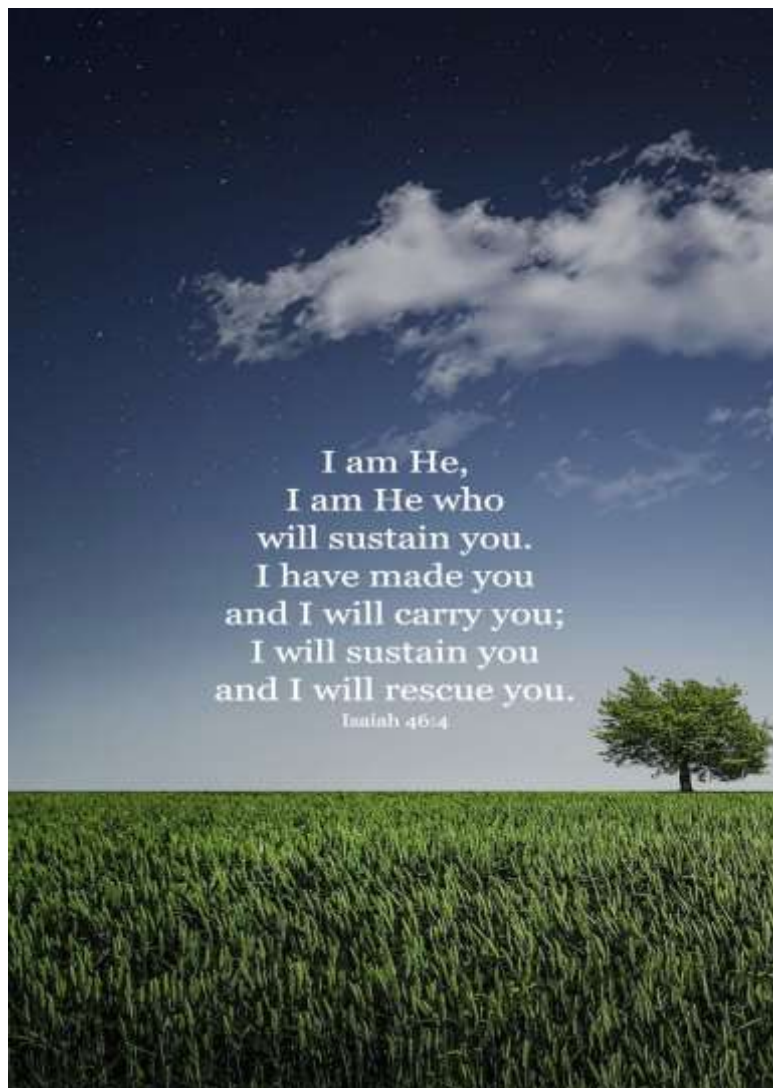




Living churches at the heart of their communities...

**St Giles', Durham,
St Cuthbert's, Shadforth and St Mary's, Sherburn**



**PRAYERS FOR REFLECTION
AND TIMES OF STILLNESS**

Welcome to this set time of prayer within this Church during this second lockdown. This booklet has been prepared for you to read and reflect during your time of silence and to take away with you when you leave the Church building. The selection of prayers is intended to encourage, support and guide you in your own thoughts and prayers. It is hoped that they will also be a source of comfort and reassurance as we all face this uncertain time together. They remind us all that we are not alone, God is with us always. He loves and cares for us as His children and would never desert us.

In these times of uncertainty and darkness in the world the Light of Christ shines out its rays clearly marking our path ahead to God.

Rev'd Abbey Hughes

May the Lord our God bless you and keep you; The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.

(Numbers 6. 24-26)



A Prayer for us all

Father we come to you in prayer today seeking guidance, strength, comfort, and hope from You. As we enter a second phase of lock down, we know that many are fearful about the future and are struggling to see an end to this pandemic. 'Covid' has affected so many people's lives in such a negative way bringing real distress, loss, and misery as a result. There is a real sense of being lost abandoned and alone with no one to turn to. People are searching and longing for help spiritually, mentally, and physically. As Christians we know and believe that You are present in these troubled times and that we are not alone, that You created this world and all that is in it out of love and that You are actively involved in our world and have a purpose for it. Yet at times it can be a difficult thing to believe and see in the world today.

As believers in You we place ourselves and lives into your hands, Father. We ask that through us, in everything we do and to all we encounter, your light, hope, love, comfort and the reassurance of your presence may shine through us. Strengthen each one of us in our faith and commitment to You. Help us to clearly point out to others your love and saving grace which they too can encounter as all are welcome as your children. We ask this in your Son's name, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen



Father as we come into your house today, let us praise you for your greatness and your love, for all the good things we enjoy and perhaps take for granted. Help us to remember that your presence is always with us. We ask you to guide us in our daily lives. Help us to be open to the needs of others and not to be focused constantly on ourselves. We pray that we will be open to the power of the Holy Spirit to guide us in the work you would have us do. We pray that we will be willing to follow you as it is though you alone we will find true peace and fulfilment. Amen

Living Lord, whatever life brings, however demanding it may prove, and no matter how hard it may sometimes be to understand your will or glimpse your hand at work, help us to keep faith in your purpose, to trust in your love and to look forward to the dawn of your kingdom, living each day in the light of that promise.

