

SUNDAY PRAYERS

24th May 2020



St Nicolas
NEWBURY

Being Good News. Bringing Good News.

(Please use these prayers in whatever way is helpful for you, whether you follow them through as a service or pick out the sections which best help you to engage with our living God.)

Loving God, we gather in Jesus' name:
bringing our hungry hearts and carrying our heavy loads.
We come to find rest and life.
We come to drink of the living water that is Jesus your Son.
He will sustain us and help us grow in faith and understanding.

PRAYER FOR THE DAY (by St Augustine of Hippo)

You, who fill heaven and earth,
Always busy, always quiet,
Who are present everywhere and everywhere are fully present,
You who are not absent when far away,
Who with your whole being fill,
Yet go beyond all things,
You who teach the hearts of the faithful without the din of words,
Teach us, we pray.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

PSALM 16

Keep me safe, my God,
for in you I take refuge.
I say to the LORD, 'You are my Lord;
apart from you I have no good thing.'
I say of the holy people who are in the land,
'They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight.'
Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more.
I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods
or take up their names on my lips.
LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup;
you make my lot secure.

The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places;
surely I have a delightful inheritance.
I will praise the LORD, who counsels me;
even at night my heart instructs me.
I keep my eyes always on the LORD.
With him at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.
Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices;
my body also will rest secure,
because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead,
nor will you let your faithful one see decay.
You make known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

CONFESSION

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you,
through our own fault,
in thought, and word, and deed,
and in what we have left undone.
We are heartily sorry,
and repent of all our sins.
For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

ACTS 20:17-38

From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. When they arrived, he said to them: 'You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus. 'And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that

prison and hardships are facing me. However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the good news of God’s grace.

‘Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

‘Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have not coveted anyone’s silver or gold or clothing. You yourselves know that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”’

When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

Joy Mawdesley’s sermon on this passage can be heard [here](#).

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION written by Siân, Jim and Sophie Lupton.

(There is an alternative prayer activity on page 6 of this booklet)

Lord we thank you that even in these unprecedented and difficult times we strive to remain connected and in fellowship with each other. We thank you for blessing us by the hard work of many behind the scenes, including our staff team and volunteers of all ages. Thank you for our community in Newbury and that you are the cornerstone we can trust and rely on. You sustain us with perseverance and wisdom through your Holy Spirit and your peace which surpasses our own understanding.

Father God we pray you will guide our government and those in authority as they make decisions to ease the lockdown and help protect the welfare of everyone. We pray especially for decisions regarding schools and the impact they have on headteachers, teachers, support staff and pupils. We pray that your peace will calm all their anxieties and that you will help them in practical ways to respond positively

to the uncertainty and constant change. We pray for all parents who have extra responsibilities educating their children at home; give them patience, confidence and enable them to maintain a good sense of humour. We pray that you bless the work of COINS (Christian Outreach in Newbury Schools) and our church community as we continue to support teachers and parents sharing the good news of Jesus with children and young people.

Lord we pray for all the key workers in our community that you will strengthen and give them good times of rest and relaxation. Thank you for their faithful commitment to ensure we have maintained excellent healthcare, domestic services, transport and food supplies. We pray for countries where less developed infrastructure is causing hunger and suffering, particularly thinking of our brothers and sisters in Lesotho and Uganda. We also pray for those displaced and refugees, whose suffering and uncertain future has increased with the spread of the pandemic. Give us compassionate hearts and direction on how we can serve you in reaching out to support them.

Father we pray for the vulnerable in our community, who struggle with access to services or are facing financial worries. Please help us to see them and direct how we can practically support those around us. We also ask for your loving and gentle comfort for everyone who is feeling lonely and missing the physical contact of friends and loved ones. We thank you for the technology that has enabled us to keep connected and the joy that it has brought. Help us to keep our eyes fixed on you, safe in the knowledge of your love and faithfulness.

In Jesus' name. Amen

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.

THE GRACE

May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

ALTERNATIVE PRAYER ACTIVITY

As we come to the end of this short sermon series on fellowship, reflect on the things you have heard over the last few weeks.

Draw a picture of a tree:



Think about our fellowship together as a church, and your own fellowship with any other communities you are a part of, and pray:

Roots – that fellowship will be rooted on God’s love

Trunk – that fellowship will grow tall and strong in faith

Branches – that all in fellowship will stay connected to God and to others

Twigs – that those on the fringes will be included in fellowship

Leaves – that fellowship will flourish and grow

Flowers – that fellowship will bring beauty where there is sadness and darkness

Fruit – the fellowship will produce fruit, as those who believe become more like Jesus and those who do not believe come to know him.