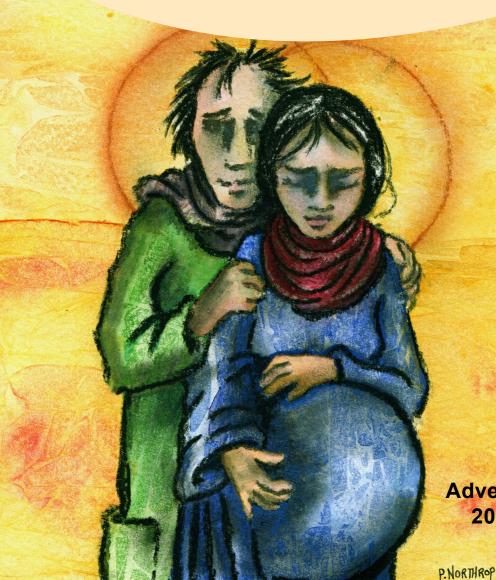


# **CALENDAR OF PRAYER**

'Praying for each other; praying with each other'



Advent 2020

# INTRODUCTION

And so one of the strangest years of the century so far nears its close. We find ourselves in a situation we could barely have imagined just a year ago: living through a pandemic which has altered our lives in so many ways. Things we used to take for granted have become precious treasures we long to rediscover; new habits, forced upon us by lockdown, have opened our eyes and reshaped our priorities.

Looking ahead to 2021, we taste both the exhilaration and the trepidation of knowing that things will not 'go back to normal'. News of a vaccine brings hope, but does not answer the age-old questions about how we, the human race, might grow into more harmonious relationship with our planet. The long story of Brexit moves into its next chapter, striking afresh the counterpoint of anxiety and optimism in a divided nation.

These liminal, in-between moments call us to new depths in prayer. As a diocese, we have joined together in the work of listening and discerning – asking ourselves what we're noticing and learning through this strangest of times – and we have discovered new rhythms of prayer, with many churches in the diocese continuing the routines of online daily prayer which they began in the Spring.

For most of us, Advent and Christmas will be unlike any we've known before, something which may be uncomfortable or painful, but also something which gives us an opportunity to find some new rhythms in the way we pray through the season. The Church of England has produced various resources under the heading 'Comfort and Joy', and we commend these to you. You can find them here: www.churchofengland.org/resources/preparing-advent-christmas-2020-comfort-and-joy

It also seems fitting to bring you a rather different Calendar of Prayer for this final month of 2020, one which speaks to the issues we face at this time. We offer it to you as a companion through this unfamiliar festive season and a way to connect with hundreds of others around the diocese travelling this same unfamiliar road.

#### It contains:

- images on the themes of hope, peace, love, joy and renewal, with meditative scripture text and collect to accompany you in your Advent waiting and your Christmas rejoicing
- •prayers of thanksgiving, intercession and lament, written by people from all over the diocese
- reflections to help you contemplate the coming of Christ in the light of all we are living through in these days.

May we encounter the light and life of the Christ-child in unexpected ways as we pray with and for each other.

# WEEK 1 HOPE

#### LOOK...at the painting

What do you notice? What might we learn?

#### **WAIT...**with prayerful expectation

Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart.

#### John 1: 1-5

In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. From the very beginning the Word was with God. Through him God made all things; not one thing in all creation was made without him. The Word was the source of life, and this life brought light to people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out. (GNB)

#### LISTEN...for a word of Hope

#### **RECEIVE...**in prayer

Emmanuel, come to us, abide with us.

O God of Advent Hope, you invite us to journey with you.

