

Thursday Prayers—17th July 2025.

Thursday Prayer in Ely Cathedral and on Zoom 10.30am on 17th July & 21st August

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

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A warm welcome to everyone who is joining us today, whether you are near us in Ely Cathedral, or far away.

Our focus today is: Continuing in Faith.

We will start with today's prayer.

Lord give us faith to serve you as we follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before. May we continue to be a people who seek and follow your will, Lord, make us people of faith. May we continue to be a people who reach out to the world with your love. Lord, God of every generation, help us, in our time to continue the work of your great commission. To gladly share the love of Christ and to build your kingdom on earth. Amen.

Reading

A letter of Paul to the Colossians beginning at verse 15.

He is the image of the invisible God; his is the primacy over all created things. In him everything in heaven and on earth was created, not only things visible but also the invisible orders of thrones, sovereignties, authorities and powers: the whole universe has been created through him and for him. And he exists before everything, and all things are held together in him. He is, moreover, the head of the body, the church. He is its origin, the first to return from the dead, to be in all things alone supreme. For in him the complete being of God; by God's own choice, came to dwell. Through him God chose to reconcile the whole universe to himself, making peace through the shedding of his blood upon the cross-to reconcile all things whether on earth or in heaven, through him alone.

Formerly you were yourselves estranged from God, you were his enemies in heart and mind, and your deeds were evil. But now by Christ's death in his body of flesh and blood, God has reconciled you to himself, so that he may present you before himself as dedicated men, without blemish and innocent in his sight. Only you must continue in your faith, firm on your foundations, never to be dislodged from the hope offered in the gospel which you heard.

This is the gospel which has been proclaimed in the whole creation under heaven; and I, Paul, have become its minister.

It is now my happiness to suffer for you. This is my way of helping to complete, in my human flesh, the full tale of Christ's afflictions still to be endured, for the sake of his body which is the church. I became its servant by virtue of the task and assigned to me by God for your benefit: to deliver his message in full; to announce the secret hidden for long ages and through many generations, but now disclosed to God's people, to whom it was his will to make it known-to make known how rich and glorious it is among all nations. The secret is this: Christ in you, the hope of a glory to come. He it is whom we proclaim. We admonish everyone without distinction, we instruct everyone in all the ways of wisdom, so as to present as each one of you as a mature member of Christ's body.

Reflection.

The passage from Saint Paul is telling us of the role of Jesus Christ. His Supremacy, His role as the image of God, the creator of all things.... And the reconciliator of all things to God through his blood. He is the one in whom all things hold together. God's purpose is to reconcile things to himself through Christ, making peace by the blood of his cross. In his letter, Paul says that Christ is the head of the church, it dwells in Him and the gospel and has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven.

We are reminded of this at our Eucharist service and in taking the body and the blood of Christ. Our prayers usually end by mentioning His name and our hopes that he hears us, not forgetting that we also mention the Father and the Holy Spirit.

This is one of Paul's greatest letters and yet was written to an unimportant town and its people. A volcanic area, but one of rich soil, good for pasture land, where sheep grazed and an area well known for the wool and cloth which came from there. The waters of the river Lycus and its tributaries contained chalk which solidified into remarkable grottoes and cascades and archways.

It is thought that Paul had never visited this land and its people.

The ending of our bible reading calls for believers to be established in faith, firmly rooted in the gospel and to persevere in hope. You can stand firm, Christ lives in you. This gives you assurance because of sharing His glory. The Jesus life style and our faith are simple! Would that be so easy?!

Follow Him, love others.....and see what happens.

We are 'called', how we operate is totally different and we need to have the freedom to choose how we operate. We are on a journey- who am I? what am I meant to be doing? And we are all at different stages on that journey. Talking to Mothers' Union members is easy- we are all on the same level, starting a conversation is not difficult and we seem to understand each otherbefore we even start.

How about those who are not always on the same wave length?

When I leave church on a Sunday, the coffee things put back in the cupboard, a menial task I have helped with finished, and I walk through the churchyard, I have often seen people I recognise and I am often asked what I have been doing. So, I tell them I have been to the service in church and sometimes I think I may be speaking to them in riddles. I don't think many really understand the things I am saying - you have to know how much to say! But I am trying to say something meaningful without saying too much!

Some people in Colosse believed that salvation was only for the elite but Paul declared that the all-sufficient Christ was for everyman!

One final thought: Remember you are loved, called and chosen- --and one last hope in following our Lord-----please do so by example.

The Monthly prayer which we can say together, which says a lot:

Father, open our eyes to see you as the way to live our lives. Open our hearts to be obedient to your calling and to follow your directions. How can we listen to your voice today and who can we invite to join in, to join up with the Mothers Union? Amen.

Intercessions.

Lord,

We pray for the work of the Mothers` Union, in our own Diocese of Ely and that worldwide. We pray for all in Mary Sumner House, our Worldwide President Kathleen Snow our Chief Executive Bev. Julian.

We pray for all members in the Province of Canterbury and our new Provincial President Comfort Fearon.

We pray for our Diocesan leaders, Jean, Debbie and Hazel and all our branch leaders and all our members.

In our prayers today, Lord, we pray for all who are suffering from natural disasters, war, and famine especially those particularly caused by climate change. We remember the people of Jerusalem and the Middle East, Ukraine, Sudan and Myanmar and Iran and all conflicts around the world and we ask for your help for all people who are suffering.

God of healing, restore us to wellness. Heal us from physical diseases. Relieve us from mental illness and emotional wounds. Protect us from selfishness and greed that threaten our spiritual well-being. Help us to make your love visible. Strengthen us to continue loving and supporting all who are in need. Lead us to treat others so that all people feel they are important, cared for and treasured.

Lord, in your Name. **Hear our prayers.**

We pray for our world wide links, Lusaka in Zambia, Shyoggwe in Rwanda, Sokoto and Ikka in Nigeria, Karimnagar in India and our diocesan links with Kigali and Vellore.

Let us say together the Lords 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.**

Let us stand, if we are able, and join together in singing: The Lord's my shepherd.
(Stuart Townsend)

**1. The Lord's my shepherd I'll not want,
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters.
His goodness restores my soul.**

**And I will trust in you alone,
For your endless mercy follows me,
Your goodness will lead me home.**

**2. He guides my ways in righteousness,
And he anoints my head with oil,
And my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on his pure delights.**

And I will trust in you alone.....

**3. And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
For you are with me, and your rod and staff
Are the comfort I need to know:**

And I will trust in you alone....

If we can join together to say the Mothers' Union prayer.

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.

Let us join in the Thursday Prayer.

Heavenly Father, you have called us apart to share in the 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.

The Grace.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.