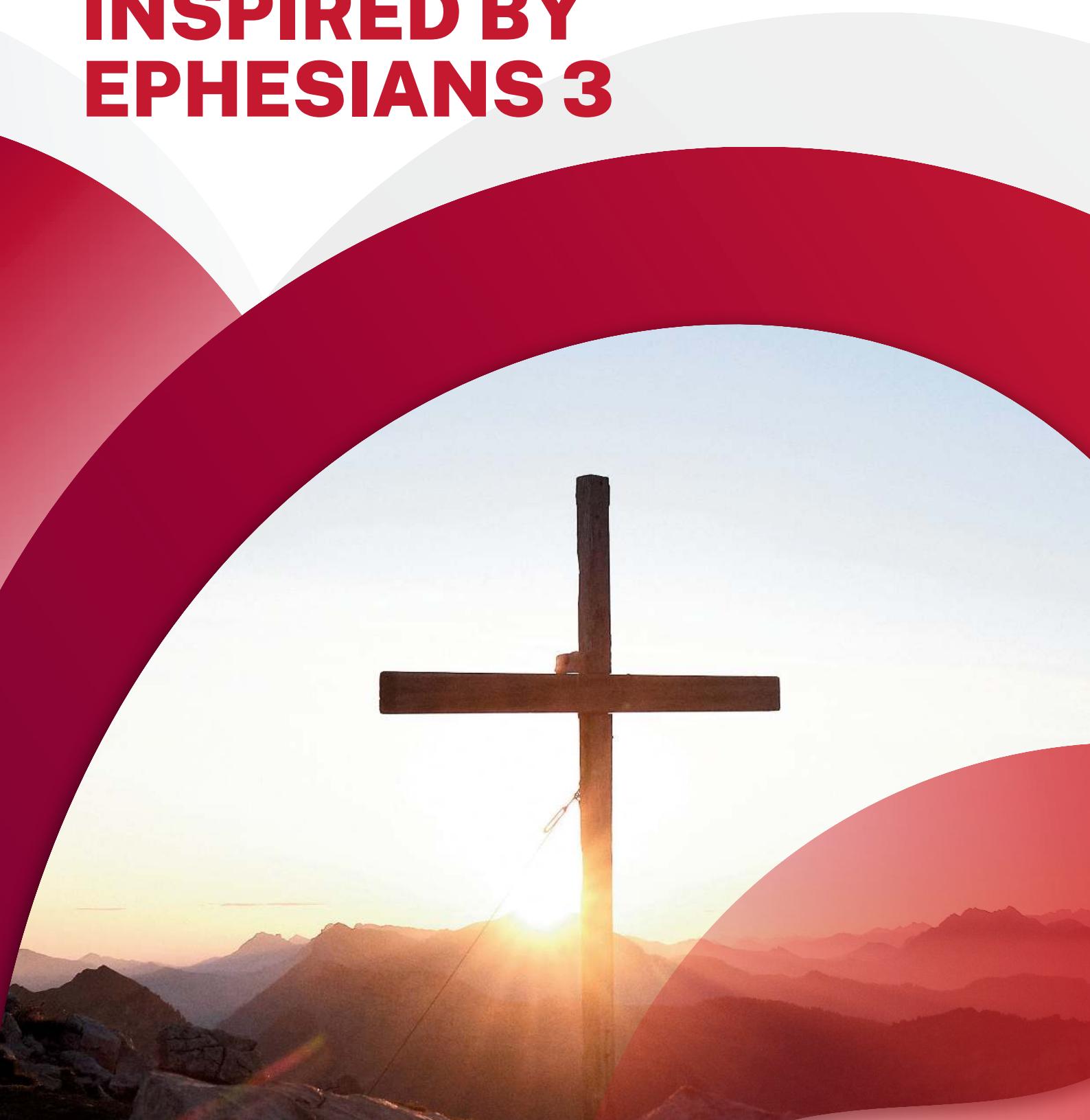




South West Peninsula Methodist District

REFLECTIONS & RESOURCES INSPIRED BY EPHESIANS 3



Introduction

This booklet gathers together prayers and reflections inspired by Ephesians 3:14–21, our South West Peninsula District’s scripture focus for the year.

