

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



More than a building

Dear Friends,

The sight of Notre Dame in flames shocked the whole of France and most of the world. This beautiful, ancient building has a resonance far beyond the community of those who worship there but is a symbol of the history of France, the culture of Europe and most of all a sacred place to people of faith and those without faith.

The sight of the fire made me realise afresh how seeing the medieval All Saints' burning down must have been utterly shocking and devastating for the whole Town of Hertford. No wonder there was a huge public will to rebuild and interestingly to rebuild in a contemporary and enlarged, different style to the previous Church.

Churches are landmarks, centres of community, historical and cultural icons and beautiful sacred spaces that must be cherished, looked after and valued. The late Victorian architecture, the huge space, the red Runcorn stone of the new All Saints may well have looked shocking to some, just too contemporary and not even in the same shape or footprint of the previous church.

It takes vision and courage to step out into a more contemporary expression of the church, so that we are not always looking back to the past. True hopefulness must always be about a projection into the future.

We are faced today with a general crisis of faith. People have so many options for use of their time and there are many competing world outlooks to consider. For some this will be liberating, for others

threatening or confusing. Many people describe themselves as agnostics, meaning that they "do not know", others as spiritual but not religious – which can mean many things. It may be tempting to turn to the past (and there is certainly spiritual richness there to be valued) but the church of people which we seek to build needs to balance its heritage with a fresh appreciation of the contemporary situation.

These weeks of Easter are about newness of life, which Jesus came to bring. He sought to bring love and compassion to the people of his time and met with violent rejection. His gospel was based firmly within the traditions of his people, but still they could not accept the new revelation he brought. They had a strong faith in the worship and traditions of their ancestors, with the Temple as the central focus. Jesus warned them that the Temple would not survive much longer, and it was soon destroyed by the Romans.

He identified with the temple, however, referring to his own body as a temple which would be cast down and raised again after three days. The cross and resurrection. It is Jesus' spiritual presence now to which we are called to bear witness.

My feeling is that we should value the faith that has been kept alive for us to share, and buildings such as churches or cathedrals are valuable as inspiring resources. But we cannot put our trust in them nor allow them to cause us to fail in connecting with the people of our time.

Perhaps that is why, although Notre Dame will doubtless be raised again, those of us

not promised massive amounts of money must recognise that living and sharing the gospel of Jesus is our priority above all things.

For the risen Jesus took his disciples forward, and sent them to take the good news to others.

Love, Jo

Thy Kingdom Come

30th May – 9th June

We at All Saints will be joining Christians in the diocese and around the world in accepting the Archbishop of Canterbury's invitation to pray between Ascension and Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus Christ.

We are inviting members of the congregation, and friends in Hertford, to sign up for an hour of prayer during the days between Ascension (30th May) and Pentecost (9th June).

The church will be open for extended hours, and there will be prayer stations around the church with suggestions and aids to prayer.



More information on Thy Kingdom Come:
www.thykingdomcome.global/

More information on Diocesan events:

www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/thy-kingdom-come/

and for Churches Together at
www.ctherts.org.uk/events/thy-kingdom-come

Prayer Resource for Thy Kingdom Come

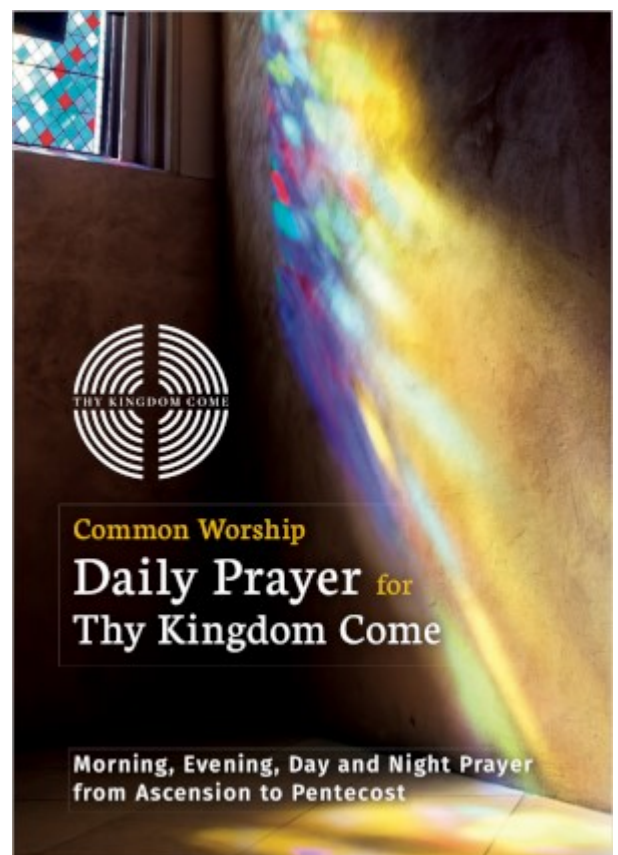
During Thy Kingdom Come, you are invited to discover new habits and ways of praying to God, that those whom you know might come to know Jesus.

From the earliest days of the Church, people have gathered together to praise God and to pray for salvation through his Son. The services in this booklet form part

of what is sometimes known as the 'Daily Office', a form of worship and prayer which can be used by individuals or in groups as a structure for praise and petition. It is drawn from Common Worship, one of the worship resources of the Church of England.

Whether you are new to 'structured' prayer or an old hand, you are invited to try praying with us for the period between Ascension and Pentecost. We hope you may find in it a spiritual rhythm which will nourish your heart and keep prayer on your lips, enabling you to become part of a global wave of prayer.

That rhythm might take the form of saying both Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer. Or you might start with just Prayer During the Day – suitable for any time of day – followed, perhaps, by Night Prayer.



This is available as a book from Church House Press or as a download following the link in this webpage:

<https://www.thykingdomcome.global/resources/common-worship-daily-prayer-thy-kingdom-come>