

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021

ABIDING
IN
CHRIST

Aros yng Nghrist / Ag maireachtáil i gCríost

18-25 January

www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer





Coloured windows in the chapel at the Community of Grandchamp

Our spiritual well-being is as important as our physical well-being. In the past year both of these have been seriously challenged: the COVID-19 pandemic has caused us to be careful about our own health, taking precautions such as washing hands and wearing facemasks and maintaining social distance. Some of us have been ill or have lost someone close to us. Meanwhile the working lives of many have been disrupted and families kept apart, often at huge personal cost. Perhaps it has made us all more anxious about our health and more aware of our vulnerability. At the same time church buildings have been closed and worship has been taking place online. Opportunities to worship and pray together have been seriously curtailed. We may well be feeling a sense of isolation from God as well as our neighbour.

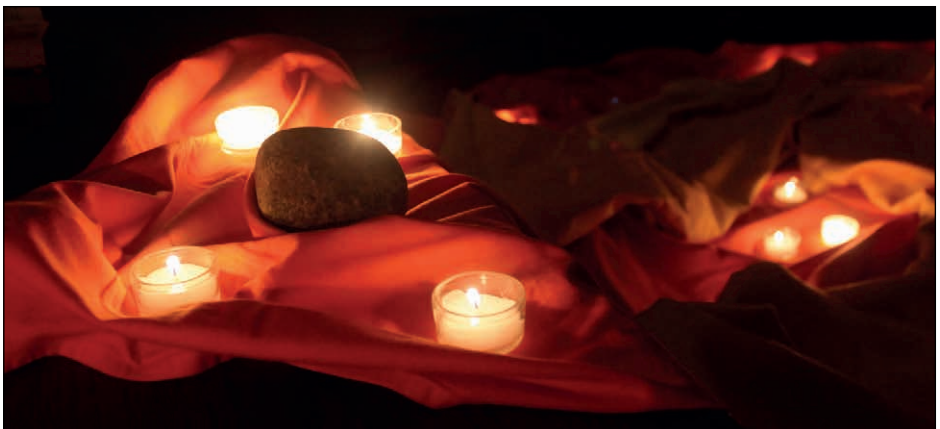
The period of lockdown that we have lived through has caused us to take a step back to think again about our priorities and the things and people that we value, that make our lives whole. The long periods of absence from extended family and friends, and the inability to share a meal together or celebrate a birthday or a wedding, are examples of this.

When it comes to our spiritual life, what is it that is most important for our well-being? As Church life was to a large extent paused for the first time for most people, what does it mean to be part of the one Church, the Body of Christ when all we see of our sisters and brothers are on the screen of a laptop?

When the World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity invited the sisters of the Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland to produce the material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity for 2021 they could not have foreseen the pandemic and its impact. Yet the Sisters of Grandchamp have offered us something uniquely precious: an opportunity to engage with a form of prayer that is both very ancient and yet at the same time so apposite for our times. The ancient rhythm of prayer found in many religious orders and their traditions teach us that when we pray, we pray not just on our own or with those who share the same physical space, but with the whole Church, the Body of Christ, of Christians in other places and in different times.

This rhythm of prayer, with its traditional forms of structure, hymns and psalms and perhaps most importantly, silence, might well be an important gift from the ancient Church to the Church of today struggling with pandemics and lockdowns and more widely with some of the serious challenges that our world faces, most particularly climate change, racism and poverty. This tradition of prayer and spirituality, despite the things that hurt and separate us, invites us into shared prayer and silence together. Surely a most precious gift in troubled times. Come with us this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and enter into a place of community and blessing. Simply “be” in this place and be carried by the prayer and the reality that it is God, in Christ and through the Holy Spirit, who carries us and accompanies us. Always.

Bob Fyffe, General Secretary, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland



INTRODUCTION TO THIS YEAR'S THEME



The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2021 has been prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland. The theme that was chosen, “Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit”, is based on John 15:1-17 and expresses Grandchamp Community’s vocation to prayer, reconciliation and unity in the Church and the human family.

The Grandchamp Community has its origins in Europe in the 1930s, when a group of women of the Reformed tradition sought to rediscover the importance of silence and listening to the Word of God. Today the community has fifty sisters, all women from different generations, Church traditions, countries and continents. In their diversity the sisters are a living parable of communion. They remain faithful to a life of prayer, life in community and the welcoming of guests. The sisters share the grace of their monastic life with visitors and volunteers who go to Grandchamp for a time of retreat, silence, healing or in search of meaning.



In producing the material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity for 2021, the sisters are inviting churches across the world to enter into their tradition of prayer and silence that is rooted in the

ancient traditions of the Church catholic.

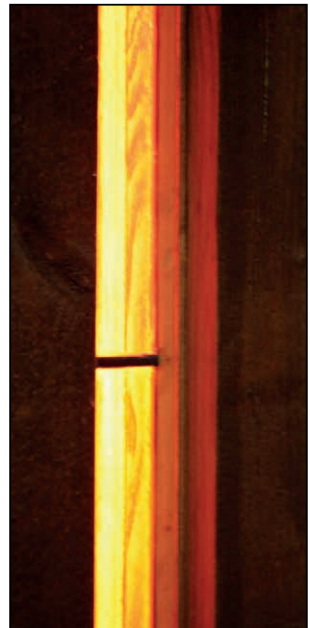
Jesus said to the disciples, “abide in my love” (Jn 15:9). He abides in the love of the Father (Jn 15:10) and desires nothing other than to share this love with us:



“I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father” (Jn 15:15b). Grafted into the vine, which is Jesus himself, the Father becomes our vinedresser who prunes us to make us grow. This describes what happens in prayer. The Father is the centre of our lives, who centres our lives. He prunes us and makes us whole, and whole human beings give glory to the Father.