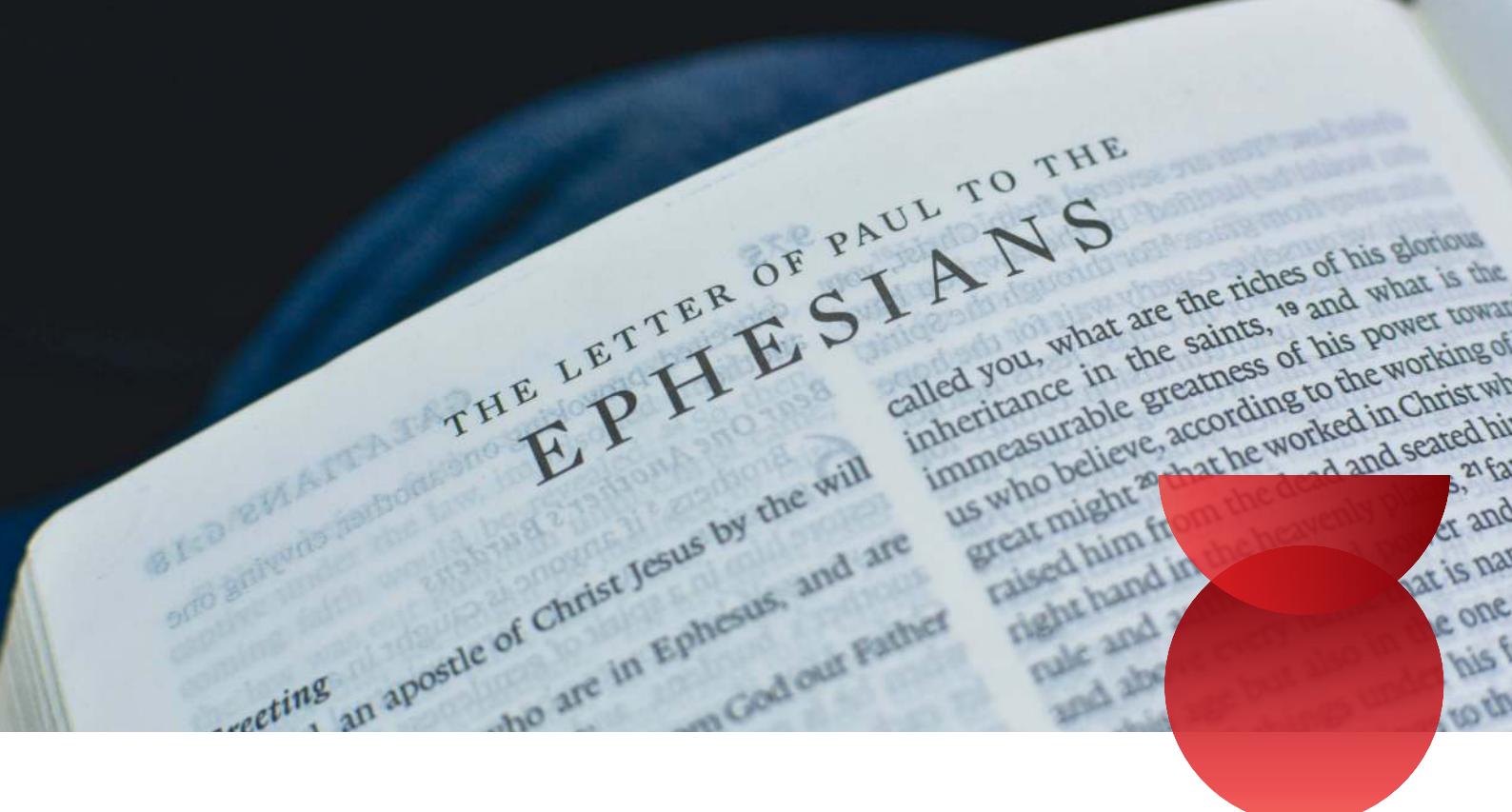
Rooted in Paul’s great prayer for a people to be strengthened in love, we offer these resources for personal devotion, small group conversation, and moments of shared worship as well as wider information on the wider resources within the district.

