



# Prayer Diary

## November 2020

### An experience of Covid 19



The first indication that things weren't quite right was when I was walking my dog on the Monday evening. I was aware that my muscles were aching, but as I was otherwise fine I thought no more of it. However at 3am the next morning, I woke shivering all over. An hour later I was drenched in sweat. My temperature was 38.4 I knew I needed to self isolate and get a test. Feeling so grim that I couldn't sleep, I curled up on the sofa and at 6am started trying to book a test online.

Four and a half frustrating hours later, I got a drive through appointment for later that afternoon. I wasn't that worried. I had been careful and I didn't know anyone else locally who had been ill, so I thought I had one of the colds that seemed to be doing the rounds. I had a horrid sore throat and congested sinuses, which seemed to support my assumption. It was just irritating having to self isolate until the test came back. The test centre were friendly and efficient and told me I would probably have the result within 24 hours, so we started planning what we would do when I got the all clear. My husband had a list for the supermarket. I was going to walk the rather bored dog.

I spent most of the next 24 hours in bed dozed up on paracetamol to hold the fever and aches at bay. (Although I did lead a brief online midweek service from my living room.) Then on Wednesday afternoon, I woke up from yet another nap to find a text on my phone. I had tested positive for Covid.

There have been many surprises about this diagnosis. The first is the sheer amount of Covid related admin there is! I had to contact my senior staff colleagues, my curate and my Churchwardens. We had to make decisions about the Sunday service and agree a form of words for the weekly church email. The track and trace form took some time and energy to complete, and there were repeated phone calls to my daughters' worried schools. And then there were all the messages from well wishers, family and friends who had heard the news.

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One of the hardest things has been the consequence of my diagnosis on others. As I mentioned, I thought I had been very careful, but a colleague still needed to self isolate as we had had a 1m+ outdoor meeting the day I became unwell (track and trace do not recognise mitigations like being outside or wearing a face covering on their form). We had had dealings with self employed tradespeople and I was terrified they would have to isolate and suffer loss of earnings. Thankfully, they were outside the contact window. The implications for my daughters' schools were immense – we had the potential to affect three different year groups if the girls had it (so far, they haven't). It was a source of huge comfort to me that my curate had presided at our in-building worship the previous Sunday. Despite the robust safety procedures we had in place, I would have tortured myself with the possibility of accidentally infecting my beloved congregation.

Psychologically, being diagnosed with Covid was rather strange. On one hand, I knew that there was at least an 80% chance that I wouldn't become significantly unwell. I was under 50, healthy and didn't have any of the risk factors. But I had seen one of my best clergy friends experience long tail Covid and didn't relish the prospect of that. I had also conducted the funerals of three local men in their 40s who had died of Covid during lockdown. As a priest, I had seen firsthand the tragedy this virus could cause. It didn't help either that the main narratives in the media have either been of covid deaths or of long tail cases, understandable thought that might be. I ended up messaging a clergy friend from another diocese who I knew had had Covid and got better. "Tell me some normal covid stories!" I begged. Her reassurance was a lifeline.

Ministry wise, it is so frustrating. After the rollercoaster of the last six months, I finally felt like I was getting my head around being a church for our parish in the midst of a pandemic. We had great plans for building relationship, community and hope in safe ways over the coming months. Of course, that is still happening, but I don't have the energy to be in the middle of it where I like to be and I don't know when I will. Currently, even a brief phone call wipes me out. Instead, as a staunchly independent type, I am having to let others minister to me. My curate has taken over my priestly responsibilities. My pastoral care team are praying for me. My Churchwardens are organising parish practicalities. My diocesan colleagues are picking up other roles I fulfil. Friends are shopping and walking the dog and sending cheering things through the mail. I have been deluged with love and care from all over the place. I am humbled and blessed.

I think longer term this experience will keep me from complacency. I thought I was doing everything according to the book and was really unlikely to get Covid. I still got it, and I thank God that I didn't put more people at risk in the days before my symptoms started. I think my top tip for ministry colleagues would be to constantly assume they might be carrying covid and be really strict about your hand washing, mask wearing and above all distancing. We need our churches to be places of hope not risk, especially for those more vulnerable to covid's effects than ourselves.

