

The image shows the interior of a church with a high, vaulted wooden ceiling supported by stone arches. The walls are made of stone, and there are several large, silver, dome-shaped pendant lights hanging from the ceiling. In the center, there is an altar with a mural above it. The floor is covered with wooden pews, and a red carpet runs down the center aisle. The overall atmosphere is solemn and historic.

# Sunday March 29th, 2020

Morning worship at St. Leonard's Parish Church  
Dunfermline

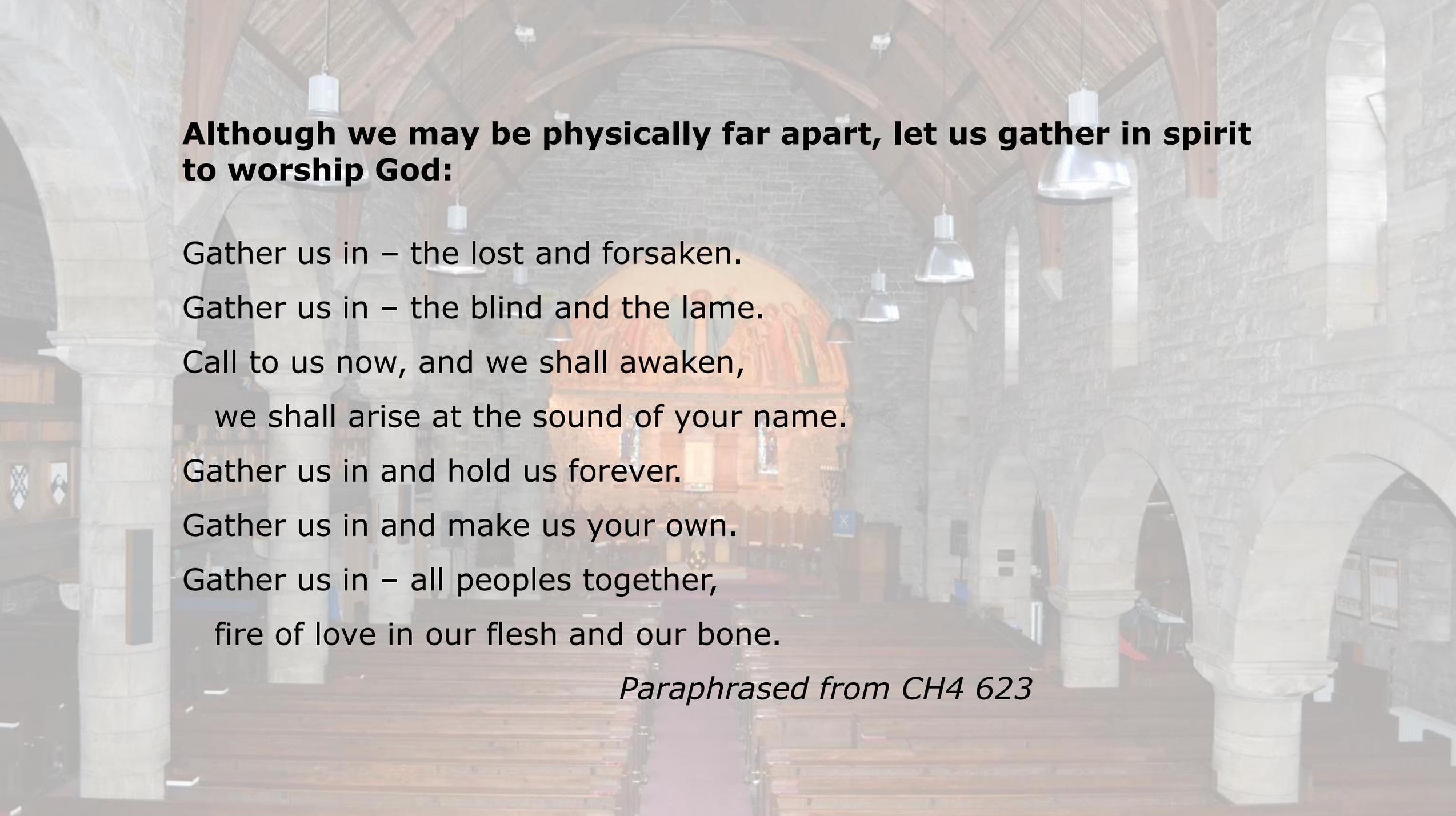
(originally posted on Facebook)



**Welcome** - We've had a week of the 'new normal' -  
I do wonder how we are all doing?

Before all this happened, the plan had been to take a pause in our series on 'Call' for our Stated Annual Meeting...but we paused to face our fears instead.

Now we are in the 'just have to go through it' (Bear Hunt!) phase, and so I've decided we are going to finish our series. We've thought about the call of God on our lives - what a joy and privilege it is, what a blessing and a revolution it is. And today we are going to think about how we are called to mission - and if you've been around St L's for the last week while of Path of Renewal, you'll know I prefer to talk in terms of 'missional living' - and today is no different!



**Although we may be physically far apart, let us gather in spirit  
to worship God:**

Gather us in – the lost and forsaken.

Gather us in – the blind and the lame.

Call to us now, and we shall awaken,  
we shall arise at the sound of your name.

Gather us in and hold us forever.

Gather us in and make us your own.

Gather us in – all peoples together,  
fire of love in our flesh and our bone.

*Paraphrased from CH4 623*

## **Call to worship**

### **Stillness -**

Notice the quality of the light around you.

Notice the scent of the air you breathe in.

Notice the sounds you can hear - you may need to listen hard!

As you slow your breath, let your mind become calm.

As your mind becomes calm, imagine your spirit held gently in the cupped hands of God.

This crisis comes at people differently -

Some are desperately rushing to make it easier for others...and crave moments of stillness.

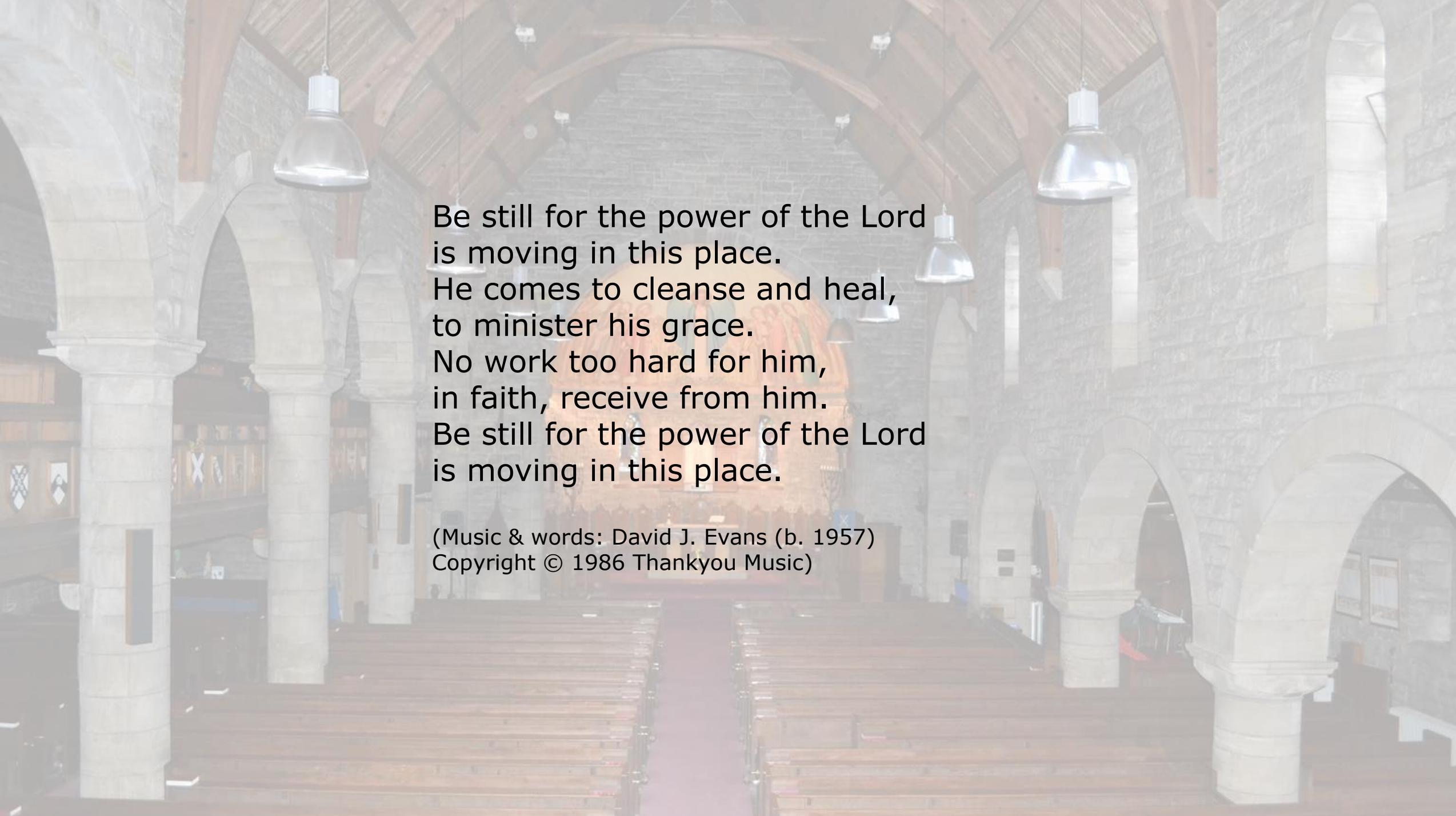
Others are confined, constrained, maybe even railing at enforced stillness...but not still in their spirits.

'Be still,' says God, 'and know that I am God.'

