

Opening words

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. I come to worship the Lord, the holy God, let my soul be restored.

Hymn – The Lord's my shepherd

- 1 The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
he makes me lie in pastures green,
he leads me by the still, still waters,
his goodness restores my soul.
*And I will trust in you alone,
and I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.*
- 2 He guides my ways in righteousness,
and he anoints my head with oil;
and my cup — it overflows with joy,
I feast on his pure delights.
- 3 And though I walk the darkest path —
I will not fear the evil one,
for you are with me, and your rod and staff
are the comfort I need to know.

Stuart Townend (b. 1963)

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Prayer

Jesus, my shepherd, holy and anointed one – as I approach you here today, open my eyes to see you, and heart that I may grow in faith. As I come before your throne, take away my blindness, Lord. Open my eyes that I might truly see you: my shepherd, my comforter, my redeemer. **Amen.**

A prayer of confession

God of grace, forgive the blindness that stops me from seeing the best in people, assuming that I am always right, so others must be wrong.

Forgive the blindness that sometimes makes me regard some people as inferior,
or when I haven't allowed them a point of view because of disability or status.

Forgive my blindness to poverty, to prejudice, to injustice.

Forgive my blindness when I see people as 'nobodies'.

Forgive me, Lord, and open my eyes to wonder and to possibilities, to relationships and to community. **Amen.**

May almighty God have mercy on me, forgive me my sins, and keep me in life eternal. **Amen.**

Lord God, whose blessed Son our Saviour gave his back to those who struck him and did not hide his face from shame: give us grace to endure the sufferings of this present time with sure confidence in the glory that shall be revealed; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Ephesians 5.8-14

John 9.1-41

Time for Reflection on the Readings

Prayers of intercession

Light of the world, I pray for those who suffer prejudice because of any kind of disability – physical, emotional, social or mental: help me to recognise my prejudices and to treat all people equally. Open my eyes that I might see.

I pray for all who work for a fairer and more just society, where all can be free to live, no matter what their circumstances. Open my eyes that I might see.

I pray for all who walk in darkness, with no light and little hope: may they know the joy that only you can bring. Open my eyes that I might see.

Heal those who mourn, suffering loss and sadness; those who are alone, rejected by family and friends; those who are outcasts in our society. Lord, show me how to be an instrument of your healing. Open my eyes that I might see. Amen

Hymn – Lord the light of your love is shining

- 1 Lord, the light of your love is shining,
in the midst of the darkness, shining:
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us;
set us free by the truth you now bring us —
shine on me, shine on me.
*Shine, Jesus, shine,
fill this land with the Father's glory;
blaze, Spirit, blaze,
set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,
flood the nations with grace and mercy;
send forth your word,
Lord, and let there be light!*
- 2 Lord, I come to your awesome presence,
from the shadows into your radiance;
by your blood I may enter your brightness:
search me, try me, consume all my darkness —
shine on me, shine on me.
- 3 As we gaze on your kingly brightness
so our faces display your likeness,
ever changing from glory to glory:
mirrored here, may our lives tell your story —
shine on me, shine on me.

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

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A prayer to end

May I take the light of Christ with me into this day, and share it, that all may have the opportunity to see. Almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, bless me and keep me, now and always.
Amen.