"Prayer enlarges the heart until it is capable of Containing God’s gift of himself."
Mother Theresa

As I write this, I have just presided at three ordination services. In each of those services, I reminded the ordinands of the responsibility they were taking on. And then, just at the moment when any reasonable human would feel overwhelmed, I said the words:

You cannot bear the weight of this calling in your own strength, but only by the grace and power of God. Pray therefore that your heart may daily be enlarged, and your understanding of Scripture enlightened. Pray earnestly for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I've always loved the image of the heart being enlarged. Mother Theresa reminds us that it is enlarged so that we can receive the gift of God himself. Paul in 2 Corinthians 6 says to the church which has rejected him:

“...our heart is wide open to you… open wide your hearts.”

The open heart is a symbol of welcome, hospitality and acceptance.

I hope this prayer diary will help you to open wide your hearts.

+Martyn
Bishop of Leicester

Retreats

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK PLEASE CALL OR SEE OUR WEBSITE

Launde Abbey is a retreat house in the heart of the country with God at its centre

Sept – Dec 2022
at Launde Abbey

DIVING FOR PEARLS RETREAT 05-08 Sept
Exploring the Depths of Prayer with Isaac the Syrian (Monastic Wisdom) this retreat beckons us to relax and enjoy God’s creation.

BEGINNERS’ RETREAT 16-18 Sept
A retreat for first time retreatants led by Alison Myers and Chris Webb. The aim of the weekend is to help you enter the world of silent retreats gently and with plenty of support.

FRAGILE LIGHT 16-18 Sept
The light we see shining in the face of Jesus Christ is a fragile light revealed in his broken humanity. It is a fragile light he shares with those who seek to follow him.

FRIED, FRAZZLED & FATIGUED? 02-10 Nov
A retreat for church leaders in a safe place to find renewal, relaxation and rest in the company of fellow travellers.

SPIRITUAL WRITING 11-12 Nov
Come and discover the art of spiritual writing, writing about our spiritual lives and writing from that deep reflective place inside each of us.

CURIOUS CONTEMPLATIVE 18-20 Nov
This retreat will explore the shape of contemplative life by following the transformative story of the prophet Elijah. We’ll reflect on the contemplative life journey and see whether or not that’s paralleled in our own lives.

THE ‘I AM’ SAYINGS 28-01 Dec
During this retreat we will pray with, and through, the ‘I am’ statements of Jesus in John’s gospel using a variety of ways of praying with the text, including lectio divina and imaginative contemplation.

ICON PAINTING RETREAT 05-09 Dec
Join experienced iconographer, Peter Murphy for a week learning the medieval gilding and painting techniques to create stunning icon paintings.

STILL BEFORE CHRISTMAS 2022 05-08 Dec
As our first Christmas since lockdown draws near we take the opportunity to gather together around the Bethlehem manger in a retreat led by the Warden of Launde Abbey.

www.laundeabbey.org.uk • 01572 717254 • info@launde.org.uk • Charity No: 1140918

FOREWORD FROM BISHOP OF LOUGHBOROUGH

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+Martyn
Bishop of Leicester
WELCOME

Welcome to the new edition of the diocesan calendar of prayer, which takes us through from the thanksgiving of Creationtide and Harvest, through Advent and finally to the season of Christmas when we celebrate the miracle of our Saviour’s birth.

If you know of anyone else who would like to receive a paper copy of this publication, then please contact James Pickersgill, the Bishop’s Chaplain as below. It can also be downloaded from www.leicester.anglican.org/everyday-faith/calendar-or-prayer/

Every day we pray for Bishops and our sisters and brothers in Christ around the world using the Anglican Cycle of Prayer and the Porvoo prayer calendar (www.porvoochurches.org) – these are included in italics at the bottom of each Sunday. You will also find one of our own partner dioceses featured throughout. The Anglican Communion have changed their practice and now only include the name of the diocese, asking us to pray for the people, clergy and Bishops of the named dioceses. The names of Diocesan Bishops in Great Britain have been added.

The key to the parish entries is as follows: C = Clergy; R = Reader; PA = Pastoral Assistant; Pio = Pioneer Minister; AM = Associate Minister; Evng = Evangelist; PTO = Permission to Officiate.

Do let the Bishop’s Chaplain know if you’ve got a story to feature on a Sunday in a future edition – with as much notice as possible please!
Email: bishops.chaplain@leicestercofe.org or phone 0116 270 3390 or send it c/o Bishop’s Lodge, 12 Springfield Road, Leicester, LE2 3BD.

We are very grateful to Revd Canon Brian Davis for his work on gathering parish prayer requests, to Peter Collett for his on-going assistance, Beth Cluer for much of the imagery and to all our contributors in this autumn edition.
Creationtide or the Season of Creation is the period in the annual church calendar, from 1st September to 4th October, dedicated to God as Creator and Sustainer of all life.

Resources available:
Creationtide resources | The Church of England
Doxecology – Resound Worship
Creationtide resources – 1st September – 4th October (wordpress.com)
Eco Church – An A Rocha UK Project

Creator God,
you made the goodness of the land,
the riches of the sea
and the rhythm of the seasons;
as we thank you for your gracious providing
may we cherish and respect
this planet and its peoples,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Pray for Vicki and Phil Bryson to be Licensed today by Bishop Saju at St Dionysius Church, Market Harborough.

Minnesota (Episcopal Church)

THURS 1 SEPT  Creationtide

FRI 2 SEPT  Mountsorrel Christ Church & St Peter; St Leonard’s, Swithland

Colin Resch (C), Helen Hodson (R-PTO), Edmund Stacey (R-PTO), Gary Lee (R-PTO), Mel Rawley (Asst Minister in training), Linda Vesty & Alison White (Children & Family Workers), Kat Jenkins (Youth Worker) Christ Church & St Peter’s CE Primary School, Mountsorrel; St Leonard’s CE Primary School, Swithland.

Pray for us as we follow up on the relationships and connections we have formed during our Summer week of mission. Kat recently joined our team as Youth Worker, pray that she settles in well and that her ministry among us will bear fruit amongst the young people of Mountsorrel.

Indigenous Spiritual Ministry of Mishamikoweesh (Canada)

SAT 3 SEPT

Mississippi (Episcopal Church)
World Alzheimer’s Month

In this country we have become increasingly aware of not only Alzheimer’s disease, but also of dementia more widely. It is visible in our families and communities but still retains elements of fear and stigma. In some countries this is far greater, yet worldwide there are over 55 million people living with dementia and this is set to almost triple by 2050.

Activities and organisations working with people experiencing dementia are a lifeline for many. Dementia cafes, games sessions and music groups, for example, enable both the person experiencing dementia and their carer to have fun and meet other people, perhaps to lift the worry for a short time. And none of these activities need be exclusively for those living with the condition.

