



UNITED BENEFICE OF CUDHAM & DOWNE

All-Age Father's Day Service

Sunday 16th June 2024



Father's Day Service

*please say the words in **bold***

Opening prayer

St John writes 'Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.' Let us pray.

Father, you are amazing!

When I look at you, I see your father's heart. I feel your fatherly love, and your fatherly touch strengthens me.

I thank you for the example you give as a father to us – an example that teaches us how to be fathers in this world to our own dependants.

Here, now on Father's Day, bless us deeply as we allow your heart to touch our own families.

Help us to receive and to share your love in this world so that many will see and experience the Father's love in abundance.

Thank you, Jesus. **Amen**

**Song: Praise, my soul, the King of heaven,
to his feet thy tribute bring;
ransomed healed, restored, forgiven,
who like me his praise should sing?
Praise him, praise him,
Praise him, praise him,
praise the everlasting King.**

Praise him for his grace and favour
to our fathers in distress;
praise him still the same for ever,
slow to chide and swift to bless:
Praise him, praise him,
Praise him, praise him,
glorious in his faithfulness.

Father-like, he tends and spares us,
well our feeble frame he knows;
in his hands he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes:
Praise him, praise him,
Praise him, praise him,
widely as his mercy flows.

Angels, help us to adore him;
ye behold him face to face;
sun and moon bow down before him,
dwellers all in time and space:
Praise him, praise him,
Praise him, praise him,
praise with us the God of grace.

H F Lyte

Reflective prayer leading to confession

Our relationships with our fathers are complicated.
For some of us, our father's love is like God's love
-- too deep, too long, too wide, too strong to measure.

Some of our dads are here; some were never here.

For some of us, God's love fills in the empty spaces our fathers left behind.

All of us are shaped by the relationship or lack of relationship with our fathers.

On this day when we remember what it means to have a father or be a father, we recognize the importance of fathers in our communities. We pledge as a congregation to love and nurture the fathers among us so that they will manifest the love of God in all that they do.

Let us return to the Lord our God and say to him:

Father,

we have sinned against heaven and against you.

We are not worthy to be called your children.

We turn to you again.

Have mercy on us,

bring us back to yourself

as those who once were dead

but now have life through Christ our Lord. Amen.

May the God of love
bring you back to himself,
forgive you your sins,
and assure you of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Song: Father God, I wonder how I managed to exist
Without the knowledge of Your parenthood and Your loving care
Now I am Your son, I am adopted in Your family
and I can never be alone
'Cause Father God, You're there beside me**

**I will sing Your praises
I will sing Your praises
I will sing Your praises forevermore
I will sing Your praises
I will sing Your praises
I will sing Your praises forevermore**

Ishmael

Bible reading (Luke 15:11-24)

¹¹ Jesus said: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

¹³ "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!

¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Short talk – Kim

Creed

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.
We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

***Song:* How deep the Father's love for us,
How vast beyond all measure!
That He should give His only Son,
To make a wretch His treasure.
How great the pain of searing loss!
The Father turns His face away;
As wounds which marred the Chosen One
Bring many sons to glory.**

**Behold the man upon a cross:
My sin upon His shoulders;
Ashamed I hear my mocking voice
Call out among the scoffers.
It was my sin that held Him there
Until it was accomplished;
His dying breath has brought me life:
I know that it is finished.**

**I will not boast in anything:
No gifts, no power, no wisdom;
But I will boast in Jesus Christ:
His death and resurrection.
Why should I gain from His reward?
I cannot give an answer;
But this I know with all my heart:
His wounds have paid my ransom.**

Stuart Townend

Reflective Candle lighting

We light a candle for all fathers in our community... (*pause*).

May they continue to love and nurture children and cherish their precious gift of fathering. May they offer friendship, support and encouragement to each other.

We light a candle for fathers here today... (*pause*).

We give thanks for the life and love they give us. May we show them respect and love and remember to tell them often how grateful we are.

We light a candle for men who have assumed a fathering role... (*pause*).

We give thanks for how they mentor and guide us with fatherly love and advice.

We light a candle for all fathers in war torn lands and all fathers who are refugees... (*pause*).

May they be given the right to raise their children in peace, dignity and delight.

We light a candle for all our fathers and grandfathers who have died...
(*pause*).

We give thanks for their love, their laughter and their labour. We give thanks for the way they shaped our values, our faith and our family traditions and rituals. May they rest in peace.

God of love, you gave us fathers to give life to us and glory to you.

We celebrate fathers and those who have a fatherly role by giving a gift to all men present this morning

Prayers ending with

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

***After the notices, we sing: Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with Thee.
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not,
As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be***

*Great is Thy faithfulness,
Great is Thy faithfulness,
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided,
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me*

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest;
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth.
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide.
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow;
Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside.

Closing responses

The Lord God almighty is our Father:
he loves us and tenderly cares for us.

The Lord Jesus Christ is our Saviour:
he has redeemed us and will defend us to the end.

The Lord, the Holy Spirit is among us:
he will lead us in God's holy way.

To God almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be praise and glory today and for ever. Amen.

Thank you for joining us for worship this morning. Help yourself to hot and cold drinks and biscuits from the church before you go home.

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