Our hope is that these words will help us dwell more deeply in the breadth, length, height, and depth of Christ’s love as it takes shape among us.

With grateful thanks to all who have contributed their wisdom, creativity, and prayerful insight to this collection.

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Ephesians 3: 14 – 21(NRSV)

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. ¹⁶ I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, ¹⁷ and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love.

¹⁸ I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth,¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.²⁰ Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine,²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever.

Amen.



Intercessions for Synod September 2025

We come before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. And we pray for the Church, the world, and all who seek to live and serve in love.

Gracious God, Strengthen your Church with power through your Spirit in our inner being. May Christ dwell in our hearts through faith, and may we be rooted and grounded in love. Bless our leaders with wisdom, courage, and compassion. May your fullness overflow in every act of worship, witness, and welcome. We pray for those stepping into new ministries, new roles, or new seasons of life. Give them strength through your Spirit and courage to follow your call. May Christ dwell richly in their hearts, and may they grasp the vastness of your love. Empower them to serve with joy, humility, and hope.

God of the land and its rhythms, We pray for those who live and work in rural communities – farmers, carers, clergy, and neighbours. Bless the soil, the seasons, and the sacred stillness. Strengthen those who face isolation, economic uncertainty, or dwindling resources. May rural churches be places of rooted hope, hospitality, and renewal.

God of movement and diversity, We pray for those who dwell in towns and cities – amid bustle, beauty, and brokenness. Bless the planners, the pastors, the poets, and the people. May urban churches be beacons of justice, creativity, and sanctuary. Help us to see Christ in every street corner, every crowded bus, every quiet cry.

God of tide and tempest, We pray for those who live and livelihoods are by the sea and dotted along the coastline. Bless the harbours, the horizons, and the homes shaped by salt and story. Protect those who face rising waters, coastal erosion, seasonal work, or fragile economies. May coastal churches offer refuge, rhythm, and radiant welcome.

God of boundless grace, We pray for individuals across our district – those in churches, homes, workplaces, and quiet corners of discernment. May each one be inspired and emboldened through knowing the love of Christ – a love that surpasses knowledge, heals wounds, and awakens purpose. Help us look forward in faith and hope, trusting that you are already at work in us and through us. May your Spirit stir fresh courage, holy imagination, and deep joy in every heart.

Now to the One who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly more than we can ask or imagine, to God be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever.

Amen.

Deacon Ruth Richey

Thoughts on Ephesians

'Filled with all the fulness of God' prayed deeply, reverently, significantly as silence enveloped the room: spiritual thoughts of holiness, value and inspiration were shared amongst those gathered. Yet my mind veered towards 'Toy Story', as Mrs Potato-head busily packs her husband's head with essentials for the adventure ahead- for the toys were off on a rescue mission to the great outside world: the vast unknown where Woody had been snatched and the toys were to bring him back to a home where he was loved.

Obviously, Mr Potato-head must be ready for anything; not knowing what he might encounter, his wife piled in objects- '*spare shoes, a golf ball, your angry eyes, and a key- I don't know what it's for, but it might be useful.*' Shortly afterwards, in went the monkeys and a huge ball of blue playdough- pushed in so firmly that Mr Potato head's face changed, his nose popped forward and an ear dropped off as a stream of blue playdough appeared, pushing his features out of place. He was truly filled to overflowing, thanks to the care of his beloved wife.

Meanwhile, somewhere inside, a key languished that might prove useful for the journey ahead: perhaps this is where I returned to Paul's prayer- our personal key for living well for Christ.

'Here, this is for you- the key to my heart'
Words spoken gently, graciously, generously,
As a large, heavy, iron key was gently placed into my hands.

'But, no, surely not- it cannot be' I replied, meeting his gaze with mine-
'It's way too small.'
He smiled, and gave me it anyway,
'You might need it- sometime'

And he left me, holding the key- Slowly growing warm in the palm of my hand.
'For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father'
This, the key to being filled with the fulness of God-
Too large for any of us to hold in our hands.

Or in our heads-
Giving strength and encouragement
Wherever, whatever we encounter
Throughout our adventure of faith.

