

A month of Sundays January 2024



Preston Ribble Circuit

Ministry Team

Sunday 7th January 2024

Call to worship

It all begins here!

We begin a new day, a new week, a new year.

Let us begin again by listening and looking for God's Spirit,
and expecting God's light to shine in dark places.

Bible reading: Psalm 29

A psalm of David.

¹ Ascribe to the LORD, you heavenly beings,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

² Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
worship the LORD in the splendour of his holiness.

³ The voice of the LORD is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the LORD thunders over the mighty waters.

⁴ The voice of the LORD is powerful;
the voice of the LORD is majestic.

⁵ The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;
the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.

⁶ He makes Lebanon leap like a calf,
Sirion like a young wild ox.

⁷ The voice of the LORD strikes
with flashes of lightning.

⁸ The voice of the LORD shakes the desert;
the LORD shakes the Desert of Kadesh.

⁹ The voice of the LORD twists the oaks
and strips the forests bare.

And in his temple all cry, "Glory!"

¹⁰ The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;
the LORD is enthroned as King forever.

¹¹ The LORD gives strength to his people;
the LORD blesses his people with peace.

Hymn Stf 181: Of the Father's love begotten

- 1 Of the Father's love begotten
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega,
he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore.
- 2 By his word was all created;
he commanded, it was done;
earth and sky and boundless ocean,
universe of three in one;
all that sees the moon's soft radiance,
all that breathes beneath the sun,
evermore and evermore.
- 3 This is he whom seers in old time
chanted of with one accord,
whom the voices of the prophets
promised in their faithful word;
now he shines, the long-expected;
let creation praise its Lord,
evermore and evermore.
- 4 O you heights of heaven, adore him;
angel hosts, his praises sing;
all dominions, bow before him,
and extol our God and King;
let no tongue on earth be silent,
every voice in concert sing,
evermore and evermore!

Aurelius Clemens Prudentius (348–c. 413)

translated by John Mason Neale (1811–1866) and Henry Williams Baker (1821–1877)

Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 181 .

Prayers of intercession

Eternal God, it feels as if the whole world has changed and yet in you there is stability and the opportunity of a new beginning.

So, we pray now for those whose lives are in turmoil, those whose lives have been turned upside down, those who feel lost.

May they feel supported, find fresh hope,
and use our prayers in Jesus' name to strengthen them.

We pray for those for whom the lockdown has come as a relief, for those who now feel safer,
but we pray too for those who now feel desperate, alone and worried about their jobs, their finances, their mental health.

May they feel supported, find fresh hope:
Lord, use our prayers in Jesus' name to strengthen them.

We pray for children and young adults as their schooling is disrupted,

we pray for those who enjoy learning from home, but pray too for those who will lose confidence, who miss their friends, who feel vulnerable.

We remember their parents and the parents of children with special needs, struggling to cope on their own.

We pray for teachers, administrative staff, and all those who feel overwhelmed.

May they feel supported, find fresh hope:
Lord, use our prayers in Jesus' name to strengthen them.

We pray for the people of a divided America at this time of political and racial tension and transition, for outgoing President Donald Trump and President-elect Joe Biden.

We pray too for countries around the world struggling with ethnic violence and militancy.

We remember the people of West Africa
and in particular the people of Niger, villagers who live in fear,
those who have been wounded in recent attacks
and those who have been bereaved.

May they feel supported, find fresh hope:

Lord, use our prayers in Jesus' name to strengthen them.

We pray for those who have been injured
or lost their homes and loved ones in the severe weather,
remembering particularly the people of Norway affected by
landslides,

and those in Australia battered by cyclones.

We pray for those who work in the emergency services,
those whose work is dangerous and traumatic.

We pray for those in refugees camps
with little protection from the weather,

those who sleep rough,

those who can't afford to heat their homes.

May they feel supported, find fresh hope:

Lord, use our prayers in Jesus' name to strengthen them.

We pray for one another, our families,
our communities, our church fellowships.

May we support those who are unwell or grieving.

May we bring fresh hope to those who feel forgotten and are
vulnerable,

and may we – both practically and prayerfully – share our faith
in your Son Jesus in whose name we entrust these prayers to
you.

Amen.

