

# Community Vigil

## Saturday 19th November, 2022

Introduction - We gather this evening, people from all walks of life, to honour and pay tribute to the lives of those who have died. We are here because in one way or another, their death affects us all. We come so that we may bring comfort to the family and friends, as we stand with them in their pain and grief.

We come to renew our trust in God who has said: “*I will not fail you or desert you*” (Heb 13:5), and to stand together in our shock and brokenness.

We come to say this is not what Houghton Regis is known for, nor do we want it to be in the future, as together we seek peace and reconciliation, justice and hope.

*Silence*

### Reading - Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me to lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside the still waters.

He restores my soul;

He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil; for You are with me;

Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

All the days of my life;

And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.

*Silence*

## Prayers -

Father, we lift up to God the families caught up in this, those who are frightened, and we pray for peace into the community acknowledging the trauma this incident has caused. Bless those who mourn with the comfort of your love that they may face each new day with hope and the certainty that nothing can destroy the good that has been given. May their memories become joyful, their days enriched with friendship, and their lives encircled by your love.

Loving God, you call us to turn our swords into ploughshares, and our spears into pruning hooks. Begin your work of transformation in all whose lives are overshadowed by knife crime, replacing violence with peace, grief with comfort, fear with your perfect love.

Eternal God, we pray for unity, love, and peace to drive our thoughts, actions, and words. Where our communities are broken, send your Holy Spirit to heal, and show us how we can join in your great work of reconciliation, as you mend and restore all things.

We make these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

## *Silence*

In the Bible we are told, *“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”* (John 1:5) Today of all days, light can feel quite distant. It is easy to be here, and to think that death has won. But the Bible tells us that love is stronger than death, because God is love.

Maybe this evening, even in the shadow of such pain, grief, and brokenness, our most powerful response, is to live our lives as people of peace, hope, joy and love. And so in a symbolic, defiant act, against the evil that has happened, I invite you to break your glow stick, light a candle, turn on your phone torch as together we let light shine in this darkness, and say that no more, will darkness overcome it.

## *Glowsticks are lit*

## Reading - Matthew 5:3-19

Jesus said, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the gentle, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

## *Silence*

### Prayers -

Lord of light, we pray that unity may prevail in our town. Help us to be instruments of Your peace. Help us to come together to resolve the issues that affect us all.

We pray for our community leaders, officials, teachers and emergency services. May you bless them with wisdom, so they be thoughtful in their decisions and listen to the voices of the community.

We pray that our schools will be a safe, positive community for our students.

Today, we stand together as one. We call for an end to the violence and aggression in our town that causes division, despair and death. We long for a shared future where our homes and our streets are safe places again. We declare that the power of love and forgiveness is stronger than the power of fear, violence, and revenge. We will each play our part. We will not be afraid. Today we choose to believe in hope.

We make these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

## *In Silence*

*let us bring our personal prayers to God*

As children of the same heavenly Father,  
we have the confidence to say together,

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.**

**And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

*A minister gives the Blessing,*

The Lord be with you.

**All: And also with you.**

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God  
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;  
and the ✠ blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always

**All: Amen.**

Go in the peace of Christ.

**All: Thanks be to God.**

*Road remains closed until 8pm. People may stay around in quietness.  
If anyone wishes to speak to church representatives after or for prayer, they can.*

