

**SAFFRON WALDEN AND VILLAGES TEAM MINISTRY
PRAYERS FOR PASSION SUNDAY (5TH IN LENT), 29 MARCH 2020**

Today we enter Passiontide: commemorating the intense period leading to Jesus's own suffering on the cross. As we too feel so much anxiety and uncertainty, let us hold firm, knowing that Christ trod this path before us. You might like to light a candle at home while you use this leaflet, symbolising Jesus as the Light of the World: and to say the prayers and readings out loud.

Introduction

We gather together, united in purpose though separate in place, in the name of God, our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

*We say together (or why not **sing!**) an opening hymn:*

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise:
In all His words most wonderful;
Most sure in all His ways.

O loving wisdom of our God,
When all was sin and shame,
The second Adam to the fight
And to the rescue came.

O generous love! that He, who smote
In man for man the foe,
The double agony in man
For man should undergo.

And in the garden secretly,
And on the cross on high,
Should teach His brethren, and inspire
To suffer and to die.

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise:
In all His words most wonderful;
Most sure in all His ways.

The Lord is here: **His Spirit is with us.**

We have come together as the family of God in this community. And especially we thank you, Heavenly Father, for your family, the Church; and for your love in sending us your Son Jesus to live and die and rise again to bring us close to you. Help us to pray to you in faith, to sing your praise with gratitude, and to listen to your word with eagerness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

God shows his love to us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Let us then show our love for him by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

Lord our God, in our sin we have avoided your call. Our love for you is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early. Have mercy upon us; deliver us from judgement; bind up our wounds and revive us; in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hearing God's forgiveness

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Readings *We now follow the readings on the [Grapevine](#):*

Collect (the special prayer for today)

First Reading: Romans Chapter 8, verses 6-11

Gospel reading: St John's Gospel, Chapter 11, verses 1-45

Reflection *You may wish to read the Reflection on the Grapevine.*

In a moment of quiet, think what message this may have for you, and ask God to help you live it out in your life this week.

We declare our faith together

**We believe and trust in God the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.
We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us with power from on high.
This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Father of all, we come to you longing for peace and health throughout your world. Help us to trust that throughout our anxiety and difficulties, your loving purposes will prevail, and to hold to your loving promise of a new creation where pain will cease and tears be wiped from every eye.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, you suffered and gave your life that we might live. You taught us to love our neighbour, and to care for those in need as if we cared for you. Give us strength to comfort the fearful, to bring help to the sick, and to reassure the isolated. May we and your whole Church throughout the world stand as a beacon of your love.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

God of compassion, be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation, especially*do name those on your own heart*. In their loneliness, be their consolation; in their anxiety, be their hope; in their darkness, be their light.

Lord in your mercy

Hear our prayer

Gracious God, give skill, sympathy and resilience to all caring for the sick, and wisdom to all seeking a cure. Strengthen them with your Spirit, that through their work many will be restored to health. Give wisdom to our government; energy to all key workers and volunteers; and keep us mindful of each other.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sharing Christ's Peace

Once we were far off, but now in union with Christ Jesus we have been brought near through the shedding of Christ's blood: for he is our peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

As you say this, hold in your mind all who are joining in these prayers today.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray together as Jesus has taught us

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.

We ask God's grace for the week ahead

Heavenly Father, may your strength sustain us in joy and in sorrow. May your peace enfold us in our waking and in our sleeping, and may your presence be with us now and always: in the name of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen.

We say (or sing!) a final hymn:

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with thee;
Thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not
As thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed thy hand hath provided—
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To thy great faithfulness, mercy and love. *Great is*

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! *Great is....*

May the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, be with us all now and evermore: and may we go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

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