In the midst of the challenges and the changes,

in spite of the restrictions and regret, inspire us to look,

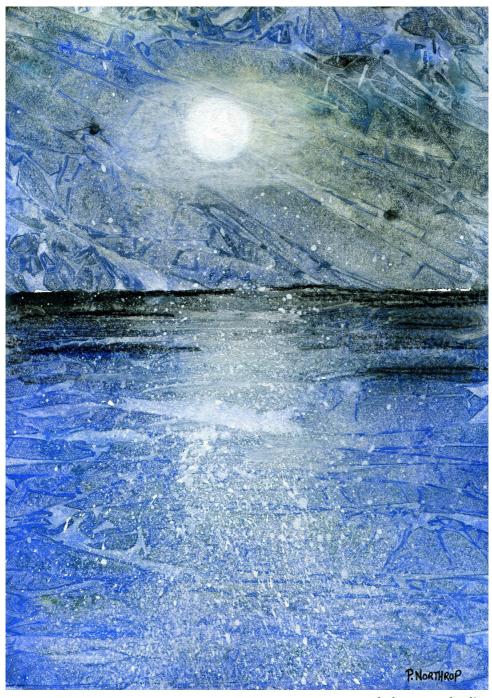
to listen and to receive afresh your promised gift.

Call us to remember in different places and new ways

that you are Emmanuel, our, 'with-us' God,

whose light will overcome the darkness.

Amen



No darkness nor dazzling

# 1 DEC A PRAYER FOR ADVENT

God our heavenly Father, as we begin this advent journey, fill our hearts with your comfort and joy, that we may wait with confidence the coming of your Son. Make us watchful and keep us faithful in your service, so that we may share your hope with all around us.

(Bishop Rose Hudson-Wilkin)

#### Anglican Communion:

Seoul (Korea) The Rt Revd Peter Lee

Eastern Newfoundland & Labrador (Canada) The Rt Revd Geoffrey Peddle

#### 2 DEC PRAYING FOR: SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

We pray for all our young people, that they will find hope in these difficult times. We thank you for the hope which their friends, teachers, youth leaders and families bring into their lives. For those young people who are feeling hopeless, provide new opportunities and connections with others.

(Rebecca Swansbury and the Children and Young People's Team)

#### Anglican Communion:

Seychelles (Indian Ocean) The Most Revd James Richard Wong Yin Song (Primate)

Eastern Oregon (The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Patrick Bell

# 3 DEC LAMENT: PANDEMIC HOPELESSNESS

How long O Lord must we sing this song (with a mask on)? We are weary with disorienting losses of past, present and future. The tide stays out, exposing us for what we are, and are not. Leaning into winds of change, we scan the twilight for hands to hold, listening for your beckoning voice.

(Peter Ingrams, Local Ministries and Growth Advisor)

# Anglican Communion:

Sheffield (England) The Rt Revd Pete Wilcox

Eastern Zambia (Central Africa) The Rt Revd William Mchombo

Easton (The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Santosh Marray

# 4 DEC PRAYING FOR: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We pray for the Mental Health and Wellbeing of those working from home: We pray HOPE: H – that home will be a place of safety; O – for outdoor activities and others to share them with; P – that personal space will be peaceful and protected; E – for energy in their endeavours.

(Lorraine Apps-Huggins, Lead Chaplain at the Living Well)

#### Anglican Communion:

Shinyanga (Tanzania) The Rt Revd Johnson Chinyong'ole

Eau Claire (The Episcopal Church) The Revd William Jay Lambert

#### 5 DEC REFLECTION ON LIVING ADVENT WELL

The decade arrived wrapped in shiny paper, bursting with hope and opportunity. But once unwrapped, hope wilted. This advent we long for rescue. His coming makes hope blossom again. What is my most audacious prayer for 2021?

(Jon Marlow, Diocesan Director of Ordinands)

#### Anglican Communion:

Gasabo (Rwanda) The Most Revd Laurent Mbanda (Primate)

Edinburgh (Scotland) The Rt Revd John Armes

# WEEK 2

PEACE

LOOK...at the painting

What do you notice? What might we learn?

**WAIT...**with prayerful expectation

Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart.

Isaiah 26: 3-4

You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you.

Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal. (NIV)

LISTEN...for a word of Peace

**RECEIVE...**in prayer

Emmanuel, come to us, abide with us.

O God of Advent Peace; in you we place our trust.

In our anxieties and concerns; in you we place our trust.

When fears for tomorrow and regrets from yesterday burden us, when sorrow and loss snatch our hearts,

remind us that it is in you we place our trust.

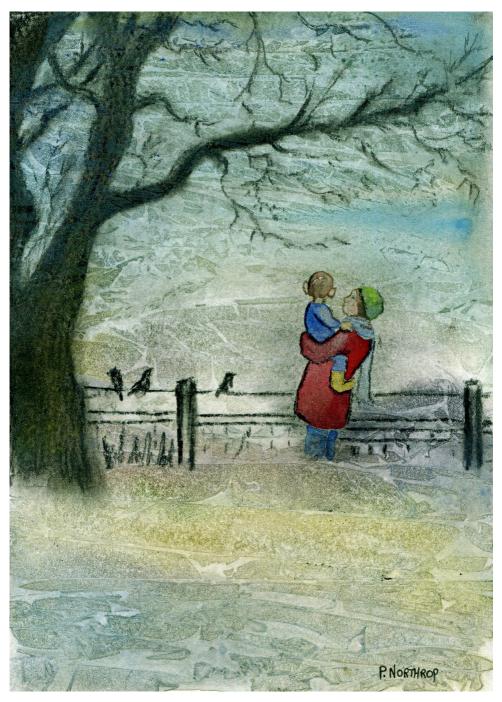
For you are our Prince of Peace, our rock eternal,

whose foundation of steadfast love will not change.

Help us to trust you more fully and to rest more completely

in the peace you offer us, and all the world.

Amen



Instruments of your peace

# 6 DEC A BLESSING OF PEACE

Deep peace of the morning bird to you. Deep peace of the winter moon to you. Deep peace of the frosty grass to you. Deep peace of the country lanes to you. Deep peace of the open fire to you. Deep peace of the coming Christ to you.

(Chris Hodgkins, Rural Business Chaplain)

Anglican Communion:

The Reformed Episcopal Church of Spain (Extra-Provincial to the Archbishop of Canterbury)

The Rt Revd Carlos López-Lozano - Bishop of Spanish Reformed Episcopal Church

#### 7 DEC PRAYING FOR: ONGOING LISTENING AND DISCERNING

Jesus Christ, Prince of Peace, as we listen together as a diocese to what your Spirit is saying to the church, help us to discern how you are calling us to be, in this changing world, and give us courage to go where you are leading.

(Archdeacon Jo Kelly-Moore)

Anglican Communion:

Shyira (Rwanda) The Rt Revd Samuel M Mugisha

Edmonton (Canada) Vacant

#### 8 DEC THANKSGIVING: UNEXPECTED BLESSINGS

Lord, we thank you for this year. Even with all the difficulties, trials and tribulations, we find hope in you. Lord, we give you thanks for the things we have learnt about ourselves, about others, and most of all about you. Unchanging, loving, you are the light in our darkness.

(Jane Barker, Ordinand, St Peter and St Paul Borden)

Anglican Communion:

Shyogwe (Rwanda) The Rt Revd Jered Kalimba

Egba (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Emmanuel Adekunle

Lafia (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Godwin A Robinson

# 9 DEC PRAYING FOR: SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

God of peace, calm the fears and anxieties which young people experience at this time. For those who are unsure about their future or worry about exams next year, bring peace. For those who feel angry or upset at the ongoing uncertainty of what next year will hold, bring peace.

(Rebecca Swansbury and the Children and Young People's Team)

Anglican Communion:

Sialkot (Pakistan) The Rt Revd Alwin John Samuel (Diocesan Bishop)

Egba West (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Dr Samuel Oludele Ogundeji

#### 10 DEC LAMENT: CREATION CARE

God, have mercy on us. We grieve species that are being extinguished. We lament the tangled web of climate injustice and the slow-growing mould of complacency that dampens our life-sparking hope. By the icy freshness of your Spirit, awaken us from our over-consumption, that we may embrace change and true community.

