

The Late Late Service

Quiet Service Preparation Handbook

1ST edition

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If you can't make it..

The rota is given out well in advance of the Quiet Service. You are free to swap if you can't make the date you were assigned to, but please notify the worship co-ordinator as the rota itself is constructed in such a way that we try to balance ages and experience in the formula.

Introduction: "Alternative" Worship & The Quiet Service

The phrase "Post-Modern" has sometimes been applied to the style of worship that we employ. "Post-Modern" refers to the idea that we are brought up in a world where we receive a bombardment of messages, meanings and influences with few fixed points. We are used to "plurality", a situation where many options exist and people are loathed to say any one is better than an other. We are not used to "absolutes", and the presentation of absolutes in religion makes people uneasy. "Post-Modernity" sees life as a complex web of constructs; people putting their own meaning and interpretations on events and experience, but ultimately it asserts that we float on a bed of uncertainty, grasping for meaning and systems to offer solidity but destined to live the whole of life in "relatives".

What has this got to do with worship? Well it means that people are used to assimilating information and stimulus from several different areas at once. At the celebration we are aware that it's OK to bombard people at times, they'll take it all in. Furthermore, you don't have to be too systematic about it: people are "trained" by their experience of growing up post-modern to make sense of your various stimuli. It is our aspiration in leading worship to introduce people to a "sense" of God, more than a definitive theological statement. We hope to provoke a separate exploration within the confusion of life so that people dig beneath the great rubbish heap of late 20th Century living.

So we are trying to make the Quiet Service a different kind of experience. To redress the limits of the "3-minute-culture" of radio and TV, and acknowledge that we have a deeper need. A need that involves broadening our time frame in order to reach other parts of ourselves, and also reach God in other parts of ourselves. Accordingly, it should be a time when people are taken on a journey of "slowing down", sitting patiently and *feeling* in a different place to usual. We might still be aware that people can assimilate a variety of cultural forms in that mindset, but in general we move slowly and lead slowly, not jumping about quickly in terms of the mood and content. The challenge is to move both content and "feel" at the same time, asking questions of both as the service is constructed.

These things have an implication for the music and words that are chosen for the quiet service. On top of thinking "content" you also have to think "tone". Make them *both* present at all times.

The Role of the Worship Leader

People spend years training to lead worship so don't think you're expected to know everything because your name is on the rota. At the LLS we've had a tradition of sharing this role in order to celebrate what each has to give the other... everyone's worship can be meaningful to others. However, this can put a pressure on people and they feel stressed at the thought. Here's a summary of what a worship leader does:

- * Plans content that they think would speak to *them* if they were participating
- * Inform all other organisers (sound, visuals, etc) of the plan for the evening
- * Delegates tasks when appropriate or desired
- * Welcomes people, creating an environment that enables all to worship
- * Prompts the congregation to feel at home with each other
- * Gains the trust of the worshippers (doesn't spring surprises that make them anxious)
- * Guides the congregation through the process... "*what's going on??*"
- * Uses inclusive language to draw people to God (not *push* them!)
- * Tries to articulate, leave space for, or create an exercise to express the sentiments of the worshipper to God
- * Challenges and invites worshippers to keep moving on their journey with God

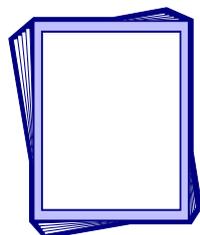
Making it all Happen 1: Seeing the end from the beginning

How long it takes to plan

3 people are on each monthly rota to plan the Quiet Service. It usually takes a meeting together before the education night in order to touch base with each other. The following week people usually have to meet twice, once at the beginning of the week, then nearer the end. So maybe allow for 3 meetings and time to run around in between.

Remember: it is not your job to *do* everything! The role of organiser is to plan and invite what or whoever it takes to put your plans into action. There is not an expectation that Quiet Service planners will do all the talking, or writing or whatever. Get in touch with others, and don't feel under pressure to do things you're not comfortable with. Do what you want, not what you think you *should* do.

What you might end up with



There is usually an "order of service" sheet at the end of the planning process which will contain a list of:

- Items involved in the order that they come in.
- Who is leading each item.
- Any special needs or instructions for technical people.
- Any instructions for people who help with rituals.

Remember, people who are helping out with, say one item will sit nervously through the rest of the service unless they are sure when it's their "bit", so it's helpful for them to get an order of service so that they can participate in the rest of the event without thinking "is it me next?".

You can expect a "check-in" call from the worship co-ordinator near the weekend just to see if there's anything you need or are uncertain about as well as make sure you've remember all the necessary components (such as introduction & explanations etc.).

Notifying people / time scales

As a rule, the more notice you can give people the better when it comes to visuals and music. In practice, things are often rushed. If you have an idea that you're wanting something, get in touch with the relevant person a.s.a.p, particularly for live music.

Slides of new words must have 3 days advance: the Thursday before the service itself is when you must have drafted up anything which needs putting onto screens in word form (unless you do it yourself... see later)

Who to go to for what

Worship co-ordinator:

Help with putting ideas together and structure.
Help with spoken components, difficult or new ideas, lyric slides, troubleshooting... **"HELP"**...

Music co-ordinator:

Help with choosing music, mixing music, checking out new musical ideas, finding out what's new from the music group.

Visuals co-ordinator:

Help with choosing visual images. One person is the contact person from this group every month, but contact the co-ordinator to find out who this is. You can leave all visuals up to them if you want, just give them a plan of the evening.

Technical co-ordinator:

Help with setting up sound and lighting needs. Particularly if you're trying new ideas check this with them, make sure they'll work!

On the night

We get into St Silas at about 10 past 8. The chairs have to be moved first and this usually happens when the rest are setting up visual and music gear.

Do not be obliged to help with these if you are leading, rather make sure your part is all ready.

Keep your eye on the watch and try to push people to be ready for 9.