**Revd Kate Massey**  
**Dean of Women's Ministry**

# Cycle of Prayer - November 2020

With a focus on parishes and schools in Shipston Deanery

**Sun 1**

All Saints' Day

Ilmington, Tredington and neighbouring parishes. Clergy: Stephen and Jean Fletcher, Tim Seller. Reader: Ros Wakefield. We give thanks for our six parishes each with their own identity. Please pray for any suffering and anxiety during this time of pandemic, especially amongst our young people.

**Mon 2**

Brailes Primary School. Headteacher: Heather Childs. We thank God for this school community and pray for God's blessing on the pupils, teachers, staff and governors.

\*Commemoration of the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day)

**Tue 3**

We thank God for all those who serve as clergy in the diocese. We pray for strength and energy, especially during this busy term.

\*Richard Hooker, Priest, Anglican Apologist, Teacher of the Faith, 1600

\*Martin of Porres, Friar, 1639

**Wed 4**

November is Men's Health Awareness Month. The aim is to raise awareness and fundraise for research into some of the biggest health issues faced by men: prostate cancer, testicular cancer and mental health and suicide prevention. We pray for men suffering with health conditions and pray this month is successful in its aims.

**Thu 5**

November is Lung Cancer Awareness month. We pray for all who have been diagnosed, and for all who are undergoing chemotherapy. We pray also for members of their families who surround and support them.

**Fri 6**

We thank God for those who serve on committees and working groups in parishes, deaneries and the diocese.

\*Leonard, Hermit, 6th century

\*William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, Teacher of the Faith, 1944

**Sat 7**

Ettington Primary School. Headteacher: D Johnson. We thank God for this school community and pray for God's blessing on the pupils, teachers, staff and governors.

\*Willibrord of York, Bishop, Apostle of Frisia, 739

**Sun 8**

3rd Sunday  
before Advent

We pray for all parishes that are currently experiencing a vacancy. We pray for the appointment processes, that the right ministers will be found to lead these parishes forward. We also pray for the new opportunities in lay ministry during the vacancy.

\*The Saints and Martyrs of England

**Mon 9**

Brailes & Sutton, with Tysoe, Oxhill & Whatcote. Clergy: George Heighton, Heather Parbury, Jill Tucker, George Warner. Reader: Jennie Rake. We thank God for calling Heather to join us as our Associate Minister. Please pray for those in our group who cannot get to church that they will continue to join in our worship being Zoomed from our churches.

**Tue 10**

Ilmington Primary School. Headteacher: Rebecca Noon. We thank God for this school community and pray for God's blessing on the pupils, teachers, staff and governors.

We pray for the Investment Sub-Committee which meets today.

\*Leo the Great, Bishop of Rome, Teacher of the Faith, 461

**Wed 11**

We pray for hospital and hospice chaplains in our diocese; Stig Graham, Ricarda Witcombe, Martin Hammond, Frances Tyler, Nell Cockell, Rosemary Pantling, Sue Miles, Simon Betteridge, Steve Tash, Liz Jones, Sharon Crofts and Simon Moulton.

\*Martin, Bishop of Tours, c.397

**Thu 12**

Stourdene Benefice. Reader: Philip Knight We thank God for the pulling together and all the joint efforts of our lay leaders. We ask that God guides each one to seek out his wisdom. We give thanks for their passion and dedication as shepherds who care for their sheep. We also give thanks for their positive and confident attitudes, for this we are very thankful.

**Fri 13**

This week is Interfaith week. Interfaith week aims to build good relationships and working partnerships between people of different faiths. We pray that this week is successful in highlighting the importance of interfaith relations.

\*Charles Simeon, Priest, Evangelical Divine, 1836

**Sat 14**

Today is World Diabetes Day, a day when millions of people around the world come together to raise awareness of diabetes and what it is like to live with the condition. We pray for everyone living with diabetes.

We pray for Diocesan Synod which meets today.

