

# PRAYER AND REFLECTION

The Revd Heather McIntyre  
Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020



## Opening Psalm 133

How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!

It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes.

It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life for evermore.

## Prayer:

Lord God, we come to you today as your people, even though scattered. We thank you that we are a people you love, a people you bless, a people with whom you journey through all life and all eternity.

We thank you that you touch us with your life and gently invite us to a new and deeper way of living; a way of overflowing mercy, joy, hope and generosity.

You have called us into one body and we thank you for this privilege. Help us to really appreciate one another and hold us together as one church, one body, one world.

Amen

### **Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-14**

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

For in the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many.

### **Reflection:**

You will have all heard John Donne's words, "No man is an island" many times. He wrote this line after almost dying from spotted fever in 1623. Donne was fifty-one years old and the dean of St. Paul's cathedral when he fell gravely ill. His

daughter was engaged to be married and he urged her to wed whilst he was in hospital so that he knew she would be taken care of if he died. From his bed, he listened to the church bells toll the news of weddings and of deaths from the epidemic around him. Physically Donne felt largely alone and yet the very loneliness of lying in bed led him to his most famous insight about the human condition.

As we live through this pandemic, we know that the best way to acknowledge this reality is to embrace solitude. The best way to be community focused is to be physically isolated, in order to save lives and not transmit the virus. We can acknowledge that it has been hard at times and can feel very lonely, but during this crisis I think we have all been reminded too of our need of one another. We depend on our scientists, our government, and all those service providers who care, who keep our communities safe, who clear the rubbish, who keep food on the shelves, who look after our children, our frail and our sick members of society. The list is endless. We cannot do it alone – and we have frequently heard the words, “We’re all in this together” from the mouths of our politicians. Local neighbourhoods have spoken about the community being brought together at this time, in ways that probably haven’t been seen since the end of the second World War. Within our church community at Amersham, we have been supported and encouraged by one another in a

variety of ways and reminded too of our need of one another.

Our God is a God of community, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As people made in God's image, we are made to be in community. We all bring our various gifts and skills to the body, but I believe the greatest gift we bring is simply the gift of ourselves. Each one of us is uniquely shaped and when shared with others in love, brings blessing to the whole body.

“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main...”

**Prayer:**

Creator God and divine parent of all humanity, we praise you for the marks of your image that we find in those around us and in ourselves:

Your skill as a designer and artist in the intricacy of our human bodies,

Your attendance to our needs in parents and care-givers,

Your wisdom in those who teach and guide us,

Your orderliness in managers and strategists,

Your provision of resources in those who release  
finance and assets,

Your creativity in artists, musicians and entertainers,

Your justice in campaigners,

Your playfulness in children,

Your vulnerability in the poor and suffering,

Your faithful love, kindness and mercy in our friends  
and loved ones and

Your active Holy Spirit in fellow disciples.

Amen

**Blessing:**

Be with us now and remain with us wherever we go  
and hold those we love in your care. Fill our hearts  
with your steadfast love, strengthen our wills and  
encourage our souls, give us your

joy and fill us with hope, so we bring your blessing  
to others and glory to you.

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy  
Spirit.

Amen