

# starters for Sunday

## **Fourth Sunday in Lent**

**26 March 2017**

The Mission and Discipleship Council would like to thank Rev Margaret Whyte, retired Minister previously of Pollokshaws Parish Church, Glasgow, for her thoughts on the fourth Sunday in Lent.

### **Contents**

1 Samuel 16: 1-13.....	2
Psalm 23.....	3
Ephesians 5: 8-14 .....	4
John 9: 1-41 .....	5
Sermon Ideas .....	6
Lectionary Readings for Mothering Sunday .....	9
Sermon Ideas for Mothering Sunday .....	10
Illustration .....	11
Time with Children.....	12
Prayers.....	13
Musical Suggestions for Lectionary Passages .....	19
Musical Suggestions for Mothering Sunday .....	20
Additional Resources.....	21



## Quick Guide...

*Helping people prepare for reading the Bible in worship can make a real difference. Overcoming nerves, reading in ways suitable to the text, speaking clearly etc.*

You may wish to email these three links to the people reading Scripture on Sunday to support them in their involvement in worship: [Managing your nerves](#); [Creative readings](#); [Worship at the Lectern](#)

### [1 Samuel 16: 1-13](#)

**We have here the beginning of the colourful, rich and dramatic story of the reign of King David...** The people demanded a King from God, yet politically, the monarchy was needed to unite the diverse tribes of Israel after about 200 years of inhabiting Canaan. With the succession of David, Israel reached heights never seen again.

The story of Samuel selecting a new King had deep significance for the House of David and the people of Israel, but came with great tragedy for Saul. Samuel is reluctant to bring that dynasty to an end - having had the choosing of Saul, seeing him grow into a great king only for it all to end so badly, in madness, jealousy and defeat. Samuel's grief that Saul is now rejected by God and his prayers for Saul's physical and spiritual recovery shows the kindness and stature of Samuel. The cloak and dagger activity suggested by Yahweh to circumvent Saul's discovering that replacing him is afoot really hides Samuel's terror at having to bring about a coup. Samuel should not have shilly shalied; a successor to Saul was not only a decree from God but absolutely necessary for Israel's future security.

Some commentators suggest that this choosing of a new king was simply about one tribe taking over from another; that it was inter tribe and geographic rivalry, as Saul was a Benjaminite from Gibeah, north of Jerusalem and David a Judean from Bethlehem, in the south.

Samuel often travelled the country worshipping and making sacrifice in various places, and so it did not arouse suspicion that he arrived at Jesse's property. As each of the sons of Jesse are brought before him for ritual cleansing before the sacrifice, Samuel has to learn that God's ways are not our ways, that God's values and criteria are not ours. Each young man might have looked likely and suitable for kingship, but it was the youngest, David, the shepherd boy, in whom God's confidence would be placed for Israel. Jesse seemingly in ignorance of David's courage and



wisdom expresses that David is the least likely of his children. This part of the story may be exaggerated a bit by the writer to show clearly just how much God's favour is with David; unfit and ordinary he may be but with God's anointing he will become an extraordinary king and God will give him all he needs to take up this mammoth task as Israel's temporal and religious leader.

Interestingly I have read that for verse 1 where the Good News has "I have chosen" other versions say "I have provided a king..." and the Hebrew word for provided literally means "to see"!!! God says, "I have seen to it" or I have seen the peoples' needs for a king. God sees and knows all our needs. To spell it out linking into Jesus the Light of the World.

### [Psalm 23](#)

David the shepherd boy has been taken from the quiet sheep folds of his father's land to the highest position in the land, to rule over Israel. It is a lovely idea that David the shepherd boy who became Israel's greatest king, might have written what must be the best loved and best known of all the Psalms. However it is highly unlikely. One piece of evidence would be the use of the phrase "the house of the Lord" meaning the temple which was not built by David but by his son Solomon, after David's death.

Commentators also say that the very personal and individual spiritual feelings expressed here are more characteristic of the period of Israel's exile in Babylon and not of David's time five centuries earlier about 1,000BC. Psalms and prayers and worship would have tended to be a communal expression of the whole community of believers.

Not that that matters at all, because who has not been moved by this Psalm's simple imagery, found comfort and reassurance in times of trouble, and hope at the closing of a life? It does sound like the work of someone with experience though. It has a tone of quiet confidence, serenity and peace and expresses a faith born out of troubles and sorrows and strengthened by them.

