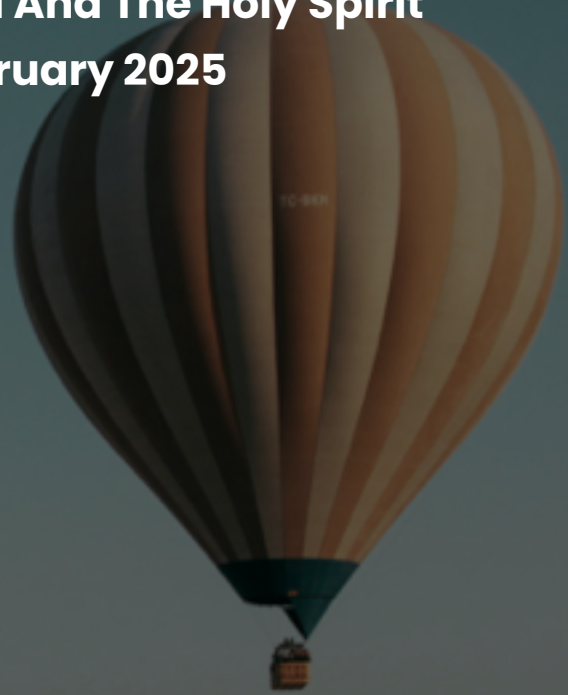


# Church Together

The People Of God And The Holy Spirit

23rd February 2025



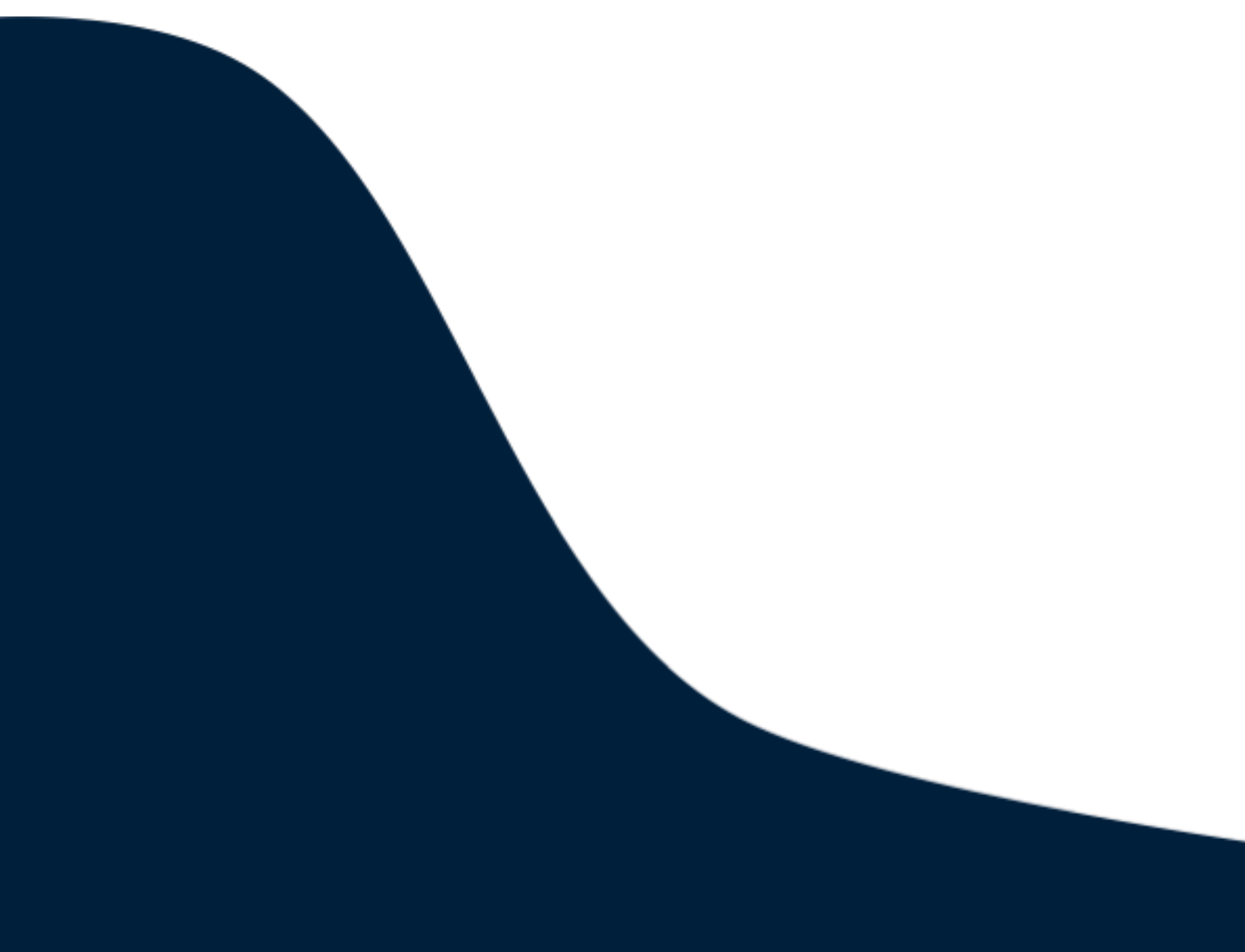
# Welcome

In today's Service we will be looking at: **Ephesians 1 v. 11 - 23**

The theme for our service today is: **The People Of God And The Holy Spirit**

Today our service also includes: **Communion**

We hope that you will be able to engage with everything that has been produced for today's service and that you would be able to **Know That You Are Part Of The Family Of God By The Power Of The Holy Spirit**



# Call To Worship

## **Psalm 108 v. 1 - 5 NLT**

My heart is confident in you, O God;

No wonder I can sing your praises!

Wake up, my soul!

Wake up, O harp and lyre!

I will waken the dawn with my song.

I will thank you, Lord, in front of all the  
people.

I will sing your praises among the nations.

For your unfailing love is higher than the heavens.

Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds.

Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens.

May your glory shine over all the earth.

The Holy Spirit never discourages the people of God. Any voice, any influence, any teaching which has the effect of discouraging you as a Christian is not from the Holy Spirit. And there's a lot of it around.

# Opening Prayer

This morning Lord, we thank you for the freedom to be amongst your people here today. Loving and gracious Lord we thank you for the past week, for the conversations we have had and the tasks that we have carried out.

We thank you that we are able to come to you just as we are, whether that is weary, tired and looking for direction or even full of joy and hope because of all that Jesus has done for us. Loving Lord, you accept us just as we are and you love us just the same. We thank you that we are still able to come before you in the busyness of our day, to worship you, and to offer ourselves in service to you.

Thank you that in worship we can put aside for a little time, the uncertainties of this world and rest upon the certainties of your Kingdom. Help us to be still in your presence and we ask that you would be in our hearts and minds as we prepare to hear your word. As we come together at this time we do so with an open heart and an open mind. Help us to hear what you are saying to us but not just hear what you say but to act also to act upon what we have heard.

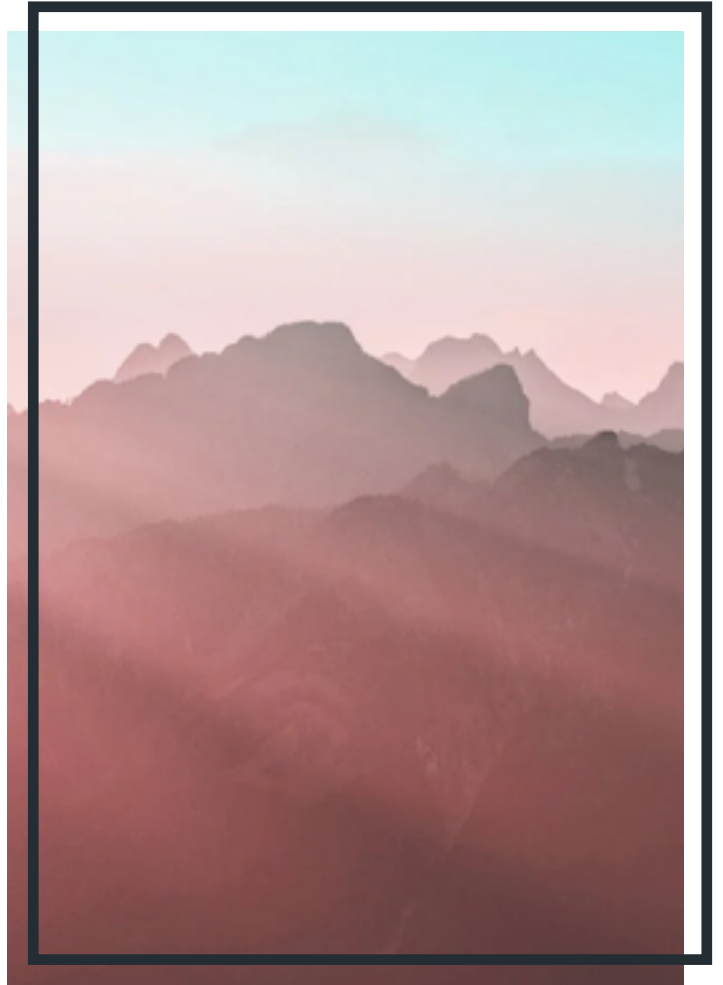
Thank you that we can bring to you all the hurts and fears that trouble us, and leave them there, knowing that your strength and assurance are all that we require. Help us to encourage each other and not to criticise, to build up and not to knock down, to develop and move forward on our journey of faith together. Thank you Lord God for the opportunity of being with you today.

