

A Liturgy for the North



Gathering

Leader: As we gather, we light a candle and centre our hearts before God.

a candle or outdoor brazier is lit.

We have come from many places and journeyed alone to be together.
We come as we are, with our hopes and fears.
Scattered and diverse, with all our differences, we are one in you.
Draw us deeper into your presence,
that we may hear your heartbeat for the North,
for this land and its people.
Anchor our hearts in your love and make us one in you.

All: Amen.

Leader: I welcome you, I honour you and I bless you

The leader invites people to turn to one another saying

All: I welcome you, I honour you and I bless you

Hymn / Song: suggested *Christ be our light*

Leader:

Christ of the rising and setting sun, of city streets and village greens,
of dales and moors, hills and valleys.
Christ who kindles light in every darkened place,
gather us now in the fire of your love.

All: Christ, be our light and shine in our hearts.

Leader:

Kindle your light in our hearts, Lord,
that your fire may burn brightly
in our homes, churches and communities.
Let the light of your kingdom scatter the darkness,
and set the North ablaze with your glory.

All: Amen.

Leader:
From Tweed to Humber, from Esk to Mersey,
from eastern coast to western shore,
let the people rejoice.

All: Lord, let every hill and valley, moor and mountain,
coast and countryside, hamlet and homestead,
village and town, city and conurbation, declare your praise.
Let young and old, every tribe and culture, give you honour and praise.

Remembering

Reading: Isaiah 58:11,12

The Lord will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your frame.
You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.
Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
and will raise up the age-old foundations;
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

Leader:
Building the new on the foundation of the old,
we thank you, Lord, for those who have gone before us
and whose legacy inspires us.
For Aidan, Cuthbert, Hild and all your saints.
We thank you that your gospel has touched and transformed lives,
its good news carried like a torch through the land,
its light bringing redemption and renewal.

All: Lord, for those who have gone before us in the faith, we give you thanks.
May the same Spirit who called and empowered them
lead us to walk again the ancient paths, repair the broken altars
and build the new on the good foundations of old.

Confessing and Uniting

READING: John 17:23

I in them and you in me, so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Leader:

Lord, we confess that we have not lived as those who you've called to be children of light. Have mercy on us, and deliver us from the shadows in our lives and in your Church. Forgive our attitudes, words and deeds that have grieved your Spirit and sown division. Forgive our self-sufficiency and our trust in human endeavour alone. In our weakness, renew us in your strength. In our poverty, clothe us with the riches of your grace. Abiding in you, help us to be present, to listen well and discern the movement of your Spirit across the North. Teach us to think deeply, live authentically and be fruitful. Give us the grace to serve humbly, the simplicity to love our neighbours generously and boldness with tenderness to proclaim your truth. Call us afresh into the adventure of pilgrimage, sharing the good news with everyone, everywhere. Raise up pioneers and planters, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, missionaries, abbots and abbesses. Pour out your gifts on your people for the renewing and reimagining of your Church and the coming of your kingdom.

The leader invites everyone to join hands

You have called us to love one another
that the world might know we are your disciples.
Unite our hearts, that we may walk together,
honouring, serving and blessing one another, collaborators in the Great Commission,
companions on the missional adventure.
As Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one, make us one.

All: Amen.

The leader invites everyone to share the Peace together.

Hymn / Song: suggested *A new commandment I give unto you*

We pray for all your people,
for every believer bearing witness to your love across the North:
where there is weariness, grant renewal; where there is discord, bring peace; where there is need, make our hearts and hands swift to serve.
Give us courage and grace to be a welcoming presence in our communities, sharing your love in word and deed.
Help us to welcome the stranger, uphold the vulnerable, bring good news to the poor, and be bearers of hope.

All: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Encircling Prayers

Reading: John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all humanity. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

Leader:

Let us open our hearts in prayer, stretch out our hands and ask that the light of Christ may fall on this land like the dawn, bringing life and love, hope and healing, mercy and peace.

All: Circle us Lord and bless the North with your light.

The leader invites people to quietly bring their prayer sticks to a table to build a 'bonfire of intercession' whilst the prayers below are offered.

During the encircling praying a drumbeat / possibly bodhran could be played denoting the heartbeat of God for people and places.

For People

Leader:

We hold before you, Lord, the people of the North:
the strong and the struggling, the hopeful and the hurting,
those who rejoice and those who weep.
the anxious and forgotten, those who suffer and all who grieve,
those trapped by poverty, hungry and cold,
those locked in addiction, crippled by fear.
those longing for meaning, dignity and belonging,
the homeless, the stranger, the refugee.
Bless the young who dream, the old who remember,
the families who hold things together,
the lonely who long for connection
and the weary who carry more than they can say.