The Psalm could be though, of a king looking back with grateful memories from the luxury of his beautiful palace, to the lush green valleys, and gentle streams where he led his flock and protected them from every danger. In faith he looks back but with equal faith he looks forward.



The God who had always been with him would go with him into whatever his future held beyond the grave.

The metaphor for God as the good shepherd is one that will run and run despite our modern day distance from farming as the unknown Psalmist celebrates the goodness and loving care of our God.

### [Ephesians 5: 8-14](#)

Just as there is some doubt about the author of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, the Letter to the Ephesians may or may not have been written by Paul. The jury is still out on that one, some commentators saying that it wasn't written until the 2<sup>nd</sup> Century AD. What matters is the message of eternal truths contained therein. It certainly contains many of the themes of Paul not the least our union with Christ Jesus and how we live in the knowledge of that.

The letter tries to carve a path for Christians on how they should live with the realities of paganism and the deep religiosity of pantheism.

The first half of the letter reads like a typical Jewish prayer of blessing of the time, found also in Paul's other letters. The last chapters are also typically Pauline where he is prescriptive about the way we live our lives and the type of behaviour and moral code we are expected to live by.

Some commentators suggest this was a cyclical letter to new communicants describing the behaviour that is expected of them; if so the earlier prayer must have been powerful stuff for the newly Baptised to hear, as it is for all of us. Though, if written in a time of persecution the words were designed to have strengthened the resolve of those who were under threat.

The writer draws a stark contrast between Christian and non-Christian behaviour expressed in terms of light and darkness. We are reminded of Jesus. "I am the light of the world" he tells the Pharisees in their Spiritual blindness (John 8: 12) and "the light for the world" in our Gospel for today. Jesus' own teaching in the Sermon on the Mount encourages his followers to be lights to the world. (Matthew 5: 14) Along with verse 9 sounding similar to the "fruits of the Spirit" in Philippians 5: 22-23, and verses 12 -13 echoing John 3: 19-21, could this open up the exciting prospect that the author (if not Paul) was familiar with Paul's other letters and the Gospels!



The author encourages his listeners to work towards a community of transparency, honesty, justice and goodness for after all they are all part of the same family, “the children of light.”

### [John 9: 1-41](#)

Jesus the Light of the World, opens the eyes of one born blind.

This long and convoluted chapter, though of a great story, controversy and healing, is a lot to hear at one sitting. After the initial story of healing the narrative jumps back and forth as this newly-sighted man and then his parents are interrogated by his neighbours and then by the Pharisees. Jesus disappears for much of the chapter only to reappear to elicit the man’s confession of faith and the confession of unbelief of the Pharisees, confirming their spiritual blindness.

Jesus healed several people of their blindness, relatively common in Jesus’ day. This man was born blind, while several diseases could cause blindness then, just as today.

The belief that there was a relationship between sickness and sin was a common one, and a source of great debate within Judaism, hence the disciples’ question to Jesus and the investigation by the Pharisees. Jesus ignoring the man’s blindness, its causes and the debate, shifts the focus by speaking of the purpose of his blindness.

The main reason for John telling this story is cited in verse 3 from Jesus’ own lips, “He is blind so that God’s power might be seen at work in him.” This is the reason for John writing his Gospel; that Jesus’ true nature as the son of God might be seen in the works of power he performed and that people will believe in him.

Here in this passage is one of the seven signs or works of power that are so important to John’s message. Unfortunately the Pharisees see this miracle as yet another challenge to their control over the people and in rejecting Jesus do not understand their own spiritual blindness. What is worse they refuse to believe that the man was healed by the power of God in Jesus and therefore are wilfully blind, in contrast to the man born blind who now sees the true nature of Jesus.

Jesus says he only does what the father does, which includes giving life and judgment (verse 39) so that the blind will see and those who can see will become blind; harking back to Isaiah and



Jesus' reading of this passage in the Synagogue. (Luke 4:16) As the Pharisees realise Jesus is getting at them, there is an altercation. They have not only doubted that he is the Messiah (revealed by the very act of healing a blind man as it is a sign of the Messianic age) but doubted what they can see with their own eyes – namely that a man who was born blind, can now see.

The healing of a blind man by Jesus is a major sign of his identity and highlights the significance of his coming.

