



# Prayer Diary

## September 2021

### Hope

September always has a certain air about it for educational professionals. The smell of new stationery, fresh exercise books, and the promise of new students to walk alongside. It is a season of hope. Last September this hope felt dimmed by rising Covid-19 cases. The school year was a recurring cycle of bubbles, distancing, contact tracing and isolation. School teams demonstrated their adaptability, resilience and steely determination to be there for their communities.



There is always, however, a reason for hope. Indeed the Christian story is one of what might seem from the outside a ridiculous hope. Christian belief is centred on a God who becomes incarnate, dwells among us as a human, and is murdered for being “different” and making the powers that be uncomfortable. But he is not defeated by death and rises in his human flesh and takes that fleshliness back into the Godhead. Once again God in three persons, trinity, looks upon the flesh of creation and can say “it is good”. We do not have to do anything to earn this – it is a gift once for all. We are not left alone with God the Father and Jesus viewing us from afar, because the third person of the trinity, the Holy Spirit is amongst us, loving us, supporting us, giving us the strength to go on when things seem hopeless, until Jesus comes again to restore all creation back to what God intended it to be.

This hope is what I have returned to again and again throughout the pandemic. Indeed every time I speak to a head teacher or governor about the challenges of school in a pandemic I sense the Holy Spirit saying “It’s all good, I’ve got them”.

*Continued on Page 2*

**April Gold**  
**Diocesan Director of Education**

As we step forwards into a new academic year, which will bring with it continued challenges for schools and their wider communities, please join the DBE in praying for our schools. Talk to your Church community about how you might work in partnership with your local school to walk alongside the children and families to share our Christian hope in a God who is all loving and all powerful and walks alongside us. For as Paul states in Romans 10:14:

*“how can people call for help if they don’t know who to trust? And how can they know who to trust if they haven’t heard of the One who can be trusted? And how can they hear if nobody tells them? And how is anyone going to tell them, unless someone is sent to do it?” (The Message)*

## Great is Thy Faithfulness



Great is Thy Faithfulness is an afternoon at Coventry Cathedral on the 25th September for the diocesan family to explore God's faithfulness.

Using various spaces in the old and new cathedrals all ages will be able to reflect on God’s faithfulness in prayer, lament and praise.

The afternoon will start at 12 noon with the Litany of Reconciliation. Then there will be three zones with prayer stations to move through as well as time for a picnic lunch - so don't forget your picnics!

The afternoon will end with a Eucharist all together at 2.30pm. Everyone is welcome.

# Cycle of Prayer - September 2021

With a focus on parishes and schools in Coventry North Deanery

**Wed 1** St Laurence's Primary School, Coventry. Headteacher: Michelle Cuskelly. We pray for God's blessing on pupils, teachers, staff and governors in this school community.  
\*Giles of Provence, Hermit, c.710

**Thu 2** We pray for the Coventry North Deanery Leadership Team (DMPC): Gareth, Ann, Mark, Les, Jennifer, Simon & Wilfrid as they meet to finalise the Deanery Plan. We pray for courage, humility & discernment.  
\*The Martyrs of Papua New Guinea, 1901 and 1942

**Fri 3** Radford St Nicholas. Clergy: Andrew Coleman. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.  
\*Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, Teacher of the Faith, 604

**Sat 4** Coventry St John Baptist. Clergy: Dexter Bracey. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.  
\*Birinus, Bishop of Dorchester (Oxon), Apostle of Wessex, 650

**Sun 5** Today is the Readers' Licensing Service at Coventry Cathedral. We pray that God may guide and encourage the Readers being admitted and licensed (Dee Badland, Susan Morris, Gail Richmond) and the Readers transferring into the diocese (Clement Wedderburn, Jackie Brown). We also pray for all the Readers being re-licensed.  
Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity

**Mon 6** September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Childhood cancer is devastating to sufferers and their friends and families. This annual international awareness month aims to raise support and funding for children with cancer. We pray for children diagnosed with cancer.  
\*Allen Gardiner, Founder of the South American Mission Society

**Tue 7** At the start of a new academic year, we pray for all those going back to school or starting at new schools. We pray that they all may know Christ's presence with them, ahead of them and alongside them in their schools. We pray for the meeting of the Coventry North Deanery Chapter, as they meet for lunch, fellowship & to review the Deanery Plan.

