**4th August 2024**

[**Call to worship**](javascript:void(0))

God sees our hearts and loves us more than we will ever know.  
Let us come to him trusting in his mercy and his care.  
**Amen.**

[**A gathering prayer**](javascript:void(0))

Holy God, you know our hearts and all that has happened in our lives this week. Draw us to yourself, convict us of anything that keeps us from you and transform us by your redeeming love.  
**Amen.**

[**A prayer of approach**](javascript:void(0))

God of love, we come before you, with hearts and minds open to not just be comforted, but to be confronted by you.  
All-knowing, all-seeing, ever-present God,  
you hold a mirror to our souls.  
**Amen.**

[**A prayer of adoration**](javascript:void(0))

God, you are everywhere.  
**We worship and adore you.**  
You see what we try to hide, yet you love us.  
**We worship and adore you.**  
You see our failings, yet you still see goodness in us.  
**We worship and adore you.**  
You challenge us when we get it wrong, helping us to do better.  
**We worship and adore you.**  
**Amen.**

[**A prayer of confession and an Assurance of forgiveness**](javascript:void(0))

**A prayer of confession**

Lord, we like to live in denial of our sins and shortcomings;  
we paper over the cracks of our misdemeanours,  
refusing to accept what we are and what we have done.  
But you confront us and hold a mirror to our souls;  
our self-image cracks beneath the truth of your gaze.  
Forgive us, we pray; help us to examine ourselves  
and know our hearts, as you do.  
**Amen.**

**Assurance of forgiveness**

Today, O God, we consider how much you forgave David;  
how great were his sins, and he the king!  
Yet still you saw the goodness in him,  
the potential to be what you wanted him to be;  
when he truly repented, you forgave him.  
Thank you, Lord God, for the assurance  
that you will do likewise for us.  
Confront us when we have become complacent; s  
how us the wrongness of our ways,  
so that we may repent and return  
and rejoice in your generous forgiveness.  
**Amen.**

[**A prayer of praise**](javascript:void(0))

Thank you, Father, for stopping us in our tracks  
when we are stubbornly plunging into darkness.  
You shine your light on our sins, and we are revealed  
in all our foulness and foolishness.  
Thank you for forgiving us when we truly repent.  
We praise you for your love and understanding,  
which are beyond our limited comprehension,  
and for the generosity of your forgiveness,  
so powerful we can hardly take it in.  
All praise and thanks be to you, now and forever.  
**Amen**

**Remember last week – story of David and how he saw a beautiful woman bathing and decided he would take her, but she was the wife of another person.**

**We talked about being careful what we look at –**

**Remember binocular eyes we had>**

**the Bible verse (or perhaps just part of it): ‘Your eye is the lamp of your body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but if it is unhealthy, your body is full of darkness’ (Luke 11:34).**

**David did wrong and it took him away from God and God’s way.**

**Active worship**

**Mirror Mirror S A**

**Where do we see God in our lives?**

**You will need: a selection of small mirrors.**

* **If you are using the mirrors, hand these out (one per person). Or invite people to take out their phones and open the camera on selfie-mode (turning the camera so their face shows on the screen).**
* **Invite everyone to reflect on where they are seeing God in their lives right now. What in their life takes them further away from God?**

**Olympic Round Up**

Two hundredths of a second; the blinking of an eye. That’s how close Adam Peaty came yesterday to equalling Michael Phelps’ record of 3 successive [#Olympic](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/olympic?__eep__=6&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZUzLXh_efTSwP8JvJg7OcFw7FIYuC0fQx9A6n9fMAFG4K66N4b0MRMy4EnOq2lwsDmp1yDRWOuSHbF0S1uKLM47bSjRYVX7Kw_u5Y_Rri1JI_-dC-OAYWBisIN7GZ1G693khZpTL0v4CiJBfhvf2wU5hk5QBiE6ScfGqUsr4W8riA&__tn__=*NK-R) golds in the men’s 100m breaststroke.

The pink towel over his shoulder didn’t hide the ink across his sternum - a simple cross with the words ‘Into the Light’. Since getting that tattoo last year, the British World Record holder has talked openly about the strength and stability his recent conversion to Christianity has added to his life - not least in his battles with addiction and mental health.

