

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 19 October 2025
Trinity 18**

Welcome to this week's prayers and reflections. Our Gospel reading is a beautiful parable about being persistent in our praying. One of the times when we seek to do this is when we or a loved one is facing a serious illness or even death. It is then that we pray, pray, pray again. The praying doesn't stop with the loss of a loved one as we will reflect on in this week's edition.

May God be with you in your praying and remembering.

God bless,

Revd Katrina

Vicar

Phone No. 01604 812907

Mobile No. 07710 464675

E-mail: katrinahutchins94@yahoo.co.uk

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*As you prepare to enter this time of reflection and remembering,
place your hopes and fears into God's loving care.*



In heavenly love abiding,
no change my heart shall fear;
and safe is such confiding,
for nothing changes here.
The storm may roar about 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*

Prayers and Reflections
for use at home on Trinity 18
God with us

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 prayer and reflection with any regrets, with things that you wish you had not said, done or been, offer them to God in the silence of your heart. And then, reflect on the words of this next verse.

Wherever he may guide me,
no wall 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)



*If you wish, dip your finger into a bowl of water and make the sign of the cross on your palm.
Feel God's forgiveness.*

One of the most familiar lines from Psalm 23 is:

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

Psalm 23:4

God does not promise us a life free of pain and suffering, a life free from sickness and loss. No! Our lives are no different to those who walk through life without being aware of God's presence. It is how we walk through life's dark times that shows our faith in God's love and his loving promises. Our verse based on Psalm 23 highlights this. For it says - no want shall turn me back.

It does take a lot of prayer and persistence in prayerful listening to be able to keep on trusting in God's care. Naturally, when someone we love is suffering from a painful condition, a life limiting illness or a brain sapping dementia, we would love them to be well again. We pray for this, and as we pray we sense where God is guiding them or us. Our prayers change to reflect our own and our loved one's needs on the path which lies before them. We sense more deeply what it is to trust in God's shepherding knowing that he will provide all that is needed for today's journey. He is ever alert to our needs and to our praying.

Take a moment to reflect on your own needs or those of a loved one's. What is the way that lies before you? As God gently walks beside you on this path, what is it that you would like to share with him? Offer this in the silence of your heart. Be still, and sense his presence and his response, and renew your trusting promise to walk with him.

*The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.*

Psalm 23:1

PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER

(The Collect)

Across our villages and the worldwide Church, this prayer is being said today. Add your voice to this earthly circle of prayer to our God whose love is unbreakable.

God, our judge and our saviour,
teach us to be open to your truth
and to trust in your love,
that we may live each day
with confidence in the salvation which is given
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Psalm 23 ends with these glorious words of hope – hope in this life, hope in the life that awaits us about this life.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Psalm 23:6

On one level, this verse speaks of being able to go into God's temple, his earthly house – his church, whenever we wish. Nothing that we have thought or said or done can bar our entry into his sacred space. And, when at home or out in the glorious beauty of his creation, nothing can stop us from turning to him in prayer and praise. He is truly God with us. His Son's death on the cross wiped away all that might separate us from God's love or make us feel unworthy of asking for his help.

It is a verse that encourages our prayerfulness and inspires our one-to-one relationship with our God who walks with us through life's challenges, sadness and sorrows.

On a deeper level, it offers us a glimpse of heaven. As Christians, we trust in our Lord's promise of a place in God's house when this life draws to a close. We believe in a life beyond this life – a glorious eternal life.

It is where we hope to be reunited with our loved ones who have gone before us. Who are you hoping to be with in heaven? Picture them as you say or sing this verse from 'Abide with me'.



Hold thou thy cross
before my closing eyes;
shine through the gloom,
and point me to the skies;
heaven's morning breaks,
and earth's vain shadows flee;
in life, in death, O Lord,
abide with me.

Henry Frances Lyte (1793-1847)

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

Parable of the Persistent Widow

Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: 'In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, "Grant me justice against my adversary."

'For some time he refused. But finally, he said to himself, "Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!"'

And the Lord said, 'Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?'

Luke 18:1-8

Pray, pray, pray again...

I remember when my mum died. It was a huge shock to us as a family; my dad had lost his partner-in-life. It took him about two years to adjust to the life that now lay before him – a life without his wife of thirty plus years at his side. He remembered her every one of his remaining days. He missed her still as he departed this life. My prayer is that, in those final breaths, he looked with hope towards heaven where his wife Ethel would be waiting for him.

Grief is the price we pay for love. It is rare that a husband will die on the same day as his wife. So, when making their loving and lifelong promises, dad and mum will have known that one day death would part them - for a time.

Grief encourages us to pray for the strength to live through each stage, especially those early weeks and months and years, and the courage to find a new way of living without our partner at our side. Green pastures, bright skies will come again. We'll see them through eyes that have experienced the joy of love and the sorrow of loss.

Think about where you are on the journey of life and loss, and future loss, and where God is. How is he walking with you and you with him?

What are you praying? Know that you can pray, pray, pray this daily, God is listening. God is replying as he walks at your side.

You are not alone.



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)

OUR PRAYERS

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

Lord Jesus, you promise a place in your Father's house when we die, and you show me that your Father listens even when I keep on praying the same thing. When dark clouds hide him, Lord, help me to pray...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you offer a glorious glimpse of heaven and a hope of reunion with those who are dear to me. In love, I name them in my heart...

I thank you for their love and care. My love for them lives on.

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you promise to walk with us through life's dark places as well as our bright times. In faith, I think of those who are struggling with ill-health, with a fear of dying, with loss. Lord, walk with them...

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.**