

We meet your word in the wonder of family, whatever shape it may take.

*(Pause)*

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We give thanks for foster carers and adoptive parents who open their homes and their lives.

*(Pause)*

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We offer our church activities which welcome parents and children.

*(Pause)*

Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We bear before you organisations working to make children's lives safer, healthier and more joyful.

*(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 contentment.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with determination to resist  
consumerism.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with extravagant generosity.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with yourself.**

## DAILY WAITING

*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. The reflection is taken from the Thy Kingdom Come 2023 Novena booklet by the Very Reverend Bob Keys.)

### 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.*

CHANGING LIVES



CHANGED LIVES



NINE DAYS OF PRAYER 2023

## LISTENING

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! (1 John 3:1, NIV)

## REFLECTING

St John has a 'WOW!' moment in today's verse. It is encouraging that even the apostles sometimes struggle for words to express just how great God is. His love, His compassion, His glory, His understanding, His coming to us in the Lord Jesus Christ leave John almost lost for words.

He finally settles on a way to sum up God's giving in creation and His giving of Himself. The expression he uses means something like, 'love from another world'. Our human understanding can't get our brains round it, but the wonderful thing is that we can know it, receive it, rest in it, enjoy it, and share it. Genesis tells us that mankind was made in God's image. John is now telling us that we have, if we have believed in Christ, been born again as God's children; and that truth simply blows his mind.

My own father died when I was five, so I have few memories of him. In photos, we look quite alike; but if I am ever tempted to doubt whose child I am I have only to open the filing cabinet and read my birth certificate. Today's verse with its great, 'And that is what we are!' is the Christian's birth certificate. Our assurance is based not in our own feelings, but in the effective word of God. No wonder the modern translation uses 'lavish' to describe the generous, costly, self-giving love of God.

Pray today that the five you are holding in your heart will receive and rest in the love of the Father, which constantly calls them home to become His children. Pray that they will find in Him the peace and place in His family for which we were created and redeemed.

Living the kingdom, living as sons and daughters of the king, means sharing that generosity. At the feeding of the 5,000 there were 12 baskets full of the leftovers. Jesus tells His disciples as He looks at the hungry crowds, 'You give them something to eat.' He still does. As we live out the generous overflowing love of the kingdom then the hungry will be fed, the lonely befriended, prisoners visited, and the poor understand the good news.

## PSALM 103 1-13 (NRSV)

- 1 Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
**and all that is within me, bless his holy name.**
- 2 Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
**and do not forget all his benefits—**
- 3 who forgives all your iniquity,  
**who heals all your diseases,**
- 4 who redeems your life from the Pit,  
**who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,**
- 5 who satisfies you with good as long as you live  
**so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.**
- 6 The Lord works vindication  
**and justice for all who are oppressed.**
- 7 He made known his ways to Moses,  
**his acts to the people of Israel.**
- 8 The Lord is merciful and gracious,  
**slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.**
- 9 He will not always accuse,  
**nor will he keep his anger for ever.**
- 10 He does not deal with us according to our sins,  
**nor repay us according to our iniquities.**
- 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
**so great is his steadfast love towards those who fear him;**
- 12 as far as the east is from the west,  
**so far he removes our transgressions from us.**
- 13 As a father has compassion for his children,  
**so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.**

**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, you are mother and father, shelter and refuge,  
Teach us to find our identity in you;  
Help us grow to look more and more like you.  
When we feel overwhelmed and our inner resources seem scarce,  
Remind us of your lavish love,  
And help us to give freely from the bounty we have received. **Amen.**