

## **Prayers of Intercession**

### **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

#### **Being new and young**

You know the phrase, “the night is but young”? Well, today, the year is but young! What is ahead of us? This time last year, we had little idea about the joys and disappointments that filled 2023. But now we know: good or bad, we know the history of the year. So we pray in hope for this young, new year.

It is indeed a new year with a fresh start for the history of Immanuel with Highworth! A lot of the work has been done to unite us as one church in two locations, but we all know that there will be more to do as the year progresses. We ask that we might journey onwards with open minds to see opportunities that lie ahead. We rejoice in what has passed and what is to come. Give us the strength and will to move in new directions, possibly with new people and in new places.

We pray for the seeds of ideas that might direct us towards a more sustainable future. We pray for all nations to take positive and active roles in the way we treat this earth. We pray for scientists, technologists and engineers – all have a role to play in caring for our environment. Help us to think further than the obvious, knowing that finding the real truth is rarely easy. We need to remember the young and their futures – our actions affect their lives now, more than ever.

We watch for the small green shoots to emerge from the ground; for the tiny buds that dress the trees signalling that the future WILL burst forth...nothing can hold it back. We rejoice in the cycles of life, watching the world's clock turn, day after day, giving us hope for a brighter future, when nights are shorter and days stretch out further. We thank you for the hope this brings to so many who find winter a difficult time. We pray for people who find it difficult to leave their homes during the dark months, we pray for those who are lonely, for the sick and for those on the fringes of our society.

We pray for creativity in dealing with new and old problems. For those who are involved in wars and conflicts. Wars that are often, to quote, “started by angry old men, but [they] are fought by young men who die for reasons that are beyond them”\*. Lord, we pray for the young men and women of the world who are engaged in warfare, who are trying to protect their homes or pressured into fighting in ignorance of truths. We pray for the aggressors and the oppressed; they are all your children.

We think of the young people of Swindon. We pray for the success of this year's Old Town Partnership project, as we set out to raise money to support not only "Swindon Youth for Christ", but also the local "Street Pastors"; both aim to help and guide our young people. Help us to work together as a true partnership, celebrating our commonality and differences in active and positive ways. Again, Lord, we are all one family.

We remember our children as they return to school. The teachers, the admin staff, the support assistants and the maintenance team. Everyone of them plays a role in caring and educating our children. We pray for wisdom, understanding, patience, joy and learning to permeate the fabric of the school buildings and that they may be happy, caring and progressive places.

Thank you for new beginnings. We ask for strength and courage to face tomorrow. May our faith and hope in you grow like the trees around us, strong, mighty and firmly rooted in your being. May we become wiser as the year ages. Help us to learn from mistakes we have made and to move forward with open minds. Be with us as we grow from young to old, help us to put out a hand to those following behind and to step carefully in the foot prints of those ahead, thoughtful of who we are and mindful of the impact we make.

*"Walk beside us, O Holy One,  
as we question and welcome,  
as we challenge and invite,  
as we discover and understand".*

Help us to welcome the new and the young, help us to see the potential of this world and its people.

Amen

\*David Gemmell