\*Samuel Seabury, first Anglican Bishop in North America, 1796

**Sun 15**

2nd Sunday  
before Advent

South Warwickshire Seven. Clergy: Stuart Allen, Ben Dyson, Anthony Wells. Readers: Clare Wells. Give thanks for new people joining our online prayer meetings and YouTube Services since March. Pray for wisdom in planning our online and physical Christmas services, and that the Lord will enable us to reach many in our community with the good news of Jesus.

**Mon 16**

We pray for those who are grieving. We remember those who feel alone and pray for God's comfort and blessing. Pray that God will give us the compassion to comfort and care for those who are in need.

\*Margaret, Queen of Scotland, Philanthropist, Reformer of the Church, 1093  
\*Edmund Rich of Abingdon, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1240

**Tue 17**

This week is Anti-Bullying Week. The theme this year is 'United Against Bullying'. The aim is to take a stand against bullying and raise awareness in schools, colleges and organisations. We pray for all who are being bullied, and for initiatives that aim to prevent bullying.

\*Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, 1200

**Wed 18**

We thank God for the dedication and hard work of all headteachers in our church schools, and we pray that they may know God's vision, wisdom and strength.

\*Elizabeth of Hungary, Princess of Thuringia, Philanthropist, 1231

**Thu 19**

Today is World Toilet Day. World Toilet Day is a United Nations observance that celebrates toilets and raises awareness of the 4.2 billion people living without access to safely managed sanitation. We pray for this initiative.

\*Hilda, Abbess of Whitby, 680

\*Mechtild, Béguine of Magdeburg, Mystic, 1280

**Fri 20**

This is Alcohol Awareness Week. Issues with alcohol seem to be increasing, with more young people drinking alcohol. We pray for those whose lives are being damaged by drink, and for the impact this has on family and friends.

\*Edmund, King of the East Angles, Martyr, 870

\*Priscilla Lydia Sellon, a Restorer of the Religious Life, 1876

**Sat 21**

Shipston on Stour with Tidmington, Honington and Idlicote. Clergy: Sarah Edmonds, Jill Tucker, Nicholas Morgan, Hannah Gregory. Reader: Alison Tomkinson. We thank God for the new ways of worshipping developed in lockdown. Please pray for those unable to join us yet in church or online and our ministry to them, and for our growing work with Food Bank.

**Sun 22**

We praise God for Christ the King! We reflect on Isaac Watt's hymn 'When I survey the Wondrous Cross'. We pray that we might be renewed in our love to God. "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."

\*Cecilia, Martyr at Rome, c.230

Christ the King

**Mon 23**

Newbold and Tredington Primary School. Headteacher: Sam Welsby. We thank God for this school community and pray for God's blessing on the pupils, teachers, staff and governors.

\*Clement, Bishop of Rome, Martyr, c.100

**Tue 24**

We pray for prison chaplains in our diocese; Sarah Gillard-Faulkner, Rosemary Lowdon, David Spademan, Peter Ireson and Kate Hitchcox. We pray that God gives them strength and wisdom in their work. We pray for the Diocesan Audit Committee which meets today.

**Wed 25**

We pray for all who work at the Diocesan Office under the leadership of the Diocesan Secretary, Ruth Marlow. We pray for God's guidance as they seek to serve and equip the whole of the Diocese of Coventry.

\*Catherine of Alexandria, Martyr, 4th century

\*Isaac Watts, Hymn Writer, 1748

**Thu 26**

Tysoe Primary School. Headteacher: Paige Neale. We thank God for this school community and pray for God's blessing on the pupils, teachers, staff and governors.

We pray for the Glebe Committee which meets this afternoon.

**Fri 27**

Today is 'Buy Nothing Day', an alternative to Black Friday. Buy Nothing Day aims to raise awareness of the environmental impact of consumerism. Today you need do just one thing: buy nothing! Please pray for this initiative.

**Sat 28**

Today we pray for Together for Change, a joint venture between the Diocese of Coventry and the Church Urban Fund. We pray for the charity's work in setting up social enterprises and local projects that will support sustainable community transformation and tackle poverty in Coventry and Warwickshire.