Abiding in Christ is an inner attitude that takes root in us over time. It demands space to grow. It can be overtaken by the struggle for the necessities of life and it is threatened by the distractions, noise, activity and the challenges of life.

We live in a time that is both troubling and magnificent, an often dangerous time where we are challenged by pandemics, wars, violence, poverty, racism and climate change. Yet as Christians seeking reconciliation, justice and peace, we also know the full value of a spiritual life, have an immense responsibility and must realize it, unite and help each other create forces of calmness, refuges of peace, vital centres where the silence of people calls on the creative word of God. It is a question of life and death.



Though we, as Christians, abide in the love of Christ, we also live in a creation that groans as



it waits to be set free (cf. Romans 8). In the world we witness the evils of suffering and conflict. Through solidarity with those who suffer we allow the love of Christ to flow through us. The paschal mystery bears fruit in us when we offer love to our brothers and sisters and nurture hope in the world.

Spirituality and solidarity are inseparably linked. Abiding in Christ, we receive the strength and wisdom to act against structures of injustice and oppression, to fully recognize ourselves as brothers and sisters in humanity, and to be creators of a new way of living, with respect for and communion with all of creation.

The summary of the rule of life that the sisters of Grandchamp recite together each morning begins with the words “pray and work that God may reign”. Prayer and everyday life are not two separate realities but are meant to be united. All that we experience is meant to become an encounter with God.





The worship this year closely follows the prayer life of the Community of Grandchamp, which follows the Benedictine tradition. In this tradition three of the monastic prayer services – sometimes called ‘vigils’ (traditionally said during the night) – are combined into one evening service. In the same way, our service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is shaped by three sections, called ‘vigils’, which follow a pattern used by the community of Grandchamp.

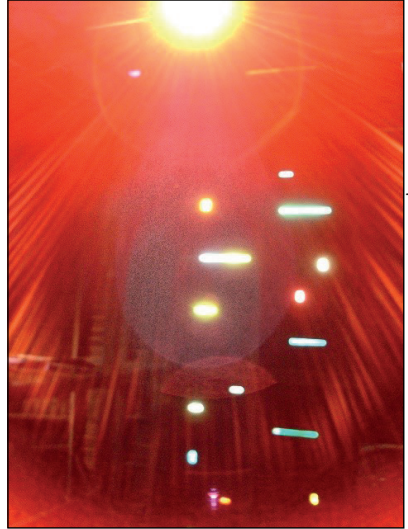
Each vigil follows the same pattern: readings from scripture; a sung response; a time of silence; and intercessions. Each vigil also has an action reflecting its theme; these are outlined below. Each ends with the singing of *Light of God (Lumière de Dieu)*, composed by a member of the community of Grandchamp. The music for this can be found in the additional resources on the CTBI website, however, if preferred, suitable alternatives can be used, for example familiar chants from the Taizé community.

The first vigil is centred on the unity of the whole person and our abiding in Christ. Participants are invited to keep five minutes of silence. These moments are repeated throughout the celebration.

The second vigil expresses the desire to rediscover the visible unity of Christians. Anchored in the love of Christ, we turn to our neighbours and exchange with each other a sign of his peace.

The third vigil opens us up to the unity of all peoples and all creation. The action in it is inspired by a text from Dorotheus of Gaza. Several people are positioned around a circle, and move towards the centre. The closer we move to God the centre - the closer we draw to each other.

There is a variety of ways in which this action may be choreographed depending on the space being used, and the traditions of those involved. The following may serve as a guide:



- Each person in the congregation will need to have an unlit candle.
- Organisers may wish to consider whether it is possible for the congregation to be “in the round” with radial aisles to facilitate this action.
- A large, raised lit candle (for example the Easter candle in many traditions) is set as the central point of a circle.
- Six to eight people from different Christian traditions surround the candle in a circle that may be outlined on the ground, or shaped by the congregation’s sitting in the round.
- Each of these people carries a small unlit candle raised high so all can see.
- During the reading accompanying the action, each person in the circle takes steps at the same pace towards the centre.
- When they reach the centre they light their unlit candles and return to the congregation. Everyone’s candle is then lit.
- During the lighting of everyone’s candles, *Lumière de Dieu* (*Light of God*) is sung.

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- Everyone holds their lighted candle through to the Dismissal. In some places, where it is appropriate and practicable, the congregations may process out of the place of worship into the wider world, with candles lit.

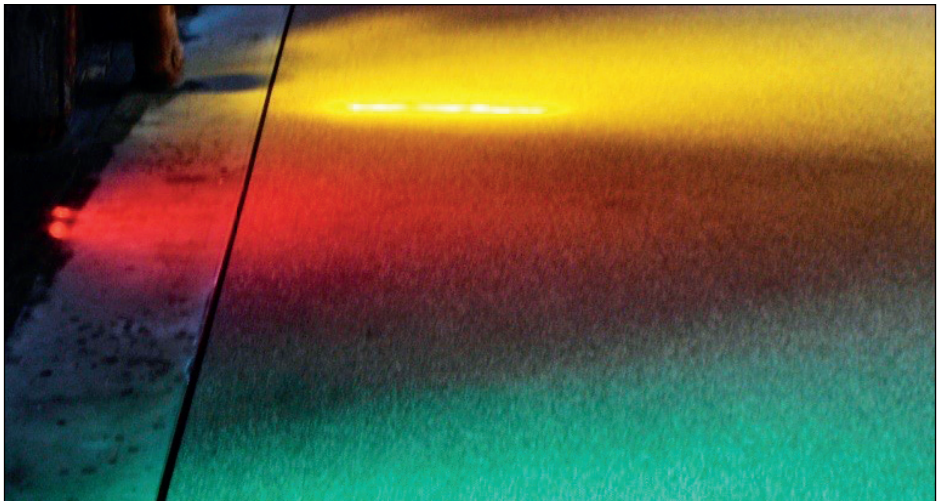


The litany at the beginning can be read or sung – if possible, by two different people. The psalms can also be read or sung, or replaced by a hymn related to the theme of the vigil.

