

# Chester Diocesan News

#EverydayFaith across the Diocese of Chester | April 2020



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
Diocese of Chester



## Let's pray

Archdeacon Ian  
reflects on prayer. Pg 2

Thy Kingdom Come 2020. Pg 4

Cover photo:  
*Ashes to Go*  
in Crewe.

# It's time to pray

The Archdeacon of Macclesfield, the Venerable Ian Bishop looks at his experience of prayer and finding the time for it.

“ ‘ll be honest, I don't think I'm very good at prayer. I remember reading Richard Foster's really helpful book on prayer a few years ago and immediately feeling he understood people like me when his first paragraph said: “We today yearn for prayer and hide from prayer. We are attracted to it and repelled by it. We believe prayer is something we should do, even something we want to do; but it seems as if a chasm stands between us and actually praying.”

Bizarrely, in the middle of one of the busiest seasons of ministry I've ever experienced, I've suddenly found prayer a bit easier. Just when I have all the excuses not to pray because of time constraints, the necessity to do so has never been more real.

Psalms 31 is a good read for anyone in time of stress. It makes it clear that stress is a fact of life, especially for the godly, but that the sovereign, personal God is a rock of refuge for all under intense stress. There is something about the need to attend to the inner self especially when the times of pressure come to bear upon our lives, to rest in God, listen to and learn from the Spirit and discover afresh what the divine relationship can offer us. In the words of John Henry Newman, “heart speaks to heart”, and in that relationship is the strength to face the challenges of life. I suspect we all experience this from time to time; in times of illness and at moments when we lose control, to whom can we turn but God who is always there.

“So, whether you’re great at prayer or, like me, a bit hit and miss, it’s time to pray, it’s always time to pray.”



*Ian Bishop, Archdeacon of Macclesfield*

One of the miracles of recent years has been the development of the season of prayer between Ascension and Pentecost that has become the season of *Thy Kingdom Come*. From small seeds the movement has grown into an international event of significance, calling us all to prayer to transform the earth. Do take note of the resources to help you create a precious experience of God in your church and community and pray for the hunger for spiritual reality to be satisfied.

Thank you for praying for the appointment of the next Bishop of

Chester, but don’t stop now. It would be good to build our prayers together as a new chapter in the history of the Diocese of Chester prepares to open. As one who was a part of the process of selection, it was reassuring to know the prayers of many were gathering as the selection process unfolded. The next bishop will, I am certain, feel unworthy of the calling, humbled by the confidence of the Church, and daunted by the task ahead.

So, whether you’re great at prayer or, like me, a bit hit and miss, it’s time to pray, it’s always time to pray.”

# Thy Kingdom Come 2020

international launch



*Archbishop Justin Welby and CBBC's Gemma Hunt*

Church leaders and representatives from various denominations and church organisations gathered for the international launch of *Thy Kingdom Come 2020* at Lambeth Palace, exactly four years to the day after it was first launched. Christians from around the world also tuned in to watch the launch, live streamed on Facebook, encouraging international audiences to take part in the 11-day period of prayer from Ascension to Pentecost.

In his main address, Archbishop Justin Welby spoke about the potential life-changing power of prayer: "What excites me is that as we come together and pray for people to be filled with the Spirit, so they come to know and love Jesus Christ, to repent of their sins and turn away from all that is wrong and to find the love of Christ filling their hearts, we are in fact praying for the changing of

our world."

The launch event also previewed new resources for 2020 including an exciting print and digital resource which will be distributed to almost half a million school children across England and Wales.

Building on from last year's Family Prayer Adventure Map, this year's digital version uses gaming and augmented reality to bring the 11-day themes to life, with contributors including Archbishop Justin Welby, CBBC's Gemma Hunt, Guvna B, Sally Lloyd Jones and storyteller Philip Glassborow.

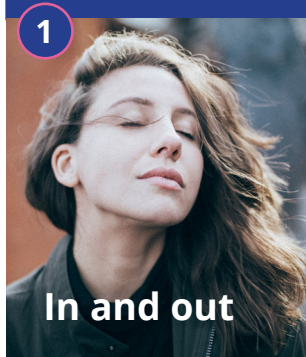
The digital map comes to life through an app, which can be downloaded through any smartphone.

Enduring favourites, such as the traditional Novena and the Prayer Journal will also be available.

All resources are available to order right now from the TKC website: [www.thykingdomcome.global](http://www.thykingdomcome.global)

## Try praying...It's easier than you might think.

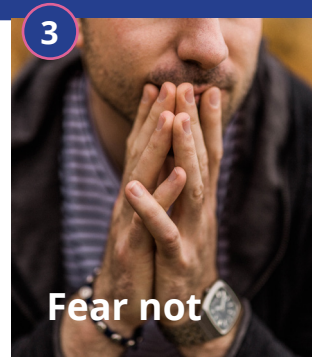
Here are three simple ways to try praying. They're perfect if you're new to the idea, and all of them you can do right now, right where you are.



