**Morning Prayer for the Seventh Sunday of Easter**

Sunday 1st June 2025 at 9.30 (call in from 9.15)

Join Zoom Meeting

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85649430168?pwd=QzFzNytXM01TQTc5cTROaHc2aElvZz09

Meeting ID: 856 4943 0168

Passcode: 336782

**Telephone instructions:**

\* Dial: 0131 460 1196

\* You are then welcomed to Zoom and asked to type in the meeting ID ie. 856 4943 0168

\* If the next instruction is to add your personal ID just press # to ignore

\* When passcode requested type numbers i.e. 336782 plus #.

\* At this point you should be admitted to the call.****

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**Preparation**

 O Lord, open our lips

*All* **and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Send your Holy Spirit upon us,

*All* **and clothe us with power from on high. Alleluia!**

What God has prepared for those who love him, he has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything. Therefore, let us in penitence open our hearts to the Lord, who has prepared good things for those who love him.

*1 Corinthians 2:9-10*

**A prayer of confession**

Sometimes, Lord, we feel as if we are imprisoned –
by our circumstances; by our health;
by our prejudices; by our own choices.
**Forgive us, Lord, and help us to walk in your paths.**
Sometimes we take the easy way out,
not knowing what blessings the hard way could have led to.
**Forgive us, Lord, and help us to walk in your paths.**
When we react before we know what the situation is,
and maybe make the wrong decision.
**Forgive us, Lord, and help us to walk in your paths.**
Sometimes we don’t realise what you have done for us,
and that we have left the old life behind.
**Forgive us, Lord, and help us to walk in your paths.**
**Amen.**

**Assurance of forgiveness**

Paul saved the jailer’s life by not taking advantage of the escape route.
We don’t need an escape route from you, O God.
You are always there to meet us,
and set us free from our sins.
You have taken us from old life to new.
We rest content in your forgiveness.
Amen.

**The Word of God**

First Reading: Acts 1: 16-34

**Paul and Silas in Prison**

**16**Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. **17**She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” **18**She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her.

**19**When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. **20**They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar **21**by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.”

**22**The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. **23**After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. **24**When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

**25**About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. **26**Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose. **27**The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. **28**But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!”

**29**The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. **30**He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

**31**They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” **32**Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. **33**At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. **34**The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

This is the word of the Lord.

*All*  **Thanks be to God**

Psalm 97

 **1**The Lord reigns, let the earth be glad;
     let the distant shores rejoice.
 **2**Clouds and thick darkness surround him;
     righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.
 **3**Fire goes before him
     and consumes his foes on every side.
 **4**His lightning lights up the world;
     the earth sees and trembles.
 **5**The mountains melt like wax before the Lord,
     before the Lord of all the earth.
 **6**The heavens proclaim his righteousness,
     and all peoples see his glory.

 **7**All who worship images are put to shame,
     those who boast in idols—
     worship him, all you gods!

 **8**Zion hears and rejoices
     and the villages of Judah are glad
     because of your judgments, Lord.
 **9**For you, Lord, are the Most High over all the earth;
     you are exalted far above all gods.
 **10**Let those who love the Lord hate evil,
     for he guards the lives of his faithful ones
     and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.
 **11**Light shines[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm%2097&version=NIV#fen-NIV-15490a)] on the righteous
     and joy on the upright in heart.
 **12**Rejoice in the Lord, you who are righteous,
     and praise his holy name.

Glory to the Father and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit;

*All* **as it was in the beginning,**

**is now, and shall be for ever.**

**Amen.**

Second Reading: John 17: 20-26

### Jesus Prays for All Believers

**20**“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, **21**that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. **22**I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— **23**I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. **24**“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

**25**“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. **26**I have made you[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john%2017&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26786e)] known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

This is the word of the Lord.

*All*  **Thanks be to God**

*We pause to reflect on the readings before turning to prayer.*

**Prayers of intercession**

Father, release us from these chains to live in the freedom of your forgiving love

Heavenly Father, we bring before you all those affected by the events in Liverpool on Monday. Please be with the injured, granting them healing of body and mind. Strengthen their loved ones to support them, we pray. We thank you for all the services who helped on the scene and in hospital, and we pray for them and the work they do.

Lord, we pray for a world which seems to be out of control. We pray for minds held captive to dark thoughts of violence, beseeching you that they might be released from the evil which has bound them. From lone wolf individuals to the leaders of nations who engage in warfare on a massive scale, we pray for the release of minds held captive to the spirit of strife and destruction. May common humanity be recognised and peace restored among the ordinary citizens who suffer.

We pray for our own communities; relatively peaceful, perhaps, yet struggling with their own challenges. We bring before you our young people, often disenchanted and vulnerable to voices calling them to danger and self-destruction. In particular, we pray for those whose minds have been ensnared by the dark side of social media, asking that they be freed from those who would seek to exploit them and lead them into harmful ways. We remember, too, our older people, feeling lost and bewildered in the midst of great upheavals and change. Lord, let us never become entrenched and unresponsive; help us to keep open minds and open hearts, so that the Holy Spirit may work in us and through us in the places you have called us to serve.

Father, we pray for your Church in these increasingly difficult times, when your message of salvation is misunderstood. In the mouths of mockers, it is often distorted, just as it was in the days of the first apostles. Lord, open the eyes, hearts and minds of those who are captive to the cynical spirit of our present age; set them free to understand the message of your merciful love.

Heavenly Father, there are so many things which hold us captive; serious illness and its effects on body, mind and spirit; fear of the future, and the shackles of the past; doubting you, O Lord, and doubting ourselves.

We pray for all who are sick in body and mind.(Prayer list)
**Response: Father, may they know the healing that comes from you.**

We pray for all who doubt your ability to care for today’s world.
**Response: Father, may there be an increase of faith to meet the challenges of this age.**

And we pray for all who doubt themselves.
**Response: Father, may we all stand strong in the knowledge that we are empowered by you through your Holy Spirit and the sacrifice of your son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Collect for the Seventh Sunday of Easter

O God the King of glory,

you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ

with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:

we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,

but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us

and exalt us to the place where

our Saviour Christ is gone before,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

*All*  **Amen.**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

 **Our Father in heaven,**

**hallowed be your name,**

**your kingdom come,**

**your will be done,**

**on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins**

**as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation**

**but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,**

**and the glory are yours**

**now and for ever.**

**Amen.**

Loving God,
give us eyes to see those around us who are sad or in trouble,
and ears to listen to their story.
Give us understanding minds,
loving hearts and a willingness to help.
Let your love shine out of us so that all can see your glory.**Amen.**

Blessing

The Spirit of truth lead us into all truth,

give us grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,

and strengthen us

to proclaim the word and works of God;

And the blessing of God almighty,

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

be among us and remain with us

and those whom we love and pray for

today and always.

*All* **Amen.**

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**What’s on ….**

**Exe Valley Community Lunches**

The next lunch is at Stoodleigh Village Hall on June 12th from 12.30pm. Please let the church office know if you will be joining us and if you need transport.

**Prayer Breakfast**

The next prayer breakfast with Steph at The Rectory Withleigh is on 28 June at 9.00am. Everyone is welcome.

**Bible Study**

Our next Bible Study is on June 10th at The Cottage Washfield at 2.30pm with Tim Gorringe.

**Prayer Chain**

The Exe Valley Mission Community are starting a telephone prayer chain. If you like to be included for prayer or know someone who would like to be included, please contact Steph at the church office 01884 250417. Only first initials will be used on the prayer chain to ensure total confidentiality.

**Coffee and Chat with Steph**

Steph will be at Banburys from 10.15am on Friday June 20th for coffee and a chat if you would like to join her.

**Discipleship Course**

Please join us as we continue with our discipleship course at the Rectory Withleigh. The next meeting will be on Thursday June 19th at 11.00am and 7.00pm

**Withleigh 8 June**

Withleigh’s service on June 8th will take the form of a ‘Songs of Praise’ to celebrate the refurbishment of the organ. The guest organist will be Paul Whitty, son of Rev. Harold Whitty. Refreshments will be served from 10am onwards and the service will start at 10.45am. All are welcome at this service and the collection will go to the organ fund.

**Contacting Church Office**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED THURSDAY 5TH JUNE – SUNDAY 15TH JUNE**

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10.00am -12 noon

Email: office@exevalleymissioncommunity.org

Tel: 01884 250417 or 07733949295

**Giving to the Exe Valley Mission Community**

If you would like to make a contribution to the work of The Exe Valley Mission Community please make a gift using the Exe Valley Group of Churches BACS details. Please use the reference EVMC Services.

**Account Name:** Exe Valley Group of Churches

**Sort Code:**60-21-27

**Account No:** 54731690

Cheques should be made payable to: 'Exe Valley Group of Churches'