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**Prayers of intercession**

These prayers have been prepared for us by representatives of **Livability** and **Christian Aid**. They will be led by members of **L'Arche**. There are ten L'Arche communities in the UK providing support with and for people with learning difficulties.

14

**One Day**

This is a reprise of a song that was written for last year's communion service, with updated words. Through the year the song has been sung in many settings around the UK, and each time with words changed to reflect the time and place. Feel free to take it away with you and make it your own.

15

**Communion**

Communion is about saying thank you. For grace. For forgiveness. For abundance of life. For creation. For each other. It is a time to focus our attention on God, through sharing the bread, wine/juice and prayer.

In preparation for communion we sing or say a "Sanctus" prayer. Sanctus just means "holy." It's a moment to remember that the God who became "one of us" is also completely different from us; the source of all the world's creative power.

When Jesus told his disciples to remember him, he gave them the simplest of symbols: food & drink. In this way he ensured that no particular level of "head knowledge" was required to take part. Even a baby can understand being fed. All that Jesus asked – and it was a huge ask – was that those who gathered round the table with him should be prepared to walk the path he was going to tread.

At Greenbelt people come from all sorts of churches or no church at all, so here we have no "right" way to do communion. The preparation, consecration and communion are all led by Greenbelters. We will consecrate the bread and wine/juice together. We encourage you to include everybody in the sharing of bread and juice. Even a baby could have a drop of juice on a parent's finger. But in some churches children are un-used to receiving communion. We respect the views of parents and guardians on this. If you would rather not, simply bow your head. If you want to bless someone who does this, simply say "The Lord bless you and keep you" or something similar.

The easiest way to share the bread is to break off a piece, give it to the person next to you and say "The Body of Christ". Hold the bread while they eat their piece, and then pass them the bread to do the same for the next person. Next, give them the cup of wine to drink from, and say "The Blood of Christ". It is good when sharing a cup to wipe the rim with a napkin where you have drunk from it, then pass the wine on, as you did the bread.

If you want to share the bread and wine in silence, that is fine too.

Some Christians are concerned that consecrated bread and wine should not be thrown away, so it's good to ensure it's all consumed, even if that's not your own tradition.

Afterwards, please ensure that any packaging is placed in the paper bag, & placed in the bins around the arena. Thank you.

One of the most beautiful things about communion is that it can mean different things to different people and at different times. So, however you decide to share it today, enjoy it with an open heart and open mind, and see what it might mean to you today, in fellowship with a field of friends.

As we share bread and wine/juice in groups we're going to sing together.

16

**What a Friend We Have in Jesus** was written by Joseph Scriven. Scriven was born in Dublin in 1820, but moved to Canada as a young man. Not once, but twice he was engaged to be married, only for his fiancé to die tragically shortly before the wedding. In spite of his chronic depression he wrote this poem to encourage his mother back in Ireland. Scriven drowned in 1886. It is not known whether his death was an accident or suicide. He is buried next to his fiancée in Bewdley, Ontario. **What a Friend We Have in Jesus** is sung all around the world. There are versions in Welsh, Japanese, Hindi and Malayalam.

17

**Bring 'Em All In**

Mike Scott has led the band The Waterboys since 1983, and they continue to write and perform. He played Greenbelt himself back in 1994. His song **Bring 'Em All In** is an inclusive anthem. You are encouraged to dance in whatever style works for you.

18

**Blessing**

This was written by Nick, who uses a wheelchair.

GREENBELT 2017  
COMMUNION SERVICEPLEASE  
BRING  
A BODY

# Supporting Notes

*"Our whole nature, extending from the first to the last, is, so to speak, one image of Him Who is."*

Gregory of Nyssa<sup>1</sup> : On the Making of Man XV : 18

Christians say, sometimes lightly, that we are "made in the image of God." What do we mean by that? Sometimes we speak as if God's qualities are amongst the colours in the palette from which we are painted. Gregory of Nyssa teaches us to think quite differently. The image of God is not a characteristic, like our height or our blood group. Instead, the whole of each person expresses the whole image of God. I am the picture: God is all the colours. God is all the ingredients in the recipe that is me. So if I am tall or short, male or female or something else, my height and gender speak of God. I may be a body that people deem to be perfect; or I may be profoundly disabled by the standards and practices of my culture. Either way, my body fully reflects the body of God.

