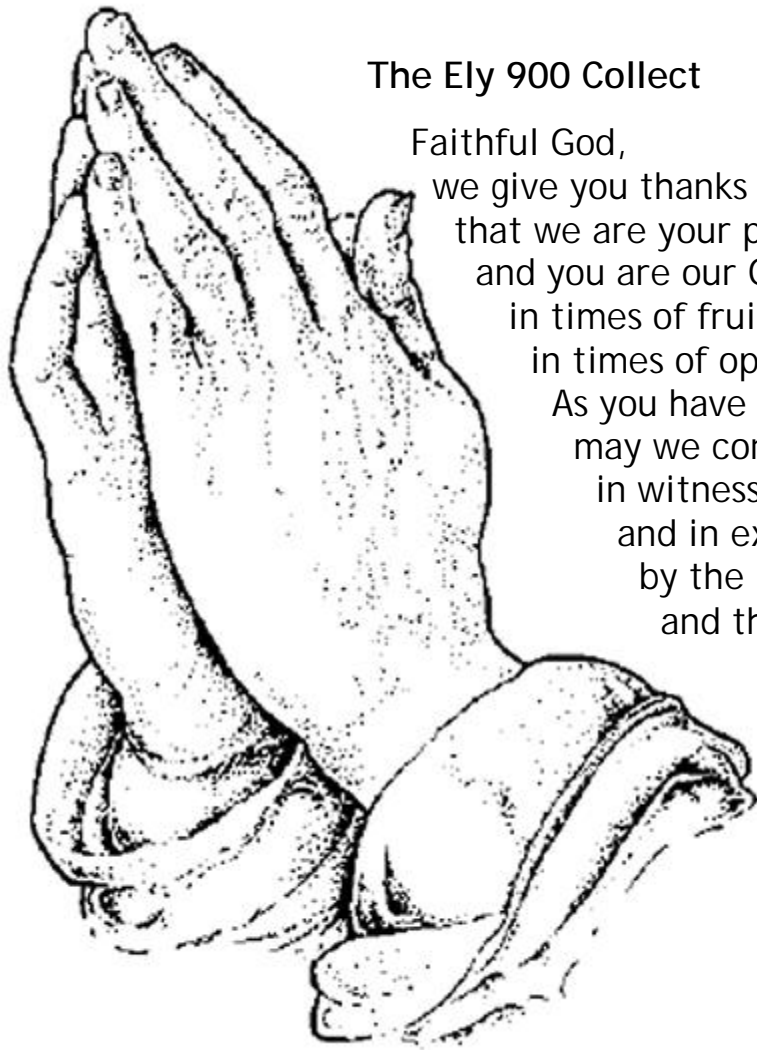




Prayer Leaflet

January 2009



The Ely 900 Collect

Faithful God,
we give you thanks
that we are your people
and you are our God,
in times of fruitfulness and times of need;
in times of opportunity and times of challenge.
As you have been faithful to us,
may we continue in faithfulness to you,
in witness to your love
and in expectation of your promises,
by the power of your Spirit
and through Jesus Christ our Lord.



The Parish Church of St Mary the Virgin
Godmanchester

Into the Unknown

Hebrews 11:8-16

By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to set out for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; and he set out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he stayed for a time in the land he had been promised, as in a foreign land, living in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city that has foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith he received power of procreation, even though he was too old—and Sarah herself was barren—because he considered him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one person, and this one as good as dead, descendants were born, 'as many as the stars of heaven and as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore.'

All of these died in faith without having received the promises, but from a distance they saw and greeted them. They confessed that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth, for people who speak in this way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of the land that they had left behind, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; indeed, he has prepared a city for them.

One of the greatest obstacles we face in following Christ is fear of the unknown. We yearn to know in advance the outcome of our obedience and where he is taking us, yet we are given only the assurance that he is with us and that he is in charge. And with that, we venture into the unknown with him.

Abraham modelled the response of a person who is willing to walk with God into an uncertain future. "By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going" (Hebrews 11:8).

Abraham knew that God had called him and had given him a promise — and that was enough. He was willing to entrust his future to the Lord.

We may do the same by trusting our Lord for the future and stepping out in faith. As we stand on the threshold of a new year, may this prayer of faith and anticipation be ours:

O Lord God, who has called us, your servants,
To ventures of which we cannot see the ending,
By paths as yet untrodden,
And through perils unknown,
Give us faith to go out with good courage,
Not knowing where we go
But only that your hand is leading us
And your love is supporting us. Amen.



Our Prayers in January are especially requested for:

In the Church

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18 - 25 Jan) – pray for the activities and services to mark this special week, and that Christians everywhere can put aside that which divides them and share God's peace together.

Ely 900 launch service (24 Jan), with the Archbishop of Canterbury – pray for this weekend, and events throughout the coming year.

Revd John Smith, inducted as the new Baptist minister (10 Jan) – pray for him, and for our Baptist neighbours as they embark on this next stage of their journey with God.

Mothers' Union – for the work of the MU towards the unity of divided Christian communities.

Choir – giving thanks for the young people who have joined and praying that more will join in the New Year; and for the Choir party (9 Jan)

Flower Guild – for the lonely and the housebound and all those who help to care for them.

In the Community

Pray for those who live on the fringes of society, and for the homeless especially during the cold winter months.

Pray for those who have lost their jobs during the last few weeks.

The Schools in the town – for all those responsible for the teaching of learning, that they keep their good health, enthusiasm for children and successes in teaching during the coming term.

In the World

Christian Solidarity Worldwide – Heavenly Father, we thank you for the life of your Son Jesus, and that Christians in difficult situations walk in strength, knowing that he was persecuted and betrayed by his own people. We thank you that through his example we have learnt to strive for justice, peace and love in our nations.

The charity the Church supports through the collection plate in January: **Church Army**, whose mission is to reach the least, the last and the lost with the life changing transforming love of Jesus Christ.

This month, in our Street Prayer Mission, we'll be praying for:

Week commencing Sunday, 4 January

Bayliss; Bluegate; Hudpool; Pinder Close; Malcoff.

Week commencing Sunday, 11 January

Pettit Road; Windsor Road; Stuart Close; Ravenshoe.

Week commencing Sunday, 18 January

Buttermel; Brickkiln; Ferndown; Golden Rod.

Week commencing Sunday, 25 January

**London Street; Betts Close; Barringer Court; Earning Street;
Sylton Close**

Please remember the residents of these streets, those known to us, and especially those, as yet, unknown to us.

Some Prayers for January:

Creator of the heavens,
who led the Magi by a star
to worship the Christ-child:
guide and sustain us,
that we may find our journey's end
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Heavenly Father,
at the Jordan you revealed Jesus as your Son:
may we recognize him as our Lord
and know ourselves to be your beloved children;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Eternal Lord,
our beginning and our end:
bring us with the whole creation
to your glory, hidden through past ages
and made known
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your apostles,
'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you':
look not on our sins but on the faith of your Church
and grant it the peace and unity of your kingdom;
where you are alive and reign with the Father
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

God of all mercy,
your Son proclaimed good news to the poor,
release to the captives,
and freedom to the oppressed:
anoint us with your Holy Spirit
and set all your people free
to praise you in Christ our Lord.

God of heaven,
you send the gospel to the ends of the earth
and your messengers to every nation:
send your Holy Spirit to transform us
by the good news of everlasting life
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