When a diagnosis has been made, the world can suddenly feel more frightening for both carer and cared-for. Good support immediately post-diagnosis is vital – enabling people to voice their feelings, to access the right help and to journey forward well. Walking alongside well while not crowding or taking over is something we can all aspire to.

Care homes are still cautious around visitors, but let’s not let that put us off. So often folk with dementia can sit unresponsive in lounges, but blossom with a bit of laughter and attention.

And let’s ensure that people living with these conditions find a true and loving welcome in our Churches.

Please pray for:
Care homes in your area, their residents and staff.
The work of the Alzheimer’s Society and Alzheimer’s International, in research, support, raising awareness and influencing policy.
People you know living with Alzheimer’s or dementia.
Support groups in your area.
Alzheimer’s Society (alzheimers.org.uk)
Home | Alzheimer’s Disease International (ADI) (alzint.org)

Revd Canon Alison Adams
Canon Pastor
Pray for those to be confirmed at Blaby and at Barrow upon Soar.

Church of England:
Diocese of Salisbury, Bishop Stephen Lake,
Bishop Andrew Rumsey, Bishop Karen Gorham

Church in Wales:
Diocese of St Asaph, Bishop Gregory Cameron

The Anglican Church of Australia

MON 5 SEPT  Diocese of Wyoming
Please pray for our sisters and brothers in our partner diocese.

MISSOURI (Episcopal Church)

TUES 6 SEPT  Bishop’s Retreat Day at Launde Abbey
Licensing of Stewart Betts – Whetstone.

WEST MISSOURI (Episcopal Church)

WED 7 SEPT  Quorn
In vacancy (C), Dawn Daly (R), Sue Osmond (R)
St Bartholomew’s CE Primary School; Rawlins College (Academy)
Please pray for this vacant benefice and for those who are sustaining the life of the church during this period.

MITYANA (Uganda)

THURS 8 SEPT
Bishop Martyn attending Lay Ministry Advisory Group meeting.

OMBOSA (Kenya)

FRI 9 SEPT
Pray for Bishops in our Partner Diocese of Trichy, visiting Leicester over the coming week.
Emmanuel Church Loughborough – weekend of events – Bishop Saju attending.

MONMOUTH (Wales)

SAT 10 SEPT  World Anti-Suicide Day
Emmanuel Church Loughborough – weekend of events – Bishop Saju attending.

MONTANA (Episcopal Church)
Blessed are those who remain steadfast under trial, for when they have stood the test they will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.

This seems an apt scripture when we consider the trials that all staff and students have gone through in the education system over the last two years. The Covid-19 pandemic saw schools close without notice, teachers having to adapt plans and resources quickly to suit online learning, having to provide pastoral care from a distance and still be present to teach vulnerable children and those of keyworkers. The summer term just gone, saw a return to many of the great things that schools hadn’t been able to do for two years; sports days, fundraisers, whole school collective worships, school trips and even examinations. Although this was welcomed, it undoubtedly came with uncertainty, stress, and a worry that what used to be the norm was now something that actively had to be remembered how it was previously done.

Everyone within the education system has shown amazing resilience and coping mechanisms during this time and have, as James 1:12 says, remained steadfast under trial.

Tracey Manns
Deputy Director of Education for the LDBE

Prayer Points:
Pray for renewed energy and strength for all students and staff as we near the end of the summer holidays and approach the Autumn term.
Pray for continued normality in the running of schools for all staff and students.
Pray for wisdom and discernment in knowing how best to help and support schools through the SEND provision crisis.
Pray for the work of the LDBE and that we can develop effective relationships with schools and support them to be the best they can be.

Licensing of Jessie Tang as Intercultural Ministry Director at 4pm at the Church of the Martyrs, 19 Westcotes Drive, Leicester LE3 0QT – all welcome!

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark:
Diocese of Ribe, Bishop Elof Westergaard
Church of England: Diocese of Bath & Wells, Bishop Peter Hancock, Bishop Ruth Worsley

The Church of Bangladesh
The Growing Faith Adventure is a call for the renewal of hearts and minds so that it becomes second nature to include children, young people, and households in every aspect of church life for the lifelong formation of faith in the whole of life.

Growing Faith is about schools, churches and households working together to give children, young people, and families safe spaces to discover and explore their spirituality and grow in faith. Established in September 2021, the Growing Faith Foundation seeks to be a strategic lead across the Church of England, to grow a younger and more diverse church and increase engagement with children and families in different settings.

In Leicester Diocese, we are exploring how Growing Faith intersects with and informs our Intergenerational Communities priority. Where are we connecting and building relationship between church, school, and household? Where are the opportunities for different generations to encounter God individually and together? How are we prioritising the voices of children, young people, and families in the Diocese?

We thank God for all those already working with children, young people, and families across our diocese.

We pray by name, for our local schools, teachers, teaching assistants and school staff.

We pray by name, for our local children’s and youth groups, and family provision.

We pray by name, for those working with children, young people, and families.

We pray for the Growing Faith Foundation. We pray for Lucy Moore and her new team as they lead the Growing Faith adventure.

We pray for Leicester Diocese Board of Education. For Carolyn Lewis & Tracey Manns, as they work to transform the lives of children and young people through effective, distinctive, rooted, and inclusive education.

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World Week for Peace in Palestine & Israel

Church of England: Diocese of Sheffield, Bishop Pete Wilcox, Bishop Sophie Jelley

Church of Greenland: Diocese of Greenland within the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark) Bishop Paneeraq Siegstad Munk

Igreja (Brazil)

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Igreja (Brazil)
140th Anniversary of the Church Army

On 26 September the Church of England recognise the man Wilson Carlile who founded Church Army in 1882. This year we are celebrating their 140th year of being Church Army, and with that much praise and thanks to God for the hundreds and thousands of lives that have been saved through our work.

We want everyone everywhere to encounter God’s love and be empowered to transform their communities through faith shared in words and action. Our work is unconditional, tackling social deprivation through partnership and collaboration to help empower individuals and communities.

Ways you can pray

Pray for our Evangelists

The Evangelists who train with us respond to God’s call on their life to make sharing the Gospel their vocation. Please pray both those who are currently in training and also those who have been on the frontline of ministry for many years.

Pray for the next season

As a charity we are dependent on the generous donations of our supporters. Like many charities around the UK and Ireland, the past period of coronavirus has decreased the amount of donations we see coming in but increased the number of people who need our help. Please pray for more faithful financial support so that we can continue to increase our capacity to see lives transformed.

The Prayer of Wilson Carlile

And now and here I give myself to you, and now and here you give yourself to me; and now and here I find your love within. Break through me, Lord, that others I may win; your wounded body and your life blood poured impel me forth to live and preach you, Lord.

