



National Day of  
**Reflection**  
23 March

**On Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March- the anniversary of the start of the first Coronavirus Lockdown- there is to be a National Day of Reflection. In the pages that follow a selection of readings and prayers have been provided for you to use on this day.**

**At 12noon there will be a 1minute silence to unite the nation in a moment of reflection.**

**A bell will toll at the church 12 times to signal the start of this silence and then after to signal its end.**

**If you would like loved ones who have died during this time, whether with Covid or not, remembered in church on this day then please share their names with Mthr Lucy  
(01243 941 551)**

## A time of prayer

*We are invited to put a lit candle (safely) in a window of our home, at 8pm. These prayers can be used at that time, or at any other time that feels appropriate.*

*We place our candle(s) in front of us, and as we light them, we say:*

**God of Love,**

**As we think about all that has changed this year,  
help us to trust that you are always with us.**

**As we remember those who have died,  
help us to trust they are at peace with you.**

**As we reach out to others with kindness and care,  
may hope shine out in every heart and home. Amen**

## Readings

*One or more of the following Scripture passages is read.*

Thus says the LORD of hosts:

Consider, and call for the mourning women to come;  
send for the skilled women to come; let them quickly raise a dirge over us,  
so that our eyes may run down with tears,  
and our eyelids flow with water.

For a sound of wailing is heard from Zion:

“How we are ruined!

We are utterly shamed, because we have left the land,  
because they have cast down our dwellings.” Hear, O women, the word of the  
LORD,

and let your ears receive the word of his mouth;

teach to your daughters a dirge,

and each to her neighbour a lament.

“Death has come up into our windows, it has entered our palaces,  
to cut off the children from the streets and the young men from the squares.”

Speak! Thus says the LORD: “Human corpses shall fall

like dung upon the open field,

like sheaves behind the reaper, and no one shall gather them.”

Thus says the LORD: Do not let the wise boast in their wisdom, do not let the  
mighty boast in their might, do not let the wealthy boast in their wealth; but let  
those who boast boast in this, that they understand and know me, that I am  
the LORD; I act with steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth, for  
in these things I delight, says the LORD.

*Jeremiah 9:17-24*

The Lord is my shepherd;  
therefore can I lack nothing.  
He makes me lie down in green pastures  
and leads me beside still waters.  
He shall refresh my soul  
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.  
Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil;  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.  
You spread a table before me  
in the presence of those who trouble me; you have anointed my head with oil  
and my cup shall be full.  
Surely goodness and loving mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

*Psalm 23*

Jesus says, 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

*Matthew 11.28-30*

I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*Romans 8.38-39*

# Prayers of Intercession

## REFLECT

Loving God,  
You hold all our times in your hands,  
our past, our present, our future.  
Be close to us now as we remember  
all the difficulties and disappointments of the past year.  
Be especially close to all of us  
who are thinking of someone we loved and knew, but see no longer,  
whether family, friend, colleague or neighbour. Help us to trust that they are at  
peace with you, and comfort us with your presence. Amen.

## A prayer for all who mourn

Gracious God,  
as we remember before you the thousands who have died, surround us and  
all who mourn with your strong compassion. Be gentle with us in our grief,  
protect us from despair,  
and give us grace to persevere and face the future with hope in Jesus Christ  
our risen Lord. Amen.

## A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus

Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy  
in this time of uncertainty and distress. Sustain and support the anxious and  
fearful, and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us  
from your love in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **CONNECT**

Loving God,  
You place us in families and communities,  
and we give you thanks for all those around us  
who serve us and help us in so many ways.  
Give wisdom to community leaders,  
to our schools, hospitals, care homes and other agencies who make a  
difference to our lives.  
Help each of us to have the courage  
to reach out with thanks and kindness to those around us and to speak words  
of faith  
as we share the good news of your love. Amen.

## **HOPE**

Loving God,  
As we journey towards Easter, help us to live as people of hope, knowing that  
beyond the pain of the cross  
lies the joy of resurrection.  
Inspire us in our worship,  
through our churches and in our homes,  
that we may bring glory to you and joy to others.  
Be with those who are struggling in mind, body or spirit, and give courage to  
those who are facing uncertainty and change ahead.  
Help each of us to keep our eyes fixed on you,  
that we may reflect your light to all whom we meet. Amen.

*We join together in praying this version of the Lord's Prayer:*

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.

## Sharing the light

*We now place our lit candle(s) in a window (safely), so that those who pass by can see it. We finish with this prayer:*

Lord Jesus Christ,  
when fear and anxiety besiege us  
and hope is veiled in grief,  
hold us in your wounded hands  
and make your face shine on us again, for you are our Lord and God.  
Amen.