**Amen**

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# Song Suggestion

Holy Spirit, We Welcome You



# Bible Reading

## **Ephesians 1 v. 11 – 23 NIV**

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

## **Thanksgiving and Prayer**

15 For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, 16 I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, 19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe.

That power is the same as the mighty strength 20 he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every

name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23 which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

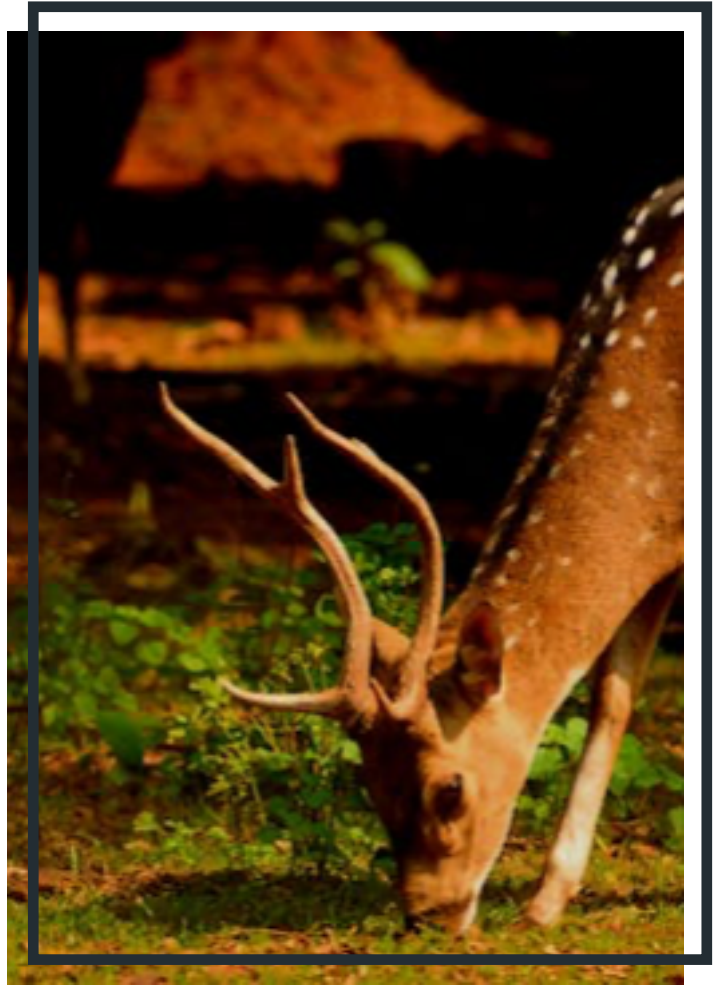


The Holy Spirit is focused on changing you, empowering you, conforming you to the image of Jesus Christ, and helping you fulfill God's plan for your life.

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# Song Suggestion

The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not  
Want



# Church Together

## Thought

In ancient times, a seal was a sign of belonging. People who were devoted to a god often had a sacred emblem of the cult tattooed onto their body. A personal seal impressed in hot wax is used to authenticate a document. Slaves had their owners' seal burned into their flesh.

