



Prayer Diary

May 2022

'For he himself is our peace' (Ephesians 2.14)

St Paul's words are a source of comfort in world where it seems that peace is nowhere to be found. We see the explosion of war in Ukraine, the violent squandering of human life in other parts of the world – including in Armenia, where I paid a recent visit – and we lose faith in our own ability to make peace. But such despair in ourselves can be the beginning of faith in Christ: for he is our peace – this is where peace is to be found.

But how can a single person – even the Son of God – be our peace? How do we locate peace in Jesus? Paul doesn't say that Jesus Christ is merely a 'peaceful' person, or even a person who merely makes us feel at peace. Paul is drawing us into a more profound reality: that the risen Christ holds out the possibility of true peace through our relationship with him. Having conquered death and sin – all that stands between us and God – we find our peace not in someone who was simply fond of speaking about it, or even a kind of non-violent role model, but simply in the fact that there is absolutely nothing which stands between us and him. The risen Christ doesn't merely illustrate peace to us or just inspire us in the ways of peace. Jesus invites us into the full reality of peace.

In accepting this invitation to live in relationship with Christ, our challenge is to look upon all of humankind and see that, likewise, there is nothing between us. Finding our peace in Christ does not mean escaping the world and hiding behind him, but quite the opposite: throwing ourselves into the arms of the other in whom we should have no fear, even reaching out to the enemy. This sounds like a tall order.

But it's as simple as addressing our neighbour with the same immediate familiarity that Jesus used with his friend and follower weeping at the tomb: 'Mary!' (John 10.16). In the peace of the risen Christ, the familiarity and love which we show each other knows no bounds. We rise above labels – we are all on 'first-name terms.' This Eastertide, my prayer is that, as a sign of hope in a bitterly broken world, we would recommit to this culture of true encounter – not only praying for peace, but living it out with each other, as we do in Christ.



Bishop Christopher

St Laurence's CofE Primary School complete Lent challenge

This lent over 350 pupils from St Laurence's CE Primary school in Coventry took part in a competitive challenge to explore what justice means today.

Thanks to a generous donor, every child in Years 1-6 of the school, which serves the Longford area of Coventry and is part of the Diocesan Multi Academy Trust, were given a copy of the Church of England's Live Lent: Embracing Justice booklet at the beginning of Lent.



Each week during their class assemblies, the children would talk and reflect on the challenges they had taken part in at home, and record how many challenges they had attempted over the last 7 days. In the weekly Collective Worship Assemblies on Wednesday mornings (which have returned to the adjacent St Laurence's Church after a period of online worship during the pandemic) the children explored the different biblical themes of justice in the booklets, based on the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lent Book 2022: Embracing Justice by Isabelle Hamley.

In a special end of term Easter Assembly, which included prayers written by members of the ICONS council for Peace in Ukraine, it was revealed to the whole school community that over the 5 ½ weeks of lent during the school half term, the total number of challenges completed across the school was 3185! Chocolate prizes were awarded to the top classes in each key stage, with a very close finish in the final days of the challenge.

Two pupils from Year 6 said this about the challenges:

"We personally think the challenges were easy for us. For instance, in Week 3 'Just Relationships', many people may not be comfortable to socialize to people. Justice is not only getting help from others, it is proving you can give, love and show kindness."

Rev Gareth Irvine, Foundation Governor and Vicar at St Laurence's Church said:

"This was a brilliant example of the school and church working together to support children and families in our community explore and live out our values of growing in faith, living in hope, and learning to love. Maybe next year we need to some of the tasks to be even more challenging!"

Cycle of Prayer - May 2022

With a focus on parishes and schools in Rugby Deanery

Sun 1

Philip and James, Apostles

Draycote & and Leam Valley Benefice. Clergy: Phil Price, Barbara Clutton. Reader: Karen Hatch. We thank God for the positivity in the two benefices as we come together as a single benefice and the way in which our new ministry team is being valued and appreciated within the parishes. We pray for wisdom and unity surrounding logistical challenges as we come together as one.

Mon 2

Bilton Junior School. Headteacher: Alex Norton. We pray for God's blessing on pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community.
*Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, Teacher of the Faith, 373

Tue 3

Rugby East. Clergy: Interregnum. Carol Davies, John Martin Jones, Gail Richmond. We give thanks for the growing links between the two churches in our new benefice (St George's and St Peter and John's). We pray for the filling of our vacancy for a new incumbent.

