

## Readings and Prayers for week of October 4<sup>th</sup>

### Notices

#### Thursday daytime fellowship group

1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday at 1pm in church - Contact Maurice Taylor for details

#### Prayers for the sick

3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month in church at 2pm - Speak with Pat Matthews for details

#### Community Letter Delivery

We have written to go out to the parish to let people know about our community annex plan and inviting them to help bring it to fruition. If you are able to help deliver the letters/flyers (just like Christmas cards) please pop in and pick some up. Thank you.

#### *Joy*

O CHRIST,

All thy ways of mercy tend to and end in my delight.

Thou didst weep, sorrow, suffer that I might rejoice.

For my joy thou hast sent the Comforter, multiplied thy promises,  
shown me my future happiness, given me a living fountain.

Thou art preparing joy for me and me for joy;

I pray for joy, wait for joy, long for joy;  
give me more than I can hold, desire, or think of.

Measure out to me my times and degrees of joy, at my work, business, duties.

If I weep at night, give me joy in the morning.

Let me rest in the thought of thy love,  
pardon for sin, my title to heaven, my future unspotted state.

I am an unworthy recipient of thy grace.

I often disesteem thy blood and slight thy love,  
but can in repentance draw water from the wells of thy joyous forgiveness.

Let my heart leap towards the eternal sabbath,  
where the work of redemption, sanctification,  
preservation, glorification is finished and perfected for ever,  
where thou wilt rejoice over me with joy.

There is no joy like the joy of heaven, for in that state are no sad divisions,  
unchristian quarrels, contentions, evil designs, weariness, hunger, cold,  
sadness, sin, suffering, persecutions, toils of duty.

O healthful place where none are sick!

O happy land where all are kings!

O holy assembly where all are priests!

How free a state where none are servants except to thee!

Bring me speedily to the land of joy.

## Monday

Read – Jonah 1 v1-6

The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: <sup>2</sup> ‘Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.’

<sup>3</sup> But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.

<sup>4</sup> Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. <sup>5</sup> All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. <sup>6</sup> The captain went to him and said, ‘How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.’

Think: What is Jonah asked to do? Why do you think he runs away from the Job? Nineveh is the capital city of the Assyrians, the world superpower of the time, this would be like God asking you to go to Beijing and preach against the people there, calling them to turn from evil. How does that help you understand Jonah’s fear? How would you feel if god gave you that job? What is the consequence of Jonah’s running from God? What does the Captain understand? How does this help you understand who God is? How does make you feel about what God is calling you to do? What is He saying right now?

Give thanks that when God has a plan, there is no thwarting him, even if we don’t like it.

Pray that when the Lord calls you, you would not fear, but step out in faith, even if the task before you feels insurmountable or terrifying.

Pray for our building project that we feel God call us to undertake, pray that while the task of fundraising feels huge, we would not shirk from the challenge.

Pray for the letter going out to our community and a letter going to local businesses, that they would be well received and lead to us getting well past our half way point.

Pray for ‘cuppa cake and company’ this morning, especially that we talk with and gently share our faith with those who do not know Jesus.

Pray for Syria. Open Doors writes, ‘Many Christian men in Syria carry huge burdens of responsibility. Pray for ‘Adam’, a new online training course for Christian men that helps them face their challenges and express their feelings in a healthy way. Pray that the 58 men attending will find strength and help as they share.’

Thank God for all the times he has revealed new meaning in the scriptures to us and pray that he will continue to open our hearts and minds this week.

Pray: Lord, My heart bleeds for my loved ones. They are entangled by sin. Their hearts are hardened. They take your love for granted. As our light and our salvation, Lord, save them. Let them understand that with you, they should not fear anyone, for you are with them.

Make them open up to knowing you. Draw them close to you that they may experience your peace which surpasses human understanding. Let your Holy Spirit guide all their ways, Amen

## **Tuesday**

Read – Mark 15 v21-27

<sup>21</sup> A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. <sup>22</sup> They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means 'the place of the skull'). <sup>23</sup> Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. <sup>24</sup> And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get.

<sup>25</sup> It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. <sup>26</sup> The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

<sup>27</sup> They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left.

Think: What was Simon told to do? How would you feel if you were commanded to do this? What do you make of the notice placed above Jesus as he was crucified? While it was put up mockingly, the Lord's true nature is revealed by it, what does this mean for you? If you met a worthy King, how might you respond? How much more should you respond to the King of Kings? What will this look like in your daily life?

Give thanks that Jesus willingly went to the cross.

Pray that you would be willing to carry the cross of Jesus, whatever the cost.

Pray for those who are in prison or facing punishment at the hands of the courts. Pray that justice would be fair and that they would hear the gospel and be transformed.

Pray for those who are overtaken with stress and are feeling burnt out.

Pray for toddlers group this morning. Pray especially as the team manage numbers and expectations of parents/carers.

Pray for Bishop Paul and Sarah to lead this diocese in wisdom.

Pray for those displaced by the erupting volcano in the Canary Islands. Pray for their safety and for the livelihoods and homes to be spared or returned to them.

