

St. Luke's Church Cannock

**2018 LENT PRAYER
DIARY**



*Keeping
a Holy Lent*

USING THE PRAYER DIARY

Each day there is a short scripture reading. Read the passage slowly and prayerfully more than once and see if anything within strikes a chord with you.

Reflect on this and then if you wish the other suggestions can be used as a source of reflection and prayer. Each Sunday contains the Collect for the day.

You are also invited to use the parish prayer below on a regular basis and to add any other prayers of your own.

Parish Prayer

Father you have called us to serve you, and you have invited us to share in the ministry of proclaiming the gospel.

Keep us faithful in worship and prayer and so bless us with the gift of your Spirit that we may reflect something of Your grace and your glory, made known to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

We pray for all involved in the process of appointing a new Vicar to serve amongst us. We pray that you will inspire the right person to come and be our Vicar. Someone to lead us, to teach us and to renew our vision, so that we and the three churches will be equipped to meet the challenges of these postmodern times.

This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Ash Wednesday 14th February - Matthew 6: 5-6

And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Reflect: Our Father 'in secret' always hears our prayers. He is the one from whom no secrets are hidden. How and when do we pray? How can we develop our life of prayer this Lent?

Pray: Lord of the desert, the Cross and the resurrection, be with us and with our friends overseas as we begin our Lenten walk. Help us to pray, and pray rightly, to our Father in Heaven.

Collect for Ash Wednesday

Almighty and everlasting God, you hate nothing you have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of you, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Thursday 15th February Colossians 1: 15-17

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things and in Him all things hold together.

Reflect: Spend some time reflecting upon the implications of these remarkable verses and the picture of the Christ that they present to us. **Pray:** May we share the vision of Paul as he sees in Jesus of Nazareth the Christ who was there at creation and is our destination in eternity.

Pray: May we share the vision of Paul as he sees in Jesus of Nazareth the Christ who was there at creation and is our destination in eternity.

Friday 16th February - Matthew 9: 14 - 15

Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?' And Jesus said to them, 'The wedding-guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.'

Reflect: To fast is one way to focus the mind on God. Do you ever fast? If it is safe and healthy to do so, why not fast one meal a week through the rest of Lent, join in a Lent Luncheon scheme with your local church or devote that time to prayer?

Pray: God our Father, focus our hearts and our minds on you as we follow your Son through this holy season.

Saturday 17th February - Isaiah 58: 10

If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday.

Reflect: Fasting and repentance can lead to changed attitudes and a different way of living. As we reflect on our own selfishness and greed, we are led by the Holy Spirit to actions which are worthy of our repentance - perhaps to feed the hungry or to help those who are suffering.

Pray: God our Father, help HHI to meet the needs of the hungry in Monze and in Trivandrum as they struggle to feed their families

LENT PRAYER DIARY 2018 - WEEK 1

Sunday 18th February - Luke 4: 12 - 13

Jesus answered the devil, 'It is said, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Reflect: What might the "opportune times" in our lives be. Are we vulnerable to wrongdoing or indifference to others when we get tired, frustrated or angry?

Pray: Lord, be with us when we face trial and temptation. Be our defence and our guard against the forces of evil, and fill our lives with your Spirit.

Almighty God, whose blessed Son was led by the Spirit to be tempted by Satan; Come quickly to help us who are assaulted by many temptations; and, as you know the weaknesses of each of us, let each one find you mighty to save; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Monday 19th February - Matthew 25: 40

Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.

Reflect: Every time I bring a helping hand or a kind word to someone in need, I do it to Jesus. What opportunities have I taken to help those in need over the last year? What opportunities to help those who have suffered over the last year have I missed or deliberately ignored?

Pray: Lord open my eyes and my heart to those around me who are in need today.

Tuesday 20th February - Matthew 6: 7 - 8

When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Reflect: Prayer is not a shopping list. It is about taking time to be with God and then having a conversation with a friend who already knows us.

Pray: Lord, teach us to pray to you as one friend talks to another. Help us to bring to you our whole lives.

Wednesday 21st February - Psalm 51: 1 - 3

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

Reflect: The way to forgiveness and peace with God is through penitence and trust in God's steadfast love and mercy in Christ Jesus.

Pray: Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

Thursday 22nd February - Matthew 7: 11 - 12

If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

Reflect: Jesus is describing the essential kindness of the Father.

Pray: Lord God, eternal Good, help us to believe in your kind generosity and to express that kindness in the way we live our lives.

Friday 23rd February - Psalm 130: 1 & 2

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.

Reflect: When I desperately need help, I can cry out to God for mercy. His goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. Name an area of your life where you need the help and mercy of God. Place this in God's hands, trusting in his unfailing love for you.

Pray: Lord, I am weak. Save me and help me, and all those in need this day, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Saturday 24th February - Matthew 5: 43 - 45

You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.

Reflect: Loving neighbours and hating enemies is almost instinctive. Jesus calls for a radical new way of living, where his people try to love everyone.

Pray: Father God, neighbour to all people, help us to try to love our enemies, and when that is very difficult, give us the strength to recognise that they are your people too.

LENT PRAYER DIARY 2018 - WEEK 2

Sunday 25th February - Philippians 3: 20 - 21a

But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory.

Reflect: Our citizenship tells us where we belong and where our loyalty and allegiance lies. To belong to Jesus is to become citizens of his kingdom. How can we become transformed into the likeness of Jesus?

Pray: Lord help me today to live as a citizen of your kingdom. Conform my ways to the pattern of your holiness.

O God, whose glory it is always to have mercy: Be gracious to all who have gone astray from your ways, and bring them again with penitent hearts and steadfast faith to embrace and hold fast the unchangeable truth of your Word, Jesus Christ your Son; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Monday 26th February - Luke 6: 36 - 38

Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.

Reflect: We are to be generous in our giving and our forgiving because we know that we depend upon the generosity and forgiving spirit of God.

Pray: God, give us your gift of generous giving, of our time, our gifts, and our resources; so that we may serve you by serving our brothers and sisters in Zambia and in India.

Tuesday 27th February - Matthew 23: 12

All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

Reflect: The ways and values of Jesus may not be understood or appreciated by those around us. They swim against the tide of society.

Pray: Lord, teach me your ways. Give me a true understanding of humility which will influence the way I lead my life.

Wednesday 28th February - Matthew 20: 25 - 28

Jesus called them to him and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

Reflect: Jesus time and time again calls us to be servants. A message which is very much in opposition to our present culture. What does it mean to be a servant?

Pray: Lord, help me to resist the desire to seek out status or to be "great" amongst the people with whom I live and work. Help me to identify opportunities for service and to recognise the worth of those who serve without status.

Thursday 1st March - Jeremiah 17: 9

The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse - who can understand it?

Reflect: Even when we do good we can do it for the wrong reason. The Holy Spirit searches our hearts and helps us to become daily more like Jesus and his fruit is love, joy and peace.

Pray: Lord I offer you my heart at the end of this day. Thank you for those times when, influenced by your spirit, I have thought and acted in love. Forgive me for those times when I have been prompted by pride.

Friday 2nd March - John 8: 10 - 12

Straightening up, Jesus said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?' She said 'No one Lord.' And Jesus said, 'I do not condemn you either. Go and sin no more.'

Then Jesus spoke again to them saying, 'I am the Light of the World. He who follows me will not live in darkness but have the light of life.'

Reflect: If anyone had the moral stature to look down upon the woman taken in adultery, Jesus had. But he chose not to condemn and instead implies that to live in the light means having a readiness to forgive.

Pray: Lord, in our frustrations with other peoples' shortcomings, and perhaps with our own, forgive us when we mock, condemn or belittle. May your longsuffering kindness characterise us and all the work we do in your name.

Saturday 3rd March - Luke 15: 18 - 19

I will get up and go to my Father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."

Reflect: The prodigal son came to himself and took the long road home. He made the choice to humble himself and admit that he had gone wrong.

Pray: Lord I am not worthy to gather up the crumbs under your table. But only say the word and I shall be made whole. Is there something that I need to do to put right what I have done wrong?

LENT PRAYER DIARY 2018 - WEEK 3

Sunday 4th March - Luke 13: 6 - 9

Then he told this parable: A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came looking for fruit on it and found none. So he said to the gardener, "See here! For three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and still I find none. Cut it down! Why should it be wasting the soil?" He replied, "Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down."