*"The image is not in part of our nature, nor is the grace in any one of the things found in that nature, but this power extends equally to all the race."*

Gregory of Nyssa : On the Making of Man XV : 17

Greenbelt works hard to be an inclusive festival; a community where everyone counts. We're proud to have achieved the Gold Level on the Charter of Best Practice by Attitude is Everything for our commitment to improving access for deaf and disabled festival-goers at Greenbelt. The only other all-age, multi-arts festival with that level is Glastonbury! Nothing is perfect, but we try to make sure that as far as possible nobody is prevented from taking a full part in the festival. That's partly a matter of justice. But it's also so that when we come together, we can celebrate the likeness of God that we find in each other, and make a livable community together.

Each of us gathered at Greenbelt reflects the whole image and character of God. If we allow anyone to be excluded, either by accident or thoughtlessness or prejudice, we will see God less clearly. The more we recognise our common humanity, the sharper our image of God will be. With the help of festival partners Livability we will try to reflect that in this year's communion service.

Whether you meet in a Victorian church building or a field in Northamptonshire, putting this into practice is very challenging. Curating this year's communion service has stretched all of us. We've been conscious all along that every idea, every word that seeks to include one person, risks excluding someone else. We've frequently run into our own limitations, as well as the limitations of the event. And then we read the amazing story of the Feeding of the Many Thousands. It's a story so good it's told six times in four gospels! And we've put it at the centre of this year's Festival communion.

God simply does not recognise our categories of leaders and followers, haves and have-nots, children and adults, the able-bodied and the disabled. God invites us all to join the feast, asking "what will you bring?" And Christ the Multiplier takes what we bring and makes it more than enough. So together we'll laugh and sing and worship and celebrate the fact that all you really need to feed 5000 people is a small packed lunch and a great God.

<sup>1</sup> Gregory of Nyssa was a theologian and bishop in the 4th Century AD in what is now Southern Turkey. He is not to be confused with Gregory of Nisa who works on the checkout of a local convenience store

1

**Rhythmicity fanfare**

Percussion plays a big part in worship throughout the Bible. Rhythmicity is led by Tim Scarborough, who has led percussion workshops and performance teams in diverse settings for 15 years. Percussion is an accessible medium of expression for many people with learning difficulties, and Rhythmicity often includes performers with additional needs. Their fanfare provides a rousing, sensual gathering point for our worship. [www.rhythmicity.co.uk](http://www.rhythmicity.co.uk)

2

**Call to Worship**

Greenbelters on platforms scattered around the Big Top shout a call to worship. We wanted to start the service with something that would bring everyone together. Often the language we use in worship can exclude people quite unintentionally. If we said something like "Bring your hands/feet/voices" etc, we would be assuming a normative body. Simply by using the format "those who have eyes...etc" the invitation becomes an inclusive one. We are simply saying "bring what you have and are."

It all adds up to

**Livability**

Livability is the disability charity that connects people with their communities. We support disabled people every day and work with churches to reach out to their neighbourhood.

As one of Greenbelt's associate partners, we're proud to have supported today's communion service.

[www.livability.org.uk](http://www.livability.org.uk) /LivabilityUK

Bringing gifts together - it all adds up

We passionately believe that when people have the chance to connect, contribute & be valued – it all adds up to more livable lives & communities.

If you have enjoyed today's wonderful celebration of bringing gifts together & want more support with creating connections in your community, visit our stand & Monday's 11am session in The Treehouse.



