

HOME WORSHIP FOR 31 JANUARY, THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

OPENING PRAYER

Arise, shine for the rays of God's glory spread across the earth. The sun is rising. Kings and peoples shall be drawn to the light.

We welcome the light that burns in the rising sun. We welcome the light that dawns through the Son of God. We welcome the light that gleams through the growing earth. We welcome the light that Christ kindles in our souls.

You give us people for the times, O Lord.

In the earliest days, you gave great leaders to Israel: Abraham, Jacob, Moses.

You give us people for the times, O Lord.

And when a word of correction was needed, you sent the prophets: Jeremiah. Amos, and Isaiah.

You give us people for the times, O Lord.

To a world crying for salvation, your Chosen One, Jesus, came to teach, to die, and to rise again.

You give us people for the times, O Lord.

And still you send your messengers, your challengers, the agents of your love: Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, and unsung saints we know. We thank you, O Lord. Amen.

CONFESSION AND WORDS OF ASSURANCE

You challenge us to use our faithful authority, O Lord: authority not reliant on the fixed pattern of years, but on the gentle, flexible, affirming approach.

You inspire us as we use our faithful authority, O Lord: authority born of wise insight, careful study, and skilful practice.

You are with us as we use our faithful authority, O Lord: authority rooted in Hebrew and Christian scripture, the prayer-based way of Jesus.

You support us as we use our faithful authority, O Lord: authority which runs counter to the powerful and fear-making forces, authority that will not leave the oppressed to suffer.

(Allow God to show you when you have failed to use or have miss-used this authority.)

You know O Lord, those times when we impose our opinions and our ways on others and you call us to change. We will put our rigid and selfish

ways behind us; we will listen to those around us; we will search out Christ's compassionate and just way for our faith community. As we let go of our self-serving attitudes and practices, we will experience peace and fulfilment. Thanks be to God. Amen.

MEMORY VERSE – try to memorise these verses from today's readings. *When the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. (Mark 1: 21-22)*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Holy God, great Spirit of all, may the whole Church honour and glorify your name in daily lives, private prayer and public worship. Holy God: may your will be done.

May the whole world resound with your truth, activate your compassion, and be soaked in your peace. Holy God: may your will be done.

May all homes and households make plenty of room for kindness and forgiveness; clear the clutter of discontent, and make us more thankful. Holy God: may your will be done.

May all who ache with sadness or physical pain be comforted and cherished, knowing your love for them. Holy God: may your will be done. As we step into each new day may our thanks and praise give joy to the living God.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

All our problems: we send to the cross of Christ.

All our difficulties: we send to the cross of Christ.

All the devil's works: we send to the cross of Christ.

All our hopes: we set on the risen Christ.

And, to him who is able to keep us from falling and to present us without blemish before the presence of his glory with rejoicing, to the only God, our Saviour through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and for ever. Amen.