

Sunday 14 December – Third Sunday of Advent

Prayers written by Yvonne Toms

Let us pray for the church and for the world and let us thank God for his goodness.

This Advent and in the Christmas season, help us to find time in our lives for quiet and thought and prayer, that we may reflect upon the wonder of your love and allow the story of the Saviour's birth to fill our hearts and minds. So may our joy be deeper, our worship more real, and our lives worthier of all that you have done for us through the coming of your Son, our Lord. Whatever our circumstance, let us rejoice in God, who has come among us.

- Christ vulnerable – a baby in a manger: God with us
- Christ vulnerable – a man on the cross: God for us

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer

We pray for your church today, gathering worldwide to praise you and to hear your holy word. Give us a sense of expectation as we come and inspiration as we go. We pray:-

- For Christians in countries where there is persecution.
- For Christians in our own country, with whom we will share our celebrations and worship
- For our Church family in this benefice

Grant that all who have come into our church during this Advent and Christmas time – young and old - may renew their relationship with you. Help us all to be glad of your presence, and to rejoice at the coming of Jesus. May your blessing be upon all who worship with us, give us grace to live as faithful members of your family that we may learn each day afresh to love and to serve you. When the carols have been stilled, when the star-topped tree is taken down, when family and friends have gone home, when we are back to our daily schedules the work of Christmas begins:-

- To welcome refugees
- To heal a broken planet,
- To feed the hungry,
- To build bridges of trust, not walls of fear,

- To share our gifts,
- To seek justice and peace for all people,
- To bring Christ's light to the world.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer

Father, we thank you for the message of peace that Christmas time brings to our distracted world. Give peace among nations, peace in our land, peace in our homes, and peace in our hearts, as we remember the birth of the Holy Child at Bethlehem, Jesus Christ our Lord, who is the Light of the world. Your Son came as the Prince of Peace and brought a message of Peace for all people. Help us to be peacemakers in our own homes, in our daily lives and wherever we meet people, so that the peace and goodwill of Christmas can find a place in the hearts of all people.

We pray for this troubled world and for an end to war and conflict especially in Gaza, Israel, Sudan and Ukraine, Drive away despair and disappointment from our politics, revive justice and truth, restore our passion for what is good and right and to bring peace.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer

God of compassion, we pray for those who find this time of year a struggle – the lonely, the hungry and the homeless; for those who feel rejected or isolated, for separated families for the unemployed and for all struggling with the cost of living. As many enjoy good food and the warm comfort of home, we give thanks for those who work in food banks and community schemes, for those who minister to people living on the streets and those who provide shelter. As we think of those who feel empty, unwanted and unloved, we ask that through the loving actions of others, they may be aware of your unconditional love for them.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer

We pray for friends and family who are ill at this time and remember them in the quietness of our hearts. We bring them to you in the confidence that you love them and know their every need and that your healing power is still the same in the past, present and future. Bless all that is being done for their recovery and answer our prayers as you see best. From our own community we pray for June Dennis, Jericho Hasieber and Jo and for all known to us alone.

Watch, O Lord, with those who wake, or watch or weep and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend your sick ones, Lord; rest your weary ones; bless your dying ones; soothe your suffering ones; pity your afflicted ones; shield your joyous ones; and all for your love's sake.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, a light which no darkness can quench. We remember those who have died and may the candles in our Church and in our homes remind us that the light of Christ shines eternally and brings hope to all. We bring before you the family and friends of Eileen Tubb and Roger Traveller

and from our memorial book, we give thanks for the lives of Diana Martin, Doreen Musselwhite, Audrey Harris and Roger Hoare.

Lord, we thank you for lives lived well and for love shared. Keep alive in us the memory of those dear to us whom you have called to yourself and grant that every remembrance which turns our hearts from things seen to things unseen may lead us always closer to you, till we come to our eternal rest. For we know that our Redeemer lives, and lives for evermore.

Lord in your mercy: Hear our prayer

Father, you gave us your only Son to prepare us for your kingdom. May our lives be a daily preparation for the day when we see you as you are. Give us the same reassurance of your sustaining love in the past, the present and the future.

May the song of the angels fill us with music. May the haste of the shepherds give us energy. May the tenderness of Mary give us love. May God bless all who we hold in our hearts this Christmas and fill us with love and peace in the New Year.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.