(Rachel Webbley, St Alphege Whitstable)

#### Anglican Communion:

Singapore (South East Asia) The Rt Revd Dr Titus Chung

Egbu (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Geoffrey Okoroafor

Egypt (Jerusalem & Middle East) The Rt Revd Mouneer Hanna Anis (Diocesan Bishop)

Nb: the Diocese of Egypt is expected to have become the Province of Alexandria by this time

#### 11 DEC PRAYING FOR: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for your constant love in this time of uncertainty and fear. Please grant patience and courage to those who live with the darkness of depression and the exhaustion of anxiety. Surround them with your healing presence so they may know that they are not alone.

(Janet Bates, Diocesan Counselling Team)

#### Anglican Communion:

Sittwe (Myanmar) The Rt Revd James Min Dein

Eha - Amufu (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Daniel Olinya

# 12 DEC REFLECTION ON LIVING ADVENT WELL

There is a moment when the dusty box is empty and scented branches bend under the weight of accumulated baubles, gluey pinecones, and squidgy chocolate Santas. Once the guiding star is at the highest point, excitement turns to awe and silence descends, a holy moment that recalls heaven's peace come down to earth.

When will I make time (however short) to pause for breath this Advent?

(Jon Marlow, Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Vocations Officer)

# Anglican Communion:

Ekiti (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Dr Christopher Tayo Omotunde

Ekiti Kwara (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Andrew Ajayi

Ekiti Oke (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Isaac Olubowale

Ekiti West (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Rufus V A Adepoju

# WEEK 3 LOVE

#### LOOK...at the painting

What do you notice? What might we learn?

#### WAIT...with prayerful expectation

Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart.

#### John 1: 26

John answered them, saying, "I baptise with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know." (NIV)

#### LISTEN...for a word of Love

#### **RECEIVE...**in prayer

Emmanuel, come to us, abide with us.

O God of Advent Love, with gratitude and praise

we give thanks for your mighty promises of love -

proclaimed by John the Baptist and revealed to us in Jesus.

Gift us with the discernment to see you in unexpected places,

to recognise your love in unexpected people,

and to rejoice that no one is ever too old, or too young

to share the unimaginable good news of your love

- your priceless, freely offered gift, given to us and all your children. Thank you.

Amen



The Visitation

#### 13 DEC PRAYING FOR: CHURCH WORSHIP DURING ADVENT

We pray for all Churches as they seek to craft effective worship for this most unusual of Christmases. May their creativity be stirred by the Holy Spirit as they seek in new ways to bring glory to God, and comfort, hope, and joy to his people.

(Max Kramer, Precentor, Canterbury Cathedral)

Anglican Communion:

Pray for the Falkland Islands (Extra-Provincial to Canterbury)

The Rt Revd Timothy Thornton - Bishop to the Forces and Bishop to the Falkland Islands

#### 14 DEC PRAYING FOR: PARENTS AND PARENTING

We pray for all who parent: for provision for those impoverished, patience for the exasperated, safety from harm, perseverance through trials and a fresh perspective on this season. In the necessity to do things differently, may families find unexpected delights, and in simple pleasures rediscovered, may joy abound.

(Sandra Goodey, Mothers Union)

Anglican Communion:

Sodor & Man (England) The Rt Revd Peter Eagles

El Camino Real (The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Mary Gray-Reeves

#### 15 DEC THANKSGIVING: NHS AND CARE-WORKERS

God we praise you that you are Lord over all. We thank you for our NHS, providing free healthcare to all at the point of need. We ask your protection over all who work to provide care in hospitals, and for care workers who continue that work in the community.

