

Intercessions 27 January 2019

Civic Service

Readings: Nehemiah 8. 1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Luke 4. 14-21

The Apostle Paul sent a message to the Corinthian church, at a time when it was riddled with extreme inequality and embroiled in bitter divisions over leadership and doctrine. It contains a powerful metaphor, comparing the church to the human body: *“If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.”* (1 Corinthians 12.26; NRVSA)

Today our nation is deeply divided by partisanship, ideology, and an increasingly tribal politics. Paul’s timeless reminder that our lives are ultimately interdependent is deeply needed today. Lord, help your churches to step up amid crisis and inspire hope, help us to identify ways in which we can intervene and help. Give us an urgent need for heightened prayer and advocacy.

(Based on Adam R Taylor; Sojourn 24 Jan 2019)

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Every session in the House of Commons begins with this prayer

“Lord, the God of righteousness and truth, grant to our Queen and her government, to Members of Parliament and all in positions of responsibility, the guidance of your Spirit. May they never lead the nation wrongly through love of power, desire to please, or unworthy ideals but laying aside all private interests and prejudices keep in mind their responsibility to seek to improve the condition of all mankind; so may your kingdom come and your name be hallowed. Amen.”

In a speech this week, the Queen urged people to find “common ground” and to respect “different points of view”.

Lord, we long to see Members of Parliament, ministers and shadow ministers, back benchers on each side of the chamber, actually pay attention to the prayer and the wisdom demonstrated by Her Majesty, to listen to one another without red line preconditions, and to move forward by consensus.

In the gospel of Matthew, chapter 25, Jesus gives his people a manifesto: help us to:

- value those you value;
- speak up for those who have no voice;
- feed the hungry;
- give drink to the thirsty;
- welcome the stranger;
- clothe the naked;
- take care of the sick; and
- visit those in prison,

recognising all the while that we are serving you.

Lord, we look for the same values to be demonstrated in Government policies and funding decisions.

Give wisdom to members and officers working in Local Government as they make decisions about how to allocate the resources passed down to them which sometimes cannot meet the needs they are required to address.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Lord, it is alarming that a survey undertaken for today's International Holocaust Memorial Day has revealed that 5% of UK adults do not believe the Holocaust took place and 1 in 12 believes its scale has been exaggerated. We remember the 6 million Jewish victims of the Holocaust, and also acknowledge the 40 years since the end of genocide in Cambodia and the 25th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide.

We see in the UK, in Europe and elsewhere in the world 'populist' movements ostensibly appealing to ordinary people who feel that their concerns are disregarded by established elite groups, but which have been exploited by those who turn it into fear and threat from those who are perceived to be different. Lord, help us to call this out wherever we come across it, and to embrace and celebrate difference.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

We hold before God those for whom life is very difficult because of oppression, corruption and poor governance, the impacts of climate change such as drought, famine and flooding, remembering in particular (but not exclusively) the people of:

Burkina Faso

Burundi

Democratic Republic of Congo

Guatemala

Honduras

Sudan and South Sudan

Syria

Venezuela

Yemen

Zimbabwe

Lord, bring peace and comfort.

We hold before God those for whom life is very difficult because of illness and pain, remembering in particular:

Clive Wood (Julie Markey's father)

.....

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

We hold before God those who have died and those who mourn, remembering in particular:

Helen (Wendy Seller's friend), and her husband Joe and sons Bennie and William

.....

Lord, comfort those who mourn.

We hold before God those who remember the anniversaries of:

.....

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Lord, we have read and heard today of your people moved by the revelation of your word in scripture, the knowledge that Jesus had of this scripture and his fulfilment of the story.

Inspire and help us to study your word, discover truth and think about that which is honourable, just and pure, that which is pleasing, commendable and excellent. God of peace: be with us. (Philippians 4.8-9)

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