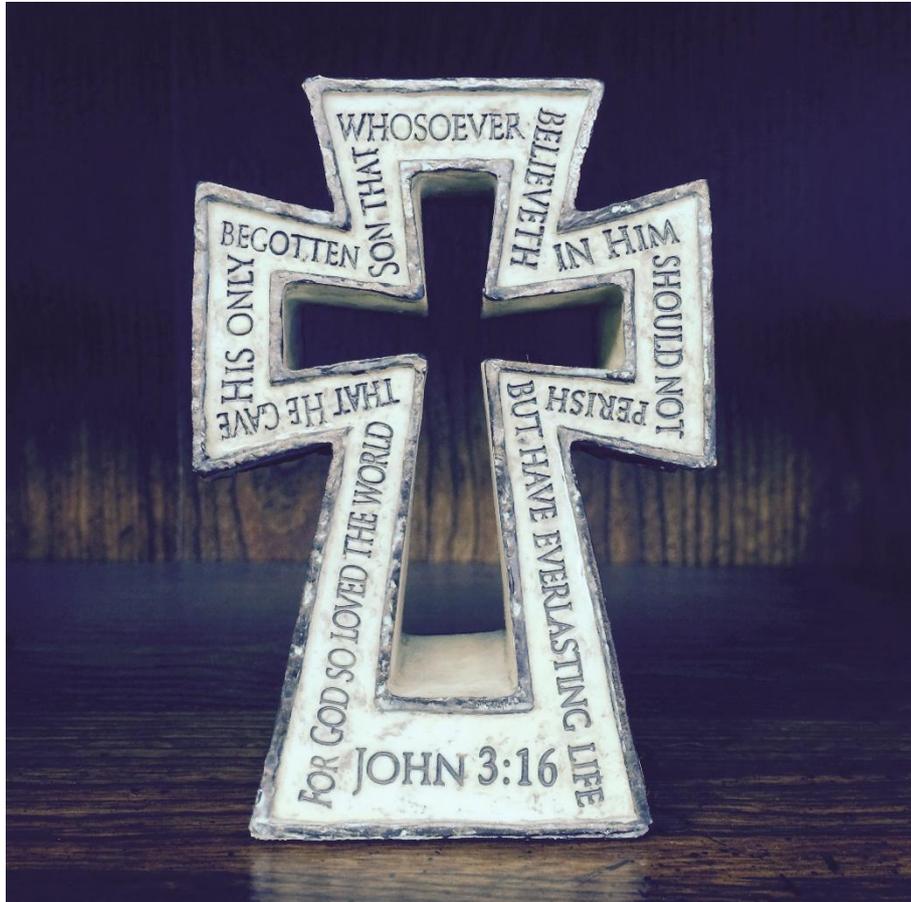


# Mears Ashby and Hardwick and Sywell with Overstone



**Prayers and Reflections  
for use at home**

**Sunday 1 March 2026**

**Lent 2**

As we journey on through Lent, we find Nicodemus – a Pharisee – visiting Jesus under the cover of darkness. A Pharisee visiting Jesus! Pharisees are known for their doubts about Jesus and their desire to squash him before the people accept him as God’s Messiah. God’s call to Nicodemus re-directs his life.

May you and I listen to God’s directions as he guides us onwards in life, onwards towards the cross.

Every blessing,

**Revd Katrina**

**Vicar**

Phone No. 01604 812907

Mobile No. 07710 464675

E-mail: [katrinahutchins94@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:katrinahutchins94@yahoo.co.uk)

*As you prepare to ponder how God re-directs us,  
open your heart to his still small voice.*



Amazing grace! How sweet the sound  
that saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now I’m found;  
was blind, but now I see.

*John Newton (1725-1807)*

Some of the material is © The Archbishops’ Council 2000, 2005, 2006

**Prayers and Reflections**  
**for use at home**  
**Re-directing**

**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.*

Father, as I prepare to spend this time in your presence,

I place myself into your hands.

Whatever you may do, I thank you:

I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let your will be done in me,

and through me.

**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, reflect on the words of this second verse of our Lenten hymn.*

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,

and grace my fears relieved.

How precious did that grace appear

the hour I first believed.

*John Newton (1725-1807)*



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

*Feel our Lord's love and compassion and receive of his forgiveness.*

*God's love and grace (forgiveness) have the power to change us. We get a real sense of this in our second verse. God's Spirit – his still small voice – speaks to our heart and soul inviting us to see what God sees. He sees both the good in us and those parts of ourselves we try to hide from him. Fear is our first response when we realise that God sees our failings – the harsh words spoken in haste, the putting of ourselves before others, the inner thoughts where look down on others, the list is endless. Daily, we can and do fail in our love for God or in our showing kindness to those around us who deserve our compassion. God's grace gives us the opportunity to try, try, try again. He re-directs us.*

*Take a moment to contemplate God's grace. How does it feel to be forgiven by him? To know that he loves you so very much that he is always willing to help you become a better version of yourself. It is why his Son died on the cross for us. How has his grace changed your life?*



Through many dangers, toils and snares  
I have already come.  
'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far,  
and grace will lead me home.

