

## Seeds of Hope

The festive season is well and truly over now, although we remain in the season of Epiphany in the Church Year. As I mentioned in last week's news sheet, Epiphany is about revelation – seeing and recognising the significance and glory of Jesus. It's a season of promise and hope in the midst of the long dark days we experience at the moment. Jesus has been born, and the world will never be the same again.

Walking around the garden I see signs of new life and hope slowly beginning to appear. Primroses pushing through frozen soil. Buds appearing on my camelias. Two daffodil bulbs planted during the Good Grief? Exhibition we held in church starting to sprout. Despite the grey days and cold winds the beauty and wonder of creation continues to overcome.

Seeds and growth are a theme of our services too. Last week Tim shared some thought-provoking reflections on the Parable of the Sower, and this Sunday we will be thinking about the Mustard Seed. I came across this prayer recently which I liked and thought it would be good to share as we set out on a new year together and look forward to the growth that God has planned in us, as individuals and as a community.

*Gardener God, forgive us for the times we have kept our seeds in the packet  
For the times we've been too scared to risk, too selfish to love, too embarrassed to try  
Gardener God, have mercy on us*

*Forgive us for where we have let weeds grow in the soil of our lives  
For the times we have forgotten to pray,  
for the days when we don't bother to listen,  
for the moments when we neglect the stirring of your spirit  
Gardener God, have mercy on us*

*Forgive us for when we have trampled on the seedlings of others  
Through careless words or outright criticism,  
through envy or feeling threatened,  
through being insensitive or wrapped up in ourselves  
Gardener God, have mercy on us*

*Forgive us for when we think it's all down to us  
When we forget that to grow we need the earth of our community,  
The water of other people's contribution, the sunshine of your favour,  
The nutrients that come through conversation and challenge  
Gardener God, have mercy on us. Amen (Grace Ealing)*

With my prayers and love, *Anita*

## **Psalm 1: A Reflection by Malcolm Guite**

Come to the place, where every breath is praise,  
And God is breathing through each passing breeze.  
Be planted by the waterside and raise

Your arms with Christ beneath these rooted trees,  
Who lift their breathing leaves up to the skies.  
Be rooted too, as still and strong as these,

Open alike to sun and rain. Arise  
From meditation by these waters. Bear  
The fruits of that deep rootedness. Be wise

In the trees' long wisdom. Learn to share  
The secret of their patience. Pass the day  
In their green fastness and their quiet air.

Slowly discern a life, a truth, a way,  
Where simple being flowers in delight.  
Then let the chaff of life just blow away.

## **Diocese of Derby Vision Prayer**

Gracious God,  
in your mercy, and for your glory,  
renew us, reshape us, revive us -  
with generous faith, courageous hope, and life-giving love -  
that, in transformed lives,  
through growing church and building community,  
we may see your Kingdom come  
and be good news for all.  
Amen.

## **Baptism and Confirmation**

Are you interested in being baptized or confirmed in 2022? If you would be, or would like to find out more, please speak to Nick or Anita.

## **Afternoon Teas at St. Peter's: Tuesdays 1<sup>st</sup> February, 1<sup>st</sup> March, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 4<sup>rd</sup> May, 7<sup>th</sup> June**

On Tuesday afternoon we enjoyed a New Year Tea, and look forward to many more as the year progresses! See above for the dates. Sandwiches and cakes will be served in the church at 2.15pm, followed by a short service of Evening Prayer. All are welcome – please call Margaret on 01332 239134 if you're planning to come for catering purposes. Hope to see you there!

## **Praying for the Persecuted Church: Central African Republic**

Three-quarters of the population of Central African Republic are Christian (that's 3.7 million believers) but they are still vulnerable to persecution.

The Central African Republic has seen near-constant conflict and fighting since 2013. Much of the country is occupied by various armed militia groups, who are responsible for a range of human rights abuses. Many of these groups – whether Islamic extremist or otherwise – specifically target Christians, so life is constantly uncertain for believers in areas under militia control.

Christian leaders who have publicly denounced the violence have been threatened; church buildings have been burned and ransacked. The conflict has resulted in the displacement of thousands of Christians who have lost their homes and livelihood and are now forced to live in displacement camps. Many persecuted believers were among the most vulnerable when the Covid-19 pandemic reached the Central African Republic, because of the financial and social exclusion they already experience.