Breathe. It's important, it means we're alive! Breathing is a way of connecting us the created, with our creator. Get a little closer to your maker today, to breathe is to pray. Take a quiet moment to concentrate on your breathing: in, out, repeat.



It's good to know there's someone out there thinking of you and wishing you well. Why not return the favour? As you think of that person, wish them well and ask God to bless them in the best way you know how.



Life is full of personal dilemmas and anxieties. Life-changing events or niggling doubts can all weigh heavily on us. Whatever you're facing, God is with you. Pray for God to enter your life, to fill you with love, and guide you through the difficulties you face.

## What is TKC?

**What:** *Thy Kingdom Come* is a global prayer movement between Ascension and Pentecost, which this year falls on 21 - 31 May.

**Where:** *Thy Kingdom Come* attracts more than a million Christians in nearly 90% of countries worldwide.

**Get involved:** Events of all shapes and sizes take place during *Thy Kingdom Come*. Look at the TKC website for details:  
[www.thykingdomcome.global/events](http://www.thykingdomcome.global/events)



# House of Prayer

**E**mily Allen, Church Buildings Missioner in the Diocese of Chester invites you and your parish to reimagine how your church building is playing its role as a place of prayer.

She says: "One of the foundational roles of church buildings is to be a house of prayer. Church buildings could be described as 'gateways' or 'thin places' that are set apart for people to connect with God. Creating spaces and resources for prayer is about how churches can work with their context to develop something meaningful. What a great treasure it is of the Church to provide space for us all to meet with our Heavenly Father and to pray for others."

Already, 38 parishes around the diocese have joined with Emily to participate in the House of Prayer Group, to share ideas and encouragement.

Recent events have focused on the practical aspects of offering prayer resources to church visitors and regulars alike. Discussion groups have covered ideas for prayer resources, prayer walks, prayer stations, and interactive activities like arts and crafts as a vehicle to prayer.

If you and your parish would like to join with other like-minded people to develop ideas for your praying community, get in touch with Emily at Church House and come along to the next event: [emily.allen@chester.anglican.org](mailto:emily.allen@chester.anglican.org)

## **Here are some examples of parishes using their church building as a House of Prayer in their community:**

### **St. John's Church, Sandiway**

St John's has explored holding a Prayer Weekend. Everyone is invited to spend time experiencing and exploring different ways to pray and listen, through 12 interactive prayer stations. This year's Prayer Weekend is on 26 and 27 September.

### **St Mary's, Lymm**

St Mary's has introduced a Prayer Tree. A family member who attended a funeral at St Mary's said:

"All I could write was Grandad. I'm sure God knows how much I miss him". The Revd Beverley Jameson said: "I am always surprised just how many people visit our church when it is open outside of services. People sometimes just need a quiet space to be with God. "

### **St Mary's, Eastham**

On the third Saturday of the month, St Mary's opens for a "Monastic Day", a day punctuated by short services based on the ancient monastic discipline, with an hour of reflection and music from 11am to 12 noon.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a green textured cardigan and a yellow floral scarf, stands in front of a large, curved stone church building. The building has a prominent arched window and a tower-like structure. A large green tree is visible behind the building. The sky is blue with some clouds. The woman has her hands clasped in front of her.

“One of the  
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*Emily Allen, Church Buildings Missioner*

# Our events

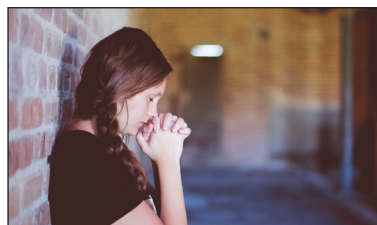
Book via Eventbrite, or go to: [chester.anglican.org/events](https://chester.anglican.org/events)



## Outdoor adventure day

04 April 2020 - Congleton

Children, young people and families are invited to a fun filled outdoor activity adventure day which will include canoeing, kayaking, orienteering and outdoor games.



## Missional Youth Church Network

24 April 2020 - Foxhill, Frodsham

An opportunity for clergy and youth leaders to find out the principles of developing youth congregations and how your parish could benefit from being part of the network.



## New approaches to Bible reading

30 April 2020 - Runcorn

Telling and retelling the story. This is a day to help those who would like to develop the skills to facilitate new approaches to reading the Bible with others. Led by Sue Richardson.



## Poetry Workshop

14 May 2020 - Dunham Massey

The day is being led by poet John Lindley and is intended as a resource for developing ministry and/or spirituality. No previous experience of writing poetry is required.



## 24 Hours with Pádraig Ó Tuama

04 June 2020 - Frodsham

A 24 hour residential for licensed ministers in the diocese based on the theme Jesus and Conflict: An exploration of gospel, poetry and history.

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