

ST PETER & ST PAUL'S CHURCH, WEM

“NEW BEGINNINGS”

DAY OF PRAYER

9 JULY 2022

7 AM TO 5 PM

This booklet contains four “prayer stations” to help you pray for our church and for our community. If you can, please sign up to pray during an hour of the day of prayer. If you are not in a position to commit to that, do take booklet or find the material on the church website and “pray as you can, not as you can’t”

There will be a prayer service in church from 4 until 5 pm to conclude the day. Do come if you can.

AT THE END OF THE DAY....

What has God helped you to understand or realise as you have prayed?

You may want to use this blank page to write or draw your thoughts and feelings.

There will be an opportunity to share our impressions during the final hour in church.

'NEW BEGINNINGS'

The aim of the day is to have continual prayer throughout a ten hour period. For each hour two people will have committed to pray, to ensure continuity. The concluding hour will be held in church, led by the Monday prayer group.

We are considering 'new beginnings' as a focus for this year, as the church recovers from the effects of Covid lockdown, and during this waiting time for a new incumbent.

There are 4 sections of inspirations for your prayers

Praise and confession

Pruning for new shoots

Working together; using our gifts

Being a light to the world

Please feel free to adopt your own expressions of prayer – through music, exercise, meditation or maybe try something new.

1. PRAISE THE LORD

The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Psalm 19:1



The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22-23

Spend some time offering your thanks and praises to God

maybe use music – sing, dance

use photography, capturing a wide image, or focus on detail

appreciate nature

*Give thanks for the steadfast love the Lord has for **you**.*

CONFESSION/ SAYING SORRY

For the people I have hurt, I'm sorry
For the mistakes I have made, I'm sorry
For the things I didn't do, I'm sorry
For hurting myself, I'm sorry
God of love and mercy,
Forgive me
Help me to let go of my hurt
and regret

Acknowledge any specific hurts, mistakes, disappointments

Consider writing them down on a piece of paper

Imagine burning that paper in a fire – representing how your confession is taken from you and dealt with

Then imagine the ash from the fire collected, and put to good use in the garden, providing nutrition for new plants to grow and thrive.



2. NEW SHOOTS



**'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes, to make it bear more fruit.
(John 15: 1-2)**

In recent times, and indeed over many years, as a church, we have suffered loss. It is painful. We have often prayed for new growth and renewal, and may have felt disappointed. Perhaps this passage can refresh our hope for the future.

Jesus' hearers would have been very familiar with the pruning process. A vineyard in winter is a field full of knobbly brown stumps. All of last year's young growth has been removed. It looks dead. Yet in due course, strong young shoots will grow from the old rootstocks. It's the same plant, but a new beginning.

What is this "pruning"? It is not a mark of failure or a process of punishment. It is the fruitful branch which is pruned, so that it can bear yet more fruit. Our loving heavenly Father helps us to let go of those things which we depend on so that we can become more completely dependent on Him.

So what comes next?

**Abide in me, as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.'
(John 15: 4-5)**

New growth is not something we do by ourselves. It is God's work. Our part is to "abide in Me". His life, His Spirit, will flow through us as we allow Him to be everything to us.

By acknowledging our dependence on Him and living, as far as we are able, in union with Him and with each other, we will, in God's time, see those sturdy new shoots beginning to grow.



PRAY:

Father, I abandon myself into your hands; do with me what you will.

Whatever you may do, I thank you:
I am ready for all, I accept all.

Let only your will be done in me, and in all your creatures.
I wish no more than this, O Lord.

Into your hands I commend my soul;
I offer it to you with all the love of my heart,
for I love you, Lord, and so need to give myself,
to surrender myself into your hands,
without reserve, and with boundless confidence,
for you are my Father.

Charles de Foucauld

3. WORKING TOGETHER

.....as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I (Paul) planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labour. For we are fellow workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

1 Cor.3: 5,6,8,9



We have different gifts according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Romans. 12:6-8

SERVING

ENCOURAGING

TEACHING

GIVING

LEADING

SHOWING MERCY

AND MORE.....

Think about the things that you are good at or really like doing. Also, think about the skills you have acquired in the course of your life. Perhaps there are ways you can employ these in building up the body of Christ. You may already be doing so, but perhaps there are new ways in which you could use them. Are you willing to use them for this purpose to be 'a fellow worker in God's service', working together in love and unity? You may feel you no longer have the physical strength to contribute as previously, but spending time in prayer for the body of Christ is of great value.

When we work together in this way, God gives life and growth. Let us pray this for St. Peter and St. Paul's:

4. A LIGHT TO THE WORLD

Reality Check. Take this time to pray from where we are - a largely retirement age congregation looking to grow connections into our age group.

Jesus said “ You are the light of the world”.

He also commands us to go out to be with others, not wait for them to come to us.

Take some time to reflect on the benefits of light:

the safety afforded to navigating our environment
the opportunity to recognise others

the sense of our place with true perspective and proportion
the nourishing potency for all our life through the growth of plants
the warmth that accompanies sunlight
the sense of freedom it brings to time shared with others



Take time to reflect on the place of faith and expectation in growing our relationships with new people in our age group

Think of the Apostle Andrew, who when Jesus asked his disciples where they could buy enough food for the crowd that had followed them spoke of the 5 barley loaves and two small fishes one of the local boys had with him. He spoke of what he had and Jesus worked a miracle with such a small gift.

Likewise we can expect our Lord to use the gift of our friendship to touch others' lives. This can be a real light for others. Especially in these times

after covid when so many have become accustomed to isolation and are indeed somewhat fearful of going out to meet others.

So be encouraged to start small. Build up a group of about 5 people you remember in prayer each day.



Consider inviting someone to come with you to one of the free monthly community lunches in the Church Hall. Look for others there to share a table with and start to make new friends. This can be a first step for someone as they begin to belong, to matter to others like you. From such a “belonging” place people will be more open and confident to begin exploring or “believing” for themselves.

So please pray for your friends, and for the social events through our church. That they might indeed multiply as those loaves and fishes did beyond expectation. That “mustard seeds of faith” might be planted and nourished.

Consider joining with others in Church to share more regularly in small group fellowship and prayer to sustain an outward perspective.



