

## Readings and Prayers for week of October 18<sup>th</sup>

### Notices

#### Meet & Eat Lunch club

We thank God for answered prayer and for the team who put on this amazing community lunch on the second and fourth Wednesday each month. Their hard work in getting the systems in shape for a proper environmental health inspection has been honoured with a FIVE star rating. This is a real testament to their love and faithfulness to Christ.

Thank You

If you would like to join for a lunch, please book through the office.

There is a recommended donation of £4 to help cover the costs.

#### Community Letter Delivery

Our letter to the parish to let people know about our community annex plan and inviting them to help bring it to fruition is ready to go. If you can deliver a few local to you or across the parish, (just like Christmas cards) please pop in and pick some up. Thank you.

#### *Christian Love*

O LOVER OF THE LOVELESS,

It is thy will that I should love thee with heart, soul, mind, strength,  
and my neighbour as myself.

But I am not sufficient for these things.

There is by nature no pure love in my soul;

Every affection in me is turned from thee;

I am bound, as slave to lust,

I cannot love thee, lovely as thou art, until thou dost set me free.

By grace I am thy freeman and would serve thee,

for I believe thou art my God in Jesus,

and that through him I am redeemed, and my sins are forgiven.

With this freedom I would always obey thee, but I cannot walk in liberty,  
any more than I could first attain it, of myself.

May thy Spirit draw me nearer to thee and thy ways.

Thou art the end of all means, for if they lead me not to thee, I go away empty.

Order all my ways by thy holy Word

and make thy commandments the joy of my heart,  
that by them I may have happy converse with thee.

May I grow in thy love and manifest it to mankind.

Spirit of love, make me like the loving Jesus;

give me his benevolent temper, his beneficent actions,  
that I may shine before men to thy glory.

The more thou doest in love in me and by me, humble me the more;

keep me meek, lowly, and always ready to give thee honour.

## Monday

Read – 2 Timothy 4 v5-8

<sup>5</sup> But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

<sup>6</sup> For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. <sup>7</sup> I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. <sup>8</sup> Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day – and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Think: How is Paul describing himself? Why do you think he talks in these terms? How do you think this might impact how you feel when you head towards the end of your life? What do you think it means for you to 'long for his appearing'? Why do you think he gives Timothy the charge we read in verse 5? What is an evangelist? Why do you think this is singled out separately to his 'duties of his ministry'? Why is evangelism so important? Why do you think churches are often quite weak at evangelism? How might you evangelise someone today?

Praise God for those with a natural gift of evangelism. Pray that we would all be bold and do evangelism as a priority in ways that work for each of us.

Pray for the opportunity to talk about Jesus with someone of no faith today. Pray you would be bold and take it!

Pray that you would live so that like Paul, you could say, 'I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.' At the end of your life

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 more people to step up and deliver the letter going out to our community and that it would be well received and lead to us getting well past our half way point for funding.

Pray for 'cuppa cake and company' this morning. Give thank for the team that work faithfully. Pray that as we move indoors, people would cope well and build new friendships.

Pray for India. Open Doors' report reveals that, when Hindu extremists attack Christians, one of the first things they do is snatch the victims' phones. However, the group will record the violence and add it to social media to promote their extremist agenda. Pray that social media platforms will do more to combat this troubling trend.

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: O God of my Salvation, You say that as far as the east is from the west, You have removed my transgressions from me. Thank You, Precious God, for forgiving me for the harm and hurt I have caused. I know You have separated me from my sins because of Your merciful heart. Dear God, I need help with forgiving myself so that I can draw close to You again. Let Your divine peace rule in my heart instead of the shame I carry from my sins. Let the burden of guilt be released through forgiveness. Thank You, dear God, for a new freedom in You. Amen.

## Tuesday

Read – Luke 12 v35-38

<sup>35</sup> 'Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, <sup>36</sup> like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. <sup>37</sup> It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will make them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. <sup>38</sup> It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or towards daybreak.

Think: In this parable, what do you think he is trying to tell his disciples? Why? What do you think it looks like in your life to keep your lamp burning? How might you be 'dressed ready to serve'? What is the reward for living out the Christian faith on a daily basis? What do you think this refers to? Why is serving so often also a blessing to the one doing it? Why is it sometimes necessary to keep going even when you want to give up/ are not enjoying it?

Give thanks that Jesus will return one day and bring his faithful people to eternity with him.

Pray for those who are finding serving tiring. Pray they get rest and are re-energised by Him.

Pray that you would be one who is, 'dressed ready for service and keeps your lamp burning,'

Pray for those who are struggling with serious ill health. Give thanks that for most people now, COVID is becoming a mild disease. Pray for those knocked flat by other viruses going around after 18 months of our immune systems not really being needed.

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 with wisdom.

Pray for those continuing to flee Afghanistan. Pray that the leaders there would be saved.

Give thanks and praise for answered prayer regarding the environmental health inspection.

