



DIOCESE OF **Bath & Wells**

Living the story. Telling the story.



Diocesan Healing Advisory Group Newsletter & Resources May 2022

¹In you, LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame;
deliver me in your righteousness.

²Turn your ear to me, come quickly to my rescue; be my rock of refuge,
a strong fortress to save me.

(from Psalm 31)

These words can comfort us as we strive to live creatively with unforeseen changes.

Over the last two years with the DHAG, Justine North, has been a source of constant focussed and committed wisdom as our Chair. She now feels the time is right to relinquish that role, as she explains here:

‘The Diocese has been asking us to consider how God calls us. For a long time, I have felt that God is calling me into healing and pastoral care. I am very moved by the verses in Matthew 22, where Jesus commands his disciples to “Love your neighbour as yourself”. This verse has motivated me to follow a career in health care, and has led me to endeavour to support others in our church communities to also show His love and care to those around us.

Having been a member of the Healing Advisory Group, over the last 9 years, and the Chair of the group for the last 3 years, I now feel it is time for me to step back from the Group, as God calls me to do other things. It has been a real privilege to serve Him through this group, which has such deep wisdom, knowledge, compassion and love, and is doing its absolute best to support churches throughout the diocese in their ministries of healing and wholeness. I want to say a personal thank you to each of the committee members for their friendship and personal commitment. I would also urge each of you to consider your calling, and how you minister to those around you.

God calls each of us. He calls us to love our neighbour. It's simple really!

Justine North

We appreciate so much Justine's unique gifts and her generosity in all that she has done for the group. May she continue to fulfil her own unique calling, wherever that takes her.

We trust that we can continue to help you to understand and develop your own understanding, prayer and practice in the area of healing.

The recent Healing Forums, which we have held online, have had the common theme of listening, both to God and to others in a variety of situations. Revd Anne Fulton continued to explore the importance of listening, which Preb Dr Alison Perham had introduced earlier in the year. You will find summaries, further information and links for both below.

We look forward to Gabby North talking to us about her role in 'Safe Families,' which works with local authorities to enable and support struggling families to flourish.

Healing Forums

'Listening in Healing' took place on 15 February

Preb Dr Alison Perham considered the vital importance of being heard. She has a background in the NHS, working in palliative care, and is now a trustee of St Margaret's Hospice.

Below are some extracts from participants' comments on the 'Listening in Healing' Forum:

In a broken and uncertain world, listening to each other has become even more essential and it is through listening to God that we ourselves are in tune with His will, kept whole, more available and detached from our own concerns, so that we can focus on those needing to be heard. *Margaret*

The vital importance of listening is not that we are there to 'fix it,' but to enable the other person to feel heard; to allow them space to hear themselves so they can begin the journey of change toward their healing. *Freda*

'Silence is the language of God and all else is a mere translation.' Listening allows those whose stories are heard to find their own way to wholeness and healing. To be an effective listener we need to listen to ourselves and care for our own wellbeing, so we can be fully present to the people we hear. We need to cultivate gentle curiosity and to be aware of the cultural baggage we bring to the table if we are to listen with equity. It is a human need and yearning to be heard. To listen well is to be alive to the wonder and awe of the whole human story with its complex mix of emotion, psychology, physicality, and spiritual being. *Caroline*

[Watch a recording of the Forum 'Listening in Healing'](#)

'Healing at the end of life' took place on 26 April

Rev'd Ann Fulton, Spiritual Care Coordinator at St Margaret's Somerset Hospice Care, spoke of the opportunities for healing through the reconciliation of body, mind and spirit towards the end of life, and how we may approach this prayerfully with respect and sensitivity.

Being with other people, including in silence, we may learn to understand something of the language of their spirit. Through our gentle encouragement and open presence, we may offer those coming towards the end of their life the time and space to reconnect with their own stories, and so to 'come home to themselves' in peace.

Ann offers support and training in spiritual care at end of life to parish pastoral teams. If you are interested, please email Ann. ann.fulton@st-margarets-hospice.org.uk

[A recording of the Forum will soon be available on the Diocesan website.](#)

Dates for your diaries:

'Healing through Families' on Tuesday 14 June, 7.30 – 9.00 pm – Online Forum
Gabby North, from Safe Families, will speak and lead our session. Safe Families works with local councils to support children and their carers.

If you wish to attend the Healing Forum on Tuesday 14 June, [please register](#) to receive the link to access the Forum on Zoom.

Celebration of Lay Ministries on Saturday 2 July, Wells Cathedral

The Diocesan Healing Advisory Group will be present at this service – do come along and see us if you would like to find out more about Healing ministry, how the group seeks to support healing ministry, how you might get involved in healing ministry in your church or tell us about healing ministry in your context. Arrivals from 1.00 pm for 2.00 service.

Healing Service on Sunday 23 October, Wells Cathedral

A healing service will take place during Evensong at 3.00 pm in the Cathedral, with prayer for healing afterwards. [Further details will be available on our website.](#)

Healing in the wider world: praying for Ukraine

Jonathan Clark of Premier Lifeline, and a member of DHAG, writes:

In 1998, following the end of communism, I was invited to be part of a Prayer Ministry Team at a Healing and Wholeness Conference in Kiev after which I visited Church communities and our contacts grew throughout Ukraine. It was then a safe place where there were family links across open borders; different populations lived alongside each other. Often the common language was Russian, which was used in our training courses. The last of my many visits was in 2014, shortly before the occupation of Crimea and Donbas.

Since the 2022 invasion, some of our contacts are the Russian-speaking Ukrainians whom the invasion was purporting to ‘liberate and protect,’ and who find themselves refugees, living under bombardment, or in occupied territory. They are traumatised, displaced, bereaved, living in fear; catapulted from their homes to chaos and exile.

Please join us in praying for all these situations, and most particularly perhaps for peace, healing and reconciliation:-

- for individuals and families; between communities and countries;
- for protection for those who work to bring and share God’s love there.

We long for people to be able to return home safely to begin rebuilding their lives and communities.

Healing Resources

[Resources to assist parishes wishing to introduce or develop a ministry of healing are available](#) on the Diocesan website.

Please keep in touch with the Healing Advisory Group, as we are here to resource you, and be assured that we pray regularly for you. Do please email us with any comments, questions or requests. Within the bounds of confidentiality, it is good to share

something of our struggles and joys with each other and, with permission, with the wider community if it is appropriate.

²⁴ Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the LORD.
(Psalm 31:24)

Gilly Bunce
Diocesan Healing Adviser
May 2022



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