

Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home**

**Sunday 18 May 2025
Easter 5**

Welcome to this week's Prayers and Reflections. As Eastertide continues, we contemplate our Lord's command to his Church and his followers, 'Love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.' Enjoy contemplating its deeper significance.

God bless,

Revd Katrina

Vicar

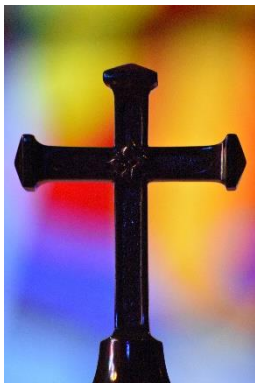
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As you prepare to contemplate our Lord's commandment to live with love, think about how Jesus lived by these words.



Love is his word, love is his way,
feasting with all, fasting alone,
living and dying, rising again,
love, only love, is his way:

*Richer than gold is the love of my Lord:
better than splendour and wealth.*

Luke Connaughton (1917-1979)

CCLI reported

**Prayers and Reflections
for use at home on Easter 5
Walk with love**

PREPARING OURSELVES

*Take a moment to be still in God's presence, and feel his love.
You may wish to light a candle as a sign of God's love - here,
in this 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.*

Risen Lord Jesus,
as I prepare to spend this time in worship,
I invite you to come and fill this space,
and my inner stillness,
with your presence.

Amen.

LETTING GO

*If you come to this time of prayer and reflection with any regrets,
with things that you wish you had not said, done or been,
offer them to God in the silence of your heart. And, when you are ready,
reflect on the second verse of this week's hymn.*

Love is his way, love is his mark,
sharing his last Passover feast,
Christ at the table, host to the twelve,
love, only love, is his mark.

*Richer than gold is the love of my Lord:
better than splendour and wealth.*

Luke Connaughton (1917-1979)

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If you wish, dip your finger into a bowl of water and make the sign of the cross on your palm.

Feel the Father's forgiveness.

Our verse invokes the image of Jesus at the Passover table, kneeling before his disciples as he washes their feet with tenderness. All twelve pairs of feet as Judas is still in the room. What greater love can there be than to wash your enemy's tired and world weary feet in the same way as you wash your friends'. This is what it means to live as Jesus lives - with an attitude of love and forgiveness.

How can this image inspire how you live this week? Who do you struggle to live alongside? Why is this? Jesus shows us that everyone deserves our love and respect and fellowship. Ask our Lord to change your mind about them so that you can find a way to love them. Pray for them as you seek our Lord's forgiveness and loving wisdom.

St. Paul offers us some powerful words on what it means to be Christ-like. Do contemplate this hymn to Christ's self-giving nature.

In your relationships with one another,
have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:
who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death -
even death on a cross.

Philippians 2:5-8



Love is his mark, love is his sign,
bread for our strength, wine for our joy,
'This is my body, this is my blood.'
Love, only love, is his sign.

*Richer than gold is the love of my Lord:
better than splendour and wealth.*

Luke Connaughton (1917-1979)

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PRAYING TODAY'S PRAYER (The Collect)

Today, this prayer is being said across our villages and the worldwide Church. Add your voice to the earthly cycle of prayer to our risen Lord who always listens to our prayers.

Risen Christ, your wounds declare your love for our world
and the wonder of your risen life:
give us compassion and courage
to risk ourselves for those we serve,
to the glory of God the Father. **Amen.**

Our prayer invites us to ponder the events of Holy Week: Jesus facing up to his persecutors calmly and with courage. He reins in his power and stills his tongue. He does not condemn those who condemn him. Love is in his heart as he suffers the indignity and the intense pain of the cross. Jesus died to save everyone who accepts the new life of the empty tomb, and the wonder of his risen life.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him shall not perish
but have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world
to condemn the world,
but to save the world through him.

John 3:16-17

And, this is the mind that Jesus would like to instil in us. Our calling is to have compassion for all peoples, to show kindness to those who serve us, and to serve those who need our help. Imagine a world in which everyone has the courage to let go of past mistakes and personal prejudices, offering the hand of forgiveness and friendship.

*Do you have the courage to live as Jesus would do in your place?
Can you show love and respect to everyone who touches your daily life,
and to everyone and every situation who appears in your prayers?*

Seek our risen Lord's help with this.



Love is his sign, love is his news,
'Do this,' he said, 'lest you forget
all my deep sorrow, all my dear blood.'
Love, only love, is his news.

*Richer than gold is the love of my Lord:
better than splendour and wealth.*

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LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

A New Commandment

When he was gone, Jesus said, 'Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.'

'My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: where I am going, you cannot come.'

'A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'

John 13:31-35

Walk with love...

Love is to be the sign of our Lord's Church on earth; a love that is inclusive and including. No one is to be left out of Christ's fellowship of followers, or left to feel unwelcome in his house. All are welcome in this place! This is what our Lord is saying. It would be a hard won lesson for John, James, Peter and Andrew, and the other apostles. No longer is God's message restricted to those of the Jewish line. Think about who might feel left out, unwelcome, in today's Church. Pray for their invitation and inclusion.



Love is his news, love is his name,
we are his own, chosen and called,
family, brethren, cousins and kin.
Love, only love, is his name.

*Richer than gold is the love of my Lord:
better than splendour and wealth.*

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John writes about Jesus' commandment to love in the second of his letters to church members. He reflects on what this message means in reality.

But now, I ask you, not as though I were writing you a new commandment
but one we have had from the beginning:
let us love one another. And this is love,
that we walk according to his commandments.

2 John 1:5-6a

The Greek word that John uses for love is agapē. This is a love that is less to do with our feelings, and more to do with our mind and our will. It is to adopt an attitude of love towards everyone. It is a call to walk in the light of Christ's love and loving example, and to make the deliberate decision to walk (or take) the pathway of love. Sometimes, as in the early Church, it takes a great deal of effort and self-control to do this, plus a change of mind about those we struggle to like. May you and I choose to walk this path each and every moment of our lives.

OUR PRAYERS

Here are some Eastertide prayers. Feel free to add your own.

Risen Lord, love is your name, love is your rule of life. When I am struggling to show love or respect or kindness to someone, speak your words to me, 'Love one another.' May I take the path of love.

Risen Lord, hear my prayer.

Risen Lord, love is your law, love is your word to our world's hurting peoples and places. If world leaders choose your path of love in every situation, what a wonderful world it would be. Guide, Lord...

Risen Lord, hear my prayer.

Risen Lord, love is your word, love is your way to life, life in all its fullness for those constrained by their ill-health, by the frailties of old age. Bless, Lord, all who choose to be carers...

Risen Lord, hear my prayer.

Offer your own heartfelt prayers and praise.

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.

Risen Lord, come and meet me where I am,
this Eastertide. Fill me with love and joy and peace,
so that I may offer your hope to others.
Bless me and keep my loved ones safe, I pray. **Amen.**