**Morning Praise @ Home 22nd December 2024**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Reading Luke 1:39 – 56

### Reflection from Max Lucado Mary’s Prayer

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God. O infant-God. Heaven’s fairest child. Conceived by the union of divine grace with our disgrace. Sleep well.

Sleep well. Bask in the coolness of this night bright with diamonds. Sleep well, for the heat of anger simmers nearby. Enjoy the silence of the crib, for the noise of confusion rumbles in your future. Savour the sweet safety of my arms, for a day is soon coming when I cannot protect you.

Rest well, tiny hands. For though you belong to a king, you will touch no satin, own no gold. You will grasp no pen, guide no brush. No, your tiny hands are reserved for works more precious:
to touch a leper’s open wound,
to wipe a widow’s weary tear,
to claw the ground of Gethsemane.

Your hands, so tiny, so white—clutched tonight in an infant’s fist. They aren’t destined to hold a sceptre nor wave from a palace balcony. They are reserved instead for a Roman spike that will staple them to a Roman cross.

Sleep deeply, tiny eyes. Sleep while you can. For soon the blurriness will clear and you will see the mess we have made of your world.

You will see our nakedness, for we cannot hide.

You will see our selfishness, for we cannot give.

You will see our pain, for we cannot heal.

O eyes that will see hell’s darkest pit and witness her ugly prince . . . sleep, please sleep; sleep while you can.

Lie still, tiny mouth. Lie still, mouth from which eternity will speak.

Tiny tongue that will soon summon the dead, that will define grace, that will silence our foolishness.

Rosebud lips—upon which ride a starborn kiss of forgiveness to those who believe you, and of death to those who deny you—lie still.

And tiny feet cupped in the palm of my hand, rest. For many difficult steps lie ahead for you.

Do you taste the dust of the trails you will travel?

Do you feel the cold seawater upon which you will walk?

Do you wrench at the invasion of the nail you will bear?

Do you fear the steep descent down the spiral staircase into Satan’s domain?

Rest, tiny feet. Rest today so that tomorrow you might walk with power. Rest. For millions will follow in your steps.

And little heart . . . holy heart . . . pumping the blood of life through the universe: How many times will we break you?

You’ll be torn by the thorns of our accusations.

You’ll be ravaged by the cancer of our sin.

You’ll be crushed under the weight of your own sorrow.

And you’ll be pierced by the spear of our rejection.

Yet in that piercing, in that ultimate ripping of muscle and membrane, in that final rush of blood and water, you will find rest. Your hands will be freed, your eyes will see justice, your lips will smile, and your feet will carry you home.

And there you’ll rest again this time in the embrace of your Father.

### Affirmation of faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession by Nick Fawcett**

## Light in our darkness

In a beautiful but broken world, full of so much good yet so much evil,
so much joy yet so much sorrow, we bring you, Lord, our prayers for others.

Where hardship has crushed the spirit, poverty, injustice or disease having destroyed faith in the future,
Lord Jesus Christ, **may your love bring light.**

Where war and suffering scar your world, hatred, greed and intolerance erupting into violence,
Lord Jesus Christ, **may your love bring light.**

Where disaster has brought devastation, flood, famine, earthquake and hurricane shattering lives,
Lord Jesus Christ, **may your love bring light.**

Where hearts are closed to you and others, doubt, fear, dogma and prejudice creating alienation,
Lord Jesus Christ, **may your love bring light.**

Come to our world, Lord, and heal its wounds, shining in the darkness and restoring joy, faith, hope and love.
Lord Jesus Christ, **may your love bring light.**

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name, Thy kingdom come,******Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**