

## Marking the start of [#EverydayFaith](#) on Plough Sunday



### Purpose and preparation

The observance of Plough Sunday on the First Sunday of Epiphany goes back to Victorian times, but behind it there is a much older observance, associated with the first working day after the twelve days of Christmas, hence 'Plough Monday' in some places.

In the Middle Ages ploughs were sometimes kept in the parish church, and some churches kept a 'plough-light' – a candle that burned over the plough throughout the winter. In days when work was scarce in winter, the observance looked forward to the time of sowing with the promise of a harvest to come. Some Christian communities have reintroduced it as a focus for asking a blessing on human labour near the start of the calendar year.

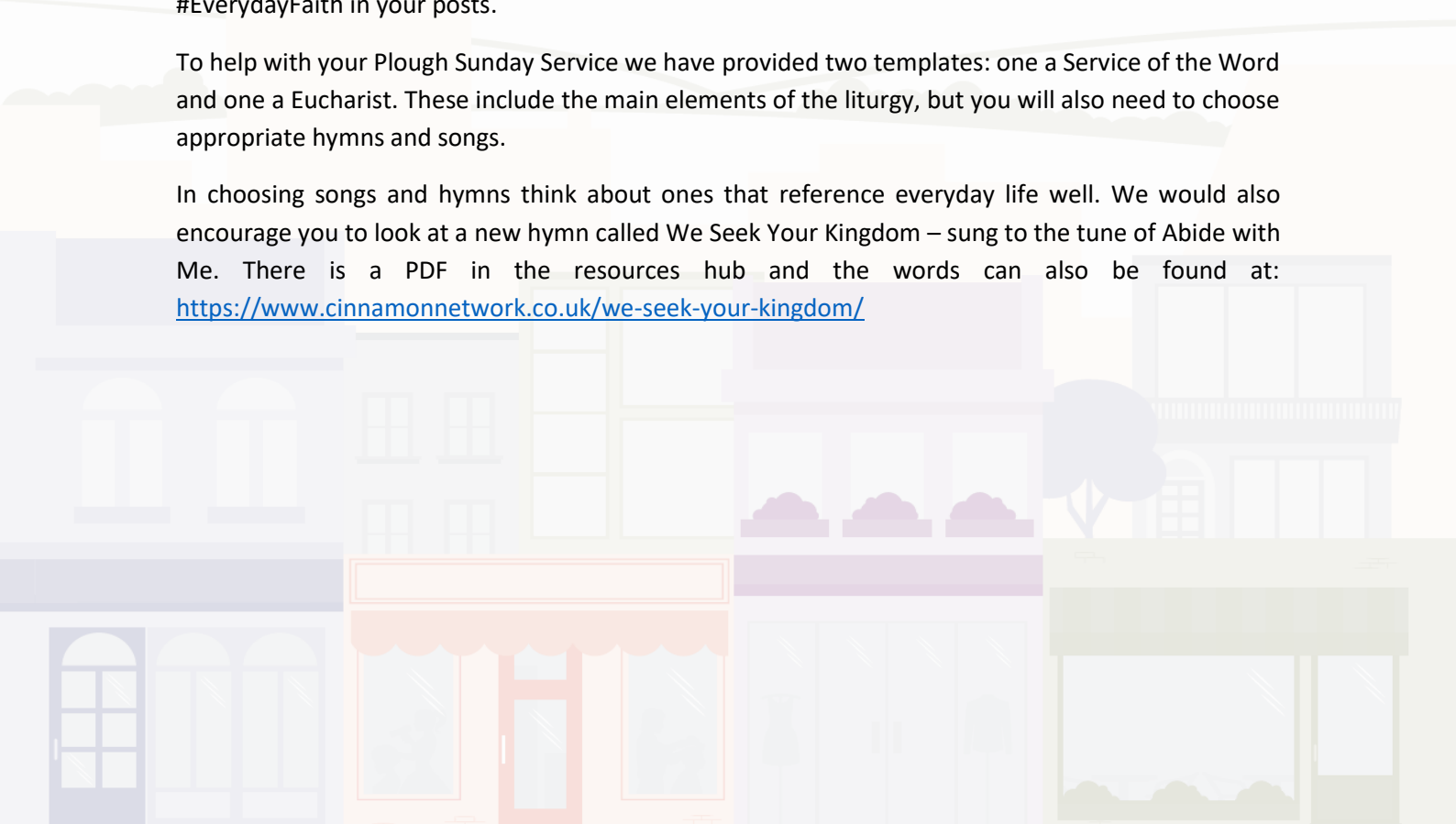
Whilst Plough Sunday remains an important marker for the start of a new agricultural year, this year we are encouraging all churches to use this day to mark the start of a new year of finding and following God in everyday life: **to celebrate and pray for the work of cultivating God's kingdom in whatever we are called to do.**

