



# Plants for Reflection: Mint

**Mint (Mentha)** has many different species spread across much of the world. It spreads easily and is often considered to be an invasive species. It is mainly used as a flavouring in cooking, in traditional medicines and cosmetics.

## **Bible Passage: Luke 11:42 (NRSV\*)**

But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and herbs of kinds, and neglect justice and the love of God; it is these you ought to have practised, without neglecting the others.

This verse from Luke's Gospel is taken from a passage where Jesus has been invited to dinner by one of the Pharisees. The dinner does not get off to a good start when Jesus doesn't follow his host's expectations about cleaning his hands before the meal. Jesus responds with this verse and a number of other comments challenging the importance his hosts placed on these rituals.

All religions have rituals which they expect their believers to follow. However, what Jesus was saying to his host was that there are things that are more important than simply following the rules. In particular Jesus was reminding them that as well as paying their tithes (taxes) they should be showing God's love to people. There are several stories in the Gospels where Jesus shows God's love to people who were outsiders in their society, lepers and foreigners being two common examples.

## **Reflection: Community and Isolation**

Mint is a plant which, as you will know if you've tried to grow it, spreads very easily and likes to make its home in many different places. It is also a plant that adds flavour to many different dishes.

The 16th century writer and priest John Donne wrote "No man is an island entire of itself." It is a piece of writing that reminds us of the benefits of our connections with other people, both locally and throughout the world. For Donne, there should be no exceptions to our links to our fellow women and men.

\* New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicised Edition, © 1989, 1995, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

If you read all these reflections, you will discover something of the breadth of connections across the world. Our focus is also closer to home and our place in this local community and the people who live, work, and visit here. The offer of this Bible Garden as a place for quiet rest and reflection is part of our ministry to the people who pass by us day by day. This is part of our work to show God's love to be felt by everyone.

## **Prayer**

God of love, here is our house  
A house where love dwells and all are welcome  
A garden where memories linger, and all will be embraced  
Help us show your love for all who meet us here

God of love, here is our town  
A town where people come to live, to work, to visit  
A community of hopes and fears, of love and laughter, of joy and sorrow  
One of which we are part, seeking to show your hope, your love, your faith

God of love, we are here  
With our friends, our families, our neighbours,  
Welcoming those who come to stay  
Help us to show your hospitality for everyone we encounter here

Amen

## **What we do: Coffee Mornings**

The Charity Coffee Mornings at Garstang United Reformed Church started in 2006 and are usually held on the first Thursday of every month (with a break during the Covid Pandemic). They are part of the Church's outreach programme and to also benefit local charities in the Preston, Lancaster and Garstang areas. Money raised from the sale of refreshments goes to a charity chosen each year.

Different charities are invited to hold events each month to raise awareness of their charity and generate funds through stalls, raffles etc. Charities who have benefitted include Defying Dementia, Eczema Society, Epilepsy Society, The Matthew Hesmondhalgh Memorial Fund, Rosemere Cancer Centre, Parkinson's UK (Preston Branch), L'Arche (Preston), Bowland Pennine Mountain Rescue Team, LASAR (Lancaster Area Search and Rescue).

These events are held in the Hall and give a warm welcome to Church people, Garstang residents and visitors alike.