

## **Bible Readings & Prayers – 23rd March, 2025**

### **Words as we present a symbol of the cross: a whip**

God seeks to restore creation; to remake the life of the world. In Jesus Christ we see God's hope for the world as he transforms our human nature.

ALL: Saviour, we offer you love and worship.

### **The Collect for the Third Sunday of Lent**

Almighty God,  
whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain,  
and entered not into glory before he was crucified:  
mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross,  
may find it none other than the way of life and peace;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.

### **Isaiah 55:1-9**

'Come, all you who are thirsty,  
    come to the waters;  
and you who have no money,  
    come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk  
    without money and without cost.  
Why spend money on what is not bread,  
    and your labour on what does not satisfy?  
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good,  
    and you will delight in the richest of fare.  
Give ear and come to me;  
    listen, that you may live.  
I will make an everlasting covenant with you,  
    my faithful love promised to David.  
See, I have made him a witness to the peoples,  
    a ruler and commander of the peoples.  
Surely you will summon nations you know not,  
    and nations you do not know will come running to you,  
because of the Lord your God,  
    the Holy One of Israel,  
    for he has endowed you with splendour.'  
Seek the Lord while he may be found;  
    call on him while he is near.  
Let the wicked forsake their ways  
    and the unrighteous their thoughts.

Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them,  
and to our God, for he will freely pardon.  
'For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
neither are your ways my ways,'  
declares the Lord.  
'As the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

### **Luke 13:1-9**

Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, 'Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them – do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.'

Then he told this parable: 'A man had a fig-tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, "For three years now I've been coming to look for fruit on this fig-tree and haven't found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?"

"Sir," the man replied, "leave it alone for one more year, and I'll dig round it and fertilise it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down."