

Lord God, we thank you that we can gather freely here at St Andrew's this morning...able to hear your word and to praise you. We thank you for the fellowship of our church and the encouragement we are able to offer one another-sometimes much needed by those among us who are lonely, vulnerable and in need of healing.

We pray for those whom we know who, this weekend, are attending Greenbelt-may their spiritual lives be encouraged and renewed by what they see, what they hear and experience.

And we ask that we should continue to grow as a church and to understand that our mission is to reach those who may not be part of our fellowship at this time but who seek to find the bread of life. So, Lord, with two weeks to go, we pray for our Beer Festival that it will open doors to some for whom the church door has appeared shut and uninviting. **Lord, in your mercy.....**

This morning, Lord, we remember in our prayers the on-going work on our church building. We give thanks for the great skills of those involved, ask that you keep them safe as they enter the final weeks of the project and ensure that we remember the importance of securing our building so that it can continue to be a place where those of faith and those seeking faith may come for many years to come. **Lord, in your mercy.....**

Creator God, we give thanks for the beauty of your creation, its stunning majesty and the richness of what it offers us. May we be responsible stewards who, at this time, take notice in our own lives of the need to manage our waist, to reduce our use of plastics and, more generally, to live lives that are sustainable within the overall limits of the resources available to us.

And where Lord, for whatever reason, there is environmental damage, we pray for your mercy on those who suffer and that you will give strength to those who seek to help. At this time we pray for those affected by forest fires such as in North America and Southern Europe, tropical storms and hurricanes in the Caribbean, collapsing infrastructure (may we not forget the ongoing traumas of so many affected by the events at Grenfell Tower last year) and by the monsoon rains in Kerala, southern India, where more than a million people are staying in over 4000 relief camps across the state. Give comfort to all these people as their material lives are transformed by events around them. **Lord in your mercy.....**

This weekend we read about the Pope's visit to Ireland...so important in strengthening trust within the Christian community of that country. Let us then pray also for all those charged with leadership in the Christian church-whatever their denomination or practice-may they find a balance where they offer both inspiration and service thus modelling the humanity of your son, Jesus Christ. Within our own church we pray for our Archbishops and Bishops-particularly Bishop Alan of St Albans (may his harvest appeal "Give Peas a Chance" reap the

required rewards and support the people of Malawi), Bishop Michael of Hertford and, at St Andrew's, we pray for Alan, the staff team, Tracy and, in particular, Wendy for whose presence amongst us, we give thanks. **Lord, in your mercy.....**

Let us pray now for those whose lives are restricted by illness.....those known to us personally.....and those whose names are given to us:.....May they and all those who care for them find some healing in the knowledge of your presence and by the power of these prayers. **Lord, in your mercy.....**

And we pray for those whose hearts are saddened by death....those left mourning by the recent deaths of.....those who have yet to fully comprehend the loss of loved ones and those who remember the anniversaries of the dearly loved who, at this time, include.....**Lord, in your mercy.....**

So, Lord, all around us we are challenged...by the requirements of our church, by the needs of others, by the consequences of evolution and change and by difficulties experienced in our personal lives. But, by your words and teachings, you also challenge us so that, like your disciples, we sometimes complain "this teaching is difficult". When this happens, Lord, may we not turn our backs and leave you but, instead, recall the words of Simon Peter who answered your challenge with the words: "to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life".

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