**Wed 8** Today is UNESCO's International Literacy Day, a day to raise awareness globally on the issues surrounding adult and child literacy. 775 million adults lack minimum literacy skills, with two thirds being women. We pray this day highlights the importance of literacy and promotes change.  
\*The Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**Thu 9** Foleshill St Paul. Clergy: Interregnum. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.  
We pray for the Bishop's Core Staff Team which meets today.  
\*Charles Fuge Lowder, Priest, 1880

**Fri 10** Radford St Francis of Assisi. Clergy: Interregnum. We pray for our churchwarden, PCC and congregation as we continue to seek a new vicar for St. Francis. We also pray for God's guidance as congregation families, church activities and children's work begin to resume now that covid restrictions are easing.

**Sat 11** Foleshill St Laurence. Clergy: Gareth & Jenny Irvine. Curate: John Samuel. Family Link Worker: Rea Verdon. We thank God for the Hope Hub during the last year and our outdoor worship services. Please pray for our Alpha Course this Autumn, the reboot of our midweek communities and the wider development of St Laurence's as a Mission Hub to serve the Diocese.

**Sun 12** Creator God we give you thanks for all of our farmers as they harvest the crops that feed us. We thank you for the skills of those who will be bringing the harvest in, and we ask that the weather be favourable. We pray that the harvest is bountiful enough to share with all those who are in need.  
Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity

**Mon 13** We pray for Gareth Irvine (Area Dean) & Ann Weitzel (Lay Chair) as they meet with members of BSIG to present & discuss the Deanery Plan. We pray for good understanding and a strong sense of God's direction for the deanery. We pray for the Diocesan Business Committee which meets this morning.  
\*John Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, Teacher of the Faith, 407

**Tue 14** Coventry Holy Trinity. Clergy: Interregnum. Readers: Sue Shepherd, Geoff Wilcox. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members. We pray for April Gold and all those who work with her at the Diocesan Board of Education. We give thanks to God for all that they do supporting, managing, caring for and inspiring schools in the diocese.  
Holy Cross Day

**Wed 15** Holbrooks St Luke. Clergy: Simon Oakes. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.  
\*Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, Martyr, 258

**Thu 16** We pray for our Bishops, Christopher and John; for their ministry, positions of responsibility, their times of rest and their families.  
\*Ninian, Bishop of Galloway, Apostle of the Picts, c.432  
\*Edward Bouverie Pusey, Priest, Tractarian, 1882

**Fri 17** 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.  
\*Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, Visionary, 1179

**Sat 18** We pray for clergy and church leaders who are unwell. We remember especially those who cannot work and minister while they recover or receive treatment. We pray for sensitivity and understanding in churches and congregations, and for unity in working together.

**Sun 19** September is Blood Cancer Awareness Month. Blood cancers are collectively the third biggest cancer killer in the UK but awareness of the different types of blood cancer such as leukaemia, lymphoma and myeloma, and their symptoms are low. We pray that this month helps to raise awareness and save lives.  
*Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity*

**Mon 20** Ansty & Shilton. Clergy: Andrew Coleman. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.  
\*John Coleridge Patteson and his Companions, Martyrs, 1871

**Tue 21** Today marks the International Day of Peace - an annual event designed to bring peace to every individual across the globe. It is also designed to be a day of ceasefire. We pray for God's help in our own lives to cease fighting, stop arguing and make peace with others. We pray for God's dynamic intervention of peace into the most troubled places of conflict.  
*Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist*

**Wed 22** We pray for the Coventry North Deanery Synod as they meet together in person to hear about what God is doing in our communities, share the Deanery Plan and hear an update about LLF in the Deanery.  
We pray for the Diocesan Mission Fund Committee which meets today.

**Thu 23** Longford. Clergy: Rosalyn Murphy. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.  
We thank God for our Archdeacon Pastor, Sue Field, and pray for God's blessing on her work and ministry, and her family.  
We pray for the Diocesan Board of Education which meets today.

**Fri 24** September is World Alzheimer's Month. We pray for all those affected by Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. We give thanks for the progress made in treatments and care, and we pray for greater understanding of the disease.

