

SOLE⁺BAY CHURCHES

BLYTHBURGH • REYDON • SOUTH COVE
SOTHERTON • SOUTHWOLD • UGGESHALL
WALBERSWICK • WANGFORD CUM HENHAM

Morning Prayer at Home

You may wish to light a candle and have some reflective music playing in the background.

The Lord is good, a strong refuge when trouble comes. God is close to those who trust in him.
Nahum 1.7

Opening Sentences

O Lord, open our lips and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

Pause for reflection as you offer the day to God.

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you; now and for ever. Amen.

Bible Reading

Psalm 23

- 1 The Lord is my shepherd; ♦
therefore can I lack nothing.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures ♦
and leads me beside still waters.
- 3 He shall refresh my soul ♦
and guide me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
- 4 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.
- 5 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.
- 6 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.

**Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.**

You may wish to use the weekly pattern of Bible readings given below, or choose a passage of your own.

Sunday Morning Old Testament Reading

Exodus 2:1-10 NRSV

Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him.

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. "This must be one of the Hebrews' children," she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?" Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Yes." So the girl went and called the child's mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, "because," she said, "I drew him out of the water."

Sunday Morning New Testament Reading

John 19:25-27 NRSV

And that is what the soldiers did.

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, "Woman, here is your son." Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

Sermon

Today, will be like no other Mothering Sunday anyone has ever experienced before. We are faced with a virus that is affecting the way of life for nearly every man, woman and child on our planet and as a result there are currently no public acts of worship in our churches which adds to the total bewilderment of the situation.

However, the Christian Church, the Body of Christ, is still here and will be learning new but also re-engaging in old ways of being church to continue to sustain all people during this very difficult and uncertain time.

Today, is the traditional day in our calendar when we give thanks to God for our mothers but also remember that God himself wants us to have a personal relationship with him as a parent to a child. The readings set for today remind us of the risks and responsibilities that go along with parenting. In Exodus, it is the quick thinking of Miriam, Moses' sister who suggests to Pharaoh's daughter that her mother could be the midwife for Moses and help both to suckle him and also raise him on behalf

of Pharaoh's daughter. This is against the backdrop of Pharaoh's decision to kill all new born Hebrew boys because he believes the population of the Hebrews has become too great.

It is Moses who grows up to challenge Pharaoh to let His people go and due to Pharaoh's obstinacy brings calamity on the Egyptian people. It is not an exaggeration to argue that without Moses' sister and mother the history of the Hebrews could have been so different. Moses is the Saviour of the Hebrew people so without Miriam his sister, and Jochebed his mother the Exodus - the moment when the Hebrews were set free from slavery may have never happened.

And in the short Gospel reading, Jesus shows his great love for his mother by declaring, even as he dies, that John is now her son and Mary is now to be regarded as John's mother. This is the ultimate act of caring that reminds us that we also need to care for our parents and the vulnerable in our society and make sure they are catered for throughout their lives and especially in old age. Mary shows us what motherhood should be like and it is why she is often seen as the mother of the church.

In this time of national emergency we need to harness all of our parenting skills to support each other through this time of crisis.

So many people in our communities are offering to support others, often more vulnerable than themselves and this act is fundamentally a demonstration of loving kindness that God commands us to show. In Micah 6:8 the prophet tells us, *'what does the Lord require of you, but to act justly, love kindness and walk humbly with your God'*.

Every act of kindness and understanding that we show to others at this time is a demonstration of God's love to each one of us, shown most profoundly in the death of his own Son, Jesus Christ on the cross.

In essence, Mothering Sunday, particularly this year, is a reminder that we should all demonstrate the best parenting skills we can in caring for each other, reflecting the love that our Heavenly Father bestows on each of us.

Reverend Alan Perry

Bible Readings for the week

Monday Morning

'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.' Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

John 14.1-6

Tuesday Morning

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4.8-9

Wednesday Morning

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3.16,17

Thursday Morning

You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place for God.

Ephesians 2.19-22

Friday Morning

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. *Romans 19.9-12*

Saturday Morning

He said to his disciples, 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? If then you are not able to do so small a thing as that, why do you worry about the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! And do not keep striving for what you are to eat and what you are to drink, and do not keep worrying. For it is the nations of the world that strive after all these things, and your Father knows that you need them. Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

Luke 12.22-31

Prayers

Almighty and everlasting God,
we thank you that you have brought us safely
to the beginning of this day.
Keep us from falling into sin
or running into danger;
order us in all our doings
and guide us to do always
what is righteous in your sight;

through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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 Christ Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

Intercessions

Let us pray to God,
who alone makes us dwell in safety:

For all who are affected by coronavirus,
through illness or isolation or anxiety,
that they may find relief and recovery:
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

For those who are guiding our nation at this time,
and shaping national policies,
that they may make wise decisions:
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

For doctors, nurses and medical researchers,
that through their skill and insights
many will be restored to health:
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

For the vulnerable and the fearful,
for the gravely ill and the dying,
that they may know your comfort and peace:
Lord, hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.

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.**

You might like to keep some quiet for your own prayers and to remember the sick.

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.**

The Conclusion

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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