

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



Daily Prayer *for Advent*

Monday 30 November 2020 to Thursday 24 December 2020

The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness -
on them light has shined.

Isaiah 9:2

Welcome to this special edition of prayers and reflections for daily use during Advent. As we prepare for Christ's coming at Christmas, it is good to be able to pause each day to contemplate God's vision for his creation and his undying love for us. Monday to Saturday we explore God's story through the eyes of the patriarchs (the founding fathers of the Jewish faith), the prophets, John the Baptist, and Mary.

Enjoy journeying with God through Advent to Christmas. May he bless you with his light and his joy, his peace and his hope.

God bless,

Revd Katrina

Vicar

Phone No. 01604 812907

Mobile No. 07710 464675

E-mail: katrinahutchins94@yahoo.co.uk

Some of the material is © The Archbishops' Council 2002-2006

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.

WEEK ONE

The Patriarchs

Preparation

As you prepare to meet with God, pause to reflect on all that has happened so far today and what lies ahead of you. Offer them to God in silence.

I put my trust in your steadfast love;
my heart will rejoice in your salvation. *Psalm 13:5*

Opening Prayer

O God, you search me and you know me.
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.
You know the journeys that I take
and the places where I rest.
You know all that is on my heart,
and the “to do” lists and worries
that are cluttering my life.
Help me to let go of them,
for a while, as I spend time in your presence.

Amen.

Reading and Reflection

Read today's reading and pause to reflect on its message.

Our Prayer for this Week

If you wish, light a candle to represent the Patriarchs.

Heavenly Father,
God of Abraham and Sarah,
you called the patriarchs to live by the light of faith.
May your light shine in my heart,
so that I may be ready to meet Christ our King
when he comes again.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father...

Conclusion

May the Lord make us ready for his coming in glory. **Amen.**

Readings and Reflections

Monday - The Call of Abram

November 30th

Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' So Abram went. *Genesis 12:1-4a*

Abram and his wife Sarai gave up everything to go where God was sending them, and did not look back. What is God inviting you to let go of this Advent?

Tuesday - God's first promise

December 1st

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, 'Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.' But Abram said, 'O Lord God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?' And Abram said, 'You have given me no offspring, and so a slave born in my house is to be my heir.' But the word of the Lord came to him, 'This man shall not be your heir; no one but your very own issue shall be your heir.' He brought him outside and said, 'Look towards heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed the Lord; and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness.

Genesis 15:1-6

Abram looked up at the stars and believed that God who made the universe can make the impossible possible. How deep is your trust in God's promise to you? Offer him your fears.

Wednesday - God's eternal promise

December 2nd

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, 'I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.' Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, 'As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. *Genesis 17:1-7*

God made a promise to Abraham which he kept through the generations down to his Son's coming and beyond to us. Think about how you came to faith. How will you celebrate the true meaning of Christmas with your family?

Thursday - The Hospitality of Abraham

December 3rd

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, 'My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.' So they said, 'Do as you have said.'

Genesis 18:5

God visited Abraham and Sarah, and ate with them. Contemplate God's presence with you in this moment in time. Emmanuel - God with us. Come to eat with us.

Friday - You shall have a son...

December 4th

Then one said, 'I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.' And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?'

Genesis 18:10-12

God blesses Abraham and Sarah with a long-awaited son. Yet - Sarah doubted. Echoing Mary's words, 'How can this be?' Offer to God your doubts and questions.

Saturday - God's gift of laughter

December 5th

The Lord dealt with Sarah as he had said, and the Lord did for Sarah as he had promised. Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son whom Sarah bore him. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, as God had commanded him. Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. Now Sarah said, 'God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me.' And she said, 'Who would ever have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age.'

Genesis 21:1-7

Sarah laughed with joy and happiness at the gift of a son. God had filled an aching void in her life. Ponder when God has sensed your sorrows and given you the gift of relief and happiness, and joy at a new beginning. Give thanks to him.

WEEK TWO

The Prophets

Preparation

As you prepare to meet with God, pause to reflect on all that has happened so far today and what lies ahead of you. Offer them to God in silence.

