

THE ST STEPHEN'S NEWSLETTER - 1 May

Prayer Points for May

O Christ the healer, we have come / to pray for health, to plead for friends. / How can we fail to be restored, / when reached by love that never ends? // From every ailment flesh endures / our bodies clamour to be freed; / yet in our hearts we would confess / that wholeness is our deepest need. CH4 717

Heavenly Father, we pray for your hurting world. We give thanks to you for the gifts you have given to each and every one working in the many professions which are caring for your people. May your Holy Spirit be with all those who have lost loved ones. We pray for all those whose mental health is suffering; the lonely and the depressed. There is so much love shown as everyone is looking out for each other. You Lord have bound us together through words. May we glorify your name in all the world. Amen

We acknowledge, Father God that we are weak but you are strong. Our strength may fail, but yours will never fail. Hold on to us, Lord and bear us up.

Lord Jesus, we remember how you met with your followers after your resurrection. We think of their amazement and joy at the meeting, and thank you that we ourselves can meet you here on earth, through prayer, reflection and the words and deeds of those around us.

As trees, flowers, birds and animals continue to develop new life; as the days continue to lengthen and the weather to become warmer, we thank you that we can be calmed, and also encouraged to remember that we are part of your whole creation, and that you care for us all.

Holy Spirit, we ask that you enter the rooms where there is hidden suffering. Where people are being abused. Where people feel for whatever reason that they cannot accept help. Where lack of resources mean that people have no easy means of communication with the outside world. We pray that they might find a way to break out of their difficult situations and find the support they need.

Dear Lord, remind us that you have given us all skills and talents with which to help others and that we all have something to offer. Even if we cannot even leave the house we can give a cheering word on the phone or e mail, or set aside more time for prayer.

We pray for leaders throughout the world as they make complex decisions related to the global pandemic. Help them to work together with people in other fields such as scientists and economists, putting aside point scoring and jostling for power for the greater good. Grant them the wisdom and stamina they require to guide their countries at this time.

Lord, as inequalities are being highlighted in all parts of the world by this unprecedented situation, we pray that there may be a growing appetite for change when the immediate threat is past.

Hold us in your love, we pray, together with our sisters and brothers of all faiths and none throughout the world, thinking especially at this time of Muslims entering the holy month of Ramadan. Give them strength to follow their regime of fasting and prayer even though they will have the added discipline of isolation imposed on them.

CHRISTIAN AID WEEK, 10 - 16 MAY

Love never fails. Coronavirus impacts all of us. But love unites us all.

As this virus spreads across the world, love rises up in response. Now is the time to reach out to your neighbours both near and far. Your love protects. From storms, from drought, and now from coronavirus. Your love protects our global neighbours battling the spread of this illness. Your love protects. With soap, clean water and medical supplies.

By supporting us this Christian Aid Week, you can reach out and protect more of your neighbours today.

If you would like to help support the work of Christian Aid please go online to make a donation.
<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week>

Shirley Sutherland, Christian Aid Convenor

TWO NEW HYMNS FROM MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Any more lockdown hymns? - Please send them to helen_hopwood@hotmail.com

Title: *Is it a New Song?* Tune of: “*Brother, sister, let me serve you*”

Verse 1

Change me, Jesus, lead me forward,
Help me to be more like you
When I fail you, strengthen, raise me,
Help me to my life renew.

Verse 2

When rough winds do shake life's journey,
When I don't know what to do,
Teach me, teach me what the truth is,
As I seek my way to you.

Verse 3

As we face our selfish actions,
Life on earth has suffered too,
Light the way which yearns to change us,
Help us help Your church renew.

Is change really something new? Isn't it just a tool to help us sing an old song? Look up the words to the old song “Just a song at twilight” - J.P.

To the tune “*Salley Gardens*” - CH4 253 “*Inspired by love and anger.*”

Lord Jesus, walk beside me
whatever path I take.
To strengthen me and guide me
through winning or mistake.
Be close as I encounter
what I am sent to do.
Teach me along the journey
to keep in step with you.

Lord Jesus, run to find me
when life has gathered speed.
Return me to the centre
of what you want and need.
Show me by your example
the balance I should find
between the rush of action
and the stilling of the mind.

Lord Jesus, sit beside me
and touch my dying hand,
to help to reassure me,
to help me understand
that you will journey with me,
that this is not the end,
that you will not desert me
my living, pilgrim friend.

J.D