Please join us on the journey by visiting us at www.churcharmy.org

Chris Hardy
Publications Officer
CA Communications Team

Confirmations in Goscote and Sparkenhoe East Deaneries

European Day of Languages

There are about 255 indigenous languages in Europe, which roughly translates to 3% of the world’s total. European mother tongues have differing grammar, characters, pronunciations or sounds. And yet, they are all used to communicate. Language can be used to draw us together as much as it can be used to cause division. Language can be used for us to draw closer to God, through prayer, praise, liturgy and reflection, and yet the Bible warns us to be wary of the tongue.

This year sees the 20th anniversary of celebrating European language day, at the same time as it sees war in Ukraine. As we seek to celebrate the richness of language and culture that exists across our continent, we need to remember to hold this richness in tension with the very real human cost that is being paid daily in Ukraine. Bringing this to God is something that we should continue to do every day. Language and its use matters on an international stage as much as it matters on a relational 1-1 level in our worshipping communities. Where in our churches and communities could you value the contributions of people and the mother tongues they might have to offer? How does allowing space for the Lord’s Prayer to be corporately multi-lingual in your church change the narrative of belonging and ownership? How do we make space for the stories of those from the Global Majority to exist in equity with other pre-existing stories or cultural expectations?

Luke Fogg
IWC Project Manager

House of Bishops meeting

TUES 27 SEPT
Bishop’s Leadership Team Residential at Launde Abbey.

Mumias (Kenya)

WED 28 SEPT
Bishop’s Leadership Team Residential at Launde Abbey.

Mundri (South Sudan)

THURS 29 SEPT
Michael and All Angels
Bishop’s Leadership Team Residential at Launde Abbey

Everlasting God, you have ordained and constituted the ministries of angels and mortals in a wonderful order: grant that as your holy angels always serve you in heaven, so, at your command, they may help and defend us on earth; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Mundu (South Sudan)

FRI 30 SEPT
Coalville with Bardon Hill & Ravenstone

Gill Pinnington, Rhiianne O’Rourke (C), Geoff Pinnington (R)
All Saints CE Primary School, Coalville

Pray for a fresh start in our ministry as we rebuild following the effects of Covid, that God would give us courage as we put our vision into reality. Give thanks for our newly priested Pioneer Curate, Rhiianne O’Rourke.

Murang’a South (Kenya)

SAT 1 OCT
Black History Month

https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk

Murray (Australia)
Leicester Deaf Centre bestowed with The Queen’s Award for Voluntary Service

The Leicester Deaf Centre has been bestowed with The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service – the highest award a local voluntary group can receive, equivalent to an MBE – in recognition of its amazing work.

In case you didn’t know, the Leicester Deaf Centre, which is based at Frog Island in the city, is made up of four organisations - Leicester Deaf Action Group CIO, Signing Network CIC, iNet Interpreting Ltd, and BSLnet Ltd.

The consortium’s work is all about serving its community and includes an open house coffee morning, a charity shop and an employment service, and can help with things such as translating letters into British Sign Language (BSL), making phone calls and filling out PIP and DLA forms. The centre also houses the country’s first BSL interpreting Cooperative, run by volunteers, who provide access to BSL interpreters for organisations such as Loughborough University, University Hospitals of Leicester with two volunteers attending a garden party at Buckingham Palace.

"Everyone who comes here has a passion and a heart for the deaf community, be they of differing faiths, or of none. From making cups of tea and working in the charity shop, to influencing leadership, the Leicester Deaf Centre is God’s Kingdom working, here on earth – it’s like-minded people offering loving service to the deaf community."

Representatives of Leicester Deaf Centre will receive the Queen's Award crystal and certificate from Mike Kapur, Lord-Lieutenant of Leicestershire with two volunteers attending a garden party at Buckingham Palace.

“I want to thank the Diocese of Leicester in particular for being part of this journey – for their continued ongoing support to the ministry to the deaf and hard of hearing, and in providing the ‘deaf development worker’ role, which has enabled that vital ministerial link to the local deaf community to continue for an incredible 125 years.”

But the work doesn't stop here. Karen says there are many opportunities ahead, and they could do with more volunteer support in fundraising and has asked for our prayers for people to come forward.

If you feel called to help, please contact Karen on karen.sly@leicestercofe.org

Church of England: Diocese of Liverpool, Bishop Paul Bages, Bishop Beverley Mason

Church in Wales: Diocese of Monmouth, Bishop Cherry Vann

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark: Diocese of Haderslev, Bishop Marianne Christiansen

The Anglican Church of Canada

“God, you ever delight to reveal yourself
to the childlike and lowly of heart:
grant that, following the example of the blessed Francis,
we may count the wisdom of this world as foolishness
and know only Jesus Christ and him crucified,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Leicester Deaf Centre

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The Anglican Church of Canada
Prisons Week

Over the last few months, as in the outside world, life within the walls of HMP Leicester has gradually returned more or less to normal. Corporate worship has resumed for all faith groups. We are now able to invite everyone who wishes to attend rather than restricted numbers.

We have also re-started our faith study groups. Our volunteers are once again able to join us for worship and for study groups, which is a great blessing.

Family visits have been up and running again for the several months now. Maintaining and strengthening family ties can be a major factor in creating stability for prisoners once they leave custody. It’s a joy to walk past the visits hall and hear the sound of voices again.

As a Chaplaincy team we continue to support all our prisoners, whether they have a faith or not, and we also offer support to staff members when needed. We were awarded Team of the Month recently!

For nearly 50 years, Prisons Week has encouraged Christians to pray for all those affected by crime and imprisonment. The Samaritan leper in Luke 17 inspires us all to seek what he was amazed to find when returning to thank Jesus for his healing … a new beginning.

So, what are you thankful for?

Prisons Week this year runs from the 9th to the 15th October. You can find more information and a prayer leaflet at www.prisonsweek.org

During that time would you pray for:
- All those who work with prisoners and with victims of crime
- Prisoners being released, especially those who have served long sentences and who may struggle to reintegrate into life outside. The world is changing so rapidly and it’s hard to keep up while you’re inside
- Prisoners who find new beginnings while in custody
- Prison staff, who do such a challenging job
- Chaplaincy teams around the country

Helen Stokes
Lay Anglican Chaplain, HMP Leicester

World Homeless Day

A chance to focus not only on the homelessness we know about, on our own streets, but to consider the issue worldwide.

A good place to start is through World Habitat, a leading protagonist in this field globally. It has its offices in Leicester and Leicester is one of their partner cities, through the Homelessness Charter. Please pray for displaced people and the organisations which seek not only to alleviate their situations, but also to find solutions. Pray, too, into the situations which have caused people to become homeless or vulnerably housed.

