



YEAR OF PRAYER 2018

Advent Sunday this year will mark the beginning of the 'Year of Prayer', which is a Diocesan initiative to help us to develop and deepen the life of prayer and spirituality within the Diocese with a particular emphasis on building bridges between our personal and corporate prayer, thus enabling us better to pray our worship.

The Year will be launched with **Prayer Cards** with a prayer for the morning and for the evening. As we all pray these prayers every day over the course of this year, it will deepen and strengthen the connection between our time of personal, individual prayer and our corporate prayer with others.

There will be many opportunities to grow in prayerfulness and to develop our spirituality.

The **Lent Course** 'Inspiring Vision' will give us an opportunity to use art as a way of seeing salvation and opening windows onto God. Each week well known public figures, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, will reflect upon a piece of art that has inspired them and helped them in their journey of faith and prayer. The reflections will be available on podcasts and the works of art chosen will also be available. Written material will accompany the reflections for individual and group use to explore in greater depth the themes touched upon and how they engage and resonate with our own experience.

There will also be available a **Diocesan Prayer Course** called 'Finding God in All Things'. This five week course will introduce us to Ignatian Spirituality, as developed by St Ignatius of Loyola, and provides a wonderful way of living out the Gospel in the world and prayerfully recognising God's presence in all things, especially in the most surprising people and places.

For each of us to have a **Way of Living** is important if our life of prayer is going to be ordered and disciplined and if our life of prayer is change the way we live our lives and engage with others and the wider world. There will be practical material on the Diocesan website about how to make a Rule of Life which could make this Year of Prayer life changing and life enhancing for us. The material, written by Bishop Martin is called **IHS: A Way of Living**.

As part of the Year of Prayer it is very much hoped that there can be a **deanery conference** on a Saturday morning in 2018 across deaneries to resource and inspire people about the practice of prayer. It is hoped that rural deans will be able to organize these or identify someone with enthusiasm who can take responsibility to do this. Of course smaller deaneries can join together for their conference. The suggested title is 'Pathways in Prayer: resourcing the journey'. In addition, some parishes are arranging a **week of guided prayer** (retreat in daily life), Spiritual directors/ prayer guides are available for this. As the year unfolds, further information will be available about this. The Diocesan Spirituality Adviser Andrew Mayes is available for advice. (andrew.mayes@gmail.com)

The Archbishops launched the **Thy Kingdom Come** initiative several years ago as an invitation to pray specifically for people we know to come to know Jesus. The specific period is between Ascension and Pentecost and many events will be taking place in the diocese over that time. There are also resources for private prayer. We hope that many people in the Diocese will embrace this opportunity for concerted prayer for the growth of the kingdom. There will be more details available via magazine, website and ebulletin.

Pilgrimages have always been an important part of the path of prayer, with the experience of journey, arrival at a holy place, worshipping together and then returning home again refreshed and renewed. During the course of the Year of Prayer there will be four Archdeaconry Pilgrimages to the Cathedral. As the Mother Church of the Diocese, the Cathedral has for centuries been a place of pilgrimage and will offer a generous welcome to archdeaconry pilgrims.

There will be three **Clergy Study Days** in the Year of Prayer, which will focus on how we might raise realistically the quality of our liturgy and worship in our churches, given our resources. The days will be the same format with input in the morning followed by a series of workshops in the afternoon.

The **Education Department** has a number of exciting events planned for the Year of Prayer. Our twelve Year 6 Leavers Celebration Services, our Headteachers' Conference and a Quiet Day for Heads will all be focused around the theme of prayer. We are strongly encouraging our schools to all have Prayer Spaces in schools and to work in partnership with their local church. This initiative inspires pupils to pray in various creative and thoughtful ways. Following the success of the Art Competition last year, the Department is set to launch another competition, this year, focussed on the theme of Prayer. Schools will be able to undertake large projects such as creating a Quiet Spiritual Space inside or outside their school building to give opportunities for people to take time to reflect and pray.

Along with the competition category of Prayer through Space, there are also categories of **Prayer through Word** and **Prayer through Image**. The 'Prayer through Word' asks schools to send pupils' own written and illustrated prayers which will be selected to be published in a book. The Prayer through Image will invite pupils to illustrate some traditional Anglican prayers with calligraphy and illuminated lettering as well as iconography. The winning entries will be framed for display in the school and we hope these prayers will be used in acts of worship in schools.