

Welcome

WE PRAY

From our earliest days, O God,
You call us by name.
May we be attentive to your challenge,
make us eager to respond,
that, knowing your love and grace,
we may draw others to meet you. *Amen.*

*Forgive us when we are slow
to learn of you,
reluctant to walk your way,
hesitant to speak of your unfailing and
everlasting love
for all the world.*

Silence

Give us the assurance that our sins are forgiven,
that we are loved and trusted.
Help us make your love real to others.

*Generous God,
you pour out your love for us , again and again.
Generous God,
You promise to be with us, always.
Thanks be to God. Amen.*

WE READ GOD'S WORD

A Story of Promise and Hope

13¹⁻³ At about that same time Jesus left the house and sat on the beach. In no time at all a crowd gathered along the shoreline, forcing him to get into a boat. Using the boat as a pulpit, he addressed his congregation, telling stories.

3-8 “What do you make of this? A farmer planted seed. As he scattered the seed, some of it fell on the road, and birds ate it. Some fell in the gravel; it sprouted quickly but didn't put down roots, so when the sun came up it withered just as quickly. Some fell in the weeds; as it came up, it was strangled by the weeds. Some fell on good earth, and produced a harvest beyond his wildest dreams.

9 “Are you listening to this? Really listening?”

Or watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=guDeSYcwRYg>

Homily/Sermon/Talk

This story is a parable. Jesus told lots of parables many of which were about growth, learning and development. The most exciting thing about the parables Jesus told is that they described the Kingdom he came to announce – the gift of God's love which makes us into a community of those who are loved by God and called to love others.

This parable of the sower is about a farmer who scattered corn widely, again and again and again until some landed on soil in a place where it could grow and flourish and produce more seed and food.

Sometimes we have thought this story is about us being the kind of person where God's gifts can flourish in and produce a harvest. This is a disastrous interpretation. The parable is not about us, our character, our disposition. The parable's essential truth – the main point – is that God gives, again and again. The sower sows seed, again and again. God loves us. God is generous, is profligate, even wasteful with his seeds/love/. The seed is not measured out, weighed up, counted out,

restricted, limited or rationed. God's love is generous, wasteful, spread widely, is indiscriminate, without limit or bound, it is vast as an ocean with no shore. Such a gift can transform lives, communities, the world.

Try throwing seed – it will roll everywhere, you can't aim accurately, so you spread it widely, you do it generously, you do it with a big heart and an open hand. This is how we are loved by God. This is how we are to love.

God gives us seeds of promise, seeds of hope in the love God shows us in Jesus and invites us to show others, our neighbours, our communities, our world.

WE SING

1. The love of God comes close
where stands an open door,
to let the stranger in,
to mingle rich and poor.
The love of God is here to stay,
embracing those who walk the Way;
the love of God is here to stay.
2. The peace of God comes close
to those caught in the storm,
forgoing lives of ease
to ease the lives forlorn.
The peace of God is here to stay,
embracing those who walk the Way;
the peace of God is here to stay.
3. The joy of God comes close
where faith encounters fears,
where heights and depths of life
are found through smiles and tears.

The joy of God is here to stay,
embracing those who walk the Way;
the joy of God is here to stay.

4. The grace of God comes close
to those whose grace is spent,
when hearts are tired or sore
and hope is bruised and bent.
The grace of God is here to stay,
embracing those who walk the Way;
the grace of God is here to stay.

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WE PRAY

*Through our lives and by our prayers
Your Kingdom come.*

We pray for all children and young people in education, for those who are home educated and those who receive their education in schools, colleges and Universities. We remember those particularly who have just moved to a new school and those who attending school, college or University for the first time.

Silence

*Through our lives and by our prayers
Your Kingdom come.*

We pray for all who teach, for those who hold senior responsibilities and exercise leadership, and especially for Head teachers and Principals.

Silence

*Through our lives and by our prayers
Your Kingdom come.*

We pray for all who contribute to the life of schools by running extra-curricular groups, those who volunteer as Governors, and those who fundraise.

Silence

*Through our lives and by our prayers
Your Kingdom come.*

We pray for all administrative, support and ancillary staff in our schools, colleges and Universities.

Silence

*Through our lives and by our prayers
Your Kingdom come.*

We pray for our Chaplains, lay and ordained, in our schools, colleges and Universities.

Silence

*Through our lives and by our prayers
Your Kingdom come.*

We pray for all parents, especially for those who struggle with their responsibilities and those with few resources.

Silence

*Through our lives and by our prayers
Your Kingdom come.*

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*Give us all your strength and courage,
May we know your hope, and rely on your
promise to be with us, always. Amen.*

The Lord's Prayer (modern version)
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.

(New English Version)

WE SING

"Give to me, Lord, a thankful heart"

(words can be found in a number of hymn books including "Rejoice and Sing", and "Singing the Faith")

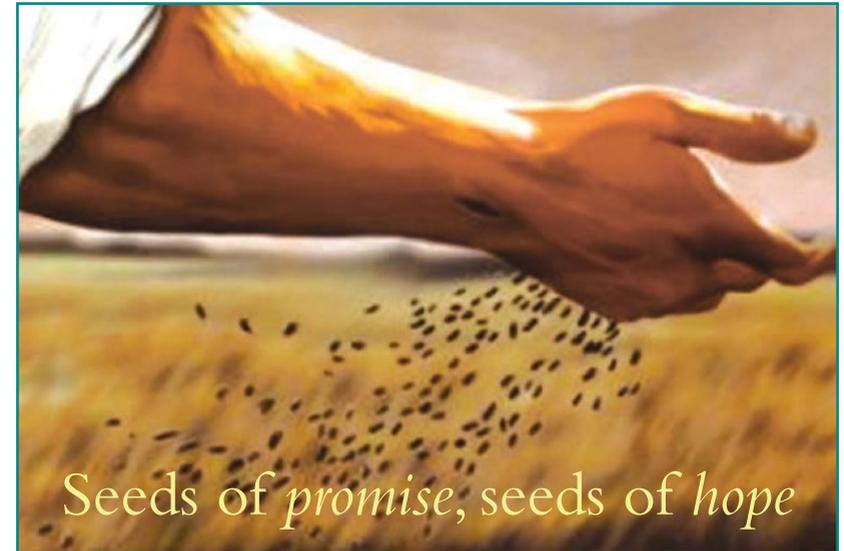
WE DEPART

May the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Spirit
Be with you all.
May you live and grow in the love of God.
Amen

*We go,
filled with hope
and sure of God's promise of abundant life.
We go,
to grow and flourish in the love of God,
and to bring life to others,
Thanks be to God. Amen*

Act of Commitment **(all standing)**

An Order of Service Outline



WE GATHER

Jesus, lead us to the Father,
by your Spirit, help us draw near.

As we come with awe and gladness,
help us draw near.

Alleluia, alleluia,
help us draw near.

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You might like to listen to the music version of this at...

http://www.resoundworship.org/song/jesus_lead_us_to_the_father