Revd Janet Park



Photo credit: Rev7CommunityHairSalon

A view from the salon chair

In Ephesians 3:14–21, Paul prays not for external success or recognition, but for inner strengthening — that Christ might dwell within us so deeply that love becomes our root and our grounding. This love isn't small or contained; it is vast — stretching beyond knowledge itself, filling us with the fullness of God.

In the context of REV7 and our mission through NPNP and CAM, this prayer becomes the heartbeat of what we do. Every haircut, every welcome, every conversation becomes a vessel of that love — a living reminder that transformation begins from within. We are strengthened not to stand above others, but to kneel beside them, rooted in compassion, serving from the abundance of God's love that overflows beyond measure.

Revd Darren Middleton



Prayer

Loving God, root us in Your boundless love, that through every act of care and creativity in this salon, Your fullness may flow — healing, restoring, and renewing all who enter.

Amen.



A reflection from “another” Chair

Paul’s prayer for the Christians in Ephesus is surely one of the great prayers of the New Testament in its scope and vision of what God can do, and desires for all creation. This is a prayer for all, in every circumstance faced, to be given strength as God’s Spirit works at transforming and growing us. Holding this all together is the vision that Paul has of the enduring and abiding love of God in Christ that is majestically described in v 18-19:

¹⁸ I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.’

This invitation to comprehend the incomprehensible in being bound up with God’s purposes and intention is a picture of God’s love that wins. This love is strong enough to sustain us through every circumstance and fills us to become the people God intends us to be.

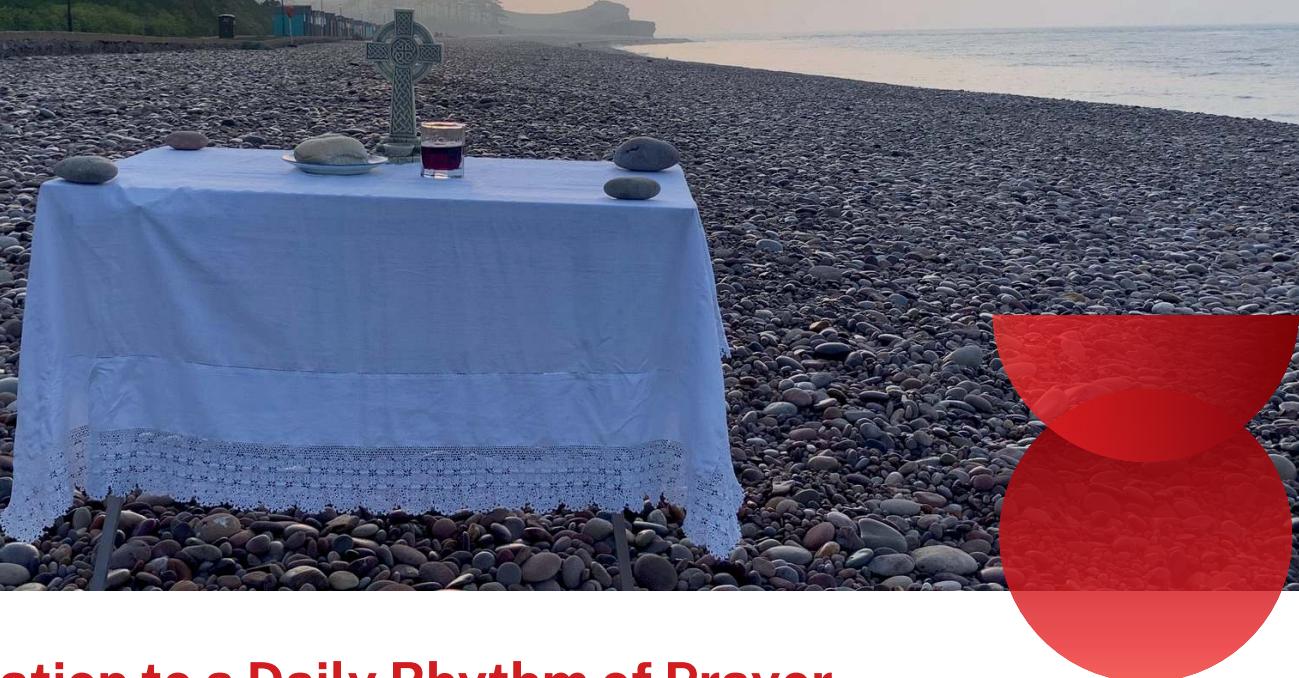
I wonder what this prayer unlocks within you as you read these verses?

