers of intercession

Your light shines, your light is with us now.

We thank you for the light of Jesus that shines in us as we come here to be together. We thank you that we are free to worship, and there is no darkness of fear for us in this country.

We ask that your light would help us in our worship and prayer, in our activities and our learning, and fill us with the joy of knowing more about you.

We remember those who face the darkness of arrest, cruelty and harm for wanting to worship you. In sadness we pray for all the families and friends of the five thousand Christians who have lost their lives for their faith over the last year, and we ask that wherever in this world they are, they would see and know your light right now.

Your light shines, your light is in our country.

We thank you for all that makes us feel safe and good in our country, and the many good things that we enjoy. We thank you for all the churches that work to shine your light.

We ask that we as your people here would be active and energised to share your light in our schools, shops, colleges, hospitals, and all places of work near us.

We remember those who have the responsibility of bringing light and hope to all people in our nation. We think of all those badly affected by the recent budget, and for those who can now be more generous in helping others. In hope we pray for our politicians and leaders who have been elected or chosen to serve all people, and we ask that they would daily put aside the darkness of temptation, greed and selfishness, and instead consider and work for all that would make our lives better and brighter.

Your light shines, your light shines across your world.

We thank you for the light of creation, when all was made and you saw that it was good. We thank you for all the wonders of your world; our daily reminders of you.

We ask that we, as your people, would value your world and do all we can to protect land, animals, birds, rivers and the seas and work to end the darkness of pollution and destruction.

We remember with sadness those who have lost their homes, their land and their work through changes in the seasons, the rising of water levels, and the increasing power of the sun's heat. As we move from one of the wettest winters on record we are aware of the damage being done to our climate, and the challenges for the future. Help us to think about all that we can do, and all that we can encourage and vote for, to protect your created world better.

Your light shines, your light is never defeated by darkness.

We thank you that where you are there is always light and hope through your love for all people, but we recognise that for many people right now that light is hard to find.

We ask that we would be willing to speak up for those whose darkness seems overwhelming, and are in the middle of despair and conflict.

We remember those normal families who are caught up in war and conflict, who have no security and safety, and who have suffered the loss of those close to them. We think of people in Haiti where unrest is developing; Gaza where millions are in despair; Ukraine, Israel, and other nations across the world. We ask that you would strengthen all those who can bring light in the darkness of this hopelessness and pain.

Your light shines, your light is with us now.

Help us to be people who stay in your light, and share your light with those around us.

Amen.

Junior Church join us for the final hymn

R&S 663 Love divine

1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
 joy of heaven to earth come down!
 fix in us thy humble dwelling,
 all thy faithful mercies crown.
 Jesus, thou art all compassion,
 pure unbounded love thou art;
 visit us with thy salvation,
 enter every trembling heart.

2 Come, almighty to deliver,
 let us all thy grace receive;
 suddenly return, and never,
 never more thy temples leave.

Thee we would be always blessing,
 serve thee as thy hosts above,
 pray, and praise thee without ceasing,
 glory in thy perfect love.

3 Finish then thy new creation,
 pure and spotless let us be;
 let us see thy great salvation
 perfectly restored in thee!
 changed from glory into glory,
 till in heaven we take our place;
 till we cast our crowns before thee,
 lost in wonder, love and praise.

Charles Wesley (1707-88)

The Blessing

May the blessing of God Almighty
 Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer,
 be upon you, and those whom you love,
 this day and always. Amen.

The Grace

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
 the love of God,
 and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
 be with us all evermore. Amen.**