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# VISION IN FOCUS

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## Introduction

Prayer and Mission is at the heart of this edition as we are encouraged to join Christians from across the world to pray from Ascension to Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus.

As part of the global ecumenical movement by Thy Kingdom Come, our prayers and actions can be part of bringing God's Kingdom here on earth. But where do we start? From ideas for prayer to plans for outreach work, we have loads of resources, ideas and support to help you flourish.

And don't forget our Diocesan Celebration Service on Saturday May 18th at 11am, St Mary's Priory Church, Abergavenny.

*Debra Goddard  
Diocesan Communications Officer*

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## 9 Days of Prayer and Mission



Throughout church history, the revival of Gods church has always been preceded by an out-pouring of prayer. By being involved in the **9 Days of Prayer and Mission** you are taking part in the global ecumenical prayer movement of Thy Kingdom Come, which invites Christians around the world to pray from Ascension to Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus.

But we believe that it is our actions as well as our prayers that draw people into a deep relationship with God. As well as tapping into that conversation with God about the deep desires of our heart, prayer also transforms us, so that we can do our part in bringing about God's Kingdom here on earth. A place of justice and equality for all, a place of healing and reconciliation.

**The Ven Stella Bailey**

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**What Does God's Kingdom on Earth Look Like?**



Join the Ven Stella Bailey as she talks about mission and asks others from across the diocese, 'What Does God's Kingdom on earth Look Like?'

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## How to build the Kingdom of God



Yarn bombing

When we hold missional outreach activities they should be built on two principles:

Offering God's love - in a way that values others impacting their self-worth and mental health and offering practical support or messages of hope.

Building relationships – People will not hear the gospel message you have to share until they have a relationship with you, these activities are opportunities to hear people's stories.

This is not about fundraising but loving people into the Kingdom of God.

In addition to the previous ideas of running a **community litter pick** or **eco church project** here are some further simple ideas that can be used for a one off event.

**Teddy bears picnic** – arrange a space for a community teddy bears picnic, run children's games and activities and encourage people to bring something along to share so you can feed the 5000.

**Community walk** – people open up to each other on a walk. Arrange a simple walk to enable people to build relationships.

**Yarn bombing** – knit small hearts and leave them around your community with words of affirmation and self worth. (picture above)

**Painting rocks** – arrange a rock painting session and fill your local area with fun and colour.

**Gift a plant** – pot up a small plant and deliver them to local houses and businesses with the message 'A gift from your local church'

**Skills sharing** – put on a free flower arranging lesson or crochet class or whatever the skill might be in your church community. You then have an opportunity to share with others over tea and cakes.

**Repair café** – hold a one off repair café event using local skills to fix things for people.

**Film night** – enjoy each other's company with a film night, maybe sing along to the sound of music?

**Cheese and wine evening** – share some time with each other and specifically invite those who you know live on their own.

**Foodbank collection** – hold a special collection event, finding out the items in current need at your local food bank.

**Pet blessing service** – bring some fun to people's day by holding a pet blessing service.

**Clothing swap shop** – have a one off clothing swap shop especially aimed at parents with children – they grow so quickly!

**Funeral planning** – arrange a one off funeral planning event, maybe in partnership with your local undertakers to encourage people to consider their own funeral. You could go one step further and ask a local solicitor to explain the various powers of attorney and wills.

**Speak out for justice** - encourage people to write letters to prisoners by partnering with Amnesty International. Advocate for those who are oppressed and raise local issues with those who are decision-makers.

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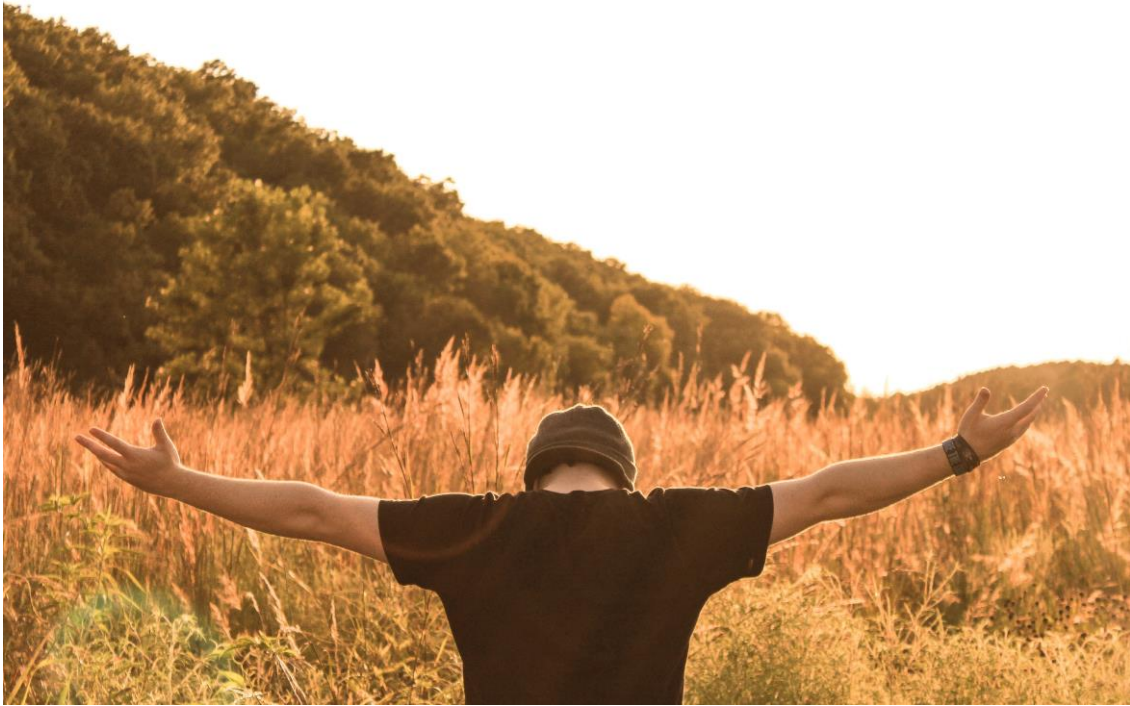
## Why do we pray?



