Year of Prayer

Diocese of Coventry
Advent Resource



A people of prayer and hope

DIOCESE OF COVENTRY

coventry.anglican.org/advent

INTRODUCTION
From Bishop Sophie



AN ADVENT INVITATION

Dear Friends,

I am delighted to welcome you to join me in a Year of Prayer in the Diocese of Coventry.

As we have been moving towards a refreshed vision and renewed strategy for the future of our diocese, there has been a strong sense that the best place to start is in prayer; to draw closer to God, personally and corporately, and to pray for those we are called to live amongst and serve in our communities.

Following on from our season of 'Walking Forward Together' as we begin a new church year at the start of the season of Advent, the world is more in need of the reconciling love of God in Christ than ever.

In this resource you will find four themes relating to Hope which you can explore individually, with others or even as a whole church community. There are activities and prayers to use creatively in your own setting.

Please also consider how you will engage in the Year of Prayer; in your church, chaplaincy, school or home setting. We will be encouraging prayer together, prayer walking, retreats and gatherings across the diocese in all kinds of ways. Deaneries are also looking to pray through the months with renewed focus and commitment.

Thank you for joining in. We are confident that, when we ask, God will hear and answer our prayers as we put our trust in Him, depending on him for our every need.

With every blessing and prayers assured,



HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

WHO IS THIS BOOKLET FOR?

This resource is for everyone! We have designed this **Year of Prayer Advent Resource** to be used in families and households, over the dinner table, in whole churches, in small groups, in new worshipping communities, with a friend over coffee, or in personal prayer and reflection. Our hope is that this will be a prayerful companion for you during Advent this year.

WHAT IS CONTAINED IN THIS GUIDE?

This short resource offers four weekly sets of reflections and prayer activities. Each week includes a bible passage, a reflection, discussion questions, a simple creative prayer activity and a weekly collect. We will be focusing on a different aspect of hope as we experience it through the Advent lectionary readings. There will be videos of the key content at **coventry.anglican.org/advent**, or you could read and discuss the passages and prayers together in your community.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

We hope that you will be able to take this guide and fit it into the rhythms and patterns of your life. You might like to light a candle each time you stop and pray, or perhaps create an informal advent wreath for your household.

WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING?

Coventry Cathedral are hosting a prayer station throughout Advent, centred on hope. All are welcome to visit and pray.

WHAT DOES HOPE LOOK LIKE?

We would love to see what prayer looks like for you this Advent. If you use any of the creative prayer suggestions or make an advent wreath or prayer station, please send us your photos! If you post on social media, you can use our hashtag **#CovDioAdvent2026** or email us at **communications@coventry.anglican.org**.

1. Hope Holds On | Mark 13:28-37

When its branches become tender and put forth leaves…

REFLECTION

Fig trees are resilient, with deep roots and a long history of cultivation. Jesus says that when their branches become tender and leaves appear, a new season is near.

Hope trusts that today is not the final destination. Jesus says, “Be on your guard; keep alert.” Hope keeps watching, holding on to signs that fruit is on the way.



Rev. Harry Steele

WATCH

Scan the QR code

QUESTIONS

- What fruit trees or plants are you familiar with? What signs tell you that fruit is coming?
- Where do you see signs of God preparing something new?

ADVENT PILGRIMAGE

See if you can make a pilgrimage to the prayer station at the cathedral to join your hopes and prayers with those of others from all over the diocese and beyond.

PRAYER ACTIVITY

Pears of Thankfulness

You will need:

- A bowl of pears or other fruit

Take and hold a piece of fruit. Notice its shape, colour, scent, and weight.

Remember that fruit grows slowly, and reflect on where God may be at work.

- Thank God for signs of hope
- Ask God for patience and help to hold on until new fruit appears

COLLECT FOR ADVENT 1

Almighty God,
as your kingdom dawns,
turn us from the darkness of sin
to the light of holiness,
that we may be ready to meet
you in our Lord and Saviour,
Jesus Christ.

OPTIONAL

Light the first advent candle as you pray





VIDEO OF SESSION

Watch a video of today's session from Rev. Canon Harry Steele, our Director of Mission and Discipleship.

Scan the QR code

SHARE YOUR PEARS

How did you use fruit in your prayers? Show us on social media using the hashtag #CovDioAdvent2026 or send an email to communications@coventry.anglican.org.

2. Hope is Outrageous | Mark 1:1-8

A voice of one calling in the wilderness

REFLECTION

When we have waited a long time for change, hope can arrive in surprising ways. John the Baptist looked outrageous. His clothes, diet, and message challenged expectations and made people stop and take notice.

Hope has a holy discontent with the status quo. Like a splash of cold water, hope disturbs, challenges assumptions and calls us to look again.



Andy Waddams

WATCH

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QUESTIONS

- What things help you wake up and feel alert in the morning?
- What surprising thing might God be inviting you to notice?

