Dear friend
I enclose the virtual service for Rogation Sunday. For those in our Benefice, there will be a short service of prayer and meditation at All Saints' Farmborough at 7.30pm on Ascension Day (Thursday 13th) - note pm not am!

Rogation is a time when we ask for God's blessing on our work and our lives. This week's hymn is 'Father hear the prayer we offer', with lyrics supplied, from the splendid Chet Valley churches:
https://youtu.be/r1-9wam-2Rk

In the gospel reading, Jesus warns that there will be troubles ahead. Ad Dominum cum tribularer (When I was in trouble I called upon the Lord, and he heard me), from Psalm 120, set by William Byrd, here sung by the Sixteen, with music to sing along to:
https://youtu.be/a1NBADSYWE0

'Nobody knows the trouble I've seen' is one of the arrangements of spirituals by Michael Tippett in his oratorio 'A Child of our Time':
https://youtu.be/GRWdTadm4q4

or, of course, there's Louis Armstrong's version:
https://youtu.be/SVKKRzemX_w

A couple of items kindly supplied by Martin. 'Bless The Lord, O My Soul' (S. Rachmaninoff 'All-Night Vigil' / Vespers, op. 37, 2.), sung in Russian from the Cathedral of St. Mary Magdalene in Warsaw by Sigvards Klava choir:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfDreatXYeU

'O Praise the Name' - Brian Johnson | Bethel Music Worship. Thirteen minutes of worship repeating a mantra. Bethel Church is an American, non-denominational, charismatic, megachurch, in Redding, California with over 11,000 members. Bethel has its own music labels and Jesus Culture ministries, which have gained large popularity within contemporary worship music. This clip gives an example:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMWYoBtACe0

Finally, a recent arrangement of John Rutter's 'The Lord Bless you and keep you' sung during lockdown at St Mary's, Saffron Walden by Bobby Goulder and Bobby Goulder and…
https://youtu.be/GRWdTadm4q4

With every good wish
Chris

VIRTUAL SERVICE 9.5.21
ROGATION SUNDAY



The seed is Christ's, the granary is Christ's,
in the granary of God may we be gathered.
The sea is Christ's, the fishes are Christ's,
In the nets of God may we all meet. *(Trad Irish)*

CONFESSION
Almighty God, forgive our selfishness and lack of understanding of other nations, our indifference to the many who are not free, and even suffer martyrdom for their faith. Forgive, O Lord, our poor stewardship of the resources you have so generously given us. Forgive our disregard of the painful struggle of the few on behalf of the many who suffer oppression and neglect.
(World day of Prayer, 1988.)
May the Father forgive us by the death of his Son and strengthen us to live in the power of the Spirit all our days. (Common Worship)

COLLECT for Rogation Sunday. 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 your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit.

READINGS Joel 2.21-26, Psalm 66.1-8, James1.22-end, John 16.23b-end.

REFLECTION Rogationtide, the days leading up to Ascension Day, is a time to ask God's blessing on our work (Rogare = "to ask" in Latin). Traditionally, congregations would "beat the bounds" of the parish, asking for God's blessing on the crops.
In Old Testament times, there was often a hesitancy about praying to God directly. A certain protocol had to be followed, including sacrifices by a priestly intermediary. Even the word for God (Yahweh) was usually replaced by Lord (Adonai). Yet we have the authority of Jesus himself to address God as Father, or even Daddy. Jesus is our High Priest who identifies with us. He is our mediator and the Holy Spirit is our intercessor. If we pray in Jesus' name, the Holy Spirit can take our incoherent, even infantile, prayers and present them to the Father. Then, in the face of the troubles of this world, we can receive Jesus' peace, one that the world cannot give.

PRAYERS *If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it (John 14.14)*

Lord, teach us to pray in your name. Help us to unburden our cares, our anxieties, our selfishness and our pride, and lay them at the foot of your cross. Support us in the difficult times and be with us in our times of joy and celebration.

We pray for the nations of this world, for countries fractured by war, unrest or corrupt leadership. We pray for peace and tolerance of differing views.

At this Rogationtide, we pray for our farming communities, for our fishermen and all who work to put food on our tables. Especially we remember those who labour for poor wages to provide cheap food and clothes for our backs. Empower those organisations which strive for fair and just trade. We pray that the discussions about climate change will lead to positive, lasting changes in our behaviour. Help us to enjoy the earth gently.

We pray for all who are facing a time of trial and tribulation, for those facing financial worries, for those unable to find work, for the victims of natural or man-made disaster. Comfort and heal the sick in mind, body or spirit, those facing surgery or medical procedures, those who face constant pain or grief. Guide us in our efforts to support them; help us to reflect something of your selfless love.

We say the **LORD'S PRAYER**
We share **THE GRACE**



FINAL PRAYER
Lord, isn't your creation wasteful?
Fruits never equal the seedlings' abundance.
Springs scatter water.
The sun gives out enormous light.
May your bounty teach me greatness of heart.
May your magnificence stop me being mean.
Seeing you a prodigal and open-handed giver,
let me give unstintingly like God's own.
(Dom Helder Camara, Brazil.)