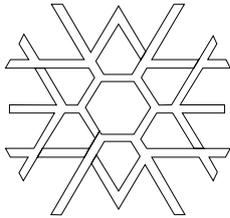
People who are not in the community are not allowed in before we are ready to start. If they are your friends and helping with the service that's OK. The bit near the PA controls, the kind of "backstage" area is only for organisers.. we've had thefts from that area. Only people organising / delivering the service are allowed to speak into the mics... we've had people ask to give "a word" before. They're usually unstable, and it is a rule that it does not happen. Neither do we publicise at short notice for people who come up on the night and say "can you tell people about..." If there are notices to be given out we keep them to things we're involved with or are endorsing. It's really to protect ourselves from being seen to promote things that turn out to be dodgy. If you're put on the spot on the night and don't know what to do, refer them to the Worship Co-ordinator or Spokesperson. If neither of them are there, grab a steering group member.

Making it all Happen 2: Planning the Content

Themes

The Quiet Service is the second week in our monthly theme cycle. The previous week will have been the Education Night which opens up the theme.

The Quiet Service is expected to take forward the theme of the month from the Education Night by contemplating aspects of it before God. Sometimes this is quite hard to do if there is a theme that doesn't obviously lend itself to this treatment, and you might consult the Worship Co-ordinator for support if you are particularly stuck. You may want to start preparing the service before the Education Night, if so, you could leave space for some flexibility to allow for some facet of its content to be considered for inclusion.

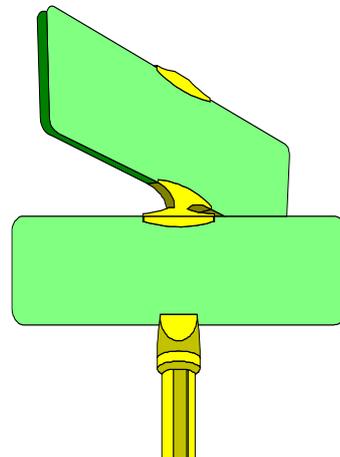


Creating Liturgy

“Liturgy” is “the order of worship”. It means where you start, where you go to next, what bits you include, who says them who does them etc.

Liturgy has always been a part of worship. Churches who say they have no liturgy very quickly develop a few routines or patterns that can be said to be “liturgy”. Just as a conversation between two people might take a certain pattern... starting with “hello”, ending with “goodbye” and having a few standard bits in the middle (“how are you” etc. then the bit you’re most wanting to say) so liturgy is seen to shape the conversation between God and the community coming to talk to God. More than that, its shape also says something about the relationship, for instance, most liturgy starts with an approach to God and moves on to a confession that we are not worthy to come to God because of our sinfulness. In other words, the pattern acknowledges the status & nature of the relationship. Liturgies would never start with “Yo, God, here’s a list of things that we want, so listen up”.

So liturgy can be seen as a framework. It does not have to be adhered to as law, but used as a guide; a way of putting signposts into the service so that participants know where they are going. It is useful because one of the responsibilities of leading worship is to make the participants feel secure enough to enjoy their own encounter with God, without having to worry about the event falling apart, or somebody pulling them off-track in some way. A standard framework for a quiet service liturgy might be something like this:



Welcome by the hosts

Approach to God

Giving Thanks

Confessing our wrongs > being known to be forgiven

Listening to God

Responding to what we heard

[Healing Ritual]

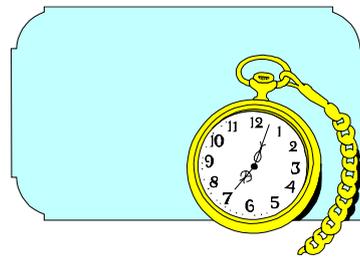
Expressing concern for others

Committing ourselves to the world

Blessing

Notices & invitation to stay etc.

All of these elements in the liturgy can use a variety of formats to “do the work”. This guide contains some examples of options and guidelines for new creations. Do not be afraid to experiment, but do be careful of pulling the liturgical framework too far apart unless you feel very confident.



*keep an eye on the time
factor: whole service... maybe
an hour & a half?*

Inclusive Language

The LLS has always strived to use inclusive language. This is not about about “political correctness” (although the two are related) it is about making sure that we are enabling anyone present, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, age, disability etc to feel that they are wanted by God’s people and hence God.

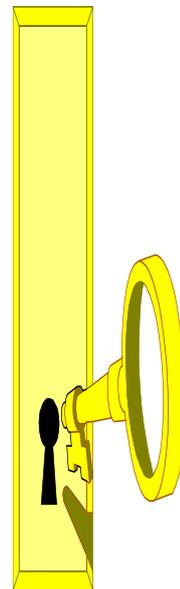
The issue is complicated, but it has meant for us a few basic things that are sometimes against the flow of other churches:

- avoidance of exclusively male terms for God
- avoidance of language like “Mankind” and “Man” (humanity / people) or “Brothers” (family) etc. Watch out for this in new songs you might use.
- sensitivity to all maleness in scripture, sometimes changing the actual language in a way which better communicates the core message without offence
- care regarding assumptions of marriage as the only end of romantic unions
- sensitivity as to the understandability of our references

Bits of the Liturgy

Prayers

- Could be a joint prayer read together from the screen
- Could be a prayer said by just the leader with a communal AMEN
- Could be a response-based prayer: these work best with a response that is either short, or on the screen, and a phrase which precedes the response, e.g. “when I say “In your mercy”, you reply “Hear our prayer”” It is best to rehearse this once with the gathering so that they may then concentrate on the prayer instead of worrying about when they come in!
- Spontaneous prayers: Introduce a framework of prayer-content then ask people to say what they want from where they are sitting. Asking for short things will include more people, e.g. names of people you’re concerned about.
- Written prayers: people note on bits of paper what they want to pray about. Depending on the issue, these could be read out by leaders, or put into baskets and offered to God, or symbolically torn up or burnt (e.g. if they are sins we want to know are forgiven) or hung on a prayer tree. The more private the issue, the less they should be offered verbally!
- Small group prayer: asking people to form small groups for free-form prayer with a couple of other people.
- Moving and stopping prayers: people walk around in a large circle and then stop to pray. The movement changes the mood and sentiment.
- Prayers with musical interludes: people learn a chant and sing it in between subjects of concern or statements, e.g. in confession a “Kyrie” is sung in between statements of confession.
- Meditations are a good way of including the imagination in prayer or a thought-journey. They are quite hard to do, requiring the correct degree of timing and level of input in order to carry everyone. A book like “Sadhana” has some in it and a guide to the idea. If you’re keen but not to sure, contact the worship co-ordinator.



