

**Mears Ashby and Hardwick
and Sywell with Overstone**



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 25 October 2026
Remembering our Loved Ones**

Welcome to this week's Prayers and Reflections. On Sunday, around the benefice, we will be remembering our loved ones. We all have people who were special to us in life and, now that they are no longer with us, retain a unique place in our hearts. Whether your loss is new and fresh, and very much a part of your waking hours, or one that you have carried with you for some years, it is good to pause in God's presence to remember our loved ones with love and thankfulness.

May God be with you in your remembering. I am thinking of you too.

Every blessing,

Revd Katrina

Vicar

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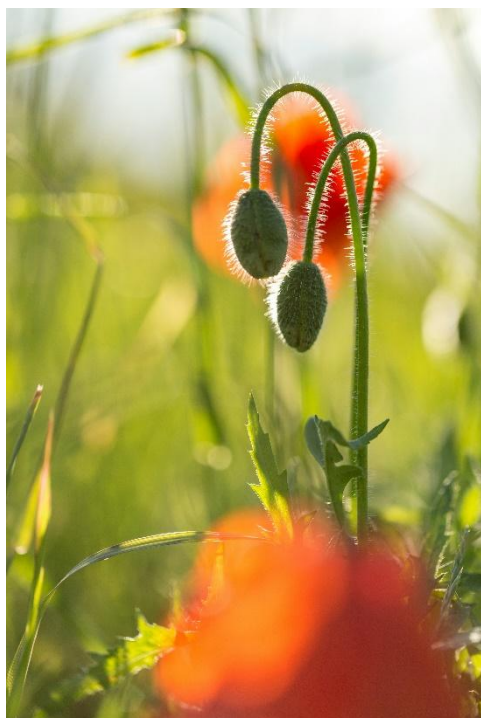
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As you prepare to enter this time of remembering, I invite you to contemplate this poem of remembrance. May these words speak to your heart.

Afterglow by Helen Lowrie Marshall



I'd like the memory of me
to be a happy one.
I'd like to leave an afterglow
of smiles when life is done.
I'd like to leave an echo
whispering softly down the ways,
of happy times and laughing times
and bright and sunny days.
I'd like the tears of those who grieve,
to dry before the sun
of happy memories
that I will leave when life is done.

Prayers and Reflections to remember our loved ones at home

PREPARING OURSELVES

Take a moment to be still in God's presence, and feel his love. If you are indoors, you may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's love - here, in your room. You may also wish to have a bowl of water ready for the time of letting go. When you are ready, say this opening prayer.

Lord, as I sit and wait in silence,
I place my hopes and dreams,
my fears and concerns,
into your safe and loving hands.
Enfold me with your love,
make my heart beat in time with yours;
in Jesus' name,
I pray. **Amen.**

LETTING GO

If you come to this time of remembrance and reflection with any regrets, with things that you wish you had not said or thought, done or been, offer them to God in the silence of your heart. And then, pause to contemplate the opening words of our main hymn.

In heavenly love abiding,
no change my heart shall fear;
and safe is such confiding,
for nothing changes here.

Anna Laetitia Waring (1820-1910)

If you wish, dip your finger into a bowl of water and make the sign of the cross on your palm. Feel God's love for you. Nothing can ever separate you from his love, not even the tears and sadness, anger and frustration of losing someone who filled your life with love.





The storm may roar without me,
my heart may low be laid,
but God is round about me,
and can I be dismayed?

Anna Laetitia Waring (1820-1910)

based on Psalm 23

PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER

(The Collect)

Today, this prayer is being said across the benefice. Add your voice to this earthly circle of prayer to our Father whose love never ends.

Eternal God, our maker and redeemer,
grant us, with all the faithful departed,
the sure benefits of your Son's saving passion
and glorious resurrection
that, in the last day,
when you gather up all things in Christ,
we may with them enjoy the fullness of your promises;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Our prayer for All Souls speaks to us of the hope that we have in Jesus. Death is not the end! We can trust in God's gracious love and forgiveness and believe that our loved ones are safe in his keeping. We can imagine those we miss in heaven. What a glorious scene!

Changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

*How does your hope of heaven help you to live with grief and loss?
Offer what is on your heart to our Lord who brought us this hope.*

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

A vision of hope

Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:8-13

Our hope

Grief is an emotional journey. We go from disbelief and shock to anger at how God could let this happen to deep sadness and depression, and on – in time – to acceptance. Sometimes, our grief is accompanied by a sense of relief that our loved one's earthly struggles are no more. She or he is no longer in pain. This thought can fill us with a sense of peace.

Grief is not always a straight line. We can be doing fine then, suddenly, we see something or someone and our grief is raw again. Tears can flow years on from our loss. We still feel their absence. It is a sign of how much this person still means to us, and how our love lives on.

St. Paul was so right when he wrote that love never ends. It is why grief is as endless as our love. It is the price we pay for love. A price worth paying as life would have been so much poorer without their love.

And God's love for us is unending too. Wherever we are on the long and winding path of grief, he is with us. He walks with us. He listens to us. He supports us. Ponder your experience of this as you contemplate this second verse inspired by Psalm 23.