Amen

Nick Fawcett '(Light Dawns) 100 Meditations for Public Worship from Advent to Epiphany,' Kevin Mayhew 2011

Lord, you go before us at every moment of the day. You are in every person we meet and in every experience we have. We are always catching up with you in our lives, always finding you had been there, not realising it at the time. Expand and enrich our awareness, our capacity for attending to your presence and our ability to recognise your grace. Amen



*Donal Harrington,
'Prayer Reflections for Group Meetings',
The Columba Press, 2004*

A prayer by Blessed Charles de Foucauld. He was a man of deep faith. Drawing upon his intense experience of God, he left all he had known and abandoned himself into the depths of the African desert to be with the poor. Only by identifying with the least did he come at last to be the brother of all.

Lord, Father of our human family,
you created all human beings equal in dignity:
pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit
and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,
dialogue, justice, and peace.

Move us to create healthier societies
and a more dignified world,
a world without hunger, poverty, violence, and
war.

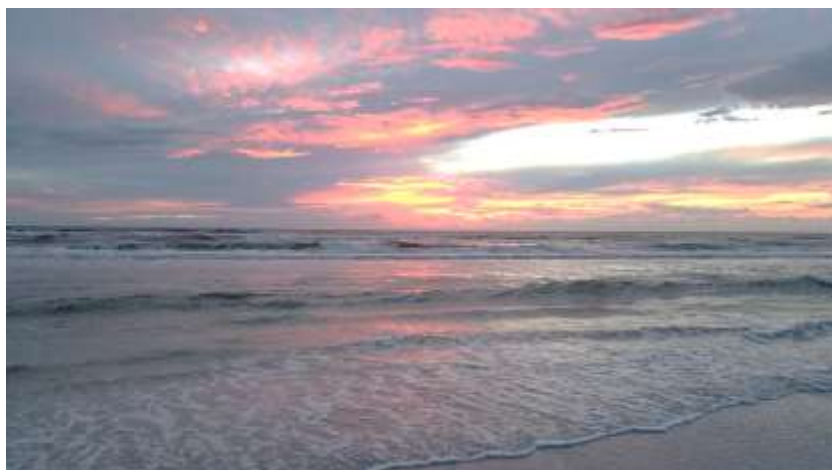
May our hearts be open

to all the peoples and nations on earth.

May we recognise the goodness and beauty
that you have sown in each of us,

and thus, forge bonds of unity, common projects,
and shared dreams. Amen

Lord inspire us to live in such a way
that we always give of our best and
be welcoming and generous towards others. Amen



Father we pray for our parish and the surrounding community in which we live, for our common needs of ministry, care, and compassion. In our prayers we remember especially those who find themselves out of work, those who are lonely, those who are struggling in anyway, those who are sick and those who have died. We remember Jesus' words, 'Come to me, all you that are weary and carry heavy burdens.' Father help us though our words and actions to share your compassion and love with others. May we be the means of comfort, love, help and support to those in need. Amen



Lord God, protector of all who trust in you, without you nothing is strong, nothing is holy; support us always by your love. Guide us so to use the things of this world, that even now, we may hold fast to what endures for ever. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with us throughout this day. And with all those we love. Amen



'The Benedictine Handbook'
Canterbury Press 2003

Advent Prayer

As we approach the coming of Advent help us not to become so involved in buying presents, sending cards, decorating houses and Christmas trees, that we forget the true meaning of Advent. Help us to remember to make time to reflect and be alone with you, to focus on how we can prepare spiritually for your coming and make a real effort in leading a Christian life. In so doing help us to become lights in this world that guide others through the words we speak and actions we carry out. Amen

Father, breathe your Spirit
Upon your people who do your work.
Grace us we pray, with a new sense of your
mystery,
A new experience of your presence,
A new commitment to your Gospel,
A new dedication to your kingdom.
May your spirit be our inspiration
And may our work contribute to the coming of
your reign. Amen



The Heart of Christmas

a Reflection by Ken Taylor

All of this and more is within the Christmas story
but it is far more than a story,
it is a sign of truth and love.

Christmas is new birth
a new beginning,
a sign of new life,
in the depth of winter.

In this perfect moment for you
pray for yourself.

Pray for a new beginning,
for a new quality of life, and peace and love.

Pray for an open mind and heart and eyes
that you may recognise him whenever he comes to you.

Hold in your heart and mind
the eternal truth God gives us
when He sets child in the midst of us
and calls us to be like children:

Pray for the grace to be childlike.

Stillness

Lord of life and love,

Fill us with your love and live in us and through us. Amen