Bishop’s Council Meeting

Church of England: Diocese of Truro, Bishop Philip Mounstephen, Bishop Hugh Nelson

Church of Norway: Diocese of Tønsberg, Bishop Jan Otto Myrseth

Church of Sweden: Diocese of Strängnäs, Bishop Johan Dalman

The Church of the Province of Central Africa
**World Food Day**

World Food Day is a designation by the agricultural arm of the United Nations. Their front page statement reads:

2022 finds us with an ongoing pandemic, conflict, a climate that won’t stop warming, rising prices and international tensions. This is affecting global food security. We need to build a sustainable world where everyone, everywhere has regular access to enough nutritious food. Leave NO ONE behind.

It shouldn’t take a war in Ukraine to wake us up to those facts. We have seen images of drought, famine and other devastations over decades. The climate emergency has, however, lent urgency to issues around the globe. We hear debates around farming practice in this country, and note things missing from or exorbitantly priced on supermarket shelves.

Observing World Food Day well could include consideration of what we personally purchase, eat and throw away. But there are many questions for us:

**What could we do better?**

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**MON 17 OCT**  
Child Poverty Day / Energy Saving Week

**Diocese of Trichy**  
Please pray for our sisters and brothers in our partner diocese.  
Natal (Southern Africa)

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**TUES 18 OCT**  
Luke the Evangelist / Anti-Slavery Day

**Anti-slavery day –** https://www.antislaveryday.com

Please see article on page 22.

Almighty God, you called Luke the physician, whose praise is in the gospel, to be an evangelist and physician of the soul: by the grace of the Spirit and through the wholesome medicine of the gospel, give your Church the same love and power to heal; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Novajoland area Mission (The Episcopal Church)

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**WED 19 OCT**  
Ashby de la Zouch & Breedon on the Hill

**In Vacancy, Tim Phillips (C), Sue Brown (R-PTO), Stephen Clowes (R), Carol Eyley (R), Kathy Hart (PA-PTO), Steph Whiten (PA), Judith Lewis (R), Andy Smith (R), Viscount Beaumont’s School, Coleorton, St Hardulph’s School, Breedon on the Hill, Newbold CE Primary School**

Please pray for this vacant benefice, for those who are maintaining the life of the church during the vacancy. Please pray for those who are supporting the ministry of the community, and for a continued flourishing of the relationships with our schools.

Ndokwa (Nigeria)

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**THURS 20 OCT**  
Christ the Redeemer, Blackfordby & Woodville

**In Vacancy (C), Peter Hillyar-Russ (R-PTO), Blossom Thompson (PA)**

Blackfordby & Woodville CE Primary Schools

Please pray for this vacant benefice, for those who are maintaining the life of the church during the vacancy. Please pray for those who are supporting the ministry of the community, and for a continued flourishing of the relationships with our schools.

Nebbi (Uganda)

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**FRI 21 OCT**  
Guthlaxton Deanery

**Co-Area Deans: Jane Micklethwaite and Richard Reakes; Lay Chair: David Beeson**

Guthlaxton Deanery is continuing to see many signs of new life with beginnings of new ministries and conversations around Shaped By God Together. We continue to pray and support those benefits in vacancies. We look forward to seeing what God has in store for us as a Deanery.

Nebraska (The Episcopal Church)

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**SAT 22 OCT**

Nelson (New Zealand and Polynesia)
Journey in Faith Course
The Journey in Faith Course has enriched the spiritual life of many people in the Diocese of Leicester. It is also featured as a significant stepping-stone in the vocational journey of many people active in a vast range of formal and informal ministries across the Diocese and beyond. The course provides the time and space for groups of Christians to meet together to:

- Grow in confidence in their faith
- Deepen their relationship with God
- Explore how to live out faith in the whole of life

The course has 30 sessions run over three terms and includes such topics as:

- How to study the Bible
- Spirituality and calling
- The history and culture of the biblical world
- The Old Testament and the New Testament
- Growth in the early church and the development of Christian doctrines

This year the course is being hosted in:
- St Thomas, South Wigston
- The Church of the Martyrs, Leicester
- St Mary’s, Hinckley
- St David’s, Broom Leys
- The Community of the Tree of Life

Points for prayer
- Pray for those attending the course this year
- Pray for people you might encourage to join a group next year
- Consider whether your church could host a Journey in Faith Course in the future

For more information look at the Journey in Faith page on the website or contact Liz Rawlings liz.rawlings@leicestercofe.org

Journey in Faith Course

This what people say about their experience of the course:

‘One thing that I think this course can guarantee is that you will not be the same after completing it-in a good way’

‘This course has changed my life forever and I wish I had done it sooner!’

‘Da it! It will be challenging but it will also deepen your understanding of God, faith, church and the world’

MON 24 OCT
United Nations Day

Begins on the Sunday of the week of 24th October (UN Day) every year. It is a week of awareness and action on issues such as injustice, the environment and poverty. This year it will review the outcomes of COP 26 and encourage supporters to continue campaigning alongside other organisations on the subject of Climate Change, and to work with local communities to understand what they can do.

Also in 2022, in light of the conflict in Ukraine, are issues of peace and refugees. We are encouraged to work alongside the other agencies working on these issues such as Christian Aid; Cafod; Commitment for Life; and many others.

**Diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro**
Please pray for our sisters and brothers in our partner diocese.

TUES 25 OCT
Four Saints (Countesthorpe, Foston, Willoughby Waterleys & Peatling Magna)

Richard Reakes (C), Rod Allard (C - PTO), Mick Gillespie (C- PTO), June Ainge (R/Pio), Mike Oates (R), Lindsey Jelves (R), Helen Stokes (R), Gail Mackley (PA) & Jacqui McAughey (In Training).

This relatively new benefice is enjoying getting to know each other with a mix of united worship, social and learning opportunities. We are looking forward to discovering what Shaped By God Together will mean for our four churches.

WED 26 OCT
Bishop’s Leadership Team
Faith Leaders Forum

New Guinea Islands (Papua New Guinea)

THURS 27 OCT
ROOTS Intercultural Worshipping Community meeting with Bishop Saju.

New Hampshire (The Episcopal Church)

FRI 28 OCT
Simon and Jude, Apostles

Almighty God, who built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself as the chief cornerstone: so join us together in unity of spirit by their doctrine, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you, through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

New Jersey (The Episcopal Church)

SAT 29 OCT

New Westminster (Canada)
The slave trade is one of the greatest evils in the world. We had hoped that by 2022 it would have been consigned to the history books. Regrettably, that is not the case.

There are an estimated 4.3 million slaves in the world today, including, probably, 136,000 in the UK. They are everywhere, all around us, but we do not recognise them. They may serve you in a shop, answer your telephone in a call centre – or cold call you, they might be caring for your elderly relative in a care home, washing your car or even working beside you. Others have been trafficked into prostitution, cannabis farming or carrying drugs.

