

Finding Welcome

Alternative Readings, Collects and Eucharistic Propers for Lent 2012

Ash Wednesday 22nd February

(The usual readings for Ash Wednesday may be used, but you may like to flavour them with a sense of penitence for the Church's lack of welcome, esoteric nature and inward-looking focus: however welcoming your local church may be, this is the reputation we have nationwide!)

Lent 1 26th February

Open Hearts: discovering God's heart of welcome

Collect:

Let us pray that we may reflect the Father's heart of welcome.

Silence

Loving Father, your arms are always open wide
to welcome the wanderers back to their home,
and to re clothe them with the dignity of the children of God.
Give us the same heart for the lost,
that we, and our communities,
may always reach out with the welcome
which lies deep in your heart.
We pray through him who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Postcommunion:

Generous God, you have welcomed us to your table,
poor, unworthy and broken as we are,
and fed us with the bread of heaven and the wine of the kingdom.
Send us to the lost,
that we may welcome them as you have welcomed us.

Genesis 18:1-10a

Psalm 146

Hebrews 13:1-6

Luke 15:11-32

Response: The Lord sustains the fatherless and the widow.

Lent 2 4th March

Open Invitation: finding a way into the Christian Community

Collect:

Let us pray that we may speak to others of God's love.

Silence

Welcoming God,
you have spoken through your prophets,
but finally through your Son Jesus Christ,
and now you speak to us through one another.
Give us boldness to tell of your goodness,
and courage to introduce others
to your endless love,
that together we may find salvation
through our Lord Jesus Christ
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Postcommunion:

Strengthen and encourage us, we pray
that as we have fed at your table,
so others may be drawn to the heavenly banquet
through our invitations.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Psalms 119:41-48

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

John 1:40-46

Response: I will speak of your laws and not be put to shame.

Lent 3 11th March

Open Doors: Using our Buildings

Collect:

Let us pray that God will build his church here on earth.

Silence

Almighty God,
you are building us, as living stones,
into a temple fit for your praise,
founded on Jesus Christ, the chief cornerstone.
Heaven itself cannot contain you,
but you are pleased to dwell among your people.
May your church on earth
reflect your heart of welcome,
and may you be pleased to inhabit our praises,
through him who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Postcommunion:

In this humble house of prayer, O Lord,
we have offered you our worship
and received your grace.
Build us all, we pray,
into a house of welcome for all nations.

2 Chronicles 2:1-10

Psalms 29

Response: All in God's temple cry 'Glory!'

Acts 17:22-31

Luke 14:16-23

Lent 4 18th March

Open Services: offering a welcome in worship

Collect:

Let us pray that our worship may be pleasing to God and open to all.

Silence

Lord God,
you have opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers,
and have invited us all
to join the heavenly worship of saints and angels.
May our humble offerings of praise here on earth
be acceptable to you and welcoming to all,
until it is caught up in the worship of eternity
through him whom we worship with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Postcommunion:

Embracing God,
you welcome us, who once were lost,
to join your family and feast at your table.
As we have been nourished,
so may we nourish others:
as we have been welcomed and included,
so may our hearts be open to all.

Deuteronomy 26:1-12

Psalms 68:1-6

Response: God gives the desolate a home

Colossians 3:12-17

John 12:1-8

(Collects and readings for Mothering Sunday may be used, but you may like to flavour them with the sense of the nurturing welcome and hospitality which is a characteristic of good families.)

Lent 5 25th March
Open to all: helping people to belong

Collect:

Let us pray that we, and all God's people,
may grow to maturity in the body of Christ.

Silence

Father God, you do not leave us as orphans,
but you send us your Holy Spirit
that we may become members of your family..
You do not leave us as infants,
but you feed us with meat from your word,
that we may grow in maturity.
Build us up as your body, we pray,
until each of us is presented to you
mature in Jesus Christ,
who with you and the Holy Spirit
is ever worthy to be praised,
one God, now and for ever.

Postcommunion:

Through the bread of heaven,
the wine of the kingdom,
and wholesome food from your Word,
we grow to maturity in Christ.
Enable us, we pray,
to help all who come seeking you,
to meet you, grow up in you,
and take their place in your church,
both now on earth,
and in the age to come in heaven.

Ruth 1:8-18

Psalm 84

Response: Blessed are those who dwell in your house.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Mark 10:17-30

Eucharistic Propers

Invitation to confession:

With an open heart, God has welcomed us.
Let us confess to him our rejection of others,
the smallness of our circle,
and the narrowness of our doors.
Let us find in him the forgiveness,
which enables us to be open to others.

Gospel acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia.
Come and learn from God,
who is open-hearted and who welcomes all.
Alleluia.

Introduction to the Peace:

God has welcomed into his household
those who were near and those who were far off:
so we welcome one another with words of peace.
The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Short preface:

And now we give you thanks
that in your love you have welcomed us into your kingdom
and called us to welcome others,
that they may find, with us,
a place at your table,
and new status as sons and daughters
of the King most high.

Extended preface (for use with Eucharistic Prayers A, B and E):

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Through him you created the universe, and gave us life.
When we turned from you,
resisted your embrace and shut our hearts to your gaze,
you sent him to be our Saviour,
to reach out in the costliness of true love,
and to call us back to our natural Father and our true home.
Though we had sinned, you welcomed us back into your presence,
and you sent us out to welcome others,
that all who would hear your call
should find a place in your kingdom and a seat at your table.
Your church bears witness to your forgiving love,
and welcomes all who seek you
to find a place of belonging,
until that day when we shall meet you face to face,
and join in the saints' and angels' eternal song of praise:

Holy, holy, Holy Lord ...

Invitation:

The Lord's table is set for you:
here you are welcomed, wanted, loved.
Here is your place of belonging.
Draw near with faith.

Blessing:

God our Father,
who has welcomed you to his table and to his kingdom,
strengthen you to welcome others,
that together we may be built into a living temple,
a dwelling-place for the Spirit.
And the blessing ...