In the same way those who believe in Christ as their Saviour and Lord are sealed by the Holy Spirit, as we are told in **Ephesians 1 v. 13**, only here there is no physical mark, and the seal is meant as a reminder to the believer rather than as a sign to others.

How do we know that we have the Holy Spirit? Read on its own, the account of the coming of the Holy Spirit, that can be found in **Acts 2** might lead us to suppose that we could only have the Holy Spirit in our lives if a similar thing happened to us. There are many Christians today who believe exactly that. However, we would do well to remember that spiritual experience is by no means dependent on visible signs or emotions, valuable and wonderful though they are, nor does it always generate them.

**John 20 v. 20 – 22** which says: 'After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and

said, "Receive the Holy Spirit".

records how the risen Lord came to the Disciples, blessed them with peace and commissioned them to continue his work. Then he said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'. They were overjoyed because Jesus had come to them, but the gift of the Spirit was quiet and, we might say, completely unexciting.

Paul writes in **Ephesians 1 v. 13**: 'Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit'. The sentence here is translated in some versions slightly differently, but the apostle is not suggesting that when you become a disciple of Christ by putting your faith in him, you must wait for a new and different experience before you receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes because of believing in Jesus Christ. If you believe, you have the Spirit.

Jesus himself has promised the Holy Spirit who will come to 'be with you for ever', as we find recorded in John 14 v. 16. The world, says Jesus, does not know the Holy Spirit, 'but you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you' **John 14 v. 17** reminds us.

We see in **1 Peter 1 v. 4; Colossians 1 v. 12** that an important part of The Holy Spirit's work is to guarantee that the promises of God will be fulfilled, salvation will be brought to its fullness, and we will receive the inheritance which has been 'kept in heaven' for the believer. The Holy Spirit gives us the assurance we need to strengthen our faith and equip us for God's service.

In human friendship there are times when we especially need help, and we know that a true friend will not let us down. How much less then will Jesus, through the Spirit, let us down! Doing the best we can on our own is never

enough, but when we ask, we shall be filled with the Spirit according to our need. We can be confident that, whatever our need is, the Spirit will be sufficient for us. As we think about the imagery of what happens when things are passed down in human families, we can illustrate several points about the Holy Spirit as a pledge of our inheritance.

### **FIRSTLY, WE CAN SEE THAT WE ARE PART OF A WEALTHY FAMILY (Ephesians 1 v. 11, 12)**

Some of us may wonder how we can know God's will for our lives. While there are details, we may never know in advance, God's Word points us in the right direction.

There are many things that God desires for all of us, and these are revealed in Scripture. Here in this passage from **Ephesians 1 v. 11, 12**, we find that God wants us to experience an intimate relationship with him in Christ. In this relationship, God will delight in us, and we will praise him in return. This is an amazing truth. God wants to have a close relationship with us, no matter who we are or what we have done. Because of what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, we can live lives of praise, sharing the Good News that we are part of God's family, with others in need.

As Christians we have an 'inheritance'. God has chosen us and intends to shower us with lavish things. Those things are not just for our satisfaction, but so that we will live 'to the praise of his glory', honouring the family tradition.

### **SECONDLY, WE CLAIM THE INHERITANCE EVEN WITHOUT THE RIGHT SURENAME (Ephesians 1 v. 13)**

The Holy Spirit dwelling in us guarantees God's plan for our salvation. Just as an official marks a document as being genuine, so the Holy Spirit's work within us

guarantees our identity as one of God's adopted children. This is all made possible by Jesus and his saving work on our behalf. It becomes a reality in our lives when we place our faith in him.

Paul writes 'you also' to explain that even non - Jews inherit. It is as if we have joined the family through marriage or adoption, or that God has taken a liking to us and written us into his will! Nowadays we forget what a surprise and controversy this was in New Testament times, although knowing how jealous earthly families can be, perhaps it should not surprise us.

The theme of Ephesians is that the impossible has happened and that Christianity can include both Jews and Gentiles. Both **Acts 2 v. 17; Galatians 3 v. 14** reminds us that we are all 'sealed' with The Holy Spirit who was promised long ago. Because this idea of securely belonging to God almost certainly included baptism, you could say that our 'Christian' name is more important than our 'surname'!

The analogy of the 'seal' also refers to the branding of cattle and slaves in New Testament times, a reminder of who they belonged to.

