

This week Ronnie Mitchell leads us in prayers of thanksgiving and for others

Lord of all,

As we bring this offering to you; teach us to offer ourselves to others, to recognise that wherever there is sorrow or suffering, hunger or hardship YOU are there sharing the pain and you call US to respond. Teach us to offer what we can, when we can and wherever we can: conscious that whatever we do for anyone, we do it also for you.

Heavenly Father, from your word this morning we are reminded of these first followers of Jesus, so confused and afraid for their lives at the death of Jesus their Master and Friend for the past three years. Now they are doubtful and still frightened even when the risen Jesus greets them 'Shalom - Peace be with you.'

For the past year our lives have been completely changed by the global Covid pandemic and as restrictions are being lifted, we are apprehensive, unsure and somewhat scared about the future with its uncertainties, complications, regulations and challenges. Living Lord Jesus Reach out in Love. Especially to all facing grief and sorrow, mourning the loss of loved ones and coming to terms with personal tragedy: Hold on to them as they walk through a valley of tears. As you reach out to them may they know that you are with them, sharing their pain, moved by their sorrow. Give them the assurance that those who mourn will be comforted and those who weep will laugh.

This morning we pray for the Queen and the Royal Family at this time of loss and great sadness with their actions and words continually exposed to the scrutiny of an oftentimes unscrupulous press - may Her faith and love shine out and may she know that special peace and strength which comes from you. We take time to pray for the many widows in our own Church Family who have had to cope with such a challenging year deprived of social contacts, bless them, make them very aware that you are close beside them.

We pray for all who are unwell, afflicted by chronic pain and disease, suffering from a terminal illness; especially all whose diagnosis was delayed due to the great pressure on our National Health Service. Lord, support them in all that they face; bless and advance the medical professions in treatments and cures, bless caring organisations and all individual carers who freely offer time and energy and each day perform small but vital acts of kindness.

As our schools reopen this week we pray for staff and pupils: help them to settle in quickly and keep them safe eager to learn. Especially we pray for senior pupils whose studies have been so disrupted in the past year and for many plans for future careers dashed. Bless all parents and help them as they now have to cope with Week day routines which have been so unsettled in the past weeks and months.

Lord Jesus in our songs today we, like countless millions in Heaven and on Earth praise and honour your glorious Name, rejoicing that you are risen from the dead and assured of your matchless grace and amazing love.

Living God, we look forward to that day when every tongue will sing your praises and

all will rejoice in the light of your presence. Until that time, may everyone for whom life is hard know your hand upon them, and find in you the strength and hope they need to walk through the valley of tears and shadow of suffering confident that night will give way to dawn. Lord, reach out in love and put a Song of Joy in each of our hearts. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen