

# HOPE FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE

## Seeds of Prayer

### The seasons

Our countryside is now an amazing picture as our flora radiates life and vitality, and nature responds to the provision of its Creator. The sheer variety of shape and colour is a fitting witness to God who made it all (Rom 1: 20). Let us use this picture of the coming of summer to *give thanks for the strength and energy of our God, who loves to bring life where there is death, "to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives"* (Is 61: 1ff).

Dear Father,  
 Fill our sight with the splendour of  
 Your glory,  
 And our ears with the sound of the  
 rushing waters of Your voice.  
 May Your spreading fragrance blow  
 through our lives,  
 And Your Spirit touch the deep  
 recesses of our hearts,  
 That we might taste afresh and see  
 that You are good.

### Current issue

It is said that farmers are never happy and constantly moan about the weather. The industry certainly is completely dependent on our weather conditions. Deluge turned to drought, and land that had been too wet to access then contained seed too dry to germinate - then we were surprised again by flooding. As a result some land will remain fallow this year. *Pray that God will send rain in season, and that our farmers will be equipped to deal with the changing climate (Lev 26: 4).*

### Farming and the land

Many farms will be opening their gates for 'Open Farm Sunday' on June 10th, an event which in many cases has helped to restore the connection with local communities and break down barriers and misunderstandings between town and country. *Pray that the distancing that has grown between those who work the land and those who understand it less and less will be reversed and that once again our farms will be hubs of community, of church and of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ (Psalm 66: 5).*

### Rural life

A senior official at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) recently described rural areas across the world as 'places of growth, opportunity and inspiration', with a key role to play in solving 'major global challenges'. *Pray that people in rural Britain will recognise and rise to this task. Especially, pray that rural Christians will understand and seize the special opportunities in the countryside to advance the Kingdom of God (Ex 4: 2).*

*Pray for people living in rural communities known to you, where you live, visit, or simply drive through. Declare that the Lord has good plans for them, to prosper and not harm them, and to give them a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11).*

### Church and mission

Strong local churches are essential to effective mission. *Pray for existing rural churches to be revitalised and for new churches to be planted. Pray especially for those working to build mission-focused churches in the ex-mining villages of South Wales (Eph 3: 16).*

Our remit is for rural Britain, but please remember rural France, where the challenges facing church and mission are far greater than they are here. Recent studies suggest that the number of evangelical Christians has increased by 1000% since 1970, and that there are now some 650,000 evangelical Christians in France, about 1% of the population. In particular, *pray for those known to us working to share the Gospel and plant and nurture churches in the Vendée and Vienne départements. Pray for the work of Anglican chaplaincies among British expats in rural France - that many who have gone to France seeking the 'good life' will find faith in Jesus, and that they will also impact the local people (Acts 16: 9).*

'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 offered as a resource for prayer for individuals and prayer groups and for use in church services and other meetings. If you have found the 'seeds' helpful and inspiring or would like to feed back your own insights and prayers then we would be very happy to hear from you.

