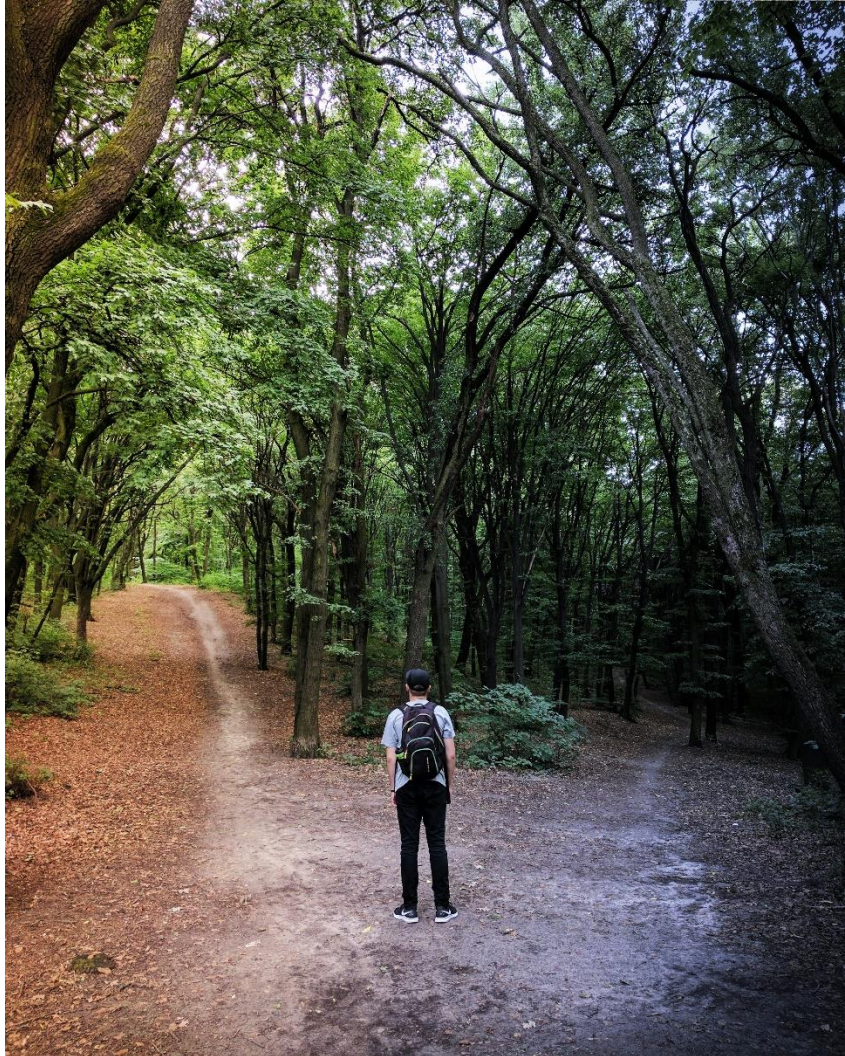


# **Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone**



**Prayers and Reflections  
for use at home**

**Sunday 17 August 2025  
Trinity 9**

Welcome to this week's prayers and reflections. In our Gospel Reading Jesus stirs up his disciples and followers, and those who have yet to make up their minds about him. He is saying, 'You can't sit on the fence. If I am the real deal, follow me! If not, go home.' It is a call to read the signs, and decide if Jesus, the Messiah or not?

May you see more clearly why you believe in Jesus as God's Son.

Every blessing,

**Revd Katrina**

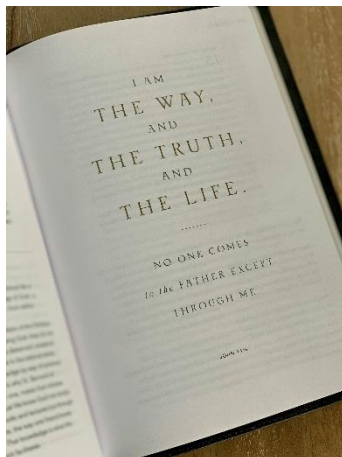
**Vicar**

Phone No. 01604 812907

Mobile No. 07710 464675

E-mail: [katrinahutchins94@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:katrinahutchins94@yahoo.co.uk)

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*As you prepare to reflect on your 'Yes!' to Jesus, open yourself to him.*

May the mind of Christ my Saviour  
live in me from day to day,  
by his love and power controlling  
all I do or say.

*Katie Barclay Wilkinson (1859-1928)*

**Prayers and Reflections**  
**for use at home on Trinity 9**  
**Read the signs!**

**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.*

May the word of God dwell richly  
in my heart from hour to hour,  
so that all may see I triumph  
only through his power.

