

## PRAYING

*Silence is kept for several minutes, to allow people to pray for the 5 people they have chosen to pray for throughout the Novena. It may be appropriate to invite people to speak those names aloud if they wish to.*

We meet your word with hearts in need of reassurance comfort amid life's trials.

*(Pause)*

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

We give you thanks for companions who walk life's journey with us.

*(Pause)*

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

We pray for those who risk their lives bringing aid and working for peace in desperate situations.

*(Pause)*

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

We bear before you all those who fear that darkness will overwhelm them.

*(Pause)*

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

Gracious God, in your mercy, search our hearts:

Help us to notice where our worship has become stale habit,

Where our fellowship has become false.

Rekindle in us the fire of your love,

That we may blaze with life in a world which is weary of empty religion.

And challenge loveless systems which perpetuate injustice.

Renew your image in us, your Church, that the world may learn the ways of love.

Amen.

(Prayer written by Lyndall Bywater, Changing Lives Prayer Network Co-ordinator)

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with resilience when the way is tough.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with opportunities to bring Christ's light into dark places.**

Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with comfort and protection.**

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. Since the theme of Thy Kingdom Come 2025 is The Lord's Prayer, these liturgies invite us to pray that prayer immediately after the Scripture reading, rather than during the Intercessions, to allow us to bring it into focus before we meditate on it in the Reflection.

The Reflections are taken from the Thy Kingdom Come 2025 Novena booklet by Archbishop Stephen Cottrell, and the Intercessions include prayers from our June Prayer Calendar, written by people from around the Canterbury Diocese.

## 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.*

*Pause for a few minutes in silence to welcome the leading of the Holy Spirit, and bring to mind the names of 5 people you will commit to praying for over the coming days.*

CHANGING LIVES



CHANGED LIVES



NINE DAYS OF PRAYER 2025

## LISTENING: John 10:7-11, NRSV

So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

*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.**

## REFLECTING

God is always there for us  
'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil...' Matthew 6:12  
The more we dig into this prayer, the more challenging we discover it to be, the harder it becomes to live the life that God shows us, and the easier it becomes to fall away and to live life just for ourselves. Which is why the Lord’s Prayer ends, ‘Lead us not into temptation’ – or in some versions, ‘Save us from the time of trial’ – ‘And deliver us from evil’.

‘The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want’, begins Psalm 23, another very famous and beautiful text. ‘Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff – they comfort me’ (Psalm 23:4).

When we pray, as we must pray each day, ‘Lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil’, we are claiming the protection of the God who is our shepherd and who walks with us and is alongside us in all the snares and temptations of life.

However, since God would never actually lead us into temptation (this is something everyone else will do!) some people have commented that it is a

strange thing to ask for. But maybe the greatest temptation of all is to imagine that we don’t need God, that we can manage on our own so that we end up putting our trust in ourselves, even to stop believing in God and believing in ourselves instead.

Oh, but this is the way that leads to all kinds of evils. Rather, the Lord’s Prayer continually invites us to be ruthlessly and scrupulously honest before God. So it really means, Lord help me when I’m tempted. Because that will be often.

There are all sorts of other ways to live your life. There are many other paths to take. In these final words of the Lord’s Prayer we are asking God to lead us on the way that is to life and we’re praying using the words of Jesus who told us that he is that way Himself (John 14:6).

Steadfast God, amid all the snares and temptations of life, lead me on the path of life eternal, save me from evil, and when I stray from the path, find me and lead me home. Oh Good Shepherd, protect me. And not just me, all those I love, and those for whom I pray today.

## Psalm 23:1-6, NRSV

1 The Lord is my shepherd;

**I shall not want.**

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;

**he leads me beside still waters;[a]**

3 he restores my soul.

**He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake.**

4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil,  
**for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
**you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.**

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,  
**and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.**

**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.**