
THE MINISTER WRITES ...



Dear All,

Psalm 8 is such a wonderful psalm. In this psalm, a hymn of praise for God's love and care for humans, we read that God has created the universe to reflect his glory, from the sky to the earth to the sea, and God has bestowed his image on humans. We discover that God created humanity with free will and gave them responsibility and dignity. The psalmist is in awe at God's beauty, revealed through creation, especially the moon and stars and he wonders why such a God would care so deeply for humanity. How could a God capable of creating the sky and the weather also be loving and tender with humankind? God has honoured humanity by giving them responsibility over the earth (verses 5-8). He has trusted humanity to take care of the animals, the food supply, and the environment. Building on sharing in the image of God, and thereby the knowledge of God, humans will shepherd what lives on earth, participating in God's love and care, which they both receive and offer as part of that image.

Reading this psalm in the midst of daily news of horrendous wars, great global inequality, injustice and suffering, and a looming climate crisis does not sit well at all, does it? We seem to have become somewhat blasé with all that God has given and have all but abandoned our responsibility to care for the earth. We seem to have lost sight of the splendour with which God made us. As one commentator writes, 'what God made to reflect God's majesty has become horror scene. We have turned on each other. We have turned on our planet. We have turned on God.' Here are some questions that all of humanity needs to wrestle with: what does it mean that we were meant to find the loving tenderness of God in the beauty of our planet, and yet we are destroying it and all its creatures with our greed for more and more resources? What does it mean that God trusted the animals in our care, and yet many of them haven't survived because of our neglect? What does it mean that we were created in the image of God? Out of all that God could have chosen to love, what does it mean that God loves humankind?

So, we consider how the proclamation from this psalm invites deep reflection on questions like these, especially remembering God's design for humankind in Genesis 1:27-30. Friends, we, and all people, are the bearers of God's image, blessed by God, and called to care for the earth. How do we live in faithfulness in this moment? How do we address the climate crisis as God's hands and feet in the world? How do we engage in our food chain and address access to food as those God has commissioned to care for all that live on earth? Friends, let us offer ourselves afresh to God and assure him of our willingness and our ability to fulfil his calling to more faithfully bear his image in the way we care for one another and in the way we care for the earth and its living things. And let's start by doing something new today to care for God's creation, no matter how small or seemingly ordinary. One act at a time, one day at a time, let's reveal something of God's loving tenderness to creation, being transformed and transforming the earth as we journey on, starting today!

With much love,

Neil

MEETING WITH FRIENDS AT THE MOSQUE

A second meeting is planned for us to meet people at the Bond Street Mosque. On Thursday 10th July from 12.15pm – 2.15pm. The first part will take the form of general discussion and a question-and-answer session, together with ample refreshments. At 1.15pm, Muslims are called to prayer and we are invited to observe from 1.30pm until about 2.15pm. This is optional if you only have one hour free.

No need to sign up this time; just meet at the entrance to the Mosque in Bond Street, or meet at 12.05pm in Christ Church car park, if you would prefer to go with a group.

HOLIDAY AT HOME

This is taking place on Thursday 24th and Friday 25th July, 10.30am-4pm and on Sunday 26th July for an afternoon tea at 5pm followed by Songs of Praise at 6pm.

Bookings are now coming in for Holiday at Home with the "destination" of Spain. The first morning is all about Spanish cities, customs and food, with the chance to sample some traditional Tapas and a Spanish picture quiz. Friday morning we will have our popular craft morning. Friday afternoon will end with a concert by Phoenix Jazz. There will also be games, puzzles etc. Lunch with a Spanish twist will be served on both days.

Registration forms are available at the back of the church and in the large hall. You are more than welcome for the whole event, but if you would like to come for one or two sessions just turn up, but please let us know if you want lunch. It would be particularly good to have a large audience for the Phoenix Jazz concert on Friday afternoon.

Everyone is invited to tea on Sunday afternoon, no need to book, which will be followed by Songs of Praise in the church. If you would like your favourite hymn or reading to be included in the service, request forms will be at the back of the church. If you would like to be involved with the running of Holiday at Home, with transport, help with crafts or as befrienders, please see a church life committee member. Thank you.

BRAIN TEASER SOLUTION

Here is the Brain Teaser solution from June's Comment:

Mark, Luke, Kings, Acts, Revelation, Genesis, James, Ruth, Numbers, Amos, Nahum, Esther, Judges, Job, Titus, Lamentations, Hebrews, Peter.

Well done, if you got them all.