Reflect: God is patient and merciful. Trees are supposed to bear fruit, and so are we, but God gives us another chance - "one more year".

Pray: God, merciful judge, go on dealing with us patiently and help us to bear fruit for you throughout the year after we celebrate your Easter rising.

Almighty God, you know that we have no power in ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Monday 5th March - Psalm 43: 5

Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

Reflect: We can call out to God even when he seems far away, when we feel miserable and even, perhaps, when we feel he might not be there.

Pray: Lord, we thank you that your love never fails. Even when we feel lost, alone and faithless, still your love and mercy endure forever.

Tuesday 6th March - Matthew 18: 21 - 22

Then Peter came and said to him, 'Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy times seven times.'

Reflect: Seventy times seven means that we never reach the end of our need to forgive others. Forgiveness and reconciliation are at the heart of the Gospel of Jesus and should be at the heart of our lives.

Pray: Lord, forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Wednesday 7th March - John 9: 39 - 41

And Jesus said, 'For judgement I came into this world, so those that who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind.' Those of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things and said to Him 'We are not blind too are we?' Jesus said to them, 'If you were blind, you would have no sin, but since you say, "We see", your sin remains.'

Reflect: Jesus brought clarity of vision and continues to do so but then, and perhaps now, it was the religious people who thought that they saw clearly enough.

Pray: Lord help us to keep our eyes open for opportunities to serve you but also regularly to close them in prayer. When we get over confident in our own ways of seeing, remind us, by your Spirit that we need you to lighten our darkness.

Thursday 8th March - Psalm 95: 6 - 7

Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. O that today you would listen to his voice!

Reflect: Our God is the creator of all things, our maker, and he will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth.

Pray: Lord, thank you that we are your people, the sheep of your hand. Help me to kneel and listen to your voice today.

Friday 9th March - Mark 12: 28 - 31

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the first of all?' Jesus answered, 'The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.'

Reflect: When asked to summarise the commandments Jesus identifies loving God and loving neighbour as most important. For him it seems that in doing one we are also doing the other.

Pray: Lord God of our neighbours as well as ourselves, teach us to serve you above all things, and to do that through service to our neighbours.

Saturday 10th March - Psalm 51: 17

The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

Reflect: God desires truth in the inward being, not pretence. When, before God, we acknowledge with sorrow our own greed and selfishness, we find that he is full of mercy and quick to forgive. Lent is widely observed as a time of self-denial. Today you may want to turn off the radio or TV for a short while and instead to sit quietly before God, reflecting on today's reading.

Pray: Lord, teach me to be truthful in my inward being, that my heart and my life may be pleasing to you.

LENT PRAYER DIARY 2018 - WEEK 4

Sunday 11th March: Mothering Sunday - John 19: 25b - 27

Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

Reflect: Not so very long ago we were celebrating Christmas. Here we find Mary at the foot of Christ's cross. Parenthood like all relationships carries both the potential for great joy and great sorrow.

Pray: God our Father, we thank you for the depth and blessing of relationships: into our joys and into our sorrows pour your love and grace that we may love more fully and be blessed by your grace. Remember especially those mothers in Monze who struggle alone and in great poverty to feed and educate their children.

Gracious Father, whose blessed Son Jesus Christ came down from heaven to be the true bread which gives life to the world: Evermore give us this bread, that he may live in us, and we in him; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Monday 12th March - John 4: 50

Jesus said to him, "Go; your son will live." The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way.

Reflect: The Christian life is a life of faith. We believe in the word that Jesus speaks to us, and we aspire to live according to his word. Write down some words of Jesus which speak truth to your heart.

Pray: Lord, thank you that your words are the words of eternal life. Lead us into an ever deeper trust in your word and promises.

Tuesday 13th March - John 5: 9b - 13

Now that day was a Sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, 'It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.' But he answered them, 'The man who made me well said to me, "Take up your mat and walk".' 'They asked him, 'Who is the man who said to you, "Take it up and walk"?' Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd that was there.

Reflect: For some people faith can come to as clear as crystal but for many faith comes as brief glimpses here and there as "Jesus disappears in the crowd" again.