An offering of a free heart will I give you
and praise your name, O Lord, for it is gracious. *Psalm 54:6*

Opening Prayer

O God, you search me and you know me.
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.
You know the journeys that I take
and the places where I rest.
You know all that is on my heart,
and the “to do” lists and worries
that are cluttering my life.
Help me to let go of them,
for a while, as I spend time in your presence.

Amen.

Reading and Reflection

Read today's reading and pause to reflect on its message.

Our Prayer for this Week

If you wish, light a candle to represent the Prophets.

Heavenly Father,
God of the prophets of old,
who brought your word of peace and justice.
May I walk in the light of faith,
and come at last to the city
where you are the light.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father...

Conclusion

May the Lord make us ready for his coming in glory. **Amen.**

Readings and Reflections

Monday - A child will be born for us

December 7th

For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onwards and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Isaiah 9:6-7

Isaiah wrote these words during a turbulent time in the history of God's people, when the kingdom was in danger of failing due to the misrule of King David's successors. God promises them a new king who will bring justice and peace. Where do you see this is most needed in our world today? Pray for these places.

Tuesday - A King of David's line

December 8th

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth.

Isaiah 11:1-4a

In sending his people a new and just king, God will not break his promise to David that his offspring will rule for all time. The king will be of David's line. He will care for God's struggling people. It is a powerful promise in these uncertain times. Where do you see God at work in the world today? In your life? Trust in him.

Wednesday - Foes will become friends

December 9th

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Isaiah 11:6-9

God's vision for our world is one filled with peace. Natural foes will become friends, and children will be safe. As you contemplate this beautiful image, allow God to speak to you through its words. How are you feeling? Offer your hope to God.

Thursday - It is time**December 10th**

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. *Isaiah 40:1-2*

God's message to his people speaks into the suffering of his people in exile and into his people's waiting for their Messiah, and into our waiting for his return. Waiting is a key theme for Advent, especially so this year as we wait for an end to the coronavirus crisis and a return to a normal social life. How are you finding this waiting time? Offer your fears and frustrations to God.

Friday - Your king will be born...**December 11th**

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

Micah 5:2, 4

God's new king will be born in David's birthplace. This is significant. It is a sign that he has come to fulfil God's promise to David, but his style of kingship will be so different to what has gone before. He will be the Good Shepherd of God's flock. And, he will fulfil God's promise to Abraham and rule over all nations. Christ was born to be King of the whole of our lives. Offer yours to him.

Saturday - God's gift of laughter**December 12th**

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgements against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord. *Zephaniah 3:14-20*

Christmas is a time for celebration and singing carols with gusto. Contemplate the words of your favourite carol. Offer them as a prayer to God. Christ came to bring hope to the hopeless. Offer your Christmas hopes to him.

WEEK THREE
John the Baptist

Preparation

As you prepare to meet with God, pause to reflect on all that has happened so far today and what lies ahead of you. Offer them to God in silence.

You are my help and my deliverer;
O Lord, do not delay. *Psalm 70:6*

Opening Prayer

O God, you search me and you know me.
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.
You know the journeys that I take
and the places where I rest.
You know all that is on my heart,
and the “to do” lists and worries
that are cluttering my life.
Help me to let go of them,
for a while, as I spend time in your presence.

Amen.

Reading and Reflection

Read today's reading and pause to reflect on its message.

Our Prayer for this Week

If you wish, light a candle to represent the John the Baptist.

Heavenly Father,
whose prophet John the Baptist
gave witness to the light that came into the world.
May I share with joy the good news
of the light of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father...

Conclusion

May the Lord, when he comes, find us watching and waiting. **Amen.**

Readings and Reflections

Monday - You will have a son...

December 14th

But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.'

Luke 1:13-17

Zechariah and Elizabeth mirror the childless desperation of Abram and Sarai and their faithfulness. God listens and responds to their heartfelt yearnings with the gift of a son John who will herald in God's King. Offer your inner sadness and deep longings to God. Receive from him.

Tuesday - Who will be...

December 15th

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, 'No; he is to be called John.' They said to her, 'None of your relatives has this name.' Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, 'His name is John.' And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbours, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, 'What then will this child become?' For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

Luke 1:59-66

When a child is born, family and friends start to dream dreams for his or her future. John's neighbours sensed God's hand in his birth and in his naming. Who will John become? It is a lesson in waiting for God to reveal his plans. Offer to God your own unanswered questions. Seek the patience to wait for his revelations.

