

OPEN SPACE SERVICE

17th May 2026 (Easter 7)



RUTH: Stepping into the Unknown

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you
and also with you.

God of our days and years,
we set this time apart for you.
Form us in the likeness of Christ
so that our lives may glorify you.
Amen.

Introduction: Today we are reflecting on the story of Ruth, a story of loyalty, love, and faithfulness to God and neighbour. In following Naomi back to Israel, she stepped into the unknown, and is forever remembered as one of only four women to be mentioned in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus.

Confession and Absolution

Christ the light of the world has come to dispel
the darkness of our hearts.

In his light let us examine ourselves and confess our sins.

We have not always worshipped God, our creator.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

We have not always followed Christ, our Saviour.
Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

We have not always trusted in the Spirit, our guide.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

The almighty and merciful Lord
grant you pardon and forgiveness of all your sins,
time for amendment of life,
and the grace and strength of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Hymn - Will you Come and Follow Me

Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown?
Will you let my name be known?
Will you let my life be grown in you
And you in me?

Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
Should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you
And you in me?

Will you let the blinded man see if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean
And do such as this unseen?
And admit to what I mean in you
And you in me?

Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell that fear inside and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
To reshape the world around
Through my sight and touch and sound in you
And you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name
Let me turn and follow you and never be the same
In your company I'll go
Where your love and footsteps show
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you
And you in me
Ooh, ooh, ooh, ooh

Old Testament Reading Ruth 1.1-17

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These took Moabite wives; the name of one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. When they had lived there for about ten years, both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so that the woman was left without her two sons or her husband.

Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the Lord had had consideration for his people and given them food. So she set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, 'Go back each of you to your mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband.' Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. They said to her, 'No, we will return with you to your people.' But Naomi said, 'Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the Lord has turned against me.' Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

So she said, 'See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.' But Ruth said,

'Do not press me to leave you
or to turn back from following you!
Where you go, I will go;
where you lodge, I will lodge;
your people shall be my people,
and your God my God.
Where you die, I will die—
there will I be buried.
May the Lord do thus and so to me,
and more as well,
if even death parts me from you!'

REFLECTION

Hymn - The Lord's My Shepherd AMNS 426

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want.
he makes me down to lie
in pastures green; he leadeth me
the quiet waters by.

My soul he doth restore again;
and me to walk doth make
within the paths of righteousness,
e'en for his own Name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through death's dark vale,
yet will I fear none ill;
for thou art with me; and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.

My table thou hast furnish-ed
in presence of my foes;
my head thou dost with oil anoint,
and my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life
shall surely follow me;
and in God's house for evermore
my dwelling place shall be.

Psalm 119.105-112

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.
I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,
to observe your righteous ordinances.
I am severely afflicted;
give me life, O Lord, according to your word.
Accept my offerings of praise, O Lord,
and teach me your ordinances.
I hold my life in my hand continually,
but I do not forget your law.
The wicked have laid a snare for me,
but I do not stray from your precepts.
Your decrees are my heritage for ever;
they are the joy of my heart.
I incline my heart to perform your statutes
for ever, to the end.

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

REFLECTION

Hymn - Lead, Kindly Light

Lead, kindly Light, amid th' encircling gloom;
O lead me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home;
O lead me on!
Keep firm my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene, one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that you
Should lead me on.
I loved to choose and see my path, but now,
Please lead me on!
I loved the garish day, and spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will; remember not past years.

So long your pow'r has blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

The Prayers of Intercession

The Peace

To crown all things there must be love,
to bind all together and complete the whole.
Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts.
The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Hymn - Great is thy faithfulness MP 200

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
there is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not,
as Thou hast been Thou for ever wilt be.
*Great is Thy faithfulness, great is Thy faithfulness;
morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed Thy hand hath provided;
great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!*

Summer and winter and spring-time and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.
Great is Thy faithfulness ...

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!
Great is Thy faithfulness ...

(Thomas O Chisholm 1866-1960)

The Blessing

Hear the teaching of Jesus:

'Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it.'

Go now to do God's will;

and the blessing of God almighty,

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

be upon you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

THE ADVENTURE OF PRAYER

A Sermon Series for Summer 2026

Sundays at 10am



“Prayer begins as the opening of my heart and mind to God's love for me. And it never ceases to be that, however wide the demands of that love are discovered to be ... For how can I love my neighbour as myself unless I am deeply aware of what I am, that I am being loved into fullness of life by the Father of us all?”

(Harry Williams CR, *Becoming what I am*)

St Mary's and St John's Kidlington with St Mary's Hampton Poyle.

The Adventure of Prayer
A Sermon Series for Summer 2026

1. Being Loved: Romans 5 : 1-8
David Meara John 3: 16-17
3rd May (Easter 5)
2. How do I pray? 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-23 Liz
Bendor-Samuel Luke 11: 1-4
10th May (Easter 6)
3. Prayer Ministry Romans 12: 9-16
Penny Pedley Luke 11: 5-10
31st May (Trinity)
4. Being Attentive Ecclesiastes 3: 1-11 John
Morris Matthew 25: 1-13
7th June (Trinity 1)
5. Being Justified Romans 4: 18-25
David Meara Luke 18: 1-8
14th June (Trinity 2)