



# Prayer Diary

December 2016

*“What came into existence was Life,  
and the Life was Light to live by.  
The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness;  
the darkness couldn't put it out.”*

(From the Gospel of John, chapter 1, 'The Message')

A look back at the events of this year does not give us the brightest picture of life in this world. The individual and precious lives of children, women and men are scarred by war, famine, poverty and homelessness, and the rhetoric of hatred, fear, self-preservation and national defence builds ever-higher barriers, casting longer shadows. In a world created for life and redeemed for 'life in all its fullness', we are seeing a vision of humanity's capacity to create a culture of death, to plunge ourselves and each other into the darkness.

In Advent we learn again that God's people must inhabit, trustfully and hopefully, that very darkness. Here we must wait, holding our own pain and the suffering of our neighbours, communities, and nations; recognising our need for God's Spirit to breathe life into our dying souls and this perishing world. *What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by.* The Light of the World, who was born a fragile baby in a darkened corner of an oppressed Middle East, lived from borrowed manger to borrowed tomb and carried the weight of our darkness to the depths of our death. But, *the darkness couldn't put it out.* The light of God blazes in the darkness and life bursts from the tomb.

With the coming of the Light of the World comes our calling. As Mary, young and unknown, bore the very life of the one true God into a broken world, so we are called to bear God's life in our world today. It is in the darkness that we must carry the Life-Light that will overcome it, as Mary carried the Son of God in her womb, in her arms and in her heart – the Saviour to redeem the world.



**Bishop Christopher**

## Coventry East Deanery

My name is Clive Hogger and I am the area dean for Coventry East. This is a rather grand title which means that I help the Bishop's Core Staff Team to oversee any day to day issues that arise, to think strategically about how we resource our area for mission, and to keep in touch with the pastoral care needs of the clergy in the deanery. It is a real privilege to be able to serve in this way and Coventry East, despite the material poverty evident, is a warm and vibrant part of the city.



**Rev. Clive Hogger**  
Area Dean

I am also vicar of St Anne and All Saints, a fairly small, authentic congregation in an area close to the city centre that has seen a huge increase in the number of young adults moving in as Coventry University has expanded. We have been blessed this year by the arrival of Ian Sweeney, part of the Acceler8 Team, who has helped us to develop and grow in our ministry to younger adults, including starting a new informal service, Crossover, and a discipleship group, Citizens. Both of these have seen growth and we are starting to see young adults coming to faith, including two full immersion baptisms this year and some confirmations.

In common with my brothers and sisters across the deanery we are involved not only in meeting the spiritual needs of our population but also their material needs, and we are involved in Coventry Food Bank, Coventry Winter Night Shelter and Street Pastors amongst other things. Across our patch we also find the churches running various lunch clubs, breakfast clubs, uniform groups, stay and plays, Messy Church, school services, job clubs, mental health courses, debt relief and advice surgeries. This is a varied and often challenging place to worship and minister and we are hugely grateful for the generosity of others in the diocese who, via the support fund, enable us to function as we do. We are seeing growth in the kingdom of God despite the challenges and we eagerly anticipate that there is more to come...

# Cycle of Prayer - December 2016

With a focus on parishes and schools in Coventry East Deanery

**Thu 1** We pray for the Diocesan Board of Education, and for all schools and places of learning throughout the diocese; that they may celebrate the true meaning of Advent and Christmas together.  
We pray for the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC).  
\*Charles de Foucauld, Hermit in the Sahara, 1916

**Fri 2** St Alban, Coventry East. Clergy: Vacancy. Church Warden: Lesley Wells. We thank God for all the hard work that Revd Lynnette Clarke did with us during the two years that she was with us and the work that Kim is doing with our youth. Please pray for our congregation as we await the appointment of a new vicar to lead us further on our journey of faith.

**Sat 3** Today Bishop Christopher will be attending the Syrian Refugees' Charity dinner at St Peter's Hillfields. We give thanks for the work of the Coventry Refugee & Migrant Centre and for the refugees who will be hosting this event as they thank Coventry for the welcome they have received.  
\*Francis Xavier, Missionary, Apostle of the Indies, 1552

**Sun 4** Through the busyness of Advent and Christmas we pray for all clergy, Readers and Licensed Lay Workers throughout the diocese.  
\*John of Damascus, Monk, Teacher of the Faith, c.749  
\*Nicholas Ferrar, Deacon, Founder of the Little Gidding Community, 1637

**Mon 5** We pray for Sarah Hills, Coventry Cathedral's Canon for Reconciliation Ministry, as she visits CCN partners in the USA and attends the CCN board meeting. We also pray for Bishop John who is meeting with Shipston Deanery Chapter today.