Song

- Can be communal, led by musicians from the front.
- Could be communal led by recorded music but with words on the slide and encouragement to sing with it.
- Could be a “listen to this” type of performance song, presented by a person or people at the front, or a recording.
- Could be a chant that gets taught to everyone.
- Could be a way of singing an old liturgical prayer, e.g. “Agnus Dei”. People should be told the meaning of any ancient Latin or Greek phrases. The LLS has always used these as a sense of being tied into history rather than participating in the idolatry of the present common to our generation!
- Could be musicians moving amongst the participants

Ritual

- Can be millions of things, but we particularly want to use the healing circle as a regular ritual at the quiet service.. if we haven’t done it recently, perhaps it’s time for you to put it in.
- Ritual is best used when symbolising something that it its hard to express adequately with words

- Ritual should be on a matter than involves and includes everybody present.
- Ritual is best when it contains one simple movement, e.g. a hand washing or candle lighting that has been given meaning by the rest of the procedure. Bad ritual is complicated or contrived, e.g. asking people to eat a cream cracker and then drink a glass of water in order to experience thirst quenching!
- The hardest thing about ritual is describing it and leading it. Spend time on a form of words to describe it and test them out so that you're sure people understand the instructions beforehand.
- Rituals are good if they are perceptibly symbolic: you are doing something that represents / mirrors something of that which God does or we do to God.
- Rituals work as a way of inviting people to respond to God. In a way the "Altar Call" of evangelists like Billy Graham are rituals, but we are keen to use them as a way of being drawn, not pushed.
- Examples of common LLS rituals are: handwashing, laying on of hands, lighting candles, moving to something that concerns us, offering something symbolic of ourselves, anointing, touching with ash or marking ourselves in some way, making a shrine/altar together, carrying objects into the gathering (e.g. the Bible)

Readings

- Can be pre-recorded (see music group)
- Should be at least 1 Old Testament and 1 New Testament reading as part of the ancient tradition/discipline of hearing the Word of God.
- Can be anything else you want.
- Could have visuals which go with the reading
- Could be dramatised with a few readers.
- Try not to use complicated readings that seem "deep" when you're reading them, they seldom work when read out loud.
- Make sure that the people doing readings are ready to use the mics properly (see later)

Other elements

Settling down track - usually at the beginning we want to get people calmed and slowed down. The track "Holy Space" was written for this. You might have to ask people who are talking to "use this time to settle yourself and focus on God".

Using Art

The art used in the service comprises of a variety of formats. Slides are used predominantly in the quiet service, but sometimes people make other things such as mini-sculptures for shrines, or small scale artefacts that might be passed around for people to consider. Video is very occasionally used in the quiet service, seldom for atmosphere, usually just to illustrate something with a film clip or feature.



The visuals group have a slide library which now contains thousands of slides. People who are planning the quiet service will co-ordinate with a member of the visuals group, but are encouraged to try and visualise something that they might want themselves. You might have a strong idea of what you want, say certain images you've seen before or a theme or a style of images. You are asked to recognise the role of the visuals group in having some kind of final say in quality control in this respect, but invariably your ideas will be welcomed and their expertise will assist you. It is not usual for new slides to be made / photographs taken for the quiet service, but you could ask the visuals group if you are inspired. Remember the process takes a few days, so think early and don't feel aggrieved if it's not possible!

Slides in the quiet service are intended as prompts for contemplative release, in a sense they are icons:

“Icons... are not to be taken as art for art’s sake, but rather, they are to be used as windows into the spiritual world, designed to help us achieve a prayerful mindset and lead us into a life of prayer and contemplation”

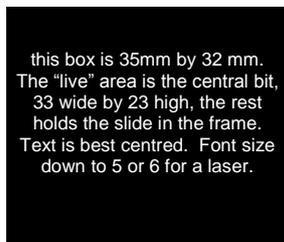
(Icons: their history & spiritual significance: Dr Zakaria Wahba)

They also inform the environment, indicate specific areas of concern, and lastly, some of them are word slides for the liturgy.

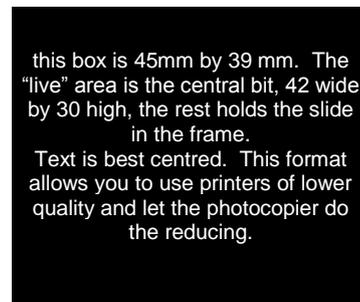
Word Slides

The visuals group also keep the stock of word slides. Most of the songs that we use regularly are on slides. Some familiar prayers are also on them. These slides are generally made by being typeset on computer and then printed onto acetate, to printed then photocopied onto acetate. This process is not difficult if you have a computer. The options are:

Print directly onto acetate, preferably using reverse writing onto black background (white on black) as this adds less light into the environment, thus:



or you could do this>>>
using a bigger print and then reducing when you photocopy onto acetate by 70% (the normal biggest reduction rate)



The acetates then have to be mounted in slide mounts, but if you do the words yourself, you can pass them on in this form to the visuals group for them to mount. If you haven’t got the technology, a few people are adept at creating new slides for words: ask the worship co-ordinator.



Choosing Music

Enclosed in this pack is a list of songs that are of our own making that you might choose. You are free to look elsewhere for inspiration. The LLS has tried to keep music within certain parameters, to try keep a “house style”. We encourage people to innovate and explore traditions that are not used much. In general the introduction of a renewal chorus or an old hymn will not be well received. We tend to enjoy modern things from people in the alternative worship mould, songs that are familiar from a “secular” source which make sense to this service, and also chants from much older traditions.

Leading on the night

It is helpful not to have too many voices at the mics. One allocated person giving instructions on the process is usually a good idea. Others might be readers or pray-ers. It may seem positively democratic to include loads of people, but it can end up a bit like a variety show. There is no rule on this, just a warning not to go too far!

some standard introductions for regular elements:

Introduction (something like...)

Hello, you're very welcome to our Quiet Service. This is the time in our monthly cycle when we slow down the pace and allow ourselves to come to God in a reflective manner.

We have created an environment that is designed to help this process. Visual stimulus will come from all around you, and we don't really have a front, although many of the people talking will be over here.

Most of the songs that we use will have their words projected onto this screen on my left, and you are invited to join in when that happens. Other items are designed for your stimulus in worship. Nothing is a performance, we are coming together to meet God in a way that includes everybody here as a participant. In as much as we give in worship, so we might receive from God. This is an act of faith.