Leader: Circle us, Lord.

All: Circle us Lord and bless the North with your encompassing light.

For Places

Leader:

Establish the work of our hands, Lord.

We bring before you the work of this land and the lives of its people:

its farms and fisheries, its industry and innovation, its enterprise and endeavour.

Bless every factory and office, ship and building site, garden and forest, school and college, hospital, hospice and care home, every charity, council and public service, every

prison and probation service, every place of transport, trade and hospitality and every arena of sport, recreation, arts and culture.

Circle us, Lord.

All: Circle us, Lord and bless the North with your illuminating light.

For Justice and Peace

READING: Isaiah 58:6-10

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?

Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter,
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;
then your righteousness will go before you,
and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard.
Then you will call, and the Lord will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.

Leader:

Lord, we cry out to you.

Where hearts are divided, breathe peace.

where burdens are heavy, breathe rest.

where injustice lingers, breathe truth.

where fear takes hold, breathe courage.

where anger takes root, breathe mercy.

where sorrow endures, breathe comfort.

where there is despair, kindle hope.

where communities feel forgotten,

where streets bear hardship,

where families struggle quietly,

let your compassion bring help and relief.

Where rivalry has overshadowed relationship, let friendship rise.

Where memory has hardened into division, let healing flow.

For hurts that linger, spoken or unspoken, let reconciliation grow.

Where pride has hindered peace,

where competition has eclipsed compassion,

and prejudice has sown distance and discord,
let your tender mercy flow.
By your grace, turn boundaries into bridges,
old griefs into wells of compassion
and estrangement into welcome.

Circle us, Lord.

All: Circle us, Lord and bless the North with your reconciling light.

The leader leads a prayer at the 'intercession bonfire'

Declaring

Leader:

In the name of the living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
we speak light and life over the North.

All: In the name of the living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
we speak light and life over the North.

Leader:

Lord Jesus, you walked the road with others,
as guest and host; you blessed the stranger's table,
spoke peace to the weary and healed the broken-hearted.
You crossed religious boundaries,
modelled church without walls
and revealed the kingdom on the streets.

All: Teach us to walk in your ways.

Leader:

You called the saints of old to wander for the love of Christ,
to pioneer and plant, to pray and go,
to everyone and everywhere,
carrying the torch of the gospel wherever your Spirit led.

All: Send us as you sent them.

Leader:

Give us hearts of compassion, eyes to see, ears to listen,
words of kindness, hands of healing and the Spirit's wisdom.

All: Amen.

Leader:

When the task feels heavy, be our strength.
When our words feel fragile, be our voice.
When the way seems clouded, illumine our path.

All: Amen.

Hymn / Song: suggested *Here I am Lord*

Lorica Prayer of Protection

Leader: Encircle us, Lord, with your peace and protection.

All:

Christ be with us, Christ within us,
Christ behind us, Christ before us,
Christ beside us, Christ to win us,
Christ to comfort and restore us.
Christ beneath us, Christ above us,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in the hearts of all that love us,
Christ in the mouths of friend and stranger.

Commissioning

The leader invites everyone to turn inwards to face one another

Leader: Lord, you command us to love one another.

All: We hear and respond to your command.

Leader: Lord, you call us to be one.

All: We hear and respond to your prayer.

The leader invites everyone to turn outwards

Leader: Lord, you commission us to go and make disciples.

All: We hear and respond to your call.

Leader:

Pioneering and planting, sowing and growing,
send us out as your ambassadors, disciples making disciples.
Empower us with courage and boldness,
inspiration and imagination,
peace in our hearts and joy in our steps.
Go before us, Lord,
open hearts and homes to receive your love.
Fan the flames of this movement to multiply:
missionaries with a message,
reaching everyone, everywhere,
one by one, friend to friend,
neighbour to neighbour, colleague to colleague,
no exclusions or partitions,

across every class and culture;
lives redeemed, places transformed.
Lord, your kingdom come!

Hymn / Song: suggested *Let The Flame Burn Brighter (We'll walk the land) / The trees of the field*

Opportunity could be given to anoint people with the oil of gladness as they sing / leave

All: Amen.

Northumbrian Blessing

Leader:

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you, wherever he may send you.
May he guide you through the wilderness and protect you through the storm.
May he bring you home rejoicing, at the wonders he has shown you.
May he bring you home rejoicing, once again within our doors.

All: Amen.

