



Call to worship (Psalm 66.16-20)

All you who love and honour God: **come and listen.**
We will tell you what God has done for us: **come and listen.**
God has heard us and helped us: **come and listen.**
God accepts us and loves us: **come and praise God with us.**

Hymn 94 - To God be the glory <https://youtu.be/19tix5g1ubc>

To God be the glory, great things he has done!
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,
who yielded his life in atonement for sin, and
opened the life-gate that all may go in:

Chorus: *Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord! Let the
earth hear his voice! Praise the Lord! Praise the
Lord! Let the people rejoice! O come to the
Father, through Jesus the Son; and give him the
glory, great things he has done!*

O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood, to
every believer the promise of God! And every
offender who truly believes - that moment from
Jesus a pardon receives: **Chorus:**

Great things he has taught us, great things he
has done, and great our rejoicing through Jesus
the Son; but purer, and higher, and greater will be
our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see:
Chorus: Frances Jane van Alstyne (Fanny
Crosby 1820–1915)

Prayer of confession

Spirit of God, move within us, illuminate our minds, our beings, to see our failings and faults, to see our neglect of those around us, those who are lonely and untouched by the love of others or their love of you. Forgive us for being so self-centered that others get pushed to the periphery of our living and our loving. Forgive us that so often our faith is an add-on and not an imperative in our daily lives. Illuminate our lives that our faith in you and our knowledge of your love permeates our every word and breath. **Amen.**

Assurance of forgiveness

The Spirit of God moves within us, floods our being, cleanses and renews us and sets us free of the burdens and pains, the faults and the failings that stop us from being the people we are called to be. The Spirit of God never leaves us or abandons us; be assured, forgiveness is yours/ours. **Amen.**

A prayer of praise and thanksgiving

You make yourself known to us, and you are present in our lives even though we do not always recognise or acknowledge you.

For all that you are, **we thank you, loving God.**

You do not leave us orphaned but embrace us with parental love that encourages and comforts us. For all that you are, **we thank you, loving God.**

You ensure that we are not alone by filling us with your Spirit of truth, that inspires and empowers us. For all that you are, **we thank you, loving God.**

Thank you, Father, for your presence, your love and your encouragement. **Amen.**

Hymn 628 - Faithful One, so unchanging

<https://youtu.be/9YzDUIqotFM>

*Faithful One, so unchanging,
Ageless One, you're my rock of peace.
Lord of all I depend on you,
I call out to you again and again.
I call out to you again and again.*

*You are my rock in times of trouble.
You lift me up when I fall down.
All through the storm
your love is the anchor,
my hope is in you alone.* Brian Doerksen (b. 1965)

The Gospel: John 14:15-21

Sermon 'The Spirit beside us'

Jesus promises his disciples that God will send the Spirit of truth, who will be with them for ever. He reminds them that those who love him are those who keep his commandments. These are the ones to whom He will reveal himself.

The theme in this speech by Jesus spirals back round to the centrality of love and loving Jesus becomes evident when we obey His commandments, the central one of which is to love as He has loved us. To help us in this, Jesus will ask the Father to give us another 'Advocate' who will be with us for ever, who is also called the Spirit.

The Greek word translated 'advocate' literally means the one 'called to your side' and could equally be translated 'intercessor', 'counsellor' or 'intermediary' and probably by a number of other words too. It is the word used in the Greek version of the Old Testament for the comforters who came to Job, so one could add a positive version of 'comforter' to the list. When Jerome was translating the New Testament into Latin, he felt that the term was intentionally broad and inclusive, so instead of choosing just one word and therefore one meaning, he simply turned the sounds of the Greek word into Latin, giving the term '*Paraclete*'.

The '*Paraclete/Advocate*' is the one who guides, counsels and consoles us, and speaks up on our behalf. Crucially, the '*Paraclete/Advocate*' will never desert us in our hour of need. This speech then flows on naturally from discussing our relationship with the '*Paraclete/Advocate*' to discussing our relationship with Jesus and with the Father. The kind of mutual indwelling that Jesus describes (e.g. 'he abides with you and he will be in you', and 'I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you') makes it clear that our relationship with the '*Paraclete/Advocate*' is not something distinct from our relationship with Jesus and the Father, rather it's all bound up in that oneness with God that ensures we are not left orphans.

The gospel reading encourage us to remember that God is always with us. God is near us and beside us, by the very fact of being the creator who longs to have a relationship with us. Jesus has passed through death, and even those who have been held by death are liberated by him. Jesus promises the indwelling Paraclete, who will come to be beside them for ever, to his disciples. This Spirit is the one who Jesus promises will always be alongside us and within us, the one who will never desert us in our hour of need. **Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

- In the power of Advocate, let us bring our prayers to the God who picks up those who have fallen and raises up those who are brought low:
- We pray for those who are crushed and those who feel the pain of our world.
- God our Father, bless those who are lonely. We pray for strangers in a foreign land, for asylum seekers and refugees, separated by language and culture from familiar ways and much-loved customs.
- Lord God, who binds up the broken-hearted and comforts those who mourn, bless those whose joy have been darkened by death. We remember those who have lost loved ones at home, in conflicts, new and old.
- Help the Church, we pray, to be a place of acceptance and belonging, a place of welcome and inclusion, where all can find a home, a listening ear, a friendly smile and a helping hand.
- Send us forth this day with the hope that gives strength to our actions. Help us to sing of our faith and in that singing find our strength to go on, trusting in Jesus who lived among us, died for us and rose again and who prays for us today, even as we pray to Him:

Our Father..... **Amen!**

Hymn 418 – We have a gospel to proclaim <https://youtu.be/Km4pnriHrH4>

1. We have a gospel to proclaim, good news for all throughout the earth; the gospel of a Saviour's name: we sing his glory, tell his worth.
2. Tell of his birth at Bethlehem, not in a royal house or hall, but in a stable dark and dim, the Word made flesh, a light for all.
3. Tell of his death at Calvary: hated by those he came to save, in lonely suffering on the cross, for all he loved his life he gave.
4. Tell of that glorious Easter morn: empty the tomb, for he was free. He broke the power of death and hell, that we might share his victory.
5. Tell of his reign at God's right hand, by all creation glorified. He sends his Spirit on his Church to live for him, the Lamb who died.
6. Now we rejoice to name him King: Jesus is Lord of all the earth. This gospel-message we proclaim we sing his glory, tell his worth. Edward Joseph Burns (b. 1938)

Sending out prayer

And now, may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **Amen.**

(Service contains materials from Rootsontheweb, Singing the Faith, Church of Scotland, image: www.workingpreacher.com, YouTube)