



ST. JOHN'S CHURCH PRAYER DIARY – FEBRUARY 2018

Looking back over 2017 very little seems to have changed. The international scene is just as dreadful, if not worse, with war and its effects still causing great anxiety. The number of refugees has increased as has the number of peoples suffering in sickness and want. Relations with America are increasingly tense. The ability to resolve Brexit is no nearer.

We pray God will help find solutions and we can enjoy better international affairs in 2018.

At home we remain a happy church having enjoyed many successes in 2017 and we thank god for all our achievements.

We pray for peace in the world.

We pray for an end to situations that create refugees, including war, persecution and discrimination.

This month we are asked to include in our prayers Wargrave with Knowl Hill, members of the Sonning Deanery.

Thursday 1st February. House group Meeting at Oak Lodge will be studying 'Conversations with God' with reference to Genesis 15 v. 1 – 17; 17 v. 15 – 22 and 18 v. 1 - 15

Friday 2nd February is the day Jesus is brought to the temple. Apart from his birth and the remarkable events that surrounded it, and his naming and circumcision, we have a public recognition of his uniqueness. Simeon, as he takes the infant Jesus into his arms, praises God and thanks Him for keeping His promise that Simeon would see God the Messiah before dying. His gratitude and profound faith permeates the beautiful 'Nunc Dimittis' (The Song of Simeon) in which he declares that this baby will "be a light to lighten the Gentiles" to be worshipped by all nations.

Anna, too, who had spent her years as a widow in fasting in prayer in the temple recognised in the child 'The One who might change the world.'

We pray, Lord, that we who have full knowledge of God, presented to us in the human form of the Christ child, may learn to be as deserving of that truth as were Simeon and Anna, so eventually "we may be presented to you with pure and human heart".

Collect for the day.

Sunday 4th February. There will be a speaker from 'Christians against Poverty' at both communion services at 8.00am and 10.00am.

We pray for the residents of Furzehill Crescent, the families, friends and relations and all close to them. We ask that they may enjoy a good life and know God's protection and love.

Monday 5th February. Our thanks to Julia, Oak Lodge's Matron with the support of her husband, Les Richardson our Church Warden, and the staff who help to keep all the residents happy. Similarly we thank God and seek His continued support for the staff of our other homes in the area: The Avenue, Pinehurst, The Homestead and St. Brendon's Care Home.

Tuesday 6th February. The Mothers' Union will meet at 7.30pm when Catherine Panadya will talk about Hindu Celebrations. Mindful of Simeon's Song it will be interesting to hear how other faiths perceive and worship their God.

Wednesday 7th February. At 8.00pm in the Church Hall, Rev. Canon John Edwards will be delivering a lecture on the Reformation 500, which should be interesting and informative. This illustrated lecture will look at the way religion in England was transformed during the reigns of five Tudor monarchs.

Friday 9th February. At 6.00pm a group will assemble to offer Prayers for the Sick. You are welcome to join them, if not with them in the vestry, then at home with your own prayers and thoughts.

Saturday 10th February. Come and join in the fun in the Church Hall with a Pancake Evening at 7.30pm. Last year's celebration was a great success and is one way in which we strengthen our fellowship.

Sunday 11th February. This will be another Café Eucharist much enjoyed by many because of its youthful informality, not lacking in sincerity.

Please pray for the residents, their relations, family and all dear to them, in Parkway.

May God be with them, supporting them at all times with His love and protection, and may they continue to enjoy the additional blessing of friendship and neighbourliness.

Monday 12th and Tuesday 13th February. We are now approaching the season of Lent and ought to be thinking how best to remember our Lord's preparation for his own Lenten journey in the desert. How best might we prepare either by self-denial or completing necessary tasks that we have been avoiding?

Wednesday 14th February – Ash Wednesday.

Appropriately, or otherwise, also St. Valentine's Day. We should remember as Christians that God himself is all-loving and will bless us if we love one another without discrimination or prejudice. May we be drawn closer to Christ as he suffers the trials and temptations on his own Lenten journey. There will be a communion service at 10.00am

At 2.00pm in the Church Hall, the Mother's Union meet to hear Kathleen Coutt's 'Lent Reflections'.

