

**Mears Ashby and Hardwick  
and Sywell with Overstone**



**Prayers and Reflections  
for use at home**

**Sunday 27 October 2024**

**Remembering our Loved Ones**

Welcome to this week's Prayers and Reflections. On Sunday, around the benefice, we will be remembering our loved ones. We all have people who were special to us in life and, now that they are no longer with us, retain a unique place in our hearts. Whether your loss is new and fresh, and very much a part of your waking hours, or one that you have carried with you for some years, it is good to pause in God's presence to remember our loved ones with love and thankfulness.

May God be with you in your remembering. I am thinking of you too.

Every blessing,

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*As you prepare to enter this time of remembering, I invite you to contemplate this poem of remembrance. May these words speak to your heart.*

**Afterglow by Helen Lowrie Marshall**



I'd like the memory of me  
to be a happy one.  
I'd like to leave an afterglow  
of smiles when life is done.  
I'd like to leave an echo  
whispering softly down the ways,  
of happy times and laughing times  
and bright and sunny days.  
I'd like the tears of those who grieve,  
to dry before the sun  
of happy memories  
that I will leave when life is done.

# Prayers and Reflections to remember our loved ones at home

## PREPARING OURSELVES

*Take a moment to be still in God's presence, and feel his love. If you are indoors, you may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's love - here, in your room. You may also wish to have a bowl of water ready for the time of letting go. When you are ready, say this opening prayer.*

Lord, as I sit and wait in silence,  
I place my hopes and dreams,  
my fears and concerns,  
into your safe and loving hands.  
Enfold me with your love,  
make my heart beat in time with yours;  
in Jesus' name,  
I pray. **Amen.**

## LETTING GO

*If you come to this time of remembrance and reflection with any regrets, with things that you wish you had not said or thought, done or been, offer them to God in the silence of your heart. And then, pause to contemplate the opening words of this hymn.*

New every morning is the love  
our wakening and uprising prove;  
through sleep and darkness safely brought,  
restored to life and power and thought.

*John Keble (1792-1866)*

*If you wish, dip your finger into a bowl of water and make the sign of the cross on your palm. Feel God's love for you. Nothing can ever separate you from his love, not even the tears and sadness, anger and frustration of losing someone who filled your life with love.*





Be still, my soul:  
the Lord is at your side;  
bear patiently the cross of grief and pain;  
leave to your God to order and provide;  
in every change  
he faithful will remain.

*Katharina Von Schlegel (b. 1697)*

*trans. Jane L. Borthwick*

## **PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER** **(The Collect)**

*Today, this prayer is being said across the benefice. Add your voice to this earthly circle of prayer to our Father whose love never ends.*

Eternal God, our maker and redeemer,  
grant us, with all the faithful departed,  
the sure benefits of your Son's saving passion  
and glorious resurrection  
that, in the last day,  
when you gather up all things in Christ,  
we may with them enjoy the fullness of your promises;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Our prayer for All Souls speaks to us of the hope that we have in Jesus. Death is not the end! We can trust in God's gracious love and forgiveness, believing that our loved ones are safe in his keeping. We can imagine those we miss in heaven. What a glorious scene!*

But purer, and higher,  
and greater will be  
our wonder, our rapture,  
when Jesus we see.

*Fanny J. Crosby (1820-1915)*

*How does your hope of heaven help you to live with grief and loss?  
Offer what is on your heart to our Lord who brought us this hope.*

## LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

### The LORD is our hope

I have been deprived of peace;

I have forgotten what prosperity is.

So I say, 'My splendour is gone

and all that I had hoped from the LORD.'

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.'

The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him,

to the one who seeks him;

it is good to wait quietly

for the salvation of the LORD.

For no one is cast off

by the Lord for ever.

Though he brings grief, he will show compassion,

so great is his unfailing love.

For he does not willingly bring affliction

or grief to anyone.



