

HOME WORSHIP FOR 14 MARCH, THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

OPENING PRAYER (from today's Psalm 107)

God is good; God's steadfast love lasts forever. We know it, we believe it, we proclaim it.

God is good; God's steadfast love lasts forever. Those who thirst for new life are satisfied; those who hunger for the living Word are filled!

God is good; God's steadfast love lasts forever. The imprisoned ones know freedom; sinners know pardon!

God is good; God's steadfast love lasts forever. The powerful are humbled; the needy are raised up from their distress! God is good; God's steadfast love lasts forever.

You are with us as we go with Jesus towards Jerusalem, most gracious God, and we are thankful. You stay with us in the tough moments of reflection and confession. You are with us, reminding us of all that sustains us as a church, our common life of faith, our encouragement of one another. You are with us as we make clear your realm of love and justice beyond this church. You are our inspiration for mission; you are at the heart of our service to others. You are with us as we walk beside the cross-carrying Jesus. You remind us of the demanding call to discipleship, of our need to confront the dark, self-serving powers. Most gracious God, stay with us! Amen.

PRAYER OF REFLECTION AND WORDS OF ASSURANCE (from John 3:16)

"God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that everyone who has faith in him may not die, but have eternal life."

When we are ready to affirm our own worth and to use our hidden talents, we hear the words... "God so loved the world..."

When we find the faithful strength to forgive the person who has caused us harm or heartache, we hear the words... "God so loved the world..."

When our church can focus its gaze on those most despised, most ignored in our society, we hear the words.... "God so loved the world..."

When our world leaders are prepared to reduce resource use for the sake of future generations, we hear the words... "God so loved the world..."

(In silence allow God to show you the times and ways you haven't truly believed that "God so loved the world.")

Eternal life begins as you are willing to use your hidden talents and to forgive those who have harmed you. Eternal life for the church begins as we show concern for the oppressed, for those for whom Christ died. Eternal life for our planet begins when our leaders look beyond our present day needs to the needs of our children and grandchildren.

“God so loved the world” that God gave us Jesus Christ. Peace and pardon are ours. Thanks be to God! Amen.

MEMORY VERSE – try to memorise these verses from today’s readings.

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. (John 3: 14-15)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Loving Father, we pray for all who are persecuted for their faith, and for whom following you brings danger. We pray for those who are new to faith and those who no longer walk with you. We thank you for the example of those whose faith shines out in their lives.

We are all your children: help us to grow in faith.

Loving Father, we pray for those forced to leave their homes, their families or their countries. We pray for those who, through war and famine, must watch their children die. We pray for your peace and comfort.

We are all your children: help us to grow in faith.

Loving Father, we pray for all the mothering that goes on in our churches and villages and for those who crave tenderness and are weary of the struggle to be strong.

We are all your children: help us to grow in faith.

Loving Father, we pray for all new parents and their babies, and all giving birth today. We pray for all who are vulnerable, that they may be protected from harm.

We are all your children: help us to grow in faith.

Loving Father, we give you thanks for the comfort you provide in all our troubles, and for the richness of all our relationships.

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

CLOSING PRAYER

O Love that will not let us go, you will be with us.

O Love that will not let us go, bear with us when we ignore you.

O Love that will not let us go, forgive us when we turn our backs on crying needs.

O Love that will not let us go, do not leave us when we leave others to work out their own salvation.

O Love that will not let us go, we see the cross on the hill and we know that whatever comes, you will be with us!

Lord Jesus Christ, you humbled yourself in taking the form of a servant, and in obedience died on the cross for our salvation: give us courage to follow you and to proclaim you as Lord and King, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.