The responses during the prayers of intercession can be read, sung or replaced by others. The intercessions can be prolonged by adding time for free prayer.

Hymns can be accessed and heard on the website of the Community of Grandchamp: www.grandchamp.org.

You can also listen to their common prayer online every day at: www.grandchamp.org/prier-avec-nous.



DAY 1

“You did not choose me but I chose you”

(John 15:16a)

Genesis 12:1-4

The call of Abraham

John 1:35-51

The call of the first disciples

MEDITATION

The start of the journey is an encounter between a human being and God, between the created and the Creator, between time and eternity.

Abraham heard the call: “Go to the land I will show you”. Like Abraham we are called to leave that which is familiar and go to the place that God has prepared in the depths of our hearts. Along the way, we become more and more ourselves, the people God has wanted us to be from the beginning. And by following the call that is addressed to us, we become a blessing for our loved ones, our neighbours, and the world.

The love of God seeks us. God became human in Jesus, in whom we encounter the gaze of God. In

our lives, as in the Gospel of John, God’s call is heard in different ways. Touched by his love, we set out. In this encounter, we walk a path of transformation - the bright beginning of a relationship of love that is always started anew.

“One day you understood that, without your being aware of it, a yes had already been inscribed in your innermost depths. And so you chose to go forward in the footsteps of Christ....

In silence in the presence of Christ, you heard him say, ‘Come, follow me; I will give you a place to rest your heart.’”

[The Sources of Taizé (2000) p. 52]

CALLED BY GOD



PRAYER

Jesus Christ,
you seek us, you wish to offer us
your friendship
and lead us to a life that is ever more
complete.

Grant us the confidence to answer
your call
so that we may be transformed
and become witnesses of your
tenderness for the world.

QUESTIONS

- Have you ever been aware that God was asking you or someone you know to begin a new journey in life – whether literally moving to somewhere else, or ‘changing direction’ in some other way? How did you respond?
- What changes could your church or group of churches make to empower God’s people to walk more faithfully the path God has set for you, or to discern God’s guidance more clearly?
- What are some of the stories of the ‘new’ members of your community, whether they have crossed a county boundary or journeyed across continents to get there?

GO AND DO

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

Global: Get informed about and take action on global refugee and asylum issues and campaigns.

Local: Participate in any hospitality being offered locally to those who have had no choice but to go on a long journey to find safety in an unfamiliar place across the world.

Personal: Spend time exploring what is unfamiliar to you in another Christian tradition and which might help lead you to greater understanding and unity.

DAY 2

“Abide in me as I abide in you”

(John 15:4a)

Ephesians 3:14-21 May Christ dwell in our hearts

Luke 2:41-52 Mary treasured all these things

MEDITATION

The encounter with Jesus gives rise to the desire to stay with him and to abide in him: a time in which fruit matures.

Being fully human, like us Jesus grew and matured. He lived a simple life, rooted in the practices of his Jewish faith. In this hidden life in Nazareth, where apparently nothing extraordinary happened, the presence of the Father nourished him.

Mary contemplated the actions of God in her life and in that of her son. She treasured all these things in her heart. Thus, little by little, she embraced the mystery of Jesus.

We too need a long period of maturation, an entire lifetime, in

order to plumb the depths of Christ's love, to let him abide in us and for us to abide in him.

Without our knowing how, the Spirit makes Christ dwell in our hearts. And it is through prayer, by listening to the word, in sharing with others, by putting into practice what we have understood, that the inner being is strengthened.

“Letting Christ descend into the depths of our being ... He will penetrate the regions of the mind and the heart, he will reach our flesh unto our innermost being, so that we too will one day experience the depths of mercy.”

[The Sources of Taizé (2000) p. 134]

MATURING INTERNALLY



PRAYER

Holy Spirit,

May we receive in our hearts the
presence of Christ,

and cherish it as a secret of love.

Nourish our prayer,

enlighten our reading of Scripture,
act through us,

so that the fruits of your gifts can
patiently grow in us.

QUESTIONS

- The Bible tells us very little about Jesus' youth and early adulthood, when he seems to have lived an ordinary life in Nazareth. How are you conscious of God's presence with you in the everyday things of life?
- In your church or group of churches how do you nurture your children and young people to walk with God in their everyday lives, and how could you do this better?
- What does the churches having a 'presence' together in the community look like in your area?

GO AND DO

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

Global: As people of faith think about how you can work together for the day when all can know a full and abundant human life.

Local: Consider how the churches in your area can be more child friendly spaces.

Personal: Give thanks and pray for the children you know.

Dates

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from 18th to 25th January (the octave of St Peter and St Paul). However, some groups choose other times of the year, particularly around Pentecost which is a symbolic date for the unity of the church. Do make your own decision, taking local factors into account. To allow for use at any time in the year, the Days material uses the notation 1-8.

Order of service

The order of service in the centre of the pamphlet can be pulled out and photocopied if you wish. Alternatively, all resources can be downloaded from the CTBI website and you are welcome to further edit or adapt them for local use. Please acknowledge the source of material as Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, Week of Prayer for Christian Unity resources.

Christian unity wall

Please add details and photos of your events, prayers and messages of unity to the Christian unity 'wall' at weekofprayer.org by posting to Twitter using the #wpcuwall hashtag. Posts appear automatically (after a slight delay).

Photo credits

Our thanks to the Community of Grandchamp for the use of their photos (www.grandchamp.org).