The Middle Group warmly invite you, along with members of St. Johns and Castle Hill churches to join them on Thursday 25th September at 6pm for a special Curry Night in aid of The Leprosy Mission. Tickets cost £5.

The proceeds will go to Revive, Leprosy Mission's project in Odisha, India. Matt Henderson, our area representative will be joining us.

Please RSVP to Netty by Sunday 7th September (janette.waters@btinternet.com)



PRAYER CALENDAR FOR JULY

6th July

Loving God, we give you thanks for the talented people in our community who will be performing at this year's Ipswich Music Day. We pray for all the organisers and participants, that it will be a blessing for them and for all those attending. Amen

13th July

We remember all the families who are connected to our church through Tots Plus. May it continue to be a joyful time and where they experience God's love and fellowship. Amen.

20th July

Heavenly Father, we ask for your blessing on our church family as we gather together in Christchurch Park for our picnic and games. We also pray for all our leaders and guests at The Holiday at Home on 24th and 25th July and that it will be special and memorable time for all. Amen.

27th July

Almighty God, we pray for peace in our world, where there is often conflict and strife. Bring an end to violence and injustice. Inspire leaders to work towards the well-being of all people. May your love and compassion prevail, uniting nations in a common pursuit of peace. Let your kingdom of peace reign on earth as it is in heaven. In the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, we pray. Amen.

Holiday at Home,

Thursday 24th- Friday 25th July 10.30am-4pm
Sunday 27th July 5-7pm



With many activities taking a break over the summer months, there will be two days of social activities for anyone who would like a change from the weekly routine. Do join us for our

Holiday at Home at Christ Church, Tacket Street IP4 1AU

“This Year We're Off to Sunny Spain- Viva Espana !”

Each day will begin with coffee

There will be two days of activities and entertainment including

Crafts, games and quizzes some with a Spanish theme

Learn some Spanish

Lunch will be served

A concert by Phoenix Jazz, and more

And, of course, time to sit and chat to old friends and new.

Sunday afternoon we will serve afternoon tea at 5pm followed by “Songs of Praise ” at 6pm, including your requests.

We have again applied for funding from Ipswich Borough Council Make a Difference fund.

You are welcome to any or all of the days . If you are interested, registration forms are available at the back of the church and in the large hall or telephone Anne 01473 727790, email durnfordanne@gmail.com who will be pleased to give you more information.

Transport can be provided if required.

ECO CHURCH – CREATION CARE

The warfare currently raging in the world is obviously a tragedy for all caught up in it in terms of the human suffering and physical destruction. And the fact that other nations, including our own, are feeling the need to increase their spending on defence – inevitably at the expense of other, more socially useful programmes – is desperately sad. In the midst of all of this, climate and environmental matters can seem to slip down our list of concerns.

The sad fact is that war and even peacetime military activity do serious environmental damage. Direct impacts include pollution, habitat destruction and disruption to ecosystems as well as significant greenhouse gas emissions. The building up and maintenance of military forces requires considerable energy long before war even begins, and it's mostly derived from fossil fuels. The best estimate we have is that military activity is responsible for 5.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Armaments and the military do not appear in the Paris Climate Agreement, meaning that they are not obliged to report to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on their climate action and progress. Yet the global military sector is on the top of the list of the world's climate polluters.

The former UN Secretary general Ban Ki-moon once said: "the environment has long been a silent casualty of war and armed conflict. From the contamination of land and the destruction of forests to the plunder of natural resources and the collapse of management systems, the environmental consequences of war are often widespread and devastating".

The Rev'd Andy Braunston, the URC's Minister for Digital Worship, recently shared a reflection he entitled "Why do the nations rage so furiously together?", which included this prayer:

"O Most High, the nations rage and fight, they prepare for war not peace, and we have no words.

Crucified God, again and again you die in your people, as the forces of imperial might love death not life, and hide in the dark instead of seeing the truth in the light, and we have no words.

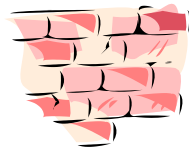
Most Holy Spirit, as simple fools we hope for peace, we long for weapons to be beaten into ploughshares, for flourishing in Israel, Gaza, and Iran, and for our words and prayers for peace to be no longer needed.

Amen."

Eco-tip for July: Summer is the time for picnics. Let's resist the temptation to use disposable plates and cutlery.