Pray: Creator God, thank you that there is nowhere I can go that is beyond your presence. In your presence, I am blessed beyond measure. You have said that you will never leave me or forsake me, you are always with me. May I live a life of thanksgiving in your presence. Hear my prayer and fill my heart and my mouth with praise to you for your good gifts. May your love be the passion in my heart. May your joy be my strength when times are hard. May your presence be my peace that overflows. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

## Wednesday

Read – John 15 v18-22

<sup>18</sup> 'If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. <sup>19</sup> If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. <sup>20</sup> Remember what I told you: "A servant is not greater than his master." If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. <sup>21</sup> They will treat you this way because of my

name, for they do not know the one who sent me. <sup>22</sup> If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin.

Think: Why do you think Jesus is talking to his disciples about being hated? How do you think this fits with the idea of 'not belonging to the world'? How does he encourage them that its ok to suffer like this? What does it tell them about the ones who inflict this? What do you think it looks like in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to 'belong to the world'? How as a Christian do you think you should look as one who does not? Why do you think this will cause worldly people to hate you and even persecute you for not following the world? How does this passage help you when that does happen?

Give thanks that Jesus was willing to be hated and persecuted for you and me?

Pray for those new members of General Synod. Give thanks that many were elected who hold the historic and biblical view of marriage and scripture/the Christian faith more broadly. Pray they will hold fast and help the church to be renewed and restored.

Pray that as the world turns the screw on the church for refusing to conform, we would be bold and remember that this is what Jesus told us would happen. Pray that we always respond with love and grace and speak with gentleness with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Pray for our Wednesday service. Give thanks for answered prayers.

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

Pray for the persecuted church, especially across the Middle East

Pray for the work of Washington Community Food Project.

Pray for farmers at risk of having to destroy animals/food because of shortages, that they would find solutions that work for the long term. Pray for government wisdom.

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

Pray for the nation of Hungary today

Pray for our new annexe project, especially grant applications that have gone in get a good response and Anna as she prepares more. Give thanks that the faculty has been granted. Pray for grant application with Sir James Knott Trust due to be decided on next week. Pray for the applications with Ecclesiastical, All Churches Trust and Bernard Sunley Foundation.

Pray: Gracious God, I come to you in thankfulness for your unending provision. You provide food in abundance and protection under the shelter of your wings. You grant rest and renew my strength. You guide me along the right paths and restore my soul. Even when I am confronted with danger, you are close beside me as my shield. You honor me, and I overflow with blessings. I truly lack nothing. Your goodness and unfailing love chase after me. Thank you, God! Amen.

## Thursday

Read – 1 Timothy 4 v7-10

<sup>7</sup> Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. <sup>8</sup> For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. <sup>9</sup> This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. <sup>10</sup> That is why we labour and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, and especially of those who believe.

Think: What would you call an 'old wives' tale'? Can you think of any examples? What about myths that are sometimes held by people? Why do they run counter to being godly? Do you think physical health matters at all? Why might eating and living in a healthy way have 'some value'? Why does the body matter, not just the soul? Why does the soul and being godly hold much greater value? Where do you put your hope? How should this develop your living? How does the author show you he has been changed?

Give thanks that while God gave us physical bodies, how we live is based on Him, not on how we look or feel.

Pray that as Christians we would steer clear of myths and old wives tales, but rather focus our hope on the truth held out in the gospel of Jesus Christ

Pray that we would all learn how to live, eat and shop in a more healthy and wise way.

Pray for the continued life of the Church and for its flourishing. Pray for those new to the church. Pray for more to volunteer to help in our various activities and especially as we consider our children's work.

Ask God to guide this Church and reveal to us where our next steps will be. Pray that we would be wise at the pace we open up new things.

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

Pray for those who are worried about all the colds, flu and covid going around.

Pray: Eternal God of grace and compassion, I am overwhelmed that you came to earth to give your life so I could live. I give you my prayer of thankfulness for salvation from sin, and death, and hell. I praise you for coming to save me and the world. I will trust you and not be afraid. You, Lord God, are my strength and my song. You have given me victory from the chains that once held me down. Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and honour belong to you. Amen.

## Friday

Read – Psalm 144 v1-6

<sup>1</sup> Praise be to the LORD my Rock,  
who trains my hands for war,  
my fingers for battle.

<sup>2</sup> He is my loving God and my fortress,  
my stronghold and my deliverer,  
my shield, in whom I take refuge,  
who subdues peoples under me.

<sup>3</sup> LORD, what are human beings that you care for them,  
mere mortals that you think of them?

<sup>4</sup> They are like a breath;  
their days are like a fleeting shadow.

<sup>5</sup> Part your heavens, LORD, and come down;  
touch the mountains, so that they smoke.

<sup>6</sup> Send forth lightning and scatter the enemy;  
shoot your arrows and rout them.

Think: How does verse 1 make you feel? Why might it feel like it ought not be in the bible? Why might it be ok for David to be praying a psalm like this? What battles did he have to engage with? What would have happened if Israel had lost to the philistines and been conquered once more? How does this Psalm help you understand God's relationship with us as humans? What do we learn about what will happen to those who oppose God's people? Do you long for god to come down into earth and eradicate those who persecute Christians and commit evil? Why is it good that he hasn't done it yet?

Give thanks that the Lord is just and will judge evil people. Praise him that he will rescue us.

Pray that he might come down and restore his church and rescue us from false teachers and those who are corrupt and godless.

Pray that we would understand the seriousness of evil and that God's rule matters.

Pray for Open Doors. Pray for Rubina\*in Bangladesh. she became a Christian after overhearing the teaching in a church she walked past. Sadly, she was beaten and divorced by her husband. Rubina and Shalma\*, one of her daughters, found shelter with a local believer. Shalma has since married a Christian man. Pray that Rubina and Shalma will grow in their faith.

Pray for the nations of Kenya, Kosovo, Mexico and North Korea.

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 people in the police and judiciary. Pray they would act with justice and integrity. Pray for those on trial in the courts, and victims, that justice would not take long.

Pray: King of Kings, Lord of Lords, thank you that you are great and abundant in power, your understanding is beyond measure. In your wisdom, you have created the church, described as Christ's body. May we work together as members of one body, using the gifts and abilities you have given us to faithfully love and serve one another. Would we find our strength from Jesus, the head of the body. May the Lord make us increase and abound in love for each other. May you establish our hearts as blameless in holiness before you. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

## **Saturday**

Read – 2 Kings 24 v18 – 25 v2

<sup>18</sup> Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem for eleven years. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. <sup>19</sup> He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as Jehoiakim had done. <sup>20</sup> It was because of

the LORD's anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his presence.

Now Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

**25** <sup>1</sup> So in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. He camped outside the city and built siege works all around it. <sup>2</sup> The city was kept under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.

Think: Who was Zedekiah? How was his rule? How did the Lord view him? Why do you think Zedekiah might have rebelled against the king of Babylon? How did Nebuchadnezzar respond? What happened to Jerusalem? Why did God allow all this to happen? What does it teach us about the importance of godly leaders? How does this story point to Jesus? As the one King who never sinned, Jesus can lead his people and protect them against his enemies. How does this give you confidence when feeling under siege in life?

Give thanks that We have a King who is perfect.

Pray that you would pray for your leaders regularly, especially that they would be wise and godly in the way they live and lead.

Pray for those who are part of churches with unfaithful leaders who do evil, that they would persevere or, if necessary, find godly leaders.

Pray that the Church would bless many this All Hallows eve as we try to put on something different for young people.

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 who have not yet found a way back to church. Pray for churches struggling with low numbers and a lack of finance. Pray they would become more missional.

Ask God to help you to serve as he has called you. Pray against fear as we head to winter

Pray for grace amongst church family to abound. Pray for unity and love in the gospel and to avoid disputes about unimportant and secondary issue. Thank god for the unity we do have.

Pray: Mighty God, thank you that you are gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Jesus said that he would build the church and the gates of Hell would not prevail against it. Lord, fill your church with the security that comes from knowing we are protected by you. Fill us, too, with boldness to reach others. You are able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or imagine, according to the power at work within us. To you be glory throughout all generations, forever and ever. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

## **Sunday**

Read – Hebrews 7 v23-28

<sup>23</sup> Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; <sup>24</sup> but because Jesus lives for ever, he has a permanent priesthood. <sup>25</sup> Therefore he

is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

<sup>26</sup> Such a high priest truly meets our need – one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. <sup>27</sup> Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. <sup>28</sup> For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect for ever.

Think: How does Jesus contrast with the Hebrew priests? How can he save completely? How is he unlike those priests? Why were they flawed? Why is it such good news that Jesus was perfect? Why is it important that he is exalted above the heavens? What is the difference between an oath and the law? What does this teach you about what should govern your life? Why is it better to live by promise than by a legalistic system? How does grace fit into this? How does it help knowing that Jesus is the priest that connects you to God the Father and that he is praying for you?

Praise God that our high priest truly meets our spiritual needs and brings forgiveness.

Pray that you would learn to have confidence that his one sacrifice at the cross deals with your sin once and for all.

Thank him that your only sacrifice is to offer one of praise and thanksgiving.

Pray that you would understand more what it means to have a great high priest in Jesus praying for you and connecting you to God so you can speak with him freely.

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

Pray for our Sunday children's groups this morning. Pray for those seeking baptisms.

Pray for those who are facing issues with inflation because of shortages

Pray that we would swiftly resolve the shortage of energy in the UK without destroying jobs

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 refugees, particularly those coming from Afghanistan.

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: Lord, my Dwelling Place, I give thanks for the blessing of my church family. I love that we can gather to worship you and mutually encourage one another. I thank you that we have the privilege of praying together and praying for each other. I thank you for the sweet fellowship we have while eating, working, or serving together. I am incredibly blessed by my brothers and sisters in Christ and how our individual gifts and personalities blend into a precious whole. Amen.