Friday 16th February. Prayers for the Sick in the vestry at 6.00pm.

Sunday 18th February. First Sunday in Lent.

There will be a Taizé service in the evening at 6.00pm.

We pray for God's blessing on all the residents of Upper Dukes Ride.

Monday 19th February. The Mother's Union holds their Prayer Meeting at 9.30am in the vestry.

Lisa and Ken will be taking communion to the residents of Oak Lodge and at 3.00pm to those at Pinehurst.

Tuesday 20th February sees another meeting of the Book Club at 8.00pm in the Church Hall when they will discuss Trollope's 'The Warden'.

There will be a house group meeting at Oak Lodge when it is hoped that more will be tempted to come as the date does not clash with the Lenten lectures usually held on Monday evenings.

They will be discussing 'Listening to God in Prayer.' Talk will be focused on 1 Chronicles Chap.14 v. 8 – 17.

May they enjoy a meaningful exchange of thoughts and ideas.

Wednesday 21st February. The Governors of the C of E School meet this evening. We pray that their thoughts and deliberations will be informed with vision and wisdom.

Thursday 22nd February. We continue to be ever grateful for all those who together have such an impact on the fellowship of our Church. We begin with the Vicar, Lisa; David our Curate; the LLM's Gillian, Hazel, Lewis; our churchwardens Anna and Les; the choir, organist and choir mistress; the servers; the readers; the sidesmen, the welcome teams; the coffee makers; the social committee; the cleaners; the flower arrangers; the Church visiting group; all those involved in looking after the youngsters, the Pathfinders, the Web, Minus Fives and the team who keep our Churchyard looking so wonderful.

Indeed the list is endless, as should be our thanks.

Friday 23rd February. Prayers for the Sick in the vestry at 6.00pm

Sunday 25th January – Lent 2.

This Sunday sees the beginning of our Stewardship Campaign when we are asked to consider how much we give to our Church and how much we try to help others. A reminder of the Missions we support is listed below.

Our prayers are asked for the residents of Wellington Road, Coleridge Close and Mulberry Close

Tuesday 27th February. On this day in 1593 George Herbert was born, arguable the most Christian of poets within the canon of English literature. A brilliant scholar and a member of Parliament he chose instead to give up the likely place at court to dedicate his life after ordination to care for the souls of his parishioners at Bemerton. He wrote prolifically. His humility, piety and sincerity shine through his writings. Many of his poems were set to music and his hymns are still sung. He died on 1st March 1633 after a short life dedicated to his Lord.

Wednesday 28th February. The Standing Committee meets. May their deliberations prove profitable with God's blessing and guidance.

Nunc Dimittis (Song of Simeon) from the Book of Evening Prayer

**Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word.
For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou has prepared before the
face of all people.
To be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of thy people Israel.
Gloria. Amen.**

Simeon has reminded us that he saw the infant Jesus as the 'light to lighten the Gentiles'.

Here is a prayer of thanks to and plea for peace from our Lord, 'our light and salvation.'

**We rejoice in the good things of our land,
We pray that justice and freedom will be all for all peoples.
We remember today all who are imprisoned for speaking out against evil
Or for resisting a corrupt regime.
We also pray today for the peace of Jerusalem.**

David Adam.

A short poem by George Herbert revealing his firm faith.

**Virtue
Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridle of the earth and sky;
The dew shall weep thy fall tonight;
For thou must die.**

**Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye;
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.**

**Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie;
My music shows you have your closes,
And all must die.**

**Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.**

A reminder of the Missions we support. We thank God for all those hard-working, brave and unselfish people who work within these organisation to make the world a better place.

We also thank the members of our congregation who have made themselves responsible for them in our Church.

**Church Mission Society;
Church Army;
Leprosy Mission;
Embrace the Middle East;
Corymeela Community;
Bible Society;
Children's Society;
Hope Zone Drop-in Café;
Helen and Douglas House Hospice;
Alexander Devine Children's Hospice
JAC, a centre for disaffected youngsters.**

