



Welcome and introduction

Welcome to our Service brought to you by Digital Church from the East Solent and Downs Methodist Circuit in southern England. Thank you for taking the time to be with us as we to listen to God's word, and to pray and praise him.

Today's Bible Reading tells us about God's love for us.

Call to worship

Beloved, let us love one another;
for love is of God,
and everyone who loves has been born of God, and knows God.
The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.
By this God's love was revealed in us,
that God has sent his one and only Son into the world
that we may live through Him.
He loved us and His Son was an atoning sacrifice for our sins.
If God loved us this way, we also ought also love one another.
No one has seen God at any time.
If we love one another, God remains in us,
and His love has been perfected in us.
By this we know that we remain in Him and He in us,
because He has given us of His Spirit. **Amen**

Prayer of worship

Your love O God is for all people Lord, no matter where they are from or where they live.
Your love accompanies us on our journey through life, through the good and bad times,
and the happy and sad times.
You are our rock, our guide, our teacher and our friend.
We worship you and adore you. **Amen**

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, who loves us beyond all understanding.
When we let our fear stand in the way of sharing your love, God, we are sorry.
Most merciful God, who knows all our wrongdoings but You still forgives us,
we take time today to talk to you about what is heavy on our hearts.
We ask that you take these burdens, reduce our anxieties, letting us know your forgiveness,
we pray that you will help us to forgive ourselves.
Let us remember your love for us, that you gave your Son, for all of us.
No matter how we may have wronged you,
you still clear our names.
Help us also clear our conscience, that we may be free to focus on all the good you provide.
Loving, compassionate and generous God, we pray to you this day. **Amen**

Assurance of Forgiveness

The Lord forgives those who repent of their sins,
of their failings and faults,
and the Lord travels with us on our journey in life. **Amen**

Hymn I love you Lord

I love you Lord
And I lift my voice
To worship you,
Oh my soul rejoice.

Take joy my king
In what you hear,
Let it be a sweet,
Sweet sound in your ear.
In your ear.

I love you lord.
Oh, how I love you lord.
I love you Lord.
I love you Lord.

Take joy my King
In what you hear
Let it be a sweet, sweet sound.
In your ear

TITLE: I love you Lord

BY: Laurie B. Klien

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Bible Reading 1 John 4 v7 -21 (Good News Translation) God's Love and Ours

Dear friends, let us love one another, because love comes from God. Whoever loves is a child of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. And God showed his love for us by sending his only Son into the world, so that we might have life through him. This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven.

Dear friends, if this is how God loved us, then we should love one another. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in union with us, and his love is made perfect in us.

We are sure that we live in union with God and that he lives in union with us, because he has given us his Spirit. And we have seen and tell others that the Father sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If we declare that Jesus is the Son of God, we live in union with God and God lives in union with us. And we ourselves know and believe the love which God has for us.

God is love, and whoever lives in love lives in union with God and God lives in union with him. Love is made perfect in us in order that we may have courage on Judgment Day; and we will have it because our life in this world is the same as Christ's. There is no fear in love; perfect love drives out all fear. So then, love which has not been made perfect in anyone who is afraid, because fear has to do with punishment.

We love because God first loved us. If someone says he loves God, but hates his brother, he is a liar. For he cannot love God, whom he has not seen, if he does not love his brother, whom he has seen.

The command that Christ has given us is this: whoever loves God must love his brother also.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Beloved, let us love one another because love is from God.

We thank you for the Easter season, which we are still celebrating, for the victory of good over evil, love over hate and life over death, for the love God has poured into our hearts, and for the gift of the Holy Spirit within us.

Help us to pray and live each day in the light of Easter. **Amen**

Hymn Come, let us sing of a wonderful Love (Stf 443)

1 Come, let us sing of a wonderful love,
tender and true;
out of the heart of the Father above,
streaming to me and to you:
wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

2 Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell,
joyfully came;
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
sharing their sorrow and shame;
seeking the lost,
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

3 Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
home, weary wanderer, home!
Wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

4 Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love,
come and abide,
lifting my life, till it rises above
envy and falsehood and pride;
seeking to be
lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

TITLE: Come, let us sing of a wonderful love

BY: Robert Walmsley (1831–1905)

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Reflection

Today's reading from 1 John has perhaps the greatest passage in the Bible on love: the love of God for the world, shown through his Son, is a love we should also show to each other. This is how we come to know God, and to know that God is love. The depth and power of the three words "God is love" are often lost on us because of the abundance of contradicting conceptions of love all around us. We tend to forget that it is God's love for us that makes it possible for us to love one another.

It all begins with God's love. God is the source and the definition of love. God is love. God loves as the sun shines: love expresses who God is. There is a saying: God's love is like the ocean, you can see its beginning but not its end.

