



EVENING PRAYER
ORDINARY TIME
Readings & Reflections
Crossroads and Signposts



Newbury, St George & St John

**Welcome to this service of quiet reflection and prayer,
St George the Martyr Wash Common and
St. John the Evangelist, Newbury.**

From earliest times, Christians gathered at regular hours during each day and night to respond to God's word with praise and thanksgiving.

This evening , we shall have a combination of three short bible readings, a short reflection and time for silence. The service is intended to be attentive to Gods presence and for a time of listening.

Following our benefice day of prayer and pilgrimage, we shall continue the theme of journeying, of travelling together, with and towards God.

It is hoped the service will give space for deeper listening and to turn our attention inwards to the God who dwells within each of us.

Front Cover Image. *Unsplash* Damien DUFOUR Photographic



Newbury, St George & St John

The Greeting

The officiant says:

Pilgrim God,
You are our origin and our destination.
Travel with us, we pray, in every pilgrimage of faith,
And every journey of the heart.
Give us the courage and the nourishment we need to travel well,
And the welcome we long for at our journey's end.
So may we grow in grace and love for you
And in the service of others,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen

John Pritchard
Former Bishop of Oxford

Uphill Climb

Mark 9.2-8

*Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John,
and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves.
And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling
white, such as no one on earth could bleach them.
And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with
Jesus.
Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make
three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.'
He did not know what to say, for they were terrified.
Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice,
'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!'
Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more,
but only Jesus.*

Reflection 'When' Kathy Galloway

When I ascend to the mountaintop
and gaze with joy on the other side,
or when I must travel to places of death;
cherish my delight, and contain my horror,
for you have been there, and there before me,
O Jesus of the Way.

And when my journey takes me away from where I am comfortable
and I must encounter new ideas, new ways, the new normal,
hold my heart and mind open,
for you are there too, waiting to welcome me,
O Jesus of the Way.

And when my path is black and unlit, it all seems uphill
and I can see nothing in front but dark and fearful shapes,
still my panic enough to know
that one of them is your shape,
Oh Jesus of the Way.

A period of silence

Prayer

God of our mountaintop experiences,
Closer to sky, to heaven,
will you be coming with us?
Will you go on giving us a glimpse of glory?
And will you be with us into the valleys?
And be with us to the ends of the earth?
Yes, my beloved, I am with you always, everywhere.

Amen.

Crossroads

Jeremiah 6.16

Thus says the Lord:
Stand at the crossroads, and look,
and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way lies; and walk in it,
and find rest for your souls.

Reflection

Crossroads are places where we have to stop,
we must make decisions
and choose which route to take.
They can be painful places,
and places where sacrifices have to be made.
They can also be places of liberation.
For Jesus, the place of the Cross was all of those things.

A period of silence

Prayer

Living God,
Our journey in life is not always straight forward,
Sometimes we go to places we don't want to go,
Sometimes we have to face up to ourselves and to others
Admit our vulnerabilities, our failings, and our sufferings,
When we find ourselves at a crossroads
And we wonder where we should go next
And nothing is clear at all,
Gracious God walk with us, help to be courageous,
Strengthen our love for you knowing that you died in order that we
might live and travel well.

Amen.

Signposts and Listening

1 Kings 19. 9-13

At that place he came to a cave, and spent the night there.

Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 'What are you doing here, Elijah?' He answered, 'I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away.'

He said, 'Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.' Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.

Reflection 'Be Still' A B Simpson

A few years ago, a friend placed in my hand a book called *True Peace*.

It was an old medieval message, and it had but one thought—that God was waiting in the depths of my being to talk to me if I would only be still enough to hear Gods voice.

I thought this would be very easy and so began to be still. And I had no sooner commenced that an perfect pandemonium of voices reached my ears, a thousand clamouring notes from without and within.

Some were my own voices, my own questions, some my own prayers
Others were voices from the worlds turmoil.

In every direction I was pulled and pushed and greeted with negative headlines and unspeakable unrest.

Sometimes it is necessary to listen and to answer others, but God said, "Be still and know that I am God". The came more conflicts and thoughts of fear, uncertainty, of cares and of others; but God said, "Be still"

And I listened, and slowly learned to obey, and shut my ears to every sound. I found after a while when other voices ceased, or I ceased to hear them, there was a still small voice in the depths of my being that began to speak with an inexpressible tenderness, power and comfort

A period of silence

Prayer

Now, O Lord,
calm me into a quietness that heals and listens,
that moulds my longings and my passions,
my wounds and wonderings
In the silence, let me listen
and hear the truth you have put into me;
Trust the love you have for me
Speak to me;
in the blowing of the wind;
in the rusting of grass
in the beauty of my heart
in the ordinary and everyday
speak Lord.
I am listening.

The service ends with the Nunc Dimittis

The words that Simeon prayed upon recognising Christ, for whom he had been silently waiting in humility and faith (Luke 2)

Now, O God may your servant go in peace
As you promised,
For my eyes have seen your salvation
Which you have prepared for all to see,
A light to enlighten the nations
And the glory of your people.

Amen

Some material in this service is copyright:
Common Worship© 2000 The Archbishops' Council and Common
Worship Festivals© 2008 The Archbishops' Council
© Around a Thin Place Book, Wild Goose Publication;
Seeds for the Morrow Dorothy Miller, Wild Goose Publications



Newbury, St George & St John