

Glastonbury Together in prayer



A news sheet for members of Glastonbury churches during the crisis caused by Covid 19

Thy Kingdom Come

Thy Kingdom Come is a phrase we know well saying it regularly when we pray the Lord's prayer. It is also a global movement for prayer. Christians around the world are invited to pray between the Ascension and Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus. Thy Kingdom Come was started by the Anglican Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 2016, but in the years since then has grown to become an International and Ecumenical call to prayer. This call to prayer is focused on a time when the Apostles themselves prayed having little idea what was to come to them. They appeared to have lost Jesus for a second time and did not know what his promise to send the Holy Spirit actually meant. We too can pray each in our own way and in so doing deepen our personal relationship with Jesus Christ. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, says *"In praying 'Thy Kingdom Come' we all commit to playing our part in the renewal of the nations and the transformation of communities."* Surely this is an important message in 2020 as we come to terms with and eventually fight back from the effects of the virus. Ideas on how to take part in the prayer movement can be found on their web site at <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/about-us>. Closer to home the Monks at St Mary's will be publishing prayers and meditations for a Novena starting on 22nd April. These can be found on Fr Bede's blog at frbederowe.blogspot.com

Signs of Hope

The last issue of this Newsletter focused on God's sign of hope the rainbow. Now we are seeing signs of that hope as the current crisis matures and we hear how restrictions are being changed around the world. Restrictions on travel and meeting people have been eased but not yet removed, and those who cannot work at home are returning to work. It may be some time before we can once again gather in our church buildings to worship together but there are hopeful signs with changes overseas that may eventually reach us. Drive in Mass in France and services with well spaced chairs outside churches have been seen in the news reports. In Italy Mass is being resumed but with precautions in place. In Northern Ireland churches can reopen for private prayer, an initiative that is likely to be the first step for us in Somerset.

Praying for Somerset

As part of the Thy Kingdom Come initiative a group of Christians met on Glastonbury Tor in 2019 to pray for Somerset, those who could not make the climb prayed at the top of the town in the Methodist church to where the tor party returned for a welcome light lunch. It had been planned that a similar event would take place in 2020 but with the current restrictions in place it had to be cancelled. Glastonbury was chosen as a venue for this prayer event by Churches Together in Somerset because of its central location and because from the Tor there is a good view across the whole county. Whilst we cannot gather to pray this year we can still pray for the unity of Christians and for the work of Churches together in Somerset. Pray that we can find ways in which different traditions can work and pray together, for understanding and cooperation in the work God has set us to do. Hopefully in 2021 those fit enough for the climb can again gather on the Tor to pray at this time.



Ascension of the Lord

Forty days after the resurrection

The Ascension of Jesus into Heaven is an important part of the Christian Faith and as such is part of the creed used by Christians worldwide to express their faith. In the Gospel of St John there are references in some translations to the need for an Ascension but no mention of the event itself. For that we have to turn to two short verses in the Gospel of St Luke and in the Acts of the Apostles, written by the same author means in effect we only have one narrative of this event. The feast of the Ascension is one of the times when the Church calendar relates to the timing in the Bible as it occurs 40 days after Easter on a Thursday. This again comes from a single sentence in Acts that says Jesus appeared to them over a period of 40 days and spoke to them about the Kingdom of God. The period between Easter and Ascension is important for the linking between the events of Jesus life and the prophesies in the Old Testament. The necessity for the Ascension stems from the frailty of man, the Apostles needed to see him leave in order to prepare themselves for what was to come at Pentecost. We in turn can prepare ourselves for the coming of the Holy Spirit by prayer and reflection.

A further glimpse in 1 Peter

The different lectionaries (Roman Catholic, Revised Common and Episcopal) continue to take readings from 1 Peter for the last two Sundays of Easter, although the verses vary between them they share a common theme. On the 6th Sunday the common theme was be a good follower of Christ, He died for our sins so we should not be frightened if we have to suffer for doing the right thing. Indeed Peter says we are better off to suffer for doing right than for doing wrong. On the 7th Sunday we follow the theme of suffering again this time suffering for being a Christian. We should feel blessed if we suffer for being a Christian as it means we have the Holy Spirit with us.

In between these passages Peter tells how we should be faithful to God, we should love one another as love is an antidote to sin. We have been blessed with gifts that we should use in the service of each other in a way that brings honour to God. The final chapter of 1 Peter is addressed first to Christian leaders. Leaders must tend to their flock not because they have to, but because they want to. We are then all told that we should be humble to each other as God opposes the proud and helps the humble.

Helping others is still important

In different times we would have had collectors out seeking donations for Christian Aid last week during Christian aid week. In Glastonbury we also have events outside the week itself such as Lent Soup lunches, and breakfasts at various times. In the current circumstances none of this is happening this year, indeed the start of the crisis cut short the Soup lunches planned for this year coming as it did during Lent. The people helped by Christian aid still need supporting. Hopefully when the current situation is resolved it will be possible to hold events to raise funds outside the traditional times. In the meantime if you can help by making a donation contact the local representative for your own church. Alternatively visit the Christian Aid web site where you will be able to find an "E-Envelope" that you can send to friends and family to ask them to support the work being done on our behalf in less privileged parts of the world. (Catholics may prefer to help CAFOD instead, the organisations have similar aims.)

The way to pray

Your (thy) Kingdom Come, is the second petition of the Lords Prayer following from the opening praise of God and the petition that God's name be hallowed. RT Kendal is his book on the Lord's Prayer talks of the prayer being a formula to praise God first before asking for our own requests. How often in our modern "me" generation, he says, do we think what is in it for ourselves? Jesus gave us the proper way to pray—praise God first, then seek His interests before looking at our own needs or wishes. We would be good to remember this formula when we pray and put God firmly in the front of our prayer instead of as an afterthought at the end.

A big Prayer Event

As part of Thy Kingdom Come this year there will be a big National Prayer event on Sunday Evening 24th May from 20:00 to 21:30. The event will be streamed on Facebook and You Tube. Links can be found on the Glastonbury Churches Together web site.

Connecting via an App

An App for Thy Kingdom Come has been produced and can be found in the Google Play store and the Apple App Store. The App is full of the daily videos, Bible readings, reflections, podcasts from Professor NT Wright and a special section for your 'Pray for 5' which is a theme of Thy Kingdom Come where you are asked to pray for five friends or family to come to faith in Jesus.

