

Readings and Prayers for week of November 15th

Notices

Both Sunday services will be indoors. An act of remembrance will take place in the 10am service as close to 11am as possible. There is a remembrance service at the war memorial.

Community Letter Delivery

Our letter to the parish to let people know about our community annexe 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.

Community Annexe Fundraising

We are thankful to God for the first small-medium sized grant awarded this week by All Churches Trustm adding a further £15,000 to the total given or pledged.

Christmas plans

We will be producing a Christmas flyer soon, but this year we plan to have two carols by candlelight services to enable greater social distancing. They will be ticketed. This will be the Sunday before Christmas at 4pm and 6pm. By popular request there will be outdoor carols on Christmas Eve at 6pm with mulled grape juice / mulled wine, possibly a nativity family service at 3pm and a midnight communion – beginning at 11.15pm, and a Christmas day service at 10am. Christmas Meet & Eat will be on December 22nd

The 'Carols on a Van' will be back going out on 4 evenings

The Prayer of Love

GRACIOUS LORD,

Thy name is love, in love receive my prayer.

My sins are more than the wide sea's sand,

but where sin abounds, there is grace more abundant.

Look to the cross of thy beloved Son,

and view the preciousness of his atoning blood;

Listen to his never-failing intercession, and whisper to my heart,

'Thy sins are forgiven, be of good cheer, lie down in peace.'

Grace cataracts from heaven and flows for ever,

and mercy never wearies in bestowing benefits.

Grant me more and more to prize the privilege of prayer,

to come to thee as a sin-soiled sinner, to find pardon in thee,

to converse with thee;

to know thee in prayer as the path in which my feet tread,

the latch upon the door of my lips, the light that shines through my eyes,

the music of my ears, the marrow of my understanding,

the strength of my will, the power of my affection,

the sweetness of my memory.

May the matter of my prayer be always wise, humble, submissive,

obedient, scriptural, Christ-like.

Give me unwavering faith that supplications are never in vain,
that if I seem not to obtain my petitions I shall have larger, richer answers,
surpassing all that I ask or think.
Unsought, thou hast given me the greatest gift, the person of thy Son,
and in him thou wilt give me all I need.

Monday

Read – Isaiah 5 v8-24

¹⁸ Woe to those who draw sin along with cords of deceit, and wickedness as with cart ropes,

¹⁹ to those who say, 'Let God hurry; let him hasten his work so that we may see it.

The plan of the Holy One of Israel – let it approach, let it come into view, so that we may know it.'

²⁰ Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.

²¹ Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight.

²² Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks,

²³ who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent.

Think : The LORD Almighty has found only bad (literally *stink*-) fruit in vineyard Israel. The six "woes" in today's reading identify six sins of God's people. 1. The rich buy up homes and farms to build isolated mansions surrounded by estates. 2. People party and drink but have no regard for God; death will swallow them down as they swallowed their drinks. 3. God's judgment is mocked by those who think God's patience means he will never act in justice. 4. Evil is called good and good is called evil. 5. People consider themselves wise in their own sight. 6. People love their alcohol but deny justice to others. Isaiah repeats ideas now familiar: the arrogant will be humbled and the LORD will be exalted (v15-16). When God acts in judgment his righteousness and holiness is proved. Many of Judah's sins were committed by the rich and powerful. Jesus speaks blessing to the poor and weak, to those harmed by the sins of others and those who lament their own spiritual poverty. When God judges sin, the world is put right.

Pray for our nation, that our leaders would stop following popular thinking, but actually do what is best for people under the Lord.

Pray for those who use alcohol to escape from life and hide from issues that need sorting.

Pray for those who humble themselves and learn spiritual 'poverty' by relying on Jesus.

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 flyers gone out to the community that people read them, are enthused and give generously. Give thanks for gifts already given.

Pray for those in the congregation who have had COVID, especially those who are having lasting effects. Give thanks that most of us have had it mildly.

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 China. Open Doors' writes, 'Persecution is escalating in states with anti-conversion laws. Believers are being falsely accused of forced conversions, churches vandalised and closed, and pastors threatened and beaten. Ask the Lord to soften the hearts of influential local figures so that Christians are more widely accepted.'

Pray for the funeral of Stuart Pearce this afternoon.

Pray: My God, Oh, Your Word is so crucial in our lives. I am always thankful that You instructed the Bible to be written all those years ago. It teaches us fundamental truths and helps guide us as we go about our lives. Surely, reading more of it will well equip us for life. And, in constant meditating, there is always so much more to notice and learn. You have blessed me, my God, with life-changing and empowering lessons I have learned and will continue to learn from your Holy Word. Amen.

Tuesday

Read – Isaiah 5 v25-30

²⁶ He lifts up a banner for the distant nations, he whistles for those at the ends of the earth. Here they come, swiftly and speedily! ²⁷ Not one of them grows tired or stumbles, not one slumbers or sleeps; not a belt is loosened at the waist, not a sandal strap is broken. ²⁸ Their arrows are sharp, all their bows are strung; their horses' hooves seem like flint, their chariot wheels like a whirlwind. ²⁹ Their roar is like that of the lion, they roar like young lions; they growl as they seize their prey and carry it off with no one to rescue.

Think : The ancient church was called to be light to the nations, to be a tree that yields fruit because its roots are deep into God's word. But Israel has spurned "the word of the Holy One of Israel" so their roots will decay, they will dry up like straw, and the fire of God's justice will burn against his people (Isaiah 5:24-25). If those who are called to be "the salt of the earth" lose their saltiness then they will be "thrown out and trampled underfoot" (Matt. 5:13). Isaiah speaks of distant nations that will come to trample Israel; he refers to Assyria who will seize Israel like a lion seizing its prey, and Judah would experience the same when Babylon came. If the church swaps darkness for light then its lights will go out, with darkness and distress the inevitable result (Isaiah 5:20,30).

Praise God that He is the one who judges the wicked.

Pray for our church, that we would be an ever shining light of the Lord in our community

Pray that you would be someone who turns away from darkness and help others to do likewise.

Pray for the unity of the church to be a reality on earth as it is in heaven. As you pray, ask God to show you who in your church needs you to love them.

Pray for those who are struggling with serious ill health, especially cancer.

Pray for those working in shops and warehouses. Pray for Christian staff sharing their faith.

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

Pray for those living under repressive regimes.

Pray for those working in industry. Pray for innovation and science here in the UK to bring prosperity and opportunity for many more people in ecologically sound ways.

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 – Isaiah 6

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: with two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³ And they were calling to one another: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.’ ⁴ At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. ⁵ ‘Woe to me!’ I cried. ‘I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.’

Think : How can Israel be changed from a wicked, unclean city into the holy city that draws all nations to the LORD (2:1-5)? Isaiah’s encounter with the King, the LORD Almighty, the eternal Son of God (John 12:41) is the answer. God’s people need to experience what Isaiah experienced: a vision of the LORD in all his holiness and majesty, leading to a humble awareness of uncleanness; then the removal of guilt through a sacrifice of atonement; finally a commissioning to become God’s servant speaking his message. This pattern of chapter 6 is, roughly, the shape of the rest of Isaiah’s book. Isaiah is given a tough calling, for his words will harden the hearts of those who have already rejected God and his prophets. Jesus’ parables had a similar effect (Luke 8:10). Though Judah would be laid waste, Christ is the “holy seed” who brings hope for the future (6:13).

Praise God that He is holy. Give thanks that through Christ we are made clean despite sins.

Pray for those called into Christian ministry, especially when they face opposition and rejection. Pray for those who work in rough areas, whether rural or inner city.

Pray for those who speak God’s warning into society. Pray that they will be heard.

Pray for our worship, that we would honour God whole heartedly in all we do.

Pray that you would trust that the Lord, in His sovereignty, really is working for the good of all who love him, even when we cannot understand how or why. Pray that through difficulties and suffering, we would see growth and fruit as we stand fast in Jesus.

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 work of Washington Community Food Project.

Pray for those working in care homes. Pray about the issue of compulsory vaccination.

Pray for the nation of the Bulgaria today.

Pray for our town of Washington and those who try to make it a better place to live.

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 and the grant given by All Churches Trust. Pray for grant application with Sir James Knott Trust that has recommended the application to a sister trust and should be decided imminently. Pray for the applications going to Bernard Sunley Foundation, William Leech and those gone to Laing, Catherine Cookson foundation and Clothworkers.