We were "born of God" with knowing God's character (4:7). God's children have an intimate relationship with God and thus are deeply acquainted with God's love. In saying that "everyone who loves is born of God and knows God," the author of John 1 suggests that God's children cannot help but love because they are so intimately in fellowship with God.

First John, however, speaks of love in a specific, distinctly Christian way. Love is not God, but God is love, meaning that believers are to understand love on God's terms and according to God's character. If we know God, then we will show God through our love for others. Divine love manifested most perfectly through the love of God in Christ is a reality that God desires us to know, see, inhabit, and share. God's love is not some abstract concept. It is passion expressed in action. God made love real and present by sending Jesus to live among us and to die for us. God continues to show us love through Jesus' life-giving presence among us.

When God perfects his love in us, it means that God's intended purpose for loving us is fulfilled when we extend the love to others. If ever we should question whether God truly does love us, the gift and witness of the Holy Spirit confirmed it: we are God's beloved. God's love is a truth more basic and reliable than the ground we walk on and the air we breathe.

God's love does not depend on our initiative or on our worthiness. We don't have to clean up our act before God can love us. We don't have to measure up to some standard in order to be lovable. Instead God showers love on us whether we deserve it or not. In the Gospel of John, when Jesus was preparing his disciples for his departure, he comforted them and asked the Father to give them a comforter, The Holy Spirit; he also gave them a new commandment:

A new commandment I am giving to you: that you should love one another just as I loved you so that also you should love one another. In this everyone will know that you are my disciples: if you should have love for one another. (John 13:34-35)

Let us therefore remember that God loved us not because we had something to offer him, but rather because He had something to offer us. "For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). God loved us so that He could demonstrate His mercy to us in the person of His Son. Even though we have the freedom to set our own priorities, Jesus made a point of defining certain ones of them for us: "' Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with your entire mind.' This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second is like love your neighbour as yourself , love then is not a grey area in the scriptures. Jesus love gave priority over all the Christian virtues, every thought, response and act of good will, will be done with love, or it means nothing at all.

However, we still cannot see God because only Jesus the Son has seen the Father (4:12; see also John 1:18; 5:37; 6:46). There will be a day when "we will see him as he is" (3:2). But until then, the invisible God makes himself visible in Christian love. When we love in response to God's love for us, "his love is perfected in us" There is no fear in love, perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and therefore whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also." Those who say, 'I love God,' and hate their brothers or sisters, are not telling the truth; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. When we demonstrate Christian love, it distinguishes believers from the rest of the world. John 4 goes on to say, "By this love all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

Let us rejoice and praise God, and show his love for us in our actions towards our neighbours and in our communities; we are Christ's hand and feet, ready to go forward in faith. Amen

Prayers of Intercession

God of Love,
may we abide in your presence and so able to abide in your love;
as we freely receive your love,
may we freely share with others all that you have given us through Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour.

God of Love,
your Son remained with his disciples after his resurrection, teaching them to love all people as neighbours.
As his disciples in this age,
we offer our prayers on behalf of the universe in which we are privileged to live
and our neighbours with whom we share it.
We pray for all churches,
help them to respond to agenda items with justice and concern for all people,
we pray for the outreach of your church,
that it may reach out to the needy and the rejected;
that love may be revealed in action.

We pray for the rapidly changing situation in the Middle East.
We pray for the United Nations as it seeks to foster the values enshrined in its charter
of peace, justice, respect, human rights, tolerance and solidarity.
And we ask that the leaders of the nations of the Middle East will seek harmony and lasting peace.
May power and influence be used with wisdom and compassion.

We pray for all patients in hospital.
We remember those awaiting appointments, tests and test results,
their families and all who are concerned for them,
those who are ill and have no one to care for them,
remembering especially those whose names are written on our hearts.

And we pray for ourselves.
Help us to be aware that our conduct can make a difference and that our words can bring about change.
Help us to be inspired by justice,
to seek to serve rather than be served,
and to be bold in challenging the status quo when it needs to be challenged.

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

Gathering all our prayers and praises into one, we pray as our Saviour Christ has taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for and ever. Amen

Hymn Love divine all loves excelling

1 Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down!
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown.

Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart. [x2]

2 Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy grace receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more Thy temples leave.

Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

3. Finish then Thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place;
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise. [x2]

TITLE: Love divine, all loves excelling

BY: Charles Wesley

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Closing Prayer

Father, as you have loved us, so may we love.

Jesus, as you have called us, help us to follow.

Spirit, as you have sent us, fill us with your power. **Amen**

The love and the life of the Risen Christ be with you:
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always **Amen**