



## Praying for the appointment of a new Bishop

The Crown Nominations Commission will be meeting on 9 May to shortlist candidates to be the next Bishop of Worcester and interviews will take place on 12 & 13 June.

We want to surround this process in prayer.

In this booklet you will find a selection of prayers and resources which you can use on the days themselves, in church on a Sunday morning or at any other time. Please do join us in continuing to pray for this process and all those involved.

# For corporate prayer

## Opening Prayers

*Min* In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

*All* **Amen.**

*Min* The Lord be with you

*All* **and also with you.**

A minister introduces the time of prayer in these or other appropriate words.

*Min* We meet to seek the guidance and empowerment of God's Holy Spirit,  
and to pray for this diocese,  
for those discerning who the next Bishop of Worcester should be,  
for the candidates offering themselves as bishop,  
for Bishop Martin and all those sharing  
in oversight of the diocese in the vacancy,  
for the parishes, churches, clergy and people of the diocese;  
that this time of waiting may make us more aware of God's Spirit,  
that this time of discernment may  
make us more open to God's guidance,  
and that this time of change may  
make us more responsive to God's leading.

Silent prayer

*All* Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*A hymn or song may be used here.*

## Readings

*One or more readings from the selection of readings provided (pages 5-7) or elsewhere is used.*

## Reflection

*A minister may offer a short reflection on the reading(s) to lead into a time of prayer.*

*A hymn or song may be used here.*

## The Prayers

*Various prayer resources are provided on pages 8-10. Either set prayers such as those provided may be used, extempore prayer may be invited, or silent prayer encouraged.*

*The prayers may include time for people to light candles, burn a grain of incense, stick pins on a map of the diocese, place written prayers in a basket, or make some similar non-verbal expression of prayer. This prayer expressed in action may be accompanied by the singing of prayer songs or chants, e.g. O Lord, hear my prayer (Taizé).*

*A hymn or song may bring the time of prayer to a close, either here or after the collect.*

## The Lord's Prayer

*Min* As those joined by the Spirit in the one family of God,  
we make our prayer as God's beloved children:

*All* Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.

## The Collect

*Min* Lord Jesus Christ,  
bishop and shepherd of our souls,  
look on your people gathered in prayer before you,  
and send us a bishop who will lead us in hope,  
nurture us in faith,  
and tend us in love,  
that we may bear witness to you  
by the life and service we share together  
as your Kingdom People,  
for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

*All* **Amen**

## Blessing and Dismissal

*Either the gathering concludes with all saying the Grace, or this blessing and dismissal may be used, a lay leader saying us rather than you.*

*Min* The God of all grace,  
who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ Jesus,  
restore, establish, strengthen and support you in the faith;  
and the blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
be with you and remain with you always.

*All* **Amen.**

*Min* Let us bless the Lord.

*All* **Thanks be to God.**

## For personal prayer

This framework of suggested prayer topics can be adapted to suit your pattern of praying. There is a short scripture reading for each topic which may help you reflect on what to pray for, or meditate on. Or you may incorporate the topics in well established forms of prayer, using Iona or Taizé resources, or a more reflective time of prayer using traditions such as the Jesus Prayer.

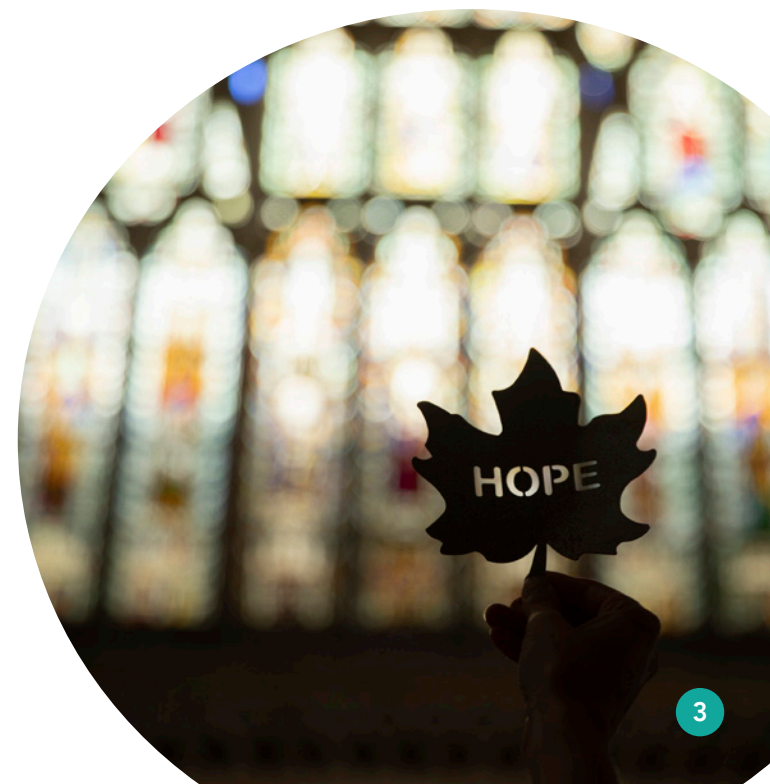
### Introduction

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord, direct our thoughts, and teach us to pray.

