**Morning Praise @ Home 3rd March 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 Ephesians 3: 14 – 21

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### Reflection from Ruth

Our reading this morning begins with these words: “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name.” Which raises the question, for what reason?

Reading back through Paul’s letter to the Ephesians we see that he is rejoicing that God’s will is to include the Gentiles in salvation. Paul is filled with joy and gratitude that all followers of Jesus Christ are part of God’s own family—there is no “us” and “them,” insider and outsider. All are part of the family of God.

He then begins a poignant prayer, a prayer that could be offered by all of us who love our congregations. Paul’s hope is that they would be taken over by Christ. He prays that they will be strengthened in their inner being—from the inside out—by the power of God’s Spirit. This is not a matter of becoming stronger in themselves, but by having Christ dwell in their hearts. The issue is letting Christ in to change us. Having Christ dwell in our hearts is akin to having a new person move into our households. If they’re just visiting, it is all rather easy; we simply offer hospitality and try to practise good manners. But if someone moves in to stay, everything changes. So it is when Christ moves in to the hearts of Christians. The Message translation captures this sense: “that Christ will live in you as you open the door and invite him in”.

We cannot assume that because worshippers are in church, they have let Christ live in them. We cannot assume they have tasted the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ. So our prayers should mirror Paul’s and we must also question ourselves about how much room  we are willing to give up for Christ? Or for others in “the family”?

Paul’s prayer is full of hope for something different: for Christ to take over these people, and strengthen them by God’s own Spirit. His prayer is for both power and love; power to comprehend the depth and breadth of Christ’s love, and so be filled with the fullness of God.

When we apply this to our lives, we can have the knowledge that beyond our small hopes, beyond our small lives, beyond our meagre imaginations, God is at work, fulfilling the plan laid out for all eternity.  **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 Philip**

Father we thank you that you can do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine.

We thank you for your love that surpasses all knowledge.

Give us the imagination to at least ask for help in those things we feel called by you to achieve.

Fill us with your Spirit that we can appreciate the love you give us and help us to show that love to all.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Lord we pray for all those grieving at this time. Show them your love and help them as they feel such loss, console them with the knowledge of your Kingdom.

We pray for any we know who are sick; be with them Lord and help us all to show them the care and love you would have us show all our neighbours.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Lord, be with us in the coming week. Help us to live our best lives, filled with your spirit, as we are made new in you. Nurture in us the gifts of your spirit that all may see your presence in our lives.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer**

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**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

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