SOMETHING NEW

Where can you thoughtfully try something new this week? You might consider a different route to work or school or eating a new food from a culture you have not tried before. Pay attention to what you experience and consider what God might be inviting you to notice.

PRAYER ACTIVITY

Waking Up

You will need:
- A bowl of water
- Paper footprints
- Pens

On each footprint, write something surprising you are noticing, or where you sense God may be at work. Place the footprints together to form a path.

Touch the water and splash a little onto your hand or face.

- Walk your path of footprints and thank God for unexpected signs of hope.
- Pray that God would wake us up to where He is at work.

COLLECT FOR ADVENT 2

Almighty God,
purify our hearts and minds,
that when your Son,
Jesus Christ, comes again as
judge and saviour
we may be ready to receive Him
who is our Lord and our God.

OPTIONAL
Light the second advent candle as you pray





VIDEO OF SESSION

Watch a video of today's session from Andy Waddams, our Director of Communications and Engagement.

Scan the QR code

STEPS OF HOPE

How many footprints did you make? Show us on social media using the hashtag #CovDioAdvent2026 or send an email to communications@coventry.anglican.org.

3. Hope Points to Jesus | John 1:6–9, 21–23

He came only as a witness to the light

REFLECTION

John the Baptist drew attention through his words and actions, but his purpose was to point people towards Jesus.

As we approach the longest night of the year, hope points to the light, to the coming dawn.

Hope helps us look beyond ourselves, ready either to speak or to stay silent, seeking to help others to follow the light of Christ.



Anna Naish

WATCH

Scan the QR code

QUESTIONS

- Tell a story about a sunrise you remember. What made it memorable?
- What is harder for you: stepping forward or stepping back so that others can see Christ?

STEPPING OUT

Have you ever tried a prayer walk? Consider going for a walk as it gets dark, looking for Christmas lights and praying for the light of Christ to shine in your local area.

PRAYER ACTIVITY

Shining Light

You will need:

- A map or pictures of your local area
- A torch

Look carefully at the map or pictures. Notice streets, workplaces, schools and people who come to mind.

- Turn on the torch and move it slowly across the map. As the light falls on different places, pray for those there.
- Ask God to help you point others towards the light of Christ.

COLLECT FOR ADVENT 3

God for whom we watch and wait,
you sent John the Baptist to
prepare the way of your Son:
give us courage to speak the truth,
to hunger for justice, and to suffer
for the cause of right,
with Jesus Christ our Lord.

OPTIONAL
Light the third advent candle as you pray





VIDEO OF SESSION

Watch a video of today's session from Anna Naish, our Lay Learning and Training Lead.

Scan the QR code

LIGHTS IN THE DARK

What did you use to pray for your area? Show us on social media using the hashtag #CovDioAdvent2026 or send an email to communications@coventry.anglican.org.

4. Hope Embraces | Luke 1:26-38

How will this be?

REFLECTION

Hope waits for things that seem impossible. “How will this be?” Mary asks, yet she replies, “I am the Lord’s servant.”

There is a courageous yes at the heart of hope. Hope trusts God with an uncertain future. This Christmas, where might God be inviting us to say yes, embracing both the ordinary and the extraordinary, and trusting Him anew?



Rev. Canon Nitano Muller

WATCH

Scan the QR code

QUESTIONS

- Talk about a time when you tried something courageous. Were you excited, nervous, or both?
- What part of your future feels uncertain at the moment?

HOPE IS BORN

In this busy week of Christmas preparations, how can you reflect on the gift of hope we receive through Christ? You might like to visit a church near you for a special Advent or Christmas service. Visit **AChurchNearYou.com** to see what’s happening nearby.

PRAYER ACTIVITY

An Everyday Manger

You will need everyday objects, like:

- An empty tissue box or shoe box
- Shredded paper or dry leaves
- A clean tea towel or sock

Build a simple manger from your items. Use a box for the frame, rough material for the bedding and something soft as a blanket.

Reflect on the people and places God chose for the arrival of Christ.

- Thank God for meeting us in ordinary places
- Offer God an area of uncertainty in your life
- Pray that we would experience courage like Mary's

COLLECT FOR ADVENT 4

Eternal God,
as Mary waited for the birth of your Son, so we wait for His coming in glory; bring us through the birth pangs of this present age to see, with her, our great salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

OPTIONAL

Light the fourth advent candle as you pray





VIDEO OF SESSION

Watch a video of today's session from Rev. Canon Nitano Muller, the Canon for Worship and Welcome at Coventry Cathedral.

Scan the QR code

PREPARING A MANGER

What did you use to create a manger at home? Show us on social media using the hashtag #CovDioAdvent2026 or send an email to communications@coventry.anglican.org.

THE GIFT OF CHRISTMAS

You are warmly invited to experience the hope of Jesus and the gift of Christmas at a church near you.

You can find details of special events and services for Advent and Christmas at AChurchNearYou.com or by using this QR code.

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