

ROGATION SUNDAY

9 MAY 2021



Arthur Rank
Centre

CONFIDENT RURAL CHRISTIANS



ROGATION SUNDAY

9 MAY 2021

Rogation is a time of asking, asking God's blessings on emerging crops. In times gone by when everything depended on the local harvest, this was vital. A failed local harvest meant starvation, so asking God's Blessing at various points was seen as important.

We still depend on farming today for our food but can draw on harvest from all over the country and beyond. It can be easy to feel disconnected from where our food comes from. Which makes this still a good time to pray for farmers who are at the mercy of the weather. The pandemic has reminded us that farmers are key workers and need our support.

This is also a good time to ask God's blessing on our communities many of whom have been hit hard by recent events. Walking around our community and praying at

various points is a positive way of supporting those communities. As we emerge from lockdown what better way to celebrate than going for a socially distanced walk together (as regulations allow). Giving thanks to God for the countryside and green spaces that have helped us so much during these last months?

It is also a good way of connecting with the wider community inviting people to join the walk, eating together at the end of it. It can be far less intimidating to join in an outdoor walk rather than going into a building.

Rogation provides us with the opportunity to praise the Creator God, give thanks for our food and those who produce it; to pray a blessing on the communities in which we live and share together.



Let us celebrate however we can, in thankfulness for all we have been given.

Revd Elizabeth Clark, National Rural Officer for the Methodist and United Reformed Churches



What does the Bible say?

Mark 4:26-29

Jesus also said, 'This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain - first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.'

This parable, only found in the Gospel of Mark, evokes the secretive growth of a seed, night and day, nourished by the soil. Just as the ear of wheat ripens months after its seed was first planted, the seed of the spirit in the heart of a believer will ripen into a life lived fully for God.

It reminds us of the potential in every person who hears the message of Jesus – they too are like a seed filled with everything they need to accept Grace and live fully and eternally. But just as a seedling needs fertile soil, water, protection from storms, the new Christian needs a community of guidance and love, and of time for prayer, so the seed of God's word will bear fruit.



Rogation Blessing

Rogation Sunday, May 9, is an opportunity for churches to take a service out into the parish, with a prayer walk and blessing the earth around them. You can use this liturgy online also, as coronavirus restrictions continue to prevent worship outside churches.

Traditional prayer processions around villages were held from the Middle Ages to 'beat the bounds' - where parishioners were reminded of the edges of their villages, when claims over land could cause long lasting feuds between villages!

The act of blessing can take place in a local field, or in a home garden. It is a moment to savour God's creation.

If people are joining in at home they will need some seeds, soil and water – even an apple or tomato seed could bear fruit.

Prayer

Creator God,
whose will it is that the earth and the sea
should bear fruit in due season:
bless the labours of those who work on land and sea,
grant us a good harvest
and the grace always to rejoice in your fatherly care;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Psalm 50:1-2; 10-11

The Almighty God, the Lord, speaks;
he calls to the whole earth from east to west.
God shines from Zion,
the city perfect in its beauty.

All the animals in the forest are mine
and the cattle on thousands of hills.
All the wild birds are mine
and all living things in the fields.

We come before you our God and Sustainer,
remembering that you are our Creator and the source of
all being - out of your love the universe was born.

From primordial darkness you put in place all that is
needed for growth and saw that it was good.

You have put this world into our hands: may we
recognise your Spirit within it, disturbing and
challenging us to care for creation, for the weak and the
deprived. Lord we remember that we are called by you
to nourish the earth and its diversity of life, to share the
gifts you have given, with one another and with the poor
of the world, Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

Thanks be to God



Readings and Prayers

Here are some suggestions of readings and prayers for different places in the community. The readings are there to give ideas of how our concerns for the community are reflected in the Bible. You may not want to take those with you but read them beforehand and use the prayers as you walk.

Of course, you may not have all the places mentioned in your village so just use what you need. If there are places we have not thought of, why not write your own prayer? Make sure to abide by current social distancing guidelines.

At an arable field

Reading: Deuteronomy 8:7-10

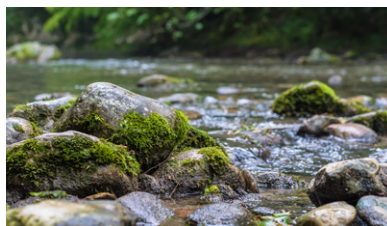
Creator God, we praise you for the glory of your creation, for the fruitful soil, that produces crops so that we can eat.

We praise you for the beauty we see all around us.

We remember farmers as they work to care for and harvest the crops, for the difficulties they face.

May they receive a fair price for their labour.

In Jesus name, Amen.



At a stream

Reading: Psalm 104:10-13

Lord our God, we give you thanks for the gift of water essential to life. We give thanks for rain that waters the crops. We pray for those who have no clean water; and ask that you will challenge us all to work to change their situation. Jesus you promise us the water of life may we drink of that water always. Amen

Outside the village hall

Reading: Luke 10:25-37

Loving God, we pray for the village hall and all the activities that take place here.

We pray for those who give their time and energies to care for the hall, and those who lead different activities. We pray for those who will be missing their clubs and activities, shared time with others.

We pray for this community that it may be a place where all are valued. We pray for ourselves that we may be agents of your Kingdom. In Jesus name, Amen.

Outside a house

Reading: Luke 4:16-21

Loving God, we pray for this home and all the homes in this village, that they may be places of peace.

Surround our homes with your love and protection. We remember those who at this time have nowhere to isolate and feel safe. Bless those whom we love wherever they may be, hold them safe in your hands. Inspire us to reach out to our neighbours in a spirit of love and care. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Outside the school

Reading: Luke 2:41-52

Loving God, we give you thanks for this school. We ask your blessing on all the children and the staff. We pray for those children that they be safe. We remember those being schooled at home, for the parents who are struggling to work and teach, for those who have struggled learning in the past year.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Returning home

Thank you for this home, Loving God, and for all who live here.

Thank you for all your gifts you have given.

Continue to bless us now and always, Amen.



Arthur Rank
Centre

CONFIDENT RURAL CHRISTIANS

arthurrankcentre.org.uk

info@arthurrankcentre.org.uk | 024 7685 3060

Find us on Facebook [/ArthurRankCentre](https://www.facebook.com/ArthurRankCentre) • Follow us on Twitter [/ArthurRankCentre](https://twitter.com/ArthurRankCentre)

UK Registered Charity 1104300