

manna

From the Church of England Diocese of Bath and Wells ☩ January 2026

2026 - a year of prayer

Across Bath and Wells in 2026, we are all encouraged to join in with a year of focus on prayer, however that works for us, in the hope that we will grow in prayer and faith as the year progresses.

Kate Scott, Bishop's Chaplain, and a member of the group drawn from across the diocese who are seeking to offer support and resources throughout the year says, "We do pray in Bath and Wells, but we want to encourage everyone in their prayer life, and perhaps to discover and explore new ways of praying. We also want to hear what others find valuable in their prayer life and to all learn together."

"As well as strengthening our personal connection to God as we nurture our prayer life, we hope that this will also be an opportunity to reach out to our communities to ask them what they would welcome prayer for, and to pray for and with them."

Following a meeting on prayer with Area and Lay Deans from across the diocese, a host of ideas for the year of prayer that may help nurture people's prayer life emerged – from exploring



pilgrimage to simply learning more about prayer. One idea that bubbled up was the idea of a prayer box, full of various prayer items, that will be shared around deaneries throughout the year.

Caroline Deakin, Area Dean of Locking and also a member of the prayer group offering support, says, "We hope that every deanery will welcome the arrival of the prayer box for periods of 2026 as we seek to grow the wave of prayer across the diocese. The idea is that as the boxes travel the diocese they accumulate prayer. Along the way we hope to collect stories, answers to prayer, and find out how people are simply engaging in really different ways in prayer and what that meant them, how it's maybe developed their prayer life."

Find out more about the year of prayer: bathandwells.org.uk/prayer

News in brief

Racial Justice Audit report published

The report shares the findings of an audit last year into the strengths and challenges in how we approach belonging, representation and participation in Bath and Wells, particularly for people of Global Majority Heritage, from flourishing or fully participating in the life of the Church. Revd Rona Stuart-Bourne, Milborne Port, pictured with church member, Fregil, was one of those who participated in the audit conversations. She said, "I was very happy to be involved. We had a great conversation."

[Read more](#) about the impact of the conversations.



Lego, tea and biscuits

In Combe St Nicholas in South Somerset, little Lego bricks have perhaps appropriately, been the building blocks of something very special! From no clubs for children apart from football to a thriving programme of family activities, the team is keen to inspire others to follow in their footsteps.

Pupils' prayers for 'Heads up for Air Rescue' challenge

Three head teachers from Moorland Federation in West Somerset have cycled between every school in the Federation in a single day to raise money for the Air Ambulance. To support them in their 'Heads up for Air Rescue' challenge, pupils across all eight schools in the Federation wrote thoughtful, heartfelt prayers. Head of School, Jon Moise-Souch, said: "Their words capture exactly why we're doing this; community, kindness, and supporting a service that is so vital to our rural area."



Watch a video of Revd Deborah Perreau and Family Chaplain, Denise Lugg talk about this journey on the [diocesan YouTube channel](#).



Find out more on these and other stories at bathandwells.org.uk/news

Time to learn to pray

By Michael Beasley, Bishop of Bath and Wells

'Lord, teach us to pray.' In Luke's Gospel it's these words, spoken by the disciples, that cause Jesus to give them the Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:1-4). Jesus says to his friends 'When you pray say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial.'

Many of us think that we should be able to pray automatically. And that if we can't, it's either because 'it's not our thing' or because we're failing. Yet in Luke's Gospel, the disciples still need to ask Jesus how to pray, even after they've been knocking around with him for ages. So maybe we should give ourselves a break and accept that working out how to pray is not obvious and that all of us need to learn.

In 2026, I'm asking all of us across our diocese of Bath and Wells to make the year one of especial focus on prayer. I'm hoping we'll all be able to say the words 'Lord teach us to pray' and that together we'll all grow in our experience, understanding, insight and practice.

How can we learn about prayer? We have to make a start. We need to make some mistakes. We need to learn from others. It doesn't happen in the abstract. Prayer is a 'learning by doing thing' where if we stick at it, we grow and change.

How might you learn to pray more this year? There isn't a master plan designed to get everyone on their knees. Most action will happen locally where we can identify what we need, work out who can help us, and then get underway. Some simple resources designed to be helpful are being made available. More importantly, please do talk to your vicar or other church leaders about what might be possible where you are.

Together, let's say these words in the year that is to come: 'Lord, teach us to pray.' A very happy New Year to you all.

Bishop Michael



A purposeful journey with God

The Revd Jane Durham, Assistant Area, Glastonbury, and member of the prayer group, is keen to explore how pilgrimage fits into the year of prayer and how it can be supported.



What does pilgrimage mean in terms of faith and discipleship

I think it is about being aware of the journey as much as, if not more than, the destination. It's a purposeful journey to walk with God, and maybe to explore something of our faith, to mull something over, or to encounter God in a new and different way and in a new and different place.

You've said pilgrimage can become prayer. How does that happen?

Sometimes it's a way of praying because we're stuck in one place, and if we're on a pilgrimage, then we've got an opportunity to pray in a different way.

Why is it difficult to pray in stillness?

Sometimes I really struggle to pray sitting in one place. I'm too distracted and it's too normal.

How does it help you prayer for people you encounter on the way?

If I walk past a school, part of my pilgrimage is praying for the school and the pupils. If I walk past the

house of someone who has been bereaved, or had a new child, or has a challenge, then it's an opportunity to pray for them as I walk past.

Does the everyday environment become part of your prayer life?

A for-sale sign makes me pray for the people moving out and the people moving in. A local business or a pub makes me pray for how they're surviving in the current economic context. And if we're enjoying the countryside, then it's an opportunity to thank God for the amazing world in which we live and to pray for that world.

How does pilgrimage fit into the year of prayer?

We are going to have notes of pilgrimage routes that already exist across the diocese and there will be resources around pilgrimage. But we can also just start thinking around our community. Who is it I want to pray for, where is it I want to pray? And just make a habit of walking those bits of the community, or cycling them, or whatever is appropriate for you. If you can't do it by going out, then get a map - going on a pilgrimage by just having a map in front of you.

Follow us on



@BathWells



_BathWells



bathandwells



DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living and telling the story of Jesus