**Morning Praise @ Home 30th March 2025**

**Mothering Sunday**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Readings John 21:15 – 17 Ephesians 4:11 – 16

### Reflection *THE NURTURING CHURCH*

The original intention of Mothering Sunday was to help people working away from family and home to return to see the family - especially their mothers, and to revisit their Mother Church – usually a Cathedral. The deeper purpose behind this reunion was to celebrate those who nurture us in life and faith: Mothers (parents) and Mother Church.

Jesus relentlessly expresses to Peter the importance of nurturing and caring for God’s family of all ages. (John 21:15-17)

“Simon, do you love Me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.”

**“Tend My lambs.”**

“Simon, do you love Me?”

“Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.”

**“Shepherd My sheep.”**

“Simon, do you love Me?”

“Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.”

**“Tend My sheep.”**

Jesus gives the leader of the Apostles the call to nurture the people of God.

Paul expressed the same ideas differently in Ephesians 4:11-16. This passage explains how nurturing is a vital part of God’s purpose for the church - nurturing his people through to maturity of faith and to share together in serving God’s plans.

As we go through the passage, ask yourself, how do we as a local church fulfil what God wants from us? Then, ask yourself, am I willing to do what God asks of me?

Verses 11-13 are one long sentence.

In the first part of the sentence, verses 11-12, we learn that God gives a gift to the followers of Jesus. The gift is a gift of people. He gives to the Church ministry leaders (always plural) with a range of gifts. God gives apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

These gifts are never found together in one person and this calls for a team approach. Thereafter the purpose of giving such ministry leaders to the family of God is to help us all to grow in faith and to become active participants in serving the local church.

How do we know when the Church is mature or at least being built up towards maturity?

To answer the question, we need to finish the sentence in verse 13. Paul speaks of being united in our shared faith: On the same path.

Just four sentences earlier, the Apostle had written, “*There is* one body, one Spirit, one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father.”

We are to have a shared faith in the Lord Jesus. He is to be the primary focus of every Church and every goal - Knowledge of the Son of God. He is what should excite and enable the Church family to be at its best. And what does that look like?

We are all to discover who He is and what He did. We are to know of His character, wisdom, love, compassion, and truth. God wants us to know the unfathomable riches of Christ. We are to know how to apply Jesus in every area of life.

Unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God are measurable. We measure our faith and knowledge of Christ by how much Jesus is Lord of our life. This is a primary indicator of a healthy, nurtured Christian community.

Jesus is the King and Lord over all things. He is Lord of this age, the age before the new heavens and the new earth, and He is Lord in the age to come.

The fullness of Christ directly relates to him being our number One. Christian maturity is measured by how much Jesus is Lord of our life.

Our growing relationship with Jesus informs us that Jesus is good. His ways are right. He loves us and wants the best for us. The knowledge of Jesus leads to our faith in Jesus. We trust Him. We willingly submit to Him in faith.

God’s aim in nurturing us is that we reach a level of maturity so that it is clear that Jesus is our Lord. We love Jesus as our Lord. We trust Him with our lives.

We are mature when Jesus is Lord over our job performance. Jesus is to be Lord over our marriage and relationships. We are mature when Jesus is Lord over our emotions, leisure time, and lifestyle. A mature Christian submits to Jesus in every part of life.

God’s nurture will always seek the best for us and from us.

This may not be the first thing that comes into your mind when you think of Mothering Sunday but its core to what it was meant to be. Mother Church nurtures us for the sake of Jesus. **Amen**

### Affirmation of faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession**

Lord of all wisdom,
Today, we pause to celebrate the incredible women in our lives.
We thank You for all the mothers who nurture us with boundless love,
guiding us through life’s challenges with strength and grace.
We also honour the women who may not have children of their own
but have shared motherly moments, offering kindness, support, and wisdom to those around them.

Lord of grace, we pray for the children who carry the ache of losing their mothers,
we lift them up to You, asking for comfort and peace.
May the memories of love and laughter surround them,
reminding them that those ties can never be broken.
We thank You for the gift of unconditional love that reflects the essence of motherhood. Help us to carry that love forward, sharing it with others in our own unique ways. **Amen.**

Lord of the Church, we thank you for the Church which exists to nurture our faith in the Lord Jesus. Help all who lead in your Church to enable the Church to always refocus on Jesus and to serve him in our daily lives. Help us to grow in faith and to nurture faith in each generation. Help us to have an infectious faith so that others are drawn to know your love and care, In Jesus name. **Amen.**

God of heaven, we thank you for the precious gift of love, which we receive from our Mothers, family and friends.
We give you thanks for the ability to care, nurture and love which you have set deep within us.
Help us to use these gifts for the good of our families and friends and to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the one who loves us so much, that he gave his life for us. **Amen.**

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary, shared the life of a home in Nazareth,
and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself:
strengthen us in our daily living that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal; through Jesus Christ our Lord, **Amen**

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***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 today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**