Wherever he may guide me,
no want shall turn me back;
my Shepherd is beside me,
and nothing can I lack.
His wisdom ever waketh,
his sight is never dim,
he knows the way he taketh,
and I will walk with him.

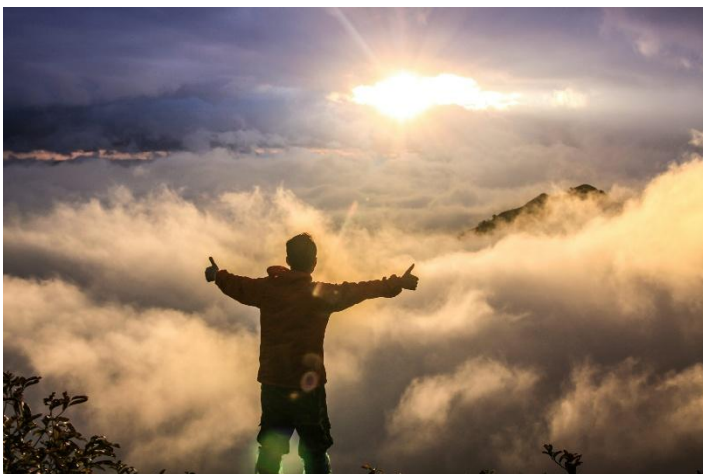
Anna Laetitia Waring (1820-1910)

based on Psalm 23

St. Paul promises that God's love never ends. Our passage offers a little glimpse of the life that awaits us beyond this life. When we get to heaven, we will see how much God loves us for being us. We will see all our love, all the kind and thoughtful things we have done in this life as God sees and values them. We will see those things that we regret and know we are forgiven. For we will be able to see that God loves us. Truly loves us. We will see him face to face. Think about this glorious promise.

Think about the ones that you have lost on life's path. Think of them experiencing God's love face to face, knowing that his love never ends.

Offer your response to God's unending love and his heavenly promise, with the help of this verse.



Great things he hath taught us,
great things he hath done,
and great our rejoicing
through Jesus his Son;
but purer, and higher,
and greater will be
our wonder, our rapture,
when Jesus we see.

Fanny J. Crosby (1820-1915)

from To God be the glory!

You may wish to move on to remembering your late loved ones by name, trusting in God's heavenly promise. If you wish, light a candle as a sign of your love and theirs. Think of their love – as undying as yours – and give thanks for the ways in which they brightened your life.

When you are ready, pray this prayer of faith and hope and love.

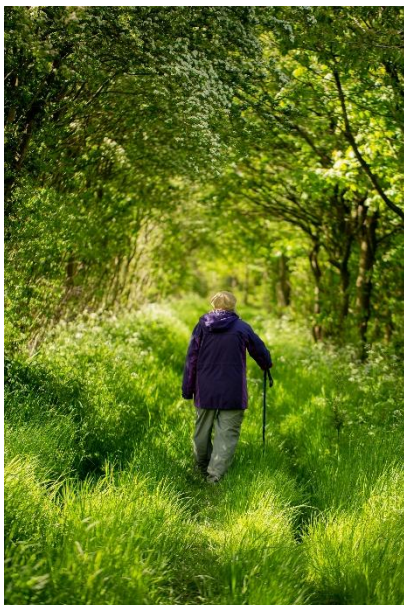
A Prayer of Hope-filled Remembrance



Loving God,
your love surrounds me
from before my first breath
to my dying one.
You are here - with me.
Help me to trust that those whom I love
and see no more are safe in your eternal care,
experiencing the joy of heaven;
in Jesus' name, I pray. **Amen.**

There is nothing in this life that we face on our own - not birth nor death, not love and marriage nor separation and loss, not tears of overflowing, exuberant joy nor tears of aching and endless sadness. God is with us. God will be with you in the days and years to come, whether your life is filled with blue skies or dark clouds.

Ponder what you would like to say to him or ask of him as you say or sing this last verse inspired Psalm 23.



Green pastures are before me,
which yet I have not seen;
bright skies will soon be o'er me,
where the dark clouds have been.
My hope I cannot measure,
my path to life is free,
my Saviour has my treasure,
and he will walk with me.

*Anna Laetitia Waring (1820-1910)
based on Psalm 23*

OUR PRAYERS

Feel free to use one or more of these prayers and to add your own.

Lord Jesus, when I feel overwhelmed by loss and loneliness,
by a burden of care, you invite me to come and sit in your presence.
You are my resting place. Thank you for being there for me.

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, when I think of the people across the globe,
who are living in war zones or in refugee camps, scared for their lives,
I pray that you will be their hope. Lighten, Lord, their darkness.

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, when I think of the families sitting at bedsides in
care homes, hospitals and hospices, waiting for that final breath,
I pray that you will be at their side. Guide, Lord, the dying.

Lord, hear my prayer.

Offer your own heartfelt prayers and yearnings, praise and thanksgivings.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

PRAYER OF BLESSING

A closing prayer of blessing for this week.

O God, you search me and you know me,
all my thoughts and feelings are open to your gaze,
you see the paths I will take before I take them. Guide my daily living.
Bless me and keep my loved ones safe, I pray. **Amen.**