## Sermon Ideas

**A** I heard a story that someone who entered the hotel room of the blind singer Ray Charles asked him without thinking, why he was shaving in the dark? “Brother,” Ray replied, good naturedly, “I do everything in the dark!”

John loved symbolism and used it throughout his Gospel. He often used the imagery of light and dark. In John 1 Jesus is “the light of men that shines in the darkness” etc etc. and 8:12 Jesus proclaims “I am the light of the World; those who follow me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

In verse 5 of this chapter Jesus declares, “While I am in the world, I am the light for the world.” Then the one who is the light proceeds to give light to the one who has lived in darkness all of his life and this man believes that Jesus is the Messiah. By way of contrast the Pharisees who think they can see, reject “The light of the World” and are left blind and in darkness in their unbelief.

We as Jesus' disciples are his Incarnation in our own day. We too are to be lights to the world as Matthew says (5:14) We live in a very dark world, our future since recent political decisions is increasingly uncertain, many still live with the uncertainties whether they will have a night free from bombs and snipers, or where their next meal is coming from. Many live in the darkness of spiritual poverty, while many are seeking for the light without direction from Christians.

Unlike another blind beggar – Bartimaeus who took the initiative and called out to Jesus to heal him, it is Jesus here who sees this blind man, and as we know he looked with compassion on all who were hurting, physically, mentally and spiritually, Jesus takes it



upon himself to heal this man and show the glory of God. This story show us the great need that our world which is a dark one, needs a saviour who can open blind eyes, but that we who have seen the light and know the light of the world, can carry his light into all the dark places of the world.

**B** The belief is still prevalent today that bad things happen to people because they deserve it; that some people's lives are blighted by troubles but it is because of their sin, because of their wrong doing. People still say, "I must have done something really bad for this to have happened to me." "Why is God punishing me, am I so bad?" My own sister who died a few years ago of Breast Cancer said the same thing to me time and again.

Yet we all know very well that calamities and disasters are no respecter of persons, these things happen to all, to the bad and the good, to the rich and to the poor alike. The sun not only shines on the righteous, but on the unrighteous too. The rain falls on all.

Are the many people around the world who die daily from natural disasters any worse a person than any other. The people who died in the Italian avalanches a few weeks ago were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Were the 16 Hungarian children killed in a bus crash in Italy a few days later guilty of heinous sins? Was anyone we know personally, cut down by cancer, a stroke or a heart attack, any worse a person than anybody else?

Jesus is quite adamant about this. "No," Says Jesus, "His blindness has nothing to do with his sins or his parent's sins." And Jesus in effect goes on to say that God uses these bad things to show his glory, "He is blind so that God's power might be seen at work in him." And notice Jesus doesn't try to answer the problem of the suffering of the innocent, for there is no easy answer. It is our experience though that God does bring something good out of the bad. Through research into the drugs my sister was given and the effects on the cancer, others might live, a cure will be found! And we became as close as any two sisters could ever be.

God doesn't want anyone to suffer; God doesn't want anyone to die! But he does want us to help to heal and to bring wholeness.



- C** There are those who deny the good they see happening around them, whether through meanness or jealousy. Jesus was criticised for healing a man. The man was criticized and bullied for being healed. The minister spends a time working in the schools in the parish – they are neglecting the elderly! The minister does a lot of work in the community – they are neglecting the church! We never please everybody but we must rejoice in any good thing whether it is in the church or out with, by Christian or non-Christian. There is so much that is good happening let's celebrate that.
- D** There are none so blind as those who cannot see. Often we cannot see what is under our noses – or like the Pharisees, do we not want to see? People in poverty in our own country struggling to make ends meet; those who have children and young ones with disabilities fighting a lone battle to get any help, especially from Government agencies and sometimes the Health Service, where a particular problem is to get away for a night out or a holiday; the plight of many of our older people, struggling with loneliness or unable to do the things they used to.

And of course there are those in poverty, living with dirty water and disease abroad, not forgetting those living with oppression, war and persecution.

Our Television screens are full of appeals for money and help but do we really see and act where God wants us to act and reach out with a healing, helping touch. Of course as preachers we are so often preaching to those who put love into practice and who do see what is under their noses.

As I was wrapping this up the BBC News included the item of Trump's Press Secretary belittling the Media for "lying" about the number of people who came to see Trump's inauguration as President. Despite the evidence of their own eyes there were far fewer people attending than there were at Obama's induction.

