**Morning Praise @ Home 8th September 2024**

**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 Romans 8: 26 – 28

### Reflection from Ruth

According to a poll by Tearfund, over half of adults (51%) in the UK pray. Even among those that say they are not religious, one in five say that they pray - suggesting that prayer is still important to many people.
Why do people pray? Albert Einstein said that ‘there’s really only two ways to live, as if nothing is a miracle or as if everything is a miracle’.  Either life is a fluke and we’re just a bunch of highly evolved animals on a big rock lost in space or there is a creator behind creation, God behind goodness and if so, then connecting with him in prayer is pretty much the most mind blowing thing you can do.

Archaeologists keep digging stuff up that shows we’ve always prayed. People of many faiths pray daily - even atheists admit to praying sometimes.

Real prayer is a two-way conversation with the living God who loves and listens to the things we say. Jesus said ‘ask anything in my name and it will be done’. We have a chance to ask for peace, healing, help, or whatever we need. Life matters, you matter, your choices, thoughts, prayers and actions echo in eternity.

In the gospel of Luke, the disciples say, ‘Lord, teach us to pray’. They didn’t say ‘teach us to preach, or teach us to plant churches, or teach us to share our faith’ they said ‘teach us to pray’, because they could see that this was the key to everything about Jesus’ ministry - so that’s what they asked for.
And if we’re not comfortable with praying certain types of prayers, that’s what we need to say ‘Lord, teach me to pray.’
Pete Greig from the 24/7 prayer movement said the best bit of advice he ever got about prayer was ‘keep it simple, keep it real and keep it up’. Our prayer life is at its best when it’s at its simplest.
Jesus tells a parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector who go to the temple to pray, the Pharisee is holy and elevated and he knows how to pray. His prayer is ‘thank you that I’m not like other men.’ And then you have the tax collector, despised, hiding in the corner, humbly saying ‘I’m a sinner’. And Jesus says, ‘Which of them went home, heard by the father?’ It was the tax collector, because he was humble, and he was honest before God.

So that’s how we need to pray, be honest and truthful before God, and our prayers can be simple.
And what if we don’t know what to pray for? In our reading this morning, we hear how the Holy Spirit helps us, the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with God, He searches our hearts, and he knows our mind, so everything we need to pray for, God knows already.

Pete Greig tells a story about his son, Danny.
When he was little, and had gotten to the stage where he wanted to be able to write, but couldn’t, he would scribble away on bits of paper, and his parents would say ‘that’s brilliant, well done’.  One day he said ‘Dad, read it’, and Pete says that he looked at it thinking, obviously it’s nonsense, it doesn’t make any sense, but what he found was, he could look at Danny’s face and as his Dad, could read his face. He knew the kind of day Danny had had, the weird little things that went on in his head, the way he was feeling. And so he guessed at what the scribbles meant and as he read his scribbles, Danny was nodding saying ‘Good job Dad, good reading, well done’.
And Pete thinks that praying is something like that. Our Father loves us, He knows all about us, so He can tell what our scribbles on bits of paper are.

So when we don’t know what to pray or we don’t think our prayers are good enough, let’s be like the tax collector - we don’t need special prayers because we are talking to someone who loves us, will always love us, and knows what we need already. **Amen**

**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 Ruth**

Heavenly Father, we pray today for countries where there is war, random violence or only fragile peace.  We think of the troubled parts of the world, where there is so much suffering, where darkness prevails and where the light of the Lord seems so remote.   We pray for people whose humanity is denied by others – for those suffering from malnutrition, illness and disease – for those living in fear of soldiers, or tanks or rockets.   We pray for those working in places of power and influence who make decisions which may affect many people. We pray for the peace of the world – for statesmen and rulers that they may have wisdom to know – and the courage to do – what is right.  We pray particularly for the families of the victims of the latest school shooting, and all those children who are deeply traumatised.

Lord we pray for our local, national and world leaders. We pray they may lead us with wisdom and compassion.  We bring before you areas of conflict in the world and ask that those tasked with negotiations consider the way forward with compassion for all viewpoints. As we hear about the death of women and children on yet another unsafe boat, we pray against the evils of people trafficking, we pray for those people who are so desperate that they risk their children’s lives trying to get to the UK, and we pray for effective and compassionate solutions to the situation.

Everlasting God, hear us as we pray in faith and focus on the needs of others as well as ourselves.  We pray for the whole family of your church here in Burton and Shotwick. May all your people be built up in faith and demonstrate in their lives the gospel of Jesus Christ. Give courage to those who find it hard to follow you, and help us to pray for them even when it is difficult to do so.

Creator God, we worship You as the one who has given us this life and ask that You will help us to live it to the full. At home may we be the friends and neighbours that we really want to be.  Help us to spread the warmth of Your love to everyone we meet. We pray particularly for teachers and students as they return to school, may you bless them in their work and their study.

We pray for those who are grieving and all who mourn, we pray for all those who are afflicted by physical, emotional or mental illness. Help them to keep their eyes fixed on you and give them the courage to face the trials that may come. In a moment of silence, we pray aloud or in our hearts for those on our mind at this time.

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