

HOPE FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE

Seeds of Prayer

The seasons

This year, the Feast of Tabernacles is celebrated from 2-9 October. It is a feast of great rejoicing, which remembers the Lord's past provision for His people in the wilderness (Leviticus 23:33-43), celebrates His present goodness in the completion of the harvest (Deuteronomy 16:13-15), and looks forward to His tabernacling amongst us (John 1:14), the sending of the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39), and the Messianic Age to come (Zechariah 14:16-19) (bit.ly/insuccoth). *Give thanks for the Lord's past, present and future provision, that He is "working His purpose out", and that the time is drawing ever nearer "when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God" (Habakkuk 2:14).*

Late summer has seen our native hedgerows laden with fruits and berries, and our ancient oaks bowed under the weight of acorns. Their deep roots have stood the test of time and enabled them to remain fruitful through drought and storm (Psalm 1:1-3; Isaiah 61:3). *Give thanks for this sign of the Lord's steadfast faithfulness in uncertain times and of His promise of future growth and harvest, both material and spiritual.*

This I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God (Philippians 1:9-11).

Farming and the land

A licence has recently been granted for field trials for the bovine TB vaccine (which should be completed by 2024), a new, rapid (24-hour) test for the presence of TB will be rolled out next year, and new Government funding has been released for research into other promising tests. The number of new herds with suspected or confirmed TB is already down by 10% compared with last year, and the number of holdings with current suspected or confirmed TB is down by 15%. *Give thanks for these positive developments and answers to prayer. Pray for the Lord to prosper the new initiatives and deliver our livestock from this disease.*

Rural life

Covid-19 has led to businesses closing and job losses across the country. These include rural pubs unable to trade under the new regulations (bit.ly/bob920). Many rural communities are heavily dependent on tourism, hospitality and seasonal work and the pandemic has further exposed the weaknesses of this narrow economic base. Yet, rural communities also have great potential to contribute to the recovery of the nation's economy (bit.ly/trcgbb). *Pray for all who have lost jobs and businesses, asking especially that they will find a hope and a future in the One whose plans for us are for our welfare and peace (Jeremiah 29:11). Pray for Christians and churches to play a part in creating new local economies in rural areas.*

While rural dwellers have benefited from lower disease incidence and easier access to outdoors during lockdown, many have felt more lonely and isolated than their urban counterparts. Compounded by poor rural connectivity and financial worries (eg as above), this is having a severe impact on mental health, especially in the farming community (bit.ly/cvmental). *Pray for all suffering in this way and for all those seeking to 'bind up the broken hearted', including organisations like Farming Community Network.*

Hope for the Countryside - Online Prayer Gatherings

As we cannot meet to face-to-face this November for our annual prayer day, we are running two online prayer gatherings- on Wednesday 4 November (19.30-21.00) and Saturday 7 November (9.00-10.30). Please join us for either or both of these. For more details and to register, visit hftc1120.eventbrite.co.uk or email us at info@hopecountryside.uk.

'Hope for the Countryside' is a partnership between Agricultural Christian Fellowship, Village Hope, the World Prayer Centre and Top Barn Trust.
Our aim is to mobilise and resource prayer for rural Britain.
Our vision is of beacons of prayer lighting up across our countryside.
Our prayer is for a fresh move of the Holy Spirit across the countryside of our nation.

'Seeds of prayer' is a resource for prayer for individuals, groups, church services and other meetings. If this is helpful and inspiring or you would like to feed back your own insights and prayers then we would be very happy to hear from you.