Pray: Lord of life, sometimes we can see you so clearly and at other times you disappear in the crowd. Keep us searching for you. Bless all who work at Monze Mission hospital who faithfully care for the sick and poor.

Wednesday 14th March - John 4: 23

The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him.

Reflect: It is not our outward show that matters before God, He looks at the heart, not outward appearance. Worship is about recognising what is worthy. What are the things in my life to which I ascribe most value? What are the things that take up your time, energy and thought. Where does God fit in to this?

Pray: Lord teach me to worship you first of all in spirit and in truth, and help me to love you with all my heart. Remember those in Monze and in Trivandrum who have to spend much of their life's energy in merely surviving. May they find you in their labour and suffering.

Thursday 15th March

Read John 5: 39 - 42

You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. Yet you refuse to come to me to have life. I do not accept glory from human beings. But I know that you do not have the love of God in you.

Reflect: Jesus reminds his listeners that eternal life comes from something more than adherence to the words of a book, even a book as extraordinary as the Hebrew Scriptures: it comes from a relationship with a person.

Pray: Word of Life, we thank you for the Scriptures in which we find the narrative of your love for us. Open our eyes and ears to find you in and beyond its pages.

Friday 16th March - John 7: 37 - 38

Jesus cried out, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, 'Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water'."

Reflect: Jesus calls out to all those who are thirsty and crying out for hope and meaning, for peace and abundant life. He says, "Come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink, and you will never be thirsty again."

Pray: Lord I long for more of your living water, for more of the presence of your Holy Spirit in my life. Come, Holy Spirit, live in me today.

Saturday 17th March - John 7: 50 - 52

Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus before, and who was one of them, asked, 'Our law does not judge people without first giving them a hearing to find out what they are doing, does it?' They replied, 'Surely you are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and you will see that no prophet is to arise from Galilee.'

Reflect: Nicodemus appeals to his colleagues to treat Christ in the way we now consider natural and instinctive for all people: to not be tried without the due process of law.

Pray: Lord our Judge, we thank you for the expectation that people are innocent until proven guilty: Bless and support those who are waiting for justice - especially those detained in Monze.

LENT PRAYER DIARY 2018 - WEEK 5

Sunday 18th March : Passion Sunday - Philippians 3: 8

I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him.

Reflect: Paul knew all about letting go of things that had been very important in his life in order to gain Christ and be found in him. What gives us our security in life? On what do we place the most value?

Pray: Lord, give me grace to let go of all that hinders me from knowing Jesus Christ as Lord of my life.

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Monday 19th March - John 8: 7 - 11

When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.'

Reflect: Christ reminds us that criticising others for their sin only highlights our own. This should give us pause for thought. Saying and thinking 'There but for the grace of God go I' is not very fashionable in our culture which is very quick to apportion blame.

Pray: God of mercy, swift to forgive, forgive me when I focus on other people's faults and disguise my own.

Tuesday 20th March - John 8: 23 - 24

Jesus said to them, "You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins, for you will die in your sins unless you believe that I am he.

Reflect: We believe that Jesus is the Son of God, God in human form. In his life we see perfect love and perfect truth; in him we see what God is like. God is love, and he has come to us, born as one of us.

Pray: Lord I believe that you are the Son of God. Help me to understand what this means. Help me in my unbelief.

Wednesday 21st March - John 8: 31 - 32

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, 'If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'

Reflect: As paradoxical as it seems, true freedom is found in committing ourselves to the service of one man, Jesus Christ. He is the truth that sets us free.

Pray: Jesus Christ, our Master and our Lord: help us to walk the way of discipleship, to know the truth, and to be ready for that truth to set us free.

Thursday 22nd March - John 8: 54

Jesus answered, "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father who glorifies me, he of whom you say, 'He is our God,' though you do not know him."

Reflect: Jesus does not glorify himself. He empties himself, taking the form of a servant. He is gentle and humble in heart.

Pray: Lord help me to let go of my desire for significance and glory. Teach me your way of holy love and humility.

Friday 23rd March

Read John 10: 31 - 33

The Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus replied, 'I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these are you going to stone me?' The Jews answered, 'It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you, but for blasphemy, because you, though only a human being, are making yourself God.'

