

Thursday Prayers 21st March 2024

Ely Cathedral

To join the meeting, follow this **NEW ZOOM LINK** (not same info as last month):

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84399690933?pwd=uVOgZJOKhdu4yR1ZKebODANtiIJPLC.1>

(**NEW MEETING ID:** 843 9969 0933 & **NEW PASSCODE:** 835537)

By Telephone ring: 0203 051 2874 - then follow the instructions given.

Focus: Lent

Welcome to Thursday Prayers today.

Opening Prayer

As we gather today Lord, we pray for an open heart to hear your voice as we continue in our Lenten reflections

Amen

Let us say together our MU 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 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.

Prayer for Lent

Almighty and ever loving God,

you invite us deeper into your world to share your Lent.

May this time be one of outward focus;

seeking you in those we meet.

May this time be one of inward focus;

recognising our short-comings and turning to You.

Give us hearts hungry to serve you

and those who need what we have to give

Amen

Prayer of the Month

Temptation: temptation besets our daily lives; temptations encircle our every situation, our every move and action. Temptation separates us from God. Lord, we pray to be alert to temptations and ask for the enduring strength and fellowship of the Holy Spirit to help us grow closer to You this Lent.

Amen

Bible Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

²⁴ Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. ²⁵ Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. ²⁶ Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. ²⁷ No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

Meditation

During the Season of Lent, we are invited to join Jesus in the wilderness. Sharing His deprivation and loneliness, it is hoped that we will be encouraged to be less reliant upon ourselves, choosing to depend on God for all our needs and thereby gaining a closer relationship with Him through Jesus. Spending time with our Saviour with a pattern of fasting, prayer and giving, makes Lent a place of reconciliation and healing.

We see how the Devil tempts Jesus when he is hungry and exhausted after His 40 days in the desert. Firstly, Satan taunts Jesus with the temptation to turn stones into bread. Yet this short-cut to instant gratification would not serve God's will. Jesus fights his hunger to repel the Devil and obey God. In the second temptation he is told to throw himself off the pinnacle of the temple, in the expectation that God will send His angels to rescue Him. Jesus refuses saying 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Thirdly, Satan offers Jesus all the Kingdoms of the world and their glory. But Jesus remains loyal to God and refuses to bow down and worship the Devil in order to rule with him.

As the season of Lent winds down and Easter approaches, reflecting on Christ's time and temptation in the desert serves as a guiding beacon of hope. He, too, was tempted, just as we all are; yet he proved that through steadfast prayer and total reliance on God the Father, temptation loses its power.

Intercessions

We ask for God's blessing on Beverley Jullien, our chief executive; Sheran Harper our Worldwide President; Kathryn Anderson, our Provincial President; Julia Jameson, our Zonal Trustee; and, in our own diocese of Ely: Hazel Williams, Diocesan President; the Trustees, the Task Group Leaders and all who work in Mary Sumner House.

We remember in our prayers, our MU links world wide: Lusaka in Zambia, Shyogwe in Rwanda, Sokoto and Ikka in Nigeria, Karinmager in India and our diocesan links with Kigali in Rwanda and Vellore in India.

In our Wave of Prayer

We pray for Antisiranana in Madagascar; Busoga in Uganda; Yola & Oke-Ogun in Nigeria; Algoma in Canada and Jabalpur in India.

We shall now have a few moments of silent prayer to offer personal concerns to God for those in need, remembering all those who suffer in the wars that are happening around the world.

Hymn

**Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
naught be all else to me, save that thou art;
be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.**

**Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
be thou ever with me, and I with thee Lord;
be thou my great Father, and I thy true son;
be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.**

**Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might;
be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower:
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.**

**Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise:
be thou mine inheritance now and always;
be thou and thou only the first in my heart;
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.**

**High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright sun,
O grant me its joys after victory is won;
great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.**

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.**

Thursday prayer

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

The Grace

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all
evermore.**

Amen.