

THE WINSLOW BENEFICE PARISH PUMP

◦ HOLINESS ◦ HOSPITALITY ◦ HEALING ◦

'Pray without Ceasing'

(1 Thessalonians 5:17)

What a tall order – the injunction to pray without ceasing – and yet it is what St Paul instructs the Thessalonians to do.

St Benedict, 'the Father of Monks,' felt strongly that prayer should be the basis for all forms of religious life and advised his monks to keep their prayers 'short and pure,' but frequent. He further wrote that 'in community, prayer should always be brief.' His argument was that frequent, and heartfelt, prayer has the effect of making us more prayerful in every aspect of our lives. I think Benedict got it spot on.

During these difficult and challenging times, we would like to encourage the discipline of short, frequent and communal prayer for the dispersed church remains the communal church. Prayer is perhaps the primary means for bringing us together even when we are apart.

Prayer is also the means through which the church maintains her health and vitality, and an unhealthy world needs a healthy church - a church at prayer, in other words! At its most simple, prayer is the activity that brings together 'God, ourselves and the people. Being with Him (God) for them (the people) and with them (the people) for Him (God).'

Prayer is, in other words, the activity that binds everything together. Prayer takes us out of ourselves and towards God and our neighbour. To pray is to love.

So, in these difficult and challenging times, how do we 'pray without ceasing?'

As a ministry team, we are having to learn to embrace technology as a means of bringing us together even when we are apart, so that the dispersed church remains the communal church; a church which prays together on a frequent and regular basis. We will continue live streaming the Sunday Eucharist. The Nave Altar is now in the Vicarage and we are good to go for this Sunday. Please do join us for the Benefice Service, via the St Laurence Church, Winslow Facebook Page at 9.30am.

We are also launching a new service (a short form of morning prayer) followed by online community café, hosted by Mark and Didier, called **Zoom In**. This will take place on Tuesday and Thursday mornings between 9 and 9.40am. If you would like to participate, please can you email Didier at didier@winslowbenefice.org.uk. You will need to download Zoom onto your phone, tablet, laptop or PC. Mark is producing a Zoom Guide, aimed at people like me, who find technology challenging!

Hopefully you will have received the short-form Morning and Evening Prayer, the cycle of intercessions and the weekly Gospel readings. You will find these useful if you would like to participate in **Zoom In** (or indeed if you would prefer to pray by yourself). If you haven't received these, please contact Emma at churchoffice71@gmail.com or on 07083 833 944 and she will forward copies to you.

Let's keep praying, even as a dispersed community. Prayer really does make a difference, for when we pray, we grow together in solidarity, compassion and love.

In Christ,

Andrew, Mark and Didier.