

# Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



## PILGRIMAGE – A JOURNEY OF THE SOUL

### Daily Prayer *for Advent*

**Monday 1 December 2025 to Wednesday 24 December 2025**

The Lord, before whom I have walked faithfully,  
will send his angel with you and make your journey a success.

*Genesis 24:40*

Welcome to this special edition of prayers and reflections for daily use during Advent. As we prepare for Christ's coming at Christmas and look forward to his future rule on Earth, it is so good to be able to pause for a few minutes each day to contemplate the journey that we are on. And, to remember who we are travelling with as Christmas comes close. Each week, we will travel with our Advent companions: Abraham and Sarah, the Prophets, John the Baptist and Mary. Our journey will take us deeper into ourselves as God's Spirit invites us to be trusting, learning, accepting and rejoicing.

Enjoy journeying daily with God as you prepare your heart and home to celebrate the light and love, the joy and peace of Christmas.

God bless,

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### **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.**

# OUR DAILY PRAYER

## Pilgrimage – A Journey of the Soul

### 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 passage and pause to contemplate its message.*

### Our Prayer for this Week

*If you wish, light a candle as you invite God to guide you onwards.*

God of my journeys,  
you invite me to walk by your side  
as I prepare to celebrate your Son’s coming.  
May each pilgrim step that I take draw me  
ever deeper into your loving presence;  
where my soul is you are.

**Amen.**

### The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father...

### Conclusion

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

**WEEK ONE**  
**Abraham and Sarah**  
**Trusting**

**Monday – Called to go on a journey**

**December 1<sup>st</sup>**

The LORD said to Abram, ‘Go from your country, your people and your father’s household to the land I will show you. I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.’

*Genesis 12:1-3*

Advent begins with a calling by God to take a journey. Abram and his wife Sarai didn’t know where they were going, but they knew who their travelling companion would be – God. God is calling you to pilgrim with him through Advent. You do not know where this will lead, but he will be at your side in every step. *Invite God to bless your daily pilgrimage towards Christmas.*

**Tuesday – Trusting**

**December 2<sup>nd</sup>**

So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he set out from Harran. He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all the possessions they had accumulated and the people they had acquired in Harran, and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived there.

Abram travelled through the land as far as the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. The LORD appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your offspring I will give this land.’ So he built an altar there to the LORD, who appeared to him.

*Genesis 12:4-7*

Abram trusts the LORD and so does his wife Sarai. Together, as a family, they set out on a long journey into the unknown. It would be a journey of about 550 miles. They took everything that they owned with them. *What are you taking with you on this pilgrimage? What would you like to leave behind? Place your trust in God’s guiding and providing.*

**Wednesday – Doubting**

**December 3<sup>rd</sup>**

After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: ‘Do not be afraid, Abram, I am your shield, your great reward.’ But Abram said, ‘Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?’ And Abram said, ‘You have given me no children, so a servant in my household will be my heir.’

*Genesis 15:1-3*

Abram and his wife Sarai remain childless. Yet, the LORD told Abram that he will be a great nation. 'How can this be?' Abram wonders. It will be because God is.

*Do you have any doubts as you wait on God's answers to your own prayers?*

*Why might he be inviting you to wait on him?*

#### **Thursday – God's Promise**

**December 4<sup>th</sup>**

Then the word of the LORD came to him: 'This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.' He took him outside and said, 'Look up at the sky and count the stars – if indeed you can count them.' Then he said to him, 'So shall your offspring be.' Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

*Genesis 15:4-6*

God is a god of unbelievable promises. Abram and Sarai are far too old to have children, yet Abram trusts that God will do what he says. God will keep his promise. First, there will be many years of waiting to journey through with him. *Do you have the faith to trust in God's love and his promises? Can you wait with him?*

#### **Friday – Doubting again!**

**December 5<sup>th</sup>**

Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave called Hagar, so she said to Abram, 'The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her.' Abram agreed to what Sarai said.

*Genesis 16:1-2*

Abram was eight-six years old when Hagar – his wife's slave – bore him a son, Ishmael. It was wrong to abuse the rights of this unfree woman. It was wrong to pre-empt what God will do. Yet, God does not give up on Abram or on Sarai, a son will be born to them. This is a powerful sign to us that God keeps his promises. He never gives up on us even when we let him down. *Have you ever been tempted to pre-empt God's response? Seek his forgiveness and re-place your trust in him.*

#### **Saturday – God delivers on his promise**

**December 6<sup>th</sup>**

Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. Abraham gave the name Isaac (*he laughs*) to the son Sarah bore him. Sarah said, 'God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me.'