Wed 4

Dunchurch with Thurlaston. Clergy: Pat Townshend. Reader: Steve Cook. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
*English Saints and Martyrs of the Reformation Era

Thu 5

Clifton-on-Dunsmore, Newton and Brownsover. Clergy: Pete Bone, Malcom Garret. Reader: Catherine Hammond. We give thanks for the enthusiasm for the way we work together for the Kingdom. We pray for the people of Christ Church, Brownsover as we work out our future together.

Fri 6

Provost Williams Primary School, Ryton-on-Dunsmore. Headteacher: Claire Hall. We pray for God's blessing on pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community.

Sat 7

St John's Hillmorton. Clergy: Steve Gold, Margaret Simmons, Anne-Marie Marsh. Readers: Helen Merrigan, Paul Thomas. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.

Sun 8

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Clifton-Upon-Dunsmore Primary School. Head of School: Lisa Bernard. We pray for God's blessing on pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community.
*Julian of Norwich, Spiritual Writer, c.1417

Mon 9

Bagington, Bubbenhall and Ryton-on Dunsmore. Clergy: David Wintle, Penny Hughes. Raeder: Rosemary King. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.

Tue 10

Today is World Lupus Day. Lupus is a global health problem that affects people of all nationalities, races, ethnicities, genders and ages. However many people have not heard of lupus and do not know its symptoms and the impact it can have on sufferers lives. We pray that today will help raise awareness of lupus.

Wed 11

The Revel Primary School, Rugby. Headteacher: A Edwards. We pray for God's blessing on pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school. May is Maternal Mental Health month. The theme this year is 'The Power of Connection'. We pray this month raises awareness perinatal mental health problems and how to support those suffering.

Thu 12

Knightlow Primary School. Headteacher: Jill Vavasour. We pray for God's blessing on pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community. We pray for the Bishop's Core Staff Team which meets today.

Fri 13

Bilton. Clergy: Tim Cockell, Glenn Lowde. We are thankful for the way in which people are returning to church after Covid and the way things are re-starting. We pray for the appointments of a Director of Music and Children and Families Worker.

Sat 14

Matthias the Apostle

This week is ME Awareness Week. ME is a long-term neurological condition that can cause many symptoms including debilitating pain and fatigue. An estimated 250,000 people in the UK suffer from it. We pray for all those with ME.

Sun 15

Fifth Sunday of Easter

Rugby St Andrew. Clergy: Edmund Newey, Sharon Crofts. Readers: Sue Goddard, Gwyneth Hickman, Wendy Coleman, Sue Minton. We give thanks for our new Community Engagement Lead. We pray for the development of the six Mission Hub Churches that they will give and receive generously, enabling communities across the diocese to bless one another.

Mon 16 Harris CofE Academy, Rugby. Headteacher: Roberta Harrison. We pray for God's blessing on pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community.
*Caroline Chisholm, Social Reformer, 1877

Tue 17 Dunchurch Boughton Junior School. Headteacher: Tracy Miller. We pray for God's blessing on pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community.

Wed 18 May the blessing of God be upon our farms and on all the cereal crops of our countryside. May they receive rain to swell the grain and sun to ripen it. We pray that the harvest be safely gathered in and stored, and may we see ourselves as harvesters for eternal life.

Thu 19 Today is World IBD day. It takes guts to talk about Crohn's and Colitis diseases but right now there are over 300,000 people in the UK living with a life long disease. We pray for all those who are suffering in silence because of the stigma and misunderstanding surrounding these diseases.
We pray for the Glebe Committee which meets this afternoon.

Fri 20 St Matthew's Bloxam Primary School, Rugby. Headteacher: Anita Timson. We pray for God's blessing on pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community.
*Alcuin of York, Deacon, Abbot of Tours, 804

Sat 21 Wolston St Margaret's Primary School. Headteacher: Julia McLeod. We pray for God's blessing on pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school.
*Helena, Protector of the Holy Places, 330

Sun 22 St Matthew and St Oswald, Rugby. Clergy: Alan Hulme, Jane Hulme. Readers: David Long, Mairi Mowbray, Mervyn Hughes, Gordon Banks. We give thanks for Our BLESS RUGBY initiative where 18 churches joined us to prayer walk.
We pray that our Platinum Jubilee "1952 Style Free Fete" on 4th June would enable us to build significant and fruitful relationships in the community.

Mon 23 Wolston and Church Lawford. Clergy: Kevin Flanagan, Paul Simmonds. Readers: Jayne Flanagan, Helen Simmonds, Isobel Wickens, David Gadsby. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.