And then yesterday, having come literally a split-second from a third Olympic gold, Peaty concluded his interview with the @bbcsport by sharing the relevance of his faith very naturally once again:

“I’m not crying because I came second… These are happy tears,” he explained, smiling through reddened eyes. “I’m not going to define my whole career by a medal… I asked God to show my heart, and this is my heart. I couldn’t have done more.”

And with that they cut back to the studio where the panel of pundits seemed speechless for a moment, visibly moved.

**It’s being called the shot of the**[**#Olympics**](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/olympics?__eep__=6&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZUDbroPKIM04ZGKuN-DatnZk7fSgqZI-BC_jB1Oyn_DJ6yIGT-tcwA17V-cxj-Ff4JGfcDAAhoVGZRJ15tsV8S2YLz_Xmxk3t-lYmpqV7JI0s4ixkDHwsA_WARDDDXT5lbPOH0dJmzt8tw8Akp6riQ2wQtn8FE4TWlS9uR_zPMyBA&__tn__=*NK*F)**- 3x world-champion surfer @gabrielmedina appears to defy gravity, walking upon clouds, emerging from a barrel wave off the coast of Tahiti**.  
  
To caption this amazing, unedited shot on instagram for his 12m followers, the Brazilian Christian surfer chose a simple, single Bible verse:  
  
“Tudo posso naquele que me fortalece” (“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” Philippians 4:13)  
  
📷 Jérôme Brouillet

**Christian diving star Andrea Spendolini-Sirieix gave 'glory to God' upon winning a bronze medal for diving in the Paris Olymipics on Wednesday**.

Andrea Spendolini-Sirieix and Lois Toulson won Great Britain's third diving medal of the Games, taking the bronze at the last in the women's synchronised 10-metre platform.

In a post medal ceremony interview with the *BBC*, the 19 year-old was overwhelmed with emotion as she expressed her gratitude.

With tears in her eyes she said: “I'm so happy! I usually have so much to say, I don't have anything to say today."

"Having my family here, doing it alongside Lois, it's been a crazy two years," she told the *BBC*.

"I give glory to God."

A strong final dive from the pair got them past nearest rivals Canada while defending champions China took gold, with North Korea earning silver.

Spendolini-Sirieix's father and TV personality Fred Sirieix said: "It's always a roller-coaster with you girls, you really took me round the bend and through the mill but that last dive was spectacular.

"I'm just in awe with what they have achieved. I'm so proud, so proud, I'm bursting."

The Team GB star made her Olympic debut at the 2020 Tokyo Games and regularly shares her faith in the public sphere, and with her followers online. Prior to the launch of the 2024 Games she shared Matthew 5:14 on her Instagram which reads: “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden”

She added: "Every athlete will be experiencing some sort of pressure and noise, but I am ensuring my focus is directed towards the light of God. I want to dive like no one is watching, even if the whole world is."

During the 2022 Commonwealth Games Spendolini-Sirieix dedicated a Bible verse to each phase of the competition. That year she won double European gold, two Commonwealth titles, and a bronze medal at the World Championships.

In 2023 she won silver at the 2023 World Championships.

Spendolini-Sirieix will compete in the individual 10m platform diving on 5th August.

As the [#Olympics](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/olympics?__eep__=6&__cft__%5b0%5d=AZWAQJ4Le2AqDeTrVHAeTjm9jp4n2N8EYdFTbZrGsl4J4zfZO056FGoTkxXPTKydFQTLFmiGKIN8wbSEJY73XglntwH0TF1D23xZVPTsHGwN3Yj6s6xLp9Q6Z6RvNZXGO_u_SDuN-Uf6n0hgSREPUHwm-gjo2VHPt4kVi7u3uXY3nA&__tn__=*NK-R) kick off in Paris, let’s pray particularly for the record number of Christian athletes competing at these games.

For instance, **Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone** will make history if she can retain the gold she won for America in the women’s 400 meter hurdles at the last Olympics. But the day after winning that gold she posted this moving testimony on Instagram:

“What an honor it is to be able to represent not only my country, but also the kingdom of God. What I have in Christ is far greater than what I have or don’t have in life. I pray my journey may be a clear depiction of . . . obedience to God . . . And He has prepared me for a moment such as this. That I may use the gifts He has given me to point all the attention back to Him.”