In addition to the insecurity and violence that all Christians suffer, converts to Christianity from Islam face persecution from their immediate family members. The local community will often ostracise Christian converts and might also try to force them to renounce Christianity through violence.

Jeovani was only nine when his church was attacked by Muslim extremists. The congregation was full, and the pastor was beginning the service when two mortar shells burst through the roof. Seven people were killed and at least 33 more injured.

Jeovani survived – but he had to have both legs amputated. At first, he had nightmares that the rebels were coming back to attack his family – but he still had big dreams for the future: “I would like to go back to school,” Jeovani said. “One day I want to be a civil servant and take care of my family.”

The attack was a few years ago. Now Jeovani has artificial legs, paid for by you. “I almost look like other kids – I can stand on my legs without using the sticks,” he says. And amazingly, he has forgiven his attackers: “If I should one day meet the Muslim man who shot the grenades at my church, I will not be angry. I will greet him and say, ‘God forgives you, and He wants me to forgive you too. You do not know what you have done to me, but I forgive you.’ And once I have told him that, I will never be angry with him.” (Open Doors website)

## **Prayer Meeting**

Don't forget our weekly prayer meeting every Tuesday at 11am via Zoom! Please do come along if you can. For more details, please contact Geoff.

## **Prayer ...**

In this testing time, do not hesitate to ask for prayer for any concern you have. We all face difficulties and challenges, but prayer makes a difference. In an emergency, call Bren (07967 183601), and she will ask those on the prayer chain to pray for you.

## **Zoom Joining Details for the 10.45am Service of Holy Communion:**

**On a Computer, Laptop, Smart Phone or Tablet:** Click this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/450891605?pwd=czNCTTJuaUJpQ3VlOVlnUm1zS0tKQT09>

Alternatively:

1. Open Zoom and select 'Join' or 'Join a Meeting'
2. Enter the Meeting ID: **450 891 605**
3. Select 'Join'
4. When prompted for the Meeting Password, enter **73837**
5. Select 'Continue' or 'Join Meeting' and you will be connected

### **By Phone – these are the numbers you must now use:**

1. Pick any one of the numbers below (doesn't matter which), if one doesn't work, pick another: 0330 088 5830; 0131 460 1196; 0203 481 5237; 0203 481 5240; 0203 901 7895; 0208 080 6591; 0208 080 6592
  2. Dial the number and when prompted for the Meeting ID press: **450 891 605#**
  3. You will then be prompted for a Participant ID, just press **#**
  4. Finally, you will be prompted for the Meeting Password, press: **73837#**
- You will be connected and able to hear everything that is happening.

### **St. Peter's in the City Staff**

**Acting Vicar/Associate Priest:** Revd. Anita Matthews [anita@stpetersderby.org.uk](mailto:anita@stpetersderby.org.uk)

**Curate:** Revd. Nick Parish [nick@stpetersderby.org.uk](mailto:nick@stpetersderby.org.uk)

**Vicar's PA and Church Administrator:** Hilary Streek [office@stpetersderby.org.uk](mailto:office@stpetersderby.org.uk)

#### **Inside Out Project Workers:**

**Wayne Summers** [wayne@insideoutderby.org.uk](mailto:wayne@insideoutderby.org.uk) **Revd Jo Honour** [jo@insideoutderby.org.uk](mailto:jo@insideoutderby.org.uk)  
**Revd Alan Griggs** [alan@insideoutderby.org.uk](mailto:alan@insideoutderby.org.uk)

**Building Manager:** Melvyn Wood

**Church Wardens:**  
Tim Benson, Liz Runcorn

**Kitchen Supervisor:** Gillian Wood

**We are a community of faith, hope and love in the heart of the city**  
**Follow us on Twitter:** [@stpetersderby](https://twitter.com/stpetersderby); [www.stpetersderby.org.uk](http://www.stpetersderby.org.uk)

**Parish Safeguarding Officer:** 07828 280455

**Please note that copies of the Safeguarding Policy are available in the Church Office or at [www.derby.anglican.org/safeguarding](http://www.derby.anglican.org/safeguarding)**

**The church office is currently open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday between 9.30am and 1.30pm. Telephone: 01332 360790, [office@stpetersderby.org.uk](mailto:office@stpetersderby.org.uk)**