

Intercessions on Sunday 17 January 2021

by Chris Seward

Dear Lord God, creator of our world, we give you thanks this morning for the beauty of your environment and for the opportunities it can give us to pause, to reflect and to pray. Just as Nathaniel had his special place under a fig tree where he could retreat and where he was to hear the invitation of your son, Jesus Christ, may we also value those special places where we can hear your Word.

We pray that we are open to your calling even when, initially, our response may be (like that of Samuel) one of bemusement and puzzlement or (like that of Nathaniel) one of scepticism. Give us the faith to let go our doubts and to follow you.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for our two parishes, for what is special and unique to each and what is shared. We thank you for the leadership of Alan and the staff team: Wendy, Bill, Melanie, Geoff and Forbes-Lord, may you continue to inspire and sustain their work. And we thank you for all those whose contributions to the lives of St Andrew's and St Mary's help ensure we reflect something of what you would wish us to be.

Together, may we find new ways to enable others to hear your calling and to find their true selves.

We pray for the schools in our parishes and ask that staff, parents, children and governors be sound in mind, body and in spirit and we pray for all community activities, many of which are suspended, that they will remain a channel for keeping people connected and engaged.

Lord, in your mercy.....

We pray for our world during this pandemic and remember that, in this country, we are not alone in dealing with the challenges of decision making, treatment and recovery. We give thanks for all the research and expertise which has brought us, so quickly, to an understanding of the virus, for all those who are treating us with care and compassion and for those who have volunteered to support the programmes of recovery either here or abroad. May we all find encouragement that better days lie ahead and may your presence continue to give hope, not least in these dark hours.

Lord, in your mercy.....

Let us pray now for those countries where division and dispute is so harmful to those who live there. For the United States, we pray that the Christian faith of the new President will strengthen him as he seeks to bring recovery, healing and greater unity. In Uganda, we pray that peace and justice will prevail although, right now, the pathways are hard to discern. In Hong Kong, we ask that the cause of democracy remains strong and that people of faith are able to worship freely and without fear while, in Afghanistan, we pray for a measure of stability to allow its people to experience a more peaceful and just society.

Lord, in your mercy.....

We pray now for those who are sick and those who seek healing. We remember our hospitals and nursing homes, the work of carers and all engaged in responding to sickness of any kind. We ask that we may also be strengthened to bring hope to others-be they those we meet, those we know as well as those we love. May our words, actions and prayers bring hope and light to others.

We bring before you those most in need, remembering especially:

Peter, Gwen and family, Imogen, Barbara, Maureen, Susan, Bernard, Paul, David, Moyra, Tim, Mark, Colin, Dorothy, Julie, Colin

And we remember those who have passed on from this life:

Ted Nadkarni (former curate at St Andrew's), Pamela Carter, Pamela Goodman, Patrick Harris, John Probert, Thomas Ayre

And those whose anniversaries fall at this time:

George Gray, Ingeborg Griffiths, Tony Walton, Alan Ledsam, Bessie Louise Akers

May all who care, remember and mourn be comforted by your promise of hope and eternal life.

Lord, in your mercy.....

So, Lord God, at this Epiphany time we remember you are the light that we search for...may we, like Samuel and Nathaniel, hear you and, like the Wise Men, may we find you.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.