Pray: God, the Rock of our salvation, we sing and shout for joy to You. We enter Your presence with thankful hearts and make a joyful noise to You in song. You, our Lord, are a great God, King over everything. All creation belongs to You, for You made all things. We worship and bow down to You, our Maker, for we are Your people, the sheep under Your care. We place our present and our future in Your hands, trusting in You always. Amen.

Thursday

Read – Isaiah 7 v1-17

⁵ Aram, Ephraim and Remaliah's son have plotted your ruin, saying, ⁶ 'Let us invade Judah; let us tear it apart and divide it among ourselves, and make the son of Tabeel king over it.' ⁷ Yet this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

“It will not take place, it will not happen, ⁸ for the head of Aram is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is only Rezin. Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people. ⁹ The head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is only Remaliah's son. If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all.”

Think: “Stand firm in faith”! This is Isaiah's message to Ahaz, to Judah, and to us. (7:1 to 9:7 is directed towards Judah; 9:8 to 11:16 is a similar message to northern Israel.) The house of David is under threat from the Arameans and Israelites, but if anyone should know that giant armies are no threat to the LORD, the royal line of David should. After all, giants have heads and heads can be shattered (v8-9). The church might sometimes face terrible threats that leaves our hearts shaken (v2) but Jesus is our Immanuel, God with us, and if God is for us who can be against us? Jesus is our rock, on whom we can stand firm and not be shaken (Isaiah 8:13-14, Psalm 62:6). If fear is replaced by faith then we are set free to love our enemies and pray for those who threaten us (Matt. 5:44).

Praise God that as his child, he is for you, not against you, even when life feels hard.

Pray for those who feel their faith is under attack, that they would stand firm

Pray for those who have drifted away from Jesus, whether towards religion, or towards godlessness, that they would re-experience His Holy Spirit and be renewed.

Pray for our government as they lead the country, for integrity and wisdom.

Pray for the continued life of the Church and for its flourishing. Pray for those new to the church. Pray for more to volunteers to help in our various activities and especially as we consider our afterschool 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 our youth group this evening and our lunch club at Biddick. Pray for more young people to join the lunch club

Pray for the armed forces & families, especially those who have lost loved ones in conflict.

Pray for the local schools. Give thanks that Rickleton Primary are keen for Advent assemblies and Christmas events to happen and that Bi9ddick are keen to return to church.

Pray: Lord God, You are the Sustainer of our souls. Because we pursue spiritual riches, we do not lose heart in this present affliction. We praise You that we see the glorious light of Your good news. We thank You that You have made Your light shine in our hearts, so we can know Your glory. Like fragile clay jars containing this precious treasure, we know that our great power is from You and not from ourselves. We thank You for renewing our spirits every day. Amen.

Friday

Read – Isaiah 8 v1-15

¹¹This is what the LORD says to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people:

¹²‘Do not call conspiracy everything this people calls a conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. ¹³The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread. ¹⁴He will be a holy place; for both Israel and Judah he will be a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare. ¹⁵Many of them will stumble; they will fall and be broken, they will be snared and captured.’

Think: Parents who chose biblical names for children seldom opt for “Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz”! It means, roughly, “hurrying to the spoil, hastening to the booty” and speaks of the swift armies of Assyria that would plunder Damascus and Samaria. If Ahaz had simply trusted the LORD, Assyria would have swept away Judah’s enemies. But evil Ahaz deliberately called on Assyria to help him, thinking that politics rather than faith-filled obedience was the answer. The coming flood would sweep over Judah, bringing trouble rather than help (v7-8, see also 2 Chron. 28:16-23). God’s church lives by faith alone, trusting our Immanuel rather than seeking strength from the world. Jesus is the rock on which we build our lives. Instead of fearing what the world fears – like conspiracies, ridicule, suffering or even death – we revere Jesus Christ as Lord; note how 1 Peter 3:13-15 draws on Isaiah 8:12-13. Those who close their eyes to Jesus Christ the cornerstone will stumble and fall; those who come to him are built into God’s everlasting temple (1 Peter 2:4-9).

Give thanks for Christian parents as they try to raise children in a secular society.

Pray that genuine conspiracy theories would be shown for the lies and subterfuge that they are. Pray that we would look to Jesus for truth and not elsewhere.

Pray for those who find Jesus a stumbling block to faith, that their eyes would be opened.

