



Prayer Diary

June 2017

Church as a 'contact sport'



Over the last few weeks I've found myself reflecting at Archdeacons' Visitations on five years of ministry as Archdeacon Pastor. I've been comparing it to a rugby match I went to recently because, in my experience, church can be very much a 'contact sport'. We are all different so disagreements are inevitable; and when they involve things we're passionate about, the clashes can be every bit as spectacular as those in rugby.

So what struck me about the match I watched between Wasps and Saracens? Firstly, how safe we felt. In a crowd of almost 31,000 people there wasn't a moment before, during or after the match that we felt unsafe, either for ourselves or our ten-year-old granddaughter accompanying us. We literally didn't hear any bad language, and there was even applause when 'the opposition' scored or played well. The second thing was how we were drawn-in. When we arrived, we looked askance at each other as the enthusiastic announcer tried to engage the crowd into cheering for the home team. By the end, we too were cheering with me enthusiastically waving the flag that my granddaughter was now too embarrassed to wave! And I think the key to explaining both of these is the word: 'respect'. I think it's what made what was a real competition also a joyous celebration rather than a fight. The respect the players had for one another, for the game, the referee and the crowd made a real physical clash possible without it turning into a bloodbath, and made it something the spectators wanted to be a part of.

For me the parallel is clear. What do people looking into our churches see? Do they see a group of people with the sort of radical respect and commitment to each other that might be called love? If they do I'm convinced they'll be drawn in and want to be a part of it. But if they see competition and enmity without respect and commitment then, quite rightly, they will probably go away shaking the dust from their feet.

The good news is that we're not called to like each other; the more demanding news is that we're called to love each other with the same binding commitment that God shows to us in Jesus. And that's precisely why Jesus tells us to pray for our enemies. Being a Christian isn't about being nice, but the far higher calling of being loving – to those we like but, especially, those we don't. So let us pray for those with whom we disagree, those we don't like and those we'd count as our enemies – not simply that God might change *their* hearts, but also ours that we might truly love them.

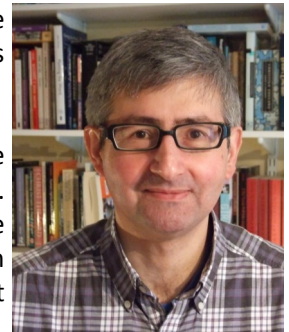
John Green
Archdeacon Pastor

Focus on Kenilworth Deanery

In October 2016, we were delighted to welcome the Revd Stella Bailey and her partner Karen, as the new Vicar of St. Nicholas and St. Barnabas Kenilworth in succession to the Revd Richard Awre. A former Coventry police officer, Stella served her curacy at St. Mary, Walsgrave and was Vicar of St. Mary Magdalen, Chapelfields. Stella is a priest of energy, faith humour and vision and well gifted to meet the challenges ahead. We were also very pleased to celebrate the licensing of Revd Lynda Lilley as Priest-in-Charge of St. Laurence, Meriden after 18 months as Curate-in-Charge. This means that there are currently no vacancies in the Kenilworth Deanery. During the year, we also welcomed the Revd Gail Phillip to the Deanery as Assistant Curate of St. John Kenilworth – in time for the completion of its major reordering work.

Four Sessions of Deanery Synod have tackled a wide range of subject matter. Last September, we had powerful presentations from Tom Millington and John Mills (Youth for Christ) advocating four dimensions of evangelism in the youth context: *Demonstrating* and *Declaring* what we believe, giving young people opportunities to make a *Decision* and *Discipling* them so they understand what it means to be a fully committed follower of Jesus Christ. In November, Revd Ali Hogger addressed the 'stigmatic' issue of mental health, highlighting the distinction between 'sanity' and 'being in your right mind' and emphasising the role of good relationships in the therapeutic process. In February, Godfrey Armitage, the Coventry Diocesan Environment Office consider the church as a place of hope in a time of environmental crisis, articulating three biblical responses to the greatest crisis currently facing humanity: *Praise* – for God's wonderful work of creation; *Lament* for the sinful human desecration of creation; and *Hope* – the promise of a restored creation and bodily resurrection. In May, the Area Dean, Revd Dr Mark Bratton, addressed the subject of medical ethics in a technological age and five ethical and theological 'tensions' that should frame Christian thinking about the moral implications of medical advance. These are, individual choice vs moral accountability; givenness vs fruitfulness of the created order; fixity vs flexibility of human nature; ideology vs pragmatism; and pessimism vs optimism.