### **THIRDLY, OUR INHERITANCE IS WRITTEN INTO THE WILL! (Ephesians 1 v. 14)**

Our knowledge of God's concern for us and the help he offers gives us a reason for hope as we seek to overcome our difficulties. When we trust God, we become part of the powerful solution he has provided to deal with all our sin problems.

Occasionally someone inherits a fortune from a family member they have never even seen! They certainly have done nothing to earn it! Our inheritance from God is not

something we deserve, but a natural consequence of belonging to him. The family privileges in the present are a sample or foretaste of what will happen in the future. The word translated as pledge or seal dates from a time before coinage and meant a down - payment or deposit - for instance, in a transaction which traded wheat for cloth, the former was too bulky to be carried in one journey, so a deposit was left as a pledge of the rest. It is certain that, though we have God's Spirit now, there is even more to come!

**FOURTHLY, WE ARE OFTEN A CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK!  
(Ephesians 1 v. 15 - 23)**

Family members often resemble each other in the way they look and in mannerisms and skills. This is even true where there is no blood relationship, such as with married couples and adopted children, because we become like the person, we spend time with.

Paul in **Ephesians 1 v. 17** tells the Ephesian Christians that it is already obvious who they belong to and prays for them to grow in spiritual understanding. We also received God's Spirit when we became Christians and are all being made like him, as we read in **2 Corinthians 3 v. 18**.

**FINALLY, OUR INHERITANCE SOMETIMES GIVES US MORE THAN WE BARGAINED FOR! (Ephesians 1 v. 19 - 21)**

Because people are so materialistic, the reading of the will when someone dies can be the occasion of much bickering in a family. We have no reason to fall out, though we often do! over God's gift of his Spirit to us, because there is more than enough of The Holy Spirit for each one of us!

The power we have that comes through The Holy Spirit is that which raised Jesus from the dead and puts him at

God's right hand with supremacy over all things, and it is that same Holy Spirit



"...you will receive power  
when the Holy Spirit has  
come upon you, and you will  
be my witnesses in  
Jerusalem, in all Judea and  
Samaria, and to the end of  
the earth."

Acts 1:8

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# Song Suggestion

Father, We Love You



# Communion

Jesus said: 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty'. **Romans 5 v. 8** also tells us: 'God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us'.

## **An Invitation to the Table:**

Come to this table, not because you must but because you may, not because you are strong, but because you are weak. Come, not because any goodness of your own gives you a right to come, but because you need mercy and help. Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more. Come, because he loved you and gave himself for you. Come and meet the risen Christ, for we are his Body, his People.

## **A prayer of Approach:**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secret is hidden; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.

## **As we prepare to receive the bread and the cup, we hear the words of The Institution:**

The Apostle Paul tells us of the institution of the Lord's Supper, when he says: 'For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night that he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said: 'This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me'. In the

same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying: 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me'. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. **1 Corinthians 11 v. 23 - 26**

**A Prayer of Thanksgiving before we eat the bread and drink the cup:**

Loving God, we praise and thank you for your love shown to us in Jesus Christ. We thank you for his life and ministry, announcing the good news of your kingdom and demonstrating its power in the lifting of the downtrodden, and the healing of the sick, and the loving of the loveless. We thank you for his sacrificial death upon the cross, for the redemption of the world, and for your raising him to life again, as a foretaste of the glory we shall share. We give you thanks for this bread and wine, symbols of our world and signs of your transforming love. Send your Holy Spirit, we pray, that we might be renewed into the likeness of Jesus Christ and formed into his body. This we pray in his name and for his sake. Amen.

**WE NOW SHARE AND EAT OF THE BREAD AND SHARE AND DRINK OF THE CUP**

A Final Prayer of Acclamation:

Your death, O Lord, we commemorate. Your resurrection we confess. Your final coming we await. Glory be to you, O Christ.

**Amen.**

# Prayers Of Intercession

This is a beautiful prayer of Intercession that is based on **Revelation 21** – take some time when praying through! We have hope. John writes in **Revelation 21**: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘See, the home of God is now among the people. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the old order of things have passed away.’ And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’ Also, he said, ‘Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ Then he said to me, ‘It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.’

We pray for those who are lonely. We hope in the promise that the home of God will be among people: that God will dwell with us, that we will be his people and that God himself will be with us. We mention in our hearts those we know who are lonely or isolated.