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Northumbria Blessing used with permission, Northumbria Community Trust

NOTE:

For leader, read leaders / facilitators

RESOURCES:

- Candles / brazier for opening
- Map / image of the North to be focused on during the Declaring.
- Wooden craft lolly sticks on which people are encouraged to write the names of people or places and to place them on the 'bonfire of intercession' when invited.
- Anointing oil

Suggested Songs and Hymns

Be Thou my vision O Lord of my heart

Naught be all else to me save that Thou art

Thou my best thought in the day and the night

Waking or sleeping Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my wisdom be Thou my true word

I ever with thee and Thou with me Lord

Thou my great Father and I Thy true son

Thou in me dwelling and I with Thee one

Be Thou my breastplate my sword for the fight

*Be Thou my armour and be Thou my might
Thou my souls shelter and Thou my high tower
Raise Thou me heavenwards O power of my power*

*Riches I heed not nor mans empty praise
Thou mine inheritance through all of my days
Thou and Thou only the first in my heart
High King of Heaven my treasure Thou art.*

*O High King of Heaven when battle is done
Grant heavens joy to me bright heavens son
Christ of my own heart whatever befall
Still be my vision O ruler of all*

O Living God we come to you
*and seek your face this day;
that in our hearts and on our minds
Your ways be known, Your will be done
that we might follow you
that we might follow you*

*O God in whom we place our trust
in laughter and in pain.
Bring light into our darkness Lord,
speak words of hope of peace and joy,
grant wisdom for each day
grant wisdom for each day*

*The days in which we live are tense, uncertain and unsure.
Speak to our lives,
our nation Lord
and in your mercy hear our cry:
Forgive and mend our ways
Forgive and mend our ways*

*Imagination, Lord we pray
will be inspired by you:
To see and feel and touch and taste
to hear, respond and in your grace
to give our lives to you,
to give our lives to you,*

*Encircle us O' Lord we pray
who seek your kingdom here;
that wisdom, strength
and hope and trust
will shape our faith,
inform our lives*

your will be done on earth

your will be done on earth

tune: Repton. Words ~ Roy Searle. Musical arrangement ~ Jill Sutheran

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Christ be our light

Longing for light, we wait in darkness

Longing for truth, we turn to You

Make us Your own, Your holy people

Light for the world to see

Christ, be our light

Shine in our hearts

Shine through the darkness

Christ, be our light

Shine in Your church gathered today

Longing for shelter, many are homeless

Longing for warmth, many are cold

Make us Your building, sheltering others

Walls made of living stone

Christ, be our light

Shine in our hearts

Shine through the darkness

Christ, be our light

Shine in Your church gathered today

Many the gifts, many the people

Many the hearts that yearn to belong

Let us be servants to one another

Making Your kingdom come

Christ, be our light

Shine in our hearts

Shine through the darkness

Christ, be our light

Shine in Your church gathered today

Songwriters: Bernadette Farrell

Christ, Be Our Light lyrics © Oregon Catholic Press Music

Here I am Lord

I, the Lord of sea and sky,

I have heard my people cry.

All who dwell in dark and sin

my hand will save.

I, who made the stars of night,

I will make their darkness bright.

Who will bear my light to them?

Whom shall I send?

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?

*I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

*I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my words to them.
Whom shall I send?*

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

*I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will send the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?*

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

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A new commandment I give unto you

*A new commandment I give unto you:
that you love one another as I have loved you,
that you love one another as I have loved you.
By this shall all know that you are my disciples:
if you have love one for another.
By this shall all know that you are my disciples:
if you have love one for another.*

Roy Crabtree

Let The Flame Burn Brighter (We'll walk the land)

*We'll walk the land
With hearts on fire
And every step will be a prayer
Hope is rising
New day dawning
Sound of singing
Fills the air*

*Two thousand years
And still the flame
Is burning bright
Across the land
Hearts are waiting
Longing, aching
For awakening
Once again*

*Let the flame burn brighter
In the heart of the darkness
Turning night to glorious day
Let the song grow louder
As our love grows stronger
Let it shine, let it shine*

*We'll walk for truth
Speak out for love
In Jesus' name
We shall be strong
To lift the fallen
To save the children
To fill the nation
With your song*

Graham Kendrick

Northumbrian Blessing

*May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you
wherever he may send you.
May he guide you through the wilderness
and protect you through the storm.
May he bring you home rejoicing
at the wonders he has shown you.
May he bring you home rejoicing,
once again within our doors.*

Northumbria Community Trust

The Trees of the Field

*You shall go out with joy
And be led forth with peace
The mountains and the hills
Will break forth before you
There'll be shouts of joy
And all the trees of the field
Will clap, will clap their hands
And all the trees of the field
Will clap their hands
The trees of the field
Will clap their hands
The trees of the field
Will clap their hands
While you go out with joy*

Music by Stuart Dauermann
Words by Steffi Geiser Rubin