[From premier@premierchristianmedia.co.uk](mailto:From premier@premierchristianmedia.co.uk)

**Lord,**

**May we always seek to give You the glory in all we do.**

**When we stand on podiums, may we always remember who put us there.**

**In Jesus' name,**

**Amen.**

**2 Samuel 11.26 – 12.13a;**

**Sermon**

As we continue our look at the life of David from the Old Testament, our Bible reading today picks up on the themes of what is right and wrong, hiding our true self, exposing guilt and seeking forgiveness.

Last week was the sad tale of David’s adultery and his attempts at cover up.

It started with the army away waging war in Trans Jordan, against the Ammonites. The army, and thus most of the young men, are out of Jerusalem. But David has not gone with his troops, he has ceased to be the king requested by Israel who would go out before us and fight our battles (1 Sam 8.20). He relies on his agents to do his work now.

He is resting at home: he has time on his hands and I quoted the old proverb ‘The devil makes use for idle hands’.

I was thinking of other proverbs my mother used to say to me:

Be sure your sin will find you out’. For much of my young life I believed this to be completely true. My mother had an uncanny ability to suss out any misdemeanour in which I engaged. There was no CCTV then – it was the 1970s – but honestly, it was as if my mother had cameras everywhere and monitored them in her kitchen.

As I got older I realised that, at least in this life, the saying is not always true. There were loads of things I did in my teenage years that she never discovered – thankfully.

The American sociologist Tony Campolo who I quoted last week, says that when a kid, leaders in his church used to tell him that after you die you stand before God and he shows a video of your whole life to everybody – and your mother will be there! I certainly hope not!

My mother’s second saying is actually a quote from Walter Scott: ‘O what a tangled web we weave, when we first practice to deceive. The first lie is often innocuous and seemingly harmless – perhaps even what we would call a ‘white lie’; but the second leads us, lie by further lie, into a web which eventually entraps us completely.

David tried to cover up his adultery with Bathsheba. He tried to get her husband Uraih to sleep with her so that her pregnancy could be passed off as her husbands. When these failed, in desperation, King David had Uriah, the husband of his mistress, deliberately positioned in the frontline of battle so that he was killed.

The story was told in the bible for the most part without passing judgement on the actions of the characters involved. But at the end of the story in 1 Samuel 11 verse 27 we are told that the thing David did was wrong in the eyes of the Lord. Perhaps the writer wanted to make certain that readers and hearers got the message alright and that what David did was wrong.

Which takes me to another of my mother’s sayings: it’s always right to do what’s right.’

That begs the question that you always know what is the right thing to do which is not always clear.

In our multi-cultural and multi-faith landscape of Britain today, values can be relative and subjective. I guess every generation decides what is ‘morally acceptable’. Culture is always in a state of flux. But you do need to know what your culture is and where your roots lie. The Bible says don’t despise the ancient paths, the wisdom of the ages. Bringing a child up in a faith can give those moorings, those roots. But for me religion is not just giving you a code of conduct. Good religion should make you compassionate, more honest with yourself, better able to forgive others and help you find acceptance, healing and hope. Let’s see how that is worked out in this story of David.

When David heard the news of Uriah’s death he told his right hand man Joab, who had colluded in plotting his death, ‘not to let the matter distress him’. Another translation could be ‘do not let this thing be evil in your eyes – it is not evil in my eyes. The eyes of David and of Joab are not so discerning about what is morally acceptable.

The seduction of power has skewed the moral vision of David. The king may act, the king may kill, the king may be self satisfied. The king, however, is not capable of revising moral reality. The king may pretend he has escaped the rule of God and that he is an autonomous being and subject to no one, but in the end of the story, there is God with another moral vision.

The story leaves us in no doubt that the eyes of God will out see the eyes of David. David may not see clearly, blinded as he is by fear, lust and power, but that does not change the moral reality to which David must answer.

Most of our society lives without reference to God apart from the odd nagging echo or doubt that maybe there is a God. Helping people to discover God in their lives is a huge challenge. In the story of David, God sends Nathan the prophet to David to bring him to his senses.

Have you ever been asked to confront someone with an awkward truth? If so, then you will appreciate just how hard it is. I often skirt gingerly around the subject, treading on eggshells rather than cause offence, vainly hoping that the penny might drop.

