

Intercessions 15 July 2018

*How long, LORD God Almighty, will your anger smoulder against the prayers of your people?
You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have made them drink tears by the bowlful.
You have made us an object of derision to our neighbours, and our enemies mock us.
Restore us, God Almighty; make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.*

(Psalm 80:4-7)

Lord, the Psalms can be a lifesaver for those of us who struggle with knowing what to pray. The words we've just heard from Psalm 80 come from a place of brokenness, which may be our experience today. We may feel derided by people who do not share our beliefs, or feel that God seems distant or even absent from us. (*London Institute of Christianity 13 July 2018*)

As we pray today for the church and the world, we will take the words of the refrain from the Psalm and make them our own. Lord, you restore some broken things because they are precious, because they are loved.

When I say 'Restore us, God Almighty', please respond 'make your face shine on us, that we may be saved'.

Restore us, God Almighty; **make your face shine on us, that we may be saved**

Lord, we thank you for the work of Young Life:

- For the contacts made in Schools in the area: through lunch clubs at Simon Balle and Richard Hale, through a presence during lunchtimes at Sele School, and at Presdales with the FutureHope bus.
- For the opportunities at Wyldlife and Young Life Clubs to experience Jesus in their lives.
- For Campaigner groups that seek to build spiritual growth, providing opportunities to lead and grow in faith.

We pray for the Young Life and Wyldlife Camps taking place shortly in Scotland, especially for the number of young people who have not been before, and their experience of challenge to thinking and faith that will arise.

Lord, we thank you for all Young Life leaders and volunteers working in the area. We pray for more leaders and committee members to volunteer to help with the work, and the training for volunteers which is taking place in September for anyone doing Youth ministry across Hertford.

We thank you for around 50 people here at St Andrew's involved with children and young people in various activities: on Sunday mornings, at TMM Youth Group, at Shake After-School-Club on Tuesday afternoons, at St Andrew Primary School's Story Club, at Toddler Group on Thursdays, and at Messy Church. And we pray for the group leaving with Tracy next weekend for the Taizé community in France - Beth, Hannah, Michael and Rosie.

The American writer L R Knost has said that:

'It's not our job to toughen up our children to face up to a cruel and heartless world. It's our job to raise children who will make the world a little less cruel and heartless.'

Lord, may your special presence and blessing be with everyone involved with children and young people, and on the children and young people themselves.

Restore us, God Almighty; **make your face shine on us, that we may be saved**

Lord, we struggle with knowing how to pray for the all the turmoil in your world of wonders.

We see too many examples of narcissistic and demagogic leadership amongst world leaders, in such contrast to the servant model of leadership demonstrated by Jesus, who has concern for 'the least of these'.

Lord, if we may just focus today on the African continent, for political turmoil and failing crops in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Mali and South Sudan, amongst others:

- We pray for all those suffering in these countries. They are so vulnerable, but you are their loving Father, and they are your precious children.
- We pray for your churches, that they will have the wisdom, energy and resources they need to help those who need it most.
- And we pray for lasting peace and stability in these countries, and a quick end to the hunger crisis.

We give thanks, Lord, for the leaders of Ethiopia and Eritrea who have signed a landmark peace agreement. We pray that this will be upheld, and that the agreement to re-establish trade and diplomatic ties will bear fruit.

Restore us, God Almighty; **make your face shine on us, that we may be saved**

Comfort and heal those amongst us who are suffering, feeling afflicted or who are in despair. We particularly remember today:

Give them courage and hope, and bring them the joy of your salvation.

We remember those who have died, and pray for comfort for those who mourn them:

And we remember the anniversaries of:

Restore us, God Almighty; **make your face shine on us, that we may be saved**

Jim Wallis from the Sojourners Community in Washington DC wrote towards the end of last year (Sojourners, 7 December 2017):

'The turbulence of (recent years) has left us feeling buffeted by constant storms in politics, society and nature. Amid daily chaos, fear and pain, one thing is clear: the role of faith leaders across society is more important than ever. Our call and our ministry require us to stay radically rooted.....to intervene in the world in unconventional ways - into deeper relationship with and on behalf of those most targeted by oppression, as part of the radically inclusive, multiethnic, global church.'

Lord, use us while you can, and:

May God, who puts all things together, makes all things whole,

Who made a lasting mark through the sacrifice of Jesus, the sacrifice of blood that sealed the eternal covenant,

Who led Jesus, our Great Shepherd, up and alive from the dead,

Now put us together, provide us with everything we need to please him,

Make us into what gives him most pleasure. (Hebrews 13:18-20)

Merciful Father.....**accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.**
Amen