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## **EASTER 5C**

15th May 2022

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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## Opening Prayers

God,  
Who dwells among his people,  
Declares that there will be a new heaven and a new earth.

I am sorry for the times when I have forgotten to care for all you have given to me, all that you have placed in my care.

God, who chooses to be with your people,  
Promises that every tear will be wiped,  
There'll be no more mourning or death, crying or pain.

I silently name the losses I carry.

God, who promises that everything will be made new,  
The old shall pass away.

I hold onto the hope in your promises and trust in you,  
The Alpha and the Omega,  
The beginning and the end,  
The water of life.

Refresh me today, I pray.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

**You may now wish to say the Lord's prayer in a tradition or language that you find most helpful.**

### Hymn:

88 STF – Praise the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation - [YouTube](#)

**Readings:** Acts 11:1-18 – [Click for reading](#)  
John 13:31-35 – [Click for reading](#)

### Response to the readings

In this week's gospel reading, Jesus says to the disciples 'just as I have loved you, you also should love one another'. But, what does it mean to love one another as Jesus loves us? Throughout the gospels, we see that Jesus' love is practical. As he heals the sick, comforts the grieving and welcomes the isolated, Jesus meets people's needs. At the same time, he speaks powerfully about a future where no one has any need, and all people know that they are loved by God. For Jesus, loving people is about today and tomorrow.

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<sup>1</sup> Opening prayers written by Sheila Matthews

Just as Jesus invites the disciples to love one another, we are invited to show God's welcoming love to those around us. What does this look like today?

Between 2021-2022, The Trussell Trust provided more than 2.1 million food parcels to people across the UK. This is the first time that foodbanks in the Trussell Trust network have provided more than 2 million parcels, outside of the pandemic. As the cost of living rises, more and more people are being forced to turn for help just to get the basics.

What does it look like to love people struggling with the rising cost of living? If we love them as Jesus has loved us, what action should we take?

The Trussell Trust are calling on the UK government to take responsibility for the cost of living crisis, and to increase the amount of welfare support people receive. Alongside giving emergency support in the form of food parcels, they are asking the government to make sure that everyone has enough money to afford the essentials they need to eat, stay warm, dry and clean. They want to ensure that people not only have enough for today, but that we can work toward a future where everyone has a stable base to thrive.

This week, could you find out more about the work of the Trussell Trust, and sign their petition? They are asking people to join them in saying that people should not have to make impossible decisions just to survive. <sup>2</sup>

Find out more and sign the petition here: <https://www.trusselltrust.org/impossible-decisions>

### **Hymn:**

738 STF – There is a new heaven; there is a new earth - [YouTube](#)

### **Blessing**

God of all grace,  
I have received from you.  
Now I head out into the world, knowing that all I have is gift.  
May I use those gifts in your name.

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Response to the readings written by Hannah Brown from the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT)

<sup>3</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker

## Prayers and prayer pointers for the week

### Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May

- Today, we pick up on the reflection from JPIT and pray for all involved in delivering foodbanks around the country.
- Whilst giving thanks for all the hard work that goes into feeding people and helping to tackle hunger, let us also pray for justice to be done, such that one of the richest economies in the world could find a way to feed people without relying on churches, charities and volunteers.
- Come Lord Jesus, come.

### Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> May

- If you can, go on a prayer walk. Or ask someone to help you make a journey around your neighbourhood – just the few houses near you would be fine, or go on a longer trip if you'd like to take in a whole estate or community.
- As you travel past each house, pray for the people who live there – just in your mind, or under your breath. Hold their situations, whether you know them or not, in your heart.

### Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> May

- Today is international museum day, and whilst you might like to take the opportunity to visit a museum or give thanks for the museums near to you or that you have visited in the past; for your prayers, why not think about the stories from the past that affect your life. Stories of your local area, stories of how the industry you work (or worked) in have impacted others, stories about how the country you live in was formed and how we are all shaped by our family, cultural and national 'stories'.
- Your prayers could focus on thanksgiving for the shoulders you stand on, or sorrow for opportunities missed and injustices you feel complicit in. Or you may choose to spend the time reading and learning about your own history, or the history of your local church.

### Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May

- Why not spend some time in silent meditation today?
- You could set an alarm – perhaps for 10-15 minutes, and then finding somewhere comfortable, where you can sit and empty your mind.

If it helps, you could use the Headspace app or website, or a similar service, to help you focus on the meditation and get used to the idea of sitting in silence for a length of time.

- Is this a practice you could include in your daily spiritual life?

### **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May**

- On this day in 325AD, the First Council of Nicaea formally opened, marking what is generally recognised as the first ever ecumenical council of the Christian Church.
- There have been many more divisions and fallings out since, but the Church in UK and around the world continues to strive for better unity and to fulfil Christ's desire for us: 'that we all may be one'.
- Today we pray for Christian unity, of purpose if not of institution, that we might heal divisions, celebrate diversity and work together not against each other in demonstrating and sharing God's love in the world.

### **Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May**

- God of all blessings,  
Thank you for the gift of food to eat,  
For the flavours and the smells,  
The energy and enjoyment I can get from the food I eat.
- I'm sorry for all the times I've taken for granted the food on my plate, the ingredients in my fridge, the ready-meals in my freezer.  
And for all the other blessings I have received that I often overlook or forget to be thankful for.  
Amen.