OVER THE GARDEN WALL

... from our neighbours at St Pancras



Dear Friends,

I'm so sorry I missed writing last month. I was returning from a wonderful holiday in Northern Italy but tripped on a step, landing on my back, and have been paying the price with pain and limited mobility ever since. Thank you so much for your concern and prayer for me. You may have heard that Fr Joseph has also been out of action - sadly he was not able to play his usual role when the Bishop came to confirm the youngsters that he had spent so much time instructing.

This week I had a wonderful experience: some of you know that I spent years of retirement going out to East Africa, mainly Uganda, running chemistry courses. Many of them were based at a boys' school not far from the Rwanda border. The first lesson I taught there was actually physics, about the clinical thermometer. They all remember it because they thought I was crazy: I didn't just dictate notes to them, as was common, but sent them outside to sit on the grass in small groups, to discuss how they would explain to a young sister how the thermometer that took her temperature actually worked! I went on to teach that class for chemistry O level and then some of them John's gospel as part of A level RE - five years in total. One boy who was in all those classes was Robert, who has just come here as a missionary priest, working in Coventry. Last Sunday I streamed his Mass and he announced that he was praying especially for his friend Jean, who was sick. I'm afraid I wept with joy. I am so proud of him: his English, after so much contact with our science teams, was very easy to understand and his sermon, on one of the most challenging Sundays of the year, when something about the Trinity is required, was short but excellent. He is so humble, yet promises to be a great blessing. In due course he will come for a little holiday here, and I hope I shall be able to bring him to Thursday Forum. I've lots of African science teachers, doctors and nurses but it's very hard for them to get here! Christianity is really alive in East Africa, but they need to be well prepared if they come here as missionaries.

We have also had the election of Pope Leo XIV. He is the first that any of us have known whose mother tongue is English. After years as a missionary in poor parts of Peru, and his clear commitment to ecumenism, let us hope he can be a gift to us all in our troubled world.

Your Catholic friend

Jean

PRAYER CALENDAR FOR AUGUST

3rd August

Dear God, we are grateful for the abundance in our lives. As we start a new month, teach us to appreciate the blessings we often take for granted. May we use these blessings to serve others and to glorify Your name. Amen.

10th August

God of Community, we pray for our town, local businesses and The Fair Trade Shop. For all those in positions of authority including our Member of Parliament, Jack Abbot and our locally elected representatives. May they be given wisdom and guidance in all they do. Amen.

17th August

Dear Heavenly Father, we lift up all the children and young people in our church and youth organisations. We pray for those who are awaiting examination results, that whatever the outcome, they will feel your peace within, as they move to the next stage of their lives. Amen.

24th August

Father God, we thank you that we can worship you in freedom. We pray for our fellow Christians throughout the world and those who are marginalised and constantly living in fear and persecution. May our prayers strengthen and uphold them in such difficult times. Amen.

31st August

Lord, we quietly turn to you for salvation, Lord, we quietly trust in you for strength, for you are full of compassion and grace. We praise you. Amen.

DIARY DATES FOR JULY AND AUGUST

Emmaus Groups

Mondays at 10.30am in the Lounge (last one 23rd June until September)

2nd & 4th Wednesdays at 7.30pm

1st & 3rd Thursdays at 10.30am in the Lounge (last one 3rd July until 18th September)

Dates for September's Comment

Copy Due Date Friday 22nd August

Publication Date Sunday 31st August

SERVICES FOR JULY AND AUGUST

All Services will be led by our Minister, Revd Neil Coulson unless otherwise stated.

Sunday 6th July

10.45am Family Worship with Holy Communion led by Revd Graham Edwards
Graham is a retired URC Minister

Sunday 13th July

10.45 am Family Worship

Sunday 20th July

10.45am Family Worship

Sunday 27th July

10.45 am Family Worship
6pm Songs of Praise Service for our Holiday at Home guests
All are welcome!

Sunday 3rd August

10.45 am Family Worship with Holy Communion led by Mr William Glasse
William is a URC Lay Preacher and Methodist Local Preacher

Sunday 10th August

10.45 am Family Worship led by Revd Richard Edwards
Richard is a retired URC Minister

Sunday 17th August

10.45 am Family Worship

Sunday 24th August

10.45 am Family Worship I led by Revd Martin Camroux
Martin is a retired URC Minister and is chairperson of Free to Believe, the URC liberal network

Sunday 31st August

10.45 am Family Worship

Sunday 7th September

10.45 am All-age Worship with Holy Communion

There will be no Service on Sunday 21st September due to the Ipswich Half Marathon.
Our Harvest Parade Service will be held on Sunday 12th October.