Tonight's theme...

The Healing Circle

We believe that the healing of God is offered to all people through Jesus Christ, and we offer ourselves to God to be instruments of that healing. Together we recognise the presence of God in us by offering a symbolic touch of healing to those who request it. No one is asked to disclose their need, we simply trust ourselves to God's care.

We understand that God heals in many ways; physically, emotionally, psychologically, spiritually. It is the same spirit of life that sustains the world that now comes to us to restore those who know their need of healing. That spirit that was in Jesus is still with us.

So we perform this ritual. To come to the middle and form a circle on the kneelers if you want prayer for healing. Once there the two people (*names*) in the centre will move around the circle leading the prayer for healing which is on the screen. Others are invited to extend the circle by also laying hands on those requesting healing. In this way we unite in a community who seeks the wholeness of each other.

When the first circle have been prayed for, others may replace them until all who request prayer have been prayed for.

So come, you who know your need of restoration. Come and bring your need to God and to your friends, trusting in the Spirit of Jesus Christ together.

*(the healing circle happens by 2 people in the middle starting opposite each other, **laying hands on 1 person at a time**, moving round to the next person on their right after praying for the first person, then repeating the pattern with the next person until that circle has been prayed for. If there is an uneven number they might both lay hands on the last person. The next circle then forms and the process is repeated. The person who introduced the ritual stays at the mic and repeats the prayer into the mic as they can see when people are ready to go)*

Joining services

These have had a pattern that has worked well, but is not set in stone. Please see the Worship Co-ordinator for advice.

Some LLS writings for reference and example

A Brief Statement of Shared Belief

As members of the Late Late Service Community we identify ourselves as the following:

1) Christian people united around the faith of the historical church, as expressed in its most widely accepted creeds and as revealed in the Old and New Testaments. We believe in God, we follow Jesus, and we trust in the presence and the movement of the Spirit.

2) People committed to looking for and living in the Realm of God (traditionally the "Kingdom") revealed in Jesus Christ: called to love one another and to be a healing community seeking the wholeness and liberation of all people.

3) People seeking to live out and express the following beliefs:

- ◆ Each human life is a gift from God and each person has equal worth and value.
- ◆ We are called to take an active stand against any relationships, practices or structures which deny or undermine this belief.
- ◆ Human creativity is a gift from God, and a way in which we express God's image in us. We seek to encourage and embrace this gift in our worship and life and to enjoy and challenge contemporary culture in all its diversity.
- ◆ The resources of the earth are God's gifts to us, for which we are called to take responsibility and show care.

We are called to live simply, identify with the poor, and know that all material possessions are gifts from God, to be shared for the common good.

The Late Late Service community is our gift to each other, and to God.

An example service: Celebrating the Feast

Theme: This service celebrates the feast of God. Its purpose is to point to the ways in which God lavishes gifts upon us with abundance and grace.

Scripture Readings: Isaiah 55:1, John 2:1-11, Luke 14:12-23.

Opening Music: "Holy Space" (LLS3)

A Prayer of Confession:

The prophet Isaiah wrote:

"Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;
And you that have no money, come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.
Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread?
And labour for that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food."
-Isaiah 55:1-2, NRSV

We have been taught that possessions and prosperity go hand in hand.
For the times when we have believed it, forgive us, Lord. **FORGIVE US, LORD.**

While we know we can not earn your blessings, we have been taught that we do not deserve to be blessed.

For the times when we have believed it, forgive us, Lord. **FORGIVE US, LORD.**

We have been taught that your hand is an empty, angry fist.

For the times when we have believed it, forgive us, Lord. **FORGIVE US, LORD.**

We have failed to recognise that our worth comes from the fact that you find us worth loving, you find us worth dying for. Yet, we have been taught to expect little or nothing from you.

For the times when we have believed it, forgive us, Lord. **FORGIVE US, LORD.**

We have, at times, been sold a model of ourselves as perfectly self-reliant, and we have built upon it, shutting out others, and in doing so, we have shut you out as well.

Forgive us, Lord. **FORGIVE US, LORD.**

Draw near to us and reassure us that you are both giver and forgiver. Forgive us for wine watered down, and with a richness that money can not buy, please bless us, in Jesus' name

...

Amen.

A Ritual of Reflection:

[This ritual involves the placement of various items at certain focal points in the worship setting. The following invitation to the these focal points, referred to as stations, explains their purpose sufficiently. However, it should be noted that, along with the items displayed for tasting, sampling or consideration, certain visual images may strongly enhance the idea of God's generosity. For example, where milk and honey are displayed, a slide image of a mother with an infant might be used to express God's loving nurture of humanity. Similarly, where wine (or grape juice) is displayed, bunches of grapes of various colours might be gathered as well, along with various grains, to accentuate the variety and beauty of God's gifts to us. Where bread is displayed, some flour might be lightly sprinkled to demonstrate the care and work which God puts into the process of blessing us. Finally, the place setting at a dinner table intended for a friend, should be prepared in such a way as to look appealing to an individual personally in need of society, inclusion, love, or any of the many blessings of heaven. Of course, the space around the central table, on which an open Bible and other items of the feast may be displayed, should be adequate to allow people to share this food, and visit afterwards. The idea is to communicate a sense of God's genuine good will and generosity, an appreciation for God's lavishness, while remaining short of promoting various forms of modern gluttony, nevertheless coaxing one or two beads of perspiration from the guardian of your group's coffers. The ritual should allow for about 15-20 minutes for each person to make the rounds. Some quiet, instrumental music, preferably solo acoustic guitar or piano, can greatly enhance the setting of this ritual.]

Invitation to the Feast:

Set up around the room are four different areas, each with different foods. These are to symbolise the richness of the feast of life in God. Each area symbolises a different issue in life, and is there so that we may meditate on these things while sitting at these areas. The wine symbolises the joy, the joy that God pours into our lives. The bread is symbolic of justice, the justice needed in this world. Everything that we have belongs to God, and is there so that we may share it with others. The milk and honey represent the things in our lives that God gives to us which we can not buy. At this place you may wish to think about

what these things are in your life. At these three areas, please taste the foods as you would partake of God's gifts. The last area is a place of invitation. Here we may think of another person who we would like to experience God's feast in a greater way, and at this place, you may light a candle for this person. This meditation will last for about 15 minutes, in the course of which you may go to all the areas, or just stay in one place. Let's begin.

