

Some topics for prayer

That we may examine the spiritual fruits of our own lives..
People who are worried about the covid-19 virus and its new variants.
The fair and just distribution of the covid-19 vaccine across the world.
People who are victim in any way to the pandemic.
People across the world 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.
Caring for our planet and sharing its resources fairly and sustainably.
People living anywhere in the world where there is famine, war, poverty, pandemic, depression, hopelessness ...

Some prayers ('collects') set for today

God for whom we watch and wait,
you sent John the Baptist to prepare the way of your Son:
give us courage to speak the truth,
to hunger for justice,
and to suffer for the cause of right,
with Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Lord Jesus Christ,
who at your first coming sent your messenger
to prepare your way before you:
grant that the ministers and stewards of your mysteries
may likewise so prepare and make ready your way
by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,
that at your second coming to judge the world
we may be found an acceptable people in your sight;
for you are alive and reign with the Father
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

**12th December
2021
3rd Sunday of
Advent**



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 or watch our weekly
services - around 20 minutes - on our
website***

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:

John the Baptist's ministry and mission

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance.

"Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.

"Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?"

In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise."

Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?"

He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?"

He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.

"His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Luke 3:7-18 (NRSV translation)

I wonder ...

... what it felt like, to be baptized by John the Baptist?

... why he had such a great effect on so many people?

... if you asked him, 'What then should I do?', what would he say?

... what does he mean by 'He (Jesus) will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'?

... and why?