What does this love of Christ feel like for you today?

When have you known the fullness of all that God intends for you?

In reflecting on these verses, may this prayer open your eyes and hearts to a deeper knowledge of God’s love and grace in a world under pressure, and how the fullness of God is opened up for you.

Revd Dr Dan Haylett



An invitation to a Daily Rhythm of Prayer

At Shoreline Methodist community we encourage a daily rhythm of prayer. We pause and bring to mind a Shoreline that is familiar, maybe it's one near where you live, one you have visited or perhaps you might create one in your imagination. We picture Jesus standing on that Shoreline, inviting us to dwell a while with him, to share with him, to be honest with him.

And so, we pray ...

Loving God, creator of the skies and the seas, lift our eyes toward you this morning,
Jesus of the Shoreline, you are interested in all we experience, the joys we celebrate, the sorrows we hold, walk with us and all we love, care, and pray for,
Holy Spirit of the wind and the waves, lead us, guide us, prompt us, and hold us as we venture out into the day ahead.

Gracious God, three in one, bless us throughout this day.

Amen

Loving God, creator of the skies and the seas, the sun and the moon, as the night falls, we rest in your loving presence and ask for your protection for all those we love and pray for.

Jesus of the Shoreline, we thank you for your constant companionship and friendship as we seek to follow your example and walk in your way.

Holy Spirit of the wind and the waves, comfort us we pray, as we pause and pay attention to your work in our lives and in the world.

Gracious God, light of the world, bless us in our waiting and our resting through these dark night hours till the dawning of the new day.

And with the Psalmist we say:

'In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone Lord make me dwell in safety.'

Amen

For all-ness

‘.... from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name’, ‘...power to comprehend, with all the saints’

Out of the many different things that will be said by our contributors about this powerful passage, it is the ‘for all-ness’ of it that I want to reflect on briefly. One of the great challenges of the early church was to draw together and sustain people from very different backgrounds into one community of faith: those from a Jewish heritage with their particular sense of being God’s people, their adherence to the law and its traditions, and Gentile converts, previously held at arm’s length by Jews and from a very different culture. Imagine the potential mistrust and misunderstanding between them. One of the core themes of Ephesians is that now, in Christ, they are one people, belonging together, ‘all the saints’.

And if the prayer of this passage is answered, if the Christians in Ephesus are indeed indwelt by Christ - rooted and established in love, with the power to comprehend the width, length, height and depth of Jesus’ love - despite their differences and the fact that they might still not always agree on everything, how might their sense of togetherness, the way they look at each other, speak and behalf towards each other, be changed?

We live in a challenging season for the inherited church, when we are aware of the struggle to find people to sustain church life, when we can be concerned about finances, and ministry is stretched. Tiredness and pressure breeds tetchiness, our differing theologies can become points of division, balancing the traditional with the new creates frustrations. It can be easy for relationships to become strained. So maybe we need to hear the ‘for all-ness’ of this passage as church, and in Christ’s boundless love be gentle and gracious with each other. This prayer is not only for the Ephesians as individuals but also as the community of the church, that they might become a community.

I also reflect that one of the things I treasure as a Methodist is the ‘for all-ness’ of our tradition. It is what inspired John Wesley’s travels around the country, the open-air preaching, the emphasis of Charles’ hymn-writing – that Christ’s love was for all, irrespective of who people were or their circumstances. There was (and is, of course) a gospel to be preached and practical love to be shown. The beauty and power of the phrase ‘from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name’ is often overlooked in this passage. We live our inheritance out in so many ways – I write this having seen the ‘Let’s Face It’ displays on homelessness last week and after sharing in worship on Safeguarding Sunday (creating a safe space for everyone), not to mention the good practical community kingdom work that is being done around the District...

