

## Vicar's Letter – October 2019

### Dear Friends

Welcome to our service today of Harvest Thanksgiving. Amid the turbulence of our times it is good to focus our thoughts on thankfulness. So often we can become consumed by bad news resulting in worry, anxiety and negativity. It is good therefore to celebrate today God's goodness to us, to count our blessings and despite everything (health scares, political upheaval, financial struggles to name but a few) recognise who God is and express our thankfulness to Him for His faithfulness.

So in the words of that great harvest hymn:

Come ye thankful people, come,  
raise the song of harvest home!  
fruit and crops are gathered in  
safe before the storms begin:  
God our maker will provide  
for our needs to be supplied;  
come, with all His people, come  
Raise the song of harvest home!

We also welcome Luke Gratton from 'Compassion' this morning. Many of us have sponsored children through the ministry of Compassion over many years, so it is good to have Luke with us today to tell us more about how they release children from poverty in Jesus's name.

### Prayer for our nation

As the political process and upheaval in Westminster continue to dominate the news headlines and the 31<sup>st</sup> October deadline approaches, members of churches from across our town are gathering each Saturday morning at 9am in the Old Mission Hall to pray.

In our recent sermon series on Esther we saw how this remarkable young woman found herself as Queen, 'for such a time as this' and in a position of influence to potentially avert the massacre of her people. In calling Mordecai and the Jewish people to fast and pray for 3 days, she understood that the destiny of nations is not so much in the hands of politicians but in the hands of the people of God who pray.

Now is the time for us to pray for our nation.

### Prayer for our Community

We need to pray for our community. Our large Church of England Primary School is looking to appoint a new Head Teacher. This school, in the heart of our community, provides an education to nearly 400 hundred children and thus impacts on hundreds of families. This is a crucial appointment, for which we need urgent, persistent, deliberate prayer to see God's choice of individual appointed.

### Prayer for our world

There is so much upheaval in our world, so many Christians persecuted for their faith in Jesus, so much poverty caused by unjust economic structures and corruption, so much damage to our environment caused by climate change, so many refugees and displaced persons (at record levels), so much violence caused by wars, that we need to intercede. We need to pray for spiritual revival in our community, across our nation and throughout the world.

### A new appointment

Many in our fellowship will have heard the news that Bishop Rachel has asked me to take on the role of Area Dean for the Deanery of Tewkesbury with Winchcombe. This is both a great challenge and a great opportunity for us all. Archdeacon Phil who will be visiting us in a few weeks time will probably speak more about this on that occasion, but in the meantime thank you for your prayers as I prepare to contribute to a more expansive ministry supporting the renewal of the church across our deanery.

### The Mop Fair and Art Exhibition

Next week we will be demonstrating generosity to our community once more through opening the doors of the church during the two evenings of the Mop Fair. Through the free provision of cakes, biscuits and hot and cold drinks and a place to sit and be still, we want to be a blessing to our community and in this way reflect God's heart of generosity and love. Do come and join us 6.30pm – 9.45pm each evening and if you are able to help serve have a word with Liz Walker.

**'Generosity is not an occasional act; it is a way of living'.**

Stephen

With every blessing in Christ,