Why do we pray? How do I help others to pray? Join others from across the diocese as they share their thoughts.

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## Ideas for prayer



Shape your normal rhythm of acts of worship around the Thy Kingdom Come theme for this period of time. Various orders of service can be found here (keep scrolling down): <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/resources/resources-services>

**Stations of the cross:** Hold a stations of the cross gathering with your prayer intentions for those who do not know Christ to discover His transforming love. An order of service on the theme of Thy Kingdom Come is available on page 5 of this document: <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/sites/default/files/2021-03/Bright%20Prayer%20Ideas%20For%20Your%20Church.pdf>

**Prayer wall:** What are your most heartfelt requests to God for your family, the Church, your city and your nation? Make space on a wall, or on a large net or piece of fabric, for people to write or draw their requests to God. When they're finished with their own request, invite them to pray for someone else's. Watch it fill up as the week progresses.

**Zoom gathering:** Take the lessons learnt from Covid and hold a gathering of prayer each day on zoom. Maybe morning prayer or compline.

**Family tree:** Find a real tree that will fit into your prayer space, alternatively you could draw or make one. Invite people to think about the members of their families or their friends who are yet to discover the love of Jesus. Invite them to write their names on luggage labels if you're using a real tree, or a sticky note if not, and to hang or stick them as they pray for each in turn. Pray that they will come to know Jesus, but also for personal courage for yourself to talk about Jesus and to invite others to church activities. Alternatively use a tree outside on which people can tie a ribbon.

**Prayer map:** Gather large maps of your area and this nation, as well as local and national newspapers. Encourage people to pray Your kingdom Come, your will be done over the places and situations that stand out to them. If they are unsure how to pray then praying for the positive – healing, reconciliation, justice, love, forgiveness, salvation – is often a good place to begin.

**Take the church outdoors:** Hold an outdoor service:  
<https://www.thykingdomcome.global/sites/default/files/2021-04/Taking%20Church%20Outdoors.pdf>

**Open church:** Arrange for your church building to be open and let people know when it is.

**Prayer walk:** Go for a walk around your parish as an individual or a group and pray for locations and issues you notice.

**A night of prayer:** 7 till 7 watching and waiting with God on a rota.

**Candle prayers:** Give everyone a candle to light and pray for one person.

**Prayer stations:** Set up creative prayer stations on the theme of Thy Kingdom Come.

**Five Friends:** Pick five people to pray for over these 10 days.

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## Praying for our friends and family



**Praying for others to know Jesus is one of the most powerful things we can do.  
Persistent prayer for others brings transformation to their lives.**

Consistently praying for others takes discipline, and there are many ways that we can build up habits that will help us to pray for our friends and family.

Choose five people you would like to pray for regularly and write their names down onto a list. If you're not sure who to pray for, ask God to guide you as you choose. Once you have settled on 5 names, commit to praying for them regularly by praying the following:

**Loving Father,  
in the face of Jesus Christ  
your light and glory have blazed forth.  
Send your Holy Spirit that I may share with my friends**

**[here, name your friends]  
the life of your Son and your love for all.**

**Strengthen me as a witness to that love  
as I pledge to pray for them,  
for your name's sake. Amen.**

*Using the BLESS acrostic can help us to focus on all the felt needs of those we are praying for:*

**Body** – health, protection, energy

**Labour** – employment/unemployment, retirement, adequate income

**Emotional** – inner peace, joy, wisdom, insight, patience

**Social** – healthy relationships between spouses, parents, children, friends, reconciliation; love

**Spiritual** – repentance, salvation, obedience, faith

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**Diocesan Celebration Service**





On **Saturday May 18th at 11am, St Mary's Priory Church, Abergavenny** there will be a service led by Bishop Cherry celebrating the life of the diocese.

This will be a celebration for all ages, including activities for children. It will be followed by refreshments and a chance to meet people from across the diocese.

Hopefully as many people as possible will come together for this celebration. Abergavenny is a wonderful place for making a day of it as well, so please encourage groups to come and enjoy the day!

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