...But I have also to say that, across my lifetime, I have never been as concerned as I am today about the future of our country. Things like the scapegoating and blaming of immigrants, the inflammatory tone of public rhetoric, and the misappropriation of our national flags, for example, fill me with unease about where we are heading. So again, maybe we need to hear the 'for all-ness' of this passage as Christians living in society, that God names every family – every family – in heaven and of earth. And hearing, as a justice-seeking church, may it inform our attitudes, our use of language, and our engagement with the world around us.

Revd Kevin Hooke



A Different Perspective

Several years ago, I briefly lived and worked in Nepal. Whilst there I climbed up into the Annapurna region for a couple of days and took the photo you see below. The picture hangs on my wall at home with the words:

*Grasp how wide & long & high & deep
is the love of Christ
that you may be filled to the measure
of all the fullness of God
Ephesians 3: 17 – 18*



The photo shows the middle section of a panoramic shot I took, hence the word “wide”.

If you look at the left of the photo, you can see a valley, which demonstrates just how “high” up I was and how far away the valley is which demonstrates the “depth”.

Travelling to Nepal and climbing in the Annapurna region gave me a whole new perspective on those words “high & deep & wide & long” from this passage.

Whatever our experience of these words are, it’s wonderful to know that God’s promise of his love for us is on a different level. When we experience this love, our wonder of God takes new directions, finds new levels and an inspiration that both grounds us, but also releases within us things that are well outside our own ability.

God bless.

Helen Pearce
District Social Justice Coordinator



Rooted and Grounded

Paul's prayer in this passage is one of the most expansive, hope-filled blessings in Scripture. It begins in humility — "I bow my knees before the Father" — and rises into a vision so generous that it stretches the imagination. Paul isn't praying for the Ephesians to simply "get by" in faith; he is praying for them to be strengthened, indwelt, rooted, grounded, expanded, and filled.

At the heart of the prayer is love — not a fleeting emotion, but the steady, anchoring, life-altering love of Christ. Paul imagines this love as something with dimensions: breadth, length, height, depth. It is as if he is inviting us to step into a vast landscape, a love that cannot be contained by intellect alone but must be lived, breathed, and experienced. This love meets us in every season of life.

For those who are retired and navigating the shifting identity that comes when work no longer structures the day, this prayer speaks of an inner strength that does not depend on productivity or role. It reminds them that their worth is rooted not in what they do but in the love that holds them.

For those who live alone — whether by choice, circumstance, or loss — Paul's words offer companionship. Christ dwelling in the heart is not a poetic flourish but a profound truth: no one is ever truly alone in the household of God. The breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love reaches into quiet rooms, long evenings, and the spaces where silence feels heavy.

For those who find life a struggle — emotionally, physically, spiritually — this passage is a lifeline. Paul does not pray that they become strong by their own effort, but that strength is granted to them. God's power is already at work within us, even when we feel fragile. And for those juggling responsibilities, carrying invisible loads, or trying to hold things together with equal measures of love and exhaustion — this prayer is a reminder that they, too, are rooted in a love deeper than their worries.

The God who strengthens the inner being is present in the school run, the stress inducing meeting, the sleepless night, the family tensions, the laughter around the table, and the moments when patience wears thin. Christ dwells in the heart of the home, the workplace, the gathering, as surely as in the quiet of the sanctuary.

For all of us — those leading, caring, grieving, longing, hoping, dancing, or simply putting one foot in front of the other — this passage is a reminder that the strength we need is not conjured from our own reserves. It is gifted. It is breathed into us. It is rooted in love. The love of Christ is both our root and our horizon. It steadies us. It stretches us.

And it is enough.

Deacon Ruth Richey

Reflective Questions

- Where in your life do you most need to be “strengthened in your inner being” at the moment?
- What helps you feel rooted and grounded in love when everything around you feels changeable?
- How have you experienced the “breadth and length and height and depth” of Christ’s love in ordinary, everyday moments?
- Where might God be inviting you to imagine more expansively—to trust that “abundantly far more” is possible?
- What would it look like to live today as someone already filled with the fullness of God?