Reflection

‘Blah, blah, blah!’ Who would have thought that these three
words – are they even words? – would be the start of a serious
challenge to a group of powerful politicians and world leaders?
The young Greta Thunberg was referring to a series of climate
change conferences, suggesting that they were ‘just talk’ and
that serious action should be taken before it was too late. ‘Blah,

blah, blah!’ was no use when serious, far-reaching, action was needed. The courage and foresight of this young girl was and is a catalyst for action.

Over the centuries people have spoken words or carried out actions that have triggered action or new movements. The civil rights movement in America was triggered and strengthened by the actions of people such as Rosa Parks, the woman who refused to sit in the area designated for black people on a bus; or in the powerful words of Martin Luther King in his speech ‘I have a dream’. That might remind us of the words of another Martin Luther, generations earlier, who said, ‘Here I stand, I can do no other’, triggering the reformation with his words and actions.

The ultimate example, of course, is the ‘wind from God, sweeping over the face of the waters’ dividing light from darkness and bringing order from chaos – the word and breath of God in action. This week’s Psalm offers other examples of the power of the voice of God: ‘The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness’, ‘The God of glory thunders’, ‘May the Lord bring peace to his people’.

There is much ‘stirring up’ in the pages of the Bible, such as the story of John the Baptist. He certainly stirred things up, and paid the ultimate price for it. He proclaimed a new start, with people acknowledging their wrongdoing and turning their lives around – beginning again. He announced the coming of Jesus who would bring another new start through his death and resurrection, and the sending of the Holy Spirit. The effects of this were seen by and in the people whom Paul baptized in Corinth; and the effects are seen in people today, filled with and stirred up by the Holy Spirit.

Action and stirring to action are the name of the game when God’s Spirit moves. And there is just as much need today for us to look out for signs of God’s spirit ‘moving over the waters’ and bringing new life and new beginnings. Let it never be said of us that we are just ‘Blah, blah, blah!’

Say the Lord's Prayer

A sending out prayer

Help us to look for you, Lord, around every corner,
in every place and at every time.

Help us to be in tune with new things you are doing,
and help us to join in.

Amen.

Sunday 14th January 2024

Call to worship

God reaches out to us in so many ways,
in beauty around us and silence within,
stirring us to action or helping us wait.
Let us reach out to God now
and give ourselves space to see, feel and hear the call.

Bible readings: Psalm 139: 1-6, 13-18

- ¹ You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.
- ² You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
- ³ You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
- ⁴ Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.
- ⁵ You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.
- ⁶ Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.
- ¹³ For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
- ¹⁴ I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.
- ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.
- ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.

¹⁷ How precious to me are your thoughts, God!
How vast is the sum of them!

¹⁸ Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.

John 1:43-51

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.”

⁴⁴ Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

⁴⁶ “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked.

“Come and see,” said Philip.

⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here truly is an Israelite in whom there is no deceit.”

⁴⁸ “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked.

Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”

⁴⁹ Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the king of Israel.”

⁵⁰ Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You will see greater things than that.” ⁵¹ He then added, “Very truly I tell you, you will see ‘heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on’ the Son of Man.”

Reflection

Even whistles at different pitches or a wave of the hand can mean a particular command to a sheep dog. For a sheep dog to operate successfully there is a partnership and trust based on years of training and a relationship between animal and owner. The commands may be difficult sometimes, but the owner knows the strengths and weaknesses of the animal and knows its capabilities. If the dog is young and inexperienced, the owner will maybe work the dog alongside a more experienced animal, and will not push a younger animal too hard. The trust and affection between dog and handler is something beautiful to see, and is very effective in achieving the desired result. If the owner were simply to shout commands at the dog, without the partnership between them, the results would mean a scattering rather than gathering or directing of the sheep. And we might also note that not all commands are for action. Sometimes a dog needs to wait for the next call. Rushing ahead could mean the opposite result from that required.

This week's psalm tells in detail how God knows and understands us: 'O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.' It is reassuring that God knows and understands us before he calls us. He wants to work in partnership with us and doesn't leave us all alone to do the task. And importantly, of course, there are others in partnership with him too, with whom we can work.

Nathanael appears in our Gospel reading, with his calling being given an important place in Matthew's Gospel. But we do not hear of Nathanael later in the Gospel; he was not one of the 12 apostles. His calling and tasks were in line with God's care and knowledge of him. It is interesting that Jesus knew about him. He had even seen him sitting under the fig tree before they met! When we hear God's call to us 'Go by!', 'Come back!' or 'Sit!', we are being called to the task by one who knows and loves us so we can have confidence when we follow him.