## Hymn

Be still, for the presence of the Lord,  
The Holy One, is here.  
Come bow before him now,  
with reverence and fear.  
In him no sin is found,  
we stand on holy ground.  
Be still for the presence of the Lord,  
The Holy One, is here.

Be still for the glory of the Lord  
is shining all around.  
He burns with holy fire,  
with splendour he is crowned.  
How awesome is the sight,  
our radiant King of light!  
Be still for the glory of the Lord  
is shining all around.

The background image shows the interior of a church. It features a series of stone arches supported by pillars, with wooden pews arranged in a central aisle. The ceiling is made of dark wood with exposed beams. Several large, silver, dome-shaped pendant lights hang from the ceiling. The overall atmosphere is solemn and historic.

Be still for the power of the Lord  
is moving in this place.  
He comes to cleanse and heal,  
to minister his grace.  
No work too hard for him,  
in faith, receive from him.  
Be still for the power of the Lord  
is moving in this place.

(Music & words: David J. Evans (b. 1957)  
Copyright © 1986 Thankyou Music)

## **Prayer**

I have adapted a little prayer written by Rev Angus Mathieson from the materials for this Sunday on the Church of Scotland website. This means that we will be praying in concert with the larger, wider family of the church in Scotland this day:

Out of the depths, we cry to You, O God.

Hear our voices, and be with Your people

as we gather in worship in this time –

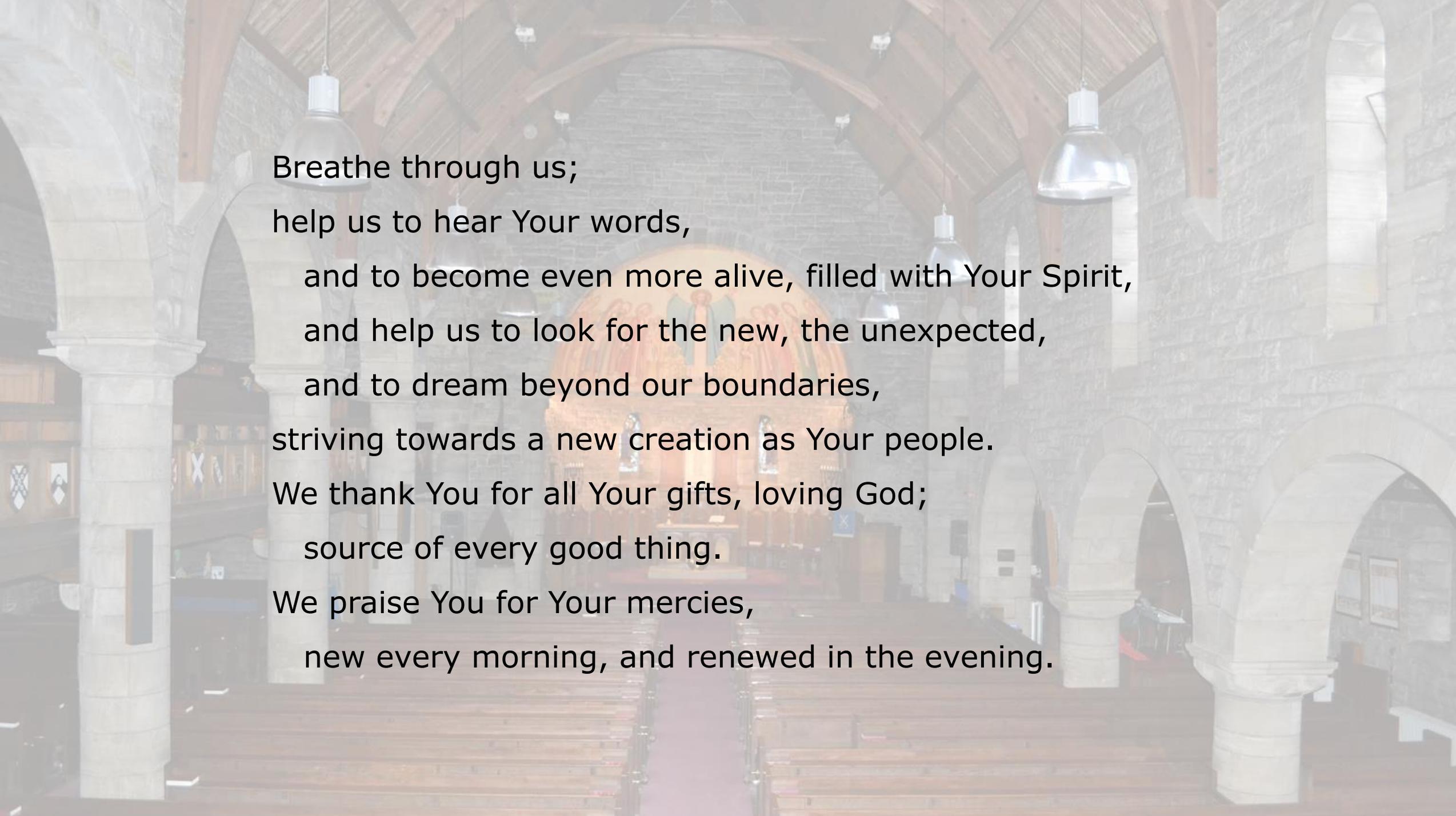
and in our various places.

Come through Your Spirit, living God, and partner with us;

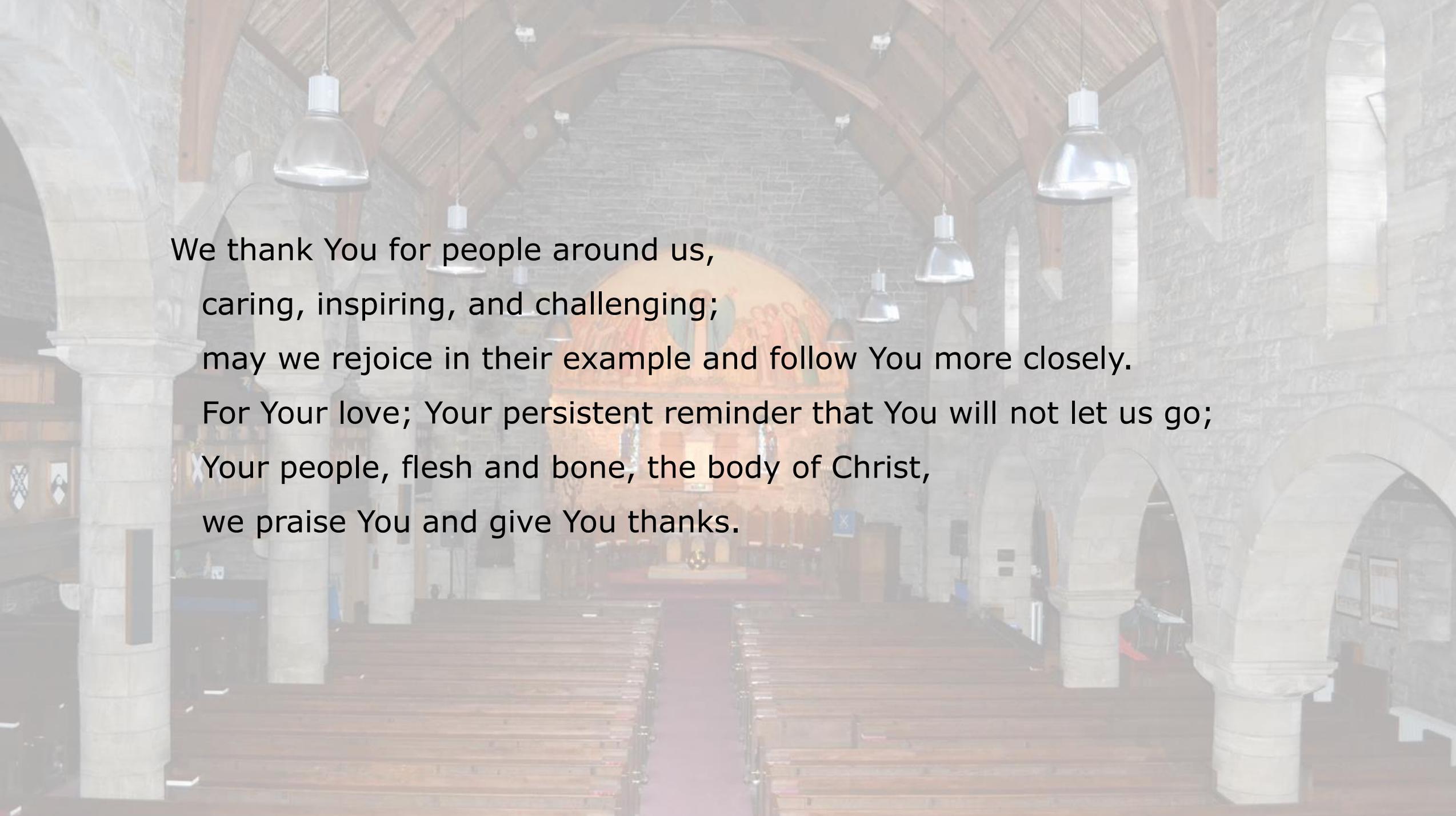
lead us to paths of steadfast love;

lead us to new life;

