



PRAYING EPIPHANY WITH BISHOP SOPHIE

When Bishop Sophie came to Coventry in November, Andy Waddams and our Communications team picked up some interesting themes during her visit, five of which might help us to focus our prayers at the start of the new calendar year.

>> LEADERSHIP <<

Bishop Sophie started the day at Blue Coat Church of England School in Coventry - she posed the question, "What do you think is an important quality in a leader today?" to the students, and in response to their ideas commented; *"I was struck by the students' thoughts of what qualities people in leadership should have, with service and empathy being especially important, which I whole heartedly agree with."*

>> PRACTICAL CARE <<

At St Francis Employability, a charity which provides vital support for unemployed people based at St Francis Church, Radford, Bishop Sophie said; *"I am so very inspired to see the support and excellent practical care being shown to those in our communities who are in need."*

>> RECONCILIATION <<

I am committed to leading a Diocese that extends the hand of friendship across the differences that can so easily divide us and play a leading role in the work of reconciliation that for Christians, lies at the very heart of our faith."

>> SINGING & THE ARTS <<

Bishop Sophie dropped in at an after-school club at Kineton Church of England School. As a keen soprano herself, Bishop Sophie enjoyed joining in with the children and talked to them about the importance of music to wellbeing and mental health. As someone who is deeply passionate about the arts and theatre, Bishop Sophie found the tour of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre fascinating and looks forward to frequent visits to the theatre when she moves here.

>> PRAYERFUL & HEAVENLY-MINDED <<

At St Nicholas Church, Alcester, our Rural Mission Hub, where people can come from rural churches for support, she addressed parishioners gathered for a prayer meeting with a message encouraging Christians to be future focused people, whose true citizenship is in heaven.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

ROMANS 15.13

Growing Young Leaders, I

This month we are focusing on **Growing Young Leaders** and it is an opportunity to reflect on our own experience of faith and leadership as a young person.

Esther, David, Ruth, Jeremiah and Jesus are just a few examples of young leaders in the Bible. **They had a big impact from a young age. We can pray for our young adults today and how God might be using them and preparing them.**


I wonder what your experiences of being a young leader is/was? This is a good time to thank God for the opportunities and people who encouraged and supported each of us. It may also be a time to give God the difficulties and challenges that we face(d).

Nowadays there are leadership opportunities from the beginning of primary school and throughout their time at school. There is no age restriction on leadership and this is true in church as well. How are we praying for and giving opportunities to develop gifts, a voice and leadership from childhood into adulthood in our church community?

Leadership is about having your voice heard (both being listened to and seeking their opinion), having places to explore & grow in your gifts and opportunities to lead (whether its visible leading from the front or leading in other ways). **Thank God for the spaces this is visible in your church community and ask him to help you notice the ways you can develop people in these ways.**

Anna Naish



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
‘My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life’. John 10.10 (NLT)			1	2	3	4
2025 is full of fresh possibilities and hope for the Diocese, with the arrival of Bishop Sophie in the Spring, in loving relationships restored, release of gifts/financial resources and new leaders.			Looking for more grace to embrace differences	Praying for a New Year filled with generosity and abundance	Growing leaders, and especially young adult leaders in 2025+	The development of more new worshipping communities
CHRISTMAS 2 5 This Week please pray with +Sophie for the New Year and seeds to be sown this week >>	EPIPHANY 6 >> LEADERSHIP QUALITIES among clergy and lay leaders	7 >> RECONCILIATION within church congregations and in local communities	8 >> PRACTICAL CARE in our churches and pastoral leaders & teams	9 >> MUSIC, THEATRE AND OTHER ART FORMS ACROSS Coventry & Warwickshire	10 >> ‘PRAYERFUL AND HEAVENLY MINDED’ members of every congregation and church	11 The Diocese of Coventry <i>Diocesan Secretary – Jacqueline Ladds</i>
BAPTISM OF CHRIST 12 For many new believers and disciples in 2025 – for ‘rich and satisfying lives.’	13 For our Diocesan Safeguarding Team, led by Sarah Price; all DSOs.	14 A new Diocesan Reconciliation Learning Course starts today	15 Parish Support from the Diocesan team based at 1 Hilltop, Coventry.	BSIG and BCST 16 <u>Bishop’s Strategy Implementation Group</u> & <u>Bishop’s Core Staff</u>	17 Healthy communities, with churches a catalyst for change.	18 WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY (18-25 JANUARY)
EPIPHANY 2 19 for ecumenical relations to be a focus for everybody	20 For the Chapel of Unity in Coventry Cathedral. <i>Dean - John Witcombe</i>	21 Diocesan Reconciliation Learning Course session 2 today	22 Looking forward to welcoming +Sophie in a few months’ time.	DEG 23 <u>Diocesan Environment Group</u> meet today	24 Our Diocesan commitment to Net Zero and Creation Care.	CONVERSION OF PAUL 25 For those receiving careers and vocational support this year
EPIPHANY 3 26 For the helpless and homeless on streets across our Diocese. Gratitude for homes.	27 For all living in poverty; for Christians Against Poverty advisors; for financial advisors.	28 Diocesan Reconciliation Learning Course session 3 today	DAC 29 <u>Diocesan Advisory Committee</u> in relation to church buildings and vicarages.	30 Bishop’s Study Morning ‘The good news about the good news’ with Canon Chris Russell	31 Young people: Growing Faith, our family, school, church connections.	

PRAYER DIARY

A POSITIVE NEW CULTURE *from Leading Your Church into Growth, 2021*
 Vision – Hope – Sunrise – Pathway
 Strong words from the Word
 On you I will build my church - Your old men will dream dreams -
 And your young men will see visions
 Words to lift us, to give a new sense of purpose
 A lamp to guide our feet, A Joy in our hearts
 A hope in our living, A future to enter into

“The mission of the spiritual companion is to say to clients what Jesus said when he first addressed his future disciples: launch out into the deep and wait in silence. But they must also be taught how to do it – to be initiated into the art of contemplation. For only in this way can they find contact with meaning and restore balance and direction in their lives in liminal and crisis situations.”
 from Tomas Halik (2024) “The Afternoon of Christianity: The Courage to Change”

Growing Young Leaders, 2 *from Anna Naish, Lay Learning and Training Lead*

Young Person's Pathway

Earlier this year we heard from a church in our diocese who have been meeting regularly with their young adults and have found a regular pattern of meeting, learning and mentoring for people to explore their gifts and ministries. This brilliant story of journeying with their young people has led to the creation of a Young people's Pathway. Unlike other Pathways it allows you to choose your sessions from across different ministry areas (or stick with a specific one) and to meet with other young adults to discuss and explore leadership. As you pray, I wonder which young people's names come to mind. I wonder what you can do to support them (or they support you). I wonder if there is a nudge to mention this to them.

<https://www.equiphub.org.uk/courses-events-and-resources/young-leaders-pathway/>



Not sure what young people think, do or want?

Have a look at this [report from Youthscape](#) for ideas on how to pray for them. The original research was done with 14 to 18 year-olds, some of whom will now be in their early 20s. So, it is helpful to see key trends for ideas on how to engage with, support and importantly pray for our young people.

If you are close to this age group, I wonder how it resonates with your experience.

PAUSE FOR PRAYER – in 2025

“A pause allows something to happen which would otherwise not occur, and you never quite know what that will be”

DO / PAUSE: YOU ARE NOT A TO DO LIST – is the title of 2019 book by Robert Poynton. The series of books published by The Do Book Company are handbooks on a wide range of eclectic ‘Do’ topics including: Beekeeping, Design, Disrupt, Improve, Lead, Listen, Preserve, Story and Sourdough! In DO/PAUSE we are encouraged to design a calendar of pauses – a diary is usually ‘chopped into clearly delineated chunks’ – but what if you invented your own, with different layers of time such as ‘Learning, tasks, loves, distractions – Mind, hand, body, heart – Me, you, them, us – Money, beauty, fun’? we are asked

What would it look like if you more consciously introduced God into your busy diary (or calendar)?

How might His presence direct the tasks you select, the learning you decide is most important, who you pray for, and where you need spaces to be refreshed ... day by day, week, by week, month by month this year?

What will your mind focus on in scripture, on where your steps take you, what exercise your body needs?

Who will you pray for each day, how will you open yourself to be changed by the Holy Spirit, where will God direct you to pray beyond your closest circle of family and friends?

What unexpected adventures and opportunities might come your way?

How might you direct your giving and use of gifts?

What joys lie ahead?



Time Capsule for 2025



It wouldn't be Christmas without a little project or two. This time capsule struck us as a lovely way to consider where God might lead us in 2025. It would make a great activity with friends, children and grandchildren.

A new year can be an opportunity for setting goals, new opportunities and taking chances – three things which prayer might help us to see more clearly.

What you need:

Slips of paper, pens, a box or other container.

What to do:

Find a small box or jar (about to hit the recycling pile)!

Pray and ask God for guidance as you approach 2025.

Listen for God's voice - that might be in a word or a feeling or any other way that is personal to you - and write down what comes to you. Any words? Ideas? Areas of your life to work on? Issues you feel are stirring your heart?

Write any prayers you have for 2025, and anything you've heard from God on slips of scrap paper.

Put these slips of paper into your box or jar (You may also want to include these somewhere you will see them regularly, like a journal).

Keep your container safe until the end of 2025. When you open it again at the end of the year, you may find, before you, answers to prayer, areas of your life God has worked in, and situations he has changed for you.

Repeat for 2026!

from an A Rocha UK 'Wild Christian' mailing, 26 Nov 2024

A Rocha have targeted 25 vulnerable species across the UK. You might be surprised by what is included in their list, and 'why' >>>

Target 25 - A Rocha UK

Target 25 is A Rocha UK's project to help a range of declining species, taxonomic groups, and threatened habitats. Partners in Action are working to help a wide range of 25 target places and species that are struggling with the effects of climate change, habitat loss and pollution.

PRAYER JAR / COLOURED CARD STRIPS



Why not create your own prayer jar?

Include strips of paper or card – some naming the Deaneries in the Diocese; on others name individuals you would like to pray for in 2025; include our bishop and archdeacons; add youth workers and chaplains; add your own church, other

churches, charities you support, people you long to thrive by coming to know Jesus, and other people you

want to pray for regularly; *pray for them in 2025*. **Each day - perhaps even more than once a day - you can choose three to pray for.**

- The prayer theme this month is **Growing (Young Adult) Leaders and New Year Coming up – the Themes for the next 4 months focus on Healthy Churches (February), Lent and Easter (March/April) and New Worshipping Communities (May)**. Do consider sending me your prayer suggestions, and any other jottings.
- Generally, each month we focus on a different Deanery; this month there is a break in this pattern, but we will return with a really local focus in February when we will be praying for Southam Deanery, and Rugby Deanery in March. I look forward to receiving updates from area deans and clergy, and anyone else with specific prayer requests.
- **DPD Contact: Clive.Hicks@Coventry.Anglican.org**