Wednesday - He came to...

December 16th

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

Mark 4:1-5

John came to prepare the ground for Jesus - to encourage God's people to take a fresh look at their lives, see their need of God and seek his forgiveness. Pause to centre your attentions on God and abide in his love. Say sorry for any inattention, over the past week, and feel his forgiveness.

Thursday - Be a voice in the wilderness...

December 17th

A voice cries out: 'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' *John 1:6-7*

John came to make it easy for the people to find their way to Jesus. In the Bible, the wilderness is a desolate place where God comes to find us and travel with us. Contemplate your wilderness times. These are sacred places where God comes to be with us. Invite him into your sadness.

Friday - Look to the light...

December 18th

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. *John 1:6-7*

John came to point people to the light: Jesus, Light of the World. Where is Jesus' light shining in the darkness of social distancing and aloneness, and in the world's sadness. Give thanks for his light of hope. How can you be a light-bearer?

Saturday - Look for the good news...

December 19th

The disciples of John reported all these things to him. So John summoned two of his disciples and sent them to the Lord to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?' And Jesus answered them, 'Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me.' *Luke 7:18-19, 22-23*

John's time is drawing to a close. He has done what he has been born to do. Yet - he still needs to be sure. He wants to know that Jesus is the One - the Messiah, and Jesus replies, 'Look at what I have been doing!' What makes Jesus the One for you? Give thanks for his good news in your life.

WEEK FOUR

Mary

Preparation

As you prepare to meet with God, pause to reflect on all that has happened so far today and what lies ahead of you. Offer them to God in silence.

We give you thanks, O God, we give you thanks,
for your name is near, as your wonderful deeds declare. *Psalms 75:1*

Opening Prayer

O God, you search me and you know me.
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.
You know the journeys that I take
and the places where I rest.
You know all that is on my heart,
and the “to do” lists and worries
that are cluttering my life.
Help me to let go of them,
for a while, as I spend time in your presence.

Amen.

Reading and Reflection

Read today's reading and pause to reflect on its message.

Our Prayer for this Week

If you wish, light a candle to represent Mary.

Heavenly Father,
whose servant Mary
obeyed your call to be the mother of our Lord.
May I heed your call to live humbly and faithfully
the whole of my life.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father...

Conclusion

May God, who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light,
bless us and fill us with peace. **Amen.**

Readings and Reflections

Monday - You will have a son...

December 21st

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.'

Luke 1:28-29, 38

Mary may have been dreaming dreams about her to-be married life with Joseph, and contemplating their to-be children, but she was not praying desperately for a child. God's intervention in her life was untimely. Yet - she had the courage and faith to say, 'Let it be with me.' It is a self-giving as generous as her to-be Son's on the Cross. Pause to let go of all that holds you back from abiding in God's love and saying "Yes" to his call on your life. Wait on him.

Tuesday - Joy!

December 22nd

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.' And Mary said, 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.'

Luke 1:39-42, 46-47

Mary rushes to share her good news with her cousin Elizabeth. Life as a not-yet-married mum will be tough, but her heart is filled with joy at God choosing her to be the mother of his Son - the Messiah. She sings with joy! What is bringing you comfort and joy in the lead up to Christmas? Give thanks.

Wednesday - Sadness

December 23rd

Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

Luke 2:34-35

Mary's joy at giving birth to Jesus is tinged with sadness. The shadow of the cross can already be seen in his young life. Sometimes, being a parent can be tough. Pray for parents who fear for their children's future. Offer to God the sadness within your Christmas celebrations.

Thursday - Being Jesus' mum...

December 24th

After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.' He said to them, 'Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.

Luke 2:46-52

Mary lost sight of Jesus for at least three days. She must have been frantic with worry for his safety. Where could he be? In the temple. Where else? Yet - Mary must have done more than an OK job as Jesus' mum. For he grew to be an adult, which was no means certain in those days, and a wise and caring man. Like Jesus, you are God's beloved child. Offer what's on your heart to him as you prepare to celebrate his coming into Mary's life and yours.

May you have a happy and blessed Christmas.

Revd Katrina

Continue your Christmas journey with Comfort and Joy

Nine Lessons and Carols for Christmas