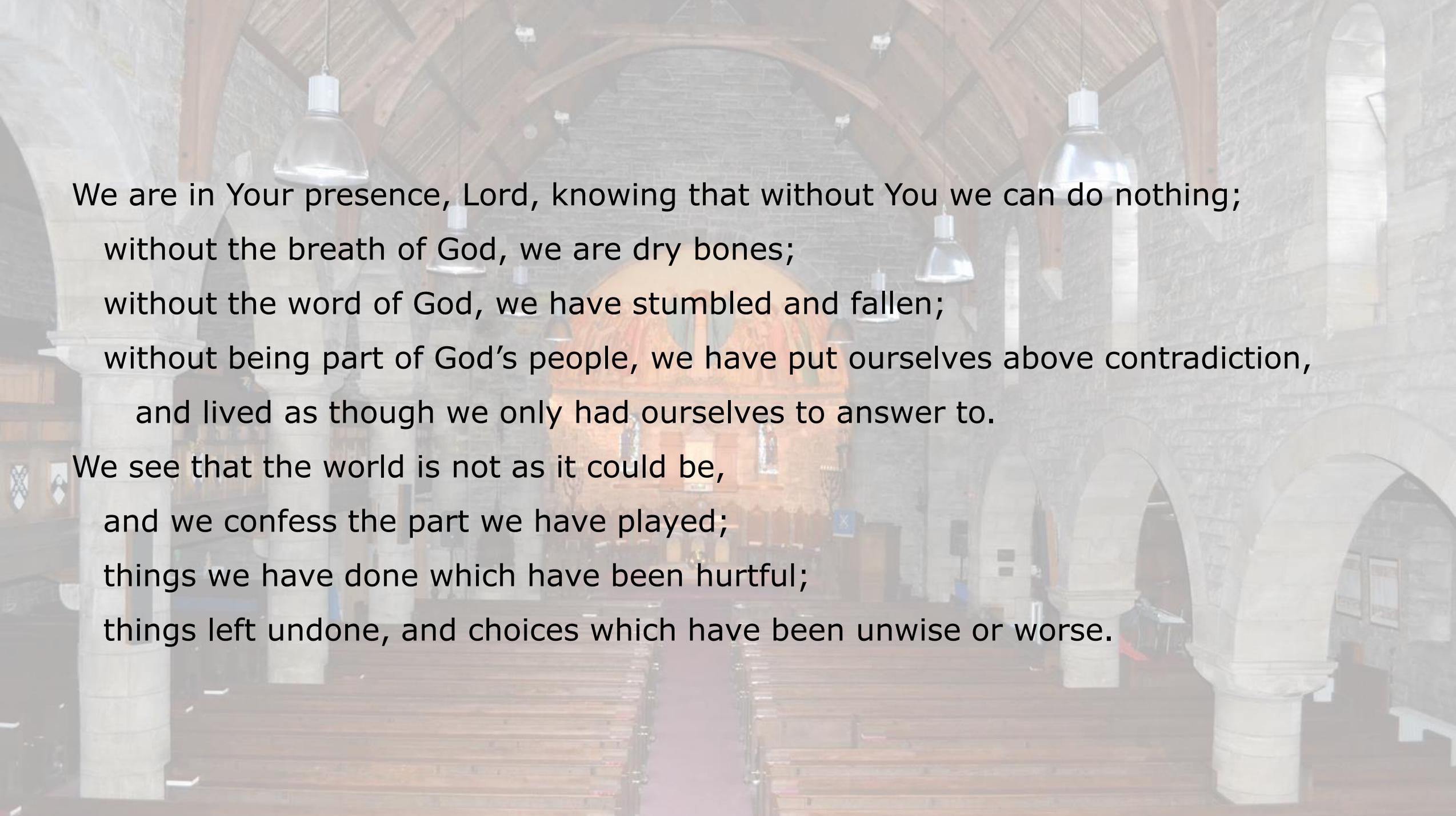
and lead the world to the peace which You offer.



Breathe through us;  
help us to hear Your words,  
and to become even more alive, filled with Your Spirit,  
and help us to look for the new, the unexpected,  
and to dream beyond our boundaries,  
striving towards a new creation as Your people.  
We thank You for all Your gifts, loving God;  
source of every good thing.  
We praise You for Your mercies,  
new every morning, and renewed in the evening.

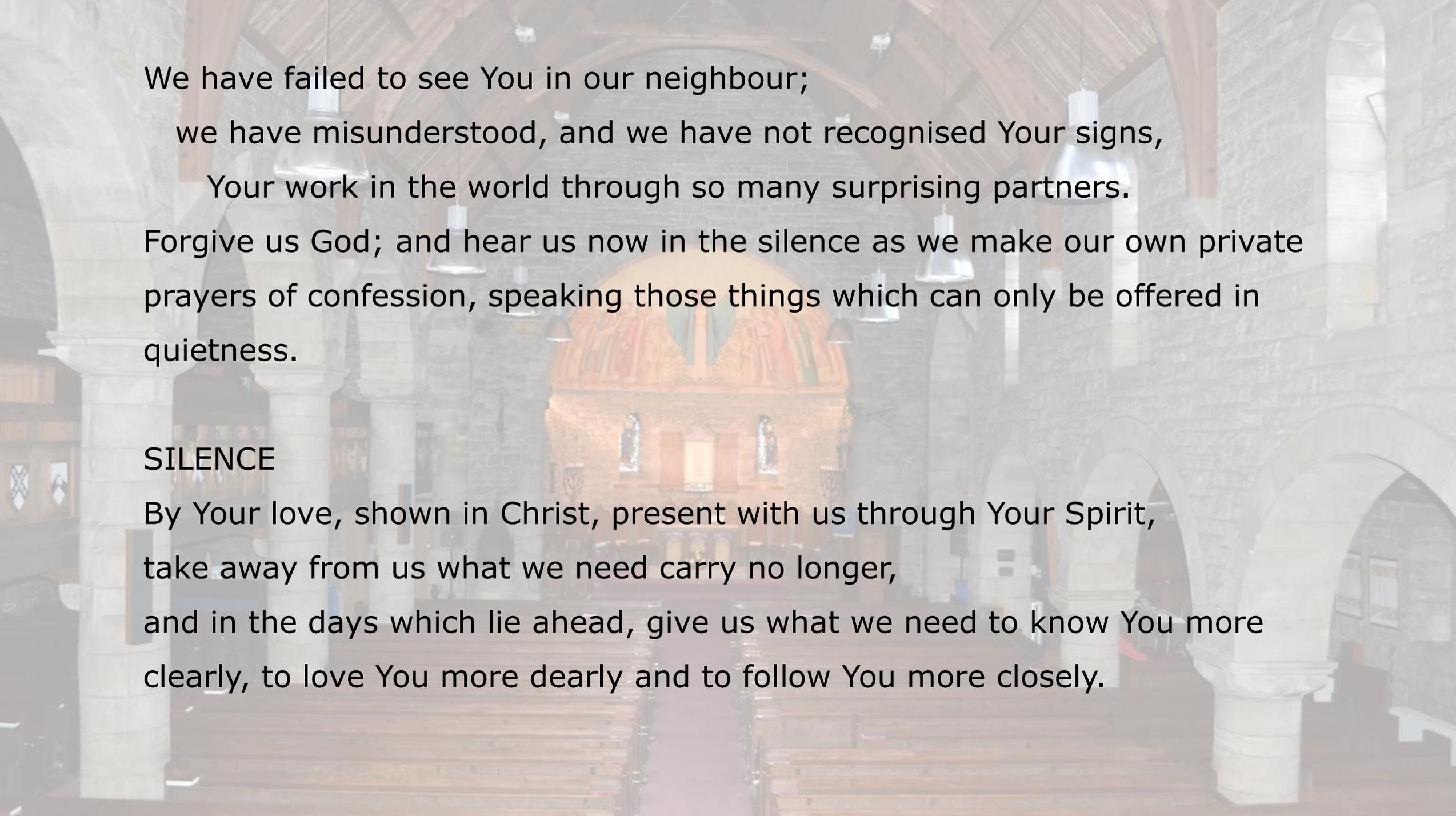


We thank You for people around us,  
caring, inspiring, and challenging;  
may we rejoice in their example and follow You more closely.  
For Your love; Your persistent reminder that You will not let us go;  
Your people, flesh and bone, the body of Christ,  
we praise You and give You thanks.

The background of the image is a faded, grayscale photograph of a church interior. It features a series of stone arches supported by pillars, with rows of wooden pews leading towards an altar area in the distance. Several large, industrial-style pendant lights hang from the ceiling. The overall atmosphere is solemn and quiet.

We are in Your presence, Lord, knowing that without You we can do nothing;  
without the breath of God, we are dry bones;  
without the word of God, we have stumbled and fallen;  
without being part of God's people, we have put ourselves above contradiction,  
and lived as though we only had ourselves to answer to.

We see that the world is not as it could be,  
and we confess the part we have played;  
things we have done which have been hurtful;  
things left undone, and choices which have been unwise or worse.