## **Our hope**

*Grief is an emotional journey. We go from disbelief and shock to anger at how God could let this happen to deep sadness and depression, and on - in time - to acceptance. It is not always a straight line. We can be doing fine then, suddenly, we see something or someone and our grief is raw once more. Tears can flow years on from our loss. It is a sign of how much this person still means to us, and how our love lives on. As St Paul wrote, 'Love never ends.' and the price of such love is the pain of loss.*

*Where did you find yourself in our reading from Lamentations?  
Where do you see yourself in this poem by Tessa Wilkinson?*

### **The Sea by Tessa Wilkinson**

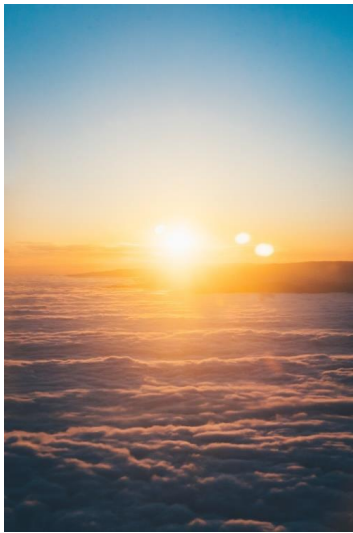
The sea is such a fickle thing  
One minute smooth and calm  
Blue and tranquil  
The next rough and raging  
Tossing anything in its path up in the air  
Throwing it where it will.  
So like grief  
One minute we feel calm  
'Today I am all right'  
'Today I will not be battered and tossed about not knowing  
    where or who I am'  
Then we see something  
Or smell something  
Quite out of the blue  
And the wall of grief that we thought we had turned from  
Picks us up and tosses us here and there  
Until we land exhausted back on the shore  
*Our Lord does not promise us calm,  
gentle seas. He does promise a life  
beyond this life, and his Spirit's presence  
with us as we grieve for our loved ones.*



*As you hold onto his dual promise, seek what you need from him at this stage of your journey of life and faith, love and loss.*

*When you are ready, think about the ones that you love and see no more, naming them in your heart. You may wish to light a candle for them, as you give thanks for their love and for all of your happy memories.*

### **A Prayer of Hope-filled Remembrance**



Loving God,  
your love surrounds me  
from before my first breath  
to my dying one.  
You are here - with me.  
Help me to trust that those whom I love  
and see no more are safe in your eternal care,  
experiencing the joy of heaven;  
in Jesus' name, I pray. **Amen.**

### **Trusting in our Lord's promise:**

#### **I have often wondered *by Jan Brind***

I have often wondered at this great mystery - that I, so small and insignificant, should have caught the attention of God? Strange that, just when I was feeling so empty and alone, God should beckon and say, 'Come to me - I will be with you. We will face this together.' I know now that God was always there, watching. But I was too busy with the humdrum things of life to notice. Oh, the joy of feeling that presence! And to know that God *is* always there - not just in sadness, but in the laughter and colour and busyness of life. Yes, God is always there - in life, and in death. And in the great adventure that is still to come.

*There is nothing in this life that we face on our own - not birth nor death, not love and marriage nor separation and loss, not tears of overflowing, exuberant joy nor tears of aching and endless sadness. God is with us. God will be with you in the days and years to come, and in what Jan calls 'the great adventure'. Offer him your prayers and praise.*

## OUR PRAYERS

*Feel free to use one or more of these prayers and to add your own.*

Lord Jesus, when I feel overwhelmed by loss and loneliness, by a burden of care, you invite me to come and sit in your presence. You are my resting place. Thank you for being there for me.

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, when I think of the people across the globe, who are living in war zones or in refugee camps, scared for their lives, I pray that you will be their hope. Lighten, Lord, their darkness.

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, when I think of the families sitting at bedsides in care homes, hospitals and hospices, waiting for that final breath, I pray that you will be at their side. Guide, Lord, the dying.

Lord, hear my prayer.

*Offer your own heartfelt prayers and yearnings, praise and thanksgivings.*

### **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.**

### **PRAYER OF BLESSING**

*A closing prayer of blessing for this week.*

O God, you search me and you know me,  
all my thoughts and feelings are open to your gaze,  
you see the paths I will take before I take them. Guide my daily living.  
Bless me and keep my loved ones safe, I pray. **Amen.**