*John Newton (1725-1807)*

## **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 God who always listens to our prayers.*

Almighty God,  
by the prayer and discipline of Lent  
may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings,  
and by following in his Way  
come to share in his glory;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Our prayer invites us to contemplate the mystery of our Lord's rejection and his death on the cross. Why did God's Son choose to face death rather than use his divine powers to transform the thoughts of the Jewish elders: the Scribes and Pharisees? He could have forced them to believe, believe that he is the Messiah. But what God desires is heartfelt worship, deep and true acceptance. So, his Spirit spoke to theirs and – mostly – they chose to reject him. Their hearts were closed to him. God only re-directs us when we choose of our own freewill to accept his call on our lives.*

*The forty days of Lent are an opportunity to open ourselves up to God's re-directing. Freely, we can listen and accept his desire for our lives. Lovingly, we can tread gently the way that he opens up before us.*

*Pause to wonder at the possibilities that God offers. Do you wish to say, 'Yes!' to him?*



The Lord has promised good to me,  
his word my hope secures;  
he will my shield and portion be  
as long as life endures.

*John Newton (1725-1807)*

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

### **Jesus re-directs Nicodemus**

Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.'

Jesus replied, 'Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.'

'How can someone be born when they are old?' Nicodemus asked.

'Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!'

Jesus answered, 'Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, "You must be born again." The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.'

'How can this be?' Nicodemus asked.

'You are Israel's teacher,' said Jesus, 'and do you not understand these things? Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven – the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.'

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 3:1-17*

### **Open to re-directing...**

*This fateful evening cannot have been the first time that Nicodemus – a man of deep faith – has seen Jesus. To run the risk of being seen entering our Lord's lodgings suggests that he has seen Jesus in action, listened to his teaching and wants to know more about this Rabbi. His opening words imply this. He has seen one or more of the signs that Jesus has done. Amazing – impossible – wondrous signs of God's power to transform lives. His heart is open to who Jesus might be – the Messiah. His mind is willing to accept – absorb – this earth-shattering possibility: 'It has begun – our liberation! Jesus is the one sent by God to set us free. Free to worship him free from fear of those who are controlling our lives – the Romans.'*

*Pause for moment to ponder this openness of Nicodemus to Jesus being the chosen one – the Messiah. Feel his wonder at what God is doing through Jesus. Try to enter into his open search for the truth.*

*He comes to Jesus willing to be re-directed by him. His rebirth has begun, through God's grace. But it's not going to be a quick and pain-free rebirth. Like a pupil who is struggling to grasp a difficult lesson, Jesus is going to open Nicodemus' eyes to the way that God's Spirit is at work within him. This is something that Nicodemus needs to feel – to sense. Just as Elijah did in the cave as God appeared to him as a still small voice – a whisper.*

*Nicodemus needs to let go of who he has been – a man with a head-shaped faith rooted in the Scriptures. One who daily lives by God's Laws, all 613 commandments. Instead, he needs to open his heart to God's stirring presence. Feel God's Spirit with him. Tune his own spirit into God's and be guided by him, so that his faith becomes a soul-shaped one. A faith that is so very alive that he can feel, touch and sense where God is, what he is doing. Did Nicodemus feel himself falling deeply in love with the God who loves him so very dearly?*

*Pause to sense what Jesus was inviting Nicodemus to sense – God's love, his Spirit's presence in your room. In your heart. Offer him your worship, your devotion and your love.*

*Allow him to be the one who sets your direction in the coming week. Keep on tuning yourself into him. Listen to his words of loving affirmation, listen to his words of life-enhancing re-direction. Be stirred by him, changed by him. This is the life in all its fullness that Jesus offers.*

*Pure joy! Deep peace! Real hope!*



Yes, when this flesh and heart shall fail,  
and mortal life shall cease:  
I shall possess, within the veil,  
a life of joy and peace.

*John Newton (1725-1807)*

## OUR PRAYERS

*Here are some Lenten prayers. Feel free to add your own.*

Lord Jesus, you welcomed Nicodemus with open arms. He came with a deep desire to see who you are. You opened his heart to God's Spirit's presence in his life. Lord, stir my heart as you stirred his...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you came to challenge the way that we live. You came to draw us into your kingdom. Your desire is that we put love before laws, and care for the vulnerable. Lord, re-direct those who harm others...

Lord, hear my prayer.

Lord Jesus, you saw the risks that Nicodemus would face on his path to a true faith in you as God's Chosen One – the Messiah. You gave him the gift of your Spirit to guide him. Lord, send your Spirit to strengthen...

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.**