*Genesis 21:1, 3a, 6*

Abram and Sarai have new names, and a new child to bring joy and laughter into their lives. God's trust in them has brought about the beginning of a people – a family – whose journey leads to the birth of God's own Son. *How might God's trust in you shape your life's path? Ponder this with him.*

**WEEK TWO**  
**The Prophets**  
**Learning**

**Monday – Desolation**

**December 8<sup>th</sup>**

How deserted lies the city, once so full of people! How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave. Bitterly she weeps at night, tears on her cheeks. Among all her lovers there is no one to comfort her. All her friends have betrayed her; they have become her enemies.

*Lamentations 1:1-2*

We ended last week on a high note – the birth of a son and of a nation who will be God’s people. God is more faithful to his people than they are to him. Finally, God sends them into exile to teach them a lesson. We feel their desolation at the destruction of their city and their temple. God feels far from them. *Look back at your life. Have there been times when God has felt far from you? Think about the promise he makes in Psalm 121: The LORD shall keep watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth for evermore. Advent is about learning to travel with him.*

**Tuesday – God in the darkness**

**December 9<sup>th</sup>**

I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope. Because of the LORD’s great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, ‘The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.’

*Lamentations 3:19-24*

The prophet Jeremiah is sitting in the ruins of Jerusalem – God’s city. You’d have thought that all would feel as dark as the deepest darkness. But, no! He still trusts in God’s steadfast love and believes in a time when God will restore their fortunes. In God, he hopes. *What can you learn from Jeremiah’s experience of God being with him in the darkness? Even when all hope is lost, God is.*

**Wednesday – Learning in a new or strange place**

**December 10<sup>th</sup>**

By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered Zion. As for our lyres, we hung them up on the willows that grow in that land. For there our captors asked for a song, our tormentors called for mirth: ‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion.’

How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?

*Psalms 137:1-4*

The psalmist is one of God's people taken into exile in Babylon, 500 miles away. God has sent them out of the land he promised to Abraham and Moses. Spiritually, this was a journey towards a new way of being with God. The psalmist is discovering how to praise God from a place of humility and humble learning. *What can you learn from his experience? How is God inviting you to learn new ways of being with him?*

#### **Thursday – The heart to begin again**

**December 11<sup>th</sup>**

'The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,' declares the LORD. 'This is the covenant that I will make with the people of Israel after that time,' declares the LORD. 'I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, "Know the LORD," because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,' declares the LORD. 'For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.'

*Jeremiah 31:31-34*

What a beautiful lesson God is teaching his people as they spend time in exile, away from the land that he gave to their ancestors. It is a lesson that speaks to us of the one who came to us at Bethlehem. For our Lord wants us to know him in our hearts and souls, and to know that his Father forgives every one of our sins. Nothing can separate us from God's love. *Ponder this powerful lesson. In stillness, offer your praise and prayers.*

#### **Friday – God's highway**

**December 12<sup>th</sup>**

A voice of one calling: 'In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all the people will see it together. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.'

*Isaiah 40:3-5*

God promises that the journey home to him, all 500 miles, will be a smooth one. *Ponder how our Lord Jesus is this way to his Father in heaven.*

#### **Saturday – God's laws**

**December 13<sup>th</sup>**

I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws. *Psalms 119:7*

Two laws alone are needed in this life: Love God with every fibre of our being, Love others as ourselves. *How are you learning to live by these?*

**WEEK THREE**  
**John the Baptist**  
**Accepting**

**Monday – Accepting God’s gift**

**December 15<sup>th</sup>**

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: ‘Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord.

Zechariah asked the angel, ‘How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well on in years.’

*Luke 1:11-15a, 18*

Zechariah is given a double blessing. Firstly, he has been honoured by the presence of one of God’s messengers. Beware of this as God’s angels come to disrupt our lives! Secondly, he is promised a son – a very special son. He questions rather than accepts this amazing gift. In his shock, he forgets that God can. *Ponder this idea, God can do what feels impossible. He is the Creator of the Universe!*

**Tuesday – Accepting God’s blessing**

**December 16<sup>th</sup>**

When his time of service was completed, Zechariah returned home. After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. ‘The Lord has done this for me,’ she said. ‘In these days he has shown his favour and taken away my disgrace among the people.’