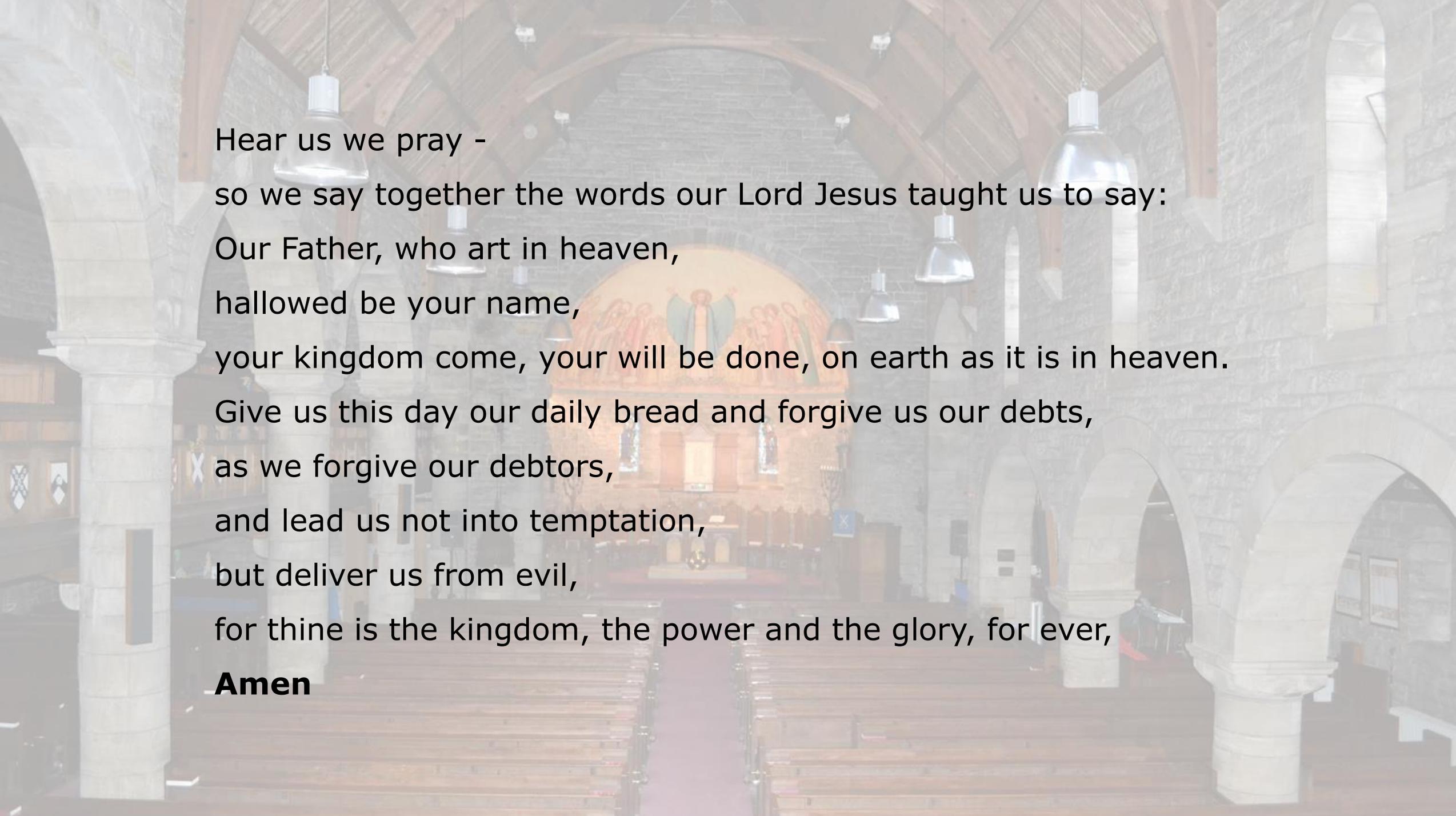


We have failed to see You in our neighbour;  
we have misunderstood, and we have not recognised Your signs,  
Your work in the world through so many surprising partners.

Forgive us God; and hear us now in the silence as we make our own private prayers of confession, speaking those things which can only be offered in quietness.

## SILENCE

By Your love, shown in Christ, present with us through Your Spirit,  
take away from us what we need carry no longer,  
and in the days which lie ahead, give us what we need to know You more clearly, to love You more dearly and to follow You more closely.

The background image shows the interior of a church. It features a series of stone arches supported by pillars, creating a sense of depth and grandeur. The ceiling is high with exposed wooden beams and several large, modern-style pendant lights hanging from it. In the center, there is an altar area with a large, colorful mural or stained glass window depicting a religious scene. The floor is made of wooden pews, and the overall atmosphere is one of a well-maintained, historic place of worship.

Hear us we pray -  
so we say together the words our Lord Jesus taught us to say:  
Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts,  
as we forgive our debtors,  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil,  
for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever,  
**Amen**

## Scripture

*If you have the time, read all of Luke 10 because it gives us a background of mission forms that provide a really interesting context.*

### *Luke 10:38-42*

(38) As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him.

(39) She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.

(40) But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

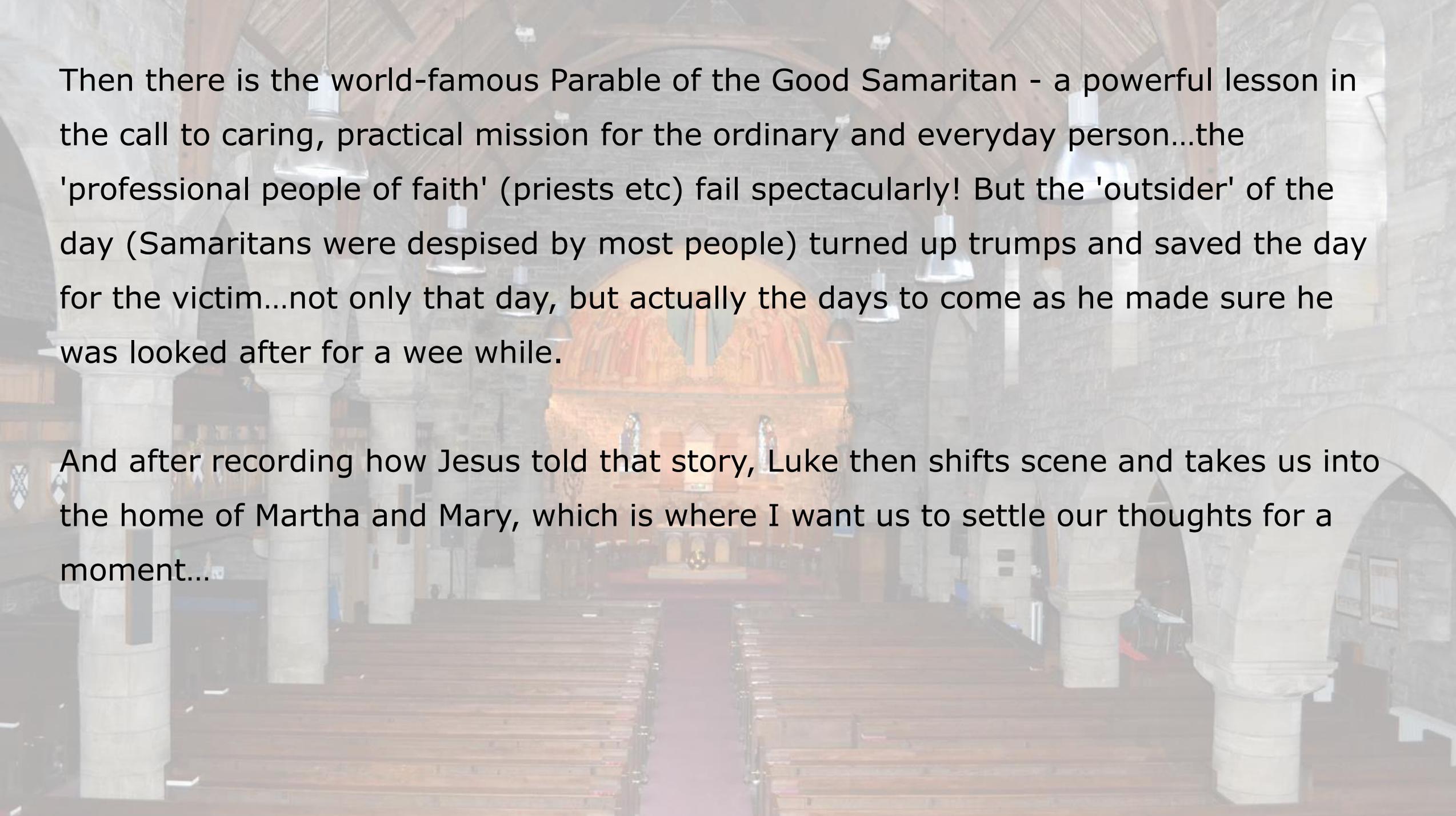
(41) "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things,

(42) but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

I was wanting to take us back this week to our Lent series on 'Call', and particularly our call to mission (or missional living, as I tend to think of it since being on Path of Renewal!). But Mary and Martha kept coming to my mind.