Tue 24 The Revel Group. Clergy: Martin Faulkner. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
*John and Charles Wesley, Evangelists, Hymn Writers, 1791 and 1788

Wed 25 We pray for the chaplains serving at HMP Onley and HMP Ryehill. May the Lord bless and protect them and the prisoners they work with.
*The Venerable Bede, Monk at Jarrow, Scholar, Historian, 735
*Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherborne, 709

Thu 26 This week is English Tourism Week. We pray for the churches in our diocese that are tourist destinations.
We pray for the Bishop's Core Staff Team which meets today.
*Augustine, first Archbishop of Canterbury, 605
*John Calvin, Reformer, 1564

Ascension Day

Fri 27 Newbold-on-Avon with Long Lawford. Clergy: Paul Wilkinson, Diane Bussey, Peter Beresford, Sara Bowie, Stevie Cross. Reader: Jonathan Broom. We are thankful for new people joining the church post-pandemic. We pray for continued guidance of the Holy Spirit as we seek to reach out to our communities in new ways

Sat 28 St Andrew's Benn Primary School, Rugby. Headteacher: Abi Huggins. We pray for God's blessing on pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community.
*Lanfranc, Prior of Le Bec, Archbishop of Canterbury, Scholar, 1089

Sun 29 Today is the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. The theme for this year's Day is "The road to a lasting peace: Leveraging the power of youth for peace and security." Today, tens of thousands of young peacekeepers are deployed around the world. We pray for safety for the peacekeepers who work in very dangerous locations across the world.

Seventh
Sunday of
Easter

Mon 30 Leamington Hastings CofE Academy. Headteacher: Suzanne Marson. We pray for God's blessing on pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community.
*Josephine Butler, Social Reformer, 1906
*Joan of Arc, Visionary, 1431

Tue 31 St Oswald's CofE Academy, Rugby. Headteacher: Hillary Lorimer. We pray for God's blessing on pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community.

The Visit of
Mary to
Elizabeth

Revd Claire McArthur joins General Synod

The Revd Claire McArthur, Rector of Stoke St Michael's, Coventry, has joined the House of Clergy of the General Synod following the recent departure of the Revd Stella Bailey who is soon to take up her appointment of Archdeacon of the Gwent Valleys in the Diocese of Monmouth.



Claire was one of the nine clergy candidates who ran in the General Synod elections last autumn. The General Synod rules stipulate that if a vacancy occurs within two years of the election, the votes from the election can be recounted using the Single Transferable Vote system to determine the candidate to fill the vacancy. Following a recount of last October's vote, Claire has been appointed.

Commenting on her appointment Claire says:

"I am delighted to take up the clergy vacancy on General Synod, I wish Stella well as she takes up her new role in Wales. I love ministering within the diversity of the Church of England, but I am aware that there needs to be an honest conversation held at the national level if we are to remain relevant to the communities that we serve. I am passionate about protecting parish ministry and am still in awe and excited that everyone is part of a parish, our national church should be for everyone, regardless of gender, age, disability, tradition, race, socio-economic status or sexuality. I believe that we are all made in God's image and are accepted and loved. We should welcome all. I hope that I will represent my colleagues effectively."

Please pray for Claire as she takes on this new role.

Prayers for Ukraine across the diocese

At the end of March, Bishop Christopher called on the people of Coventry and Warwickshire to gather in prayer for peace in Ukraine, on Wednesday April 6th at 6.30pm. The Bishop led a prayer gathering at Broadgate in Coventry, whilst other gatherings were held across the diocese.



The prayer gathering at Broadgate attracted quite a crowd of passers-by as children from St Laurence's CofE Primary School read their own prayers and local musicians, including songwriter and broadcaster, Sandra Godley, performed.

Over in Stratford-Upon-Avon, about 60 people gathered on the Bancroft Gardens adjacent to the RSC in to pray, at the same time as the call to prayer was taking place in Coventry. The vigil was led by the vicar of Stratford, the Rev. Patrick Taylor, and included the Coventry Litany of Reconciliation, led by Archdeacon Barry Dugmore.

St Paul's Church in Leamington Spa also gathered to pray. Curate, the Revd Andy Ruffhead said:

"It was a privilege to gather to pray for Ukraine on Wednesday evening, at the same time as churches across the diocese. We prayed publicly in the St Paul's church garden, around a cross which has been mown in the grass. It felt very appropriate to gather around the Cross as we approach Holy Week, standing with the people of Ukraine and crying out to the Lord for peace. We joined with Ukrainian Christians in praying Psalm 31, as well as praying for civilians, soldiers and leaders caught up in the war. We finished with the Coventry Litany of Reconciliation, recognising the need for and power of forgiveness as shown to us by Jesus on the Cross."

Thank you to everyone who joined in with Bishop Christopher's call to prayer. Please continue to pray for peace in Ukraine.