



Prayer Diary

February 2021

“The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Nehemiah 8.10)

Almost 1600 years ago Jerusalem lay in ruins, its people exiled to Babylon. Nehemiah is in the service of the foreign ruler who conquered it. He finds himself in a position of trust and influence. The news of broken city walls, a broken people, destitution, and economic and spiritual breakdown of those left behind break Nehemiah’s heart before the Lord and directs his prayer in mourning, tears, fasting and repentance. His prayer is grounded in his trust in God, and the covenant promises of God to gather, *restore and bring to the place I have chosen as a name for my dwelling* (Neh 1.8-10).

The Lord paves the way for Nehemiah’s return to Jerusalem, and amidst opposition and factions, with faith and resolve he oversees the re-building and restoration of the city. His trust in the face of opposition holds firm: *The God of heaven will give us success* (2.20). His team undertake different tasks, the work gets completed and the exiled begin to return. A day of gathering takes place, the prophet Ezra reads the law; there is worship and weeping. The people of God are encouraged to dry their eyes, to mark the day as sacred to the Lord, to celebrate God’s restoration of his city and people. *This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve for the joy of the Lord is your strength.* (8.10)



As we look towards the spring, may we be encouraged to pray for the day of return that is coming, the day of rebuilding that is coming, and that with our worship and tears, we will journey from grieving to celebration again, for the joy of the Lord is our strength.

The Venerable Barry Dugmore
Archdeacon Missioner

Southam Deanery in 2021



With the continued upheaval of the pandemic, we face further personnel challenges this year.

We are so very sorry to see Jane Everitt retiring early on health grounds – she remains rooted in our hearts and prayers as she and Tim move closer to family, and goes with our love and blessing.

As we welcomed Andy Batchelor to Harbury in a restricted distanced way, and a new model began by drawing Ufton into the Harbury and Ladbroke Benefice, we are also exploring new appointments in other parts of the deanery. This runs alongside trying to continue to develop our collaborative models of working together, so that we function more as a team than lots of separate parishes. Of course, this has become much more difficult given the restrictions of the pandemic, but we hope that when these are lifted and there is a confidence about meeting again, we can continue to strengthen this vision.

Please pray for our clergy – we continue to have a considerable number of funerals, many Covid-related, and the effect this has on communities and churches is very noticeable.

As with others around the Diocese, the clergy feel the weight of this, so please wherever you are, support and pray for your local ministry teams, clergy and lay.

We continue to pray for God to use this time to build His kingdom in new ways, and that we might have the courage to listen and embrace the things we need to do next.

Martin Green
Area Dean of Southam Deanery

Cycle of Prayer - February 2021

With a focus on parishes and schools in Southam Deanery

Mon 1

The Bridges Group. Clergy: Gillian Roberts, Claire Maxim. Reader: Peter Jackson. We thank God for the creative ideas to engage with our local communities that have come out of the Covid restrictions. Please pray for wisdom as we plan for the long-term future of the Group.
*Brigid, Abbess of Kildare, c.525

Tue 2

Presentation of Christ in the Temple

As we celebrate the Presentation of Christ in the Temple, we thank God for the faithfulness of Simeon and Anna. We pray that we would learn how to reflect God's light in the communities in which we live, work and learn.

Wed 3

This week is Sexual Abuse & Sexual Violence Awareness Week. In the UK, 20% of women and 4% of men have experienced some type of sexual abuse since the age of 16, however often this is not reported due to fears about not being believed. We pray that this week helps bring awareness and gives a voice to victims.

Thu 4

Today is World Cancer Day. Under the tagline, 'I am. I will.' World Cancer Day 2021 will explore how everyone can play a part in reducing the global burden of cancer. We ask God to guide our reflections on what we can do to make a difference to the fight against cancer.
*Gilbert of Sempringham, Founder of the Gilbertine Order, 1189

Fri 5

Long Itchington & Marton. Clergy: Jane Everitt, Rob Rogers. Reader: Terry Morris. We thank God for the technology that enables us to continue to worship together in lockdown. Please pray for our priest, Jane Everitt, and for the children, staff and governors of our church schools; Long Itchington Primary and Knightlow Primary.

