

### Words for Praying.

O Lord, help us to accept  
that you made us all so different,  
with our own temperaments and talents.  
Like plants, we cannot change our nature,  
yet you rejoice in each one of us being special.  
Help *us* to rejoice in our uniqueness  
and accept what we are called upon to do;  
wherever our lives are planted  
grant that we may praise you  
and glorify your name.  
Amen.

### Praying now for the most essential of humans needs: relationships.

God of relationships, we thank you for all who are dear to us,  
near or far, present or past.  
We remember all those who are alone  
especially during these lockdown weeks  
and acknowledge places within us that feel empty.  
Comfort and console all who feel unloved, insular  
or unsupported.  
Inspire awareness of isolation, compassion and generosity,  
To heal the hurt and fill the void,  
For Jesus' sake.  
Amen.

(With thanks to Rev Margaret Marshall)

### A Blessing.

May God the Creator  
Who made us and all living things  
Bless us, our homes and our families  
Now and forever. Amen.

Sunday June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2020

The Benefice of the Paxtons with Diddington and Southoe  
“Keeping in Touch” Edition 14: The Third Sunday after Trinity.  
Celebrating Nature.

Greetings everyone!



It is a very hot afternoon as I write these notes. I was up early with my video camera filming some clips for this Sunday's You Tube video at Paxton Pits, and the beauty of the lake, trees and warm air was stunning. It was a pleasure to interview several people as well, some with no warning (!) who tell us why they love Paxton Pits. One of them is Trevor Gunton who talks so enthusiastically about the Pits. He says:

“Whilst many have been in lockdown these past weeks, nature has not. For the last few months there has been an overflowing of wildlife”.

Trevor's enthusiasm for nature is infectious and I hope many of you can enjoy his words in the video. You will find the link on the benefice Facebook Page @thePaxtonsBenefice on Saturday evening.

You may have heard via the media this week that services in religious buildings can be offered again from July 5<sup>th</sup>. There is a lot to think about in our benefice as to when and how we open. Social distancing will need to be adhered to and numbers will be limited, so we wait for clearer guidance from the National Church before making any decisions. In the meantime, we will maintain our presence online not least on Facebook and with our You Tube videos and these “Keeping-in-Touch” leaflets.

Hoping to see more of you now out and about and do ring anytime.

With love and prayers, Annette. 01480 211048.

**A Reading for Today.**  
**The Parable of the Different Soils**  
**Based on Matthew 13 v 1-9.**

*A farmer went out to sow his field. There was a footpath through it, too hard for the seed to take root, so it rotted or was eaten by the birds.*

*Some of the ground was on rock with little depth of soil, so that the plants could not develop deep roots, nor could the ground hold much moisture. The plants sprang up quickly but soon withered away.*

*Some of the soil was deeper but impoverished so that it grew nettles, docks and thistles as well. The plants took root, but the weeds grew more quickly so the plants were choked and died.*

*But some soil was well tended and fertile, in good heart, and the seed that fell on it put down deep roots, grew tall and strong and yielded a rich harvest.*



**Responses:**

**O Lord, save our hearts from being as the footpath,  
too hard for your word to take root.**

**O Lord, save our hearts from being as the rocky ground,  
where your word cannot be nourished and withers away.**

**O Lord, save us from being as the poor soil,  
Where your word is overpowered by the cares and worries  
Of our everyday life.**

**Bless us, and make us fertile soil, in good heart,  
where your word flourishes and brings life to ourselves and to others.  
Amen.**

**Some thoughts from Annette (and Trevor Gunton)**

Whilst many have been practicing some sort of shielding these last few weeks, it has been often said that nature had been having, well, a field day!

Here are some of Trevor's words from his interview on June 23<sup>rd</sup> outside the Visitor's Centre.

“Whilst some of us have been in lockdown, nature has not. For the past two months, there has been a flowing of wildlife. In two gardens I know of, 50 species of birds have been seen either in the gardens or flying through. Here at the Pits, there is a staggering amount of wildlife, damsel flies, dragon flies and the most fantastic flora such as wild mullein and Viper's Bugloss. In the field behind us are 100 common spotted orchids and up the country lane 200 pyramidal orchids. What other village has this kind of facility?”

“From my favourite spot, the riverside viewpoint, you can see kingfishers and herons – stand there and you could be in the Danube Delta. We have brought the wilderness into the village! Nature is not in lockdown, it's out there and we should celebrate. And, you don't have to go outside, open your window and you will be surprised what you see in your back garden.”

I wonder if one of the good things to come out of these dark days of Covid-19 is a deeper appreciation for and love of the natural world around us. Maybe more people have become connected to nature and the therapeutic qualities of being outdoors are well documented. But we especially think of those who have had to remain at home since mid-March and need to stay indoors for a little while longer and hope soon they can enjoy fresh air and sunshine.

Jesus often uses images from nature to get his parable messages across as in the story about the sower. The idea of us being like fertile soil where God's word can flourish deep within us and produce good fruits is as compelling as the deep attractiveness of nature in all its rich variety.

Let's rejoice in the extravagant variety of flora and fauna, animals, birds and fish. Let's be mindful to care for our earth and encourage youngsters to develop an abiding fascination in the natural world. And let's thank the staff and volunteers at Paxton Pits who are doing a great job and we wish them well as they begin to re-open many of the facilities available for visitors.



