

Christ Church, Ipswich
Sunday 15th March 2026
Family Worship for the Fourth Sunday in Lent
Mothering Sunday

Hello, I hope you are well. Today, on this the Fourth Sunday in Lent, our Bible reading will be John 9:1-41. We shall also mark Mothering Sunday within our Prayers. Let us worship God together:

Call to worship

Come and see what the Lord has done.
 Give thanks for his goodness,
 and know his healing presence among us.

A gathering prayer

We come to worship God,
that we may see his glory.
 We come to find Jesus in God's word,
that we may see his glory.
 We come to ask for faith and understanding,
that we may see his glory. Amen.

R&S 380 Christ, whose glory fills the skies

1 Christ, whose glory fills the skies,
 Christ, the true, the only Light,
 Sun of Righteousness, arise,
 triumph o'er the shades of night;
 Dayspring from on high, be near;
 Daystar, in my heart appear.

2 Dark and cheerless is the morn
 unaccompanied by thee;
 joyless is the day's return,
 till thy mercy's beams I see,
 till they inward light impart,
 glad my eyes, and warm my heart.

3 Visit then this soul of mine,
 pierce the gloom of sin and grief;
 fill me, radiancy divine,
 scatter all my unbelief;
 more and more thyself display,
 shining to the perfect day.
 immortal invisible God
 Charles Wesley (1707-88)

A prayer of praise on Mothering Sunday

Gracious God,
 on this special day of thanksgiving,
 we catch a glimpse,
 through a mother's love for her child,
 of your love for us;
 the care, dedication and devotion you show to all your children
 which makes us as much 'our Mother' as 'our Father'.
 For the intensity of your love,
Lord, we praise you.

As a mother nurtures her children,
 instructing, feeding, clothing, guiding,
 so you nurture us,
 carefully leading us towards maturity.
 For the intensity of your love,
Lord, we praise you.

As a mother tends her children,
 comforting in times of distress,
 reassuring in times of uncertainty,
 encouraging in times of challenge,
 nursing in times of sickness,
 so you tend us,
 always there to lift us up
 and set us on our feet again when we fall.
 For the intensity of your love,
Lord, we praise you.

As this day we thank you for nurturing love,
 we also make time to pray for all those
 who have been denied the joy of motherhood;
 and we pray for all for whom Mothering Sunday,
 for different reasons,
 brings pain rather than pleasure,
 hurt rather than happiness.
 May your love enfold them this day and always.

Gracious God,
 Mother and Father of us all,
 we praise you this day for the wonder of your love
 and the constancy of your care.
 Gratefully we respond,
 In joyful worship
 And heartfelt thanksgiving.
 For the intensity of your love,
Lord, we praise you. Amen.

A prayer of confession

The blind man was secure in his healing and his faith. Even when challenged by the Pharisees he stood firm. Lord God, we ask you to forgive us for the times we doubt you. For the times we make play down your power in our lives – or the lives of others. For the times we fail to acknowledge things that don't suit us. For the times we look at others and blame something on the result of some 'sin' when they haven't done anything wrong at all. Forgive us for not seeing with your eyes. **Amen.**

Assurance of forgiveness

Jesus came to check on the blind man when he had been sent away. You, Lord, come to look for us when we have erred and bring us forgiveness and hope. Thank you that you are a God who doesn't only bring us forgiveness when we are truly sorry, but you keep an eye on us as we go forward, trusting you. 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, for ever and ever. Amen.

Family Talk

R&S 289 To God be the glory

1 To God be the glory, great things he has done!
 So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
 who yielded his life in atonement for sin,
 and opened the life-gate that all may go in.

*Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
 Let the earth hear his voice!
 Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!
 Let the people rejoice!
 O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son;
 and give him the glory - great things he has done!*

2 O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood,
 to every believer the promise of God!
 And every offender who truly believes,
 that moment from Jesus a pardon receives:

3 Great things he has taught us,
 great things he has done,
 and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son;
 but purer and higher and greater will be
 the wonder, the beauty, when Jesus we see:
 Fanny Crosby (1820-1915) altd.

Our Children go to Junior Church with our love and blessing

A Man Born Blind Receives Sight

9 As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. ² His disciples asked him, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' ³ Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. ⁴ We^[a] must work the works of him who sent me^[b] while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. ⁵ As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.' ⁶ When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, ⁷ saying to him, 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam' (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. ⁸ The neighbours and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?' ⁹ Some were saying, 'It is he.' Others were saying, 'No, but it is someone like him.' He kept saying, 'I am the man.' ¹⁰ But they kept asking him, 'Then how were your eyes opened?' ¹¹ He answered, 'The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." Then I went and washed and received my sight.' ¹² They said to him, 'Where is he?' He said, 'I do not know.'

The Pharisees Investigate the Healing

¹³ They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. ¹⁴ Now it was a sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. ¹⁵ Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, 'He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see.' ¹⁶ Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?' And they were divided. ¹⁷ So they said again to the blind man, 'What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.' He said, 'He is a prophet.'

¹⁸ The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight ¹⁹ and asked them, 'Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?' ²⁰ His parents answered, 'We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; ²¹ but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself.' ²² His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus^[c] to be the Messiah^[d] would be put out of the synagogue. ²³ Therefore his parents said, 'He is of age; ask him.' ²⁴ So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, 'Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner.' ²⁵ He answered, 'I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.' ²⁶ They said to him, 'What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?' ²⁷ He answered them, 'I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?' ²⁸ Then they reviled him, saying, 'You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. ²⁹ We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.' ³⁰ The man answered, 'Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. ³¹ We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. ³² Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.' ³⁴ They answered him, 'You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?' And they drove him out.