**Sat 25** Allesley. Clergy: Lizzy Holland. Readers: Colin Holtum, Fey Holtum. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.  
\*Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester, Spiritual Writer, 1626  
\*Sergei of Radonezh, Russian Monastic Reformer, Teacher of the Faith, 1392

**Sun 26** Coventry St George. Clergy: Jennifer Wickham. Reader: Shirley Trafford. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.  
We pray for the Bishop's Core and Extended Staff who meet today.  
\*Wilson Carlile, Founder of the Church Army, 1942  
*Seventeenth Sunday after Trinity*

**Mon 27** During British Food Fortnight, we give thanks for the growers and producers of food in this country. We thank God for the care that goes in to making food safe for us to eat. We remember those around the world who do not have enough food.  
\*Vincent de Paul, Founder of the Congregation of the Mission, 1660

**Tue 28** Keresley. Clergy: Interregnum. We praise God for the closeness and support shown amongst the church family during the pandemic and the sense of expectancy and hope for the future. We pray for the church during the vacancy and for the appointment of a new incumbent.

**Wed 29** We pray for World Heart Day. On average more than 17 million people die from heart-related illnesses every year. We pray that this awareness day encourages people more attentive to their heart health.  
We pray for the Diocesan Finance Group which meets this morning.  
*Michael and All Angels*

**Thu 30** We give thanks for the ministry of retired clergy and the support they provide in so many ways to the lives of our churches across the diocese.  
We also pray that new clergy and their families will settle in quickly and feel at home in Coventry diocese.  
\*Jerome, Translator of the Scriptures, Teacher of the Faith, 420

# Focus on Coventry North Deanery

*'Christ Centred – Jesus Shaped: Humbler, Simpler, Bolder'*

These powerful words speak of the Church of England's emerging vision for the 2020's. I believe they also speak to each of us here in the deanery and diocese both words of encouragement and hope, which many of us have been able to testify to in the last 18 months; that Jesus is with us and at the heart of all we do. But they also perhaps challenge & stir us to reflect, repent & change as we consider what sort of church God is wanting to rebuild and restore through us as we emerge from the shockwaves of COVID-19. To become a church of missionary disciples, where a mixed ecology is the norm (parish & plants, ordained & lay-led), and to become younger and more diverse.

This national vision, together with the Diocesan Growth Strategy to see 150 new worshipping communities formed in the next 10 years, has begun to shape and form the foundation of our Deanery Plan. Since February, the Deanery Leadership Team (DMPC) have been meeting to listen and hear from all the parishes in our deanery. We've invited parishes & pioneer churches to join together for our Deanery Learning Community where we have met together (on Zoom so far) to listen to each other, share the opportunity & challenges, hear inspiring stories & theology on leading churches into mission & discipleship, listen to the voice of God and make plans for how we are going to respond.

This integrated, Spirit-led process will continue in September as we begin to share, consult & discern a Deanery Vision for the 2020's.

Please do pray for us – for humility, simplicity & boldness!



**Revd Gareth Irvine**  
**Area Dean**

# St Francis Employability

Throughout the pandemic, St Francis Employability has encouraged good neighbourship within the local community by asking people to look 5 doors down, left, and right, to ensure support reaches those most in need.

The 5 doors down project began in March 2020 as a response to the national lockdown and the evident need for food support within the city. Initially, it started with a team of willing volunteers who were able to create food parcels from donations to provide essential food to the most vulnerable people in the community. As well as food parcels, the team were also able to provide breakfast and lunches on a click and collect basis. Since March the project has grown immensely with St Francis Employability becoming a registered food hub with the Trussell Trust where people can come and fulfil their foodbank vouchers and receive other essential items.



From September 2020 the 'One Stop Social Supermarket' was opened in response to a need for ongoing support for many of the households who used the food hub services. The social supermarket takes food support one step further and looks to address why people are needing help with food. Through the social supermarket, households pay approximately £3.50/week and receive about £20 worth of shopping as well as support in other areas, including support with benefits, debt, housing, CV's, job search, English lessons and much more. The aim of the social supermarket is to move people away from food support and towards independence by helping them overcome their barriers.

As well as providing physical support, St Francis Employability have also acted as covid champions by and creating a covid support line which was used to help people understand symptoms, book tests and vaccines. There were also several workshops based on COVID and the team provided the local community with hygiene packs to support good hygiene.

St Francis Employability have also been able to support the local community with CV writing, Job search, benefit advice, housing support, ESOL lessons, skills training, virtual coffee mornings and much more. Earlier this week we were visited by a local MP who thanked the team of staff and volunteers for all that they have done to support the local community during such difficult times.

Please continue to pray for the work of the St Francis & St Francis Employability, and for the discernment & appointment of their future parish priest this Autumn

**Selina Read**  
**Projects Manager**