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021

ECUMENICAL CELEBRATION

Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit

(cf. Jn 15:5-9)



Coloured windows in the chapel at the Community of Grandchamp

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Invitation to prayer

Entrance Hymn

A hymn invoking the Holy Spirit (to be chosen locally)

Words of welcome

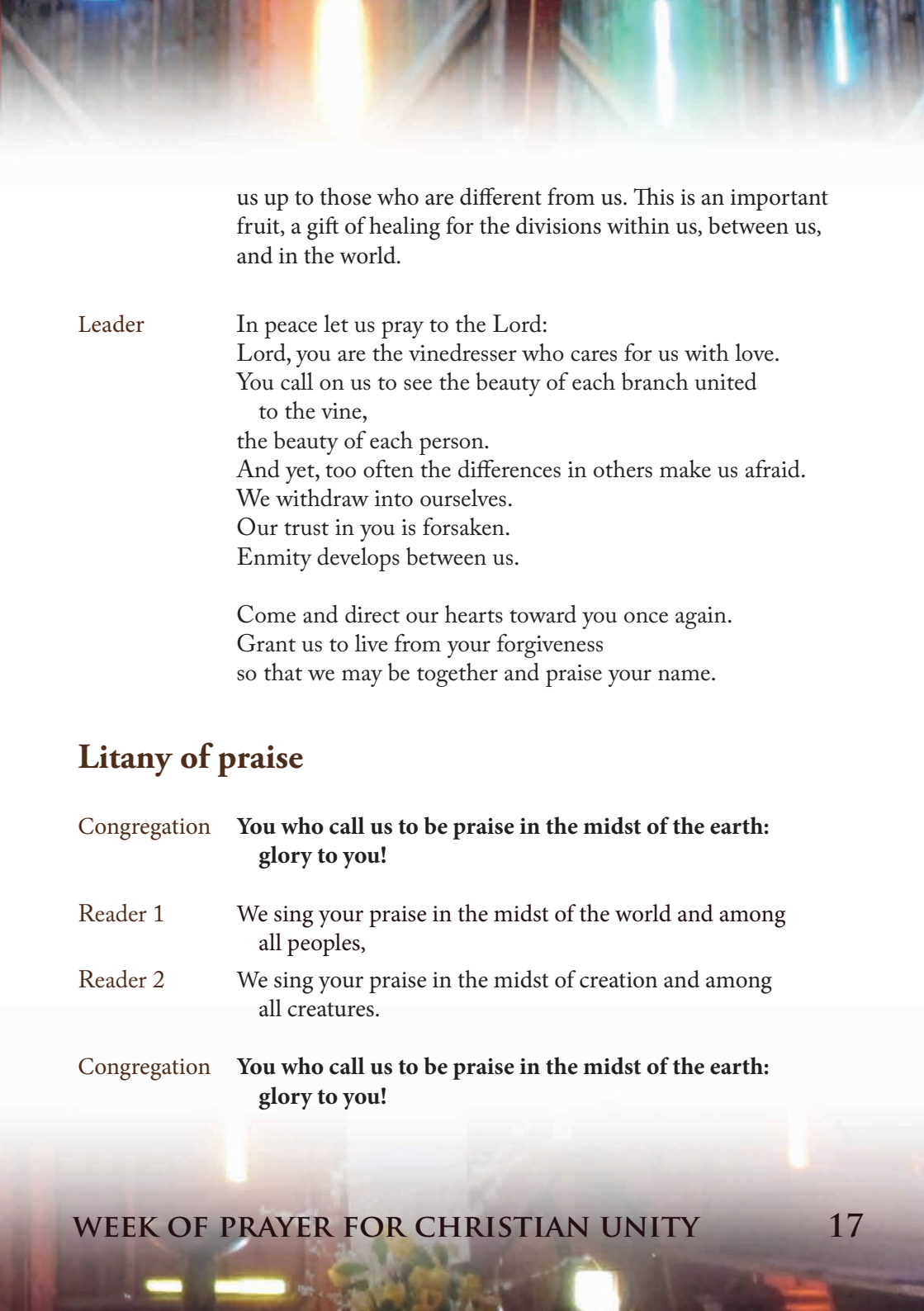
Leader May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always!

Congregation **And also with you.**

Reader 1 *Brothers and sisters in Christ, this year the theme of the
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, chosen by the sisters of the
Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland, is: "Abide in my love
and you shall bear much fruit".*

Reader 2 It is the great desire of God, expressed by Jesus, that we might
come to him and abide in him. He waits for us tirelessly,
hoping that, united to him in love, we will bear fruit that will
bring life to all, Faced with our differences, we risk
withdrawing into ourselves and seeing only that which
separates us. But let us listen to how Christ calls us to abide in
his love, and so bear much fruit.

Reader 1 In the three moments of prayer that follow, we remember the
call of Christ, we turn to his love, to him who is the centre of
our life. For the path of unity begins in our intimate
relationship with God. Abiding in God's love strengthens the
desire to seek unity and reconciliation with others. God opens



us up to those who are different from us. This is an important fruit, a gift of healing for the divisions within us, between us, and in the world.

Leader In peace let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, you are the vinedresser who cares for us with love.
You call on us to see the beauty of each branch united
 to the vine,
the beauty of each person.
And yet, too often the differences in others make us afraid.
We withdraw into ourselves.
Our trust in you is forsaken.
Enmity develops between us.

Come and direct our hearts toward you once again.
Grant us to live from your forgiveness
so that we may be together and praise your name.

Litany of praise

Congregation **You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth:
 glory to you!**

Reader 1 We sing your praise in the midst of the world and among
 all peoples,

Reader 2 We sing your praise in the midst of creation and among
 all creatures.

Congregation **You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth:
 glory to you!**

Reader 1 We sing your praise among suffering and tears,
Reader 2 We sing your praise among promises and achievements.

Congregation **You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth:
glory to you!**

Reader 1 We sing your praise in the places of conflict and
misunderstanding;
Reader 2 We sing your praise in the places of encounter
and reconciliation.

