

Happy New Year – we pray that it will be a healthy and hopeful one! Thank you for using these prayers to support our local, national and global communities, and thank you to everyone who has contributed prayers and ideas this month. **Highlighted words** are links to Bible readings or other material. The **green country names** remind us of countries at various stages of their Covid journey. Please share ideas for February's diary with Kirsteen Robson, ideally by 12th January (prayerdiary@stmaryswarwick.org.uk or 07799 682872). If you know anyone who would like a paper copy but can't get one, or if you would like to receive the diary by email, please contact Kirsteen (details above).

Fri 1

...Peru

Emmanuel, God is with Us, on this first day of a new year we pray for new beginnings: for the seeds in the ground, for the bulbs in the earth, for the thoughts in our hearts today. May they be the innocent shoots of new life and love tomorrow. (C. Spiers)

Sat 2

Democratic
Republic of Congo
Uruguay
Botswana

As many shops continue to be affected by Covid restrictions, we pray for all whose hopes relied on a successful festive season. We remember those who worked for the companies that have scaled back, or folded entirely, adding Dorothy Perkins and Top Shop to the dismal litany. May those who have lost their jobs find that, along with your blessing, other opportunities will come their way. We pray for the success of WCC's redundancy support scheme, asking you to bless its staff and clients.

Sun 3

**Second Sunday
of Christmas**

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1.5) Lord Jesus, shine the light of your love into the darkness of loneliness, your healing into sickness, your comfort into grief, your courage into fear, your hope into despair... There is no darkness that will overcome your light. Amen, Lord, may it be so.

Mon 4

Guinea
Maldives
Tajikistan

As a new academic term begins, we ask you to bless all learning communities facing further uncertainty. Protect staff and students physically and equip them emotionally, that effective learning and support may take place, whether in person or online. Be with all due to take exams that may significantly affect their future, giving each the resources they need for their potential to be fulfilled.

Tue 5

Mauritania
Zimbabwe
French Guiana
Jamaica

On the twelfth day of Christmas we recall the list of feathered gifts in the familiar carol and pray for the bird population facing the threat of avian flu. We remember the smitten swans at Stratford and pray for the safety of the swan family in St Nick's park that has brought pleasure to so many this year. Protect them and the chickens kept domestically or on farms, who are now experiencing lockdown restrictions of their own.

Wed 6

The Epiphany

Malta
Cabo Verde
Syria

We saw his star and have come to worship him. (Mt. 2) With the Magi, we travel in hope, as honest seekers, ready to change the direction of our lives in search of the living presence of Jesus. We open up our treasures: 'gold of obedience, incense of lowliness and myrrh of our woundedness', trusting that all things offered with an honest heart will be redeemed, and that we shall be transformed to see anew and to glorify God in our daily acts of service.

Thu 7

Cuba

Lord Jesus, who sees no borders between countries and whose life and love are for all, may the Star of Wonder shine brightly into the hearts of every nation. We remember especially the UK and the EU as Brexit assumes a more tangible shape.

Fri 8

As St Mary's Organ Recital Series continues, we thank you for the technology to do this online and for new audiences reached, remembering too those who aren't able to listen in this way.

Sat 9

Belize
Haiti
Gabon

Comforter Spirit, ease the distress and suffering of those whose lives are locked down because of crimes committed against them. Move through others to bring reassurance that they are not alone, physically or in the depths of their souls. Unlock doors that reveal a path of healing through hurt and injustice to a more peaceful place, where trust and confidence can be gradually restored.

Sun 10

The Baptism of Christ

On the day of her last service at St Mary's, we give thanks for our curate Alycia, Mark and Miles and for all they have done to inspire, enrich and support the church and Warwick Schools communities. Uphold your servant, bless and guide her and may your spirit rest upon her in her role as Priest-in-Charge of the Northleach Benefice.

Mon 11

Réunion
Guadeloupe
Hong Kong

As rules change and we all make decisions about how to live, we pray for compassion and patience with others. Help us give thanks for those who raise issues, remembering how precious our basic freedoms are. Help us treasure our constitutional right to worship, the freedom of the press, free speech and the right to protest, whilst praying for the future for our country.

Tue 12

Bahamas
Eswatini

Lord Jesus, who offers hope and healing to the world, we give thanks for Warwick Hospital, and ask you to bless and strengthen all who work there. Thank you for the new Children's Assessment Unit providing more space for children and their families in A&E.

Wed 13

Andorra
Rwanda

As Covid vaccines continue to be developed, tested and deployed, we give thanks for the dedication of all involved and pray for the best possible outcome. Please bless their production, storage, distribution, administration and efficacy, that as many people as possible may be protected from the virus strains.

Thu 14

Trinidad and Tobago
Congo

We give thanks for the work of the Coventry branch of **Emmaus**, who aim not only to provide a bed, but also to give people a reason to get out of one. We pray for those who are still living on our streets in Warwick and Leamington. Help us to recognise and be grateful for what we have and share what we can, showing those who are homeless that they are not forgotten.

Fri 15

Mali
Malawi

We ask for your blessing today on all who live, work and worship in Old Square, Market Place, Market Street, New Street, Swan Street and Brook Street, each according to their needs. Sustain all who are struggling with the effects of restrictions and keep alive the flame of hope for better times to come.

