

Prayer for Dereham & District

Monday May 4th 2020

Here is a suggested outline for the hour between 7.30 and 8.30 pm, but praying in our own homes, we can choose a different time if necessary.

Read: Psalm 23 (the appointed Psalm in the Church of England Lectionary for yesterday, Sunday 3rd May.)

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord
my whole life long.

- **Focus** on the language of restoring – protecting – comforting
- **Praise God** for His love and His gift to us of His son Jesus – our Shepherd and Saviour.

Praying for our church congregations and leaders: -

- Remembering especially our Vicars, James and Gill. Also for our Rector-to-be Paul Cubitt.
- Asking particularly for the Father's upholding and strengthening of our leaders, as they take responsibility for an increasing number of funerals. Each service affords considerable distress, at an unprecedented level – for the bereaved families and for those supporting them and leading the services. With constraints on the maximum number who can attend, on the location of the ceremony and on distancing between individuals, the means of comfort and support that the bereaved depend on at such times has been taken away. Though this is understandable, for the protection of the living, it is a very hard situation to bear for those going through such a time.
- Praying for all in our regular congregations and for others who don't usually attend services, but who recognise their need of God – that the faith of each will be strengthened – not shaken.
- Thanking the Lord for new opportunities to worship Him and to find out more about Him, through an increased reliance on radio, television, audio and video media and the internet – opening up these possibilities to many who do not normally attend Church services.

Sing or say:

Be strong and courageous

The Lord of the ages

Holds all His little ones

Safe by His side

Be strong and courageous

The Lord of the ages

Holds all His little ones safe

Do not fear the darkness

(Do not fear the darkness)

Do not fear the sadness

(Do not fear the sadness)

Do not fear the sickness

(Do not fear the sickness)

Jesus has conquered them all

Do not fear the enemy

(Do not fear the enemy)

Do not fear the poverty

(Do not fear the poverty)

Do not fear eternity

(Do not fear eternity)

Jesus has conquered them all

Praying for our wider community (Dereham and the surrounding villages)

- Remembering those struggling financially. Lifting up to God the service of the Mid-Norfolk Food Bank and its requirements of food supplies, for it to continue to provide for the needs of many people at this time.
- Praying for local charities, charity shops, and for small businesses. Especially remembering those who have had to close and to furlough staff. Praying that they will be able to restore their services to the community and reopen businesses, once the present crisis is behind us.
- Thanking the Lord for all those on the front line providing the services on which our community relies: NHS and Care Staff, including cleaners; shop assistants, delivery van drivers, refuse collectors, school staff... (and others who come to our minds.) Praying for all their needs – PPE, protection from infection, exhaustion, anxiety, childcare and schooling.
- For families in lockdown, those in situations of domestic abuse, for family pressures, home schooling, carers of people with dementia, and those with learning disabilities, or mental health problems.
- Praying for elderly people living alone, for those shielded and in complete social isolation, for people in care homes, for patients in hospitals. For individuals sick with Covid19. Remembering also those who are on waiting lists for cancer treatment, hip and knee surgery, cataracts...
- Lifting to the Lord anyone else we know of in need of prayer.
- Praying for those who do not yet know the Lord – for them to be open to hearing His knock at the door, and receiving Him in, at this time when other means of support can no longer be taken for granted.

To read and to do...

Ephesians 6: 10 - 18

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled round your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

Amen.