

## PRAYING

We wait upon the Holy Spirit to gift us with renewing grace.

Oh gentle God,  
you cross all the barriers of separation;  
longing to be near us,  
you wipe away our tears,  
you shower us with precious gifts;  
your comfort soothes away our shame.  
May we spread the word  
that you have spread a table  
- and that all are welcome at your feast.  
**Amen.**

We meet your Word in the joy of friendship.  
(Pause) Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We express our thanks for the hope of everlasting life.  
(Pause) Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We offer our time, our money, our company to bring joy to others.  
(Pause) Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We bear before you the sorrowful, the lonely, and the rejected.  
(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 freedom to enjoy ourselves.**  
Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with hearts that can love the whole world.**  
Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with longing to help others come to Christ.**  
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 instruction, plain text is to be read by a leader, bold text is to be read together.*

## 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.*

CHANGED LIVES @ CHANGING LIVES  
THE KINGDOM COME  
NINE DAYS OF PRAYER 2018

**DAY 8: CELEBRATE**  
**Friday 18 May**

## LISTENING

Isaiah 25: 6-10

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-aged wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death forever. Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain.

## REFLECTING

*(The image for this text can be found in the Novena booklet or on [www.canterburydiocese.org/novena](http://www.canterburydiocese.org/novena))*

Have you ever had the experience of going to a party and losing track of the time, when you are so alive to the moment that you get a little taste of eternity? In Isaiah's glorious vision of God's kingdom this is what everlasting life looks like: not an eternity of floating aimlessly on a cloud, or an endless extension of our consciousness with nothing to think about, but action, rejoicing, engagement, fun, celebration.

Just as on God's mountain there are no distinctions of time, so there are no distinctions of person. Unlike our celebrations, where we delight in the comfortable company of our friends, God's party is radically inclusive. He will wipe away the tears from *all* faces, he will take away the disgrace of his people from *all* the earth. For in God's sight, no celebration can be complete while anybody is left outside. That's quite a challenge for us. It's a challenge to imagine how much our small hearts will need to be enlarged so that we can enjoy the banquet of heaven with the whole earth as our friends; and it's a challenge to reflect God's hospitality and generosity in all that we do. How often do we seek out the weeping and the disgraced? How often do we wipe away their tears? How often do we invite them into our homes?

For Christians there is a foretaste of this eternal banquet in the Eucharist. Here, for a moment, we put aside the ticking clock of this world and enter into the peace and joy of the eternal kingdom with those around us. As on Isaiah's mountain-top, these may be people with whom we have very little in common, people we hardly know, but as we share in the Eucharistic feast, we recognise that we are bound together with them in the one body of Jesus Christ our Lord. We are bound together in a communion of saints that stretches back to the beginnings of the human race and forwards to the end of time. Let us pray that we may have the courage and the generosity to invite all people to climb God's mountain with us.

*As time allows, share your insights with one another.*

### A Song of the Redeemed

- 1 Behold, a great multitude ♦  
which no one could number,
- 2 From every nation,  
from all tribes and peoples and tongues, ♦  
standing before the throne and the Lamb.
- 3 They were clothed in white robes  
and had palms in their hands, ♦  
and they cried with a loud voice, saying,
- 4 'Salvation belongs to our God  
who sits on the throne, ♦  
and to the Lamb.'
- 8 They shall never again feel hunger or thirst, ♦  
the sun shall not strike them,  
nor any scorching heat.
- 9 For the Lamb at the heart of the throne ♦  
will be their Shepherd.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning is now  
and shall be forever. Amen.**