



# Prayer Diary

January 2021

*Arise, shine, for your light has come,  
and the glory of God has risen upon you. Is.60.1.*

Every time we meet to break bread we sing or we say 'Heaven and earth are full of your glory'. The season of Epiphany invites us to open our eyes to the glory of God. But are our eyes truly open to God's glory? Do we look at others, at the creation, even at God, through lenses smeared by cynicism, resignation or even fatalism? Have we lost that childlike capacity for wonder and for awe? As Jesus tells Nicodemus, we need to be born from above to see the kingdom of God. Jn.3.3. It is in God's light that we can see the light of God's glory. Ps.36.9.



As we begin – and continue in – the New Year, let us remind ourselves that God has put eternity in our hearts and that we are citizens of heaven, that we are no longer our own but God's. Let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. With Jesus at the centre, our eyes will be opened.

We might want to ponder the extraordinary and wonderful prayer of Jesus:

'Father, I desire that those you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.' John 17.24.

Let us dare to pray that God will open our eyes to 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' 2 Cor.4.6.

+ John

## Church and Community unite on Mission Partnership



Atherstone Rangers Junior Football Club and St Mary's Church, Atherstone have sent 60 shoeboxes to the Samaritans Operation Christmas Child Shoebox appeal.

Earlier this year the local Atherstone Rangers Junior Football Club put out an appeal for kit sponsors for their U7 Titans team. The team

at St Mary's thought that this would be a wonderful mission opportunity. They agreed to sponsor the team for 2 years. Atherstone Rangers were able to purchase kit for the team and in turn St Mary's, as the sponsor, had their slogan on the team's shirts.

Members of the congregation go to support the team at their games and are building relationships with the families. The church has a variety of events with the club planned for the future as soon as Covid regulations allow.

One of the mums from the club responded to the church's recent call for help with packing shoeboxes for the Samaritans Operation Christmas Shoebox appeal. The club managed to fill 60 shoe boxes which have been passed on to the Samaritans for distribution.



The Revd Michael Brandsma, Vicar of St Mary Atherstone, comments;

*"We view our relationship with Atherstone Rangers as wonderful partnership with the community and hope to develop this further in the future."*

# Cycle of Prayer - January 2021

With a focus on parishes and schools in Nuneaton Deanery

**Fri 1**

Naming and Circumcision of Jesus

On the first day of 2021 we ask for God's blessing on the year ahead. We give thanks for the Lord's faithfulness over the last year, for the disciples gathered and the communities transformed by reconciling love. We pray that we will be filled afresh with the Holy Spirit this year.

**Sat 2**

Wolvey CofE Primary School. Headteacher: M Parker. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, parents, teachers, staff and governors.  
\*Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzus, Bishops, Teachers of the Faith  
\*Seraphim, Monk of Sarov, Spiritual Guide, 1833  
\*Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah, Bishop in South India, Evangelist, 1945

**Sun 3**

Second Sunday of Christmas

Exhall. Clergy: Gail Phillip. Readers: John Owen, Chris Wilson, Hilary Cryer. Families Worker: Jen Watson. We thank God for wider links with the community formed through online services. Also we give thanks for people coming to faith and being baptised. Please pray for our Super Sunday School project working together with Bedworth & Bulkington parishes.

**Mon 4**

St. Paul's, Stockingford. Clergy: Kate Massey, Jo Joyce. Readers: Emma Kennedy, Colin Udall. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.  
We pray for all the staff and pupils returning to school today for the new term.

**Tue 5**

Bedworth Team. Clergy: Dave & Ann Poultney. Readers: Kath, Ruth, Maggi, Geoff. We thank God for our new staff members Nicola (families), Damares (worship), Denise (admin) & Mark (20s/30s), and also for becoming a Hub. Please pray that we can embrace many changes and opportunities, and grow spiritually and numerically as we reach out to our community.

**Wed 6**

The Epiphany

Nuneaton, Weddington & Caldecote. Clergy: Kelly Betteridge, Adrian Guthrie, Martin Butt. Readers: John Hitchcock, Sally Hince, Terry Lenton. Other staff: Mark Seabourne, Sally-Ann Veasey. We thank God for newness - new team members, new gifts being exercised. Please pray for wisdom in knowing how to shape our expressions of church and serve the community post-Covid.

**Thu 7**

Wolvey with Copston Magna and Withybrook. Clergy: Jonny Vaughan. Readers: David Hopkins, Yvonne Pitt, Ken Sleeman. We thank God for guarding our churches from the worst effects of COVID. Please pray for many to be saved in all our villages.  
We pray for the Bishop's Core Staff Team which meets today.

