

**Transformation – NOW!  
GOD'S LOVE**

**Hymn: New every morning is the love**

*Sung by St Martin's Voices*

New every morning is the love  
our waking and uprising prove;  
through sleep and darkness safely brought,  
restored to life and power and thought.

New mercies, each returning day,  
hover around us while we pray;  
new perils past, new sins forgiven,  
new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.

If on our daily course our mind  
be set to hallow all we find,  
new treasures still, of countless price,  
God will provide for sacrifice.

The trivial round, the common task,  
will furnish all we need to ask,  
room to deny ourselves, a road  
to bring us daily nearer God.

Only, O Lord, in thy dear love  
fit us for perfect rest above;  
and help us, this and every day,  
to live more nearly as we pray.

*John Keble (1792-1866)*

## **Opening prayer**

Lord, you have taught us  
That love is patient and kind,  
That love is never pleased  
When others make mistakes;  
But love looks for and rejoices in goodness.  
Love does not want to expose faults.  
Love always believes the best;  
For love is always hopeful, always patient,  
Love never gives up.  
Teach me Lord  
To make all my judgements  
In the light of the love that never dies.

*Frank Topping*

## **Bible Reading: I John 4: 7, 17-21** *(The Message)*

My beloved friends, let us continue to love each other since love comes from God. Everyone who loves is born of God and experiences a relationship with God.

God is love. When we take up permanent residence in a life of love, we live in God and God lives in us. This way, love has the run of the house, becomes at home and mature in

us, so that we're free of worry on Judgment Day - our standing in the world is identical with Christ's. There is no room in love for fear. Well-formed love banishes fear. Since fear is crippling, a fearful life - fear of death, fear of judgment - is one not yet fully formed in love.

We, though, are going to love—love and be loved. First we were loved, now we love. He loved us first.

If anyone boasts, "I love God," and goes right on hating his brother or sister, thinking nothing of it, he is a liar. If he won't love the person he can see, how can he love the God he can't see? The command we have from Christ is blunt: Loving God includes loving people. You've got to love both.

## **Reflection**

*by Moira Laidlaw*

### **Jesus calls us to love God with all our hearts..**

More than our families and friends, our homes,  
our jobs, our cars, our computers, .....?

More than all of these  
because when we love God with all our heart,  
it is that love which influences us  
and enables us to act lovingly  
towards not only family and friends—  
who may be easy to love—  
but towards others who may not be so easy to love.  
And we realise that people matter more than things.

**Jesus calls us to love God with all our soul,**

with our whole being

Our whole being?

More than anyone or anything we invest energy in?

Music, sport, art, gardening, - any of our hobbies...?

More than all of these

because when we love God with all our soul

it is God's dynamic love which directs how we use our energy,

our interests, our power.

Who we are and what we do can then be used

to benefit others as well as ourselves.

**Jesus calls us to love God with all our mind.**

Surely not all of our mind.

More than our thirst for knowledge, our learning in schools and beyond, the books we read,

our advances in information technology, .....?

More than all these

because when we love God with all our mind,

it is God's creative love which then inspires our thoughts

and our will so that our wisdom and knowledge are shaped by God's kingdom values of justice and mercy, love and

peace.

**Jesus calls us to love our neighbour as ourselves.**

Forgive us, O God, when we go along with society's  
concentration

on selfish needs over against selfless deeds.

Forgive our self-centredness and enlarge our vision  
to see all people as neighbours.

All of us loved equally by you.

**Hymn: How deep the Father's love for us**

*sung by St Martin's Voices*

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 mar 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*

© 1995 Thankyou Music/Adm. by [worshiptogether.com](http://worshiptogether.com) songs  
excl. UK & Europe, adm. by [kingswaysongs.com](http://kingswaysongs.com).  
[www.kingswaysongs.com](http://www.kingswaysongs.com). Used by permission.

## **Prayers**

*Thom Shuman*

We are hesitant to confess, Holy God,  
how hard it is to love as you wish.  
It is easy to love you with all that we are,  
except when you ask us to love our neighbour  
with all that we have.  
We find it hard to love our neighbour,  
when it is linked to the way we love ourselves.  
And it is difficult to love anyone - even You -  
more than we love ourselves.

Forgive us, Love Eternal.

As you took a risk in creating us,  
help us to take risks to love others compassionately,  
to love ourselves genuinely,  
and to love you as completely as you love us  
in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.        Amen.

## **The Mothers' Union Prayer**

©*Mother' Union*

Loving Lord,  
we thank you for your love so freely given to us all.  
We pray for families around the world.  
Bless the work of the Mothers' Union  
as we seek to share your love through the encouragement,  
strengthening and support of marriage and family life.  
Empowered by your Spirit,  
may we be united in prayer and worship,  
and in love and service reach out  
as your hands across the world.  
In Jesus' name.                      Amen

## **Hymn: Come down, O love divine**

*sung by St Martin's Voices*

*Discendi, amor santo Bianco da Siena (died 1434)  
Translated Richard Frederick Littledale (1833-1890)*

Come down, O love divine,  
seek thou this soul of mine,  
and visit it with thine own ardour glowing;  
O comforter, draw near,  
within my heart appear,  
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn,  
till earthly passions turn  
to dust and ashes, in its heat consuming;  
and let thy glorious light  
shine ever on my sight,  
and clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

Let holy charity  
mine outward vesture be,  
and lowliness become mine inner clothing;  
true lowliness of heart,  
which takes the humbler part,  
and o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

And so the yearning strong,  
with which the soul will long,  
shall far outpass the power of human telling;  
for none can guess its grace,  
till he become the place  
wherein the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling.



## **Blessing**

May God, who kindled the fire of his love

in the hearts of the saints,

pour upon you the riches of his grace.

May he give you joy in the fellowship

and share in their praises.

May he strengthen you to follow them in the way of holiness

to come to the full radiance of glory.

And the blessing of God Almighty,

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

be with you now and always.

Amen

Material: as stated

Theme music: Catherine Hilton

Theme image: Erik Karits on Pixabay.com

Background image: Jiroh on Unsplash

Readers: Christine Sharp, Karen Owen, Kirsty

Screepton, Joy Butterworth, Andrea

Walsh, Ian Butterworth

CCLI: 5097385

**Thursday Prayers next month will be on  
9<sup>th</sup> March 2023 – Lent**