There are none so blind as those who will not see.



**E 1 Samuel 16: 1-13**

This passage as well as the one from John is to do with seeing (verse 1 see above) hearing and judging. Verse 7 God does not judge as others judge. One who was chosen to be king, was already ironically shepherding his flock.

1. Once more God is providing for his people just as he did in the wilderness with Manna and water and deliverance from Pharaoh. He is providing them with a king. God still provides. In the Ancient near East an image of the shepherd was a symbol for the king. One who was chosen to be king, was already ironically shepherding his flock. It is no coincidence of course that Jesus called himself the “Good Shepherd” who cares for his sheep; the one chosen, anointed and sent by God.
2. The ways of God - God sees on the inside not what is on the outside. It is what is in our heart that is important to God. We are so taken up with image and celebrity, how we look, what labels we wear, what car we drive. Advertisers bombard us with images of material things we want, rather than need. These things are not important to God. It is how we care for one another; it is how we love one another that is important to God. The text thousands of years old still speaks to our generation. I read somewhere that for the last hundred years or more the taller of the two candidates in the Presidential race to the White House has always won!

**Lectionary Readings for Mothering Sunday**

Lectionary Reading for today John 9: 1-41 with an alternative OT Reading  
or John 15: 5 – 17

1 John 4: 7 - 21

1 Samuel 1:20-28 Birth of Samuel

Isaiah 54:1-8 The Lord's Love for Israel

Psalm 46 God is With Us

Ephesians 5:25 to 6:4 Wives, Husbands, Children & Parents

John 13: 31-35 Love one another.

Mark 3:31-35 Jesus' Mother and Brothers

John 19:25-27 Mary at the foot of the Cross



"... I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also... from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 1: 5; 3: 15).

## Sermon Ideas for Mothering Sunday

Jesus said, I give you a new commandment, that you love one another.

Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.

Such love Jesus showed us by giving his life for us. That kind of sacrificial love is the kind I associate with mothers – not all of them, but the majority of mothers (and fathers too of course) put their children before everything.

As I write this my husband is watching the film *The Day after Tomorrow*. The world is in the grip of a second ice age. Everywhere in the Northern Hemisphere is freezing permanently. Denis Quad's son Sam is ice bound in New York. Denis Quad nearly sacrifices his own life by walking from Washington in sub-zero temperatures to save his son. Sam's mother, a Paediatrician (hoping and praying her husband will save her son) meanwhile stays at the bed-side of a very sick little child waiting for an ambulance to rescue them, nearly losing her own life in the process.

It is this kind of love, the love we see in Jesus, that is found in a Mother's love too and so we celebrate Mother's Day. We have to be sensitive of course because not everyone has experienced such love. It is always shocking when we hear of the abuse of children at the hands of mothers. A few years ago we prayed when a little boy from Edinburgh went missing, only to learn that his body was found and his mother arrested for his murder. These are all the more shocking because it seems unnatural. Mother's do not do these things. A Mother is love. Just like God is love. Yet we shouldn't allow these heart-breaking stories to deter us from celebrating Mother's Day and the love of God we see in our parents.

"Love one another." This was almost the last advice Jesus gave to his disciples, a special blessing before he is arrested, tried and killed. More than anything else, what he wants for them, is that they will love and be loved. It is of course Love that makes the world go round. There is nothing more important and finer. Without it many a little child has gone wrong and with it anything can



be achieved.” Without love I am nothing.” says Paul. “Love is patient and kind; it is not jealous or conceited or proud... love never gives up.”

Paul too was very good at giving his Churches advice and telling them what to do.

My Grandmother was a great one for advice. When she was sticking steel curlers in my hair and I was writhing in agony she would say, “Pride feels no pain.” She would also say – “Always keep your nose clean.” It took me years to realise exactly what she meant! That it wasn’t about boggies!

She was always quoting from the Bible “Trust in the Lord with all your heart.” Indeed she wrote that verse inside a bible she bought me for my 8<sup>th</sup> Birthday and it has always stuck. And she would say “Give generously and God will return it 3-fold.” She believed this and I know it came true for her regularly.

Advice our Mothers, Grannies, Dads give us sticks with us.

I canvassed a few people for words of wisdom from their Mothers.

Karen – “Always make sure you have a hanky with you and a clean pair of knickers.”

