

Prayers: 10 January 2021

Be with us, Lord, as we call upon you in prayer.

We give You thanks for the gift of water – that powerful symbol of your Spirit moving in our lives and in our world - and the living water that supports all life on earth. Inspire us, by Your love and power, to live courageously as Christians – extending the flow of Your Spirit to our families, friends and community. Help us to be better stewards of the living water on the planet, as we recognise our role in climate change and environmental damage - and take responsibility for reducing our impact.

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

O God our heavenly Father, whose love sets no boundaries and whose strength is in service: grant wisdom, courage and insight to the leaders of the nations. Give to all who exercise authority

- determination to defend the principles of freedom, love and tolerance,
- strength to protect and safeguard the environment

and

- clarity of vision to guide the world into the paths of justice and peace.

Be close to all in the United States as they work to stabilise their political system and re-establish confidence and trust in their leaders.

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

Lord, we pray for all who work for your church in our Diocese, in the Deanery and in the Leith Hill Benefice. With joy, we give You thanks, Lord, for the work and inspiration of all who minister here: especially for David, Martha, Judith and Virginia, who bring their creativity to the many aspects of our church life at St Mary's.

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

We pray for our families, friends and neighbours. Comfort those who are afraid and dispirited in this difficult time and be close to all who are working beyond tiredness in the NHS at the moment.

Bring courage and hope to all who suffer – to those who are sick and those who mourn. Be with Tony Berry, as he recovers from surgery.

Lord, be close to the family and friends of Sarah Stiles, whose funeral was this week and whose life we commemorate with a candle in this service today. We ask you to give them your strength; be close to them. *[Slight pause]*.

And in a moment of quiet, we pray for those known personally to us who are suffering at this time. [PAUSE]

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

Lord, we bring before you our frailty as Christians: our imperfect lives, our broken promises and our hesitant hearts. As we are called to discipleship, this prayerful poem by Howard Thurman offers us insight:

Song of the angels *from 'The Mood of Christmas'*

When the song of the angels is stilled,
When the star in the sky is gone,
When the kings have gone home,
When the shepherds are back with their flocks -
The work of Christmas begins:

To find the lost
To heal the broken
To feed the hungry
To release the prisoner
To rebuild the nations
To bring peace among people
To make music in the heart.

Lord, as we reflect upon your unbounding love for us and Your rejoicing when we turn again to You after we have lost our way, help us to see more clearly the path that leads our lives to follow You. God of love, turn our hearts to Your ways - and give us peace.

Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.