A Time of Meditation

A Prayer of Intercession:

We recognise before God that what we own are gifts that we are looking after. He has called us to join in the feast of life and to share this feast with others.

WE PRAY FOR BREAD AND JUSTICE.

We thank you God that our supermarkets are finally stocking a fair trade coffee. That means that the workers who have grown and picked the coffee, and their families benefit directly from the purchase.

We pray that we will refuse a bargain that leaves others without the means of life. May our world trade not in human lives but so that all may live.

WE PRAY FOR WINE AND ABUNDANCE.

Our God, you who have made an extravagant earth with more seeds than can possibly be fertilised, fruits that fall to the ground heavy with smell and juice, worlds of fertility and forest and growth and colour that no one ever sees,

Help us your people not to be a begrudging people
Help us to enjoy the abundance and share what we have easily. Amen.

"Our God in Heaven" (LLS2)

We Share the Gifts

Pentecost TV Scroll

(This was presented as a title-type scrolling text on video in the same service as "*The Possibility People*". It is best read in silence between musical tracks.)

Until it breathes in living matter the spirit of God
is silent

yet there is no life that is unsupported by the breath
of the Creator

The death of Jesus re-formed the commitment of God
to the creation

Tonight we celebrate PENTECOST

It is the day on which the Holy Spirit of God
was released to us

The Holy Spirit is the invisible spirit of Jesus

The Holy Spirit brings to us the secrets
and intentions of the Realm of God

The Holy Spirit meets us at the source of our being

The Holy spirit is inviting us into a relationship

It is the most profound experience of love
and passion

The relationship is that of God - the giver of life,
and Jesus the restorer of life to its intended way

The Holy Spirit takes our hearts to the Heart of God

From our source we are invited to be renewed:
to re-see the world through the eyes of the loving God.
We are invited into a realm of new possibilities

It is at the centre of who we are: our WILL that we
must unite with the restoring spirit of Jesus

It is in the tension of split second moments that the
true intention of our will becomes life

Then we opt from impulse into choices of life
and death

Then we behave in one of two ways:

out of love
or
out of fear.

unique (A Quieter Moment from the Celebration Service)

There are 5 billion people on the face of the globe

There are 5 billion people on the face of the globe

There are 5 billion people on the face of the globe
but only one person like you.

You are born unique
No one ever looked like you
No one's hair, eyes, mouth or body was just like yours
No one's imagination, voice, laugh and taste was just like yours

Sometimes the world makes you scared of your uniqueness and hide it, preferring to copy others for your security.
But like the coils of DNA that contain the code of your individuality
YOU are waiting to unravel the only thing ever to appear on earth with your characteristics.

You know that
You feel that
You need that to be recognised

Who else knows that?
Who else feels that?

God knows
God only knows

YOU live. YOU are valuable

This is the truth
This is the truth contained in God
God is where you find that truth
That meaning.

Your meaning, your uniqueness unwraps in God and unfolds into the world.

When the world processes you it is death.

When God is your source it is life and you bring God into the world.

This is the truth:
You need to live in God and God in you.

Door Creed

INTRODUCTION BY LEADER:

Sometimes we're led to believe that becoming a Christian will make life easier.

But as we learn more about Jesus we find that there are new possibilities in old situations. And where we might previously have made an easy, obvious choice, following the "rules" of our upbringing, we become aware of new options in old situations.

And we find that second option has the word "truth" written all over it.

But the word "truth" is hard to take in a culture numbed by the enjoying of pleasures based on the misery of others. The truth might be uncomfortable.

And as we go on facing daily decisions we might become aware that any given situation has a choice of doors to go through. The obvious, familiar one, and the new one you're vaguely aware of.

That second door is smaller and harder to find than the familiar big door of consumerism and self-satisfaction.

The second door is not directly in front of us - it is in semi-darkness and may be covered in cobwebs until we turn around and find it.

But as we reach out for the second door we find that the word "truth" is suddenly a lot more attractive. We find that the decision to reach for the other door has somehow given us a sense of being "bigger".

If we go through that door, and take the hard option, we find that we were wrong about the fear of the small, restricting room of the truth ... we find the biggest surprise that our hearts can contain ... because on the other side of the small, dimly lit door is a wide open space. And that wide open space is freedom ... it is the Realm of God.

And once we've been through that door we get used to its feeling, and in more and more situations we begin to see the second, smaller door, and we realise that the big door that we're used to going through actually led to a small room ... a kind of prison.

And we find that the things that we thought when we heard that being a Christian would make life easier was just the same kind of escapism that our consumer generation is always selling us.

But now that we're learning to find the small door, we know the price of freedom, and we know the way of Jesus, and we can see the Kingdom of God.

LEADER:

We will not pray for creature comforts or little signs of God's existence:

ALL: WE WILL ENTER THE KINGDOM THROUGH THE DOOR MARKED "DANGER".

We will not try make others satisfy our needs or wants:

WE WILL ENTER THE KINGDOM THROUGH THE DOOR MARKED "LOVE".

We will not exploit our neighbours for a better lifestyle:

WE WILL ENTER THE KINGDOM THROUGH THE DOOR MARKED "JUSTICE".

We will not let others fight wars of greed in our name:

WE WILL ENTER THE KINGDOM THROUGH THE DOOR MARKED "PEACE".

We will not pursue careers just for the sake of money:

WE WILL ENTER THE KINGDOM THROUGH THE DOOR MARKED "SACRIFICE".

We will not ignore the consequences of siding with the outcast:

WE WILL ENTER THE KINGDOM THROUGH THE DOOR MARKED "PAIN".

We will not wait for voices or symbols from heaven:

WE WILL ENTER THE KINGDOM THROUGH THE DOOR MARKED "FAITH".

WE WILL GO THROUGH THESE DOORS IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT, KNOWING THAT JESUS HAS GONE THROUGH THEM ALL FIRST.