(Debbie Ellisdon, Ignite Team)

Anglican Communion:

Sokoto (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Augustine Omole

El Salvador (Central America) The Rt Revd Juan David Alvarado Melgar

# 16 DEC PRAYING FOR: SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

God of love, we pray that our schools will be places of love this week as they celebrate Christmas in different ways. We pray that all our young people will find love in unusual places this Christmas time, and will feel free to share it with everyone they connect with.

(Rebecca Swansbury and the Children and Young People's Team)

Anglican Communion:

South Ankole (Uganda) The Rt Revd Nathan Ahimbisibwe

Eldoret (Kenya) The Rt Revd Christopher Ruto

# 17 DEC LAMENT: UNANSWERED PRAYER; JOY POSTPONED

We wait ...in the darkness of the stable, missing those we can't see this Christmas, feeling the reminder of the loss of those we loved who have died, unsettled by the anxieties this year has brought, longing for you to lighten this place with your presence. God with us, Emmanuel.

(Janet Macdonald, Weeks of Accompanied Prayer Team)

#### Anglican Communion:

South Dakota (The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd John Tarrant

El-Obeid (Sudan) The Rt Revd Ismail Gabriel Abudigin

#### 18 DEC PRAYING FOR: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The baby in Elizabeth's womb leapt for joy — with his father still silenced by disbelief. The Magi were overjoyed when they saw the star — with Herod plotting behind their backs. As we look forward to this strangest of Christ-masses, may your joy surprise us, even in the most unlikely circumstances.

(Archdeacon Andrew Sewell)

#### Anglican Communion:

South Kerala (South India) The Rt Revd Dharmaraj Rasalam (Primate)

Ely (England) The Rt Revd Stephen David Conway

Embu (Kenya) The Rt Revd David Muriithi Ireri

# 19 DEC REFLECTION ON LIVING ADVENT WELL

Like a blown fuse in a string of lights, the smallest loss can steal away our joy and leave our hearts in shadow. In the darkness of today, look for the coming of the one whose humble birth brought light and life to the world.

Where have I seen small sparks of joy this week?

(Jon Marlow, Diocesan Director of Ordinands)

# Anglican Communion:

South Rwenzori (Uganda) The Rt Revd Jackson Nzerebende

Enugu (Nigeria) The Most Revd Dr Emmanuel Chukwuma

Enugu North (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Sosthenes Eze

#### WEEK 4

JOY

#### LOOK...at the painting

What do you notice? What might we learn?

#### WAIT...with prayerful expectation

Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart.

Luke 1: 46-49

And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me - holy is his name. (NIV)

LISTEN...for a word of Joy

#### **RECEIVE...**in prayer

Emmanuel, come to us, abide with us.

O God of Advent joy, circle our world with the light of your presence.

As our advent journeying draws to an end,

and our Christmas rejoicing begins,

may we look for your coming with renewed anticipation.

May we wait with a joyous patience, listen with refreshed ears and finally receive, with unbounded joy,

all that you want to give us.

Offering to you our praise and thanksgiving,

as we welcome you, our mighty Saviour.

Amen



How beautiful upon the mountains

#### 20 DEC PRAYING FOR: REFUGEES

Incarnate loving Jesus, born as a refugee, grant us your gifts of compassion and welcome for the homeless and hungry who have fled from oppression, war, and danger. Help us to overcome fear and prejudice, that we may share the abundance of your generosity with strangers seeking refuge and asylum.

(Jonathan Arnold, Diocesan Director of Communities and Partnerships)

Anglican Communion:

Pray for mission agencies and their ministry throughout the Anglican Communion, including the Mothers' Union around the world.

