

## Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> February – Sunday Next before Lent

### Prayers written by Pat Southwood

Father, we pray this week for light in the darkness of our daily lives, for your light which shines into the darkest recesses of our hearts giving us hope and vision as we go forward trying to follow in your footsteps. We offer ourselves to you, recognizing our weaknesses but putting our trust in you; prayerfully asking that you guide us in all we do and say, so that we may continue to build a strong and vibrant Christian community here.

We ask your blessing and guidance on your church throughout the world. Give strength to our church leaders that they may question the actions of governments whose lack of loving care for those in need compromises the lives of the poor and dispossessed. Help them and us to be the conscience of the nation speaking out for those without a voice and showing love and compassion in the face of hatred and disregard for the needs of the vulnerable.

Look on our government leaders and give them wisdom and foresight that they may act in the best interests of our country and all its peoples. Help them to deliberate carefully and with principle not looking for self-gain or aggrandizement but humbly and honestly placing the needs of our country at the heart of their discussions always remembering that it is better to work in cooperation with one another. Give them understanding and a collaborative approach in all their dealings. We pray especially for all who are working to ease the anxiety and distress caused by the pandemic. For the researchers, the health and social care workers, the voluntary workers and the aid agencies across the world. Help us to remember that this pandemic is not just here but in every country. Help us to appreciate our own good fortune and to be generous in our understanding of the needs of the rest of the world.

We thank you for the diversity and richness of the natural world. We marvel at its wonders but are careless in our actions. Help us to look beyond our personal desires placing the preservation of our environment before personal gratification. Open our eyes to the uncomfortable facts, the pollution the degradation of habitats and destruction of habitats and communities that result from our desires for more and more. Remind us that wealth is not measured in money and possessions but in the richness of our understanding and care for all that surrounds us. Without our green world with all its different plants and living creatures we are of no account. It is our responsibility as custodians of our children's futures to guard and protect it so that we pass on a world that is healthy and strong.

We thank you for those people who sustain us by their love and forgiveness, for all the people with whom our lives are inextricably linked and who make up the fabric of our family and community life. Make us alert to each other's needs and quick to serve and encourage one another. May our gentleness with each other reflect your gentleness with us.

Be with all who are sick at this time wherever they are being cared for. We think especially of those in intensive care units and care homes whose families and friends cannot visit them and all who are isolated and the lonely. We remember from our own community Jan Banks

Margaret Wilding, Ken Cathcart, Dorothy Lawrence, Gary, Hazel Chapman, Roger Le Page,

Andrew, John Leaworthy, Judith Curtis, Pat Bolton, Roy Copsey.

Surround them with your love, comfort and support them and give them courage and hope in their troubles.

You set before us the hope of life everlasting. In this confidence we entrust to you all those who have died remembering those who have died as a result of the pandemic.

From our community we bring to you Doreen Goswell, Robert Baker, Geoffrey Newbery, Vera Beckwith, and Jean Harman. Be with their families and friends in their sadness and help them to find the peace that only you can give.

We give thanks for the lives of those recorded in the memorial book:

Joyce Hooker, Vera Houghton, Carole Warne, Sheila Gennings, Pamela Pennick, Edna Chew.

According to your promises grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.

Now as we look towards Lent and remember your sacrifice made for us we ask that you open our eyes to the light of your love and give us the strength to follow faithfully in your footsteps.

Amen.