

## Reflection January 4<sup>th</sup> 2026

### Based on John 1:18 'Living Close to God's Heart'

Over the past few days, we have spent time with loved ones, shared moments of grief, moments of pleasure, moments of storytelling and some singing, we've shared table fellowship, and in all those moments we have shared the very essence of what it means to be in an honest and truthful close to a heartfelt relationship with someone.

We have given ourselves to those whom we love, we have forgiven when necessary and accepted forgiveness from others when necessary. We continue to love that close to the heart, closeness we share with others.

In every possible way we are called to be Christlike and that comes out quite clear in John 1:18. It sets out quite a significant foundation which we can understand as being the essence of Christ's divinity and His mission. The verse describes Jesus as being '*close to God's heart*,' offering us a unique lens through which we have the capacity to see the relationship between God, the Son, and all of us as God's beloved children.

The phrase '*close to God's heart*,' speaks directly to us about the incredible intimacy that piques our curiosity about what it means to be near to the 'divine heart,' which is concerned with justice, peace, and the flourishing not just existing but the flourishing, of all creation.

Looking at from John's perspective, the heart is a symbol of our core of who we are – the foundation of our thoughts, emotions, intentions, and desires. So, to be '*close to God's heart*' signifies an intimate familiarity with God's innermost thoughts and feelings. We just celebrated the birth of Jesus; in fact our windows are a reminder of our Christmas celebrations-we haven't left the time of the liturgical yet. Jesus, as the incarnate Word, reveals not only who God is but also what God cares about. If you think no one cares about you, or if you know someone else is thinking that way, you can quite confidently know that isn't right. God cares deeply about everyone. Christ's life reflects the heart of God, through embodying God's concerns for the common good, compassion, forgiveness and love.

When we reflect on the verse there's an implication of a mutual recognition and relationship suggesting that to know Christ *is* to know the heart of God. Jesus epitomises the divine love that surpasses our understanding. He is more than our mediator, he bridges the gap that stands between us and God. This shows us how close we can come into God's sacred space. Through Jesus' actions, teachings, and ultimately his sacrificial death on the cross, Christ reveals the depth of God's desire to be in a relationship with us. Not a forced relationship, one of our choosing. This relationship isn't a far off one, but more like a loving communion that invites us to participate in God's mission in all of Creation.

When we allow ourselves to share God's cares and concerns it means that we are also allowing ourselves to be drawn into the rhythms of God's form of justice and peace. Throughout the ministry of Jesus we witness the interactions Jesus has with people from all forms of society, in different kinds of circumstances, we hear of the healings he did changing peoples lives forever. He healed the broken-hearted offering them hope rather than despair. He also called for a radical love that included enemies. His heart beat with compassion for the sick, the poor and the outcast. The incarnation is a testament to God's commitment to each of us and beyond. God chose to enter into our reality, as an innocent baby, both human and divine, revealing that divine love is active and participatory not aloof in some far off distant place.

To be close to God's heart also compels us to be actively engaged in our communities. If Christ embodies the concerns of the common good, peace, and enough-for-all, then to be near his heart is to align ourselves with the same concerns. Such intimacy alters how we see the world and where we fit into it. It challenges us and the wider community to become advocates for peace and love. Through prayer, praise, and worship with God and Christ as our center, we find our hearts stirred up with a desire to respond to the world as God responds; with love, hope, joy, peace, kindness and a relentless pursuit for the common good.

This kind of intimacy reveals the nature of God's creation. God's heart desires not only the well-being of humankind but also a thriving creation. When we think of creation, we think of what's close to God's heart, we think of the health of the environment, because it was created out of love, providing us with beautiful spaces and places to find our most sacred place.

As we reflect on being *close to God's heart* this morning, I invite you to feel God's embrace and be comfortable in listening deeply to God's voice as you act on Christ's behalf in pursuit of a world that better reflects God's love and grace.

John has painted a rich and intimate picture of Christ's role within the Trinity and his relationship with us. As Christ's followers we are invited into that intimate and safe space. We are reminded that being *close to God's heart* isn't a passive experience but an active one that calls us into the world with compassion and be advocates of love, hope, joy peace, and kindness in abundance.

This kind of love is firmly founded in the heart of God, it becomes our guiding principle, teaching us that true intimacy leads not just to knowledge of God but into action embodying God's heart for the world. In a world that so desperately craves justice, peace, and to thrive in the holistic space, answering the call to dwell close to the heart of God becomes paramount-both for our journey, and the journey of the wider community.

Amen

Let us pray

God, Father of Jesus and us all, we come to you today in gratitude for the revelation of Your Son, Jesus, who has made your heart known to us. Thank you for the deep truth that, though no one has ever seen you, Jesus, your only Son, reveals your glory and grace. Help us to live into his gift of grace and understanding as we walk in the light of your love. May we all reflect your truth in our lives. Amen