

Thursday Prayer 24th April 2025 at 10.30am

Focus: “Celebrating the Light of the World” – *Philip Baker*

Zoom connecting details and link:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85209298628?pwd=VDTrciGq12BVz8luyEa34M6BRLZDIK.1>

Meeting ID: 852 0929 8628

Passcode: 080127

Welcome to everyone taking part this morning, whether in the Cathedral or joining remotely via Zoom.

Introduction and opening prayers:

The theme for this morning is “Celebrating the Light of the World” and the reading is taken from the Gospel of Luke.

We gather our thoughts and start by praying for members and events in the diocese: For the Diocesan Spring Meeting tomorrow, for the Task Group Leaders reviewing their work during the year; for those recently Commissioned into their roles in the Diocesan Mothers’ Union and all who are working directly or indirectly towards achieving its aims. We give thanks for the work of the Branches whatever that might be. We give special thanks for our members around the world, all 4 million of us, who share the desire to improve the lives of others, through work with families and support of family life. Finally, we give thanks for Mary Sumner, a very special lady without whom our movement would not exist.

We say together – **Jesus Christ, Light of the World, we draw near to renew our light in you that our lives may brightly reflect your love. Loving Lord, inspire us with your vision for the part of your world you have called us to serve. Fix our gaze on Christ that we may brightly shine with the outworking of his love as we carry out your purposes. We celebrate the light of Christ which shines in the world with ever increasing glory as God’s Kingdom grows. Amen**

Reading: Luke 24: 36b-48 – Jesus appears to the Disciples (NIV)

Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.”

They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet.

And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?”

They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.

He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses the Prophets and the Psalms.”

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”

Reflection:

The reading from Luke we have just heard, apart from being a powerful story, also contains an instruction to us. First, the story: this was the second time that Jesus showed Himself as the risen Christ and it took place as the disciples were hearing about His first appearance on the road to Emmaus. This was the final proof that Jesus was God in fulfilment of the prophecies of the Scriptures, but it was a difficult story for the disciples to accept. Can you imagine what it must have been like – first their King was crucified and then, according to the women who found the empty tomb, Jesus had risen from the dead, as prophesied. Now, here He was among them, just as if nothing had happened. And yet they knew what had happened – they had experienced it all and this was impossible! How their senses must have been reeling under the strain of all the normally impossible things they were experiencing.

That's the story, and now the Instruction. Verses 45-47 state: "Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."" So -"Repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations" – this was to be their job, to be witness to the truth of His Resurrection and to preach that Jesus is the Way to the Father in Heaven, and everlasting life through repentance.

So, what does all this have to do with the theme of our service today - "Jesus, Light of the World"? We find some help in Matthew 5:14-16. Talking about his disciples (the same disciples as we were thinking about just now), Jesus says "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." That is one of my favourite bible passages; it tells us that our duty is to illuminate others by the light of our faith shining from Jesus and reflected by us. To spread the Word of our Lord. Unless I am mistaken, this is the same instruction that we receive in the passage from Luke; as successors to the disciples who were with Jesus, we are to continue the work they were charged with and spread the Word of God, that through repentance of our sins we will, when it is time, find eternal peace with God.

Furthermore, we are not to be timid but we are to be visible, as by that means the Light of God, The Spirit, will shine and be seen by everyone around us. This is what we do as members of the Mothers' Union – we are visibly living out our lives as God intended, loving our God and loving our neighbours as ourselves. In Matthew 25:40 Jesus says "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me". *Amen*

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on
earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily
bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those
who sin against us. Lead us not into
temptation but deliver us from evil. For the
kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

Surely the hymn today has to be "Shine Jesus Shine"

Hymn: Shine Jesus Shine

Lord, the light of Your love is shining
In the midst of the darkness, shining
Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us
Set us free by the truth You now bring us

Shine on me, shine on me

*Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy Send
forth Your word, Lord, and let there be light*

Lord, I come to Your awesome presence
From the shadows into Your radiance
By the blood, I may enter Your brightness
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness

Shine on me, shine on me

*Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy Send
forth Your word, Lord, and let there be light*

As we gaze on Your kingly brightness
So our faces display Your likeness
Ever-changing from glory to glory
Mirrored here, may our lives tell Your story

Shine on me, shine on me

*Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory
Blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy Send
forth Your word, Lord, and let there be light*

Songwriters: Graham Kendrick. For non-commercial use only

The Mothers' Union Prayer: We say together:

Loving Lord, we thank you for your love so freely given to us all.

We pray for families around the world.

Bless the work of the Mothers' Union as we seek to share your love through the encouragement, strengthening and support of marriage and family life.

Empowered by your Spirit, may we be united in prayer and worship, and in love and service, reach out as your hands across the world. In Jesus' name. Amen

From the Mothers' Union Prayer Diary

The theme of the month is "Love Blooms" We pray that the love you send us will be strong. May it blossom and radiate your love that blossoms in all. Heavenly Father, we come before you with hearts of gratitude and praise for the wondrous ways love blooms in our lives. In the gentle whispers of kindness, in the warmth of fellowship, and in the selfless acts of service, we see your love reflected. May we be vessels of your love, spreading kindness and compassion wherever we go. Amen

The Wave of Prayer for today is for: Kisangani in DR Congo; Kagera in Tanzania; Awka in Nigeria; Sunyani in Ghana; Manchester in England and Popondota in Papua New Guinea.

Our Intercessions:

We pray for:

The worldwide work of the Mothers' Union;

Our new Worldwide President Kathleen Snow;

The Chief Executive, Bev Jullien, and all who work at Mary Sumner House supporting members;

Our province of Canterbury and our new Provincial President Comfort Fearon.

We pray for our whole Diocese, for our Diocesan vice-presidents, Jean, Debbie and Hazel, for those on the Trustee Board and those leading branches, our deaneries, our chaplains and our members;

Our Worldwide Links: Lusaka in Zambia, Shyogwe in Rwanda, Sokoto & Ikka in Nigeria, Karimnager in India;

The Diocese to Diocese Links: Kigali and Vellore.

And we also pray for:

Our own parishes in the Ely Diocese, our families, and our friends

Anyone known to us who is unwell or in need

Any who are finding it difficult to feel the love and support of the Christian Community, worldwide The many countries around the world experiencing conflict, oppression, natural disasters and anywhere where people live in fear or poverty.

The Mothers' Union Thursday Prayer, we say together:

Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer. Take our prayers, we humbly ask, fill them with your love and power, and use them in the cause of your glorious kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

God of forgiveness, we ask for your unfailing love to be with us today, so that we may reach out to others with love and compassion. Help us to seek peace and reconciliation with each other, and unite us as one family of God to your glory. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Grace