Sat 6

Today is 'Safer Internet Day', which promotes safe and responsible use of the internet. The aim is to teach young people about how to keep themselves safe online. We pray for young people known to us; that God may keep them safe when using the internet.
*The Martyrs of Japan, 1597

Sun 7

Second Sunday before Lent

Today is 'Time to Talk Day', a day to bring the nation together to break the silence around mental health problems. Mental health problems affect one in four people yet people are still afraid to talk about them. We pray that this day brings greater awareness of mental health problems and gives people the courage to talk about their mental health.

Mon 8

Long Itchington C of E Primary School. Executive Headteacher: Alison Hine. Head of School: Rebecca Richards. We pray for God's blessing upon the pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community.

Tue 9

Harbury & Ladbroke. Clergy: Andy Batchelor. Readers: Alison Abbott, Gemma Took, Peter Took. We give thanks for the safe arrival of Andy and his family during the pandemic. We pray for a vision day taking place when restrictions are eased and for God's guidance and inspiration as we consider past blessings and future challenges for joint ministry.

Wed 10

Radford Semele Primary School. Headteacher: Katie Benson. We pray for God's blessing upon the pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community.
*Scholastica, sister of Benedict, Abbess of Plombariola, c.543

Thu 11

Bishop's Itchington and Radford Semele. Clergy: Martin Green. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community. We pray for the Glebe Committee which meets this afternoon.

Fri 12

The Offchurch Group (TOG). Clergy: Hugh Priestner. We thank God that we are growing TOGETHER and sharing enlivened worship. Our aim is to be 'One church fellowship receiving and sharing God's gifts in Christ across our five villages'. We pray for Christ to work among us as we connect with families, young people, wedding couples and those seeking baptism.

Sat 13

St Lawrence C of E Primary School, Napton-on-the-Hill. Headteacher: John Brine. We pray for God's blessing upon the pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community.

Sun 14

Sunday next before Lent

At the end of Go Green Week, we thank God for this complex and beautiful planet, ask for forgiveness for the times we have abused the resources provided for us and ask God to help us develop a better attitude to the planet.
*Valentine, Martyr at Rome, c.269

Mon 15

St James' C of E Primary School, Southam. Executive Headteacher: Alison Hine. Head of School: Mrs Kathy Palmizi. We pray for God's blessing upon the pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community.
*Sigfrid, Bishop, Apostle of Sweden, 1045
*Thomas Bray, Priest, Founder of the SPCK and the SPG, 1730

Tue 16

We thank God for those who write songs and hymns for us to use in worship. We praise God for the wide variety of music available to us and for the songs and hymns that have helped us in our faith journey. We pray that God would stir us in musical worship and bless all those who lead, sing and play instruments.

Wed 17

Ash
Wednesday

Harbury C of E Primary School. Headteacher: Kate Guymer. We pray for God's blessing upon the pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community.
*Janani Luwum, Archbishop of Uganda, Martyr, 1977

Thu 18

We pray for those who are struggling financially. We remember especially those searching for work and those in need of food and shelter. We give thanks for all those seeking to meet these needs in Churches, charities, the welfare system and foodbanks.
We pray for the Bishop's Core Staff Team which meets today.

Fri 19

We pray for the Diocesan Mission Fund committee as it seeks to make grants available to parishes and deaneries engaging in mission. We thank God for the lives that have been transformed by an encounter with God through many different supported projects. We ask God to stir up a desire and heart for mission in individuals and communities across the diocese.

Sat 20

We pray for the vulnerable children in our country, their families and the work of organisations like Home for Good. Pray for their work with various Local Authorities across the country, that they would see more people step forward to foster children and teenagers in their area.

Sun 21

First Sunday of
Lent

We thank God for the work of the Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre (CRMC). We pray for the therapy services they provide, aimed at helping CRMC clients who may have been affected by traumatic experiences. Many have escaped violence in their home countries where they may have been tortured or seen loved ones jailed or killed.

Mon 22

At the start of Fairtrade Fortnight we give thanks to God for the progress made in ensuring a fairer wage for all. We pray for all who shop where Fairtrade goods are for sale, that God would grant us an understanding of the impact of our choices.
We pray for the Bishop's Council which meets today.

Tue 23

We pray for those who are unable to leave their homes. We ask God to give encouragement and friendship for those who feel alone.
*Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, Martyr, c.155

Wed 24

During National Heart Month we pray for the 2.6million people around the UK suffering with Coronary Heart Disease. We thank God for the British Heart Foundation and other organisations offering support to many, and investing in care and treatment developments for the future.

Thu 25

Southam and Ufton. Clergy: Vikki Bisiker. Reader: Stephen Adams. We continue to thank God for his faithfulness and provision through the ups and downs of life as a church family and wider community facing the impact of Covid. Please pray for wisdom, safety and for continued creativity in how we outreach, love, care and support others.

Fri 26

As General Synod meets this week, we thank God for our Diocesan representatives, both clergy and lay, and pray for the on-going conversations and challenges faced by the governing body of the Church of England.

Sat 27

We thank God for the work of our local fire and rescue services. We pray for lead chaplain to Warwickshire Fire & Rescue, Henry Jerwood and his team.
*George Herbert, Priest, Poet, 1633

Sun 28

Second Sunday
of Lent

Today is Rare Disease Day, a day to raise awareness about diseases that affect less than 1 in 2000 people. Cures or treatments are not often available for people with rare diseases, and some people have to wait years for a diagnosis. We pray for greater understanding of rare diseases.

Excerpt of a prayer from Tim Challies

My Good and Gracious Father,

In your Word you give the sure promise that you have loved me since before the foundation of the world. That love was always with me and held me fast through another year. You led me in each step I took. You led me around the wilderness to the places of cool rest and quiet. You led me through dark valleys to the joy beyond. You were there even in times when I wandered and went astray. There was nowhere I could go that was beyond your love, beyond your reach, beyond your care and compassion. You are so good and I am so grateful.

Father, I trust and I believe that your love and your kindness will be my theme in the year ahead. I entrust the future to you and I do it with joy and with confidence. I do it with sure hope that you already know each step I will take and that you will be with me to direct each one of them.

If you have appointed trials and tribulation, I know that you will guide and comfort me through them all. If I have to pass through persecution or times of deep temptation, I can have full confidence that you will never leave me nor forsake me. If this is to be the year you call me home, I can receive that with joy, knowing that I will rejoice to be in your presence at last. If this is the year that Christ returns—Please, may it be the year that Christ returns!—, then I will join with all Creation in rejoicing and praising your name.

But if you grant me length of days, and if you grant me health and safety through the year ahead, it is my prayer and my deep desire that I would live them all in your service and to your glory. Please grant me a grace that guides, sustains and sanctifies me every day and every hour, that in this new year I would not live a moment apart from you. Let me rely on your Spirit to supply every word I need to speak, to direct my every step, to prosper all I do, to build up my faith, and to grant me the heartfelt desire to display your glory, to advance your kingdom, and to declare your gospel.

Whatever may come in the year ahead, I pray that you would glorify yourself through me. In times of joy or sadness, in times of security or trial, in times of peace or temptation, make yourself known and make yourself great through me.

I pray this in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.

Blessing our regions

Extracts of prayers from the monthly Southam deanery online service.



Deut 6: 24-26 'May the Lord bless you and protect you.
May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you.
May the Lord show you his favour and give you his peace.'

from Revd Kim McCaffery, (Leamington Spa Jubilee)

Begin at once; before you venture away from this quiet moment, ask your King to take you wholly into His service, and place all the hours of this day quite simply at His disposal, and ask Him to make and keep you ready to do just exactly what He appoints. Never mind about tomorrow; one day at a time is enough. Try it today and see if it is not a day of strange, almost curious peace, so sweet that you will only be too thankful, when tomorrow comes, to ask Him to take it also, - till it will become a blessed habit to hold yourself simply and "wholly at Thy commandment for any manner of service". The "whatsoever" is not necessarily active work. It may be waiting (whether for half an hour or half a lifetime), learning suffering, sitting still. But shall we be less ready for these, if any of them are His appointments for today? Let us ask Him to prepare us for all that He is preparing for us.

F R HAVERGAL

From John Eld (Deanery Mission Team)