**Morning Praise @ Home 16th March 2025**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Reading Luke 13:31 – end

### Reflection from Ruth

### In our reading today we see the Pharisees warning Jesus that Herod wanted to kill him. Why would they do that? Not only did they not like him; they had been discussing among themselves what they wanted to do to and with him for quite a while. Jesus showed no reverence for the law. From the perspective of a group whose primary mission was to keep the law as fully as possible, Jesus’ behaviour was inexcusable. When Jesus healed a paralytic by forgiving his sins, the Pharisees were incensed. Only God could forgive sin. When Jesus on a Sabbath day healed a man who had a withered hand, the Pharisees were furious. It was after Jesus publicly chastised the Pharisees for being more concerned with the rule of law than with justice and godly love that they began to be openly hostile toward him. Along with the scribes, they began to lie in wait to catch him saying or doing something wrong.

### Given this troubled history of Jesus and the Pharisees, something disingenuous had to be afoot. One scholar suggests that the warning from the Pharisees was actually a political strategy of Herod. Jesus had won the hearts of the people by meeting their physical and spiritual needs. If harm came to Jesus in any way, there could be political strife. Herod therefore used the Pharisees to try to get Jesus to leave the region in peace, rather than forcing him to flee.

### Perhaps Jesus suspected that there was an ulterior motive at work. That may be why, after the Pharisees delivered their message about Herod’s ill intentions, Jesus sent a message back to Herod through the Pharisees calling Herod a fox (a sly and crafty man). By calling Herod a fox, Jesus was not only signalling his distrust of Herod; he may also have been revealing his knowledge that there was some kind of working alliance between the Pharisees and Herod. Jesus’ exchange with the Pharisees revealed that Jesus not only understood human nature; he also understood human politics.

### And like Jesus, we must increasingly be wary of being manipulated by people for political gain. When we read things in the newspapers and online - even in publications that we think are reputable - we must ask ourselves what the motivation is of the person speaking.

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### When Jesus wept over Jerusalem, it was because the people would make the choice to crucify him - and ultimately ensure their own destruction.

### The world has watched in horror as events have unfolded in the USA, particularly with regard to plans for Gaza and Ukraine, and the cancelling of foreign aid. This situation has arisen because people allowed themselves to be manipulated into voting for a regime that has very little care for vulnerable people.

### The question we must always ask ourselves is ‘Who are we serving?’ We are law abiding citizens of the UK, but the ultimate authority is God’s. Amen

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**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession led by Philip**

Father we come to you now, in prayer, mindful of the week past and also of the week ahead.

Let us reflect on the things of this last week that we can look back on positively: Perhaps conversations with friends and neighbours; the pleasure of seeing signs of Spring in our beautiful countryside and gardens; for time in our homes and with family.

Lord, we bring these and other things before you and thank you for all our blessings.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Let us also reflect on the things that we found difficult in this past week: The news, with ongoing conflicts around the world; Global politics, nationalism and self-interest; for illness, for grief, for any

disappointments. As we reflect on these and any other difficulties, we bring them before you Lord. Hear our lament, oh Lord. Hear us as we call out to you in frustration for letting the world be this way!

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Help us to respond positively and to be strengthened by our suffering. We know your Kingdom is only partly fulfilled here at this time. Help us to live Kingdom lives, Lord, to follow your way and not the ways of this world. Heal the suffering of others, Lord – the sufferings of those we know and also of those we only hear about on the news.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

We ask for your help, Lord, for the coming week. Help us to live as you would have us live, to be caring and compassionate to others. Strengthen us for any difficulties we may face, help us to respond with faith and courage. Help us to appreciate our blessings and to live Kingdom lives.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Lord we pray for our community. Help those who are feeling lonely or suffering grief. Help those who are sick or caring for the sick.

We pray for your church Lord. We pray for the church nationally, as it comes to terms with the recent issues around safeguarding. Help all those who have not received the care they should have expected from the church in their time of need. Help the church to address the matters it needs to address thoughtfully, compassionately, and with action.

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of God.

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

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***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 today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**