Occasionally, a softly, softly approach such as that may succeed but more often than not, it will fall on deaf ears. Sometimes it is better to speak the truth candidly. It may hurt, it may raise people’s hackles, even make an enemy for life, but, if it helps someone grow as an individual, it is ultimately a kindness.

Nathan had that sort of courage. The message God gave him to speak was not an easy one, almost bound to meet with a hostile reception, yet the words needed saying if David was to recognise the error of his ways and find forgiveness. Nathan also had imagination. Instead of starting with a direct accusation he used a parable to get David thinking through what he had done.

The parable is clear and simple. There were two men, one rich and one poor. The rich man has everything. The poor man only has a little female lamb. This was his only property – his whole livelihood. He treated the lamb like a treasured daughter.

The rich man needed lunch. He did not want to kill his own sheep so he took the poor man’s lamb. He took what was not his and treated it as if it were his own. In I Samuel chapter 8 the self-centred King was anticipated as one who would ‘take’ what was not his. David had taken Bathsheba and had taken the life of Uriah. The rich man in the parable had taken the little lamb. He had raped the daughter like treasure of the poor man. This was a parable of cynicism, selfishness, destruction and greed.

Nathan’s story is told in such a way that in effect it demands an immediate response. King David asserts that justice must be done in such a case. The king, accustomed to conducting judicial procedure, indicts and sentences.

Nathan’s response is brilliant: ‘You are the man!’

David is condemned out of his own mouth.

Nathan’s address is bold and direct. The story struggles with how truth shall speak to power. The parable is a good strategy, for it permits the king to draw his own unavoidable conclusion. Helping people think through what is right and wrong, the consequences of their actions, is often a better approach than just telling them what you think is right or wrong. David could discern the parable. What he does not discern is how the parable touches his own situation. But Nathan makes that clear. You are the man!

How do you tell whether someone who is criticising you is really helpful or not? The answer is to ask yourself a question: ‘Is this critic in the building business, or the demolition game?’ The skills needed for both are, as you will know, quite different. For the one, you patiently lay a foundation and then carefully lay brick on brick until something rises from the ground that you can be proud of. For the other, you go to something that another person has built and knock it down with a big steel ball.

Our critics are either builders of destroyers. Those who are builders have a single aim: they want to see us grow – to get better at what we do. The things they say to us are with the sole purpose of helping us develop. They are on our side, part of the team – if we were in a race, they would be shouting encouragement from the sidelines. At times, what they say to us may hurt (the book of Proverbs (27.6) says, ‘faithful are the wounds of a friend’) think of these wounding words by Nathan to David – but they are on our side; they are for us.

those in the second category are quite different. Their aim is not to build us up, but to bring us down. There may be no end to the opinions they will have about us and about what we are doing. They will comment on the way we dress, speak and style our hair. They will conduct personal appraisal of our work skills, our private lives, the kind of car we drive, and how our children behave. But whatever it is they are critiquing, their aim is not to help us but to rob us of joy and peace in what we do.

You will never please these people.

Let me say ti again. You will never please these people. You could spend your whole life changing this or that yet as soon as you do, your critics will simply move on to something else. But here’s the tricky thing about dealing with critics who ae destroyers. Sometimes, even though they criticise you for the wrong reasons, there may be a grain of truth in what they say. So, in a quiet moment, ponder and decide for yourself – whether any of it has value. But whether or not you want to make changes, don’t spend your life looking over your shoulder and wondering what others are making of it. Some years ago, a woman wrote saying, ‘I have spent fifty years – half a century – imprisoned in other people’s opinions of my life’

Don’t do time in that prison.

There is no freedom like knowing you have nothing to prove.

But David in the biblical story is convicted that what he has done is wrong in the eyes of the Lord. He sees the truth in what Nathan says.

Nathan goes on to warn David of the disasters that now lie ahead (vs 10-12). All actions have consequences, even forgiven ones, and God did not rescue David from the mess he had got himself in. These consequences will be worked out in David’s life in due course. You can read the unpleasant details in the following chapters and how sexual sin and violence become endemic in David’s family.

The outcome of this story is that David acknowledges that he has done wrong. In verse 13 he confesses: *I have sinned against the Lord*. It is a remarkable statement. Nathan could have been eliminated like Uriah. But at the eleventh hour, David acknowledges himself still to be a child of God. It is before God first and fore most that he has sinned. He abandons his self autonomy and resubmits to God. He is then assured of God’s forgiveness.