In my view, an authentic Christian faith must engage with the complexities of living in the world in their various dimensions. Revelation is not simply a 'deposit' but also a 'discovery' as the Church discerns what God is saying to it in the circumstances in which it finds itself and through the inspiration of word and spirit being '*led into all truth*' (John 16:13).



Revd Dr Mark Bratton
Area Dean

Cycle of Prayer - June 2017

With a focus on parishes and schools in Kenilworth Deanery

Thu 1 We thank God for all the staff who work to support Bishop Christopher and Bishop John. We pray for the interviews taking place today for Bishop Christopher's new interns. May the right candidates be appointed.
*Justin, Martyr at Rome, c.165

Fri 2 All Saints Leek Wootton. Clergy: Jim Perryman. Reader: Audrey Rowberry. On Sunday 18 June we are holding a "Cherishing Churchyards" event (11am-5pm) with churchyard trail, mini-beast hunting, hedgehog home building and a teddy bears' picnic. Please pray that we will encounter God in his creation and draw others to do the same. Why not join us? All ages welcome.

Sat 3 Next Monday (5th June) is World Environment Day. We pray that God would help us to remember that the environment is home to all life, and that we must take up responsibility to ensure that all life is respected.
*The Martyrs of Uganda, 1886 and 1978

Sun 4 On this Pentecost Sunday, we pray for all the events and services taking place across the diocese to celebrate the culmination of Thy Kingdom Come. We particularly pray for 'Rise'; an ecumenical festival of Prayer & Worship taking place in the Cathedral ruins from 2pm.
Pentecost (Whit Sunday)
*Petroc, Abbot of Padstow, 6th century

Mon 5 We pray for all those who will be starting new Bishop's Certificate in Discipleship & Mission (BCDM) modules this week; that they would gain confidence in their faith and biblical knowledge.
*Boniface (Wynfrith) of Crediton, Bishop, Apostle of Germany, Martyr, 754

Tue 6 The Ferncumbe Group. Clergy: Keith Mobberley. Reader: Kemble Everitt. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community. We pray for the Diocesan Trustees who meet this afternoon.
*Ini Kopuria, Founder of the Melanesian Brotherhood, 1945

Wed 7 We thank God for the Cathedral Chaplains and their faithful work. We pray for them as they engage with, and minister to, visitors to both the new Cathedral and the ruins of the old Cathedral.
We pray for the Diocesan Mission Fund Committee which meets today.

Thu 8 St Nicholas' Primary School, Kenilworth. Headteacher: Louise Mohacsi. We pray for God's blessing on this school community and we give thanks for all the pupils, teachers, staff, parents and governors.
We pray for the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC).
*Thomas Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells, Nonjuror, Hymn Writer, 1711

Fri 9 We pray for Bishop John who is on sabbatical at the moment; may this be a time of rest and restoration.
*Columba, Abbot of Iona, Missionary, 597
*Ephrem of Syria, Deacon, Hymn Writer, Teacher of the Faith, 373

Sat 10 June is SANDS awareness month. The stillbirth and neonatal death charity (SANDS) wants to offer care not only for people who have lost babies after they were born, but for women who have miscarried too. We pray for God's comfort and hope for all families who are affected by the loss of a baby.
We pray for the Deanery Representatives at the Support Fund Meeting today.

Sun 11 All Saints' Primary School, Leek Wootton. Headteacher: Sue Patterson. We pray for God's blessing on this school community and we give thanks for all the pupils, teachers, staff, parents and governors.
Barnabas the Apostle

Mon 12 Today we pray for the Reverend Jonathan Vaughan as he is collated by Bishop Christopher as Vicar of the Benefice of Wolvey, Copston Magna & Witherbrook. We pray for the Diocesan Business Committee which meets this morning.

Tue 13 Ferncumbe Primary School, Hatton. Headteacher: Sally Morris. We pray for God's blessing on this school community and we give thanks for all the pupils, teachers, staff, parents and governors.
We pray for Diocesan Synod which meets today.

Wed 14 Berkswell Primary School. Headteacher: Tracy Drew. We pray for God's blessing on this school community and we give thanks for all the pupils, teachers, staff, parents and governors.
We pray for the Parsonages Committee which meets this afternoon.
*Richard Baxter, Puritan Divine, 1691

Thu 15 We pray for all the young people in the Cathedral community, particularly the choristers, as they face exams but maintain their faithful commitment to helping lead worship.
Corpus Christi
*Evelyn Underhill, Spiritual Writer, 1941

Fri 16

We pray for Richard Cooke, DDO and Principal of the Diocesan Training Partnership and for all members of the DTP team.

*Richard, Bishop of Chichester, 1253

*Joseph Butler, Bishop of Durham, Philosopher, 1752

Sat 17

Burton Green Primary School. Headteacher: Sue Patterson. We pray for God's blessing on this school community and we give thanks for all the pupils, teachers, staff, parents and governors.

*Samuel and Henrietta Barnett, Social Reformers, 1913 and 1936

Sun 18

First Sunday
after Trinity

During National Carers' Week many charities gather together to recognise the contribution carers make to local communities, lobby MPs and offer support and encouragement to carers. We pray for all those who give their time to care for others and ask for God's blessing on young people who are carers.

*Bernard Mizeki, Apostle of the MaShona, Martyr, 1896

Mon 19

Meriden Primary School. Headteacher: Lucy Winkler. We pray for God's blessing on this school community and we give thanks for all the pupils, teachers, staff, parents and governors.

*Sundar Singh of India, Sadhu (holy man), Evangelist, Teacher of the Faith

Tue 20

Today we give thanks for the Revel Church of England Primary School as Bishop Christopher visits as part of their 21st birthday celebrations. We pray for the Bishop's Council which meets this evening.

Wed 21

We pray for the Finance and Administration department of the diocese. We pray for the Operations department of the diocese and for the DAC. We give thanks for each of these members of staff.

We pray for the Clergy Safeguarding Study Day taking place today.

Thu 22

Meriden and Packington, St Laurence. Clergy: Lynda Lilley. Reader: Peter Wright. We thank God for His renewal, refreshment and revival of the church community. We pray for the parish and ask God for His help to make His name known to all peoples.

*Alban, first Martyr of Britain, c.250

Fri 23

Today is International Widow's Day, a UN ratified day of action to address the poverty and injustice faced by millions of widows and their dependents in many countries. We pray for an end to the social stigmatisation and economic deprivation of widows.

*Etheldreda, Abbess of Ely, c.678

Sat 24

The Birth of
John the
Baptist

Kenilworth St John. Clergy: Andrew Attwood, John Armstrong, Jane Mullaney. Readers: Anthony Manning, Ken Pollard, Phil Sowards. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.

Sun 25

Second Sunday
after Trinity

Kenilworth St Nicholas and St Barnabas. Clergy: Stella Bailey. Readers: Heather Alford, Karen Mottram. Children and Families worker: Ali Baxter. We thank God for all who use their gifts in God's service. Please pray for us, as we start the process of working out our vision, listening to the Holy Spirit's prompting for where God is calling us to reach out to.

Mon 26

Berkswell St John the Baptist. Clergy: Mark Bratton. Readers: Richard Hollingdale, Steve Bell. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.

Tue 27

Today we give thanks for All Saints' Bedworth Church of England Primary School as Bishop Christopher visits as part of their 40th anniversary celebrations.

*Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, Teacher of the Faith, 444

Wed 28

Today we pray for the Reverend George Heighton as he is instituted by Bishop Christopher as Vicar of Brailes, Rector of Sutton-under-Brailes and Priest-in-Charge of Tysoe, Oxhill and Whatcote.

*Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, Teacher of the Faith, c.200

Thu 29

Peter and Paul,
Apostles

Today we pray for the nine deacon and four priest candidates who are on their pre-ordination retreat, ahead of ordinations on the 2nd July. May this be a time of blessing and encouragement

Fri 30

Stoneleigh and Ashow. Clergy: Sharon Goble. Reader: Audrey Rowberry. We thank God for every small but beautiful sign of God's kingdom growing. Please pray for vision and commitment to be faithful in prayer and open to the Spirit, that we may warmheartedly reach out to others, extend our welcome, and take initiative in serving our communities

The Spiritual Musings of a Director of Music

It is a privilege to journey with a community of any description, especially one that is diverse. There are always challenges, yes, but there is always much to be gained if we are willing to see where God is working and cling on for dear life! Being a Director of Music is much like that when one has essentially come into the church as a “commuter worshipper”; you are trying to work out, with others, what has come before, what the direction is, and the destination we are travelling toward together. I am blessed with a team of people who are clear where things have been but are also willing to look towards the future and are looking to place the right foundations. This is the tension I emphasise when I take on work for God: remembering that I am part of an ancient heritage, that I enrich in the present and build for the future. It is why renaissance music is as important for me as worship songs – our modern hymns – as both will be the anthems of the church for years to come.

I am also blessed to be working with people who have ideas and want to pull together. This is not always simple as I often think that I have the answers and autocratic rule is much easier than getting everyone on board. But I do not believe the former is the Lord we serve in our music making. He is the one who breaks down barriers so that all people can come to worship not in a way that just builds up individuals but builds up the whole body, and that is where I believe my role as DoM is key; to lead worship in a sacrifice of praise and to enable others to worship in the same way.

The destination I mentioned earlier: I’m still not sure where that is but I am expectant that God is leading us and by his grace we will find our way.



Mitchell Holland
St John Baptist, Berkswell

Spiritual Formation

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4:15-16

Have you been to the gym recently? Or out for a very good meal? As a society, we spend a lot of time thinking about outward appearances and how to maintain a healthy diet. But do we spend anywhere near as much time thinking about how we nurture our souls?

There is a rich vein of two thousand years of Christian teaching and wisdom which can help each of us to mature on our own spiritual journey. We are body, mind and spirit, and when we pay too much attention to one of these, or neglect one, we become somehow dis-integrated, out of kilter. Finding regular time and space for God, inspired by Christian traditions, literature and art can help us to grow spiritually and restore us to wholesomeness – to be transformed into our unique and authentic selves as God intended us to be.

It’s even better if we can tap into this rich vein in community with others. That’s what happens on the Spiritual Formation course. Spiritual formation is a process that sharpens our attentiveness to God and helps us to be more and more like Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit. These practices are shaped by our temperament and personality type. We meet fortnightly throughout the year with a number of fellow pilgrims, questioners, searchers. At each session there is a presentation on the theme for the evening followed by some time where we can explore our own response and listen to those of others. Themes over the past year have included: The Celtic tradition, Pilgrimage, The Benedictines, Spiritual Formation and Death, Poetry and Prayer, Creative approaches to prayer – and many others.

Having been involved with both the Spiritual Direction and the Spiritual Formation courses over the past few years, I have observed that people who come together as strangers, from very diverse faith backgrounds (the wider, the richer!) grow together as the course progresses and hate it when it comes to an end. Some have even said ‘This is more like my church than my church!’ Opportunities to sit down and discuss some of life’s big questions about identity, faith, and meaning are not easily available to most people in our increasingly secular society, and yet, so many people are searching.

The good news is that there is such an abundance of material to draw on that we hope to run a new Spiritual Formation course starting in September, with a fresh list of topics including Mindfulness, Thomas Merton and Spiritual Formation and Art. The course will run fortnightly on Thursday afternoons at St Michael’s Church Centre Budbroke, and on Thursday evenings at St John the Baptist, Berkswell. Do come and join us!



Chris Edmonds