

Some topics for prayer

Everyone who is hearing God call them to Baptism, that they may turn to him.

Everyone has been Baptized, that they may know the Holy Spirit in their hearts and lives.

The political institutions of our own country and the world.

How people engage with politics, wherever they live in the world.

The distribution of the covid-19 vaccine across the world.

People who are worried or frightened because of covid-19 or the vaccine.

People who have to make decisions about how to manage the pandemic.

The street you live in and individuals in it.

Members of your family. Friends. Not-so-friends.

Our town, our nation and our world.

Our NHS. Our schools and care homes.

People who work in our public services.

Our economy.

People living anywhere in the world where there is famine, war, poverty, pandemic, hopelessness ...

Two prayers ('collects') set for today

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.

Eternal Father,
who at the baptism of Jesus
revealed him to be your Son,
anointing him with the Holy Spirit:
grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit,
that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Please take this leaflet home with you.

May God bless you and everyone you love and pray for.

Welcome to private prayer

for

10th January 2021

The Baptism of Christ



This sheet offers you one of the readings set for today, together with a structured way of reading it prayerfully. It also offers you prayers set for today, some other prayers, and ideas for topics for prayer.

But first and foremost, let us 'Be still and know that I am God'
(Psalm 46:10)

The Lord's prayer

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.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

The Grace

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

***You can hear our weekly audio service -
around 20 minutes - on our website***

<https://standrewswatford.org.uk/>

A reading set for today

Here is a suggestion for a structured way of reading prayerfully. It is based on an ancient practice called Lectio Divina.

First, breathe slowly and deeply.

Ask God to speak to you through the passage that you are about to read.

1st reading of the passage: listen.

Read through the passage once, silently, but 'saying each word out loud in your mind', and listening.

Allow a word or phrase to attract your attention. Let it arise naturally from the passage as if it were God's word for you today, however unexpected.

Say it to yourself a few times, or underline it with a pen.

2nd reading of the passage: ponder.

Read the passage a second time. As you read and listen, ask how and why this word or phrase is speaking to you.

Summarise what it means for you.

3rd reading of the passage: pray.

Read the passage a third time, prayerfully asking Christ what he is saying to you in this word or phrase, and listen.

What is it that you need to do - or consider - or relinquish - or take on - as a result of what God is saying to you?

Talk to God about it in prayer.

Here is space to jot things down, to take away and to return to later:

The Baptism of Jesus

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Mark 1:4-11 (NRSV translation)

I wonder ...

... what Baptism meant for Jesus?

... why Jesus felt he needed to be Baptized?

... what Baptism means for us?

... what is the most important part of this story?

... why God's Spirit appeared like a dove?

... what it feels like to hear God's voice?

... how would you describe the Holy Spirit?

... how Jesus' Baptism relates to our own, in which the president addresses the candidates directly, or through their parents, godparents and sponsors:

We all wander far from God and lose our way: Christ comes to find us and welcomes us home. In baptism we respond to his call.

Therefore I ask:

Do you turn away from sin? (I do.)

Do you reject evil? (I do.)

Do you turn to Christ as Saviour? (I do.)

Do you trust in him as Lord? (I do.)

... and why?