



ROGATION SUNDAY

22 MAY 2022



Arthur Rank
Centre
CONFIDENT RURAL CHRISTIANS



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Service outline

Wherever your service takes place, here is a suggested structure:

1. Gather
2. Hear the Word
3. Respond to the Word
4. Go out to spread the Good News

This basic structure can be used for a fairly short, static service, or for a walk that takes some hours. Effectively, however long your planned service is, you will need to gather people at the beginning, send them out at the end, and ensure people can hear the word of God and respond to it – and in all of these stages there is the opportunity to be creative.



Gathering

This may be as simple as a liturgical greeting (The Lord be with you!), or quite complicated as people check their boots are well laced, water bottles are full, rucksack is comfy, and that safety instructions for a walk are given. Alongside the practical preparations to move as a group, there will be prayers such as

Reader 1	Behold the kingdom of our Lord Behold the beauty of the sky, The warmth of the earth, The wonders of God's creation
Reader 2	Come with joy and praise God's holy name
All	Amen
(Robson, P., <i>A Celtic Liturgy</i> , SPCK, London, 2008, p48)	

You may wish to pray for God's blessing on feet and footwear if you are walking.

If you are gathering together in church or outside, you could ask people to bring something representative from their gardens, whether a stone, a picture, a plant cutting or something else, and you could talk about those and what they mean as you gather.

The Word: SUGGESTED READINGS

1 Kings 8:35-40

Psalms 104:24-30

Matthew 6:1-15





Response to the Word

The Old Testament reading in 1 Kings makes a link between sin and healthy crops. There are times when the link is obvious. Ukraine is a fertile country and supplied seven per cent of the world's grain in 2019. That contribution is under serious threat because of the war.

Humans have been destroying the crops of other humans during wars for a very long time, and as markets become global, the impacts become global. We might expect to see food prices rise, but other areas, which import grain from Ukraine, particularly in Africa, can expect famine. This must surely be a call to prayers for peace, for justice, and for genuine reconciliation work to begin. It is also a call to a practical response from each of us as we consider how we can help our brothers and sisters whose lives have been turned upside down by war, whether in Europe, in the Middle East, in Africa or the Americas. There rights and wrongs are usually to be found far back in history, but we must strive for peace today, tomorrow and beyond.

Our Psalm reminds us not only of the praise we can give for God's glory, but also that our very existence is in God's hands. We rely on the results of our shared stewardship of the earth.

The New Testament calls us to be just and merciful in our dealings. We should not make ourselves look good because of ministering to someone in need. Our prayers do not need to be long and wordy. Remember that according to Paul, we don't always need to use words at all. God hears, and God understands when our words fail us according to Romans 8:26 – "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." However, Jesus has given us a pattern for prayer, and that pattern of the Lord's Prayer is one we do well to follow. It contains praise, the desire to align ourselves and our needs with God's will, and reminds us of our need to forgive others as well as to ask for forgiveness.

Practical responses to the Word

Walking

You may wish not only to pray for those who work to make the land productive, and share stewardship with God, but for all those who will eat or otherwise benefit from the land use. If you can see areas of ground which appear to be problematic, you could commit them to God's care. Why not talk to the farmers whose ground you walk and ask them what they need?

Boundaries

You could take photographs, make sketches or draw a map to remember your walk and what you see. You might want to meet others from across the boundary and pray, play, and eat together. Are the boundaries easy to cross (or even to find!?), and what is the impact of that on your relationships with your neighbours. Does there need to be reconciliation after past hurts?

In church

You might like to put all your symbols of the land you pray for today at the centre of a prayer space.

Intercessions

For reconciliation with God and neighbours

Give us hearts, minds, and hands which work for peace.

Where we fight, let it be for justice, and help us to be mindful that we fight our fellow humans. Protect the weak and the innocent and help us to be merciful.

For willingness, energy and ability to work for peace in our own areas and around the world

Give us open minds, strength to discern where we are wrong, and help us to put things right. Make us brave in the face of injustice, keep us aware of the needs of those whom we purport to help.

For us all to care for the land on which our food grows, and for the people who grow it

Give us understanding of what we eat, of its cost to the earth and those who produce it. Give us compassion for those who seek to feed us.

For those who are hungry

Give us eyes to see those around us who are going without. Give us common sense ways to help practically and appropriately, in ways which acknowledge the dignity of those whom we seek to feed and shelter.





Litany

Let us pray.

God the Father, Lord of creation,

have mercy upon us.

God the Son, through whom all things were made,

have mercy upon us.

God the Holy Spirit, who renews the face of the earth,

have mercy upon us.

Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, creating and saving God,

have mercy upon us.

Remember, Lord, your mercy and loving-kindness towards us.

Bless this good earth, and make it fruitful.

Bless our labour, and give us all things needful for our daily lives.

Bless the homes of this parish and all who live within them.

Bless our common life and our care for our neighbour.

Hear us, good Lord

Other parts of the Litany are available online from the Church of England, Common Worship Times and Seasons via bit.ly/roglitany.

Sending out

There may be actions to which you wish to commit, perhaps writing them down, or making a symbol of them to remind you in the coming weeks of what you have said you will do. It might be a commitment to prayer, and a commitment to practical action.

Give us a generosity that pushes back the boundaries,

For even death has been defeated by you.

With all our powers we find our power in You.

May the blessing of God almighty,

Creator, Redeemer, Comforter,

Be with us now and always

Amen.



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