It is estimated that a quarter or all victims are children. In this country, those children are probably involved in the so-called County Lines; criminals target children to carry drugs for them because they are less obvious than adults. Most victims, including children, have been tricked into believing that they can better themselves, earn money or just have a bed to sleep in. They may have been recruited abroad, but an increasing number have been targeted by gangs in this country and, as everyone copes with inflation and the rise in the cost of living, even more people are at risk.

There are accounts of criminals accosting people near homeless hostels, in drop-in centres and even outside food banks. It is always difficult to know what we can do, prayer is vital, but vigilance is needed too. If something seems cheap, it may be because it was made with slave labour; if a stranger comes to your coffee shop or food bank and seems to be talking to vulnerable people it is possible that they are trying to recruit them; if the young man washing your car or working on your drive is inadequately dressed and avoids eye contact, he could be a victim.

There are organisations working to address the problem. The Clewer Initiative is the Church of England’s dedicated project and they run training courses, as does Hope For Justice. There are other organisations and in Leicester we have started a group called CLLAMS (Christians in Leicester and Leicestershire Against Modern-day Slavery) which is working to raise awareness of this dreadful evil.

Margaret Rouse
Leicester Diocesan Project Lead for Modern Slavery

Kat Gibson
Intercultural Pioneer Minister at Roots IWC

Church of England:
Diocese of Winchester, Bishop Timothy Dakin, Bishop David Williams, Bishop Debbie Sellin

Church of Norway:
Diocese of Agder and Telemark, Bishop Stein Reinertsen

Church of Scotland:
Diocese of Edinburgh, Bishop Susan Brown, Bishop Charlotte Loder

Nynzya (Kenya)

Sharon Constable (C - retiring on Sunday 13th November 2022), Lester Halling (R), Peter Yates (R-PTO), Lynne Vernon (R), John Bass (PA)

Orchard Croft School, Broughton Astley, Manorfield School, Stoney Stanton; Croft CE Primary School

Please pray for our parish as we go into vacancy from November giving thanks for Sharon’s ministry. We will be discerning a way forward for the future, whilst continuing the on-going important work to building bridges into our communities. Give thanks and pray for growth in our work with our local schools.

Margaret Rouse
Leicester Diocesan Project Lead for Modern Slavery

Kat Gibson
Intercultural Pioneer Minister at Roots IWC

Church of England:
Diocese of Winchester, Bishop Timothy Dakin, Bishop David Williams, Bishop Debbie Sellin

Church of Norway:
Diocese of Agder and Telemark, Bishop Stein Reinertsen

Church of Scotland:
Diocese of Edinburgh, Bishop Susan Brown, Bishop Charlotte Loder

Nynzya (Kenya)
International Day of Prayer for Persecuted Christians

This year’s International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church, marked by churches in November 2022 will focus on the persecution of the church around the world. We’re joining as one global Church this IDOP to pray for freedom for the countless Christians around the world who have been detained, displaced or disappeared because of their faith. As we come out of the pandemic and ‘normal service’ begins to resume for so many churches, the daily reality for Christians in Cuba, China, Malaysia, Iran and Nigeria is the threat of detention, displacement or disappearance.

We’re earnestly praying to God for every Christian who has been detained, disappeared or displaced because of their religious beliefs. We remember the schoolchildren abducted in Nigeria in 2021 and pray for the immediate and safe release of all who have been abducted for ransom, especially students, that they would be able to return to their families and resume their education.

Resources available from Christian Solidarity Worldwide at https://www.csw.org.uk

For all those discriminated against, imprisoned and even facing death on account of their faith in Christ, we pray:

Loving Father, you satisfy our every need; protect, comfort and sustain your children. Merciful Jesus, you experienced unimaginable pain and sorrow for our sake. Strengthen and encourage your servants who are enduring trials. Spirit of Comfort, you accompany us in times of sorrow and of joy. Be with your people today and fill them with a renewed hope. Amen.

For all those who are causing the suffering we pray:

Almighty Father, you hold all of creation. May the hearts of those who persecute your children be transformed. Victorious Jesus, you conquered sin and death. May those responsible for cruelty, and suffering be convicted of their error, and seek truth and justice. Spirit of Truth, move in the hearts of perpetrators today. Amen.

For us, we pray:

Bountiful Father, you created us in your image and likeness. May we never take for granted the extravagant gift of freedom you bestow upon us. Compassionate Jesus, you always sought out those in need. Teach us your ways of mercy that we might be attentive to the suffering of others. Spirit of Fortitude, you give us the courage to stand up for the truth. Move our hearts to action and prayer whenever we see injustice against your Church. Amen.

Church of England: Diocese of Norwich, Bishop Graham Usher, Bishop Alan Winton, Bishop Jonathan Meyrick
Church of Sweden: Diocese of Luleå, Bishop Åsa Nyström

The Church of England
**SUNDAY 13 NOV  REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY**

**O God of the nations,**
**as we look to that day when you will gather people**
**from north and south, east and west,**
**into the unity of your peaceable Kingdom,**
**guide with your just and gentle wisdom all who take counsel**
**for the nations of the world,**
**that all your people may spend their days in security, freedom, and peace,**
**through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

**Interfaith Week**
Inter Faith Week is timed to begin each year on Remembrance Sunday, to encourage people to remember together the service of people of all faiths and none, and to think about peace.

Inter Faith Week is an opportunity to strengthen inter faith relations, highlight the positive contribution of faith communities to society, and to increase understanding between people of religious and non-religious beliefs.

Multi-faith remembrance services and activities are a key part of Inter Faith Week and reinforce good inter faith relations and understanding between people of all beliefs, whether religious or non-religious.

Civic Remembrance events and activities are typically organised by local authorities across the country, and many are run on a multi-faith basis. Local Inter Faith groups often play an important role in these activities.

Remembrance looks back; it is also a place from which to look forwards and reflect on how to work together for a peaceful and just world.

The Royal British Legion is working to ensure that Remembrance is understood and available to all, and passed on to the next generation.

The Inter Faith Network helped the RBL bring together a round table of faith communities in June 2019 and continues to work with them on this.

**Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church:** Archbishop Urmas Viilma, Bishop Tiit Salumäe, Bishop Joel Luhamets

**Church of England:** Diocese of Rochester, Bishop Simon Burton-Jones

**The church in Hong Kong**

**MON 14 NOV** Diocese of Trichy

Please pray for our sisters and brothers in our partner diocese.