Hymn StF 489: All I once held dear

1 All I once held dear,
built my life upon,
all this world reveres,
and wars to own,
all I once thought gain
I have counted loss;
spent and worthless now,
compared to this.
*Knowing you, Jesus,
knowing you,
there is no greater thing.
You're my all, you're the best,
you're my joy, my righteousness,
and I love you, Lord.*

2 Now my heart's desire
is to know you more,
to be found in you
and known as yours.
To possess by faith
what I could not earn,
all-surpassing gift
of righteousness.

3 Oh, to know the power
of your risen life,
and to know you in
your sufferings.
To become like you
in your death, my Lord,
so with you to live
and never die.

Graham Kendrick (*b.* 1950)

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Prayers of intercession

Come and see,
and join in praying for the people of the world waiting to hear
good news.

Loving God, we pray for the states of America to be united in
the days and weeks ahead.

We pray for an end to violence, for wisdom and protection for
President-elect Joe Biden and all who will take office in a few
days' time. We pray for those threatening to disrupt the
inauguration, and for the police force and those entrusted with
keeping the law and peace.

Lord, hear our prayer and draw us all closer to you.

We pray for those around the world at the mercy of extreme
weather conditions.

We pray for the people of Japan, of Indonesia, especially those
rescue workers who died trying to save others, for those
bereaved in the plane crash, for those in our own country
without power and heat. We pray for those tackling the climate
change challenges of our time and for our own response in our
day to day lives.

Lord, hear our prayer and draw us all closer to you.

We pray for all who are pushed to their limits at work and at
home, for Intensive Care Staff, for all in the emergency
services, for GP's, teachers and school staff, for parents and
students, for all whose mental health is at breaking point. We
pray for our Government and all whose decisions affect millions
of lives. And we pray for one another as we respond to the
restrictions locally and nationally.

Lord, hear our prayer and draw us all closer to you.

We pray for those whose businesses are closed, whose shops
are locked up, whose rooms have no guests, for those whose
money is running out, for those on the brink of despair.

Lord, hear our prayer and draw us all closer to you.

We pray for your church, entrusted with the good news of Jesus, and charged with serving all those in need. We pray for hospital chaplains, for those ministering to the bereaved, and for one another as we seek to share our faith and our hope in Jesus Christ.

Lord, hear our prayer and draw us all closer to you. Amen.

Say the Lord's Prayer

A sending out prayer

So now we go out with confidence in you,
our loving God who leads us;
you know our weaknesses and our strengths.

**Lord, call us, guide us,
and strengthen us in your service.
Amen.**

Sunday 21st January 2024

A gathering prayer

Lord, sometimes the only reward we have for responding to your call is to know that it is what you will. Give us courage and strength to do the harder things, and may we find joy in serving you in all things.

Amen.

Hymn Stf

- 1 And can it be that I should gain
an interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died he for me, who caused his pain?
For me, who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
- 2 'Tis mystery all: the Immortal dies!
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
to sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
let angel minds enquire no more.
- 3 He left his Father's throne above —
so free, so infinite his grace —
emptied himself of all but love,
and bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
for, O my God, it found out me!
- 4 Long my imprisoned spirit lay
fast bound in sin and nature's night;
thine eye diffused a quickening ray —

I woke, the dungeon flamed with light,
my chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

5 No condemnation now I dread ;
Jesus, and all in him, is mine !
Alive in him, my living Head,
and clothed in righteousness divine,
bold I approach the eternal throne,
and claim the crown, through Christ, my own.

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 345

A prayer of adoration

God of the weak and the strong, you turn reluctance into resilience, for you are faithful. **Amen.**

You turn listening into learning, for you are wise. **Amen.**

You turn diffidence into daring, for you are gracious. **Amen.**

You turn failure into fruitfulness, for you are gracious. **Amen.**

You turn obstacles into opportunities, for you are creative. **Amen.**

You turn never into now, for you are timeless, and we worship you.

Amen.

Say the Lord's Prayer

Bible readings: Jonah 3:1-5

Jonah Goes to Nineveh

3 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: ²“Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.”

³ Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go

through it. ⁴ Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." ⁵ The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

Bible readings: Mark 1:14-20

Jesus Announces the Good News

¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵ "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

¹⁶ As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. ²⁰ Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Reflection

The Walt Disney film *Moana* is a musical action adventure film, based on a legend from a Polynesian Island. It is the story of an adventurous teenager who is inspired to leave the safety and security of her Island, to go on a daring journey to save her people. In doing so she helps the islanders rediscover their destiny as an exploring, adventurous people. Moana's poignant song shows how she thinks deeply about what is expected of

her on the island, and yet feels that she must follow the urgent 'call' of the sea. Here are some of the lines from the song;

See the line where the sky meets the sea?

It calls me

And no one knows

How far it goes...

See the light as it shines on the sea?

It's blinding but no one knows

How deep it goes...

What's beyond that line?

Will I cross that line?

One day I'll know

How far I'll go...

In our Christian life, there's always an element of not knowing where the call of God will lead us – it's in the future, after all. Little did Andrew, Peter, James and John know what the future would be as they answered Jesus' call to follow him. They trusted him, and saw the person who called them for who he was – at least some of the time! The Iona song 'O where are you going and can I come with you' (from *Heaven Shall not Wait*) shows this sense of uncertainty and the trust necessary to follow Jesus. The answer to the question is:

I'm going on a journey and welcome companions...

Just join me in travelling and learn all I know.

So how far will we go in answering the call of God? Are we prepared to do difficult things or live with some uncertainty? Will we expect a reward or thanks for what we do? Or is it reward enough to know we are answering God's call? The 'Prayer for Generosity' (attributed to Ignatius Loyola) suggests the idea of labouring and not asking for 'any reward, save that of knowing that we do thy will'.

We have one big advantage over Moana, of course. We can know and trust the one who is calling us.

Prayers of intercession

God of the past and of the future,
we bring to you in prayer those people and places on our
hearts today:

We remember the parts of the world
where people are being killed, oppressed and displaced.
We pray especially for the people of Tigray in Ethiopia,
for the people of Dafur in the Sudan,
for the Uighur peoples in China.
May those in power leave behind violence and follow your call
to peace.

Amen.

Lord Jesus, you called fisherman as they worked,
so we pray for fisherman today as they struggle to make a
living.

We pray for all those who work to bring food to our table
as they struggle with the complexities of legislation and the
challenges of extreme weather.

And may those who exploit or abuse leave behind cruelty and
follow your call to compassion.

Amen.

We pray for all young people caught up in and trapped by gang
violence,

for those who have been stabbed or shot and for their families,
for those who live in fear of being attacked,
for those who have been imprisoned, who have committed
murder – and for their families,
for all those who carry weapons.

Help them to leave behind despair and to follow your call to
hope.

Amen.

We pray for the people of America as Joe Biden begins his
term as President,
and for Kamala Harris and all those entrusted with the

responsibility
of re-shaping and re-uniting the states that make up that vast
nation,
so divided by race and politics and so ravaged by Covid.
Help them to leave behind ambition and to follow your call to
serve.

Amen,

We pray for one another,
for our church families, our communities, and our loved ones,
for those who feel overwhelmed by the challenges of each day,
for those adapting to new ways of living,
for those who are ill,
for those close to death,
for those who are grieving.
Help us all to leave behind all that separates us from you and
from one another
and to follow your call to trust and to love –
in Jesus' name.

Amen.

A sending out prayer

Lord, some things you ask us to do are right up our street.
Some are more tricky.
Some can be downright difficult.
Help us grow in love for you,
and in confidence and trust,
so that we really want to do them for you – and do!

Amen.

Sunday 28th January 2024

A gathering prayer

God, thank you that we do not have to seek you on our own. As the people who gathered in crowds and synagogues recognised together the authority of Jesus, so may we work together as a community to recognise your voice in our worship and our lives. **Amen.**

Bible reading: Mark 1:21-28

Jesus Drives Out an Impure Spirit

²¹ They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²² The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. ²³ Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, ²⁴ “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”

²⁵ “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” ²⁶ The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

²⁷ The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” ²⁸ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

Reflection

This week's reading from Mark tells us that the people who heard Jesus teach in the Capernaum synagogue 'were astounded at his teaching.' 'Astounded' is a very strong word. When were you last astounded by the teaching you heard in church? What on earth did Jesus say to create this effect? The problem is, the Gospel reading doesn't tell us. Are we supposed to know from what we have read so far? But this is only chapter one! Did the first readers already know from what they'd heard about Jesus elsewhere? Or were the hearers astounded not so much by what was said as by the manner in which it was said?

