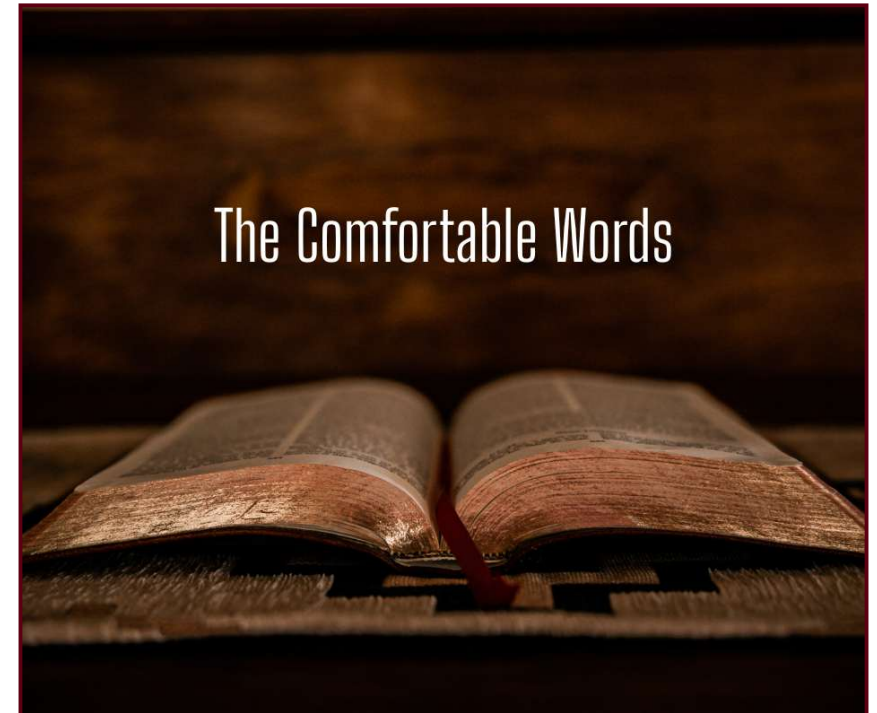




Mid-year Devotions

2026



In our Communion Service, there is a special moment when we are reminded of the love of God to those who do not deserve it. It is the **'comfortable words'**, the words full of assurance and grace to those who confess their sins and repent. Let's look carefully at these words in turn and catch something of God's amazing grace.

1a 'Come unto me all that travail and are heavy laden...'

We have many burdens in this life, many times when life seems dark and we hardly know which way to turn. I think that this is especially so when the people we love are in trouble and we can do nothing about it. This invitation from Jesus is so precious. We can turn to him, knowing that we cannot solve all problems, but he shares the load with us. But, whether we realise it or not, the greatest of all burdens is our own sin, our 'manifold sins and wickedness' committed, 'in thought and word and deed.' When we see ourselves clearly, we will realise that our only hope is to come to Jesus.

Response: Dear Lord, you understand me and know me. I come to you with my own burdens and pray that you will help me to rest in you. Amen

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1b 'Come unto me...and I will refresh you' (Matthew 11:28)

The invitation of Jesus to turn to him is followed by a precious promise of refreshment, or, in our modern translations, rest from toil and hard work. We can rest because our anxieties and fears are now shared with him. But we can rest especially because we have now found the life-changing gift of forgiveness. Doubtless you know already what it is like to be forgiven by someone you have offended. But nothing can surpass the forgiveness of God, the washing away of sin and the sense of being one with him. Jesus goes on to say that coming to him involves putting on his yoke and learning from him, for he is 'gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls'. Who better to serve and learn from than Jesus?

Response: Lord Jesus, I come to you and ask for you to take the burden of my sin. Help me to serve you now and always. Amen

2a ‘ So God loved the world. That he gave his only-begotten Son...’

God has many sons and daughters. Those who belong to him through Jesus may call his ‘Father’. But we are the *adopted* children of God. To say that there is an ‘only-begotten’ Son is not to speak of some time when there was no Son, or that he was somehow born. It is to speak about the relations in the one Triune God and to say that Jesus is the Father’s ‘one and only Son’, his real Son. And yet, he gave this infinitely precious Son to enter the world as one of us and to suffer and die. What could possess him to do that? Love – he so loved the world that he did that. If you every doubt the love of God, remember the cross and what God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, did for us.

Response: Father in heaven, thank you for your love for us. Please help me always to be assured of your love in all circumstances, through Jesus my Lord. Amen

4b ‘... and he is the propitiation for our sins’ (1 John 2:1)

He sacrificed himself for us, that we may be forgiven.

Response:

‘When I survey the wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride
Forbid it Lord that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my Lord;
All the vain things which charm me most, I sacrifice them to His blood.
See, from Head, his hands his feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns compose so rich a crown?
Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small:
Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

(Isaac Watts - Public Domain)

**4a 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father,
Jesus Christ the righteous...'**

Not all professionals are equally competent. We like to look for a good doctor, accountant, dentist, and lawyer. When it comes to the most pressing problem of all, our sin and God's judgement, we need help more than in any other circumstance of life. And at hand we have the most fitting Advocate of all, none other than Jesus Christ the righteous. It is because he did not sin that he is qualified to speak for sinners. The Bible tells us that he is praying for us, interceding on our behalf. He is the Good Shepherd, who brings his sheep home to be with God forever. How blessed we are.

Response: Gracious God, we are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table. We thank you for our Advocate who speaks on our behalf, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**2b '...to the end that all that believe in him should not
perish but have everlasting-life.' (John 3:16)**

It is good news that God is love. It is also good news that he is just. We would want that in God. But his justice means that there is a day of judgement on which we must all stand condemned because all have sinned, and the wages of sin is death. But the love of God and the wisdom of God and the justice of God sent Jesus as the Saviour of the lost. It is like being caught in the tumult of the sea and the life-saver appears. What should you do? Trust the Life-Saver. And when you do, you need no longer fear the day of judgement for you will have God's gift of ever-lasting life.

Response: Gracious Father, thank you for sending Jesus as our Saviour. Help me to entrust myself to him and so be confident that I have eternal life. Praise your name! Amen

3a 'This is a true saying and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world...'

Knowing who Jesus really is, the Son of God, makes his coming into the world astonishing. He did not come as a make-believe human, just God in disguise. His humanity was absolutely real. He slept, he ate, he worked, he prayed, he had friends, he had a real mother, you could betray him and murder him on a cross, he rose from the dead. He is like Adam, except that the first Adam failed completely. This Adam does not fail. He lived a life without sin. He purposed to come into the world. In Adam we have no hope. In Christ, our hope is joyful. And this is a truth for all humanity.

Response: Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your Son into the world to be one with us and to bear the burden of our sin. I yield my heart to you. Amen

3b '...to save sinners' (1 Timothy 1:15)

It is so easy, even normal, to think that Christianity is a form of morality intended to earn our way to heaven. We think that the main business of being Christian is to do good in order to please God. But just think of the parable of Jesus about the Pharisee who thanked God for his moral achievements and the tax-collector who simply asked, 'God be merciful to me a sinner'. Jesus said that it was the tax collector who was justified. Exactly. Jesus came not to save the self-righteous, but the sinners. How amazing is his grace! And that is what our Prayer Book is saying to us.

Response: Father, I am a great sinner, but I thank you that Christ is a great Saviour. Amen