

ENERGIZING WORLD CHANGERS – CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES, OUR FRIDAY PRAYER THEME FOR SEPTEMBER



- Inviting them to come on a faith journey

The Diocese of Coventry is a trailblazer diocese for the national Growing Faith initiative.

The Growing Faith Foundation | The Church of England

The aim is to find ways for churches, schools and families to work together in supporting the faith development of children and to celebrate and recognise their place in God's family.

Each year Coventry Cathedral welcomes over 20,000 school children to experience the presence of God through worship and learning, and providing opportunities for staff and pupils to know the reconciling Christ and His ministry.

Our Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) is also strengthening the partnership between churches, schools and families through 'Alive 2023' – a praise party and picnic for primary school children in June.

During 2023 we will:

- Submit a bid to become a national Growing Faith Hub.
- Produce resources for churches to use in CofE schools to run 'Alive' after school clubs.
- Pilot these resources in at least one deanery.
- Support at least one deanery to hold an 'Alive Sunday' intergenerational service.

Website: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media-and-news/press-releases/growing-faith-new-foundation-head-appointed>

You can link to the DBE Alive 2023 page for videos here:

<https://coventrydbe.org/alive-praise-party-2023/>



From April Gold, Diocesan Director of Education

Please pray for the 18,500 children and young people in our 76 CofE schools and the 2,500 staff who work with them daily to share the love of Christ and educate for life in all its fullness. We give thanks for the 300+ volunteers who support the governance of our schools, giving up their time to provide strategic direction, challenge and support to our 76 Heads. We give thanks for the Alive 2023 event in June and pray that the seeds planted in the children and adults who attended are fed and watered by those around them. Inspire and bless foundation clergy and parishes to walk alongside the children in their schools to disciple them in their journey to be World Changers.

Look out for resources from the DBE for Education Sunday on 10th September which you may want to use in Church and in your local school.

[Education Sunday – Churches Together in England \(cte.org.uk\)](https://www.cte.org.uk)

[Children and young people - Diocese of Coventry \(anglican.org\)](https://www.anglican.org)

In Matthew 18:16, Jesus says,

Let the little children come to me and do not stop them.



Executive Head (EH), Inter-regnum (IR), clergy (C)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Deanery Focus on Coventry North this month Gareth Irvine, Area Dean; Ann Weitzel, Lay Chair		Readers Licensing Service, 9th September	Readers in Coventry North Deanery Donald Parr, Margaret East. <i>With PTO:-</i> John Lloyd, Geoff Wilcox, Colin Holtum, Fey Holtum, Clement Wedderburn		1 April Gold, Diocesan Director of Education	2 Coventry North Deanery
TRINITY 13 3 The Cathedral – worship & music, art & events, education, reconciliation	4 <<< C - John Witcombe (dean), Mary Gregory, Sue McClellan.	SCHOOL TERM BEGINS 5 St Laurence's CofE Primary School EH - Michelle Cuskelly	6 St Laurence's, Foleshill – C - Gareth Irvine, Becca Henney, Sarah Ashelby	7 Bishop's Core Staff Team	8 Church of England Schools in the Diocese	9 St Clare's @ Cathedral – C - Charlotte Gale, Naomi Nixon
TRINITY 14 10 EDUCATION SUNDAY	11 Allesley, All Saints – IR Radford, St Nicholas - IR	12 St Thomas, Keresley with Coundon C – Charlotte Jackson	13 DAC (Church Buildings); St James, Ansty - IR St Andrew, Shilton - IR	14 St Thomas, Longford C – Rosalyn Murphy	15 Children, Parents and Carers & Staff	16 Bablake School Chaplaincy C – Sacha Slavic
TRINITY 15 17 St John the Baptist, city centre C – Fr Dexter Bracey	18 St Luke, Holbrooks C - Simon Oakes, Sarah Gillard-Faulkner	19 St Francis of Assisi, Radford C – Aggy Palaret	20 Together for Change Together for Change	21 St Paul, Foleshill C – Abby Rhodes	22 Governors and Headteachers	23 Coffee Tots @ The Wave Waterpark
TRINITY 16 24 Holy Trinity Church, city centre C – Richard Hibbert, Carolyne Powell	25 St George, Coundon C – Jennifer Wickham	26 Cathedral Chapter; Race Equality Group - Neil Masih, enabler	27 Diocesan Board of Education Away Day	28 Diocesan Environment Group Chair, Godfrey Armitage	29 Alive 2023 follow up events, like Hive at St James, Fletchamstead	30 Bardsley Youth Project