#### 21 DEC PRAYING FOR: EMERGENCY SERVICES

Pray for the health, safety and security of all those serving in the blue-light and emergency services over Christmas, paid or volunteer, putting themselves at risk for others. Pray too for their loved-ones, who are acutely aware of the risks when they are on shift or on a 'shout'. (David Slater, Joint Lead for Kent Emergency Chaplains Scheme)

Anglican Communion:

South West Tanganyika (Tanzania) The Rt Revd Matthew Mhagama

Esan (Nigeria) The Most Revd Friday Imaekhai

#### 22 DEC PRAYING FOR: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

God of tender care, support those who live alongside those struggling with mental distress. Give them the sensitivity and understanding to enable them to go on offering those they care for a safe space to be. Resource and refresh them physically, spiritually and emotionally.

(Chris Chapman, Discipleship and Spirituality Consultant)

Anglican Communion:

Etche (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Precious Nwala

Etsako (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Jacob Bada

# 23 DEC PRAYING FOR: SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

God of joy, we thank you for the love our school staff have for their pupils and families. We pray that every young person will know they are loved by you, and that you promise to always be with them. May your joy fill their homes this Christmas time.

(Rebecca Swansbury and the Children and Young People's Team)

Anglican Communion:

Evo (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Innocent Ordu

Exeter (England) The Rt Revd Robert Atwell

#### 24 DEC LAMENT: LONELINESS AT CHRISTMAS

Oh Lord, I have pleaded and begged And heard only silence. How long, O Lord? Why won't you answer me? It is too much for me. I am soul-weary And I don't understand. Restore to me the joy of your salvation. Restore to me joy, Restore me, I pray.

(Tanya Marlow, author of 'Those Who Wait')

#### Anglican Communion:

Ezo (South Sudan) The Rt Revd John Kereboro Zawo

Faisalabad (Pakistan) The Rt Revd John Samuel

Falkland Islands (Parish of) (Falkland Islands) The Rt Revd Timothy Thornton (Diocesan Bishop)

# 25 DEC CHRISTMAS THANKSGIVING

Jesus Christ, Christmas is the time when we remember that you came to be light in our dark world. This Christmas, we pray that you will shine light into the darkness of injustice, poverty and pandemic. May we discover that healing and hope are more real than we ever imagined.

(Lyndall Bywater, Changing Lives Prayer Network Co-ordinator)

#### Anglican Communion:

Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem and the People of Bethlehem

# 26 DEC REFLECTION ON LIVING CHRISTMAS WELL

"You. The crowd around the manger. Are you all one support bubble?" Love cannot be contained by the rule of six, lockdown or any human restriction. It cannot be shielded from or vaccinated against. Love spreads, contagious, oblivious to borders and masks.

Who is God calling me to show love to this Christmas?

(Jon Marlow, Diocesan Director of Ordinands)

# Anglican Communion:

Fianarantsoa (Indian Ocean) The Rt Revd Gilbert Rateloson Rakotondravelo

Florida (The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd John Howard

False Bay (Southern Africa) The Rt Revd Margaret Brenda Vertue

# WEEK 5 RENEWAL

LOOK...at the painting

What do you notice? What might we learn?

**WAIT...**with prayerful expectation

Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart.

2 Corinthians 5: 17-18

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. (NIV)

LISTEN...for a word of Renewal

**RECEIVE...**in prayer

Emmanuel, come to us, abide with us.

O God of Christmas renewal, when we realise that you love us,

something in us is renewed and even transformed.

Rejoicing in the Christmas mystery, in fellowship with

our Christian brothers and sisters across the world,

we ask you: what do you want from me?