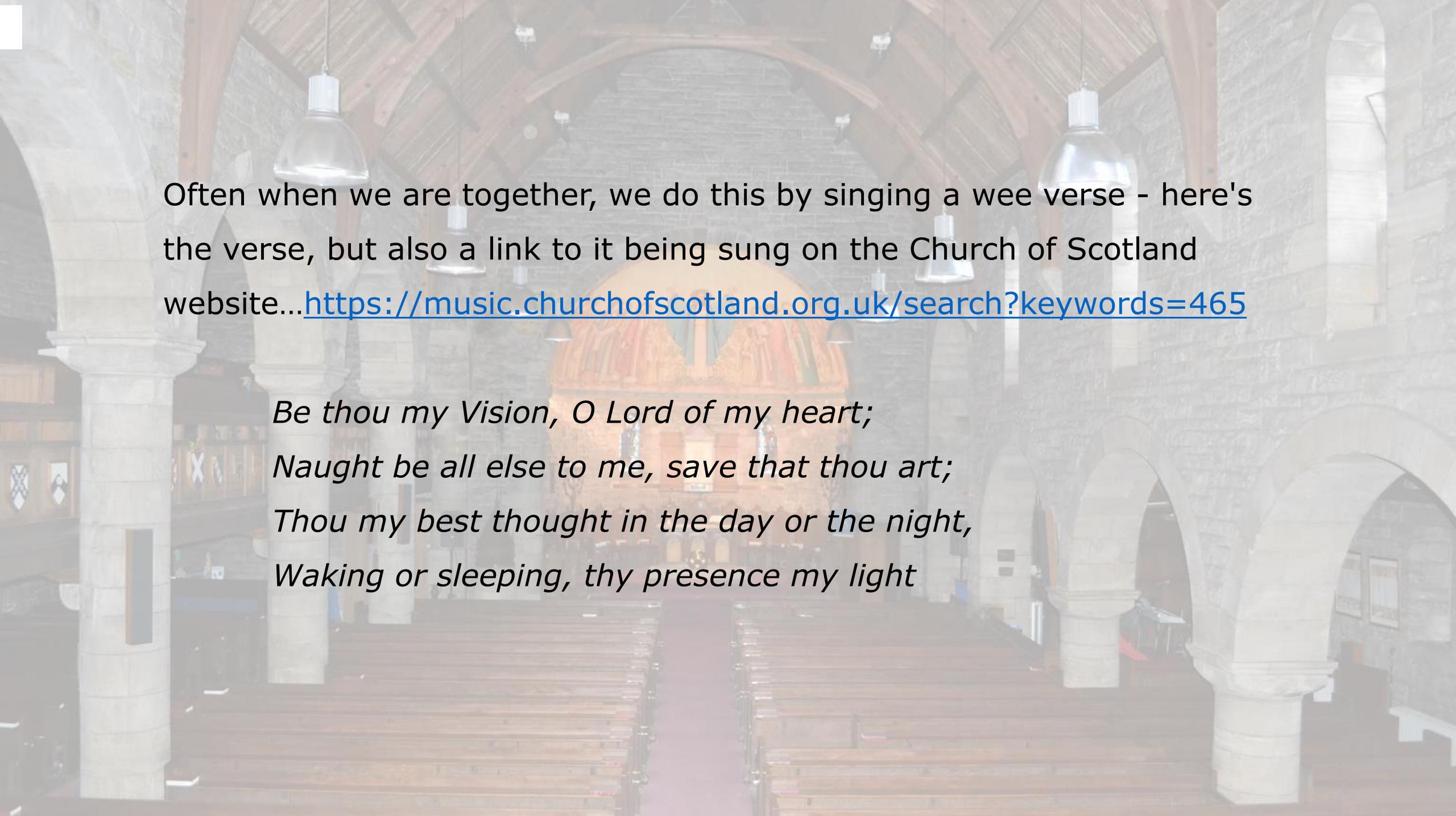
So I looked up the story of one of their encounters with Jesus...and I did what all good ministers should do - I had a look at the context of the wee bit of Scripture. That is - I started at the beginning of the chapter!

And the chapter starts with Jesus sending out a big bunch of his disciples (not just 'the 12'...but 72!). There's a tonne of stuff in this bit of the gospel...but that's for another day. For now, I want you to notice that this bit looks more like 'traditional' mission for those of us who have been around the church for a while. This looks like evangelism - being sent out to 'spread the word'. Which is brilliant...but it's not all and everything, when it comes to 'mission' / missional living!



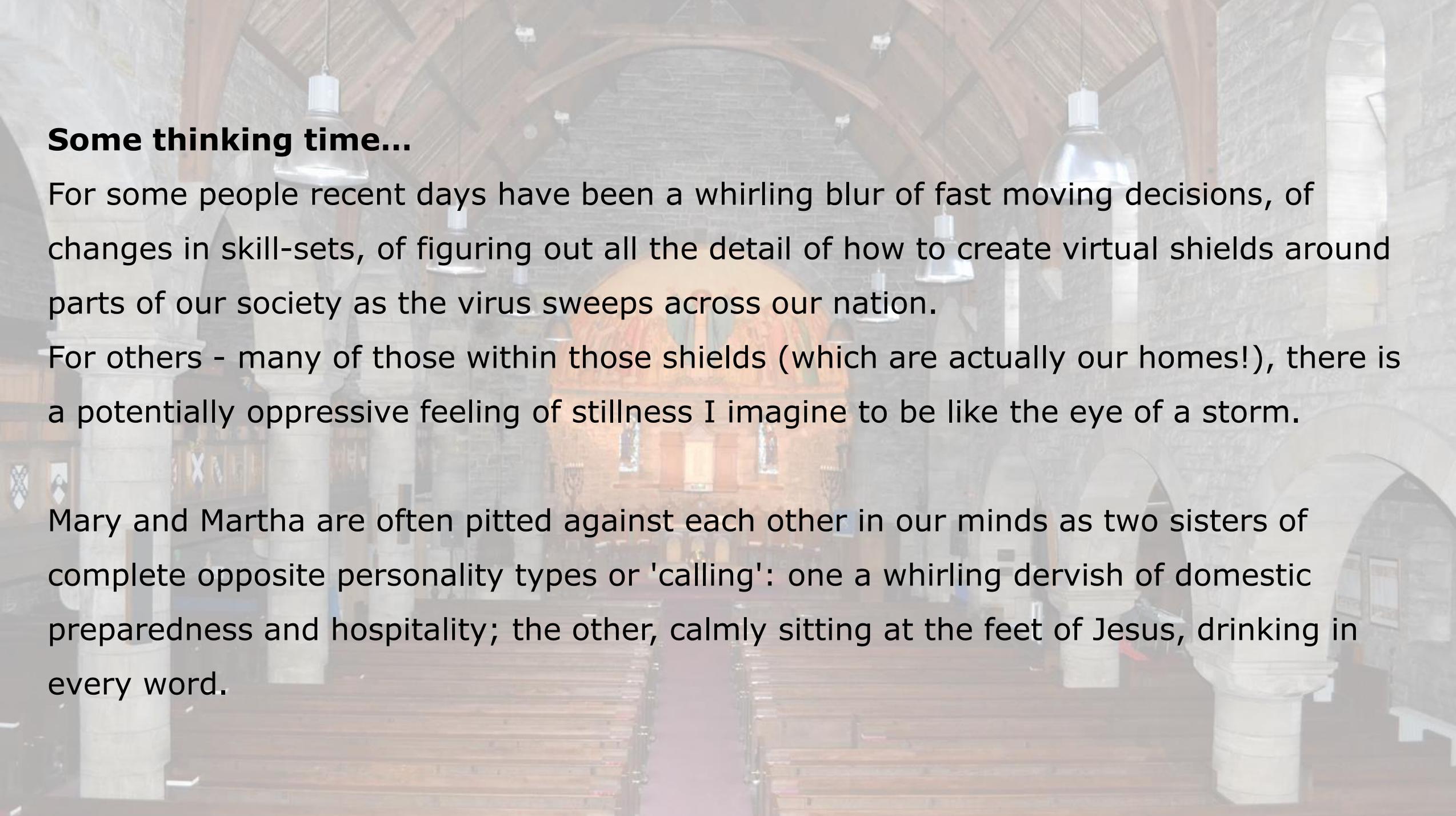
Then there is the world-famous Parable of the Good Samaritan - a powerful lesson in the call to caring, practical mission for the ordinary and everyday person...the 'professional people of faith' (priests etc) fail spectacularly! But the 'outsider' of the day (Samaritans were despised by most people) turned up trumps and saved the day for the victim...not only that day, but actually the days to come as he made sure he was looked after for a wee while.

And after recording how Jesus told that story, Luke then shifts scene and takes us into the home of Martha and Mary, which is where I want us to settle our thoughts for a moment...

The background image shows the interior of a church. It features a series of stone arches supported by pillars, with wooden pews arranged in rows. The ceiling is high and appears to be made of wood. There are several pendant lights hanging from the ceiling. In the distance, there is an altar area with a colorful canopy.

Often when we are together, we do this by singing a wee verse - here's the verse, but also a link to it being sung on the Church of Scotland website...<https://music.churchofscotland.org.uk/search?keywords=465>

*Be thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;  
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art;  
Thou my best thought in the day or the night,  
Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light*