David has shown a degree of moral courage and sensitivity in admitting his mistake and sin. How few powerful leaders can bring themselves to admit their mistakes? How few people can own up to their own foolishness and self-centredness. How few people face up to reality?

We are caught up in a world were we are protecting ourselves, comparing ourselves to others, competing with others, that we are too insecure to admit weakness and failure. In prayer we can only come before God in all honesty. No pretensions, no cover up. And the truth can set us free!

But we also come before a God who loves us and offers us forgiveness when we are truly sorry. Though it is late in the story, it is not too late for David’s repentance. David is a man who is still willing and able to cast himself on God’s mercy. God extends mercy to such a person. That is the gospel: guilt leading to forgiveness; honesty leading to compassion.

There is a true story from Australia about a young boy in year eight at secondary school who came to know the grace of God. Billy had a younger sister who was so severely disabled she could not get out of her wheelchair. When it was time for Annie to go to school Billy was the one responsible for her. He pushed her wheelchair to school , went to class with his sister, and pushed her from one classroom to the next as the school day unfolded. Caring for his sister never bothered Billy. As a matter of fact he considered it a privilege to take care of her and took pride in being responsible for her wellbeing.

When Billy was finishing year eight his sister died and suddenly he was released from the responsibility for caring for her. However, instead of being relieved, he became very sad and withdrawn. It was as though the major purpose of his life had been taken from him and he couldn’t figure out what to do with himself anymore.

It wasn’t long before Billy was in all kinds of trouble. Among the schoolteachers he earned the reputation of being a bad boy and during the next few years he seemed to do his best to live up to it.

When Billy entered year eleven he found himself with a new class tutor named Mr Smith. On the first day of class, Mr Smith, who had spent a good bit of time looking over the records of the boys and girls in his class, called out to Billy.

‘Billy come up here and sit at this desk right in front of me’.

The unhappy boy figured he was in trouble, even though he didn’t think he’d done anything wrong on that particular day. He wondered why the teacher was picking on him.

Then Mr Smith spoke again. Picking up the folder that contained Billy’s records, he looked at him, and said ‘Billy, these records tell me all kinds of bad things about you.’

Billy hung his head in shame, but then, to his utter amazement, Mr Smith tore the folder into little pieces and threw them into the wastebin.

‘Billy’ he said, ‘I’ve read over your records and I don’t believe a word of what is written there. I’m sure you are better than this.’

It was several days after when the teacher of the church youth group of which Billy was a part asked her group a simple question. ‘Do you know anyone like Jesus?’

Billy smiled as he answered, ‘I do, Mr Smith.’

Well that’s not a bad analogy. We have a Jesus, who like that schoolteacher, knows our inherent worth, can destroy the record of sins and failures and present us to God forgiven and free!’

**Psalm 51 is described as a psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.**

**1**Have mercy on me, O God,  
    according to your unfailing love;  
according to your great compassion  
    blot out my transgressions.  
**2**Wash away all my iniquity  
    and cleanse me from my sin.

**3**For I know my transgressions,  
    and my sin is always before me.  
**4**Against you, you only, have I sinned  
    and done what is evil in your sight;  
so you are right in your verdict  
    and justified when you judge.  
**5**Surely I was sinful at birth,  
    sinful from the time my mother conceived me.  
**6**Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;  
    you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

**7**Cleanse me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
    wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.  
**8**Let me hear joy and gladness;  
    let the bones you have crushed rejoice.  
**9**Hide your face from my sins  
    and blot out all my iniquity.

**10**Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
    and renew a steadfast spirit within me.  
**11**Do not cast me from your presence  
    or take your Holy Spirit from me.  
**12**Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
    and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

Lord let us hear the sound of joy and gladness – create in us pure hearts and renew your spirit in us. Amen.

[**Prayers of intercession**](javascript:void(0))

Heavenly Father, with heavy hearts, we pray for all those affected by events in Southport this week. Please comfort the bereaved, aid the recovery of those in hospital and be with all those who witnessed what happened. We pray for those whose safety and security have been violated. Let empathy and support be the focus of all action, not blame and retribution.