Lift up our hearts to worship you in spirit and in truth,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*(Common Worship)*



## Prayers

### For our diocese

that our new bishop will lead us in such a way;  
that we look to God for our vision;  
that we bear witness to Christ;  
that we seek the well-being and unity of the Church;  
that we live as Kingdom People.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

*1 Peter 2:9*

### For our diocesan priorities

that our new bishop will lead us in such a way;  
that many children and young people join us in the way of Christ;  
that our churches are renewed and become beacons of light and love;  
that people are drawn to Christ through new worshipping communities;  
that all our ministers, lay and ordained, are resourced, supported and equipped for their mission in every village, town and city.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever.

Amen.

*Ephesians 3:20-21*

### For the Crown Nominations Commission

that all may be open to the guiding of the Holy Spirit;  
that all will listen carefully for God's voice in each other's voices;  
that all will speak truthfully in love as God leads them;  
that the call of God may be discerned in the diverse needs of our diocese;  
that the call of God may be discerned in the diverse gifts of the candidates.

The Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

*1 Samuel 16:7*

### For the candidates

that each may offer themselves in openness and humility;  
that each may speak openly of their commitments and convictions;  
that each may discern their own inward sense of vocation;  
that each may share honestly their vision for our diocese;  
that each may trust themselves to the guiding of God's Spirit.

Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness.

For all of us make many mistakes.

*James 3:1-2a*

### For the person to be appointed

that they may be sure of God's calling;  
that they may be open to God's leading;  
that they may be a kind and compassionate pastor;  
that they may speak God's truth in love and wisdom;  
that they may lead among us as the servant of all.

The greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table?

But I am among you as one who serves.

*Luke 22:26b-27*

## Closing Prayers

*The Lord's Prayer may be said, as may the collect from the order for corporate worship (page 3).*

The love of the Lord Jesus draw us to himself,  
the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen us in his service,  
the joy of the Lord Jesus fill our hearts;  
and may Almighty God bless us,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,  
now, and in all the days ahead. Amen.

*(based on Common Worship)*



# Resources that may be used either for personal or corporate prayer

## A Selection of Readings

### Old Testament

*1 Samuel 16:1, 6-13a*

The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul? I have rejected him from being king over Israel. Fill your horn with oil and set out; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons."

When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is now before the Lord." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. He said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, and Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen any of these."

Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him; for we will not sit down until he comes here." He sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome. The Lord said, "Rise and anoint him; for this is the one." Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward.

*Jeremiah 1:4-10*

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy'; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you", says the Lord.

Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, "Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

*Proverbs 3:13-18*

Happy are those who find wisdom, and those who get understanding, for her income is better than silver, and her revenue better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called happy.

# Resources that may be used either for personal or corporate prayer

## A Selection of Readings

### New Testament (Letters)

*1 Corinthians 4: 1-5*

Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they should be found trustworthy. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore do not pronounce judgement before the time, before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God.

*2 Corinthians 5: 17-6.1*

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. As we work together with him, we urge you also not to accept the grace of God in vain.

*1 Peter 5:1-7*

Now as an elder myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God would have you do it - not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but be examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. And all of you must clothe yourselves with humility in your dealings with one another, for

'God opposes the proud,  
but gives grace to the humble.'

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that he may exalt you in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

# Resources that may be used either for personal or corporate prayer

## A Selection of Readings

### Gospel

*Matthew 24:45-51*

Jesus said, "Who then is the faithful and wise slave, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give the other slaves their allowance of food at the proper time? Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions. But if that wicked slave says to himself, 'My master is delayed', and he begins to beat his fellow-slaves, and eats and drinks with drunkards, the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know. He will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

*Luke 22:24-27*

A dispute also arose among the apostles as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest. But Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those in authority over them are called benefactors. But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves."

*John 10:11-16*

Jesus said "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.

# Resources that may be used either for personal or corporate prayer

## A Selection of Prayers

### A Pattern of Intercession

*Min* Heavenly Father,  
in every age you raise up pastors and leaders for your Church  
to reflect the light of Christ and to lead us in the way of holiness.  
We thank you for those who have served you as Bishop of Worcester.  
Pour out your Spirit on your Church today,  
bless our diocese with the gifts of your grace,  
and send us the bishop we need to be your people in this place.