*Katie Barclay Wilkinson (1859-1928)*



*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.*

*Our verse invites us to look inwards before looking outwards. Think back, if you can, to when you first opened the bible and read God's holy words. When I was about 8 or 9, I opened my children's edition of the King James Version of the bible and read it from Genesis to Revelation. Its small font, its traditional language did not put me off from reading all of God's words. I was a very avid reader, a true book worm, and I was starting to own the faith that I was baptised into as a baby. Reading the bible, reflecting on its passages, is something that I have done on a daily basis for decades. Like many Christians, certain passages have stayed with me, becoming my signature verses and stories. They dwell richly in my heart, through God's Spirit, shaping who I am today.*

*Not least of which is the first Great Commandment - the Shema - which comes from Deuteronomy 6.*

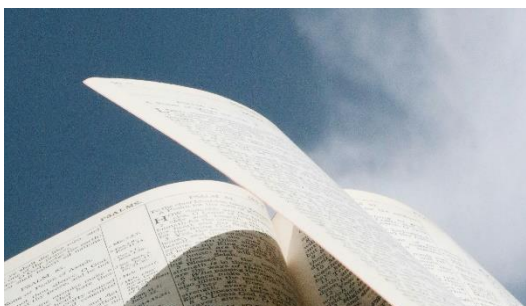
Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God,  
the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God  
with all your heart, with all your soul,  
and with all your might.

Keep these words that I am commanding you  
today in your heart.

*Deuteronomy 6:4-6*

*You cannot obey this command half-heartedly. It is all or nothing! Which chimes perfectly with the message in this week's Gospel Reading.*

*Do contemplate your own signature verses or stories. Ponder how they stir your soul or strengthen your spirit. How do they shape who you are, the way that you live? Give thanks to God for the gift of these special, sacred words and for the way that are a true blessing to you and others.*



May the peace of God my Father  
rule my life in everything,  
that I may be calm to comfort  
sick and sorrowing.

*Katie Barclay Wilkinson (1859-1928)*



## 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.*

Gracious Father,  
revive your Church in our day,  
and make her holy, strong and faithful,  
for your glory's sake  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Our prayer flows perfectly on from our reflection on our life with God's sacred words - the Holy Bible. The first Great Commandment is a call to love the Lord our God with every fibre of our being. To love him is to live every aspect of our lives for him. Imagine, if we all did this - at church, at home or work or wherever life takes us, our communities would be alive - truly and fully alive - with a sense of God's presence.*

*God's Church - in this benefice and across the nation - would be bubbling over with energy. Our pews would be full to bursting. God's vision for life on earth - his kingdom - would be clear for all to see and experience. Everyone would be touched by the faith of our Lord's followers - by us, and by all of our neighbours who come to Christ through us.*

*What a glorious vision of a Church fully alive in Christ! It is decades - two or three generations - since this was seen in this country. Church attendance is now the exception rather than the norm. God is as active today as he has always been. We need to believe in this with every fibre of our being and seek to join in with his plans for re-building his kingdom on earth to echo the one in heaven. To do this we need to be alive with his Spirit and fully in tune with his life within us.*

*Let's pray for an outpouring of God's Spirit within our churches - may we become so holy and strong, so faithful and alive in Christ, that others sense God's glorious love and receive his life in all its fullness.*

*You may wish to offer this beautiful prayer of commissioning.*

May our feet walk  
in the way of the Lord;  
may our voices speak  
the word of God;  
may our hands serve God  
in blessing others;  
may our lives show  
something of the glory of God;  
may we know the peace of God  
now and always.

**Amen.**

*Anon*

## **LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD**

### **Reading the signs**

Jesus said, 'I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

He said to the crowd: 'When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, "It's going to rain," and it does. And when the south wind blows, you say, "It's going to be hot," and it is. Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don't know how to interpret this present time?'

*Luke 12:49-56*

## All or nothing!

*This is a take it or leave it moment in our Lord's ministry. Jesus is saying that it is time to decide whether 'I am the Messiah or not.' You can't be a 'may be'. You need to look at the signs - listen to his words - and decide. Then as now, accepting Jesus as Lord is truly life-changing. Like this Aspects of Love song, love of God - Father, Son and Spirit changes the whole of our lives.*

Love, love changes everything,  
hands and faces, earth and sky.  
Love, love changes everything,  
how you live and how you die.

*Andrew Lloyd Webber, Don Black and Charles Hart (1989)*

*For those first disciples, following Jesus would change how they lived, worshipped and died. It would split them from their own family - from those members who denied Jesus to be the one and chose to stay within the Jewish faith. It would fill them with a new and refreshing vision of who God is and what it means to love him with all of their heart, soul and strength. Love of Jesus - faith in the cross and resurrection - desire to spread his Good News filled and fired them. Ponder and pray for this as you say the next verse of our hymn.*



May the love of Jesus fill me,  
as the waters fill the sea;  
him exalting, self abasing -  
this is victory.

*Katie Barclay Wilkinson (1859-1928)*

*Ponder too what causes your faith to drop or your spirits to flag. Where is our Lord in such times? How can you draw on his Spirit's resources?*



May I run the race before me,  
strong and brave to face the foe,  
looking only unto Jesus  
as I onward go.

*Katie Barclay Wilkinson (1859-1928)*

## OUR PRAYERS

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

Lord Jesus, your words are spirit and life. Your actions show me you are the Messiah, God's own Son. By the cross, you set me free to live by your loving example. Lord, accept my life and my love...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you came to fill our world with love and peace, joy and hope, to offer life in all its fullness to everyone. All we have to do is say 'Yes!' to you as our Servant King. So many say, 'No.' Open, Lord, the hearts...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, your love changes how we live and how we die. Across the globe, your Church is bringing fresh hope and new strength to those who are hungry or homeless, lonely or sick. Bless, Lord, those who...

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.**