Prayer

Holy and generous God,
Strengthen us in our inner being when we feel stretched thin or weary.
Let Christ dwell deeply in our hearts, shaping our thoughts, our words,
and our steps.
Root us again in your love—steady, spacious, and unending.
Open our eyes to the breadth and length and height and depth of your
grace,
a love that holds us when we falter and lifts us when we forget
our worth.
By your Spirit, fill us with your fullness,
that we may live with courage, tenderness, and hope.
And may your power at work within us
do far more than we dare to imagine,
for your glory and for the healing of your world.

Amen.





Guided Meditation on Ephesians 3:14–21

(You may read this slowly, leaving pauses where it feels right.)

Take a moment to settle into a comfortable position.

Let your feet rest on the ground.

Let your shoulders soften.

Let your breath find its own gentle rhythm.

As you breathe in, imagine drawing in calm.

As you breathe out, imagine releasing anything that is weighing heavily on you today.

When you are ready, bring to mind Paul's words:

"I bow my knees before the Father... that you may be strengthened in your inner being."

Place a hand over your heart or your centre.

Imagine a quiet strength rising within you — not forced, not earned, simply given.

A strength that meets you exactly where you are today.

Let this strength be for you if you are tired.

Let it be for you if you are carrying responsibilities for others.

Let it be for you if you are wondering what this season holds.

Let it be for you if you long for companionship.

Let it be for you if life feels like a struggle.

Let it be for you if you holding more than anyone sees.

Breathe in strength.

Breathe out tension.

Imagine Christ gently taking up residence in the deepest part of you—
not as a visitor, but as someone who belongs,
someone who brings peace, warmth, and companionship.

Let that presence settle.
Let it soften the edges of your day.
Let it remind you that you are never alone.

Breathe in comfort.
Breathe out sadness.

Picture yourself as a tree planted beside living water.
Your roots reach deep into rich soil—
the soil of God's love, steady and nourishing.

Feel the stability of those roots.
Feel the safety of being held.

Feel the quiet assurance that you do not have to earn this love.
It is already yours.

Breathe in understanding.
Breathe out lostness.

Now imagine yourself standing in a wide, open landscape—
perhaps the fields or cliffs or shoreline you know well.
Let the horizon stretch around you.

Hear Paul's words:
"the breadth and length and height and depth" of Christ's love.

Let that love expand around you—
wider than your worries,
deeper than your fears,
higher than your hopes,
longer than your journey.

Rest in that vastness.



Finally, imagine a gentle light within you—
the light of God's power at work.
Not dramatic, not overwhelming—
just quietly alive.

This is the power that can do “abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine.”

Let that truth settle into your bones.
Let it bring hope where you feel uncertain.
Let it bring possibility where you feel stuck.
Let it bring comfort where you feel alone.

Take a final deep breath in...
and slowly release it.

When you are ready, gently bring your awareness back to the room.
Carry with you the strength, the presence, the rootedness,
and the vast love that has held you in these moments.



Introduction to a Conversation Series on Ephesians 3:14-21

An intentional conversation is very different to a Bible study. In a Bible study we would expect to bring biblical study skills, such as the genre and context: who it was written for, and what it sets out to do for discussion. The way of addressing a bible passage, for the sake of conversation, is more personal.

In conversation, our aim is to explore and share what we believe and not simply repeat what we have heard, or been taught, by others. We explore the similarities and differences in what we think and feel about a particular topic. Conversation is deepened when we have the courage to express our own thoughts and feelings and while this might include reference to the biblical study skills already mentioned, we need to be aware that these things can become a barrier if the group includes people who are unfamiliar with the bible.

The Transforming Conversation (TC) model can be used in-person or online, with people identifying as Christians or not. It includes an introduction, handout, visual display and time for personal reflection before beginning to talk about this together. All the necessary resources and suggestions are available on the TC website for your use or adaptation.