Congregation **You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth:
glory to you!**

Reader 1 We sing your praise in the midst of rifts and divisions,
Reader 2 We sing your praise in the midst of life and death,
the birth of a new heaven and a new earth.

Congregation **You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth:
glory to you!**

First Vigil | **Abiding in Christ: The unity of the whole person**

Psalm: 103
Reading: Jn 15:1-17
Response: Ubi caritas
Short silence: (approximately 1 minute)



Intercessions

Reader God of love, through Christ you said to us: “You did not choose me but I chose you.” You seek us, you invite us to receive your friendship and abide in it. Teach us to respond more deeply to this invitation, and grow in a life that is ever more complete.

Congregation **The joy of our heart is in God.**

Reader God of life, you call us to be praise in the midst of the world and to welcome one another as a gift of your grace. May your loving gaze, which rests upon each person, open us to receive each other just as we are.

Congregation **The joy of our heart is in God.**

Reader God you who gather, you knit us together as one vine in your Son Jesus. May your loving Spirit abide in us at local church and community meetings and ecumenical gatherings. Grant that together we celebrate you with joy.

Congregation **The joy of our heart is in God.**

Reader God of the one vineyard, you call us to abide in your love in all we do and say. Touched by your goodness, grant us to be a reflection of that love in our homes and workplaces. May we bridge rivalries and overcome tensions.

Congregation **The joy of our heart is in God.**

Action: A time of silence

Reader Very often we think of prayer as something we do, an activity of our own. In this short time we are invited to an interior silence, and to turn aside from all the noise and concerns of our lives and thoughts. In this silence the action belongs to God. We are simply called to abide and rest in God's love.

Silence (approximately 5 minutes)

Hymn Lumière de Dieu (Light of God)

Second Vigil | The visible unity of Christians

Psalm: 85

Reading: 1 Cor 1:10-13a

Response: There is One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism

Short silence: (approximately 1 minute)

Intercessions

Reader Holy Spirit, you create and re-create the Church in all places. Come and whisper in our hearts the prayer which Jesus addressed to his Father on the eve of his passion: "that they may all be one... so that the world may believe".

Congregation **Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)**

Reader Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, light the fire of your love in us so that suspicions, contempt and misunderstanding cease in the Church. May the walls that separate us fall.

Congregation **Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)**

Reader Holy Spirit, Consoler of all, open our hearts to forgiveness and reconciliation and bring us back from our wanderings.

Congregation **Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)**

Reader Lord Jesus, gentle and humble of heart, give us poverty of spirit so that we may welcome the unexpectedness of your grace.

Congregation **Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)**

Reader Holy Spirit, you never abandon the men, women and children who are persecuted for their fidelity to the gospel. Give them strength and courage, and support those who help them.

Congregation **Kyrie eleison (Lord have mercy)**

Action: Sharing a Sign of Peace

Reader The Lord calls us to be united among ourselves. He gives us his peace and invites us to share it. Let us exchange a sign of his peace with our neighbours.

Everyone turns to those near them and offers a sign of peace, in keeping with their local context.

Hymn Lumière de Dieu (Light of God)

Third Vigil | The unity of all peoples with all creation

Psalm: 96
Reading: Rev. 7: 9-12
Response: O you who are beyond all things
Optional homily
Short silence: (approximately 1 minute)

Intercessions

Reader God of life, you have created every human being in your image and likeness. We sing your praise for the gift of our many cultures, expressions of faith, traditions and ethnicities. Grant us the courage always to stand against injustice and hatred based on race, class, gender, religion, and fear of those not like ourselves.

Congregation **God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!**

Reader Merciful God, you have shown us in Christ that we are one in you. Teach us to use this gift in the world so that believers of all faiths in every country may be able to listen to each other and live in peace.

Congregation **God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!**

Reader O Jesus, you came into the world and shared fully in our humanity. You know the hardships of life for people who suffer in so many different ways. May the Spirit of compassion move us to share our time, life and goods with all those in need.

Congregation **God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!**

Reader Holy Spirit, you hear the fury of your wounded creation and the cries of those already suffering from climate change. Guide us toward new behaviours. May we learn to live in harmony as part of your creation.

Congregation **God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!**

Action: Moving to the centre... and out to the world

inspired by a text of Dorotheus of Gaza

Reader Jesus calls us to abide in him, as branches of the true vine. He calls us to bear the fruit of God's healing and reconciling love. He calls us to draw closer to God and to one another as we offer this love to the world.

Imagine a circle drawn on the ground. Imagine that this circle is the world.

The designated persons stand up and form a circle around a central candle.

Reader At the centre of the world is God, in whom all our desires and longings find their meeting place.

The persons take several steps toward the centre.

Reader As we move closer to God, so we draw closer to one another. And the closer we come to one another . . .

The persons move to the centre together.

Reader ...the closer we come to God

When the candle-bearers reach the centre they each light their candle. As they stand together at the centre all keep a time of prayer in silence.

Short Silence (*approximately 1 minute*)

The Lord's Prayer

Leader With the words that Jesus taught us, let us now pray together:

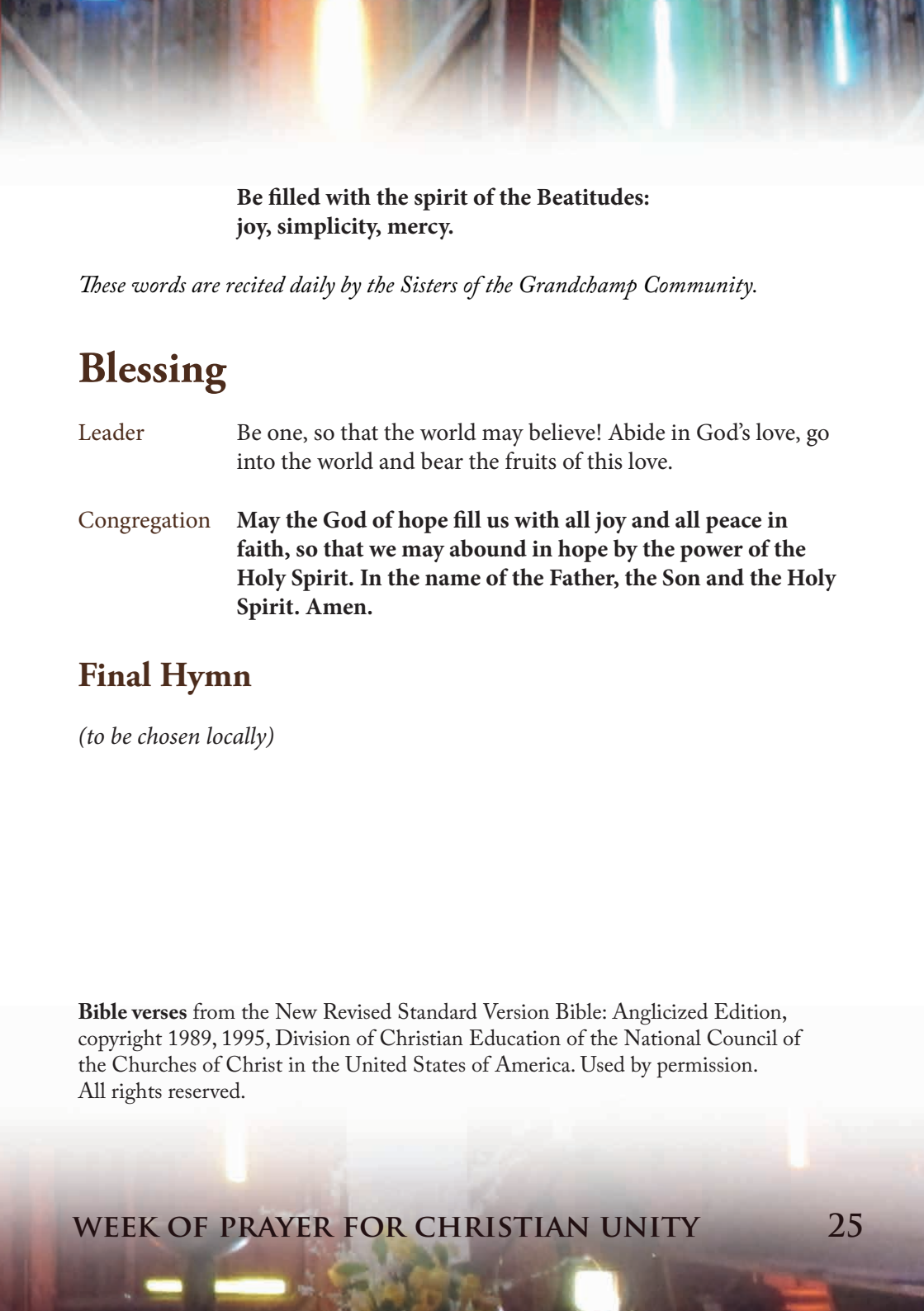
Congregation **Our Father...**

Hymn Lumière de Dieu (Light of God)

During the singing the candle-bearers return and share with the congregation the light that they have received.

Leader Spirituality and solidarity are inseparably linked. Prayer and action belong together. When we abide in Christ, we receive the Spirit of courage and wisdom to act against all injustice and oppression. We say together:

Congregation **Pray and work that God may reign.
Throughout your day
let the Word of God breathe life into work and rest.
Maintain inner silence in all things
so as to dwell in Christ.**



**Be filled with the spirit of the Beatitudes:
joy, simplicity, mercy.**

These words are recited daily by the Sisters of the Grandchamp Community.

Blessing

Leader Be one, so that the world may believe! Abide in God's love, go into the world and bear the fruits of this love.

Congregation **May the God of hope fill us with all joy and all peace in faith, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Final Hymn

(to be chosen locally)

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DAY 3

“Love one another as I have loved you”

(John 15:12b)

Colossians 3:12-17 Clothe yourself with
compassion

John 13:1-15; 34-35 Love one another

MEDITATION

On the eve of his death, Jesus knelt to wash the feet of his disciples. He knew the difficulty of living together and the importance of forgiveness and mutual service. “Unless I wash you,” he said to Peter, “you have no share with me.”

Peter received Jesus at his feet; he was washed and was touched by the humility and gentleness of Christ. Later he would follow Jesus’ example and serve the fellowship of the faithful in the early church.

Jesus wishes that life and love circulate through us as the sap through the vine, so that Christian communities be one body. But today as in the past, it is not easy to live together. We are often faced with our own limitations. At times we fail to love those who are close to us in a

community, parish or family. There are times when our relationships break down completely.

In Christ we are invited to be clothed in compassion, through countless new beginnings. The recognition that we are loved by God moves us to welcome each other with our strengths and weaknesses. It is then that Christ is in our midst.

“With almost nothing, are you a creator of reconciliation in that communion of love, which is the Body of Christ, his Church? Sustained by a shared momentum, rejoice! You are no longer alone, in all things you are advancing together with your brothers and sisters. With them, you are called to live the parable of community.” [The Sources of Taizé (2000) pp. 48-49]

FORMING ONE BODY

PRAYER

God our Father,
you reveal to us your love
through Christ
and through our brothers and sisters.
Open our hearts so that we can
welcome each other
with our differences and live
in forgiveness.
Grant us to live united in one body,
so that the gift that is each person
comes to light.
May all of us together be a reflection
of the living Christ.

QUESTIONS

- Can you think of a person in your life who you would identify as being “clothed in compassion”? Can you recall a time when you have been the recipient of compassion?
- How does your church community need to be more compassionate with members and visitors?
- What would it look like for the churches in your area to be more compassionate within your community? Where is compassion most needed in the world today?