Pray for the lunch club team as they prepare for the environmental health inspection.

Pray: Dear Lord of Hosts, in You there are endings and new beginnings. Often times, our new beginnings can be very uncertain, resulting in fear and doubt. I know that I need to forget what is behind me, and instead press ahead towards whatever You have planned for me. Give me the strength and the courage to move forward toward the goal to win the prize of the upward call of God. In Christ Jesus Our Lord, Amen.

## **Wednesday**

Read – Psalm 91

<sup>1</sup> Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

<sup>2</sup> I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust.'

<sup>3</sup> Surely he will save you  
from the fowler's snare  
and from the deadly pestilence.

<sup>4</sup> He will cover you with his feathers,  
and under his wings you will find refuge;  
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

<sup>5</sup> You will not fear the terror of night,  
nor the arrow that flies by day,

<sup>6</sup> nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,  
nor the plague that destroys at midday.

<sup>7</sup> A thousand may fall at your side,  
ten thousand at your right hand,  
but it will not come near you.

<sup>8</sup> You will only observe with your eyes  
and see the punishment of the wicked.

Think: Who do you think the Psalmist is speaking to? Why? How does this Psalm speak to you? Do you think this is a guarantee that God's people will not suffer or die? So where will we see this come true in all its fulness? Where might we see this in the current world? Do you ever pray that the wicked will experience the Lord's rebuke? Who is needing this kind of encouragement right now? How can you help them?

Give thanks that the Lord answers prayer and often does redeem his people out of situations where the wicked want to trap and hurt them.

Pray for the 'wicked' that they would repent when they experience the Lord's rebuke.

Pray against fear, that you and people around you would not be afraid of the viruses that will inevitably increase through the winter. Pray as more of us catch them, we would be wise and get the right balance between the impact of common colds and the risks of COVID.

Pray for our Wednesday service today. Pray for plans to restart home/community groups.

Pray for those facing domestic abuse. Pray there would be support for those in need.

Pray for the persecuted church, especially in the Middle East.

Thank God for the victory he was won and the new life in heaven we have waiting for us.

Pray for those working in hospitals, especially front line staff. Pray for good efficiency.

Pray for the nation of Albania today

Pray for our new annexe project, especially grant applications that have gone in get a good response and Anna as she prepares more. Pray for the chancellor as he examines that faculty application, that we would get it issued very soon.

Pray: Holy Father, Great Physician of our souls and bodies, You sent the Lord Jesus Christ, Your only-begotten Son, to redeem us from sin and death and to heal every illness. Heal the

sickness of Your servant's body and soul and give them life. You alone are the source of all healing, O God my God, and we give glory to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and in all eternity. Amen.

## Thursday

Read – Malachi 3 v13-18

<sup>13</sup> 'You have spoken arrogantly against me,' says the LORD.

'Yet you ask, "What have we said against you?"

<sup>14</sup> 'You have said, "It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty?" <sup>15</sup> But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it.'"

<sup>6</sup> Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honoured his name. <sup>17</sup> 'On the day when I act,' says the LORD Almighty, 'they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him. <sup>18</sup> And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

Think: What is Israel's sin? What is Israel failing to do? Why do you think it is an issue that God's people sin yet no one does anything about it, or worse, actively encourage it? How does Israel respond in v6? How are these people described? How does the Lord respond? What does this teach you about how God sees sin and those who enable it? Where might you turn a blind eye or enable sin through your actions or teachings? What do you need to do about that?

Give thanks that God will always redeem those who remain faithful to him by trusting him, honouring him and rightly fearing him.

Pray for those who feel that it is futile to serve God and have either become mere 'church-goers' or given up on God and church altogether.

Pray against those who have become arrogant and selfish. Pray they would learn to be sacrificial and generous. Pray for your own struggle with sin and ask for grace to change.

Pray for the continued life of the Church and for its flourishing. Pray for new workers to be brought to the harvest. Pray more people would be bolder in sharing their story of faith.

Thank God for the calling he has placed on your own life, if you are not sure what it could be ask God to reveal it to you.

Ask God to guide this Church and reveal to us where our next steps will be. How can we best take part in his plan for our local community?

Pray for the school lunch club today and the youth group run this evening.

Pray for those in fear of rising gas/electricity/fuel prices and those on reduced universal credit. Pray for the Washington community Food Project and those running it.

Pray: Father, Miracle-Worker, I put my trust and my faith in You because I know that nothing is impossible with You. Just as You told Sarah about the coming birth of Isaac, I know You will make a way when there is no way. You raised Lazarus from the dead. You made the dry bones have flesh again and then made breath enter them. Father, You look out for Your people, and for that, I praise You. You are the same God today as You were then. I believe in the power of Your hand. I believe in Your intervention. My mind has silenced the critics. I cannot hear the non-believers. All I hear is You, my Father. What harm can come to me when I walk with You? Amen.

