

# HOPE FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE

## Seeds of Prayer

### Light and liberation

Light and liberation are central to Hannukah (10-18 December) and Christmastide (25 December- 5 January), making both festivals particularly poignant at present. Jesus taught on the 'light of the world' around the time of Hannukah (John 10:22-31); Christmas commemorates the coming into the world of the "true light which gives light to every man" (John 1:9), and who calls us also to be the "light of the world" (Matthew 4:14-16). Give thanks that the "light" of Christ "still shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:5).

*Blessed are you, Sovereign God of all, to you be glory and praise for ever. In the darkness of this passing age, your saints proclaim the glory of your Kingdom, revealed among us in Christ, our light.*

### Anticipation and hope

Advent is a time of anticipation and hope, as we look back at Jesus' first coming in humility and look forward to His return in glory. Anticipation and hope are at the heart of farming also: we plant seeds in the cold winter soil in hope of their bursting forth in the warmth of spring; lambs grow steadily through the winter months in anticipation of their birth in spring. *Pray that farmers will find their hope in the Lord Jesus, in the midst of change and uncertainty. Pray for 'rural revival', for new life in rural Britain, for restoration as we repent (Psalm 80), and that we will 'look for and hasten His return' (2 Peter 3:12).*

### Brexit and blessing

At the end of this most unusual year we enter a new phase of British sovereignty. Despite intense negotiations, there are still many unknowns, including with regard to the trading arrangements affecting farming and food ([bit.ly/rusahdb1](https://bit.ly/rusahdb1); [bit.ly/rusahdb2](https://bit.ly/rusahdb2)). But we know that God "controls the course of world events, gives wisdom to the wise, and knows what lies hidden" (Daniel 2:21), and we can place all the uncertainty into His hands.

*As the UK leaves the EU, pray for the Lord to bless the other nations of Europe - their leaders and all people (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Pray that the Lord will raise up and strengthen His faithful followers, and send out labourers into His harvest, in all these lands (Matthew 9:37). Pray for those sharing the Gospel and planting and nurturing churches in rural France and in rural areas across Europe.*

### Carols and creativity

Carol services are a mainstay of the outreach of most rural and urban churches. Things will be very different this year and will leave many disappointed, even devastated ([bit.ly/ctcarols](https://bit.ly/ctcarols)). *Pray that churches will find new ways to celebrate Christmas and remind their communities of its true meaning. Pray that Christians will find ways to reach out to those who are especially lonely at Christmas and to those in need, both locally and beyond. Pray that in our present times, we will make "the best use of the time" and "understand what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:16-17).*

All year we have celebrated the wonders, vibrancy and colours of creation. This season is always an excuse to unlock our creative side! Food and feasting, art and crafts, acting and storytelling, music and song offer a myriad of ways to express appreciation of one another and celebrate that God is good, and that He is always with us, whatever the circumstances. Creating things together can provide opportunities for deeper conversations, and sharing memories, confessions of pain, loss, anxiety or fear, sometimes saying things too deep for words. *Pray for creativity and creative ways of reaching out to friends, family and neighbours, especially the elderly or isolated. Pray for special moments of connection and intimacy, and the grace and wisdom to listen, to pray and to share Jesus.*

### Online Prayer Gathering, January 2021

Following our online prayer gatherings in November, we are holding a 'follow-up' on Saturday, 30 January 2021, 9.00 - 10.30 AM. Please join us in prayer for the churches and communities of rural Britain. Find out more and sign up at [hftc0121.eventbrite.co.uk](https://hftc0121.eventbrite.co.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.

