



SOME THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS FOR OUR CHURCH, ST. JOHN'S, ITS CLERGY AND ITS CONGREGATION – MAY 2020

Heavenly Father, we ask that you continue to give us strength to help with the sharing of the responsibility of looking after each other and our church. Help us to grow in faith, to love one another, care for those in need and reach out to them. We give thanks for all the work that has been done by so many to date, to keep our church appear the warm, welcoming place it has always been and its members cared for.

We thank you for our Sunday services and the contribution made by Lisa and Mike, Gillian and Laszlo, Hazel, Julia, Tracy and Sheila and not forgetting Katherine and her beautiful singing, as well as the technicians, Ken and James, that have made our worship possible. We thank you too, for the active assistance by those helping others who are confined by the lock down and caring for our church and churchyard. May we emerge from this experience even stronger as a church community and with even deeper, richer faith.

We should give thanks for VE Day. On the 8th May, we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II when after so much suffering and so much courage, we had peace once more and freedom from the threat of Nazi tyranny. We know much hardship did continue for sometime afterwards, but at least once Japan was defeated on 15th August (VJ Day) war was at an end.

Our life continues as near to normal as is possible despite the restrictions. Meetings for some continue with the help of technology. St. John's Communication group meet on Monday. The C of E School will hold a virtual Governors meeting on 20th May. Whilst we pray for the success of the meeting, we pray for all our school children whose lives are so disrupted. They miss the company of friends as well as regular teaching. Teachers are working hard but no technology can replace the support of timely tuition. Public examination and university degree candidates must be going through a worrying time.

Funerals of a kind are still being held. We pray for the family of Rod Kennedy whose funeral will be on 15th May at Easthamstead Crematorium.

We must include in our list of thanks and extend our gratitude to all our doctors and nurses in our homes, surgeries and hospitals. Particular thanks must go to our care workers both home visiting and in our nursing homes. They have had to carry on through supply shortages and in some cases criticism in the most difficult of circumstances. Anyone working in these front-line conditions deserves our acknowledgement and appreciation.

We remember the lives of several people who have devoted themselves to serving Our Lord.

St. Julian Norwich who experienced visions revealing aspects of the love of God on the 8th May 1375. She spent her life considering their meaning and communicating them.

On the 24th May 1738, John Wesley took Holy Orders and began an interesting ministry which developed into the Methodist Church. His brother, Charles joined him in his mission. He wrote thousands of hymns celebrating God's work. Both brothers died in 1788, John on 2nd March and Charles on 29th March.

The Venerable Bede, a famous historian, is remembered. He wrote the whole history of England up to 729. He was renowned for his monastic fidelity and his love of teaching. He died 25th May 735.

On 26th May 597 we remember St. Augustine sent to England by Pope Gregory to re-evangelise the English Church. He became the first Archbishop of Canterbury.

On 30th May we remember Josephine Butler, a devout Anglican and woman of prayer. She campaigned on behalf of women forced into prostitution to survive. She succeeded in achieving the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act in 1883. She also wrote the biography of St. Catherine of Sienna whose own spirituality had inspired her.

Our prayers are with those who worship and attend Salisbury Cathedral who are celebrating the eight hundredth year of its construction. The old cathedral at Old Sarum had provided a place of worship for 200 years but needed much restoration. Together both cathedrals represent 1,000 years of Christian worship in Salisbury. We hope the efforts being made to overcome the closure of the cathedral ensure a success for the exhibition, specially planned, to commemorate the event.

We celebrate some saints this month

1st May we celebrate the lives of Philip and James who were among the original 12 apostles.

14th May we celebrate the life of Matthias, chosen by lot to replace Judas Iscariot as the 12th apostle, required to make up the number 'to sit on the thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel.'

Thursday 21st May we celebrate Ascension Day.

Glory to the King of Kings,

Glory to the Lord of Lords,

Glory to him who has ascended.

O risen and ascended Christ, all authority in heaven and earth is yours.

We proclaim you as our Lord.

We offer you our love,

we give you our whole lives.

Lord, may we enter into your Kingdom and be with you in glory,

where you are with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever. Amen

Sunday 31st May we celebrate Pentecost.

Lord God Almighty, pour upon us your Spirit,

and set us on fire with love for you,

that we may bring forth the fruits of love, joy and peace,

and live to the praise of your holy name;

through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen