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greenbelt.org.uk

3

**To God be the Glory**

This famous hymn was written in 1875 by Fanny Crosby. Fanny lost her sight when she was 7 weeks old. She was a passionate civil rights campaigner, lobbying for the abolition of slavery and for rights for people with disabilities. In 1843 she became the first woman to address the US Senate. She was also an accomplished poet and pianist, and performed at the White House for President James Polk. The tune is by W Howard Doane, a musician and Sunday school teacher from Ohio.

How much should we change the words of well-known hymns to make them more accessible or inclusive? It's a tough call. If we took all the masculine references to God out of this great hymn it would be unrecognisable! Some of the lines probably wouldn't be written today, but the poetry of them seems to carry them through. So we're still going to sing that The vilest offender who truly believes, That moment from Jesus a pardon receives. But other lines just don't make sense. The last line as written by Fanny Crosby speaks of Our wonder, our transport when Jesus we see. The word transport simply conjures up something different!

There is good reason for Christians to sing old songs without too much alteration. One is that people who have various forms of dementia or memory-loss can feel included by tunes and words that are familiar. For the rest of us, it can be a reminder that faith is not invented but inherited, and the best tunes are not always the newest ones.

4

**Introduction**

We struggled so much with how to introduce our service. We were mulling over what would have happened if Jesus had chosen disciples with disabilities. What if John was blind, or Peter was on the autistic spectrum? What if Judas was bipolar or James had cerebral palsy. Of course these are only "What if's", because in Jesus' time disability as a set of 'conditions' and 'categories' quite literally hadn't been invented. And yet, those with visible disabilities were most often shunned and ostracised. Today, disability is a category that majority society creates and imposes on some of its members. We didn't want to reinforce that. So we decided to talk about difference instead. And we have involved Greenbelters with disabilities and/or additional needs to design and lead our service.

5

**Sensory confession**

Early in our service we have an opportunity for confession. This takes the form of a "sound sculpture" created by the audio artist Mike Thornton. A base of slow beats and ambient sounds is layered with the words below, broken into phrases and fragments, mostly whispered by a variety of voices. We wanted to engage the sense of touch as well as hearing-connecting us with the earth, with our own bodies and with each other. For a variety of reasons, some people find the idea of touching their own or other people's bodies challenging - so we have made sure in the wording of the invitation that touch should be voluntary and consensual. The words used include the prayer of confession and absolution from the Book of Common Prayer, which originated in 1662. After 350 years it's not surprising that some words have fallen out of common use. We probably wouldn't talk now about "following the devices and desires of our own hearts." And yet there is power in the poetry, and also in acknowledging that our worship echoes that of believers going back over centuries. It reminds us that neither our faith nor our sins are new to God.

6

**God in Our Skin**

Many modern hymns quite rightly focus on the awesomeness and majesty of God. This new hymn, written for this service by Andrew Graystone, focuses on the sacrament of the human body. Perhaps the most astounding and scandalous of all Christian beliefs is that God has a human body. The way we describe this is vitally important, and has been a subject of debate amongst believers since the time of Christ. Orthodox Christianity fixed the doctrine at the Council of Nicaea in 325AD. Jesus was not part God and part human; nor was he God disguised as a human. Jesus was - and still is - both 100% God and 100% human. One of the many consequences of this is that it makes our own human bodies - whatever their size, shape or ability - places where we meet God.

7

**Sharing the peace**

Around 900,000 people in the UK are severely or profoundly deaf, and ten times that number have significant hearing loss. Sign language is the first or preferred language for about 50,000 people, though many more use it to some degree. At a workshop yesterday, Signs of God taught some people to share the peace using the words "Peace to you" in British Sign Language. The signers on the platforms will lead the crowd in this. You will then be given time to share the peace with each other in BSL, speech or any way you wish.

Hold your hands in front of you; make a circle with your first fingers and thumbs, and touch them together, making a sideways figure 8 (or an infinity symbol.) Now move your hands apart. That's the British Sign Language symbol for "peace."

Now with your hands open in front of you, palms upwards, mime giving someone a gift. That's the BSL for "gift" which is also used for "to you". In language of all kinds, let's offer one another a sign of peace.