**Niassa (Southern Africa)**

**TUES 15 NOV**

Bishop’s Retreat Day at Launde

**Nicaragua (Central America)**

**WED 16 NOV** International Day of Tolerance

God of all peoples, on this International Day of Tolerance, we pray for our society and the ideological, cultural and political divides which criss-cross it. Inspire your Church to be a witness to something greater than tolerance, by embodying the self-sacrificial love of Jesus. Help us to be quicker to listen than to speak, and to seek to understand more than we wish to be understood. In Jesus’s precious name. Amen.

**Niger Delta North (Nigeria)**

**THURS 17 NOV**

The BBC’s charity, Children in Need, has a mission to help ensure every child in the UK is safe, happy and secure with the opportunities they need to reach their potential.

Children in Need raises money throughout the year and also in their November appeal which is put to work where it is needed the most, funding local charities and projects who help remove the barriers that are facing children and young people so they can thrive.

**Niger Delta West (Nigeria)**

**FRI 18 NOV** Children in Need

The BBC’s charity, Children in Need, has a mission to help ensure every child in the UK is safe, happy and secure with the opportunities they need to reach their potential.

Children in Need raises money throughout the year and also in their November appeal which is put to work where it is needed the most, funding local charities and projects who help remove the barriers that are facing children and young people so they can thrive.

**Niger (Nigeria)**

**SAT 19 NOV** World Toilet Day

**FLUSHING AWAY POVERTY, ONE TOILET AT A TIME.**

By donating £60 to twin your toilet, you help fund a project in a poor community that will enable families to build a basic toilet, have access to clean water and learn about hygiene – a vital combination that saves lives.

When you twin, you will get a certificate to hang in your loo – showing a photograph of your overseas toilet twin and GPS coordinates so you can look up your twin’s location on Google Maps!

**Niger (Nigeria)**
Safeguarding Sunday

Protecting vulnerable people is at the heart of the Christian message of justice and hope with safeguarding part of the DNA of the Church. Safeguarding Sunday is an opportunity for your church setting to show your community that you take this responsibility seriously. It’s your chance to use your regular Sunday service to explore together what safer places look like, and to thank all those working behind the scenes to make our churches safer for all.

Whether you can give just a few minutes or can dedicate your whole service Thirtyone:eight have everything you need to help plan and run your event.

Last year, over 2,000 church settings across the UK took part! These are some of the things Safeguarding Coordinators in our diocese told us they did:

- We commissioned and prayed for our safeguarding Coordinator in place of prayers of Intercession.
- We dedicated the service to safeguarding, highlighting how it is everybody’s business to be watchful and report concerns.
- We used some of the national Safeguarding Sunday resources in our online service - it helped remind people of the central place of safeguarding in our culture…
- We used the safeguarding prayer…
- We used a Eucharist service as framework and included material from the 31:8 website.
- We had a guest speaker from Safe Families UK.
- We used the prayers and film in a service as a prelude to talking about the welcome we give and being more inclusive.

Join in:
https://thirtyoneeight.org/news-and-events/safeguarding-sunday/

Safeguarding Sunday Prayer 2022
Dear God,
Help us to be a church that:
Loves, welcomes, protects.
Listens, learns, serves.
Repents, restores, transforms.
Values, cares, believes.
God of justice and compassion, hear our prayer.
Help us, heal us, guide us, we pray.
In Jesus name.
Amen.

Rachael Spiers
Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser

Confirmation – Barwell.

Church of England:
Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, Bishop Martin Seeley, Bishop Mike Harrison
Scottish Episcopal Church: Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney, Bishop Anne Dye
The Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean

MON 21 NOV  Diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro
Please pray for our sisters and brothers in our partner diocese. Niger West (Nigeria)

TUES 22 NOV  Deanery of Sparkenhoe West
BAME, IWC and Resourcing Churches Programme Board meetings.
Area Dean: Mark Poskitt; Lay Chair: Pat Lockwood
Please pray for us as we seek to encourage and support all the beneficiaries in this Deanery, working together as one large family.

WED 23 NOV
Bishop’s Leadership Team meeting.

THURS 24 NOV
Newbold de Verdun, Barlestone & Kirkby Mallory, Peckleton & Tooley
In Vacancy. John Downs, Hazel Aucken (C), Alyn De Casembroot (R-PTO), Roger Dunster (R-PTO), Dorothy Fox (R-PTO)
Barlestone CE Primary School
Please pray for the people who will choose a new Rector for the Benefice and for a renewed vision and energy for engaging in outreach and service toward the wider community in each village.

FRI 25 NOV
Barwell cum Stapleton and Potters Marston
Philip Watson (C), Lynda Plumpton (R), Debra Watson (R)
Barwell CE Primary School
Please pray for our growing children’s work that our young people will learn of God’s love and grow in faith as they enjoy working together with the children’s work leaders.

SAT 26 NOV
 Mothers’ Union: 16 days of activism
16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence is an international campaign. It takes place each year from 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) until 10 December (International Human Rights Day).
Throughout the campaign, we join with others globally to raise awareness of, and call for an end to, gender-based violence in all forms and in all societies.
The 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence Campaign is an extension of the day-to-day grassroots work of Mothers’ Union, where we work alongside communities to help end gender-based violence and to support those affected by it.

Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island (Canada)
I am the Light of the World’ says the adult Jesus. St John, pondering the mystery of God being born among us in Jesus finds life itself in the light of God: ‘What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.’ (John 1.4)

The invitation to walk in the light, in the life, of the Lord is an encouragement to walk in God’s company – for God is with us always – and to invite the child to be born in the stable to be born in our lives. And for those of us who find it hard to see any light, it is a reminder that the light of God is there in and through everything: ‘The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.’ (John 1.5)

Pray for:
- all whose circumstances are dark, that they may know God’s light.
- eyes to see and hearts to perceive the truth of ‘God with us’.
- courage to bear God’s light and life into the world this Advent and Christmas.

Revd Canon Emma Davies
Canon Precentor

Scottish Episcopal Church:
Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane,
Bishop Ian Paton
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland:
Diocese of Porvoo, Bishop Bo-Göran Åstrand
The Nippon Sei Ko Kai

Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!
Isaiah 2.5

Today marks the beginning of Advent, a new Church season, and indeed the beginning of a new Church year. These next weeks prompt us to find space to receive again the good news of Jesus - the child of Bethlehem, God with us - as we await his return in power and great glory.

At the Cathedral, the theme we have adopted for Advent and Christmas this year is ‘Out of the Stable’. We are still living as a community outside our Cathedral walls while the re-building and restoration project continues; so we hope to explore over these weeks what it means for the crib scene and the story it tells to be outside too, and how we can take Jesus out of the manger and into the world around us.