**Lord, stand among us with your healing grace and strength.**

Father, we pray for our world as it faces the problems caused by climate change. As you confront us for who we are, so we have been confronted with our guilt in failing to care for creation. We pray for fairer sharing of resources, so that all human needs may be met. We pray for safety as our planet changes and we face the consequences.

**Lord, stand among us with your healing grace and strength.**

Lord God, as we gaze in awe at Olympic events, and witness what the human body can achieve, we pray for those who will never reach those heights; for those who are battling serious illness or disability, for whom life is painful and exhausting. May they know that their efforts are also worth medals and that every painful step forward is golden.

**Lord, stand among us with your healing grace and strength.**

For your Church, Father, we pray, and for us, your children; for the strength to bear witness in the midst of great upheavals and unpredictability; for the ability to meet the needs of our community and neighbourhoods in difficult days. We pray for all to whom we reach out with the offer of coffee and companionship, or food and other necessities of life. Come to our aid, Lord God, as we seek to aid others.

**Lord, stand among us with your healing grace and strength.**

**Amen.**

[**A prayer for all ages together**](javascript:void(0))

Heavenly Father, thank you that you are always with us and know everything about us. Help us to be open with you about the good and the bad in our lives. Forgive us and bring us back to that first love and excitement we felt about following you. **Amen.**

**Holy Communion**

Long ago, O Most High, you called us to be your people;

to reject the ideologies of the age and to follow only you.

When your people were enslaved you freed them,

through fire, cloud and precious law,

sating their hunger with bread from heaven,

quenching their thirst with water from the rock,

teaching them, again and again, to use freedom wisely.

When your people were in mortal peril

you raised up judges to protect them

and prophets to remind them of their responsibilities

to care for the poor and vulnerable and turn again only to you.

In the bitter years of exile, you sustained your people

teaching them to sing your song in a strange land,

keeping alive the memory and purpose of freedom,

and, in your good time, you set them free.

In the dangerous years of Roman occupation,

you sent Jesus as manna from heaven,

to teach and preach, to heal and to warn, to love and to welcome,

yet the powers of his age sent Jesus to the Cross

where your awesome weakness was displayed on high.

Before he was given over the powers,

and executed as a criminal,

Jesus shared in the simplicity of meal with his friends.

During the meal he took bread, blessed it, broke it

and gave it to his friends saying:

Take this all of you and eat it,

this is my body which is broken for you.

Do this in memory of me.

After Supper he took the cup filled with wine,

said the ancient blessing, and gave the cup to his friends saying:

Take this all of you and drink from it,

this is the cup of my blood,

the blood of the new and everlasting covenant,

which is shed for you and for all.

For as often as we eat this bread and drink from this cup we proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes again. So, let us proclaim the mystery of our faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

Most Holy Spirit, our source, goal, and guide,

gather us now into your presence,

that through these gifts of bread and wine

which we set to this holy purpose,

you may set us to eat and drink with Jesus

at the side of the Most High.

As we eat and drink we remember

both his death and resurrection to new and abundant life.

In a world of hunger let us share your bread for the world.

In a world thirsting for authentic living let us share your wine.

May we who eat be bread for others.

May we who drink pour out your love.

So, let us eat and drink as Jesus taught,

inviting the poor and excluded to this table.

May their absence here provoke a longing for truth and justice in us,

may their presence here truly transform us into the

body and blood of Christ which we now share.

The gifts of God for the people of God.

**Post Communion Prayer**

You have fed us, Lord Jesus, with the bread of heaven

and quenched our thirst with your own self.

Guide us with your love through the beauty and barrenness,

the fire and cloud, and the tide and times of life,

that through the weakness of the Cross, we may find your strength,

that we may ever sing you our praises. Amen.

**Blessing**

May the One who leads us through cloud and fire,

the One who feeds us with His very self,

and the One who fulfils our longings,

lead you, feed you and fulfil you,

that you may lead, feed and fulfil others.

And the blessing of Almighty God,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

be with you all now and always, Amen.

[**A sending out prayer**](javascript:void(0))

Holy Lord, you are just and true. We receive your forgiveness and carry it with us this week. Give us courage to confront those in power who have forgotten to act with your love and care. Inspire us to speak in a way that will help them to hear your voice and live according to your love.  
**Amen.**