

THE PARISH POST

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF SANDFORD, NEW BUILDINGS AND UPTON HELLIONS CHURCHES

10TH MAY 2020

Welcome to this Sunday's service which you can join at 10am online or catch later.

I am completing this newsletter on VE Day, watching neighbours hang bunting before around the country people celebrate whilst socially distancing (calling for great ingenuity). But VE Day caused me to ask questions of how family members alive then, celebrated the day. I found that my father who was in the Mediterranean flying with RAF air-sea rescue based in Italy had kept this letter from Field Marshall Alexander and I dedicate this to all our family members who served in WW2 wherever they were serving. *No praise is high enough for you sailors, soldiers, airmen and workers of the United Forces (in Italy) for your magnificent triumph. My gratitude to you and my admiration is unbounded ...*

Dear Lord, we pray for every military service man and woman we know, for their safety and security, for their resilience and yet for their peace. Thank you for them as we pronounce a blessing over their lives.

This week Chris from Combe Lancey way emailed a great quote to share with us all.

Life is short. Break the rules. Forgive quickly. Kiss slowly. Love truly. Laugh uncontrollably. And never regret ANYTHING that makes you smile. (Mark Twain)

Dear Lord, thank you for the joy bringers we know, the laughter makers, those who use art and cartoons to lift our spirits, who've used social media to create funny videos and uplifting music to cheer us up. Lord we thank you for their gifts and speak a blessing over them.

As we end the seventh week of lock-down I am humbled and so grateful for those who have kept society trundling along in an often sacrificial way. Those who grow and prepare our food, shop and supermarket workers, delivery drivers and above all care workers both in care homes and in the community. Most of these are among the lowest paid in our society.

Dear Lord, thank you for all those who have served us with essential services through this last seven weeks. We thank you for their commitment and good cheer throughout. We pray for their families who have seen less of them and see they are getting tired. Lord would you bless all of them and their families in a very special way.

This week I read a report that people in Britain are more scared of the coronavirus than in any other country 'because they care more about their fellow citizens', an international study has found. 'The national stereotype is that British people are fairly reserved, but when something goes on people seem very willing to step in and do the right thing'. We do live in a lovely caring community and I thought Stu's article in the Crossing magazine said it so well. But we have also seen a wonderful response in other parts of the country through churches and through charities meeting the needs of those really struggling in the crisis. The Thursday evening 'clap for carers' epitomises this spirit.

Dear Lord, thank you for the generous and sacrificial caring that has gone on throughout the country over the last seven weeks as people have looked after each other. We pray that this outward looking spirit of kindness and concern for each other becomes the new normal. Lord will you bless each person who has gone the extra mile and bless each deed that it bears fruits of kindness and compassion.

SUNDAY'S READINGS: Acts 7:55-60, Psalm 31:1-5; 15-16; 1 Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14

Whether you listen in and join Paul on a Sunday or whether you catch up on his Sunday sermon later in the week, it helps if you have read the scriptures through beforehand. This week you will read about the first Christian martyr called Stephen, read some beautiful words from Psalm 31 that are worth copying out and pinning up somewhere for when you feel low and read again some familiar words of Jesus that are often used in funeral services.

RECEIVING PAUL'S SERVICES

Remember if you are on Facebook Paul will be live streaming the service for Sundays and on Wednesdays there will be live streaming of Wednesday prayers. If you are not on Facebook but want to catch the recording go to: <https://www.facebook.com/saintswithunschurchsandford/> (It will keep asking you to either sign in to Facebook or join up but just click NOT NOW). Then scroll down until you see Paul's video and click PLAY. The recordings can also be found on our website (see top of this page) so make sure you stay in touch!

