

We meet your word in a world where love so often seems in short supply. *(Pause)*
Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We give thanks for those people in our lives who have taught us the real meaning of love. *(Pause)*
Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We offer you our homes and churches to be places where love has the final word. *(Pause)*
Come Holy Spirit: **Thy Kingdom Come.**

We bear before you those who feel themselves to be unlovable. *(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 healing for our wounds.**
Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with a heart softened from stone to
flesh.**
Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with love for every person we meet.**
Come Holy Spirit: **gift us with yourself.**

CHANGING LIVES



CHANGED LIVES



NINE DAYS OF PRAYER 2023

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.

DAY: 2

LISTENING

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. (John 4:7-8, NIV)

REFLECTING

Life can be seen as a search for love. We long to give love and to receive it. The New Testament, written originally in Greek, uses different Greek words for love. They express the variety of ways in which we find and understand what it is to love and be loved.

In these verses just one word is used. The Greek word 'agape'. John uses it six times in just two verses. This love is special, different. This love has the heart of God as its source, the cross of Christ as its sacrificial expression, and the power of the Holy Spirit to produce in Christians that same quality of selfless love. This is the love of God, the Holy Trinity, which calls from us a response of love which only His grace and power can produce in us. This agape love expresses the heart of the God who is love. This is the love that Jesus demonstrated as being greater than any other love. That selfless love touches the lepers, embraces the outcast, welcomes those whom polite society condemns, and opens His arms on the cross to encircle the world.

John is not content merely to soak up that love from God. He does want his readers to rest in that love, and to find in it the assurance of sins forgiven and the powerful liberty of the Holy Spirit to set them free from slavery to selfishness and sin; but He looks for more. As Christians, we are to be channels of that love which comes from God and which so demonstrates His nature that John says 'God is love.' It is a tragedy when any congregation fails to demonstrate that divine love in its relationship with the Lord, with fellow Christians, or with the world Christ came to save.

St Paul wrote, 'The greatest of these is love' (1 Corinthians 13), and in Revelation Jesus writes to the Church at Ephesus, 'You have lost your first love' (Revelation 2). Let's take a look in the spiritual mirror of God's word and ask Him to make our love complete.

As we pray for our five folk today, let us remember their need of love. Let's bring their emotional and physical needs to God and pray that they may open up to His eternal love, His healing, life and light.

Living the Kingdom today is obedience to a straightforward command from the Apostle: 'Friends, let us love one another.' It was the mark of the life of the early church that convinced others of the truth of the good news.

PSALM 63 (NRSV)

- 1 O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
- 2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.
- 3 Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.
- 4 So I will bless you as long as I live;
I will lift up my hands and call on your name.
- 5 My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips
- 6 when I think of you on my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;
- 7 for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.
- 8 My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.

**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, who is love itself,
Enfold us, that we might find rest in you; Unburden us as we look to the cross for our freedom; Empower us to be living examples of love to those around us. Open our hearts, that we might receive the love you give, and give the love we receive. Through Jesus Christ, who is love incarnate,
Amen.