**PRAYER
DIARY**

Prayer

Father, we pray for the eruption of new life and fresh faith across the churches, church schools and families in our Diocese. We pray for an awakening to your purpose and plans for each of these, energizing our city and communities afresh. **Amen.**

Coming up – the Themes for the next 3 months are *Renewing Generosity (October), Healthy Churches (November) and Advent/Christmas (December).*

BEING HEALTHY CHURCH

One of Bob Warren's marks of a healthy church is that it is **energized by faith**. Rather than just keeping things going or trying to survive, worship moves people to experience God's love, energy comes from a desire to serve each other, faith in Christ grows.

SPECIFIC DAYS IN SEPTEMBER 2023

3 - Coventry Cathedral - We'd like to thank God for our choristers, who come from schools across the city to lead worship at the Cathedral, and pray that their time with us will build a firm foundation for faith throughout life. Rachel Mahon, Luke Fitzgerald. [Cathedral Choirs - Coventry Cathedral](#)

6 - St Laurence's Foleshill - Praise God for the opportunity for St Laurence's CE Primary to join in with ALIVE in June, and for new adults and children joining our Sunday congregation seeking baptism and wanting to grow in their faith. Pray for our Connect new worshipping community with families which restarts in September led by our Family Link Worker Rea, and for an Alpha Course we hope to run to develop faith amongst some of our new parents. [Home - St Laurence's Church Coventry \(stlaurences.org\)](#)
[Home | St Laurence's CofE Primary School \(covmat.org\)](#)

9 - St Clares at the Cathedral – the pioneer community of the Cathedral, providing a Christian Resource Centre for the city and beyond. [St Clare's – Simple – Generous – Open \(stclaresatthecathedral.org\)](#)

16 – Chaplaincy, Bablake School – Sacha Slavic, Chaplain, for his thoughtful work across the school (and wider Coventry Schools Foundation), term begins on 6th September. [Faith Centre Dedication | News | Bablake School](#)

18 - St Luke, Holbrooks - We give thanks for the renewal of our parish and community of faith over recent months, and pray that God would continue to send us new disciples, especially young families and children. We pray, too, that the forthcoming restoration of our outdoor pulpit will lead to renewal of evangelisation.

23 - Coffee Tots – reopens at The Wave on 4th September. *“We know how challenging and sometimes lonely it can be raising children; the staff and volunteers are available to give a listening ear and offer support and friendship. There are toys and activities for the children too, we have variety of drop-in sessions in the cafe, aimed specifically at babies and pre-school children. We also offer a range of well-being courses and booked play sessions.”* [Parenting Support | Coffee Tots | England](#)

30 - Bardsley Youth Project – *“The young people we work with are among the most vulnerable in Coventry. Lack of adult support is common leading to chaotic lifestyles. Serial homelessness is a feature with ‘sofa surfing’ at friends’ houses hiding the true extent of the problem and limiting access to*

statutory support. For some of our young people we are regarded as ‘home’, the only place they feel part of and loved and cared for. The young people ‘opt in’ to use our services and engage as much or as little as they choose. Activities offered are changed regularly following consultation with the young people each term, as are the support services we offer.” [Bardsley Youth Project - Coventry Homelessness Prevention and Relief Charity](#)

PRAYER FOCUS - from a new resource from the Diocesan Board of Education

“The **Christian Worldviews and Advocacy Project** aims to support teachers and pupils in acknowledging that there is no one way of ‘being Christian’ or holding a Christian worldview.... the diversity within Christianity [is] obvious, with the impact of geographical location and historical-social context leading to a plethora of lived experience for Christians around the world.

Christianity in Europe has seen the steepest decline in the past century, whilst Africa has become the most Christian continent on the planet. When presenting pupils with the most common form of Christianity – as we learned from one of our academic contributors – it now would be more accurate to share Nigerian Pentecostalism rather than rural English Anglicanism as part of exploring Christianity as a global religion.