Tom’s Mother – Love many, trust few always paddle your own canoe.

Jeanette’s Gran, “Be good, but if you can’t be good, be careful.”

Faye’s Dad, “Live and let live.”

You could canvass others in the congregation.

What advice would you give?

You may have laughed at this kind of advice when it was first given, but we still remember at least some of it, we pass it on to the next generation, and love as that generation loved us.

## Illustration

At the Hairdressers, a lovely young girl cut my hair very expertly. And she told me this which I share with you today on Mother’s Day or Mothering Sunday. Her mother had died when she was just 6 years old. An only child, she was brought up by her father who lost touch with her mother’s sister who then moved to Manchester and they lost contact completely for 20 years.



Two years ago on the anniversary of her mother's death, she went as usual to visit her mother's grave. It had been a terribly wet and blustery day, but as she drew near to the grave-side the sun came out and illuminated, like a spotlight something white lying secured on top of the grave. She picked it up and it was a letter encased in polythene to keep it dry. And this was a letter from her mother's sister Aunty Mary asking her to get in touch. She said she couldn't read the letter for tears but caught the words. I love you. She did get in touch and has discovered a whole new extended family from when before she and her father were alone.

On Mothering Sunday we think of love – the love of our God who is the best of all parents

## Time with Children

### Origins of Mother's Day

In many European countries, the fourth Sunday in Lent is set aside as a special day to honour mothers.

In England, Mothering Sunday originally had a different meaning. It was the day when church-goers in outlying villages and hamlets would make the journey to the mother church of the parish, taking their offerings. By the sixteenth century, when many young girls worked as servants in the homes of the rich, Mothering Sunday had become a holiday when they were allowed home to visit their families.

To prove their newly-acquired skills in the kitchen, they would bake a cake to present proudly to their mothers. It was called a Simnel cake, probably from the Latin word *simila*, a fine wheaten flour.

The cake was usually made with a rich mixture, filled with plums, lemon peel and other tasty ingredients. It had to last until Easter, as it couldn't be eaten until after Lent had passed.

If a girl had a sweetheart, Mothering Sunday was the day to bring him home for mother's approval. In this case it was the man's responsibility to provide the mothering cake.

In modern times, Mother's Day was introduced and is still kept in America and Australia on the second Sunday in May.



The idea is attributed to Anna Jarvis of Philadelphia who, in 1907, suggested an annual day for mothers should be kept. At a church service people were asked to wear a carnation in honour of their mother. The custom soon became known and spread to other places.

I heard about a mother who was awakened at 6.30 this morning by her son and daughter bringing her breakfast in bed. She complained about the Burnt toast...they had watched carefully all week and as she had burnt toast every day, thought this must be the way she liked it!!!

### **What is a mother?**

Who does all the things you don't like doing or can't be bothered doing?

Cooks all your favourite foods and some things you don't like because she knows what is best for you?

Puts her hand in her purse when your credit has run out with everyone else?

Does things for you that no one else would do, like wash your smelly socks?

Someone who loves you, and loves you more than she loves herself.

**Prayer with children** – give thanks for the things their mothers' do for them!

## **Prayers**

### **Collect for Mother's Day**

God of Grace: in Your wisdom You made man and woman to be one in flesh in love. And through that love you have given us families, who have raised us to be like you. As in Jesus Christ You came to serve us, let husbands and wives, parents and children, serve each other, putting aside selfishness and separate rights. May we build homes where there is free welcome. At work or in leisure, let our families, both near and far, enjoy each other, forgive each other, and embrace each other faithfully, serving the Lord of love, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

### **Call to Worship**

There is a place, shaped for the lost, a place that knows your name and calls you home; Love's homecoming place.



There is a place shaped for us who have never left, a place that waits and longs for each return;  
Love's homecoming place.

### **Call to Worship**

We come to see Jesus

We come to hear his word

We come to worship

We gather to praise his name...

### **Opening Prayer**

Most Gracious Lord, Master, Messiah and Saviour,  
we greet you with all humility.

You are the first and the last,  
the divine light and the spirit of guidance, alpha and omega.

Your light is in all things, Your love in all beings:

in a loving mother, a kind father,

in an innocent child, in a helpful friend,

and in an inspiring teacher.

Allow us to recognize you in all Your holy names and forms.

May the message of God reach far and wide,

illuminating and making the whole of humanity

as one single family in the parenthood of God. Amen.

