

THE PARISH POST

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF SANDFORD, NEW BUILDINGS AND UPTON HELLIONS CHURCHES

24TH JANUARY 2021

Welcome to our Sunday service on line at 10am. Paul will be in St Swithun's Church but the rest of us in the warmth, comfort and safety of our homes.

REFLECTIVE PRAYER

Led by Paul, this oasis of stillness and hope from the vicarage kitchen is on Wednesday mornings at 9.30am on Facebook and is also posted on the Parish website.

YOUNG PEOPLE

One way or another those born this century will grow up with their lives forever marked and changed by this pandemic. I heard from a friend this week whose two sons, both at university, have chosen to volunteer and live in a local dementia Care Home which is terribly short staffed. They are working up to 13 hour shifts and somehow fitting in their university studies. One of them caught Covid there and so spent his 20th birthday isolated in a caravan in the grounds. Up and down the country there are young people volunteering and working and showing compassion, resilience and kindness.

CONNECT

I contacted the local Connect team to see how they were managing to do their job with young people when they can't actually meet them! Lydia is the full time Connect worker in Crediton and Dave is the youth worker at CCC (Crediton Congregational Church). Dave said, 'We have been helping build a library of revision resources currently focusing on the GCSE Christianity unit; providing pastoral support to both students and staff; engaging with students outside the school setting by running online and detached youth activities and encouraging various young people as we encounter them. Thank you for remembering us and them and praying for us all.'

SO IN YOUR PRAYERS

- Pray for the staff (teaching, support and admin) at Sandford School, at QE, at Exeter College as well as all learning settings. Pray that staff are able to adapt to new ways of delivering learning and that they retain their love of the job and their sense of humour.
- Pray for all children and students from those in nurseries and play groups up to those at universities. Pray for those who feel disappointed and disregarded, those who are anxious and stressed that they develop resilience, work hard and make wise choices.
- Pray for all parents who are juggling a working life with home schooling and pray that homes are drenched with kindness and understanding.

You could pray these words over our nation's young people. They are at the end of Luke chapter 2 and were said about the boy Jesus. **'He grew in wisdom and stature and found favour with God and with people'**. Pray that they learn and continue their schooling (wisdom), that they are healthy in body and mind (stature), that they have good friendships and role models (favour with people) and have hearts to know God (favour with God). Let's be the godparents of the next generation.

MUSIC AND SONG

Thank you to those of you who emailed to say how much you enjoyed that wonderful clip of the Hallelujah Chorus that was recommended to me. Singing lifts our spirits and singing hymns and worship songs is a way of speaking to and encouraging our own selves as well as exalting God. Earlier this week I heard Matt Redman (worship leader and song writer) talking on the radio about one of his most well known songs **10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)**. This song has been played around the world, not just in churches but at festivals, in hospitals and even prisons. Through hearing this song in a prison in a far eastern country, some drug traffickers came to know God and through their life changing witness, many other prisoners turned to Christ. The prison pastor reported that as they were led out to the firing squad they could be heard singing this song. You can find it on youtube.

START THE WEEK WITH OPEN CHURCH

On Mondays the church will be open from 10.30am -11.30am through the rest of the lockdown. Come along for a quiet moment, private prayer or just somewhere different to sit and be.

Here is a prayer that Paul used during the Wednesday Reflective Prayer time. For me there is great comfort in praying some of these ancient Celtic prayers that have sustained fellow travellers through all sorts of circumstances.

We place our souls and bodies under your guarding this day O God, O Father of help to frail pilgrims, protector of heaven and earth.

We place our souls and bodies under your guiding this day O Christ, O Son of the tears and the woundings, may your cross this day be our shield.

We place our souls and bodies under your guarding this day O Spirit, gentle companion and soul friend, our heart's eternal warmth.

SUNDAY'S READINGS: Genesis 14:17-20; Psalm 128; Revelation 19:6-10 and John 2:1-11