There are many societal issues we could have selected to be part of the Christian Advocacy and Worldviews Project and, with the pandemic still evolving, Christian worldviews and healthcare choices/medicine would make an interesting addition. However, within the scope of this project we selected the following societal issues and have developed teaching and learning resources around these because these are the ones that have most likely occurred in schools and where teachers have said they would value more support:

- Climate Change
- Politics (UK at KS2 and The Crusades at KS3)
- Race
- Golden Rule Christians (*the ethical principle of treating other people as we would prefer to be treated, Matthew 7.12*)
- The Body: Abortion (‘The Human Body’ at KS2)
- The Body: LGBTQ+
- Human Rights & Sexuality (Greater focus on Christianity in Africa at KS3)
- Digital Religion
- Motherhood and Family”

We pray for wisdom in handling the wide range of societal issues facing our teachers and schools, and for the response of children, young people and families, in the face of these huge challenges.

PRAYER JOTTINGS – SEPTEMBER 2023

- From Tyler Staton's *'Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools – an invitation to the Wonder and Mystery of Prayer'* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2022). *Chapter 9 'Ask, Seek, Knock (Silence and Persistence)'* deals with the harder aspects of prayer and times when it appears our prayers are unanswered pp. 163ff.
 - (1) **Ask** – refers to the requests that bring us to prayer. Most prayers are preceded by need – a diagnosis, an accident, a breakup. When we find ourselves in story we don't recognize, with no way back to the plot we thought we were living, we pray. We "ask".
 - (2) **Seek** – is a word peppered throughout Scripture that often refers to God himself. We are instructed to seek God through the stories of kings and judges, the poetry of the psalms, and the cries of the prophets. Jesus pointed the way along the path of prayer – the greatest gift, the One we're really after, is the Giver himself.
 - (3) **Knock** – Jesus's final verb in this teaching on prayer in the Sermon on the Mount is the destination of the prayer journey that begins in need... Ultimately it is God's invitation to pull up a chair to the table, and enjoy restful, intimate unbroken conversation with the triune God. Or as Jesus succinctly said it, "Knock and the door will be opened to you." **(Matthew 7.7-11)**

Practice –

- (1) **Say it Like You Mean It.** Name your pain and need to God. Tell God your disappointments in prayer, and don't water it down ... Tell it like it is.
- (2) **Listen for the Question.** Invite God to show you the question beneath your disappointments – often a question about the character of God. Is God really loving? Does God really care about this part of my life? Can God heal even this? Listen until you find the question.
- (3) **Ask God to meet you in the question.** Invite God to bring healing. Our only role is to invite and keep inviting. It is through this process that you will discover the faith to ask again, to keep on interceding ... he is more interested in the kind of asking that emerges from the healed heart of recovered faith.

- In 2010, a Church of England report entitled [Going for Growth](#) set out a vision for the Christian nurture of children and young people. It challenged churches to:
 - Work towards every child and young person having a life-enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ
 - Recognise and welcome the capacity of children and young people to transform the Church and the world
 - Provide support and development for all those working with children and young people.

- Churches in the Diocese are exploring fresh ways of **engaging with children, young people and their families.** Depending on its context, a church might be involved on any day and time of the week with:
 - **All-age / intergenerational worship** – already at many churches
 - **Mid-week groups based in schools and churches**
 - **Collective worship in schools** – eg *St Laurence CofE Primary*
 - **Carer and toddler services**
 - **Youth groups** – eg *Youth Cell at Holy Trinity, Coventry*
 - **Messy Church** – eg *at St Laurence's, Foleshill, monthly*
 - **Godly play**
 - **Holiday clubs/fun days** – eg *HIVE (9/9, St James, Fletchamstead)*
 - **Praise parties** – like *the wonderful Alive 2023*
 - **Sports ministry**
 - **Quiet days, using Prayer Spaces**
 - **Early Years groups** – like *Coffee Tots*
 - **Creative prayer**
 - **Chaplaincy in schools** – *at schools like Bablake*
 - **Confirmation preparation**
 - **Residential activities – including summer camps**

Pray for churches to be energized as they reflect on the best ways for them to engage with children, young people and families.

Youth Resources [Youth Resources - Diocese of Coventry \(anglican.org\)](#)

- **BREATHING SPACE** in Allesley Village, Coventry, offers a beautiful space for quiet retreat (some are led, but many are private); they schedule creative days too. Children and families are amongst those who enjoy this space. [breathing space coventry – finding beauty and stillness in the bustle of the city](#)
- *In the Autumn we pray for three more Deaneries - Warwick & Leamington (October), Shipston (November) and Coventry East (December). I look forward to receiving updates from area deans and clergy, and anyone else with specific prayer requests.*

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