GO AND DO

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

Global: What action can we take in response to the compassion needed in the world?

Local: Consider making a banner or quilt together as churches and the wider community to demonstrate the things that thread and weave you together.

Personal: Consider the clothing in your wardrobe and the lives and hands that have touched them. Have these clothes been made with fair pay and good working conditions?

DAY 4

“I do not call you servants any longer... but I have called you friends”

(John 15:15)

Romans 8:26-27 The Spirit helps us in our weakness

Luke 11:1-4 Lord, teach us to pray

MEDITATION

God thirsts for relationship with us. He searches for us as he searched for Adam, calling to him in the garden: “Where are you?” (Gen 3:9)

In Christ, God came to meet us. Jesus lived in prayer, intimately united to his Father, while creating friendships with his disciples and all those he met. He introduced them to that which was most precious to him: the relationship of love with his Father, who is our Father. Jesus and the disciples sang psalms together, rooted in the richness of their Jewish tradition. At other times, Jesus retired to pray alone.

Prayer can be solitary or shared with others. It can express wonder, complaint, intercession, thanksgiving

or simple silence. Sometimes the desire to pray is there, but one has the feeling of not being able to do so. Turning to Jesus and saying to him, “teach me”, can pave the way. Our desire itself is already prayer.

Getting together in a group offers us support. Through hymns, words and silence, communion is created. If we pray with Christians of other traditions, we may be surprised to feel united by a bond of friendship that comes from the One who is beyond all division. The forms may vary, but it is the same Spirit that brings us together.

“In the regularity of our common prayer, the love of Jesus springs up within us, we know not how.

PRAYING TOGETHER

Common prayer does not exempt us from personal prayer. One sustains the other. Let us take a time each day to renew our personal intimacy with Jesus Christ.”

[The Rule of Taizé in French and English, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Great Britain pp. 19 & 21]

PRAYER

Lord Jesus,
your entire life was prayer,
perfect harmony with the Father.
Through your Spirit, teach us to pray
according to your will of love.
May the faithful of the whole world
unite in intercession and praise,
and may your kingdom of love come.

QUESTIONS

- Jesus lived as an example of what it means to “live in prayer”. If prayer is the foundation of our relationship with God how much time and attention could you give to your personal prayer life?
- What have you learned from praying with other Christians? What might God want you to learn from the practices and traditions of others?
- What specific need in your community can you commit to pray for over the coming year?

GO AND DO

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

Global: Commit to praying through the WCC Ecumenical Prayer Cycle this year.

Local: Unite with others in your community to pray together this week, in person, online via Zoom or similar platform, or at a set time when you know others will be joining in prayer.

Personal: Consider how your prayer practices inform and influence your action in the world.

DAY 5

“You have already been pruned by the word...”

(John 15:3)

Deuteronomy 30:11-20

The word of God is very close to you

Matthew 5:1-12

Blessed are you

MEDITATION

The Word of God is very close to us. It is a blessing and a promise of happiness. If we open our hearts, God speaks to us and patiently transforms that which is dying in us. He removes that which prevents the growth of real life, just as the vine grower prunes the vine.

Regularly meditating on a biblical text, alone or in a group, changes our outlook. Many Christians pray the Beatitudes every day. The Beatitudes reveal to us a happiness that is hidden in that which is unfulfilled, a happiness that lies beyond suffering: blessed are those who, touched by the Spirit, no longer hold back their tears but let them flow and thus receive consolation. As they discover the wellspring hidden within their inner landscape, the hunger for justice, and the thirst to

engage with others for a world of peace, grows in them.

We are constantly called to renew our commitment to life, through our thoughts and actions. There are times when we already taste, here and now, the blessing that will be fulfilled at the end of time.

“Pray and work that God may reign.

Throughout your day

Let the Word of God breathe life into work and rest.

Maintain inner silence in all things so as to dwell in Christ.

Be filled with the spirit of the Beatitudes,

joy, simplicity, mercy.”

[These words are recited daily by the Sisters of the Grandchamp Community]

LETTING ONESELF BE TRANSFORMED BY THE WORD



PRAYER

Blessed are you, God our Father,
for the gift of your word in Holy
Scripture.

Blessed are you for its
transforming power.

Help us choose life and guide us by
your Spirit,

so that we can experience the
happiness which you want so
much to share with us.

QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to you that “God may reign” in your life? Is there anything you could change or adjust?
- If your church(es) were to live the “Beatitudes” each day what difference would this make to the communities they serve?
- What does it mean in our world today to be blessed by God?

GO AND DO

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

Global: Find out more about the Just Scripture initiative and help organise a session connecting the churches in your area with a community across the world.

Local: What one act of kindness could the churches in your area take together to be a unified blessing in your wider community?

Personal: Read the Beatitudes through slowly (Matthew 5: 3-11). Which of the actions described in the passage are you encouraged to take today?

DAY 6

“Go and bear fruit, fruit that will last”

(John 15:16b)

Genesis 18:1-5

Abraham hosts the angels at the Oak of Mamre

Mark 6:30-44

Jesus’ compassion for the crowds

MEDITATION

When we let ourselves be transformed by Christ, his love in us grows and bears fruit. Welcoming the other is a concrete way of sharing the love that is within us.

Throughout his life, Jesus welcomed those he met. He listened to them and let himself be touched by them without being afraid of their suffering.

In the gospel account of the multiplication of the loaves, Jesus is moved with compassion after seeing the hungry crowd. He knows that the entire human person must be nourished, and that he alone can truly satisfy the hunger for bread and the thirst for life. But he does not wish to do this without his disciples, without that little something they can give him: five loaves and two fish.

Even today he draws us to be co-workers in his unconditional care. Sometimes something as small as a kind look, an open ear, or our presence is enough to make a person feel welcome. When we offer our poor abilities to Jesus, he uses them in a surprising way.

