



New Creation Churches

May 2020

Prayer Diary

**A cheerful heart is good
medicine**

Proverbs 17: 22

A day without laughter is a day wasted.

American author Ellen Jacob said,

“Whoever said laughter is the best medicine was right. It’s also the glue that holds relationships and friendships together. To laugh together at life’s often ridiculous turn of events can make such events bearable, to laugh at the funny things in life makes life wonderful. The real gift is having a friend to share the laughter with.”

Laughter has been proven to decrease stress hormones, increase immunity and antibodies that fight infection, thereby improving our resistance to illness. Laughter triggers the release of endorphins, the body’s feel good chemicals that promote wellbeing and can even relieve pain. A good laugh is good for our mental health too, our sense of value and self-worth, even when we get up on a cold winter morning, stumble to the bathroom, look in the mirror and think to ourselves, “No that can’t be right!!!”

Much biblical text links laughter to scorn, such as Psalm 22 which states, “All they that see me, laugh me to scorn.” Even so, God wants us to be happy and that comes through him. He created us and knows us better than we know ourselves. The Canadian theologian J.I Packer said, “The way to be truly happy is to be truly human, and the way to be truly human is to be truly Godly.”

In the New Testament, the idea of happiness is linked to the Greek word Makarios, or blessed. The word is found over 50 times, including in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the book of Revelation. Scottish Theologian William Barclay described Makarios as, “the joy which has a secret within itself, that joy which is serene and untouchable, that joy which is completely independent of all life’s changes and chances.”

Human happiness depends more on changes in the circumstances of our daily lives, which can get bumpy. Happy in the Bible were those who submitted and sacrificed everything to God, who thirsted after spiritual growth, who longed for his earthly coming, and were not deterred even by persecution. One thinks of Paul and Silas singing joyful praises to God in the book of Acts, while shackled by chains in a Philippian dungeon.

But, do we take the time to look around at others near to us, and think about what might be going on for them. A tough time, a break up, bereavement, financial concerns, relationship issues with family or friends? Also, is there anyone with anything to celebrate? There is always joy to be had in others’ happy news. Life is fragile and can change in an instant with unexpected events or a diagnosis confirmed, we therefore need to seize the positives where we can. Turning adversity into strength is something that takes time, a quality helped along by the kindness of others. We must look at the person, be kind, and think what is going on for them. People can be reluctant to tell someone what they need for fear of being seen as weak. Kindness though is happiness, it is noticing, it is asking, it is caring. Everyone has the power to make someone’s day a little better, (or a little worse), depending on how they treat them. Happiness and kindness are not only the right things to do, they make real sense and a real difference.

So its good to laugh, without being coarse or disrespectful, laughter lifts spirits. It takes less facial muscles to smile than it does to frown, especially when life gets bumpy.

Current Prayer Diary Editorial team: David Ashton-Hilton, Mo Barber, Avril Chadwick, Liz Cran, Grace Isaac, Sonya Stocker and Ian Stocker, Rosemary West

Bible Verses

Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them."

Psalms 126: 7

Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalms 37: 4

ANSWERS TO PRAYER FROM PREVIOUS MONTH'S DIARIES:

- We give thanks for the way the local communities have responded to the current situation looking after the most vulnerable.
- Generosity in donations to the foodbank.

A reminder of what the Prayer Diary is about:

The prayer diary reminds us to pray each day for a person in the church, a street or organisation, and a diary event, and informs and directs our prayers, underpinning and supporting the day-to-day work of the churches in Banwell and Congresbury. The Diary is circulated to St Andrew's electoral roll in both Anglican churches and Congresbury Methodist members.

Please keep it in a handy place to use each day - it is designed to stick on the fridge with a magnet, or to fold to go in a book or bag etc.

The aim is that once every five months every person in the churches, each village & church organisation / group & each village street will be prayed for. **If you have not yet been included (and wish to be) please contact Congresbury Church Office (01934 833126).**

YOUR FEEDBACK IS WANTED

We would welcome any feedback and news of prayer answers / requests. Please contact the Congresbury Church Office (01934 833126) with your suggestions, answers to prayer, and any specific prayer requests. *Please could you get these to the Church Office by 20th May. Thank you.*

New Creation churches -Prayer During the Day

O Lord, open our lips and our mouths shall proclaim your praise.

This is the day that the Lord has made

Let us rejoice and be glad in it. *(Psalm 51.15, Ps 118.24)*

As we recall God's faithfulness we pray:

The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. *(Lam 3:22-23)*

The Word of God

the psalm for today is in this month's Prayer Diary.

The Bible readings for today are in this month's Prayer Diary.

Response *silence and a time for individual reflection*

Prayers

please use today's entry in the prayer diary to guide your intercessions

The New Creation Prayer:

Loving God, you are one-

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, united in peace.

Unite our two traditions and village communities into one body- your body, and sustain our rich diversity we pray.

We give you thanks for your commitment to your people of every age and place.

We ask for your help to fulfil our commitment to you and each other.

Grant us your peace, that we might grow in patience and humility,

and help us to leave behind all that might hinder our unity as we walk with you.

Enable us, by your Spirit, to work together in peace in a new way,

to love our neighbours as ourselves and to honour Christ as Lord. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer is said

The Conclusion

Bind unto yourself the name, the strong name of the Trinity;

by invocation of the same,

the Three in One and One in Three.

Of whom all nature hath creation,

Eternal Father, Spirit, Word:

praise the Lord of your salvation,

salvation is of Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

(St Patrick's breastplate prayer)

If you would like to join with others in saying daily prayer, please see Pew News for details for the coming month.