A Prayer of Confession: short phrases like a backward & forward conversation

LEADER: Church, listen ...

you have slaughtered the innocent in the pursuit of power,

ALL: WE ARE THE CHURCH. WE CONFESS OUR SIN.

you have held on to wealth when people around you were in great need,

WE ARE THE CHURCH. WE CONFESS OUR SIN.

you have failed to speak out in situations of injustice and oppression,

WE ARE THE CHURCH. WE CONFESS OUR SIN.

you have identified itself with the powerful and wealthy, and not the poor of Jesus,

WE ARE THE CHURCH. WE CONFESS OUR SIN.

you have perpetuated an image of God that is white, male, and middle-class,

WE ARE THE CHURCH. WE CONFESS OUR SIN.

you have allowed the differences between Christian denominations to outweigh that which
you have in common.

WE ARE THE CHURCH. WE CONFESS OUR SIN.

You are the church of:

Francis of Assisi, who called the church back to serving the poor,

HELP US TO WALK IN THIS WAY.

Elizabeth Fry, who worked to improve conditions in prison,

HELP US TO WALK IN THIS WAY.

William Wilberforce, who fought for the abolition of slavery,

HELP US TO WALK IN THIS WAY.

Desmond Tutu, who joins the voice of the church to the struggle of the oppressed black
community,

HELP US TO WALK IN THIS WAY.

Brother Roger of Taize, who calls the churches to express their true family unity,

HELP US TO WALK IN THIS WAY.

Mother Teresa, who calls the church back to serving the poor.

HELP US TO WALK IN THIS WAY. AMEN.

**A Responsive Prayer: "Lead Us Not Into Temptation"
(note the trigger word "Lord..." to show when to start the response)**

LEADER: Jesus, you've called us to be disciples, you've called us to be followers of you.

There is no trial or pain that we can go through that is not known by you, that has not been felt by your flesh and blood.

The same spirit that leads us to God led you into the wilderness.

The same spirit that showed you the secret of love, freedom, wisdom, power and healing speaks to us and calls us to true faith.

Our God, when we hear you asking us to be holy and we're tempted to think of ourselves as better than others, Lord ...

PEOPLE: LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

LEADER: When we hear you call us to be peacemakers and we're tempted to just avoid confrontation, Lord ...

PEOPLE: LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

LEADER: When you call us to love one another and we're tempted to love only those we like, Lord ...

PEOPLE: LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

LEADER: When you call us to care for the poor and the outcast and we're tempted to token acts of charity, Lord ...

PEOPLE: LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

LEADER: When you call us to depend on you and we're tempted to depend on the things we say that you gave us, Lord ...

PEOPLE: LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

LEADER: And when you ask us to search for you as our first love and we're tempted to look for experiences of God or little signs that you exist, Lord ...

PEOPLE: LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

LEADER: ... and deliver us from evil. For your kingdom is freedom and we long to be free as Jesus leads us to you. Amen.

A Prayer of Intercession: Musical response in "Heaven Help Us"

This prayer may be accompanied by "Heaven Help Us" (LLS1), in which case the response of the **PEOPLE** is a sung refrain.

PEOPLE: HEAVEN HELP US... HEAR US, JESUS.

LEADER: God, there are dreams and there are nightmares. We dream of peace, equality and justice, but behind many doors people are exploited, and behind many eyes tears swell to burst whatever dams might contain them ...

PEOPLE: HEAVEN HELP US... HEAR US, JESUS.

LEADER: Lord, there are fields to harvest and there are fields of blood. If the blood of one cries out to you from the ground, can your ears tolerate the cries of millions from the killing fields of our time: in Baghdad, in Bosnia, Northern Ireland and South Africa, East Timor and West Texas ...

PEOPLE: HEAVEN HELP US... HEAR US, JESUS.

LEADER: God, we long to reach the top of the ladder. But our climb is as often frustrated by the church as it is by the world. The truths we seek are obscured by the pride, the fear, the closed-mindedness, and the cold-heartedness of others and of ourselves...

PEOPLE: HEAVEN HELP US... HEAR US, JESUS.

LEADER: Lord, we seek treasure that lasts, we seek integrity, authenticity, healing and hope, for ourselves, for our loved ones and for our community, for the church and for the world. We know there is power in heaven to help us.

The Prophet's Speech (From "The Garden to the City")

I saw a vision - it was last Thursday at eleven o'clock in the morning,

I was standing on the Necropolis, looking down over the city
and the cold, blue autumn sky broke open over my head
and the Spirit of God breathed on my eyes and my eyes were opened:

I saw Glasgow, the holy city, coming down out of heaven
shining like a rare jewel, sparkling like clear water in the eye of the sun
and all the sickness was gone from the city
and there were no more suburbs and schemes,
no difference between Bearsden and Drumchapel.

I saw the Clyde running with the water of life,
as bright as crystal,
as clear as glass
the children of Glasgow swimming in it

And the Spirit showed me the tree of life
growing on Glasgow Green

I looked out and there were no more homeless people
there were no women working the streets
there were no more junkies up the closes
HIV and AIDS were things of the past
there were no more racist attacks
no more attacks on gay people
no more rapists
no more stabbings
no more Protestants and Catholics
no more IRA graffiti, no more Orange marches
because there was no more hate
and I saw women walking safe at nights
and the men were full of passion and gentleness
and none of the children were ever abused
because the people's sex was full of justice and joy.

I saw an old woman throw back her head
and laugh like a young girl
and when the sky closed back her laughter rang in my head
for days and days
and would not go away.

This is what I saw, looking over the Gallowgate,
Looking up from the city of death
and I knew then that there would be a day of resurrection
and I believe that there will be a day of resurrection.

A Prayer for Remembering Baptism: a washing ritual

Living God,

A woman's tears drew from the well of her heart's grief,
But in touching the feet of Jesus,
they touched your heart.

And the waters Jesus used as he served his disciples
Washed away (his) lofty position
and pledged to us that we are one.

Awesome God,

Before there was even light in creation,
Your Spirit moved upon the waters.

Now, we take the waters upon us,
and ask that again your Spirit be here.

Amen.

A Meditation: "Journey Into the Wilderness"

- I -

Meditation has often been considered a journey, a journey made by seeking calmness, and through that calmness, better awareness of more subtle movements of the mind and heart.

Most spiritual traditions use some form of contemplative technique. This prayer journey is a reflection and a way of imaginative encounter. We are not emptying ourselves; we're just closing off other distractions as a discipline of the mind.

In this exercise tranquillity is not the ultimate goal. Relaxation may be one of the benefits, but in the end, the goal involves taking a different, non-self-centred perspective.

We would like to help guide your thoughts, so that you can make your own journey, and perhaps take a new perspective on some of the paths travelled.

Whether you participate or not is up to you. If you want to opt out, that's okay ... maybe you can just use the time as quiet time.

- II -

If everyone could find their own space now ... you might want to lie down, or (at least) sit in a relaxed, comfortable position, as this will last around fifteen minutes.

In this time, there *will* be noises around you ... just let them move around you. Don't worry if you need to cough, or shift your position ... just be at ease.

If you've found your space now, we'll begin.

Become quiet now, shut your eyes, and try to hear your own breathing.

We're going to think through relaxing our bodies now... do you think your body's relaxed?

Think about its surface ... which parts are touching the ground, and which aren't ?

Try this: tense every muscle up as tightly as you can ... including your face. Tense, tense, tense ... Now gently let it go. Relax it. Let it drop away, slowly, but let it go.

Try that once more ... tense up, tighten everything in your body ... clench ... and slowly, gradually, relax. Relax. Let everything go.

Think your way through your body, now, think about how relaxed each part can be. Start with your toes, your feet ...

Move through the muscles on up your legs ... they're completely loose now ... hardly part of you at all any more.

Now leave your legs behind ...

Go to your fingers, on up to your wrists, moving up your arms to your elbows ... your shoulders ...

Think about your neck ...your head ... your face: how relaxed can it be? Let the muscles just slip away ...

- III -

Keeping your eyes closed, think about the space around you now. There are people close by, but for each of you there's a space ... a bubble around you, an area where only you are.

In your mind, let the space around you spread out ... let it get bigger until you can't reach and touch its edges anymore. You are the only one in it. Your breath may be the only sound.

Let your space open out some more, open up to the sky. The sky is clear, the day is warming. Feel the sun on your face. Now the horizon is far away from you. Become conscious of the amount of space in this wilderness.

This is not a place like the one you have come from. There are no walls. There is only space There are no timetables, no meetings to get to, nothing to prepare. There is only the warmth of the day. There are no streets, no traffic ... there is only you, and the open sky. Feel just a bit of a breeze. Be aware of the earth below you, holding you up. What does it feel like? Is it grassy, or made of rock? Feel its texture.

Know the openness around. Look towards the horizon. Note the shape of the landscape. See what grows here.

- IV -

Now, just for now, there *is* no time. There is *all* time. There is nowhere you have to be, nothing you should have had done yesterday. There is nothing that needs tidying or putting away. Everything is in order in this open space ... a clear, easy space, spread out ... open upwards.

In that other place, the place we have come from, there are things we have meant to do, always reminding ourselves of, but forgotten in the busy-ness of the days. In that other place, somewhere half buried in the bustle, there is a person you mean to care for. There is

something you mean to put in order, if you could just take the time to sit down and really think it through.

In this openness, in the now, when your face is gently touched by the sun, there is all time, there is all space. Think what it would be like, to bring just one of those thoughts, those half-buried concerns here, where there is nothing to hold you in, when there is nothing to call you away.

Just enjoy being able to think about that, without the pressures of normal life. Enjoy the new perspective.

- V -

Now somewhere, where you can just see them, there is another person out here. You can't quite tell if he has seen you yet. He seems to be gazing out at the horizon. Don't worry about him ... you are still in the warmth. He is too, I guess ... the breeze is soft.

In time, maybe you can go over and meet him. You may not recognise him, but he doesn't seem threatening.

He has seen you. He knows you're out there like him, enjoying the peace and the life.

Join him now. Take a place nearby. Like you, he has left behind another place. He has come away from people who ask questions and make demands. He has done the same as you. He has come away, because he could not think clearly when there were sounds calling, when there were things before his eyes that needed to be done. He needed time to escape as well. He needed to be away, in the quiet, in the clear, to think, and not think, and look into himself, and look out to the horizon. Share a bit of your experience with him ... from your life, from your other place ... what did you bring?

Sit with him in silence a while. It is good to know that others come out here too, to find what they need.

Now take your leave of him ... wish him well with his thoughts.

- VI -

The sun has moved in the sky, and you will need to go soon. It's okay because you know you can come back, if your life in that other place, in the place you have come from, becomes too bounded. You know this open place, and you can come again.

Now you can begin to become aware again that the earth is under you, holding you up. Wherever you are, it will still do that.

And wherever you are, there is always a space that is yours ... even in your busy life, there is a space your body occupies where nothing else can be at the same time. It is your space. It is a little piece of what you had under the open sky ...

Now, even when there are others close by, there is your body in your space. You can still hear your breathing. It never stopped.

Think about your body now again, about your breathing. Feel the movement of your lungs. Feel the earth holding you up. Which parts of you are against it? Your legs, part of your body, your head ... find your hands again ... slowly move your fingers. Very soon, we're

going to be returning to the place we started from on this journey. Keep your eyes closed, but remember what it looked like. Prepare your mind to return to that place.

You are among many others, and yet still in a space all your own.
When you are ready, open your eyes again ...

Into the Desert: a short reflection

"Then Jesus was led up by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil."
- *Matthew 4:1*

"The LORD says about his people, 'I am going to lure her and lead her out into the wilderness and speak to her heart.'"
- *Hosea 2:16*

"Jesus says, 'When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.'"
- *Matthew 6:6*

Not every desert in our lives is one we are led into by God, and not all time we spend wandering in the wilderness is time given to God. But God does lead his people into the desert, not to punish them, but as an act of love.

Hosea tells us that God "lures" his people, God "woos" us away from a thousand other things that are making a claim on us, and leads us jealously to a place in which we can be alone with God our Lover.

The desert is not a place of escape. If the desert we are in is a place of trouble in our lives then it is obviously not so. Even if we choose to spend time away in the desert it is not to escape, just as the monastery is not an escape from the world.

The wise monk, Thomas Merton, said that we must only leave the world to learn to love it more. We must only leave behind needy people in order to become more committed to serving them. We must only embrace celibacy in order to deepen our love for men and women and ourselves. We must only vow poverty as a way of learning to see true value in the world. We must only "waste time" with God as a way of discovering what the time of our lives is for.

The desert is not a place for self-hatred or masochism. The Holy Spirit leads us into the desert to speak to our hearts. To go into the desert is to go on a journey of the heart.

Closing Prayer

LEADER: Let the Holy Spirit come.

**ALL: LEAD US TO THE WILDERNESS,
TAKE US OUT OF TIME,
GUIDE US INTO UNCLENCHED MOMENTS,
OPEN US TO CALM.**

LEADER: When we're overwhelmed by the confusion of world events and start to despair,
when we hear so many calls and don't know which to answer,
when we see so many things that need doing and don't know where to begin,
let the Holy Spirit come.

**ALL: LEAD US TO THE WILDERNESS,
TAKE US OUT OF TIME,
GUIDE US INTO UNCLENCHED MOMENTS,
OPEN US TO CALM.**

LEADER: When we squeeze ourselves into others' expectations, or them into ours,
when we lose sight of what we have to offer because of all the world
demands, let the Holy Spirit come.

**ALL: LEAD US TO THE WILDERNESS,
TAKE US OUT OF TIME,
GUIDE US INTO UNCLENCHED MOMENTS,
OPEN US TO CALM.**

LEADER: When we make promises to fit you into our time, forgetting that you are beyond all
time,
when we need it, Lord, so much that we can't even ask,
let the holy spirit come.

**ALL: LEAD US TO THE WILDERNESS,
TAKE US OUT OF TIME,
GUIDE US INTO UNCLENCHED MOMENTS,
OPEN US TO CALM.**

A Shorter Meditation: "I Am Your God"

Concentrate on the feel of the surface of the ground under your body ... the ground
supporting you and holding you up, pressing up from underneath you. Feel its touch under
your feet, your legs, your back, your head. Then think of your whole body supported by the
ground.

Then imagine that you are looking up to the roof of this tent. And you know that beyond the
roof is the sky, bright blue for a new day (or grey ...).

And then imagine that you are looking down on your body. What does it look like from
above? Imagine its size and its surface. Then begin to move upwards, seeing your body
from a greater distance. Move higher and higher. Remember your body within this tent but
move upwards so that the tent looks smaller, and you begin to see more of the site as if you
were ascending in an aeroplane, and then more of the countryside, and the farms spread out
below, and you can just make out the roofs of the villages. Climb higher and higher, but
without forgetting your body and its place.

And then imagine more and more of the earth's surface lit up by the light of the sun and the
moon. Its surface is rough and pitted and surrounded by a coloured aura. You are reaching
the stars, and you are surrounded by the planets and galaxies and shifting patterns of light,
and the light is strangely close and far away at the same time.

But you have not forgotten your body left thousands of light years away on the surface of the
earth gently spinning out its time.

And then imagine moving back through the solar system so that you are descending and getting closer to the earth's surface again, as if it is coming up to meet you ... the round earth, the outline of the continents, the island of Britain and England and the tents of Greenbelt, the focus becoming more and more detailed. You see more clearly the body that you left behind.

Imagine that this is a journey between two realms ... and it is a journey that God is taking between earth and heaven, crossing the distance, as if there is a ladder with its tip out of sight. And God is reaching down from the cosmos by this ladder. And the foot of the ladder is at your feet. Your body is the place where heaven and earth are meeting. You are the place in between. You are small and located on the ground, but you see things beyond your reach. And in this place God comes to you.

Think again of the sensations in your body as it rests on the ground and imagine that this body is touched by God. It is caressed by the angels from heaven. In this body, heaven and earth can meet. And blessing and love and promises are poured out on to it.

Now, imagine that God speaks to you and says,

"I am your God.

I am the God of your father and your mother, and of their fathers and mothers. I am your God.

I am the God of this earth, its matter and substance. I am your God.

I am the God of Jesus Christ, who came from infinity to humanity. I am your God.

I am the God of this place, these poles and canvas, this space. I am your God.

This is a holy and blessed place, because I am here.

I will bless you and protect you. I will never leave you. Wherever you go, I will be with you. Each space that you live in, I will live in. And I will bless you ..."

Walking prayer from a service on healing

This exercise is to help us develop our understanding of healing as something which might begin now, but is always as part of a journey.

It is a walking reflection, which means that we will walk and contemplate as we walk, stopping to let go of what we don't need for our journey, and pick up what we do.

This reflection should help us as we prepare for our healing communion, and also for the weeks ahead.

Please be ready to take with you on your walk the thoughts that you have been gathering about your own healing so far in the service. Although we will be moving about with others, this is still about you as an individual.

pause

Would you like to stand up where you are and stand still for a few moments.

We are going to walk whilst some gentle music plays, and when I start to speak again, could you kneel or crouch where you are in order to be closer to the ground. Whilst you are kneeling or crouching, I will say a short prayer and then we will move on again.

music up

Here we will stop.

God, for my healing journey I will need to shed some baggage. I leave behind me here my false need for distractions from my own pain. For my attempt to hide from my own sense of insecurity and failure, for the tendency to ease my own pain through bringing others down, for my tendency to disguise my pain with humour, or lying, or exploitative relationships, or alcohol or any other of my defences. I leave them here. With your healing I will be real.

music up

Here we will stop.

God, for my healing journey I will need to shed some baggage. I leave behind me here my fears of others. My fear of what they will say because I am your follower, my fear of their distaste of my being hopeful in a cynical world, my fear of being disliked if I call for justice, my fear of being elevated if I achieve good things, my fear of being outside the crowd. I leave it here. With your healing I will be courageous.

music up

Here we will stop.

God, for my healing journey I will need to shed some baggage. I leave here my resentment that life is not the way I want it to be. I cannot make it be the way I want, but still I try. I do not need the hurt of thinking this way, but I am willing to stay with this anguish in order to bring it to you, leaving behind my childish desire to have everything my way. With your healing I will be reconciled.

music up

Here we will stop.

God, for my healing journey I will need to shed some baggage. I leave behind here my sense of being a victim. Others have wronged me in the past, but I will not take on their wrongdoing and let it distort or defeat me. With your healing I will be strong.

music up

Here we will stop.

God, for my healing journey I will need to shed some baggage. I leave here my sense of security in myself as I know me. I am frightened of growth and frightened of change. I am scared of being someone I will not completely recognise but understand that I will be more alive. I leave my fears here. With your healing I will be awakened.