**Fri 8**

St Laurence with St John's Ansley and St Wilfrid's with St Michael's Arley. Clergy: John Langlands. We give thanks that all members of our four congregations have not been diagnosed with Covid, and those who have been able to attend joint benefice services around the parishes bringing unity and support to each other. We pray for what the future will look like.

**Sat 9**

Corley & Fillongley. Clergy: Ali Massey, Jane Braund, Liz Jones. We give thanks for the appointment of Revd Ali as our Rector. We give grateful thanks to all who faithfully served during the interregnum. Please pray for our churches, communities and school as we negotiate the impact of the Coronavirus on ministry and outreach.

**Sun 10**

First Sunday of Epiphany

Nuneaton, St Mary. Clergy: Interregnum. Reader: Helen Allred. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.  
\*William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1645

**Mon 11**

Bulkington. Clergy: Charles Higgins. Readers: Ken Sleeman, Sue Turner. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.  
\*Mary Slessor, Missionary in West Africa, 1915

**Tue 12**

Camp Hill. Clergy: Interregnum. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.  
\*Aelred of Hexham, Abbot of Rievaulx, 1167  
\*Benedict Biscop, Abbot of Wearmouth, Scholar, 689

**Wed 13**

We pray for the Diocesan Business Committee which meets this morning.  
\*Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, Teacher of the Faith, 367  
\*Kentigern (Mungo), Missionary Bishop in Strathclyde and Cumbria, 603  
\*George Fox, Founder of the Society of Friends (the Quakers), 1691

**Thu 14**

Chilvers Coton with Astley. Clergy: Frank Seldon, Jonathan Fryer, Rupert Allen. Reader: Peter Wrigley. We thank God for the Saints project in Nuneaton Town centre, and for all the staff at the George Eliot Hospital. Please pray for our ability to reach out to people who are unable to come to church or view on-line services, and please pray for our finances.

**Fri 15**

Hartshill & Galley Common. Clergy: Heather Barnes, Sharon Crofts. Readers: Nick Miles, Sally Young. We thank God for all those who have served so faithfully, creatively and flexibly especially over the past year. Please pray for us as we continue to find new ways in which we can bless and serve our communities and re-engage with people of all ages.

**Sat 16**

Atherstone. Clergy: Michael Brandsma, John Stock. We thank God for the protection of the congregation from Covid 19, the opportunity to preach the gospel on social media during this time and the support of the diocese. Please pray for the growth of the seed sown on social media and the contacts made through community engagement.

**Sun 17**

Second Sunday  
of Epiphany

Today is World Religion Day. Through a variety of events held around the globe, followers of every religion are encouraged to acknowledge the similarities that different faiths have. We pray for inter-faith understanding and harmony.  
\*Charles Gore, Bishop, Founder of the Community of the Resurrection, 1932

**Mon 18**

We pray for encouragement for all those who work in the cathedral and diocesan offices, and give thanks for all their work and ministry.  
\*Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

**Tue 19**

All Saints CofE Primary School and Nursery. Headteacher: Sally Kaminski-Gaze.  
Abbey CofE Infants School. Headteacher: R Horton. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, teachers, staff and governors.  
\*Wulfstan, Bishop of Worcester, 1095

**Wed 20**

St Paul's CofE Primary School. Headteacher: Carl Thornton. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, parents, teachers, staff and governors.  
\*Richard Rolle of Hampole, Spiritual Writer, 1349

**Thu 21**

We pray for Saints Nuneaton, a community enterprise led by Together for Change. Based in Nuneaton town centre, Saints aims to tackle unemployment and lack of education, enhance physical, mental and emotional wellbeing, and to inspire and connect people through the creative arts.  
\*Agnes, Child Martyr at Rome, 304

**Fri 22**

St Michael's CofE Primary School. Headteacher: Chris Errington.  
St Nicolas CofE Academy. Headteacher: S Thorpe. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, teachers, staff, governors.  
\*Vincent of Saragossa, Deacon, first Martyr of Spain, 304

**Sat 23**

This week is Cervical Cancer Prevention Week. Every day in the UK nine women are diagnosed with cervical cancer, yet 75% of cervical cancers will be prevented by cervical screening. We pray that this week more women can learn about how they can reduce the risk of cervical cancer.

