

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



**Prayers and Reflections  
for use at home**

**Sunday 11 January 2026  
Epiphany 1**

Welcome to this week's Prayers and Reflections. As we are in the season of Epiphany, our Gospel readings in January will explore how God reveals himself to us through Jesus, his Son. We start with the baptism of Jesus and his anointing by the Holy Spirit at the river Jordan. We will see God's loving affirmation of his Son as Jesus sets out on his earthy ministry.

May you experience God's delight and affirmation.

Every blessing,

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*As you prepare to witness our Lord's baptism and wonder at the Father's love, offer your prayerful praise.*



Thou, whose almighty word  
chaos and darkness heard,  
and took their flight;  
hear us, we humbly pray,  
and where the gospel day  
sheds not thy glorious ray,  
let there be light.

*John Marriott (1780-1825)*

**Prayers and Reflections**  
**for use at home *for* The Baptism of Christ**  
**Delight and Promise**

**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 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 then, when you are ready, reflect on God's healing love and forgiveness.*

Thou, who didst come to bring  
on thy redeeming wing,  
healing and sight,  
health to the sick in mind,  
sight to the inly blind,  
O now to humankind  
let there be light.

*John Marriott (1780-1825)*



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

*Our second verse echoes the words from Isaiah that our Lord read in his home synagogue as he prepared to set out on his earthly ministry. This passage from scripture shows us that Jesus came to bring God's love and good news to those who were queuing up to be baptised by John – namely, those who needed to feel forgiven or receive healing.*

*Jesus did not need his Father's forgiveness. His was a pure life lived in accordance with his Father's wishes. He did not need to be baptised to become at one with his Father in heaven. He and his Father were as one, perfectly in unison.*

*He came to receive of his Father's blessing and to align himself with those seeking a new start in life. Our hymn invites us to picture our Lord's baptism as a scene lit up as if by spotlight. Our hearts and eyes are drawn to Jesus as he is revealed as God's own Son.*

*Prepare for this with this next verse.*



Spirit of truth and love,  
life-giving, holy Dove,  
speed forth thy flight;  
move on the water's face,  
bearing the lamp of grace,  
and in earth's darkest place  
let there be light.

*John Marriott (1780-1825)*

## 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 circle of prayer to our God on high.*

Heavenly Father,  
at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son:  
may we recognize him as our Lord  
and know ourselves to be your beloved children;  
through Jesus Christ our Saviour. **Amen.**

*Our prayer invites us to ponder who Jesus is to us. As this well-known verse from "As a deer pants", a hymn based on Psalm 42:1-2, says, he is our brother and our friend. He is at one with us. It is so wonderful to contemplate that God's own Son is like a brother to us. It is through him that we come to be children of his Father in heaven. Through his coming, through our own baptism, we are adopted into this family of love.*

*Ponder how it feels to be one of God's beloved children,  
to have Jesus as a sibling.*

You're my friend and you are my brother,  
even though you are a king.  
I love you more than any other,  
so much more than anything.

*Martyn Nystrom*

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*CCLI reported*

*You may like to reflect on and pray through this verse in the coming week. As you deepen your relationship with God's Son, and his Father in heaven, ponder how you are part of a worldwide family. You have millions of brothers and sisters across the globe.*

*May this inspire a sense of at-one-ness with all followers of Jesus.  
You are part of a large and diverse family!*



Holy and blessed Three,  
glorious Trinity,  
Wisdom, Love, Might;  
boundless as ocean's tide  
rolling in fullest pride,  
through the earth far and wide,  
let there be light.

*John Marriott (1780-1825)*

## **LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD**

### **The Baptism of Christ**

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, 'I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?'

Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness.' Then John consented.

As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'

*Matthew 3:13-end*

### **God's delight and promise...**

*As Jesus comes up out of the waters of the Jordan, it is as if a dazzling spotlight has been switched on. A ray of bright sunlight highlights Jesus. A voice speaks. Picture – feel – this scene. God is about to reveal who Jesus is – his very own Son.*

*God affirms who Jesus is. God shows his deep, deep love for his Son. Ponder what he said to Jesus. Sense God's delight in his Son.*

A voice from heaven said,  
'This is my Son, whom I love;  
with him I am well pleased.'

*Through baptism, we are God's children too. Imagine God saying to you, 'You are my child, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'*

*Notice the order of these three phrases.*

He affirms you as one of his children,  
you will always be one of his own.

He loves you as  
only the best of parents can do.

He delights in you  
for being you.

*God's love for us is unconditional and unending. Yes, we will mess up. Yes, we do sometimes hurt him by what we say or do, or by ignoring him or forgetting him. BUT nothing, nothing that we do will ever stop him loving us with every fibre of his being. Like the best of parents, God is true – will always be true – to us. He cannot forget any of his children. When we make a mistake and turn back to him in shame, he loves us – he forgives us. His Son sealed this promise to us on the cross.*

*How will you live this week in the light of God's deep and affirming love, and his loving promise? God delights in you. How will you delight in God's love and in the gift of a brother like Jesus?*

*If you wish, make this promise to your Father in heaven.*



Father, you are the one  
who opened the heavens  
to allow the Spirit to descend.

*I offer my waiting heart  
fill me with your Spirit of love.*

Father, you are the one  
who showed such delight in  
Jesus as your Son.

*I offer you my joy and delight in  
knowing myself to be a child of yours.*

## OUR PRAYERS

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

Lord Jesus, you came to be baptized to be at one with me,  
and to reveal yourself fully to me. You are God's beloved Son,  
and my Brother too. I feel so very loved, accept my love and praise.

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you came to call all nations into your kingdom,  
and unite us as one. You came to bring peace. Yet still we struggle  
to see that we are all brothers and sisters. Open the eyes, I pray...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you came to bring love to the broken and the fallen,  
the grieving and the hurting. You offer a fresh start in life,  
and hope to the struggling. Comfort, Lord, I pray those on my heart...

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.**