8

**Ephesians 3:14-21**

Ephesians 3:14-21 will be read by Tanya Marlow. Tanya is a writer and former lecturer in Biblical theology who is part of the Greenbelt community. She can't attend the festival in person as she suffers from a form of ME/CFS that restricts her from leaving the house except very occasionally. Tanya will join us for the Bible reading by live link from her home in Plymouth. You can meet Tanya more fully at [tanyamarlow.com](http://tanyamarlow.com). ME (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis) is a long-term illness that is often underestimated. The most common symptom is total exhaustion after normal activities. That's not normal tiredness - for Tanya, after she walks a few steps her legs can't move any more. Some sufferers are able to manage their fluctuating energy levels enough to take part in a range of activities. Others are restricted to home or to bed by the pain and exhaustion of ME/CFS.

9

**The Feeding of the Many Thousands**

In all four gospels we are told that Jesus fed five thousand people with five loaves and two fish. In Matthew and Mark we are told that he fed four thousand people with seven loaves and a few small fish. The story of the Feeding of the Many Thousands is so familiar that it hardly needs retelling.

So instead of reading the Bible story from the front, we invite you to tell it to each other in groups. We have provided some picture cards to help with this. Some people with autism spectrum disorder or other developmental disabilities use symbols to help them communicate.

There are various systems, such as PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) and Widgeits. Our set of Widgeit symbol cards has been prepared with the help of Livability. Some children and adults, including those who are both deaf and blind, use Objects of Reference to help them communicate. As well as using the set of cards you could use any objects around you, or drama/mime, or anything else you can think of to retell the story in your groups, with or without words.

Afterwards, feel free to take the set of cards away with you to be used again. If you would like to remind yourself of the original story, you will find it at John 6:1-14.

10

**God's Love is Great**

We are delighted to be including a catchy reggae version of God's Love is Great written by Tony Phelps-Jones for Prospects (now part of Livability). Members of local Prospects groups will teach it to us. It is one of many songs and choruses specially written to help make Christian worship accessible to people with learning disabilities. Simple concepts, repetition and catchy tunes can express profound truths. For more information on training and resources for churches to help adults with learning disabilities feel welcomed and included in expressing their faith in worship services, visit [www.Livability.org.uk](http://www.Livability.org.uk).

More than 1.5 million people in the UK are thought to have a learning disability. Learning disabilities are enormously varied in scope and severity. Unlike mental health problems, with which they are sometimes confused, learning disabilities affect the intellect, and are not amenable to 'treatment'. People with learning disabilities need varied levels of support; some may only need help with specific tasks such as getting a job. Others may need full-time personal care. Most people with a learning disability can live independent lives if they have the right support.

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**Homily**

Becky Tyler is nearly 15. She lives near East Grinstead with her mum Fiona and dad Steve (who was a Greenbelt volunteer venue manager for many years.) Becky has severe quadriplegic cerebral palsy and can't talk unaided. She will speak to us using a communication aid, which she controls with her eyes.

You can find Becky online at [www.jcccg.co.uk/blog/godstoriesbecky/](http://www.jcccg.co.uk/blog/godstoriesbecky/)

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**Creed**

A creed is simply a statement of what a group believes. Creeds can be very simple - such as "Jesus is Lord" - or much more detailed, like the Apostles Creed, which dates back over 1500 years. Creeds have sometimes been used to exclude people from the Christian community. But they often work the other way, defining believers as those whose allegiance is to God rather than to the norms of the culture or the demands of the state.

This creed takes the form of a chant led from the platforms, with the crowd performing simple actions to go with it. This allows us to express our beliefs with our bodies as well as with words.

Let's stand or sit, as you prefer, and say the creed together. When we say "Christ has died", stretch your arms out to the sides like a crucifix. For "Christ is risen", lift your hands in front of you. For "Christ will come again" - it's jazz hands!

**Gift Aid declaration**

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