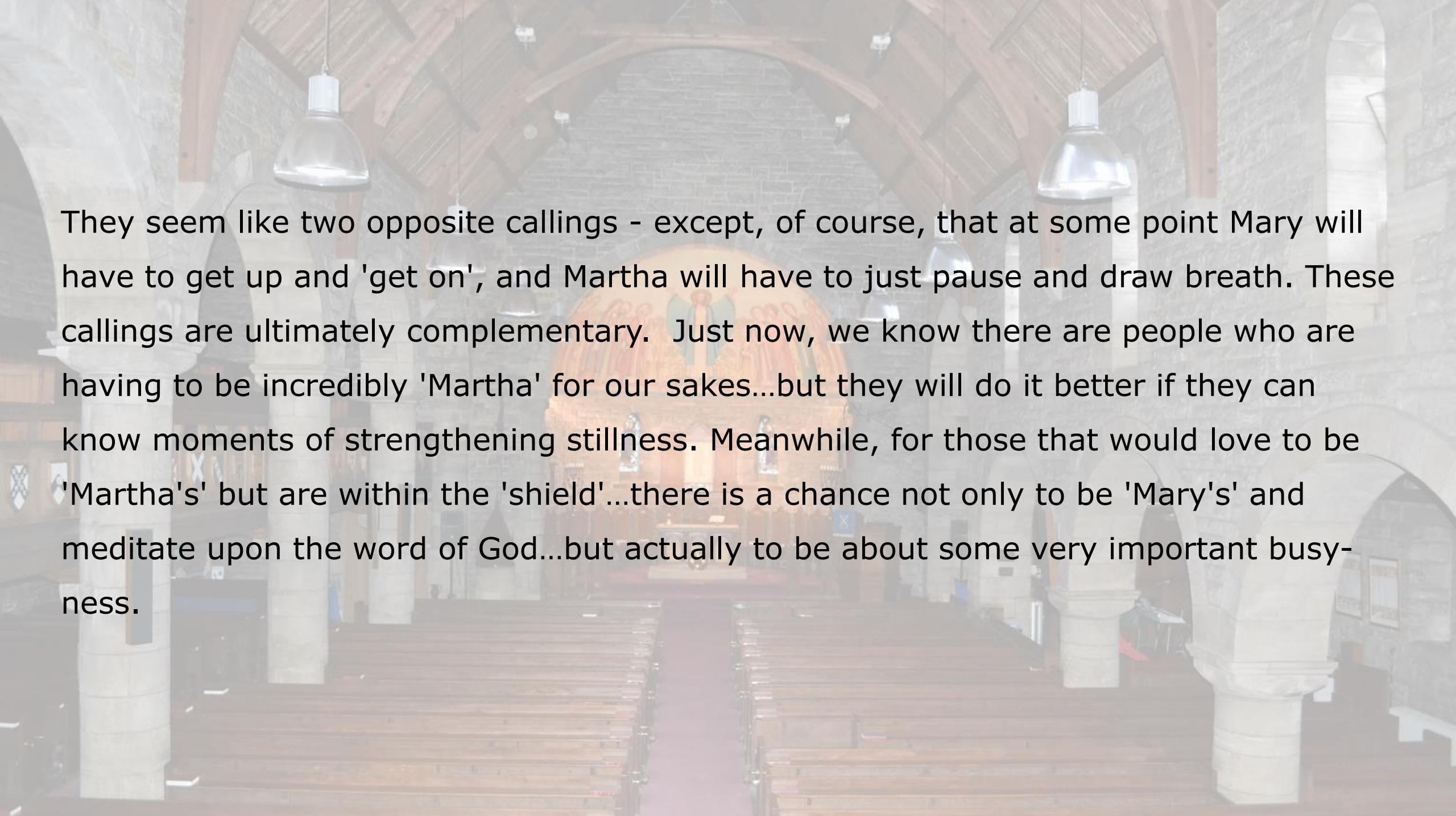


## **Some thinking time...**

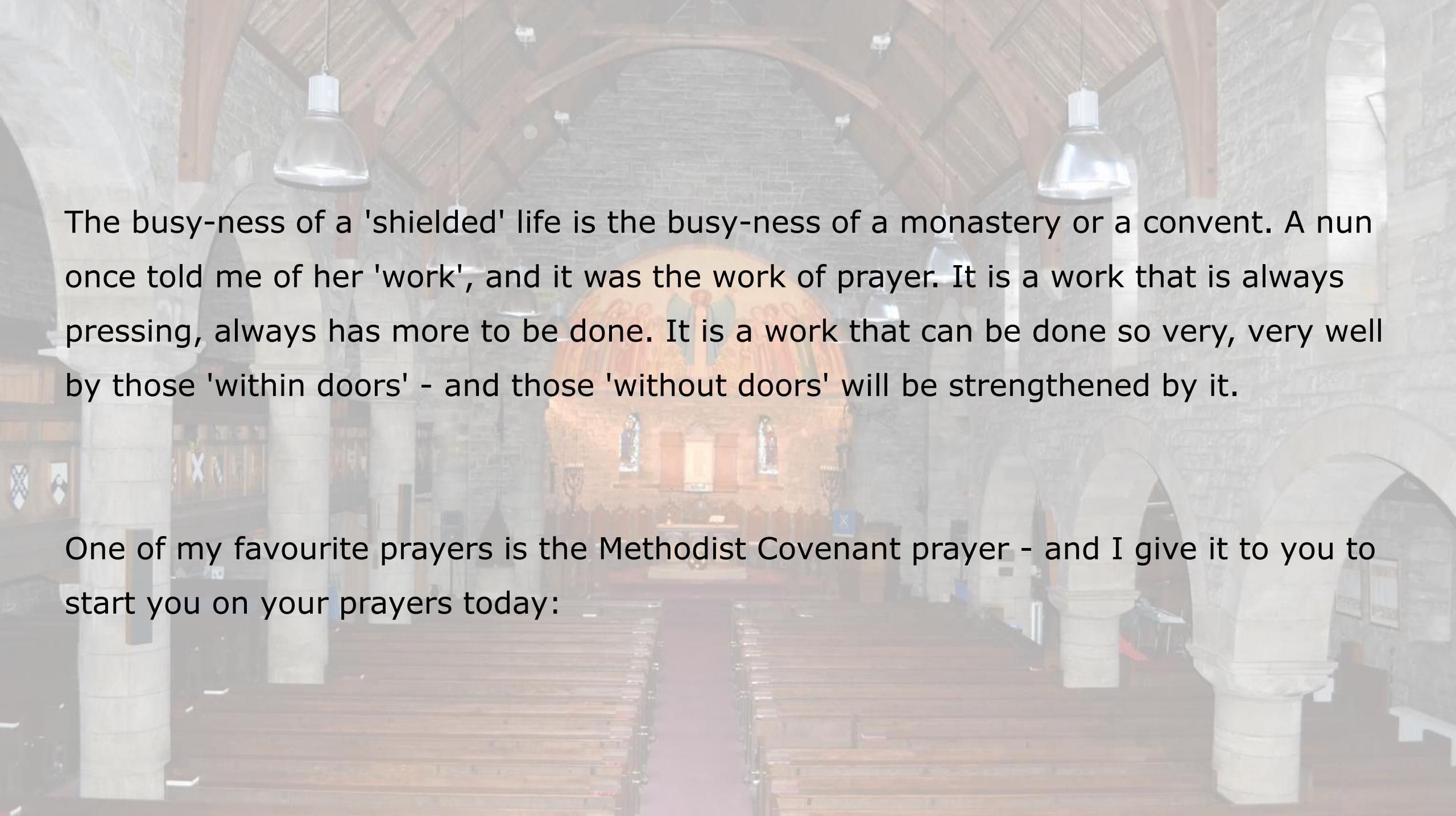
For some people recent days have been a whirling blur of fast moving decisions, of changes in skill-sets, of figuring out all the detail of how to create virtual shields around parts of our society as the virus sweeps across our nation.

For others - many of those within those shields (which are actually our homes!), there is a potentially oppressive feeling of stillness I imagine to be like the eye of a storm.

Mary and Martha are often pitted against each other in our minds as two sisters of complete opposite personality types or 'calling': one a whirling dervish of domestic preparedness and hospitality; the other, calmly sitting at the feet of Jesus, drinking in every word.

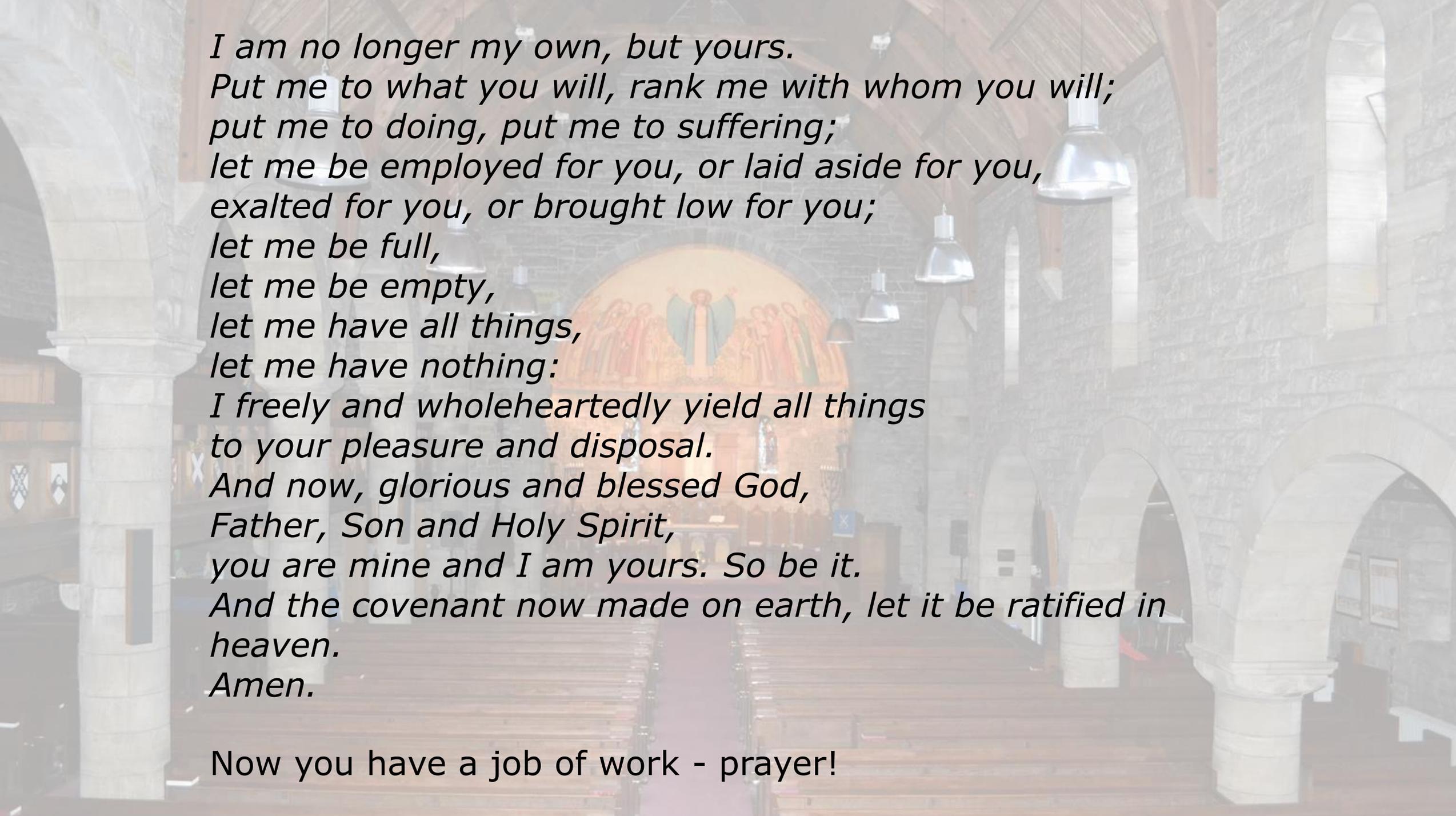


They seem like two opposite callings - except, of course, that at some point Mary will have to get up and 'get on', and Martha will have to just pause and draw breath. These callings are ultimately complementary. Just now, we know there are people who are having to be incredibly 'Martha' for our sakes...but they will do it better if they can know moments of strengthening stillness. Meanwhile, for those that would love to be 'Martha's' but are within the 'shield'...there is a chance not only to be 'Mary's' and meditate upon the word of God...but actually to be about some very important busy-ness.



