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Welcome to this time of gathering together to worship and reflect. Think of others you know from your worshipping community and remember we are never alone, as we belong to God and are connected in fellowship with other Christians. Pause as we begin our time of worship, and focus on God.

Opening Prayer

Loving God,

thank you for all that you have entrusted to us.

Thank you for our lives, our families and friends, our homes, our work, our gifts and our opportunities.

Help us to remember that these things are gifts from you, not possessions that we can take for granted.

Teach us to care for what you have given us and to use it wisely and generously.

Help us to listen when you speak to us, to recognise your presence in our everyday lives, and to welcome Jesus into our hearts.

Amen.

Prayer for Forgiveness

Merciful God,

sometimes we forget that our lives belong to you.

We can become selfish, thinking only about what we want.

We can take your gifts for granted.

We can ignore the people who need our help.

We can hear your voice but choose not to listen.

Forgive us when we have failed to care for your vineyard.

Forgive us for the times we have been unkind, impatient, selfish or unwilling to change.

Thank you for never giving up on us.

Help us to turn back to you and make a fresh start.

Amen.

Hymn : Christ is made the sure foundation

1 Christ is made the sure foundation,
Christ the head and cornerstone,
chosen of the Lord, and precious,
binding all the church in one,
holy Zion's help forever,
and her confidence alone.

2 All that dedicated city,
dearly loved of God on high,
in exultant jubilation
pours perpetual melody,
God the One in Three adoring
in glad hymns eternally.

3 To this temple, where we call You,
come, O Lord of Hosts, today;
with accustomed lovingkindness,
hear Your servants as they pray;
and Your fullest benediction
shed within its walls away.

4 Lord, here grant to all Your servants
what they ask of You to gain,
what they gain from You, forever
with the blessed to retain,
and hereafter in Your glory
evermore with You to reign.

5 Praise and honour to the Father,
praise and honour to the Son,
praise and honour to the Spirit,
ever Three, and ever One,
one in might, and one in glory,
while unending ages run.

Reflection: Cultivating the Garden of the Heart

Think about the things you have spent your life building, tending, and caring for. Perhaps it is a **family**, a **long career**, a **home**, or even a literal **garden**. We know how much effort goes into preparation. You turn the soil, clear the rocks, build fences to keep out pests, and feed the plants. You invest your time, energy, and love. Naturally, you look forward to the harvest—the sweet tomatoes, the beautiful flowers, or the joy of seeing your family thrive.

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells a story about a landowner who did exactly that. He built a beautiful, fully equipped vineyard and leased it to tenants. He did all the heavy lifting, then trusted others to care for it. But when harvest time came, the tenants forgot their place. They mistook the landowner's **generosity** for their own **ownership**. They refused to share the fruit and even turned violent.

It is easy to look at the tenants and wonder how they could be so short-sighted. Yet, if we are honest, we all face the temptation to confuse **stewardship** with **ownership**.

As we get older, our relationship with time and possession changes. We look back on a lifetime of achievements. It is a natural season for reflection. The deep truth Jesus reminds us of is that everything we have—our talents, our memories, our families, and our very breath—is a gift on loan from God. We are not the owners of the vineyard; we are the caretakers.

God has invested deeply in each of us. He has fenced us with His protection and nourished us with His grace over many decades. Now, He looks for the harvest.

What does that harvest look like in our later years? It isn't measured in material wealth or busy schedules. The fruit God looks for is **patience**, **kindness**, **gratitude**, and a **listening ear** for someone in need or who is lonely. It is the wisdom and encouragement shared with others.

When we view our lives as a gift, our hearts shift from entitlement to gratitude. We stop gripping things tightly and learn to open our hands. Let us offer God the beautiful fruit of a life well-lived in His service, trusting that the cornerstone of our lives remains firm.

Prayer of Commitment

Lord Jesus,
you have entrusted each of us with something special.
Help us to use our gifts to make a difference.
When we have time, help us to give some of it to others.
When we have money, help us to be generous.
When we have talents, help us to use them for good.
When someone needs encouragement, help us to offer kind words.
When we see something that is wrong, give us the courage to act.
Make our lives fruitful, so that others may experience your love through us.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Hymn:

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me;
break me, melt me, mould me, fill me;
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Prayer for Our Community

God of love,
we pray for our families, our schools, our workplaces and our communities.
Help us to be people who care for one another.
Where there is loneliness, help us bring friendship.
Where there is sadness, help us bring comfort.
Where there is conflict, help us bring peace.
Where there is need, help us be generous.
Remind us that we are all part of your vineyard and that we have a responsibility to care for one another.
Amen.

Closing Prayer

Father God,
thank you for sending your Son, Jesus.
Help us not to turn away from him, but to listen to his teaching and follow his example.
Give us grateful hearts for all that we have received.
Give us generous hearts to share what we have.
Give us humble hearts that are willing to change.
And help us to remember throughout this week:
We are not simply owners of what we have—we are stewards of God's gifts.
May our lives bear good fruit and bring glory to you.
Amen.