Pray that we would hear God’s guiding voice ever more clearly and would listen and obey.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will help you pursue holiness and flee from sin.

Pray for Open Doors. Pray for India. Thanks to you, a group of missionaries and pastors has been given bikes to reach rural areas to disciple believers and tell others about Jesus (see Magazine p14). "I was praying for a bike, and God has blessed me with this!" shares Abraham*. Praise God for the difference these bikes will make.

Pray for the nations of New Zealand, the Pacific Islands, Canada and Ireland.

Pray for all those who are battling against Islamic extremism, whether locally in schools and prisons, or militarily in places like Mali and Iraq.

Pray for those working in agriculture, that regenerative agriculture would develop and improve the world through reducing use of chemicals, but enable affordable healthy food.

Pray: Lord Jesus Christ, you calmed the wind and waves with your word. As people endure the uncertainty and confusion of a job search, I pray that you would calm their minds in this storm. Fill their heart with your peace and minds with your wisdom. I praise you for everything you have given me and ask you with humble confidence to provide the right job for those who need one. Make clear your will for their lives. May your grace, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us always. In your name, Amen.

Saturday

Read – Isaiah 8 v16-9v7

¹⁹When someone tells you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people enquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰Consult God's instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. ²¹Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upwards, will curse their king and their God. ²²Then they will look towards the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.

Think : Looking for certainty about the future, some (like Ahaz) seek worldly power and might. Others enquire of otherworldly powers through spiritualists and mediums. Both paths lead only to darkness and gloom (Isaiah 8:22, 5:30). Instead, turn to God! Turn to his word! Isaiah promises light to those who followed sin into darkness. Naphtali and Galilee would be oppressed by Assyria (2 Kings 15:29) but in the future that land would be graced by the coming of a king to reign on David's throne. The Immanuel prophecy may have had an early partial-fulfilment (compare 7:14-16 with 8:3-4) but one day a child will be born, a son will be given, and in him light will drive back darkness and peace will triumph over warfare. The joy of 9:3-4 is the joy of security, the freedom that comes from a successful harvest and a shattered enemy. Jesus Christ has shouldered responsibility for the world and gives us a certain future, for his kingdom will never end.

Give thanks that it is the Lord who raises the dead and that he is the one who speaks.

Pray against the occult and spiritualist activities that take place locally. Pray people would see their fraudulent, if not demonic spiritually damaging, impact on people.

Pray for our Christmas plans, that we would bring light to the parish.

Praise God for the services we have tomorrow, pray for those nervous about mixing with others. Pray for our student Chris who is preaching tomorrow.

Pray for our evangelism and online presence, that we would be effective this winter.

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: Heavenly Father, thank you that you can satisfy our every desire and need. Your word says that we should give honour to you with the first fruits of our wealth. Accept our tithes and offerings as a gift of worship to you. Multiply what we give for the effective growth of your kingdom. May Christ dwell in our hearts through faith so that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may have the strength to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. May we be filled with all the fullness of God. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.

Sunday

Read – 1 Thessalonians 5 v16-27

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰ Do not treat prophecies with contempt ²¹ but test them all; hold on to what is good, ²² reject every kind of evil.

²³ May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

²⁵ Brothers and sisters, pray for us. ²⁶ Greet all God's people with a holy kiss. ²⁷ I charge you before the Lord to have this letter read to all the brothers and sisters.

Think: dwell on each phrase here. What does it mean for you? How might you quench the spirit? Why do you think Paul wanted his letter to be heard by the whole church? Why is hearing the bible read in church so important? How does this passage encourage you?

Praise God that we can pray anywhere and at all times. Pray that we would rejoice more.

Pray that we would be ever more thankful. Pray that we would be better at hospitality and welcome. Pray that we would all be bold in our evangelism and see much fruit.

Pray for our Sunday services.

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

Pray for those who are struggling with ill health and grief. Pray for Liz, Gareth, Ann, Margaret, Maureen & Jim, Elizabeth and Maureen and Clive and Sheena.

Pray for the grace of God to touch you and all at church today.

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 war zones.

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 for more to help coffee on Sundays.

Pray: Almighty Father, whose will is to restore all things in your beloved Son, the King of all: govern the hearts and minds of those in authority, and bring the families of the nations, divided and torn apart by the ravages of sin, to be subject to his just and gentle rule. Amen.