

HMP MANCHESTER; HMP FOREST BANK; HMP BUCKLEY HALL;
HMP & YOI STYAL; HMP YOI THORN CROSS & HMP HINDLEY

GREATER MANCHESTER COMMUNITY CHAPLAINCY

PRISON PRAYER LETTER DECEMBER 2023

You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. ... Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God."

If we come to the same conclusion then we can enjoy Matthew and Luke's description of his nativity, John's proclamation that he was 'in the beginning' and Mark's statement that he is the Son of God. We are then in a position to face the momentous question of why. He is who he said he is and came from where he said he came so why not accept he came to do what he said he came to do? Just like there are many who want to water down the truth of who Jesus claimed to be there are sadly many who want to do the same with his purpose in coming. They are happy with descriptions of him as teacher, revealer of God's love, example or even healer but stop short of his own claim as having come to give his life as a ransom. He stood with sinners when he was baptized and in the place of sinners when he eventually died on the cross. As amazing as it sounds the truth is that the Son of God became the Son of Man that the sons of men might become the sons of God.

As we celebrate the fact that Jesus came down from heaven let us also pray that many of those who throughout the year have been involved with and either helped or been helped by GMCC will come to know who he is and what he has achieved.

Arthur

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"I have come down from heaven" John 6:38

Who says things like this? Someone who also said he had the authority to forgive sins, that he always existed and was going to come back one day to Judge the world and even associated himself with the unique and special name of God expressed in the phrase "I am". It always puzzles me that some people say Jesus never claimed to be God. During one of his many conflicts with his Jewish opponents Jesus said "I and the Father are one". They prepared to stone him and he asked them why and they replied "We are not stoning you for any good work but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God." They were in no doubt about what he claimed.

C. S. Lewis was an Oxford medieval literature scholar, popular writer, Christian apologist and former atheist. He did not invent but made popular an argument based on these claims of Jesus in a series of BBC radio talks later published as the book 'Mere Christianity'. The argument has been summarised as Jesus being mad, bad or who he said he was. This is how Lewis put it:

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God'. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell.



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- 1 For A who is worried about a close family member, pray for peace and strength
- 2 For R who is making some difficult choices, pray for wisdom and guidance
- 3 For M who is struggling with addiction, pray for love and support
- 4 For E who is hoping for some big changes, pray for God to move in her life
- 5 For A who has had a number of illnesses, pray for continued healing and good health
- 6 For the men on the Alpha course at HMP Manchester that ends today, pray for all the men, that the message of Jesus' love stays with them
- 7 For C who has started a mental well-being journey, pray for wisdom and support
- 8 For P who has no family support, pray for hope, healing and provision
- 9 For all in HMP Manchester, waiting to be moved to different locations, pray for peace in the waiting and hope for the future
- 10 For P who has lost touch with people who care about him, pray for restoration and hope
- 11 For A who is rediscovering his faith, pray for God to speak to him more and more
- 12 For S who is struggling with life and trying to have a good outlook, pray for joy and support
- 13 For P who is looking for accommodation, pray for favour in the process
- 14 For L who has started a new job, pray for more joy and success
- 15 For C who is curious about God, pray for the right people to share with him

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- 16 For B who has recently left prison, pray for the right support and direction
- 17 For the Chaplains in the Manchester Prisons as they prepare for the Christmas services, pray that the message of Jesus touches many hearts
- 18 For B who is struggling with family relationships, pray for peace and restoration
- 19 For S who is struggling to set boundaries, pray for wisdom and strength
- 20 For C who has become a carer, pray for support and guidance
- 21 For M who is trying to stay on the right path since leaving prison, pray for continued support and the right influences
- 22 Pray for volunteers going into Manchester prisons this season, pray for the right words and testimonies to open hearts.
- 23 For A who finds the Christmas and New Year period difficult, pray for good community and peace
- 24 Pray for parents in prison who are missing Christmas with their children, pray for comfort and support
- 25 Pray for all who are in prison this Christmas, offenders, staff as well as their loved ones, pray for hope and reflection during the day.
- 26 Pray for the children missing their parent or carer in prison this Christmas, pray for comfort and peace
- 27 For R who struggles with paranoia and bursts of anger, pray for healing and peace
- 28 For A who is struggling mentally, pray for the right intervention and healing
- 29 Pray for all GMCC volunteers who have done a wonderful job this year, pray that they are blessed throughout 2024
- 30 Pray for the staff in prison over the new year, pray that they have hope for the upcoming year
- 31 Pray for prisoners today, pray that they hold on to hope for a better year than the last