### **Opening Prayers**

The whole of Creation shouts its adoration, to You our God;  
our glorious world proclaims your power and love.

Every tree and flower tells of your might, the stars, the sun and moon, the changing seasons, of  
your amazing care of us.

What are we that you are mindful of us, what is humankind that you care for us so much.



What a gracious, faithful God You are, that Your love for us is new every morning and we awake to a new start as your new creations, ready to soar and fly, free from past mistakes and difficulties.

We thank you for this gift of creation, the gift of life, the gift of our lives,

we thank you also for the faculties which enable us to enjoy it;

our eyes to see the wonders of your world,

our ears to hear speech and the sound of music,

our lips with which to talk and sing,

our hands for working and our feet for walking.

Make us daily grateful for all your gifts and help us to use them all for your glory.

Forgive our neglect of you, our world and our neighbours.

Help us build a place of love, kindness, honesty, truthfulness and faith;

a touching place where we can all catch hold of your vision for us and your world; where everyone is gathered in.

Help us always to do what is right, to think what is right, and to say what is right, for the benefit of ourselves, those we come into contact with, and for you our Creator, through Jesus Christ

## **Prayer**

God of all Living and Loving:

How pleasant it is when women, men, and children live together in unity!

How noble is your creation and the world that you have made!

How blessed we are to receive the gifts of life and love!

We are thankful for families,

where scattered piles of stuff testify that we live fully in the moment;

where the noise of laughter and the silence of sadness are freely shared;

We are thankful for families,

where we find sanctuary from danger and judgment;

where words of love and openness are the rule of life.



We are thankful for families,  
where our differences are the spices of life;  
where our unity is something that we can always take for granted.

We grieve for families,  
where violence and rejection are living realities;  
where hearts are broken, and dreams are shattered.

We grieve for families,  
where walls of protection become fortresses of isolation,  
where language is a weapon of destruction and hate.

Help us to understand,  
those families whose identities are different from ours;  
the ways of loving, parenting, partnering and working together for peace.

Help us to dare,  
to stand strongly against hate and divisiveness;  
to encounter our differences with love and respect.

This we believe:  
that love is stronger than hate;  
that hope is stronger than despair,  
and that good is stronger than evil.  
In the name of the One who is Loving and Living, Amen.

### **Prayers of Intercession**

*Based on Man Born Blind*

We have learned today of the healing of blindness and the intransigent blindness of the Pharisees.

We may feel superior that we are not like them yet there are times when we close our eyes rather than see clearly what is around us.



When self-centredness blinds us to the wreckage of human problems  
and stubbornness blinds us to the troubles of our brothers and sisters;  
Jesus, Light of the world, lighten our darkness.

When we turn away so we cannot see the inequalities where we have so much while others live in  
poverty, Lord Jesus Light of the world, lighten our darkness.

There are many diseases around the world that it is a disgrace that with funds available could be  
healed, blindness caused by drinking dirty water in Africa and cataract removal operations  
which quickly and easily restore sight.

Areas where the light of Christ is being extinguished by persecution and violence.

Help those who live in the darkness of unbelief, disillusionment and hopelessness to come to the  
light of Christ.

We see the generosity of your grace and mercy

and we bring to you something a small part of all you have given us, give to us a generous heart  
and spirit as we dedicate both our offerings and our hearts that we may serve you and your  
church

As you touched the eyes of the man born blind touch us with your love that we may touch others.

Bless our families and our homes and any we name before you in the silence of our hearts...

Gracious and loving God, we believe, help our unbelief, Amen

### **Prayers of Intercession for Mothering Sunday**

Loving God, you who are both Mother and father to us,  
in this time of prayer we thank you for your love.

We thank you for Jesus who taught us of your all-encompassing parents' love;  
the love that waits with anxiety for us to return home;  
the love that also runs down the road to gather us in your arms;  
the love that searches until we are found; that loved us so much you sent us Jesus.

We thank you that we are your children, called by name, called even before we were formed in  
our mother's womb, called into your world-wide family, where there is such diversity, such  
individuality, such creativity, such beauty.



We ask that rejoicing in the diversity of humankind, we might always love as Jesus loved us; that we might always appreciate others of different faith and cultures, asking pardon for the times when we have failed you in love.

Remembering the world wide family we are so much part of, we pray for places around the world...

