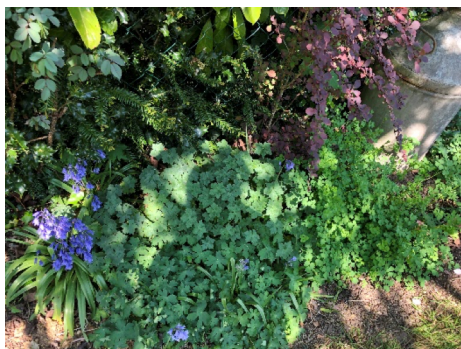


Let us Pray - Breathe 2 May 2020

Every first Saturday of the month, people from both our churches gather together for Breathe. Breathe is a chance to pray together about ourselves and our lives, our churches and our world. It is hoped that you will be able to use these prayers in the same way, by putting aside a time to pray, perhaps with someone else.

Here we are at the beginning of May, and I'm guessing this is a favourite month for many. If you are a working person it has two bank holidays in it. If you are at school, or work in one, it has half term. For churchy types it has both Ascension Day and Pentecost – two joyous festivals. For all of us, Spring has well and truly sprung. The heating can be turned off and the winter clothes packed away. And Creation is just going mad. The new greens are fresh, late blossom blooms and the danger of frost hopefully past. There is a reason that, for centuries, Morris Men and Maypole dancers have 'danced in the May'.



All of the joys of May are things to celebrate. So, let's start by thanking God for His goodness.

Looking Up

Good Father

We thank you for the many blessings of our lives. For the season of spring and the hope it brings. For the wonder of the created world. For the new things we have learned and done in the past weeks. We thank you for our churches of St Mary's and St Andrew's. Thank you for the blessing of being able to share more widely our joy in the Gospel. May we all truly feel that no-one is more welcome than every one of us.

Let's take some time now to thank God for some of the blessings in our own lives and the life of our churches currently.

Thank you, God, for.....

Amen



Looking Back

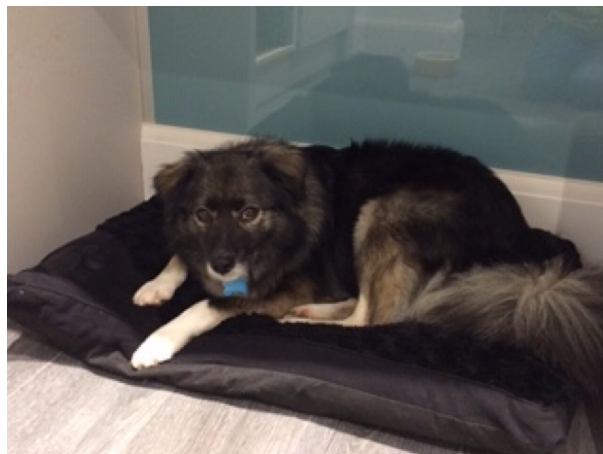
There will be things in the past few weeks you want to celebrate, but there may be things which feel uncomfortable, too.

So, let's look back at some of the successes of April and praise God for those, and let's surrender to God those things we feel we need forgiveness for.

Dear God

We praise you for the good things which have happened in the past few weeks. For new skills learnt, for challenges overcome, for relationships grown or re-built. Especially I give praise for

And we say sorry now for the things we regret and for the things which would have been better left undone



And God says,

I love you. I forgive you. Continue in peace.

Amen

Looking In

God knows us intimately – our thoughts and desires, our hopes and despairs. Jesus promised to be with us always and, during this time of isolation, we are never isolated from God. Some of us may feel even nearer to him than usual – more aware of his presence.

Dear God

How can we thank you? For your love and comfort. For your quiet, kindly presence. For never imposing yourself on your children, but instead waiting for us to turn to you. Help us to grow in our listening and our watching. Help us to look for Christ's face in friend and stranger. Help us to bridge the gap between us and our fellows, a bridge made of love.

Help me to grow, Lord.....

Amen



Looking Around

Let's look around our homes first and think of those we share them with; our neighbours, our pets and, perhaps, visitors. Let's think of those we have talked with, those who have provided help or support. Our situations are reflected across the globe. So, let's hold in prayer all affected by the pandemic. Let's hold in prayer those whose lives hold other fears and dangers.

Dear God

We pray for our homes. For our families and friends. For those we have contact with. We pray for our church communities and for the area we live in. We ask you to bless those who are fighting this pandemic – whether in an ICU ward, or a virtual classroom, or a shop, or at home. And we pray for those still affected by the disasters of this planet – whether natural or made by humans.

Especially I pray for

Amen



Looking Forward

We have, perhaps, become, to a large extent, locked into the present. It is hard to plan when we have no clear idea of what the future holds. It is hard to accept that things already planned may not happen, or may happen differently.

At the January Breathe prayer meeting, we looked forward to the New Year and I used these words:

"We make plans, but we should hold them lightly."

I was rather more accurate than I intended!

But that doesn't mean we shouldn't dream – of seeing loved ones, of travel, of celebrations, of being back together physically. Some of us may dream of returning to school or work, some simply of being allowed to do our own shopping again. God loves our dreams, so let's share them with Him. It is absolutely fine if those dreams are personal to you. That is not selfish. Our loving Father wants to know the real us, with all our hopes and fears.

Dear God

We pray for our lives going forward.

For the life of the church, and our hopes and dreams for the coming months and years. For the future of our world.

Especially I pray for.....

Amen

Praying with a friend

At a Breathe meeting we would normally split into twos or threes to talk and pray together. Today, if you would like to, why not spend some time with a prayer buddy? This might be a member of your family, if that feels appropriate. It might be you'd prefer to ask someone to pray with you by phone or a video call. If you can't think of anyone to pray with, email revwendy55@gmail.com (or call on 01707 472315) with your phone number and she'll find you a prayer buddy. But only if that's what you'd like.

You might like to simply have a chat and pray this familiar prayer together:

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed by thy name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us,
And led us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil,
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
For ever and ever.
Amen

A Final Blessing

*May Christ,
who out of defeat brings new hope and a new future,
Fill us with his new life.
And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with
you today, tomorrow and always.*

Amen