**Sun 29**

First Sunday of  
Advent

We thank God for all healthcare staff who work in our local communities, our GP and dental surgeries and clinics, our community hospitals and those who work in the field of mental healthcare. We pray for strength for them this winter.

\*Day of Intercession and Thanksgiving for the Missionary Work of the Church

**Mon 30**

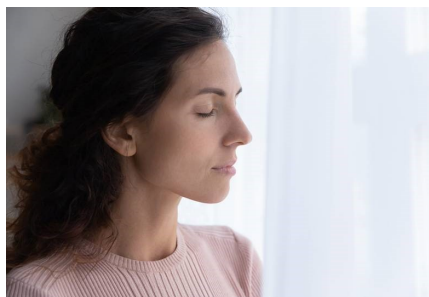
Andrew the  
Apostle

On St Andrew's Day we pray for all those who, like Andrew, seek to be the fishers of men. We pray for missionary societies and all who respond to serve the church worldwide.

## Safe Spaces launches to offer support to survivors

A new service providing vital support for survivors of church-related abuse was launched in October.

Safe Spaces is a free and independent support service, providing a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused through their relationship with either the Church of England, the Catholic Church of England and Wales or the Church in Wales.



You can contact the Safe Spaces team by:-

**Tel: 0300 303 1056 (answerphone available outside of opening times)**

**Email: [safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk)**

Safe Spaces comprises a team of trained support advocates, who have undergone specialist training in supporting survivors of sexual violence and who have received additional specific training in how the churches respond to abuse cases, the way in which faith and church-related settings have been used to carry out abuse, and the particular issues affecting people who have had or still have, a relationship with the church.

The service is for those who may have experienced any form of abuse, including sexual abuse, physical abuse, financial abuse, psychological abuse (including spiritual abuse), domestic abuse, coercive and controlling behaviour.

The dedicated Safe Spaces team are available through the helpline and live chat service on:

**Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday: 10am-6pm**

**Thursday: 12pm-8pm.**

A member of the Safe Spaces team will make contact within 48 hours (72 hours on weekends) of making a referral.

The service will run for an initial two years, with a view to extending this. It has been paid for by the Catholic and Anglican churches involved, supported by a grant from Allchurches Trust.

Find out more on [www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk](http://www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk).

## Coventry Cathedral wins national award

Despite the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic, this year's Group Leisure & Travel Awards ceremony went ahead with a special online broadcast to recognise the top attractions, tour operators and experiences as voted for by group travel organisers.



Group Leisure & Travel Magazine is a monthly publication, read by people who organise group trips for friends, colleagues, clubs, societies and companies. The annual Group Leisure & Travel Awards recognise the best providers, attractions and destinations for groups, as voted for by readers of Group Leisure & Travel.

Coventry Cathedral was nominated in the category of 'Best Historic Attraction or Venue', in an extremely strong field which also included Alnwick Castle, Belvoir Castle, Blenheim Palace, Bletchley Park and Buckingham Palace - who won the category last year.

The Cathedral's Head of Tourism and Engagement Carla said: *"Winning this award against such strong competition would always have been an amazing honour, but winning it at a time which is so unusual and tricky for the tourism industry as a whole makes it feel even more special."*

*"This award is a testament not only to the hard work of our customer facing Welcome Team, but also those who work tirelessly behind the scenes across the organisation – staff and volunteers. Everyone works together keep the Cathedral at its best for our visitors. We are incredibly thankful and look forward to welcoming more visitors in the coming months so we can show you just why we're an award winning Cathedral!"*

The 2020 ceremony was full of surprises including tricks by magician and TV presenter Ben Hanlin, best known for his award-winning ITV2 series *Tricked* as well as finishing as a semi-finalist in this year's *Dancing on Ice*.

Ben said: *"We've had 116 finalists and 20 winners, congratulations to everyone. It was an absolute pleasure to host the awards and it's great that the GLT team has been able to make it happen."*

The annual initiative, now in its 24<sup>th</sup> year, is organised by Group Leisure & Travel, Britain's leading monthly magazine for people who organise group trips and holidays. A total of 20 awards were announced, including Best UK Attraction and Best Guided Tour.