We give you thanks for our own families, remembering especially our own mothers or those who stood in her place who took care of us, who met our needs, not only nurturing our bodies, but also in love and security.

For the love of those who are still with us and for the love that is in your nearer presence we give you thanks.

And knowing the imperfect nature of human kind, where there may a need of forgiveness that you would forgive and help us to forgive.

For mothers at the start of the adventure of motherhood that you will give them all they need.

For mothers who are stretched in patience and love, who find things hard, with too much to do and not enough time to it, with babies who don't sleep, or children with special gifts, running out of energy and patience

For mothers whose children do not have clean water, or enough food to eat, or proper medication;

For mothers experiencing miscarriage or babies still born, or those unable to have children, that their motherly natures would be used in nurturing others.

Loving God, in You we find life, health, and strength.

Through Your gifts we have everything we need and so we bring our offerings to you. Take them and use them and use our all our good intentions for the growth of your kingdom on earth.

In Jesus' name Amen

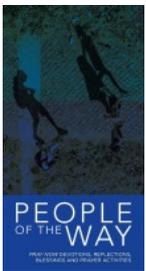


## Sending

Go out into the world, to fulfil your calling as the people of God in this place. May you know the joy of God who found you, the love of Christ who redeemed you and the peace of the Holy Spirit who gifted you to do God's work, both now and forever more...

## Sending

May you always find the way home, May you know your place is always kept. May you know God's abundant hospitality is yours and the God whose love it is prepares a feast to celebrate your homecoming... And the grace...



In addition to the above prayers, prepared by our contributor, other prayers may be found in *People of the Way* which is the theme for this year's Pray Now. It was also the theme for Heart and Soul 2016. *People of the Way* is available from [St Andrew Press](#).

## Musical Suggestions for Lectionary Passages

CH4 17	Sing to the Lord a joyful song Hallelu halleluja Praise ye the Lord.
CH4 278	Ye servants of God
CH4 13	Praise my soul the king of heaven
CH4 243	Rejoice the Lord is king
CH4 14	The Lord's my Shepherd
CH4 462	The king of love my Shepherd is..
CH4 464	Though hope desert my heart
CH4 135	O laughing light
CH4 725	Today I live
CH4 764	God has made laughter for me



CH4 555	Amazing grace
CH4 352	O for a thousand tongues
CH4 168	God weeps
CH4 345	Halle halle halle
CH4 616	There's a spirit in the air
CH4 800	Send me lord
CH4 748	Through saints we glimpse the light of Christ
CH4 543	Longing for light
CH4 551	In heavenly love abiding
CH4 720	There is a longing in our hearts

### **Musical Suggestions for Mothering Sunday**

CH4 165	Praise to the Lord for the joys of the earth
CH4 181	For the Beauty of the earth
CH4 528	Make me a channel of your peace
CH4 724	Christ's is the world in which we move...
CH4 519	Love Divine
CH4 764	God has made laughter for me
CH4 168	God weeps



## Additional Resources

### Resourcing Mission



[Resourcing Mission](#) is host to Starters for Sunday and other key mission resources for download and purchase. Online booking is available for [Mission & Discipleship events](#). Please check back regularly, as new items are being added all the time. If there is something you'd like to see on this new site, please [contact us](#) via the website.

### Prayer Resources

These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might look for in prayers. [People of the Way](#) is available from [St Andrew Press](#).



### Music Resources

The hymns mentioned in this material are ideas of specific hymns you might choose for this week's themes. However, for some excellent articles on church music and ideas for new music resources, please check out our online music pages [Different Voices](#).

### Preaching Resources



These materials are designed to be a starting point for what you might preach this Sunday. [Preachers Perspectives](#) is a resource where we have asked twelve preachers to share the insights they have gathered through their experiences of writing and delivering sermons regularly.

### Scots Worship Resources

[The Kirk's Ear](#) - Scots in the Kirk series for Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and other times of the year

[Wurship Ouk bi Ouk](#) - Metrical psalms, hymns, prayers and words for worship

[Scots Sacraments](#) may give you helpful material if you are celebrating Communion or have a Baptism.

*The Mission and Discipleship Council would like to express its thanks to the Rev Margaret Whyte for providing us with this Sunday's material.*

*Please note that the views expressed in these materials are those of the individual writer and not necessarily the official view of the Church of Scotland, which can be laid down only by the General Assembly.*

