

Intercessions 27 September 2020

Creationtide 4/5: The gift of water

Readings: Exodus 17. 1-7 and John 4. 5-15

Planet of the clowns

Stare into the moonlight

Silver fingers press my eyes

Probing in my heart with longing

These footprints by the sea's edge

Disappearing grain by grain

Lose their form but keep their substance

As the waves roar on the beach like a squadron of F16's

Ebb and flow like the better days they say this world has seen

Government by outrage

Hunger camps and shanty towns

Dignity and love still holding

This bluegreen ball in black space

Filled with beauty even now

battered and abused and lovely

And the waves roar on the beach like a squadron of F16's

Ebb and flow like the better days they say this world has seen

Each one in our own heart

Desperate to know where we stand

Planet of the clowns in wet shoes

(Bruce Cockburn, from the album '*The Trouble with Normal*'

(1983) and (2002))

Lord, you have placed us on this amazing planet which like one of the images used at the start of the service is a '*bluegreen ball in black space filled with beauty even now, battered and abused and lovely*'¹, and we lament the precarious position that we are in.

Coronavirus is a serious health crisis that has also revealed a serious societal crisis in the UK and globally, revealing brokenness

¹ From Bruce Cockburn's song '*Planet of the Clowns*', 1983)

that was often previously ignored. It has also put our current environmental and ecological crisis back into the spotlight.

We thank you for Tearfund's Reboot campaign and the partnership being launched this week with many organisations to call on the UK government to create a greener, fairer and healthier future that gets us back on track to limit global warming to 1.5°C because the decisions governments make this autumn will determine the trajectory for our economy, society and climate for years to come.

Lord, we long to see an end to extortion, dishonest gain, lives devoured, shedding of blood, false prophets, and the oppression of the poor and needy.

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

We remember those who have returned to school this month, and give thanks for the joy from having schools filled with children and young people keen to be there, back in the classroom with an appreciation of schools (albeit possibly in new ways), and at the same time with an appreciation of what has been learned during lockdown.

We particularly bring before you the current year 11s and 13s who have lost time and, having seen the chaos with this year's exams, face uncertainty about what their experience will be next year.

Strengthen and encourage teaching staff who face many pressures:

- An underlying sense of tension waiting for coronavirus test results and the fallout from a positive result.
- The limited social interaction with children and within the staff room.

- Time management with the increased workload from having to assess every child upon return to school, the need to make progress and catch-up, all at the same as having keep everyone safe.
- Insufficient resources to deal with mental health concerns.
- Fear of Ofsted intervention.

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

Strengthen and encourage the Hertford St Andrew Primary School community as they adjust to new arrangements such as class bubbles and confinement to these bubbles at playtime and lunchtime, hand washing, one-way systems of moving around school. Thank you, Lord, for the Family Support Worker who continues to support vulnerable families struggling with lack of income for whatever reason.

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

Help us this time tomorrow, Lord, to remember teachers who will be rushing between teaching, setting-up assessments, and coping with the unexpected; reminding children to sanitise their hands and always face forwards, remembering to sanitise their own hands and wear extra layers as doors and windows are open, quarantining reading books returned to school from home, and to always follow correct procedures.

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

As many home educators resume activities and classes, Lord, may they stay safe and inspired. We remember the many in the home educating community with chronic illness who are shielding and unable to resume their usual activities.

We also bring before you those who have transitioned from temporary lockdown learning to permanent home education, and those with more experience who are supporting them.

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

We are aware, Lord, of the impact coronavirus is having on University life right now. As it stands, it appears that it would have been better if most students had remained at home, rather than travel and move into Halls of Residence and other student accommodation.

And, Lord, we remember further education which often gets overlooked by the focus on higher education. The experience and pressures for students and staff will be no different.

Help further and higher education communities, local authorities, public health services, and the NHS to quickly work out how further and higher education can proceed safely, effectively and enjoyably.

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

Restore the joy of your salvation and sustain those we know who are unwell, including:

Susan, Mark, Joe, Jean, Paul, Barbara, Win Meldrew, Chris, Debbie, Bernard, Dorothy, Tim, Colin, Chrissy, Barbara, Julia, Connie

Comfort those who mourn the death of a relative or friend. We remember those who have died:

Dr Philip Lancaster, Norman Hoyle

We remember the anniversaries of:

John Goodland, Ellie Mann, Richard Darton, Laurie Darton, Gary Reid, Ron Moseley

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

As the psalmist wrote, Lord, truly you are good to the upright, to those who are pure in heart.

Keep us from missing your goodness when we stumble from envy of the arrogant and the prosperous, who seemingly have no pain and are not plagued like others.

Keep us from pride and violence, from speaking with malice and threatening oppression.

Keep our hearts clean and our innocence.

Help us to understand this as we enter your sanctuary, into your presence.

Guide us with your counsel.

Lord, our flesh and hearts may fail, but you are the strength of our hearts forever.

(Based on Psalm 73)

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