Reflect: To recognise the divine in a complex world can be profoundly difficult. The justification for attempting to stone Christ is that he is claiming for himself divinity: this is the truth though it is difficult to see.

Pray: Lord Jesus Christ, man and God, help us to be perceptive to the signs of divinity in our world.

Saturday 24th March - Matthew 1: 22

All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, "God is with us."

Reflect: Emmanuel means 'God is with us.' Jesus our Emmanuel, who was born of Mary in the stable at Bethlehem, was put to death by crucifixion. Today we reflect that God loved the world so much that he gave us his Son. When we act in love, we continue God's work of love in his beloved world. Today, may we do some particular act of love and kindness in thanksgiving for God's great love for us all.

Pray: Lord, you came to us to show us your great love and unending goodness towards us. Yet we despised and put to death the One who is our Lord and Saviour. Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

LENT PRAYER DIARY 2018 - WEEK 6

Sunday 25th March: Palm Sunday - Luke 19: 37 - 40

As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying, 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!' Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, 'Teacher, order your disciples to stop.' He answered, 'I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.'

Reflect: Jesus is clear that the cry for redemption is not just from humanity but from the entire created order, so that even the stones on the ground yearn for the coming of the kingdom.

Pray: Draw us into the cry of all creation as we long for your kingdom to dawn.

Almighty and everliving God, in your tender love for the human race you sent your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ to take upon him our nature, and to suffer death upon the cross, giving us the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant that we may walk in the way of his suffering, and also share in his resurrection; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Monday 26th March - John 12: 3

Mary took a pound of costly perfume, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

Reflect: Mary showed her love for Jesus by pouring out a pure and costly gift to anoint him, through whom all things were made, as her Lord and Saviour.

Pray: Lord, help me to honour you with my gifts and my care of all that you have given to me. Help me to be generous in response to your great generosity.

Tuesday 27th March - John 12: 30 - 35a

And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.' He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die. The crowd answered him, 'We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains for ever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?' Jesus said to them, 'The light is with you for a little longer. Walk while you have the light, so that the darkness may not overtake you. If you walk in the darkness, you do not know where you are going.'

Reflect: In the days before artificial light, walking in the dark was profoundly difficult. There was real risk involved, and Jesus's analogy of walking with the light would have been all the more profound.

Pray: Lord Jesus, the light of the World, as we move through this most Holy Week, shed your light upon us that in the gathering darkness we may know your eternal and everlasting light.

Wednesday 28th March - Hebrews 12: 1 - 2

Let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame.

Reflect: Jesus is the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. He shows us that we will face suffering and will need to persevere through trials and testing, trusting in his victory.

Pray: Lord, all of us face tasks and challenges in life which we would rather avoid. Strengthen me to run with perseverance the race that is set before me today, looking unto Jesus.

Thursday 29th March: Maundy Thursday - John 13: 34 - 35

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

Reflect: It's not by clever words, or articulate theology, or purity of life that Jesus expects his people to be recognised, but by the simple but far more difficult witness of loving those around us.

Pray: Jesus our Servant King, who on this day knelt at the feet of your friends to cleanse them; help us not to be too proud or too self-conscious to serve the people around us.

Friday 14 April: Good Friday - John 19: 30

When Jesus had received the wine, he said, "It is finished." Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Reflect: When Jesus said, "It is finished", he knew that his work on earth had been completed. He had done all that the Father had asked of him and had laid down his life for us all. Spend time today in silent prayer before the cross of Christ.

Pray: Lord Jesus Christ, your body was broken for me, and your blood was shed for the forgiveness of my sins. I thank you with all my heart that you laid down your life for me.

Saturday 15 April - Matthew 27: 62 - 66

The next day the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate and said, 'Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, "After three days I will rise again." Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, "He has been raised from the dead", and the last deception would be worse than the first.' Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can.' So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

Reflect: Our fear can often entomb us, even if we think that we are locking away the things we fear. Praise God that Jesus could not be locked safely away, and that fear couldn't keep the stone in place.

Pray: Lord Jesus, who on this day rested in the tomb, be with all those who feel that there is nothing left in life for them.