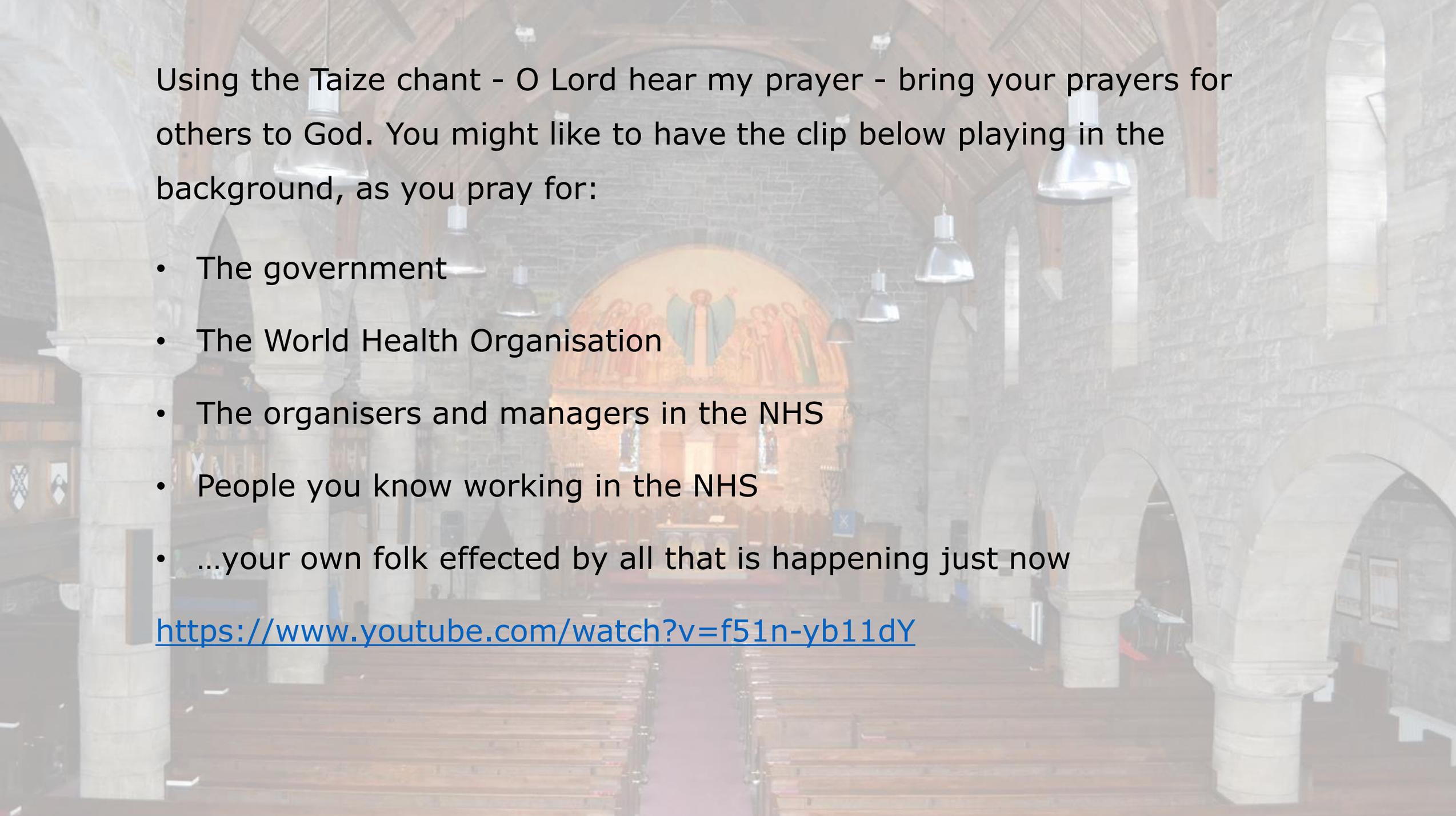
The busy-ness of a 'shielded' life is the busy-ness of a monastery or a convent. A nun once told me of her 'work', and it was the work of prayer. It is a work that is always pressing, always has more to be done. It is a work that can be done so very, very well by those 'within doors' - and those 'without doors' will be strengthened by it.

One of my favourite prayers is the Methodist Covenant prayer - and I give it to you to start you on your prayers today:



*I am no longer my own, but yours.  
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;  
put me to doing, put me to suffering;  
let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,  
exalted for you, or brought low for you;  
let me be full,  
let me be empty,  
let me have all things,  
let me have nothing:  
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things  
to your pleasure and disposal.  
And now, glorious and blessed God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
you are mine and I am yours. So be it.  
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in  
heaven.  
Amen.*

Now you have a job of work - prayer!



Using the Taize chant - O Lord hear my prayer - bring your prayers for others to God. You might like to have the clip below playing in the background, as you pray for:

- The government
- The World Health Organisation
- The organisers and managers in the NHS
- People you know working in the NHS
- ...your own folk effected by all that is happening just now

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f51n-yb11dY>

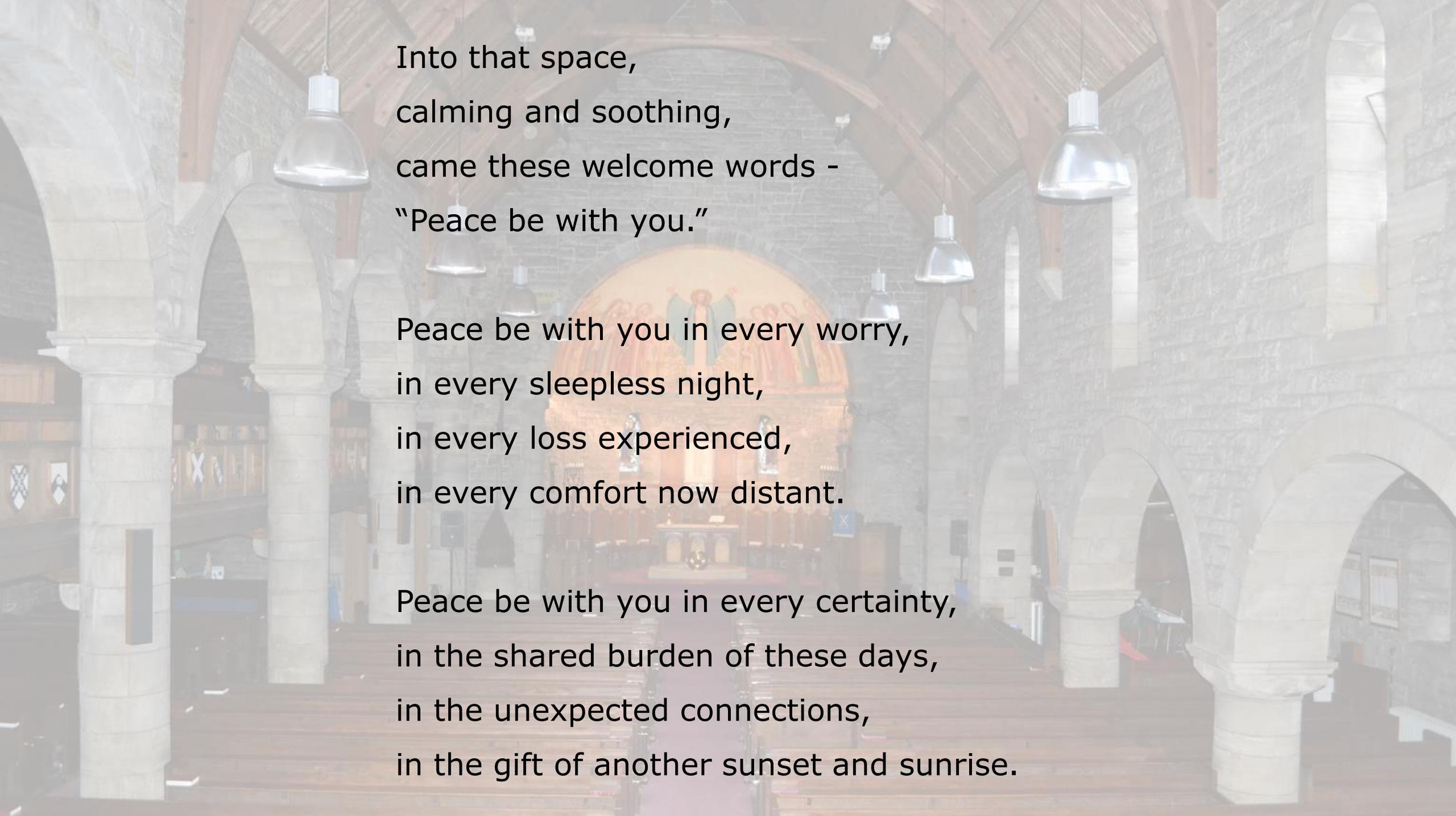
## **Closing Prayer**

Our closing prayer was written by Rev Dr Lezley Stewart. The words are beautiful, but I include it today because it resonates with some of our recent studies into the encounters between the disciples and Jesus after the resurrection...when Jesus brought peace into a situation of fear, into a room locked down...