Sat 16

Guyana
Martinique

Father God, who looks with love on even the smallest birds of the air, we pray that this month's **RSPB Big Schools' Birdwatch** and **Big Garden Birdwatch** will encourage both children and adults to take an interest in and feed your birds, discovering pleasure as they observe their feathered visitors.

Sun 17

**Second Sunday
of Epiphany**

Lord Jesus, strengthen and sustain all who are living with scoliosis, and their families who often feel powerless to help. Sustain the work of the **Scoliosis Campaign Fund**, which was suggested to receive this month's outward giving collection at St Mary's. Bless all it does to support people with scoliosis and their families and fund research into the causes and treatment of the condition.

Mon 18

**Week of Prayer
for Christian Unity**

Lord, we pray for Christians worldwide taking part in the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**. As we use prayers prepared by the Monastic Community of Grandchamp in Switzerland, we thank you for the opportunity to reflect and act on the theme 'Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit' and to do so together...

Tue 19

Nicaragua

Holy Spirit, may we receive in our hearts the presence of Christ, and cherish it as a secret of love. Nourish our prayer, enlighten our reading of Scripture, act through us, so that the fruits of your gifts can patiently grow in us. Amen.

Wed 20

Djibouti
Thailand
Mayotte

God our Father, you reveal to us your love through Christ and through our brothers and sisters. Open our hearts so that we can welcome each other with our differences and live in forgiveness. Grant us to live united in one body, so that the gift that is each person comes to light. May all of us together be a reflection of the living Christ. Amen.

Thu 21

Iceland

Lord Jesus, your entire life was prayer, perfect harmony with the Father. Through your Spirit, teach us to pray according to your will of love. May the faithful of the whole world unite in intercession and praise, and may your kingdom of love come. Amen.

Fri 22

Suriname

Blessed are you, God our Father, for the gift of your word in Holy Scripture. Blessed are you for its transforming power. Help us choose life and guide us by your Spirit, so that we can experience the happiness which you want so much to share with us. Amen.

Sat 23

Burkina Faso
Equatorial Guinea
Aruba

Jesus Christ, we desire to welcome fully the brothers and sisters who are with us. You know how often we feel helpless in the face of their suffering, yet you are always there ahead of us and you have already received them in your compassion. Speak to them through our words, support them through our actions, and let your blessing rest on us all. Amen.

Sun 24

Third Sunday
of Epiphany

Holy Spirit, vivifying fire and gentle breath, come and abide in us. Renew in us the passion for unity so that we may live in awareness of the bond that unites us in you. May all who have put on Christ at their Baptism unite and bear witness together to the hope that sustains them. Amen.

Mon 25

Central African
Republic

Conversion
of Paul

Somalia

Curaçao

Gambia

Thrice-holy God, we thank you for having created and loved us. We thank you for your presence in us and in creation. May we learn to look upon the world as you look upon it, with love. In the hope of this vision, may we be able to work for a world where justice and peace flourish, for the glory of your name. Amen. Lord, seek us out on our journeys and help us to see our own blind spots. Lift the scales from our eyes and direct our vision, so that our lives bear witness to Christ. Help us to see creation and our fellow human beings through his eyes of love and compassion and, with Paul's example before us, inspire others with the message of hope and New Life from the gospels.

Tue 26

Timothy and Titus,
Companions of Paul

Father God, Paul had faithful, caring and effective companions in Timothy and Titus, vital to the spread of the Gospel. Help us to follow their examples and continually seek to uphold and enliven your Church, using the frustrations and obstacles we encounter to embolden our shared mission to make you known.

Wed 27

Togo
South Sudan

God of peace, we remember those who suffered through the ineffable acts of the Holocaust and also recall before you those who came to Britain via the Kindertransport who never saw their families again. Open our eyes to acts of persecution, falsehood and injustice. Make us channels of your love and help us to respond in solidarity.

Thu 28

Benin
Niger

Along with George's family from Kenilworth, we pray for **Make a Wish**, which aims, in George's memory, to give critically ill children experiences and memories to last a lifetime. Bless the 2000 children waiting for wishes to be granted and the efforts of Poundland which has adopted the charity as a focus for fundraising.

Fri 29

Channel Islands
Lesotho
Sierra Leone
Guinea-Bissau

With the **CMM Sisters** in Tanzania and Zambia, we thank you that they have so far been kept safe from the dangers of Covid, especially the Sisters on the front line nursing in hospitals and those in Dar Es Salaam, who are in touch daily with people affected by it. Bring hope and relief to their local communities who, disadvantaged by the poor harvest, have no money for soap, making them even more vulnerable to the lack of fresh water.

Sat 30

San Marino

Lord of creation, as trees continue to be cleared for HS2, we thank you for the tree planting schemes run by the Woodland Trust, and **WDC's plan** to plant a tree for every person in the district. We pray that many groups will apply for trees, grants and funding schemes.

Sun 31

Fourth Sunday
of Epiphany

On the 2020 tax return deadline we remember before you all who are self-employed whose income has been reduced by the pandemic. Give hope and reassurance to those who are anxious and bring them the advice and support they need.