

Sunday 25 January – Conversion of St. Paul

Prayers written by Jenny Cass

Dear Lord and Heavenly Father we thank you for this opportunity of coming together in prayer. Help us to regularly make time in our lives to come into your presence.

We want to share with you this morning all those things and people who are on our hearts and minds. We firstly pray for our world, for all those places who are struggling with the effects of war, disease, natural disasters and other tragic events. We give thanks for all the Aid agencies who work so hard to bring relief. Lord we long for peace and we continue to pray that the leaders of the world and those in positions of power and authority will have their hearts softened by your Holy Spirit and will act fairly and responsibly with compassion instead of greed and hate.

Dear God, you lovingly created this world for us to enjoy and be its caretakers, but we have failed in so many ways. Help us to work together to put things right in whatever ways we can.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

This is the last day of the Week of Christian Unity and this is one of the prayers used during the week:

Lord Jesus Christ, You have bestowed wonderful graces and multiple gifts upon us for the sake of building up Your Body the Church. Help us to embrace and recognise our individuality, so that we may be caught up in the childlike wonder of your diverse making and creating. Breathe in us with your creative Spirit, that we may respond and spread Your word, your dream, your grace and beauty, to every place we can reach, as we pray in your name.

Let us pray for the Church throughout the world. We give thanks for all who share your Gospel message. We pray for those who must meet in secret and for those who are persecuted for their faith, thinking today of what is happening In Nigeria. Please give them courage and strength.

We thank you for St Luke's and the other churches in our Benefice. Please give strength, guidance and many blessings to all in the Ministry team, the Church Council and all who serve in so many ways. We pray that your Holy Spirit will speak to those who may be looking for a new post and that we will soon be able to welcome a new Rector.

We give thanks for all who worship here, for their faithfulness even through challenging times.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray our local community, for our shops, medical centre, schools and local businesses. For all the voluntary organisations and activities that take place, the Youthwork, Toddler Group, Messy Church, fundraising events organised by FOSL. For the Foodbank and Community Hub. For our local councillors, the Emergency services and our MP Priti Patel. Help us all to be good neighbours, give us courage to stretch out a hand of friendship and be always faithful in our prayers for those in our community.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Let us spend a moment in silence bringing to our Heavenly Father those we know who are unwell or in need today. We pray for all who are waiting for operations, for treatment or results of tests. For those who are anxious, depressed or mourning the loss of loved ones. Comfort with your presence Lord. Thank you for all who are caregivers and all who help us when we are sick.

From our community we pray for Jericho Hasieber (giving thanks for his improvement since his accident), Jo, Sarah, Sue Copsey, David Casemore, Michael, David Richards and Joanne Fearis. May they receive your love and healing.

Heavenly Father, we pray for those whose hearts have been saddened by the death of someone close and dear to them, and from our own community we pray for the family and friends of Nina Watts, June Dennis, Ben, Marian Little and Dorothy Smith. May they be comforted by your love.

From our Memorial book we give thanks for the lives of Doris Oliver, Denis William Clark, Dorothy Hunt and Mavis Hinton.

Dear Lord please be with us in the week ahead, help us to be strong and not afraid, to spend time in your presence and receive from you the power and strength needed to face whatever is ahead,

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