‘Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!’ is the invitation from Isaiah 2. The days are getting shorter and darker, reflecting much that is dark and disturbing in life. So, the call to walk in light, and particularly God’s light, has a great potency to it. Often on Christmas cards, the manger is depicted with light shining from it, pointing to the presence of God’s light in an ordinary human child - and prefiguring what this child will be.

God of mercy and justice, visit with your healing presence the millions of people living with HIV and AIDS. We pray for those orphaned by the disease, all those who have lost loved ones, and those living in fear of contracting it. Help your church, we pray, to be a safe haven for those who are abandoned, discriminated against and rejected on account of their illness. And we pray for your hand of peace and justice to be on the violence that helps spread the virus, and the poverty and inequalities which prevent people from receiving treatment. In your name we pray.

Amen.

Revd Canon Emma Davies
Canon Precentor

International Day of Abolition of Slavery

The slave trade is one of the greatest evils in the world. We had hoped that by 2022 it would have been consigned to the history books. Regrettably, that is not the case. See page 22 for more information.
The earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea
Isaiah 11.9
The Hebrew word which we translate here as ‘knowledge’ encompasses far more than intellectual knowledge, but implies also an understanding, borne out of relationship. In the way we talk of God knowing each of us. The vision is of a globe bursting with that deep rooted knowledge.

But what does it look like? We get plenty of pointers in the preceding verses, familiar as one of the great prophecies heralding the Messiah’s coming. Here, in the new scenario, God will establish a kingdom of righteousness and peace.

The author describes something very different from the current experience of his listeners. It is the same for us: the contexts differ but injustice remains real. God’s promise is as real now as it was then: our task is to live it, and in ways which enable others to catch that promise too.

To do that we must know God as God knows us.

Revd Canon Alison Adams
Canon Pastor

Church of England: Diocese of Chester, Vacancy – Bishop of Chester, Bishop Keith Sinclair, Vacancy – Bishop of Stockport
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland: Diocese of Kuopio, Bishop Jari Jolkkonen
The Episcopal Church in Jerusalem & The Middle East

MON 5 DEC  International Volunteers Day

International Volunteers Day
We aim to inspire people, whether they are decision makers or citizens of this world, to take action NOW for people and the planet. The United Nations Volunteers Programme coordinates International Volunteer Day on 5 December every year to recognise and promote the tireless work, not just of UN Volunteers, but of volunteers across the globe. Every day, volunteers dedicate time and effort to ensure the inclusion of those often left behind, drive climate action and advance the Sustainable Development Goals.

Diocese of Kiteto
Please pray for our sisters and brothers in our partner diocese.

TUES 6 DEC
Bishop’s Retreat Day at Launde.

WED 7 DEC
Hinckley St Mary
Ian Hill (C), St Mary’s CE Primary School
We thank the Lord for the fellowship of our church family, visits from mission partners and community events. Please pray with us that God would deepen our faith and grow our outreach to families and young people.

THURS 8 DEC
Holy Trinity Hinckley
Simon Wearn (C), Diane McCartney (R), Philip Thompson (R-PTO), Battling Brook Community Primary School
We thank God for His overflowing love towards us. We pray that we might bring God’s inclusive love afresh to our community, and that we might draw many more people into our church community of Jesus’s inclusive love.

FRI 9 DEC
St John, Hinckley
In Vacancy, Jon Berry (C), Dawn Matthew (C), David Rollett (Associate Minister & Ordinand), Amy Berry (Ordinand), Susan Beckett (PA), Susan Hicklin (PA), Keith Ellis (Pio), Judith Ellis (Pio), Miya Hanson (Youth), Rachel Hills (under 5’s)
Please pray for this vacant benefice, for those who are maintaining the life of the church during the vacancy, and for those who will be involved in finding a new incumbent.

SAT 10 DEC  Human Rights Day

Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December — the day the United Nations General Assembly adopted, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The UDHR is a milestone document, which proclaims the inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being - regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Available in more than 500 languages, it is the most translated document in the world.


Ogboni (Nigeria)
The child in the manger comes to describe himself as a living spring: water bubbling up from beneath to desert, through the barren landscapes of the world and of human hearts, bringing growth, fruitfulness and colour. They sat and talked for a spell. She gave him a cup of water. He gave her a well. Irene Zimmerman, *At Jacob’s Well* John 4

We are experiencing changes in our weather and the climate system making hot summers like the last one more frequent. Doing all we can to ensure life, food availability, green spaces, it seems to me, is an action that joins in the activity of God. A God who reveals themselves as the bringer of life in dry places.

**Pray for:**
- Countries affected by desertification
- Water engineers
- Those working in food production

Revd Canon Karen Rooms
Canon Missioner & Sub-Dean

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom’
*Isaiah 35.1*

The wildernesses of Sinai and the Negev in the Middle East are the harsh environment in which God called and wooed a nation to become a people and nation. These dry and fierce landscapes drew me to wonder many years ago, what sort of God chooses to reveal themselves and become visible here?

When the nation are called back into relationship with God in the Old Testament, one expression of this is discerned by the prophet Hosea, ‘I will now allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her. From there I will give her her vineyards.’

(Hosea 2.24)

God longs that those who have turned their backs on or forgotten the reality of a living and present God, might, in the dry places of their lives, rediscover the possibility of life.

To people in exile, a long way from all that is familiar and stable, this promise is offered: ‘the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom.’ This is not impossible, even though it should be. There are wonderful, if rare, events when the Middle Eastern deserts DO spring into life.

*The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom’*  
*Isaiah 35.1*

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*The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom’*  
*Isaiah 35.1*
In this week the United Nations calls individuals and organisations to mark International Migrants Day (18th December). Since the earliest times, humanity has been on the move. Some people move in search of work or economic opportunities, to join family, or to study. Others move to escape conflict, persecution, terrorism, or human rights violations. Still others move in response to the adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters, or other environmental factors.

As a diocese we are engaged at various levels in responding to the needs of international migrants, through the welcome we can offer in our local churches, schools and communities and through our collective action in groups and charities meeting practical needs.

A particular spotlight has fallen this year upon those fleeing the war in Ukraine for whom many in the diocese have considered becoming hosts. Leicester Diocese has formed a strategic partnership with Citizens UK to assist in the matching of those who are fleeing with potential hosts under the government Homes for Ukraine scheme. This has built upon the community sponsorship approach that has been successfully been adopted in recent years with those being resettled from Afghanistan and, longer ago, Somalia. Along with the 50th anniversary this year of the expulsion of Asians from Uganda (and resettlement of many in Leicester), all of this highlights the long-standing tradition we have in Leicester-shire for welcoming migrants and the unique contributions they each bring.