*Min* Lord, hear us.

*All* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

*Min* We thank you for the gifts of grace in the life of Oswald, Wulfstan  
and all those who have guided rulers through your Spirit of wisdom.  
Send us a bishop who will promote justice,  
minister peace and reconciliation,  
speak truth to power,  
and build up the common life of County and Metropolitan Borough.

*Min* Lord, hear us.

*All* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

*Min* We thank you all whom you have called as teachers of the faith:  
send us a bishop who will help us hear your Word,  
that your Spirit may help us bear the fruits of faithfulness  
as we respond to your calling in times of change and uncertainty.

*Min* Lord, hear us.

*All* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

*Min* We thank you all whom you have called to be leaders in mission:  
send us a bishop who will engage with children and young people,  
encourage new worshipping communities,  
serve the renewal and resourcing of churches,  
and build up our lay and ordained ministers  
that we may fulfil those good goals to which we believe you have  
called us.

*Min* Lord, hear us.

*All* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

We thank you for all you have called to care for Christ's flock  
and minister in the gift and power of your Spirit.  
Send us a bishop who will love the sick, the weak and the poor,  
help us serve you in weakness as well as strength,  
and share your compassion with all those for whom life is hard.

*Min* Lord, hear us.

*All* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

We thank you that you have called us into life and freedom.  
Send us a bishop who will celebrate your love with us,  
deepen our life together in the Spirit,  
and help us so live as disciples of Christ  
that with Oswald, Wulfstan and all your saints,  
we may enjoy the fullness of life and peace in your presence.

*Min* Lord, hear us.

*All* **Lord, graciously hear us.**

In silence we bring our own prayers to our heavenly Father.  
Gracious God,  
giver of all good gifts,  
empower your church by your Spirit,  
that as on the day of Pentecost,  
your people may be filled with praise,  
and proclaim Christ as Lord and Saviour,  
to the glory of your name, now and for ever.  
Amen.



# Resources that may be used either for personal or corporate prayer

## Other Prayers

### A prayer for our work with children and young people

*If prayers are held in different stations around the church, this prayer may be said at the font, and the line in brackets used.*

God, our beginning and our end,  
whose Son gave the church its great commission:  
[as we celebrate your calling at this place of baptism,]  
we pray that we may grow in obedience to his command.  
We ask your blessing on all who respond to you in faith,  
and pray especially for our work with children and young people.  
May we so share the good news of your love  
that many may encounter you through the ministry of your church,  
know the transforming power of your Holy Spirit,  
and walk with us in the way of Christ. Amen.

### A prayer for renewals and new worshipping communities

*If prayers are held in different stations around the church, this prayer may be said outside the church, or by an open door.*

God of beginnings and endings,  
companion of all our journeys,  
we stand before you  
with gratitude for what has been,  
and hope for what is to come.  
Send your transforming Spirit on us and all your church:  
bring renewal to existing communities,  
and call new ones into being,  
that voices old and new,  
lives young and old,  
may join together in love and praise,  
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

### A prayer for sharing hope and transforming communities

*If prayers are held in different stations around the church, this prayer may be said near the lectern or pulpit.*

God of all creation,  
in you all find their true calling,  
from you all receive the light of life:  
help us so to share the hope you have given us,  
that, taken and blessed by your Holy Spirit,  
our actions and words may be life-giving for the world,  
so that lives and communities may be transformed,  
and the world made new in the love of Christ,  
in whose name we pray. Amen.

### A prayer for true worship and renewed discipleship

*If prayers are held in different stations around the church, this prayer may be said near the altar.*

Heart and hope of creation,  
you have made our hearts restless till they rest in you:  
so quicken our consciences by your holiness,  
feed our minds with your truth,  
purge our imaginations by your beauty,  
draw our wills to your purpose,  
and open our hearts to your love,  
that we may truly worship you in spirit and in truth,  
who are Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

*Based on Archbishop William Temple's definition of worship*



## Resources that may be used either for personal or corporate prayer



### A Kingdom People prayer for a new bishop

Blessed are you, Lord, King of the Universe,  
who disclose yourself most fully in the humility of Christ.  
In him you announce peace and proclaim freedom;  
through him you show us the depths of your love,  
and teach us the way of compassion for all you have made.  
In his death and resurrection  
you destroy evil, defeat death, restore the sinner,  
and reconcile the world to yourself in perfect justice.  
Pour out your Spirit on your people in this diocese,  
and send us the bishop we need,  
to help us so proclaim your kingdom  
that we may be known as your people,  
and live out your life of love in the world,  
to the praise and glory of your name,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**Blessed be God for ever.**