**Tue 6** St Bartholomew's CofE Academy. Head: Sarah Rayson. We pray for God's blessing on the pupils, staff, teachers and governors of this school.  
We pray for the Parsonages Committee which meets this afternoon.  
\*Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, c.326

**Wed 7** Church of The Holy Cross, Wyken. Clergy: Denise Dekker. We thank God for those training for ministry - not only in our team but across the diocese. We pray for outreach to the community, our link with Axholme House and the young people from our school.  
\*Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, Teacher of the Faith, 397

**Thu 8** Blue Coat CofE VA School & Music College. Head: Mrs V Shelley. We pray for God's blessing on the pupils, staff, teachers and governors of this school community.  
We pray for the Bishop's Core Staff team who meet today.  
\*The Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**Fri 9** Stoke St Michael. Clergy: William Smith. Readers: Ann Brown, Janet Pocklington, Suzanne Sapiano. We give thanks for all the work done to re-order the church and for the improved facilities. We look forward to all that God is doing particularly amongst young families. We pray for our new curate as he and his family prepare to join us next year.

**Sat 10** St Margaret, Coventry East. Clergy: Ali Hogger. We thank God for our new parish, the opportunities it brings, and for the new families who have joined our church. Please pray for us as we continue to seek God's vision for the changes to come, including the launch of a new service.

**Sun 11** Willenhall. Clergy: Pam Howell & George Heighton. We thank God for the Revd Pam's first year as Vicar & for great 8EQs survey results. Please pray for us as we embed new small groups, our new Youth Group, encourage Bible reading and prayer & seek to develop more people sharing in pastoral care, church activities and leadership roles.

Third Sunday of Advent

**Mon 12** Whitley. Clergy: George Heighton. We thank God for our many successful outreach events held during this year and the Shoebox appeal last month. We look forward to welcoming pupils and families from the local school to their Christmas Services and all who may come to celebrate with joy of the birth of our Saviour.

**Tue 13** 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.  
\*Lucy, Martyr at Syracuse, 304  
\*Samuel Johnson, Moraliser, 1784

**Wed 14** Today we pray for Bishop Christopher who will be chairing the Faith & Order Commission of the Church of England.  
We pray for the Diocesan Board of Education which meets this evening.  
\*John of the Cross, Poet, Teacher of the Faith, 1591

**Thu 15** St Mary Magdalene and Risen Christ, Wyken. Clergy: Linda Mudd. Reader: Margaret Robinson. We thank God for our growing church family and the vibrancy this brings. As we prepare to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of Risen Christ Church we pray for God's discernment as we reach out to all those in our community. As we are blessed may we be a blessing.

**Fri 16**

Binley. Clergy: Jon Taylor. Readers: Paul Lucas, Chris Mellers, Greg Sampson. We thank God for those who've recently joined the church, for the Alpha course, and for Messy Church. Please pray for our CAP money course, all of our Christmas outreaches, and for those in our parish who have been the victims of burglary.

**Sat 17**

All Saints CofE Primary School. Head: Angela Dawes. We pray for God's blessing on the pupils, staff, teachers and governors of this school community.  
\*O Sapientia  
\*Eglantine Jebb, Social Reformer, Founder of 'Save The Children', 1928

**Sun 18**

Fourth Sunday  
of Advent

Walsgrave CofE VC Primary School. Head: Robert Darling. We pray for God's blessing on the pupils, staff, teachers and governors of this school. We pray that as familiar carols are sung in parishes across the diocese today, the words and meaning of these songs would be embraced afresh by all who sing them. May God be glorified in our Christmas worship.

**Mon 19**

As we look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus in a stable surrounded by animals and worshipped by shepherds, we pray for all who are looking after livestock this winter. We pray that there will be enough fodder for the winter, and resources to cope with the weather. We also pray for farmers and others working long hours in the cold weather as they care for God's creation.

**Tue 20**

Stretton CofE Academy. Head: Sarah Bates. We pray for God's blessing on the pupils, staff, teachers and governors of this school. We pray for families for whom this Christmas season is a painful time; for parents who have lost sons or daughters; couples who are no longer together; children who are unhappy, confused or in trouble; and those who are alone.

**Wed 21**

Walsgrave-on-Sowe. Clergy: Malcolm Tyler, Claire MacArthur. Readers: Lorraine Baker, Stephen Baker, Susan Morton, Trevor Richards, Tony Thistlewood. We thank God for the ongoing renovations to our building and the money coming in to fund them. We pray for a clearer focus on how to encourage the younger members of our congregation into lives of faith.

**Thu 22**

We pray for all those who come to the Cathedral as a 'once a year' experience, that they may have a real encounter with God and be moved to reconsider questions of life and faith. We also pray for the Cathedral congregations, that people may make the transition from being attenders to engaging in authentic community.

**Fri 23**

St Anne and All Saints, Coventry East. Clergy: Clive Hogger, Tim Fox. Reader: Michael Harling. We are thankful for growth in our ministry to young adults as part of Acceler8. We ask for prayer for the outworking of our pastoral scheme as we reshape our worshipping life.

**Sat 24**

Christmas Eve

We pray for the people preparing food in homeless shelters and hostels around the country. May their efforts to feed, clothe and give shelter bring God's blessing to many during this season. We give thanks for the humble birth of Jesus Christ. God, help us to love and serve in humility.

**Sun 25**

Christmas Day

Joy to the World, the Lord is come! As we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we pray that many would hear and know the Lord Jesus for themselves this Christmas. Lord Jesus Christ, your birth at Bethlehem draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth: accept our heartfelt praise as we worship you, our Saviour and our eternal God. Amen.

**Mon 26**

Stephen,  
Deacon,  
First Martyr

Stoke Aldermoor. Clergy: Buff Forbes Stone. Reader: Julie Watkins-Wollner. We thank God for the engagement with our community through foodbank, volunteering and children and families' activities. Please pray that people will know God better. Pray too for the development of plans and partnerships for a new permanent building for worship and community use.

**Tue 27**

John, Apostle  
and Evangelist

St Chad, Wood End. Clergy: Andrew Fisher, Jenny Irvine, Gareth Irvine. Readers: Brian Hewkin, Jacob Matumamboh. We thank God for the growing partnership between St Chad's and St Aidan's Missional Community. We pray for those who will find Christmas hard this year, and we pray God's blessing upon our outreach and support ministries to folk in the parish.

**Wed 28**

The Holy  
Innocents

St Peter's, Hillfields. Clergy: Bee Arnold. Reader: John McCoach. We give thanks for the relationship between the Community Centre and the Church growing ever stronger, particularly as we look toward the future and serving Hillfields together. Please pray for a youth project with the Charity BIRD. We are very excited about its potential.

**Thu 29**

"God of history, Witness of the struggles within families; we pray for the divided family of Syria as brother fights against brother, and sister rejects sister. We pray for those whose love of neighbour has been destroyed in the bitterness of enmity. May fear be submerged in compassion. Amen."  
\*Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, Martyr, 1170

**Fri 30**

Potters Green. Clergy: Mike Eaman. We continue to thank God for the success of "Time 4 Tea" on Friday afternoons, for the fellowship and friendships being formed. We thank God that we have been able to fund projects for Water Aid. Please pray for the funding of repairs to our hall roof.

**Sat 31**

As 2016 passes and a new year begins, we pray for those who are needing to find hope, purpose and faith in the coming year.  
\*John Wyclif, Reformer, 1384

## St Margaret, Ball Hill



I have been at St Margaret's church, Ball Hill for the last year on an extended placement as part of my curacy with a focus on young adults. This way of shaping training provides an opportunity to lead in places where change is needed, a great way to learn and try out new things whilst still new to ordained ministry.

The church is located in an area densely populated with students, young families and new arrivals to the city. The area is vibrant, multicultural and full of life, but not affluent, and

all of these aspects of the locality are reflected in the people of the church. They have seen some turbulent times in the past, and when I arrived they wanted a new lease of life, but were unsure how to begin.

We have had a challenging but great year, with the first full immersion baptism at St Margaret's, a party for the Queens' birthday attended by many local people, the arrival of new families, an Alpha course, hosting a Bishop's Certificate in Discipleship and Mission module attended by church members, and more. We also became part of a new parish, All Saints, in July, joining with the church of St Anne and All Saints to form a partnership with bringing the light of Christ to our local community at its heart. The two churches are very different in charisma and calling, but this has provided a unique opportunity to provide different expressions of faith from the same parish, sharing the gospel with distinctiveness but as part of a new gathering of the people of God in this part of the city. It is an exciting venture!

Plans for the coming months include a Christmas fayre, undertaking our second 8EQ survey and launching a second service. So much change and so many new opportunities can be daunting, so we would welcome prayer for a deepening of faith and relationships, within the people of the church, across the two locations of All Saints, and most of all with those who live alongside us and need to know the love of Jesus.

***Revd Ali Hogger Gadsby***

## St Bartholomew's, Binley

St Bartholomew's is the parish church in Binley on the east side of Coventry. Binley is a large parish (population around 18000), consisting of several housing estates, an ex-mining village, a few farms and Coombe Country Park! We like to think of ourselves as a welcoming and friendly church (don't all churches?) and we seek to be a vibrant, Christ centred community which brings the good news of Jesus to everyone we can.

We're currently in the middle of our Alpha course which is going well. This is supported by the home groups who take it in turns to provide a wonderful meal each week. Last year we had a number of baptisms and confirmations after the course and a new small group was formed. We also have a monthly 'Messy church' which sees our hall full of families doing craft activities, worshipping together and sharing a meal.

Like most churches we're gearing up for Advent and our Christmas celebrations. This year we're looking to bless families in the parish with Christmas presents following a request we had from a local health visitor. We're also doing 'Reverse Advent Calendars,' where we add an item each day in Advent, and then have Christmas hampers to give away. In addition to our usual carol singing, Christingle and Crib services, this year we're holding a Christmas Tree festival, inviting local schools and other community groups to contribute a tree they've decorated.

This year we have been blessed to have two Family Link Workers in the parish. They've been working both in our church school and in the church, building links between the two. They've been running parenting courses, slow cooker projects, family fun days and lots more besides. It's been great to have them around.

There is always plenty going on at St Bartholomew's, with midweek groups for parents and toddlers and the elderly, craft groups and flower clubs. We're also building our links with Christians Against Poverty, supporting the Debt centre in Coventry, and running the CAP Money course.

I'm very grateful to be working alongside some very faithful servants of Christ and it's a privilege to serve God in this place.



***Revd Jon Taylor***