Prayer pointers for this area of concern:

- Give thanks for the contribution of migrants to the flourishing of our communities and of our economy in Leicestershire, particularly in this year in which we have marked the 50th anniversary of expulsion of Asians from Uganda and continued to remember the Windrush generation.
- Pray for our local parish churches, fresh expressions and church schools in their welcome of those newly arrived from other countries and of asylum seekers transferred from other parts of the country; for generosity in the offering of practical support, a willingness to listen and for wisdom in signposting to professional advice and support.
- Pray for local MPs, national and local government leaders in the formulation of local and national policy in this challenging area.
- Pray for the work of charities supporting destitute refugees and refused asylum seekers with no recourse to benefits with emergency and transitional accommodation, including Leicester City of Sanctuary, One Roof Leicester and other partners to the Leicester Homelessness Charter.
- Pray for the work of Christians in Leicester and Leicestershire Against Modern Slavery, in raising awareness of those in our communities who may be victims of modern slavery and in signposting support including language support for those engaged in factory work who do not speak English.
- Pray for all community sponsorship hosting groups in the diocese enabling those who have fled war in Ukraine to be temporarily housed, welcomed and supported into schooling and work.
- Pray for those who provide support migrant camps in Calais, including from the Diocese of Europe
- Pray for peace in our world and particularly in those war-torn countries from which people have fled, so that many can return and rebuild their lives.

Venerable Richard Worsfold, Archdeacon of Leicester & Chair of the Diocesan Social Responsibility Group

Church of Norway: Diocese of Oslo, Bishop Kari Veiteberg
Church of England: Diocese of Durham, Bishop Paul Butler, Bishop Sarah Clark
Scottish Episcopal Church: Diocese of Moray, Ross and Caithness, Bishop Mark Strange (Primus)
The Anglican Church of Korea

Harnessing the Potential of Human Mobility
‘Therefore, the Lord shall give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel’

Isaiah 7.14

Mary was blessed to be the Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. It would not have been easy for her as a young teenager and unmarried. Try and put yourselves in her time and place. Imagine all the gossip about her. Her faith and belief in God never faltered. She would, I believe, have prayed constantly to God for strength to bear His Son and to love and look after Him.

At this time in Advent we not only reflect on Mary and her precious gift but it is a time to remember all children because they are all gifts from God.

Not all children are born healthy, not all children live to be adults. They are still God’s children, and this is a time when we can pray for all those mothers and fathers whose children have died. For all those who feel alone and desperate. We pray that they will find peace and hope in God through prayers and friendships.

Prayer itself is a natural way to communicate with God. It is God given and at the heart of all worship. When things appear hopeless God is always near us, so we can cry out for His mercy and help. Let us not forget that the silence and waiting for God is just as much a part of prayer, by creating the possibility of ‘hearing’ Him speak to us.

Icons of Mary holding her son always show Him barefooted, as a reminder of His physical reality, and that He walked amongst us leaving His footprints on the earth.

For prayer and reflection as we wait:
1. Thank God for the sacrifice of Mary
2. Thank God for the gift of children and think about how we can leave the next generation a world which is sustainable
3. Pray for those who are not able to have children or have lost a child
4. Pray for expectant parents

Rt Revd Julia Bradshaw
Curate at Leicester Cathedral

Church of England:
Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham,
Bishop Paul Williams, Bishop Tony Porter

Church of Norway:
Diocese of Borg, Bishop Atle Sommerfeldt

The Anglican Church of Kenya

Church of England:
Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham,
Bishop Paul Williams, Bishop Tony Porter

Church of Norway:
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As we reach the end of our waiting, reflect on what Advent has meant this year to you?

Pray for the many who will spend Christmas without the comforts many enjoy - including those in prison, the homeless, those who are oppressed or displaced and those most severely affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

Pray for the light of Christ to bring hope in the darkest of places.

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A child has been born for us, a son given to us.

Isaiah 9.6

Infants are so tiny, needy, fragile and utterly dependant on others for food, clothing, safety and the changing of their nappies. Yet they are full human beings, a new, miraculous life. I think that is what makes holding a newborn baby so special, the utter dependence and fragility of this miracle of life. Today, on Christmas Day we celebrate the birth of God as one of us, a needy, fragile and utterly dependant infant. God gives Godself into our hands, to be held, nurtured and cared for. God divesting Godself of all power and laying Godself into the arms of Mary. Can you imagine holding God in your arms like that, a needy, fragile and dependant infant?

Prayer prompts:
- In our need, fragility and dependence may we know the love of God
- Seeing the need, fragility and dependence of our fellow human beings may we remember the love of God
- Celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, needy, fragile and dependant may we encounter the love of God

Revd Manuela Schmucki
Curate at Leicester Cathedral

Church of England: Diocese of Chichester, Bishop Martin Warner, Vacancy – Bishop of Horsham, Vacancy – Bishop of Lewes

Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland: Diocese of Mikkeli, Bishop Seppo Häkkinen

The Anglican Church of Melanesia

Diocese of Wyoming
Please pray for our sisters and brothers in our partner diocese.

The Feast of St Stephen is celebrated on 26th December and is referenced in the opening lines of the Christmas carol Good King Wenceslas.

Pray for:
- Those who are persecuted for their faith and for standing up for their beliefs
- All who are serving as Deacons in the church
- All who work to arrange funerals and memorials

Oklahoma (Episcopal Church)

MON 26 DEC
Boxing Day / Stephen, Deacon and first Martyr

Thank God for the loyalty and witness of St John, the disciple who proclaimed Jesus as the Word made flesh. Pray that in our lives we may all be witnesses to the work and love of Christ.

Okrika (Nigeria)

TUES 27 DEC
John, Apostle and Evangelist

We pray for all those who suffer today, especially the children of our world, and for those who have lost a child.

Oleh (Nigeria)

WED 28 DEC
The Holy Innocents

We pray for all those who suffer today, especially the children of our world, and for those who have lost a child.

Olo (South Sudan)

THURS 29 DEC
St Andrew’s, Leicester Forest East & St Crispin Braunstone Town with Thorpe Astley
David Hover (C), Rosemary Meredith (R), Peter Kitchen (Pio)

Please pray with us as we seek to continue to build friendship and fellowship between our churches and with our local communities, deepen our discipleship, and discern God’s will as we renew our vision ahead of Shaped by God Together.

FRI 30 DEC
Markfield, Thornton, Bagworth, Stanton under Bardon & Copt Oak
Andrew Smith, Pauline Ashby (C), Peter Maynard (R)

Please pray for the J22 community as we continue to unite as a Benefice and share the good news of Christ in our villages.

Olympia (Episcopal Church)

SAT 31 DEC
New Year’s Eve

At the turning of the year we reflect on the year past, our achievements, our difficulties, regrets, sorrows and joys. We look forward to a new year, the hope of things to come. We remember and give thanks that God is with us through past, present and future and that his love is constant, whatever we face from within and without.

Om Fela (Nigeria)