If people work with a plough, bring it in, but why not ask all people in the congregation to bring an object that represents where they are called to serve God – and use this opportunity to invite God's blessing and to pray for fruitfulness in all our work for the Kingdom. **So a shopkeeper might bring a stack of delivery crates; a tailor a mannequin; a surveyor might bring a digital jogger; a jogger might put their digital exercise watch on the altar; a college student their bag full of books; a retired person their very busy diary (in my experience) plus an object from their pastimes or buggy if they do childcare, a person who runs a youth football team as a volunteer might bring a bag of footballs etc.**

It takes a little imagination and you will need to give people some warning. Like a plough, the bigger the better. And remember to take a photo to share in your magazine or on social media, including #EverydayFaith in your posts.

To help with your Plough Sunday Service we have provided two templates: one a Service of the Word and one a Eucharist. These include the main elements of the liturgy, but you will also need to choose appropriate hymns and songs.

In choosing songs and hymns think about ones that reference everyday life well. We would also encourage you to look at a new hymn called We Seek Your Kingdom – sung to the tune of Abide with Me. There is a PDF in the resources hub and the words can also be found at: <https://www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk/we-seek-your-kingdom/>



## Suggested readings

The lectionary readings for the day are:

**Isaiah 42: 1-9** 🕒 **Psalm 29** 🕒 **Acts 10: 34-43** 🕒 **Matthew 3: 13-end**

These passages are for the Baptism of Christ but could be used to refer to our baptism and the calling and affirmation each of us receive in this. Alternatively, the following readings work well for affirming our role in sharing in the work of the Kingdom, whatever our places and capacities:

**Genesis 2:8-15** 🕒 **Psalm 104:[1-9] 10-23** 🕒 **2 Corinthians 5:17-20** 🕒 **Matthew 6:25-33**

These passages relate to our calling to serve and seek God's Kingdom – first through our calling as human beings to care for and steward creation 'to be God's image bearers'. In the epistle this is reinforced in seeing being Christian as a calling to be 'ambassadors' for Christ. The psalm reflects on God's continuing providence and our inclusion in his works, and the Gospel reading affirms that we should be followers who seek to build the kingdom above all things – and therefore in all things.

## Continuing to mark Everyday Faith

Use one of the services in January to introduce a *This Time Tomorrow* slot (see [Everyday Faith for Churches](#), page 8).

Use another service to focus more clearly on everyday faith in your intercessions.

Use the first Sunday in February (the Sunday after the final set of reflections) to gather thoughts on people's experiences and insights and to 'commission' people to continue to find and follow God in their everyday into the New Year. The following words could be used:

After sharing some reflections and experiences, invite people to stand if they are able.

Almighty God,

In the power of the Holy Spirit,

you send us to serve your Church,

to be and make disciples.

In the power of the Holy Spirit,

you send us out into the world

to build your Kingdom.

**All: Here I am, send me**

Will you go and pray for each other until your hearts beat with the longings of God?

**All: We will go**

Will you go in God's grace to make disciples?

**All: We will go**

Will you go and call all God's people to be citizens of the Kingdom?

**All: We will go**

Will you go and faithfully encourage all God's people to a whole life of worship; in factory as well as the sanctuary?

**All: We will go**

Will you go and creatively lead all God's people to live out the good news across the whole of life; in the primary school as well as in the Sunday school?

**All: We will go**

Will you go and diligently work with all God's people to help make Christ known in the whole of life: team meeting as well as in the prayer meeting?

**All: We will go**

[If used at the end of the service the following blessing is appropriate]

May the boldness of the Spirit transform you,

may the gentleness of the Spirit lead you,

may the gifts of the Spirit equip you

to serve and worship God;

and the blessing ...

### **Our Everyday Faith Collect**

Creator God,

you made us all in your image:

may we discern you in all that we see,

and serve you in all that we do;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

(Usually said on the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity)