

1.25 million grant for a younger and more diverse church

Lunch clubs, a community choir and a church that grew out of a football team for refugees are among a number of different projects to receive funding as part of a drive by the Church of England to spread the Christian message to younger and more diverse groups.

The Diocese of Coventry is to receive £1.25 million in Strategic Development Funding (SDF) for outreach work in parishes serving estates and suburban areas in the city of Coventry and the Warwickshire town of Bedworth. The projects are part of a plan to create 150 new worshipping communities in the diocese by 2030, reaching children and young people, families, elderly people and other groups such as homeless people and refugees and asylum seekers.

The funding will support activities such as a community choir, holiday and lunch clubs, pastoral support and Christian enquiry courses. In Bedworth, new worshipping communities will meet in venues including a working men's club and a school.

A 'fledgling' church community that grew out of English language lessons and a football team for refugees and asylum seekers in Coventry will be helped to expand and set up a multi lingual service at St Peter's in Hillfields in the city.

Overall, the grant will support outreach work in the Coventry churches of St Peter's, St Oswald's Tile Hill, Holy Cross, Caludon, St Mary Magdalene with the Church of the Risen Christ, Wyken and All Saints Bedworth.

The grant has been awarded as the Church of England outlines priorities in its Vision and Strategy for the future, including doubling the number of children and young people in churches and attracting more diverse congregations..

The Bishop of Coventry, Dr Christopher Cocksworth, said:

"This is a big moment in the Diocese of Coventry as we venture out on a life-giving work to build up our church communities and reach deeper into some of the most disadvantaged parishes in the diocese."



Prayer Diary

December 2021

Come, Lord Jesus

I'm writing this reflection on the Feast of Christ the King, after confirming some wonderful people in the Cathedral from across the diocese. Before the service they shared with me their powerful testimonies of God at work in their lives. They told me of their readiness to confess that Jesus Christ is the King and their commitment to work for the coming of God's kingdom 'of which there shall be no end'.

By the time you read this, Advent may have arrived and thoughts will be turning to the coming of Christ in great humility, born as a child, hounded by a king and, after a short life, put to death by an Emperor.

The Feast of Christ the King is a good precursor to Advent. It helps us to keep our hearts and minds set on the double aspect of Advent. Yes, we look towards Christmas with all its images of powerlessness in the unmarried mother, the birth in homelessness, the escape from oppression to a far-off country. But we also hold that extraordinary descent of God into the cruel realities of human life alongside the glorious ascent of Jesus to the right hand of God where he reigns as Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

And so we have confidence to pray every day, 'Your kingdom come'. We await with eager longing the coming of Christ to establish throughout creation that kingdom of peace where 'justice rolls down like waters' and where 'God will wipe away every tear from our eyes'.

Let our Advent cry ring loud this year – Amen. Come, Lord Jesus



Bishop Christopher

Advent 2021 resources

Advent is an exciting time in the Calendar of Christian worship; as we prepare in heart, mind and spirit for the coming of Jesus, and we want everyone to be able to join in the celebration and reflection.

To make sure that no one misses out, we are creating a full 9 Lessons and Carol service that can be downloaded for FREE, to be used by groups and individuals.

There will be a variety of content available aimed at a number of different groups. Many churches would like to host a Carol service for their local community, but struggle to find musicians – We will be providing 9 Carols as both video and audio. The videos will have the words for the Carol on screen, and there will also be a printable pdf booklet for those who would prefer to do it that way.

The idea is that you can use the resources however you want to, doing as much of the reading and leading as you want to live, and using the video and audio recordings to fill in the gaps.

In this same way, we hope that the material can be taken to Schools, Care Homes, Prison Chaplaincies, Hospital Chaplaincies and even your local pub! (If you're feeling brave enough).

The Carols will be in a mixture of traditional and more contemporary musical styles and we are choosing popular and well-known classics to be as accessible as possible. We are also going to film the prayers and readings, and create a single video of the whole service that can be watched through beginning to end. We would encourage you to share this with anyone you know who can't get out to a carol service in person.

All of the resources will be available online for download from the first week in December, to allow plenty of time to prepare before holding your event. It will also allow time for the content to be shared more widely with others who may benefit from it.

The download links will be shared through Coventry.anglican.org and the Equip Hub, but if you want to pre-register your interest and make sure you get the content as early as possible, please contact us at servingchrist@coventry.anglican.org and we'll add you to a list, to be emailed the links directly, as soon as they're ready!

Wishing you all the best as you prepare for Advent and Christmas,
The Serving Christ Team.

Loving the Enemy

Last month, debutant author, Andy March released the biography of his grandparents, Englishman Fred Clayton and German woman Rike Büttner-Wobst from Dresden, who rose above extreme suffering and defied the hatred and enmity of warring nations to build an enduring bridge of love.

Andy March is vicar of St Christopher's, Coventry. Andy travelled as part of a group from Coventry to Dresden in February 2015 to join in the commemorations marking 70 years since the city was bombed and stand with our former enemies, now friends, to declare that love must overcome hate. It was a visit that left an indelible mark on Andy and provided the catalyst for the creation of *Loving the Enemy*. The Bishop of Coventry, Christopher Cocksworth, was also part of that trip and has written the foreword for *Loving the Enemy*.



Loving the Enemy tells the compelling true story of Fred Clayton, a grammar schoolboy from Liverpool, and brilliant Cambridge scholar, who leaves the comfort of the halls of Cambridge at the beginning of the Nazi era and makes a troubled journey to discover first-hand what life must be like to live under the despotic regime. Arriving in Dresden, he develops a friendship with a German family that will change his life.

Through the course of the next decade, with his and their nations at war, Fred will not forget the connections that have been made and refuses to allow hate to win. After the war, with Dresden in ruins, reflecting his own state of mind, Fred writes to the same German family. Will he find the healing, love and redemption he seeks?

Bishop Christopher says;

"It is my hope that, thanks to Andy's efforts, the story will inspire you as much as it has inspired me, and that it will find its place as a signpost, even a landmark, along the path of reconciliation, trust and love which links Coventry and Dresden; Britain and Germany."

Fri 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.

Sat 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.

Sun 26

Stephen,
Deacon, First
Martyr

Walsgrave-on-Sowe. Clergy: Interregnum. Readers: Tony Thistlewood, Lorraine Baker, Stephen Baker. We thank God for Malcolm Tyler's long ministry and pray for the Churchwardens and PCC as they begin the process of finding a new incumbent.

Mon 27

John, Apostle
and Evangelist

Today we pray for Together for Change, a joint venture between the Diocese of Coventry and the Church Urban Fund. We pray for the charity's work in setting up social enterprises and local projects that will support sustainable community transformation and tackle poverty in Coventry and Warwickshire.

Tue 28

The Holy
Innocents

Stoke Aldermoor. Clergy: Buff Forbes Stone, Julie Watkins-Wollner. We thank God for the safe return to in person worship and new families and young people joining our groups. We pray for the new step in the redevelopment of our porta cabins and garden.

Wed 29

All Saints, Coventry. Clergy: Interregnum. Reader: Mick Harling. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
*Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, Martyr, 1170

Thu 30

Binley Woods LEP. Clergy: Rachel Jeffreys. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
We thank God for our brothers and sisters who serve and worship in other Christian denominations. We ask God for new opportunities to work together ecumenically to help transform our local communities.

Fri 31

St Chad, Wood End. Clergy: Brian Nash. Reader: Jacob Matumamboh. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
As 2021 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

Cycle of Prayer - December 2021

With a focus on parishes and schools in Coventry East Deanery

Wed 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.
*Charles de Foucauld, Hermit in the Sahara, 1916

Thu 2

Church of The Holy Cross, Caludon. Clergy: Liz Harris, Paul Pavlou. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
We pray for the Bishop's Core Staff Team which meets today.

Fri 3

All Saints CofE Primary School. Head: Cara Page. We pray for God's blessing on the pupils, staff, teachers and governors of this school community.
*Francis Xavier, Missionary, Apostle of the Indies, 1552

Sat 4

Potters Green. Clergy: Mike Eaman. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
*John of Damascus, Monk, Teacher of the Faith, c.749
*Nicholas Ferrar, Deacon, Founder of the Little Gidding Community, 1637

Sun 5

Second Sunday
of Advent

St Mary Magdalene and Risen Christ, Wyken. Clergy: Edward Le Brun Powell. Reader: Richard Hollingdale. We are so grateful for our growing relationship with Christian Against Poverty in our parish. We pray that we continue to engage with young people in the parish, especially with those who have had bad experiences with the Church.

Mon 6

St Peter's, Hillfields. Clergy: Interregnum. Reader: John McCoach. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
*Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, c.326

Tue 7

Binley. Clergy: Jon Taylor, Richard Bromley. Reader: Greg Sampson. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
*Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, Teacher of the Faith, 397

Wed 8

Through the busyness of Christmas we pray for all Clergy, Readers and Licensed Lay Workers throughout the diocese.
We pray for the Diocesan Finance Group which meets this morning.
*The Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Thu 9

Willenhall. Clergy: Pam Howell, Charlotte Jackson. Growing Faith Families Worker: Dagmer Dias. We thank God for the people who attended our school holiday feeding programmes this year and the grant funding that made these possible. We pray for wisdom and energy as we plan forthcoming services, events, and groups, that they would reach out as Jesus wishes.

Fri 10

Walsgrave CofE VC Primary School. Head: Damien Sowerby. We pray for God's blessing on the pupils, staff, teachers and governors of this school community.

Sat 11

St Bartholomew's CofE Academy. Head: Mina Sharma. We pray for God's blessing on the pupils, staff, teachers and governors of this school community.

Sun 12

Third Sunday of
Advent

We pray for all those who come to church 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 congregations, that people may make the transition from being attenders to engaging in authentic community.

Mon 13

St Alban, Stoke Heath. Clergy: Zoe Pimentel, Barney Pimentel, Jacque Ayton. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
*Lucy, Martyr at Syracuse, 304
*Samuel Johnson, Moralist, 1784

Tue 14

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.
*John of the Cross, Poet, Teacher of the Faith, 1591

Wed 15

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.

Thu 16

Stoke St Michael. Clergy: Claire McArthur, Daniel Bennett. Readers: Ann Brown, Janet Pocklington, Suzanne Sapiano, Chris Dronfield, Sue Morris. We give thanks for, our children's worker, Mike Tikes; our Wild Messy Church; our 9.30 service and our continued engagement with local schools. Please pray for our community centre refurbishment.

Fri 17

St Marks, Coventry. Clergy: Phil Atkinson, Andy Clasper, Ros Williams. We pray for God's blessing upon the church members and the local community.
*O Sapientia
*Eglantine Jebb, Social Reformer, Founder of 'Save The Children', 1928

Sat 18

Today is International Migrants Day. Throughout history, migration has been a courageous expression of the will to overcome adversity and to live a better life. The day is an opportunity to recognise the contributions made by millions of migrants to the economies of their countries and to promote respect for their basic human rights. We pray for all migrants today.

Sun 19

Fourth Sunday
of Advent

Whitley. Clergy: Anne Richards. We thank God that our Drench Youth Cafe will be starting soon after a long wait. We pray that God will touch the hearts and minds of people in our parish and that he would help us bring them into the fold of friendship and show them the love of Jesus.

Mon 20

Today is International Human Solidarity Day. It is a day to celebrate our unity in diversity, to raise public awareness of the importance of solidarity, to remind governments to respect their commitments to international agreements, and a day of action to encourage new initiatives for poverty eradication. We pray that this day is successful in its aims.

Tue 21

Stretton CofE Academy. Head: Susan Samra. We pray for God's blessing on the pupils, staff, teachers and governors of this school community.

Wed 22

We pray for those who are grieving. We remember those who feel alone and pray for God's comfort and blessing. Pray that God will give us the compassion to comfort and care for those who are in need.

Thu 23

Blue Coat CofE VA School & Music College. Head: Victoria Shelley. We pray for God's blessing on the pupils, staff, teachers and governors of this school community.