We are not told about Jesus' words, but about how he spoke them: 'as one having authority'. What does that mean to you? Have you ever met someone who seemed to have a special authority and, if so, what was it about them that produced this effect on you?

People who speak loudly, confidently and coherently, and who are good at self-promotion, often seem to achieve positions of influence in the world – whether in politics, business or religion. Susan Cain in her book *Quiet* (*Quiet: The power of introverts in a world that can't stop talking*, Viking, 2012), speaks of the way that saying something and saying it with confidence, seems more important than what is said when it comes to 'getting on in the world'. Self-confidence and self-assertion give an air of authority that can be very influential. However, when John the Baptist was asked if he was 'the prophet' – the person referred to in this week's reading from Deuteronomy – he declined this opportunity for self-promotion and answered with a firm, 'No' (John 1:22).

It is often said that a person who craves high office is probably the least appropriate to take it. When Jesus suspected the crowd were about to 'make him a king', after he had fed them with the loaves and fishes, he withdrew to the mountain to be

alone (John 6:15). Perhaps it was this kind of humility coupled with sound teaching that was so astounding: someone who clearly knows what they are talking about but doesn't want great accolades as a result. We might ask how this kind of humility is regarded in today's world and Church? Where do we find it? Susan Cain warns that if we only listen to those who push themselves forward and shout loudest, we lose the wisdom of the quieter and more reflective voices. It is interesting to note that the one who shouts loudest in our Mark reading is 'the man with the unclean spirit'.

Prayer of praise

Living God, we praise you for the people you have called to speak your words of power to us and to our world – words of life and death, of opportunity and risk, of comfort and challenge, of wisdom and clarity. Help us to step out to the rhythm of their beat, the beat of justice, of compassion, of reverence for you, so that we might grow in wisdom and confidence, and sing our life's story to the music of your gospel. In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Hymn StF 56: King of Glory, King of Peace

1 King of Glory, King of Peace,
I will love thee;
and that love may never cease
I will move thee.
Thou hast granted my request,
thou hast heard me;
thou didst note my working breast,
thou hast spared me.

2 Wherefore with my utmost art
I will sing thee,
and the cream of all my heart
I will bring thee.
Though my sins against me cried,
thou didst clear me ;
and alone, when they replied,
thou didst hear me.

3 Seven whole days, not one in seven,
I will praise thee ;
in my heart, though not in heaven,
I can raise thee.
Small it is, in this poor sort
to enrol thee :
e'en eternity's too short
to extol thee.

George Herbert (1593–1633)

Reproduced from *Singing the Faith* Electronic Words Edition, number 56 .

Prayers of intercession

God of our impressionable world,
we pray for the leaders of the nations,
that they would be wise, just and compassionate
as they exercise their authority.
We remember especially those in power in Russia –
and those protesting at the imprisonment of Alexei Navalny.
We remember the governments in the Netherlands,
in the United States, and here in the UK,
praying for all leaders as they discern the way forward
amid the difficult social and economic challenges of the
pandemic.
May your truth be known,
and your love be shared in Jesus' name.
We pray for a smooth and just rolling out of vaccine
programmes,

for those who are vulnerable,
for those who mistrust the vaccine,
for those for whom it has come too late.
We pray for the families, and friends of –
and all ministering to –
the dying and the bereaved.

May your truth be known,
and your love be shared in Jesus' name.

We pray for those who feel overwhelmed
by the additional pressures of home schooling,
for those whose relationships are at breaking point.
We pray for those who have lost their lives to depression,
and for their families and friends.
We pray too for those whose lives are blighted by anxiety and
stress.

We pray for the health services and charities trying to support
them.

May your truth be known,
and your love be shared in Jesus' name.

We pray for your church – around the world and in our own
community,
we pray for creative ways to serve and to share,
for courage and integrity as we listen and pray,
for urgency and daring as we respond to the needs around us.

May your truth be known,
and your love be shared in Jesus' name.

We pray, in a moment of silence,
for all those on our hearts
and for all those who have no one to name them in prayer.

May your truth be known,
and your love be shared in Jesus' name.

Amen

Say the Lord's Prayer

A sending out prayer

Lord, like your first disciples
you send us out as sheep among wolves.
Teach us to be wise as serpents
as well as innocent as doves.
Remind us that your peace comes with us
and your hand is there to guide and encourage.
Amen.