We then experience what Abraham did, for it is by giving that we receive, and when we welcome others, we are blessed in abundance.

“It is Christ himself whom we receive in a guest.”

[The rule of Taizé in French and English (2012) p. 103]

“Will the people we welcome day after day find in us men and women radiant with Christ, our peace?”

[The Sources of Taizé (2000) p. 60]

WELCOMING OTHERS

PRAYER

Jesus Christ,

we desire to welcome fully the
brothers and sisters who are
with us.

You know how often we feel helpless
in the face of their suffering,

yet you are always there ahead of us
and you have already received them
in your compassion.

Speak to them through our words,
support them through our actions,
and let your blessing rest on us all.



QUESTIONS

- When you meet new people do they find you “radiant with Christ”?
- As we pray together for greater unity how are we showing Christ’s welcome to other Christians?
- What are people hungry for in your community?

GO AND DO

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

Global: Take time to engage with global news stories today. Take action in response to the story that most moves you with compassion.

Local: Contribute in any way that you can to a foodbank, food growing scheme or community meal initiative in your area.

Personal: Reflect on and identify who ‘the other’ is for you. How might you connect with and offer a welcome to them in your next encounter?

DAY 7

“I am the vine, you are the branches”

(John 15:5a)

1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:21-23 Is Christ divided?

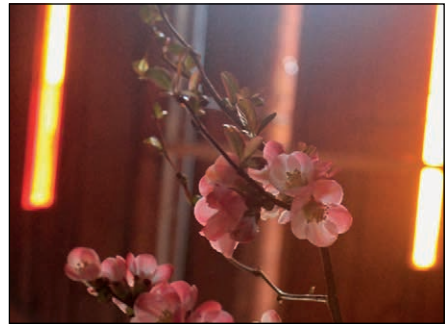
John 17:20-23

As you and I are one

MEDITATION

On the eve of his death, Jesus prayed for the unity of those the Father gave him: “that they may all be one . . . so that the world may believe”. Joined to him, as a branch is to the vine, we share the same sap that circulates among us and vitalizes us.

Each tradition seeks to lead us to the heart of our faith: communion with God, through Christ, in the Spirit. The more we live this communion, the more we are connected to other Christians and to all of humanity. Paul warns us against an attitude that had already threatened the unity of the first Christians: absolutizing one’s own tradition to the detriment of the unity of the body of Christ. Differences then become divisive instead of mutually enriching. Paul had a very broad vision: “All are yours, and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God” (1 Cor 3:22-23).



Christ’s will commits us to a path of unity and reconciliation. It also commits us to unite our prayer to his: “that they may all be one. . .so that the world may believe” (Jn 17:21).

“Never resign yourself to the scandal of the separation of Christians who so readily profess love for their neighbour, and yet remain divided. Make the unity of the body of Christ your passionate concern.”

[The Rule of Taizé in French and English (2012) p. 13]

GROWING IN UNITY



PRAYER

Holy Spirit,
vivifying fire and gentle breath, come
and abide in us.

Renew in us the passion for unity
so that we may live in awareness of
the bond that unites us in you.

May all who have put on Christ at
their Baptism

unite and bear witness together to
the hope that sustains them.

QUESTIONS

- Are you resigned to the scandal of separation of Christians?
- What part of your tradition is vital and life giving and what can you learn from what is vital and life giving within other Christian traditions?
- What could be the impact on the world of greater unity between the churches?

GO AND DO

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

Global: Find out more about the ACT Alliance and Caritas International and celebrate the coming together of Christian organisations to bring transformation across the world.

Local: Organise an online or in person conversation with the assistance of a facilitator on the theme of unity for the churches in your area.

Personal: Consider and commit to one act of unity.

DAY 8

“So that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete”

(John 15:11)

Colossians 1:15-20 In him all things hold together

Mark 4:30-32 As small as a mustard seed

MEDITATION

The hymn to Christ in the epistle to the Colossians invites us to sing the praise of God’s salvation, which encompasses the entire universe. Through the crucified and risen Christ, a path of reconciliation has been opened up; creation too is destined for a future of life and peace.

With the eyes of faith, we see that the kingdom of God is a reality that is very close but still very small, hardly visible – like a mustard seed. However, it is growing. Even in the distress of our world the Spirit of the Risen One is at work. He encourages us to become involved – with all people of good will – in tirelessly seeking justice and peace, and ensuring the earth is once again a home for all creatures.

We participate in the work of the

Spirit so that creation in all its fullness may continue to praise God. When nature suffers, when human beings are crushed, the Spirit of the risen Christ – far from allowing us to lose heart – invites us to become part of his work of healing.

The newness of life that Christ brings, however hidden, is a light of hope for many. It is a wellspring of reconciliation for the whole of creation and contains a joy that comes from beyond ourselves: “so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete” (Jn 15:11).

“Do you wish to celebrate the newness of life that Christ gives through the Holy Spirit, and let it live in you, among us, in the church, in the world and in all of creation?”

[Second promise made during profession at the Community of Grandchamp]

RECONCILING WITH ALL OF CREATION



PRAYER

Thrice-holy God, we thank you for having created and loved us.

We thank you for your presence in us and in creation.

May we learn to look upon the world as you look upon it, with love.

In the hope of this vision, may we be able to work for a world where justice and peace flourish, for the glory of your name.

QUESTIONS

- How much does your life declare God's salvation? What view of God would others have from how you live?
- What could your church(es) and community do together to make justice and peace flourish in your locality?
- How does your church or group of churches care for God's creation? What changes, large or small, could you make which would make that care more effective?

GO AND DO

(see www.ctbi.org.uk/goanddo)

Global: Find out about and join the prayer chain for climate justice.

Local: Campaign together for climate justice in the lead up to the United Nations climate change talks in Glasgow 2021.

Personal: Take action for climate justice in your own life.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021



ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer
weekofprayer.org

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