Lord you said, **‘See, I am making all things new.’ ‘Amen,**

## **make all things new!**

We pray for those who are crying; the sad, the depressed and the anxious. We hope in the promise that God will wipe every tear from our eyes. We mention in our hearts those we know who are sad and who know tears.

Lord you said, **'See, I am making all things new.'** **'Amen, make all things new!'**

We pray for those who are experiencing the consequences of death, the bereaved and those who are mourning. We hope in the promise that death and mourning will be no more. We mention in our hearts those we know who are affected by death and mourning.

Lord you said, **'See, I am making all things new.'** **'Amen, make all things new!'**


We pray for those who are in pain, suffering from illness either physical or mental. We hope in the promise that crying and pain will be no more. We mention in our hearts those we know who are ill or in pain.

Lord you said, **'See, I am making all things new.'** **'Amen, make all things new!'**

We pray for those who are thirsty for truth, love and grace; those who seek God and his life with earnest hearts. We hope in the promise that God will give water to the thirsty without cost from the spring of the water of life. We mention in our hearts those we know who hunger and thirst for God.

Lord you said, **'See, I am making all things new.'** **'Amen, make all things new!'**

Lord, your words are trustworthy and true. You are the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. We pray all this in the powerful and hopeful name of Jesus Christ. **Amen**



The Holy Spirit illuminates the minds  
of people, makes us yearn for God,  
and takes spiritual truth and makes  
it understandable to us.

Billy Graham

# Tithes, Gifts & Offerings

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If you feel that you are able to, then please keep on giving to the work of the church here at Salendine Nook, with a generous and cheerful heart, praising God for all that he has given to you and share in the finances of the church.





# The Lord's Prayer

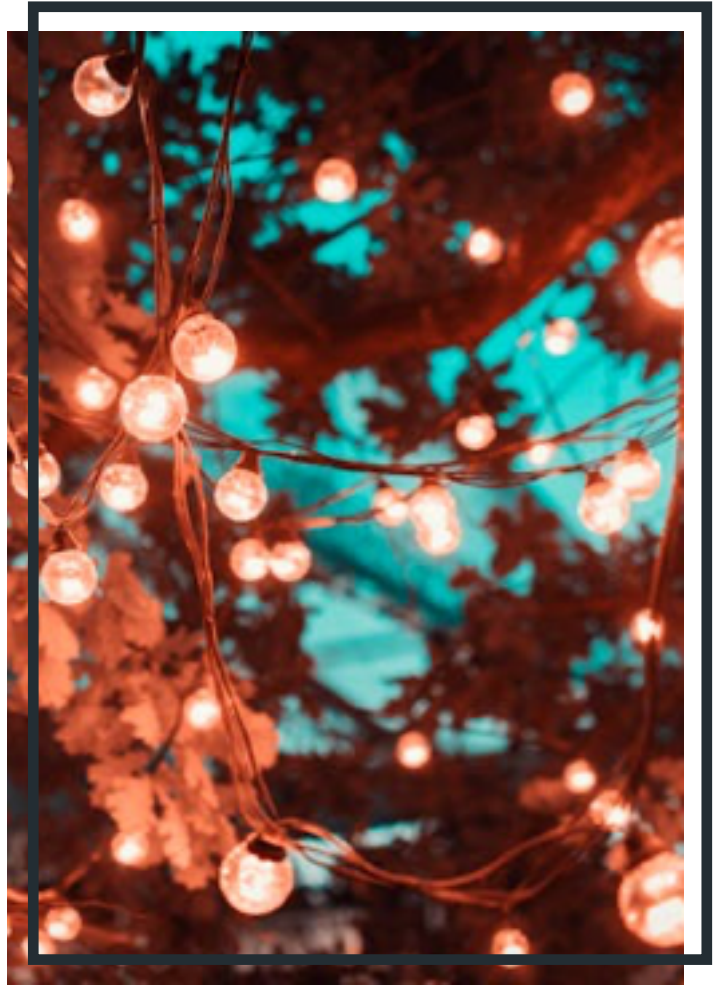
Our Father who art in Heaven  
Hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in Heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power  
And the glory, forever and ever.

**Amen**

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# Song Suggestion

I, The Lord Of Sea And Sky



# Blessing



May the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ  
The Love of God  
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
Remain with us all  
Now and forever more.

**Amen**