**Sun 24**

Fourth Sunday  
before Lent

St James' CofE Academy. Headteacher: Jane Cook.  
The Canons CofE Primary School. Headteacher: Michaela Fallon. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, parents, teachers, staff and governors.  
\*Francis de Sales, Bishop of Geneva, Teacher of the Faith, 1622

**Mon 25**

The Conversion  
of Paul

Holy Trinity Attleborough. Clergy: Alison Evans. Reader: Eddie Brown. We thank God for the recent Online Alpha and a new course called Valley Paths that we have been running. Please pray for those who have become Christians or have had a new experience of God's love and mercy. We pray that they may grow as disciples of the Lord and bear much fruit.

**Tue 26**

Bournebrook CofE Primary School. Headteacher: Alison Patchett.  
Queen's CofE Academy. Headteacher: Hannah Carvell. We pray for God's blessing upon all the children, parents, teachers, staff and governors.  
\*Timothy and Titus, Companions of Paul

**Wed 27**

Today is Holocaust Memorial Day. A day to remember the millions of people killed in the Holocaust and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. We pray for God to defend and protect all those who fall victim to the forces of evil and to give us the courage to stand against hatred and oppression.

**Thu 28**

Horeston Grange LEP. Clergy: Interregnum. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.  
We pray for the Diocesan Mission Fund Committee which meets today.  
\*Thomas Aquinas, Priest, Philosopher, Teacher of the Faith, 1274

**Fri 29**

Mancetter. Clergy: Linda Mudd. We thank God for the faithfulness of our church family and their support and encouragement to one another and the wider community during the pandemic and for the missional opportunities that have arisen. Please pray for our continued outreach and our developing partnerships within our community in the year ahead.

**Sat 30**

Today is Young Carers Awareness Day. The purpose of the day is to raise public awareness of the challenges faced by young carers. We pray for young people who are carers and the people they care for.  
\*Charles, King and Martyr, 1649

**Sun 31**

Third Sunday  
before Lent

We thank God for the George Eliot Hospital and the Mary Ann Evans Hospice. We pray for all staff and volunteers, and especially the Chaplains: Ricarda Witcombe and Martin Hammond and their teams.  
\*John Bosco, Priest, Founder of the Salesian Teaching Order, 1888

## New Diocesan Spirituality advisor

The Revd Craig Grocock, Vicar of St Andrew's Shottery, has been announced as the new Diocesan Spirituality advisor.

In a Zoom interview with Bishop John, Craig talked about his background and what he would like to do in the role.



Craig described about how he became a Christian at the age of 16 and was struck by the verse John 10:10, *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*

A few years later he felt a calling to work in the church. A woman at his church saw in Craig a calling to evangelism, particularly among children and young people. This led him into ministry with the Church Army and afterwards as a Children and Families Minister at All Saints, Bedworth. After five years, Craig moved to Warwick and started feeling a call to ordination. He talked to the then Bishop of Warwick, Bishop Anthony, about his calling and how his spiritual life underpinned this calling.

Craig has now been ordained for fifteen years. Over the past fifteen years he has been trained as a Spiritual Director with the Jesuits. He also has retained close connections with the Baptist and Pentecostal churches which has informed his spiritual life.

Over the past few years, Craig has been encouraged by the work the diocese has done with Healthy Churches and the eight essential qualities. In particular, he has seen passionate spirituality develop across the diocese and looks forward to building on this.

In the next few months, Craig is keen to travel to different areas of the diocese (whether on Zoom or in person) to listen to and work with people on spirituality.

Please pray for Craig as he takes on this new role.

## Wellesbourne Walk Through Nativity

Like all churches, St Peter's Church in Wellesbourne, celebrated Advent and Christmas differently this year. One of the big differences was that they told the story of the nativity outside.



The team at St Peter's wanted to give local families the very best experience of Christmas, despite the Covid 19 pandemic. Therefore, instead of focusing on what they can't do they changed their perspective and thought about what they could do. An idea from the charity 'Faith in Kids' provided the perfect solution—an outdoor, socially distanced, walk through nativity!

On Saturday 19th December, the church welcomed families at timed intervals and took them on a journey through the Christmas story. Families were met by an angel at the entrance of the churchyard who told them of the good news of a special baby to be born. Then they were led on a trail lit by lanterns to a series of stations. At these stations they met by a Roman soldier (who told them about the census), and then on to Joseph, the shepherds, the wise men and finally they came to a stable filled with hay bales where they found Mary and baby Jesus.

Vicar of St Peter's, the Revd Greg Bartlem says;

*"Safety is key for everyone involved, and we did a thorough risk assessment. This is something we've never done before, but it's a brilliant idea from Faith in Kids to do something new that made Christmas special. We literally guided families to find Jesus. What better way to do Christmas!"*

Find the Walk Through Nativity and other resources on the Faith in Kids website—[faithinkids.org](http://faithinkids.org)