*Luke 1:23-25*

Elizabeth’s acceptance of God’s blessing is a pure motherly response. Finally, she can hold her head high in the community because she is going to be a mum. It is the one thing that she has been yearning to be. *Feel the love and purity of her response to God’s blessing. How might you respond with love and thankfulness to God’s blessings in your own life?*

**Wednesday – A journey to see**

**December 17<sup>th</sup>**

When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbours and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

*Luke 1:57-58*

*They shared her joy.* What a wonderful response to the birth of this miracle baby, Elizabeth and Zechariah’s son. Family and friends could see that this is God’s gift to a faithful and devout couple. They accepted baby John into their hearts.



Zechariah and Elizabeth have been on quite a journey from childlessness to becoming first-time parents in their older-age. It has been a journey towards accepting God's plans for their lives and their son's. *Where are you on this journey of accepting God's loving presence and call on your life? Open your heart to him.*

#### **Thursday – John's journeys**

**December 18<sup>th</sup>**

'And you, my child will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.'

*Luke 1:76-79*

Zechariah offers these words of joy and hope after the birth of his son John. John will be the voice in the wilderness calling the people back to God's love. He will be an agent of God's forgiveness. John will both go on a journey and guide others on theirs as he prepares the way for Jesus. *Think about how our Lord has called you to both follow him and encourage others to find him too.*

#### **Friday – Accepting the need to change**

**December 19<sup>th</sup>**

John said to the crowds coming out to be baptised by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father." For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The axe has been laid to the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce fruit will be cut down and thrown in the fire.'

*Luke 3:7-9*

Not an easy message, is it? Whilst their journey to the Jordan was a short one, God's message to his people turns their lives back to him. Spiritually, this is a deep and challenging pilgrimage to God's very heart. Will they have the courage to take the first step – acceptance? *Ponder what you have learnt on your pilgrimage. Do you have more changes to make? Can you go deeper with God?*

#### **Saturday – Looking to the future**

**December 20<sup>th</sup>**

The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. John answered them...

*Luke 3:15-16a*

Being baptised by John is stage one of the people's pilgrimage. Stage two will be their acceptance or rejection of Jesus as God's promised one. *Advent is a stage on our journey with God not the destination. Ponder your acceptance of this.*

## WEEK FOUR

### Mary Rejoicing

#### Monday – Disrupting

December 22<sup>nd</sup>

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you are highly favoured! The Lord is with you!'

*Luke 26-28*

Mary's story begins with an angel's journey, heaven comes to earth, disrupting Mary's day and, also, her dreams of being Joseph's wife. Alarm comes before rejoicing! *Think about how God's plans can transform your hopes and dreams. Shock or surprise can come before rejoicing.*

#### Tuesday – Accepting

December 23<sup>rd</sup>

The angel answered, 'The Holy Spirit will come to you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail.'

'I am the Lord's servant,' Mary answered. 'May your word to me be fulfilled.' Then the angel left her.

*Luke 1:35-38*

*For no word from God will ever fail.* What a powerful declaration of who God is, what God says God does. God can bless Mary with a son – his Son. Mary's journey towards a deeper and unique relationship with God begins with a simple, calm, accepting 'Yes.' *Think about how your 'Yes' to God could transform your life. Where is your future joy in this?*

#### Wednesday – Rejoicing!

December 24<sup>th</sup>

And Mary said:

'My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me - holy is his name.'

*Luke 1:46-49*

Your pilgrimage through Advent to Christmas is drawing to a joyous close. Mary's journey to see her pregnant cousin Elizabeth results in this joyous outburst. She didn't need to become a mum. All this lay before her after her wedding to Joseph, but God bursts in to disrupt her plans. She is going to be the Messiah's mum. She, who is lowly in the world's eyes, is blessed in God's. Her Son is going to turn this world right-side up! She is amazed and overjoyed at what God is doing all because she had the quiet courage and deep faith to say 'Yes.' to him.

*Ponder your joy at being chosen by God to be one of his beloved children. Rejoice in the words of Mary's song.*

With Mary, let my soul rejoice,  
and praise God's holy name -  
his saving love from first to last,  
from age to age, the same!

*David Mowbray (b. 1938)*

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May you have a happy and blessed Christmas.

Revd Katrina

*Continue your Christmas journey with  
'Twelve Joys of Christmas,  
Meditations for Christmas and New Year'  
Enjoy!*

