

Merciful God, source of life, light and love.

We celebrate you today.

We celebrate your faithfulness through the ages – from the beginning when nothing was, you were there working in love, by love and for love.

Out of your love the cosmos exploded into being. Out of your love this planet became beautifully habitable. Out of your love we were created with the longings and dreams of your own heart. Out of your love you call us into a way of living life that enables life to flourish within us and around us.

A way of life that is gentle and generous. A way of life that is truthful and humble. A way of life that is gained when given away in compassionate service of others. A way of life that is childlike in simplicity and wise as serpents. A way of life that honours the poor and marginalised and challenges the powerful and privileged. A way of life that loves our enemies and forgives those who have hurt us.

A way of life we confess we have struggled to follow, for your ways are not our ways. A way of life we battle to trust because it feels so counter intuitive to what we have been taught is prudent and practical. A way of life that we betray when our cultural and national identity receives our higher allegiance. A way of life that we deny when we bow to our fears and pay homage to our prejudice. A way of life we destroy when we continue to begrudge our enemies.

Yet out of your love you not only call us into this unique way of living – you sent Jesus to show us the way – to be the way – and to find us when we have lost our way. And we *have* lost our way. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have been better at ignoring the suffering of our neighbour than we have been at responding in loving kindness. We have spoken more than we have listened, and much of our conversation has added more noise than light. We have assumed before we have asked. We have hurt others because we have been in a rush – often without even knowing that we have done so. We have written people off thinking that they will never change, denying the grace you have given to us.

According to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out our transgressions...

Thank you for Jesus who washes not only our feet but our iniquity with his mercy. Thank you for how he touches our transgressions without condemnation and judgement. Reach deep into our hearts to scrub them clean for they are beyond our reach. Break them open even if we complain, because we trust that a broken and contrite heart you will not despise. Put the Spirit of Jesus within us that our lives be more sensitive to his ways. Restore our joy and sustain us with your Spirit that prays within us and waters our willingness to be faithful.

Now open our lips Lord and we will declare your praise. Amen.

Prayer 2015 03 22