

# Encouraged by prayer

Malcolm Critchley, who is undertaking the Lay Ministry Foundation Course, explains how it has broadened his perspective on prayer.



Malcolm Critchley, from St Mary the Virgin, Cannington

**Is prayer a big part in your everyday life?**

Yes. It helps me to connect with God and it encourages me. I would say I get spiritual feedback from it, so I'm always left encouraged after I've prayed.

**What do you value most about prayer?**

It helps me with direction. That's what I value the most.

**Do you think prayer helps to sustain you in your faith?**

The discipline of prayer helps to sustain me. The structure of the liturgy and the prayers help give me direction and order. Organising myself in prayer helps my understanding of what God wants me to do.

**What prayer inspires you?**

The repetition of the Apostles' Creed has been one of the most helpful prayers for me. When I came back to the church after Covid I needed to

be recentred and reset and the repetition of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit put me right.

**How do you think the course has inspired you?**

It's opened my eyes and widened the horizon. I've spent most of my Christian life in loosely structured church. It's not until I came into the Anglican church that I really examined different aspects of prayer and what prayer means. Broadening the parameters of prayer has been one of the main things I've got from the course.

**Any advice for anyone looking to refresh their prayer life?**

If you have the opportunity enrol on the foundation course do it, you will learn so much. I'm learning so much and I never expected that. It's good for us to move out of our comfort zone and to explore different possibilities and aspects of prayer life because there is so much more to it than shutting your eyes and bowing your head.

[You can find some creative prayer ideas at: bathandwells.org.uk/prayer-everyone-everywhere](https://bathandwells.org.uk/prayer-everyone-everywhere)

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From the Church of England Diocese of Bath and Wells ☩

June 2024

## Archbishop joins us for Diocesan Day of Prayer

On Saturday, 7 September, everyone across our Diocese of Bath and Wells is invited to join in a Diocesan Day of Prayer for the communities we serve. Bishop Michael will be hosting a gathering in each of our archdeaconries, alongside Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury. Churches across the diocese are also invited to hold their own prayer gatherings with a focus on their local communities.

Bishop Michael says, “As churches we pray in and for our communities each and every day, but for this diocesan day of prayer I am encouraging every church to look afresh at the communities we serve and the multitude of ways we can and do pray for them.

As well as being an opportunity to help us seek God’s transformation for the communities we are a part of, I hope this will provide us with a chance to deepen our own faith and strengthen our church communities through prayer.

“I am always struck by how many people, even if they are not regular



The Archbishop of Canterbury during his last visit to the diocese in 2016

churchgoers, are pleased that they are being prayed for, and so this may be an opportunity to let our communities know that we are praying for our life together and how it might be transformed for good, as well as giving thanks for all that is good already.”

As well as the gatherings across Bath and Wells, there will be resources and suggestions for more local prayer gatherings, on that day, and into the future.

‘Unless the Lord Builds the House we build in vain.’ Psalm 127:1

Find out more about the Diocesan Day of Prayer and sign up to receive resources when they are available at: [bathandwells.org.uk/day-of-prayer](https://bathandwells.org.uk/day-of-prayer)

# News in brief

## Young People's Week of Prayer

In the first week of July, churches across Bath and Wells are invited to take part in a week of prayer for children and young people.

The prayer guide for the week, with themes, prayer points and bible passages for each day, is available to download from the diocesan website at [bathandwells.org.uk/yp-week-prayer](http://bathandwells.org.uk/yp-week-prayer) or [email: goteam@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:goteam@bathwells.anglican.org)



## New church planned for Haywood Village

A £1million fundraising project to build a permanent structure to serve as both a church and a community hub for Haywood Village, Weston-super-Mare has been launched.

## Thy Kingdom Come

Locking Castle Church was the venue for a special Movement gathering on Sunday, 19 May. Youth and young adults from across the whole of the south west came together for the Church of England's Thy Kingdom Come.

This year's Thy Kingdom Come theme explores the Lord's Prayer and at 17:30 everyone at Movement joined with people around the UK, and beyond, to pray it together.



The fundraising campaign was launched at the commissioning service for Revd Fiona Mayne, who has been key in the growth of the church from humble beginnings to a thriving community.

Find out more on these and other stories at [bathandwells.org.uk/news](http://bathandwells.org.uk/news)

# The gift of prayer

By Toby Wright, who will be installed as the Dean of Wells on Sunday, 16 June.

It is a great joy and privilege to come and join you here in Bath and Wells as the new Dean of Wells, to serve the Cathedral, the diocese and the county. This is an area with strong links on my maternal side, with my grandparents being married in Bath, and many relatives from around this patch.

One of the many things which drew me to this role is the privilege of prayer in your beautiful Cathedral Church. Each morning we gather and pray for the life of the diocese, and give thanks for that same life in the evening. Please be assured of my prayers for you in your mission and ministry and I warmly look forward to getting out to explore the diocese.

As I reflect on this time of change, I am mindful of the importance of finding patterns of prayer to sustain our lives, and nourish our spiritual growth. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu said many years ago, we must 'think of prayer as a relationship.' We are to invest in it, and to find space so that it can develop, and this takes time. Or as the mystic Evelyn Underhill put it, 'On every level of life, from housework to heights of prayer, in all judgement and efforts

to get things done, hurry and impatience are sure marks of the amateur.'

We all know the importance of taking time to invest in relationships, and I love the challenge that hurry and impatience are sure marks of the amateur. As we reflect on our own prayer lives, I wonder if there are ways that we can deepen our relationship in prayer?

The Christian tradition is packed with ways to help people learn to pray. Maybe we can find ways to slow ourselves down and be more present to the gift of prayer, so that we may join in the Apostle Paul's prayer, 'we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding'. (Colossians 1.9)



Toby (right) at Wells Cathedral on the day his appointment was announced.