Spiritual Blindness

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, 'Do you believe in the Son of Man?'^[e] ³⁶ He answered, 'And who is he, sir?^[f] Tell me, so that I may believe in him.' ³⁷ Jesus said to him, 'You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.' ³⁸ He said, 'Lord,^[g] I believe.' And he worshipped him. ³⁹ Jesus said, 'I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.' ⁴⁰ Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, 'Surely we are not blind, are we?' ⁴¹ Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, "We see", your sin remains.'

R&S 601 Christ is the world's true light

1 Christ is the world's true light,
its captain of salvation,
the daystar clear and bright
and joy of every nation;
new life, new hope awakes,
where'er we own his sway:
freedom her bondage breaks,
and night is turned to day.

2 In Christ all races meet,
their ancient feuds forgetting,
the whole round world complete,
from sunrise to its setting:
when Christ is throned as Lord,

all shall forsake their fear,
to ploughshare beat the sword,
to pruning-hook the spear.

3 One Lord, in one great name
unite us all who own thee;
cast out our pride and shame
that hinder to enthrone thee;
the world has waited long,
has travailed long in pain;
to heal its ancient wrong,
come, Prince of Peace, and reign.

G. W. Briggs (1875-1959) altd.*

© Oxford University Press from *Enlarged Songs of Praise*

Reflection

A moment for reflection

R&S 489 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart

1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
naught be all else to me, save that thou art—
thou my best thought in the day and the night,
waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.

2 Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
thou ever with me and I with thee, Lord;
thou my great Father, thy child let me be,
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

3 Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
be thou my dignity, thou my delight,
thou my soul's shelter, and thou my strong tower;
raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my
power.

4 Riches I heed not, nor earth's empty praise,
thou mine inheritance, now and always;
thou and thou only, the first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

5 High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright sun,
grant me its joys after vict'ry is won;
heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Ancient Irish poem
tr. Mary E. Byrne (1880-1931)
and Eleanor H. Hull (1860-1935) altd.

Our prayers of intercession

Lord, when the world seems in disarray, and nobody really seems to know what is going on, help us to trust that you are ultimately in control. We pray for all the innocent people caught up in the conflicts. We pray for the leaders of the nations that they may be people of humility, integrity and peace.

Lord, in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, you saw everyone. You noticed what was going on. You understood people so you knew immediately how to serve them. Forgive us for the times when we walk by on the other side, when we don't appreciate what is really going on, when we fail to respond appropriately when people need our help. As we pray for different people today, help us to see them as you see them and thus make our prayers more effective.

Lord, help us to see others as you see them.

Help us to love them like you do.

We pray for those in our church fellowship and local community who are hurting today. We pray for those who are sick, especially.... We pray for the relief of suffering. We pray for those who are sad, remembering... Lord, wrap your loving arms around them and bring comfort in their sorrow. We pray for those who are confused, lonely, anxious or unloved, especially.... Lord, reveal yourself to them and help them know your closeness.

Lord, show us how we can support those we have prayed for, as well as those we have not. Open our eyes to see the need in our local community and teach us to be the answer to our prayers. We thank you for those who serve in the foodbanks, the places of welcome, the warm spaces, the community centres. Lord, help us to touch others with your love this week.

Lord, help us to see others as you see them.

Help us to love them like you do.

Lord, we pray for all those who live with a disability. We pray that they will not receive discrimination in their schools, workplaces, local amenities. Help our church to be an inclusive community, welcoming everyone as you welcomed them. We pray for schools that are struggling to meet the needs of young people with extra challenges. Help us always to see the person you have created and not the people society wants us to see. We thank you for all those who support those who need special care, praying especially for carers and those who work in the care professions, and all medical staff. Give them times of rest and peace in the busyness of their lives.

Lord, help us to see others as you see them.

Help us to love them like you do.

In the UK we are celebrating Mothering Sunday today, so we thank God for our mothers and/or all those who have been like mothers to us. We pause to remember a special moment or something kind they have done for us and we praise God. Help us always to remember to be grateful for the love and care that others give to us. Show us one way that we can demonstrate our love for them this week. We thank you that you put us in families to share our lives together.

Lord, help us to see others as you see them.

Help us to love them like you do.

Lord, we also remember those whose family life is not happy; those who are not able to live with their natural families; those who live in abusive households; those who live with sadness or pain; those where a family member is in prison. Be especially close to these people today, Lord. May they know your love in their painful times. Help all those who are in danger to find a safe way out. Help us to be alert to any who need our specific support.

Lord, help us to see others as you see them.

Help us to love them like you do.

Lord, we pray for your world. We think of something beautiful that we have seen this week and rejoice. We also remember something in your world that is broken and needs your healing touch: countries at war, especially in the Middle East and Ukraine; places of drought or flood; places of strife and unrest; land covered in the rubbish that we throw away so carelessly; chimneys polluting the sky; forests being cut down. Lord, forgive us for spoiling your beautiful creation. We pray for all those in governments and organisations who are trying to find ways to keep your planet green and breathing for future generations. Give them wisdom and courage, we pray.

Lord, help us to see others as you see them.

Help us to love them like you do.

And Lord, we thank you for signs of new life that we see around us... Help us to rejoice in your goodness day by day... we pause to thank you for even the smallest of blessings you gave us this week.

Help us to take that new life and goodness into every situation we go.

Amen

The Junior Church rejoin us

R&S 663 Love divine, all loves excelling

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)

A sending out prayer

Lord, open our eyes to see what you are revealing.
Open our mouth to speak about you.
Guide our thoughts and increase our understanding.
Stir our hearts to love as you loved us.
Move our hands and feet to serve you in others.
In the name of Jesus Christ, our example and our friend. **Amen.**

The Blessing

And may the blessing of God,
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,
go with us and with all whom we love.
Now and forever, 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.**