### **Locked Down**

There were other doors  
once locked in fear,  
in a time of waiting  
and distress.

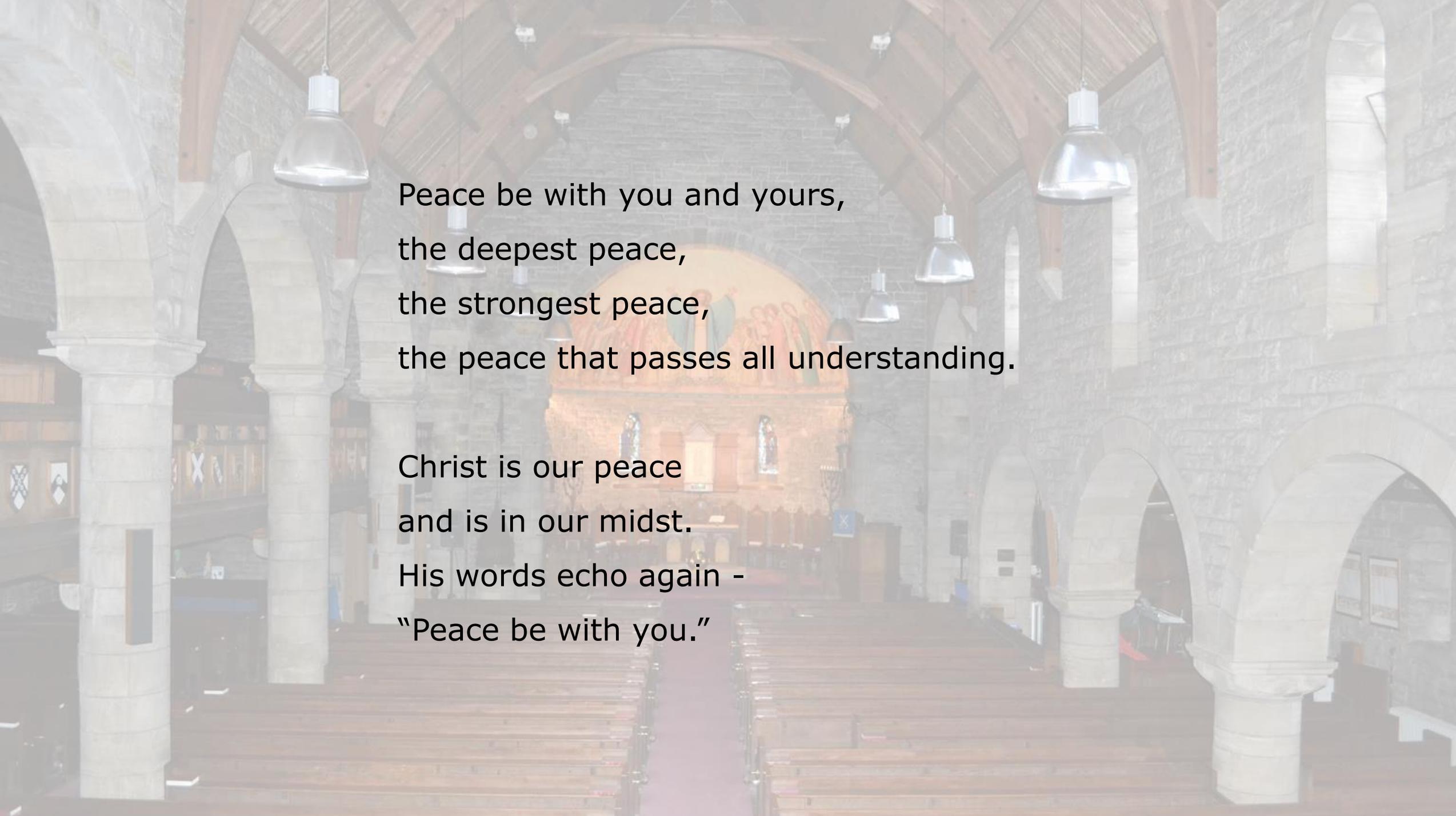
It was an uncertain,  
questioning time -  
longing for what had been known  
and treasured before.

The background image shows the interior of a church. It features a series of stone arches supported by pillars, creating a sense of depth and grandeur. The ceiling is high with exposed wooden beams. Several large, silver, dome-shaped pendant lights hang from the ceiling. In the center, there is an altar area with a large, colorful mural or stained glass window above it. The overall atmosphere is serene and peaceful.

Into that space,  
calming and soothing,  
came these welcome words -  
"Peace be with you."

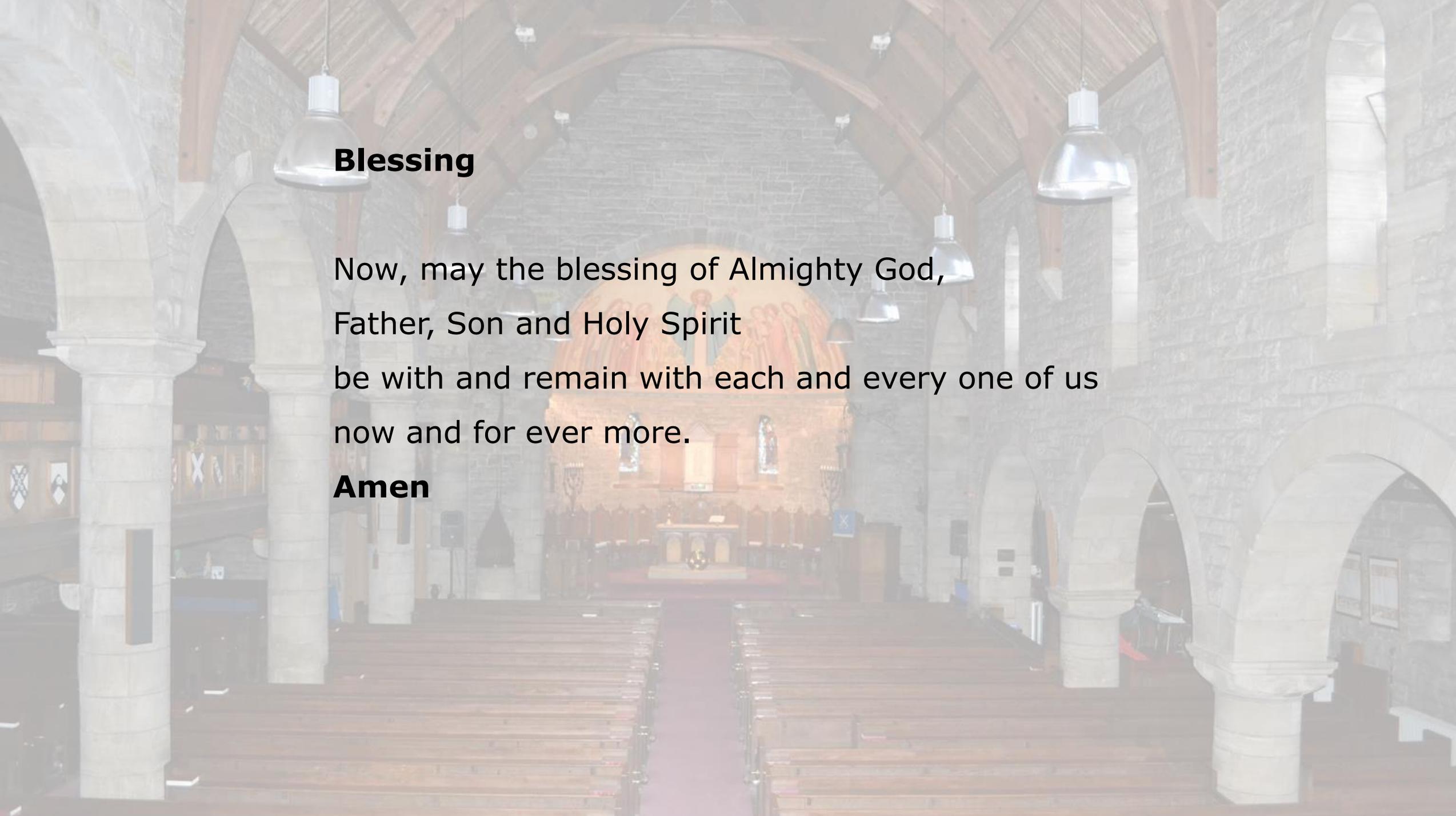
Peace be with you in every worry,  
in every sleepless night,  
in every loss experienced,  
in every comfort now distant.

Peace be with you in every certainty,  
in the shared burden of these days,  
in the unexpected connections,  
in the gift of another sunset and sunrise.

The background image shows the interior of a church. It features a series of stone arches supported by pillars, with wooden pews arranged in a central aisle. The ceiling is made of dark wood beams. Several large, silver, dome-shaped pendant lights hang from the ceiling. In the background, there is an altar area with a large mural or stained glass window depicting figures in a semi-circular arch. The overall atmosphere is solemn and peaceful.

Peace be with you and yours,  
the deepest peace,  
the strongest peace,  
the peace that passes all understanding.

Christ is our peace  
and is in our midst.  
His words echo again -  
"Peace be with you."

The image shows the interior of a church with a high, vaulted ceiling supported by stone arches. The walls are made of light-colored stone. In the foreground, there are rows of wooden pews. In the background, there is an altar area with a large, colorful mural or stained glass window depicting a religious scene. Several modern, silver pendant lights hang from the ceiling. The overall atmosphere is solemn and architectural.

## **Blessing**

Now, may the blessing of Almighty God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
be with and remain with each and every one of us  
now and for ever more.

**Amen**