The introductory conversation on Ephesians 3: 14-21 can be used as a stand-alone resource or as the first part of a series of conversations. Other topics include:

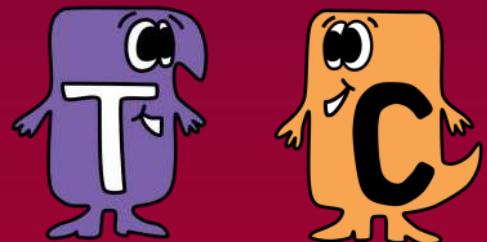
- Thinking about prayer
- The inner life
- Centrality of love
- Faith and belief
- Sense of community

A sample from the Introductory conversation is below. If you would like to find out more or download the conversation resources for this series please visit

www.transformingconversation.org or contact admin@transformingconversation.org

Bev Smerdon

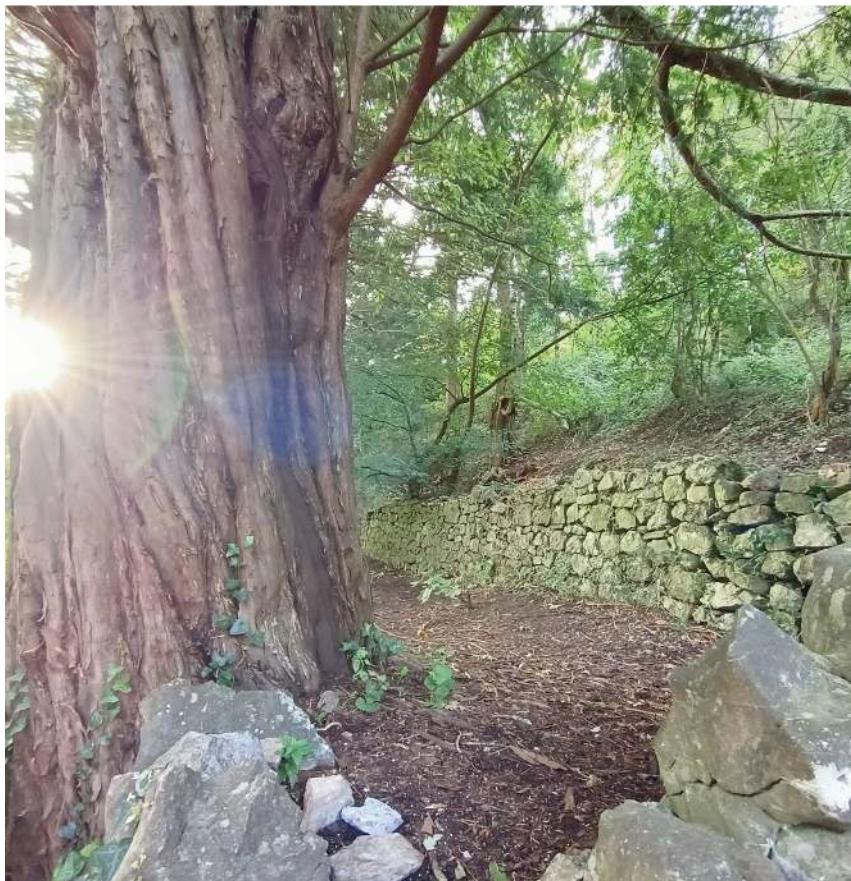
Transforming Conversation Enabler



Conversation Booklet Sample



Welcome to a conversation looking at a passage from the Bible. Irrespective of what you may or may not know about the bible or this particular passage, the aim of our conversation today is to reflect on our personal response to it. [Ephesians 3:14-21 included in full, from an appropriately accessible version of the bible dependent on the group setting.] It is quite a long passage and rather than trying to reflect on it all, you may prefer to think about a particular word, phrase or sentence and what that links to, or reminds you of. In our conversation, we will explore and share some of the thoughts and feelings aroused by the passage or the additional words and images included in this handout.



Opening Reflection:

As we listen and talk to each other about the words written here, let us experience friendship and joy together. And, through the similarities and the differences we hear from one another, may we grow in our understanding of ourselves and find ways to disagree well.

Transforming

Conversation



SOUTH WEST PENINSULA DISTRICT
The **Methodist** Church

South West Peninsula Methodist District

Thank you for taking the time to reflect with us on Ephesians. For any thoughts, ideas or queries, please do contact our district office on the below details:

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Email administrator@swpmethodist.org.uk

Website www.swpmethodist.org.uk