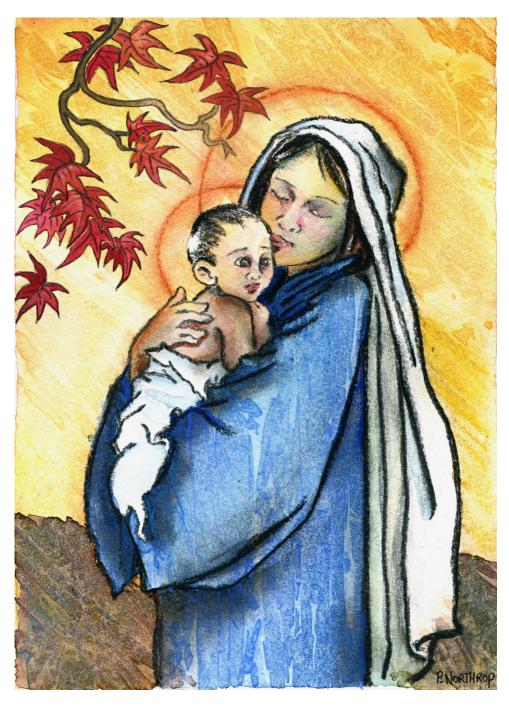
And by the Holy Spirit you reply: be my disciple, love as I love,

dare to share your life for the sake of my Good news.

Today we pray; with your light teach us to shine,

in your promises teach us to live.

Amen



Gloria in excelsis Deo

#### 27 DEC PRAYING FOR: CHURCHES BECOMING MISSIONAL

A 'teaspoon' prayer for mission in our diocese:

Thank you – for the opportunity this pandemic has given us to reassess what it means to be a gathered missional community.

Sorry – for when we have allowed human traditions and thinking to limit or quash what you had planned.

Please – help us to see your vision and follow your plan with grace, gratitude and generosity, so that renewal is seen in our Diocese.

(Mike Resch, Holy Trinity Sittingbourne)

#### Anglican Communion:

Pray for Christians in other denominations and the work of the ecumenical movement

His Holiness Pope Francis, Bishop of Rome

His All Holiness Archbishop Bartholomew of Constantinople, New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch

The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches

Bishop Ivan M Abrahams, General Secretary World Methodist Council

The Reverend Chris Ferguson, General Secretary of the World Communion of Reformed Churches

# 28 DEC PRAYING FOR: FAMILIES

Father of abundance, renew our world in your generosity. We pray for families living 'without' this Christmas: without enough food, without a loved one they have lost, without peace and joy. We pray for Foodbanks, helplines, Social Services and all who work over Christmas to provide for those in need.

(Holly Adams, All Saints Canterbury)

# Anglican Communion:

Fond du Lac (The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Matthew Alan Gunter Fort Worth (The Episcopal Church) The Rt Revd Scott Mayer

#### 29 DEC PRAYING FOR: MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

God of grace, constant in all things, enable us to look back over this year and see where you have truly been present to us. As we look ahead, may we know that you remain constant through all that changes, holding us in the love of your Son, Jesus Christ.

(Archdeacon Darren Miller)

#### Anglican Communion:

Fredericton (Canada) The Rt Revd David Edwards

Freetown (Sierra Leone) (West Africa) The Rt Revd Thomas Arnold Ikunika Wilson

#### 30 DEC PRAYING FOR: SCHOOLS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

God of renewal, we pray for our school leaders and staff. Over this Christmas time, may they be renewed by your Holy Spirit in mind, body and spirit. Continue to pour your blessing over each of them so they are refreshed and ready to return to school next week.

(Rebecca Swansbury and the Children and Young People's Team)

#### Anglican Communion:

Gahini (Rwanda) The Rt Revd Alexis Bilindabagabo

Gambia (West Africa) The Rt Revd James Allen Yaw Odico

# 31 DEC LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING AHEAD

Almighty God, looking back on 2020 we see a year of disappointments: church and family plans wrecked, education disrupted, employment thwarted, hopes dashed. As we look ahead to 2021, lift our eyes, renew our minds, soften our hearts and transform our lives for the sake of the world you love.

(Archdeacon Stephen Taylor)

# Anglican Communion:

Gasabo (Rwanda) The Rt Revd Onesphore Rwaje

Gboko (Nigeria) The Rt Revd Emmanuel Nyitsse



Cover image, and all the weekly reflection paintings, by: Primrose Northrop, gouache and charcoal on paper 2020