## **Friday**

Read – Acts 28 v1-6

Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. <sup>2</sup>The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. <sup>3</sup>Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. <sup>4</sup>When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, 'This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live.' <sup>5</sup>But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. <sup>6</sup>The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

Think: The people have been shipwrecked, how do the locals respond? What do they make of Paul and his snakebite? What do they assume? Why do you think that was? How does the Lord undermine their superstition? How do they then see Paul? What do you think Paul then might have to do to correct their second error? What superstitions do you sometimes give credence to? Do you ever see something going wrong as a punishment for some sin? While the Lord does rebuke those he loves, it should not be our first assumption, but how should we be like these islanders?

Give thanks for those who have shown you kindness in a time of need.

Pray that you would likewise show kindness when you see others who have been through a disaster. Pray against superstition and false beliefs.

Pray for the miraculous in situations where there are natural disasters to God's glory.

Pray for Open Doors. Pray for, 'Matti\* was forcibly converted to Islam when his mother changed her religion. He feels as if he is in limbo, being a Muslim on his passport but a Christian in his heart. He wants to be married, but it is hard for him to find a Christian partner. Ask the Lord to make a way where there seems to be no way.'

Pray for the nations of Venezuela, Burundi, Lesotho and Belarus.

Pray for all those who are being courageous in standing up for women's rights in Afghanistan. Pray that their work will be recognised and for their safety.

Pray for God's guidance and strength as we go through life seeking to follow his laws.

Pray: God of Loving Devotion, I pray for my friends who are suffering isolation in their homes because of this public health crisis sweeping our nation. I pray especially for my elderly and single friends who have no one with them in their home and are grieving human touch and hugs. I pray that in Your great compassion You will be with them in a special, tangible way. O Lord, Your understanding knows no limit, and I ask that You minister to their needs, and show me how to bless them from afar. Amen.

## **Saturday**

Read – Luke 11 v27-28

<sup>27</sup> As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, ‘Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.’

<sup>28</sup> He replied, ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.’

Think: Why do you think the woman in the crowd shouted what she did? What do you know of Jesus that would make you glad he lived? How does Jesus reply? What do you think he means by it? Why do you think Jesus puts so much weight on God’s word? What is the key to being blessed by it? How do you view the bible (God’s word)? How good are you at obeying it? What parts do you wish weren’t there or choose to ignore? Why?

Give thanks that we have free access to God’s word. Pray for those who crave to own their own bible, but cannot because of persecution or indeed the lack of bibles due to poverty.

Pray for those who like to denigrate the bible or dismiss it as out of date or irrelevant.

Pray that as a church, we would not only teach God’s word faithfully, but obey it too.

Pray that the Church will further become a place of discipleship and accountability.

Praise God for the services we have. Pray for our outdoor service that continues as many still feel safer outdoors. Pray for those who cannot cope with the cooler days, that will find 10am or Wednesday mornings a good alternative.

Pray for those facing uncertainty now the furlough scheme has come to an end. Pray that people would find new jobs swiftly and that as our economy adapts to the new world, we would be flexible and swiftly adapt to a new way of living.

Pray that we would be even better at welcoming new members of the church and visitors.

Ask God to reveal to us areas where we can better serve him.

Pray for unity/wisdom and good working relationships between the world’s leaders and for peace to be their priority.

Pray: Oh Lord, help me to be on guard so that I can stand firm in my faith. I know that standing firm requires me to be determined and motivated, so Lord I pray for Your help in this area of my life. I also pray that throughout my trials, I remain courageous and strong because You are always with me and will never leave me. Lord I love You with all my heart and I thank You for giving me the victory that I have received, in Jesus Name Amen.

## Sunday

Read – Hebrews 4 v12-16

<sup>12</sup> For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. <sup>13</sup> Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. <sup>15</sup> For we do not have a high priest who is unable to feel sympathy for our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet he did not sin. <sup>16</sup> Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need

Think: Having seen Jesus' view on the importance of God's word, what does this passage today teach us about the word of God? What do you learn about God? What does he know about you? How does that make you feel? What is the good news here? What privilege do God's people have? How easy do you find it to approach God in prayer? How does this passage encourage you to approach God, even with small things and even when you sin?

Praise God that Jesus is our high priest and that he brings us before God's throne freely. Give thanks that you are forgiven and have received God's mercy.

Pray that you would allow the Word of God to challenge, judge and transform you for good.

Pray that the Lord would take away the fear that some have of allowing God into their lives.

Pray for good leadership and wisdom within the church, especially towards how we engage with children and families in our community.

Pray for all who are active in this church and contribute to the running of services and groups, pray God to be with them and for encouragement.

Pray for renewal of the church of England and for new leaders to be brought up who are able to combat the demands of this time.

Pray for all children who are without a home, without food or shelter or do not feel safe. Pray for God's protection on them and for their lives to be transformed.

Give thanks to God for anyone who is willing to sacrifice their time to serve in the church and work towards furthering God's kingdom.

Pray: Oh Most Merciful God, hear my cry and look to me with your merciful eyes. I may not be worthy of your presence Lord, but I strip myself of all connection to fleshly desires and bind myself to you. Father, show mercy upon me and stretch your hand towards me in time of need. Please, do not forsake me, hear me when I call, heal me of my pains, and set me up to live and proclaim your glory. Amen.