

The Bishop of Blackburn

The Rt Revd Iulian T Henderson

December 2016

Dear Colleague

THY KINGDOM COME – 25 MAY-4 JUNE 2017

I am writing to encourage you and your parish or chaplaincy to take part in the Archbishops' global wave of prayer for mission, to commend it with your ecumenical colleagues as part of services for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January, and to invite you to a special event at the cathedral on May 24. This call to prayer comes at a strategic time for us in the Diocese, following on from the fruit of Crossroads, and will help to root all the good work taking place for Vision 2026 in a context of joyful, expectant prayer leading up to Pentecost.

As the Archbishops said when they wrote to you in September, *Thy Kingdom Come* is now fully ecumenical, commended by all the presidents of Churches Together in England, who have together compiled a launch video, available on YouTube at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9oT69xnvp0. This gives an excellent introduction to the concept of *Thy Kingdom Come*, with testimony from this year's event and practical suggestions of things local churches could do next year. Please would you discuss with your ecumenical colleagues whether you could include this video (which lasts 6 mins 50 seconds) as part of whatever services you are planning for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity?

If you have not already done so, please could you visit the website (www.thykingdom.co.uk) and register your church(es) to take part? The Archbishops' hope is to see at least 80% of Anglican churches and cathedrals taking part, and we would love to see every church in the diocese open for prayer all day each day from Ascension Day to Pentecost, so that people can come in and pray. The website provides a host of suggestions for churches to consider during this period (such as prayer stations, prayer walks, prayer gatherings) and resources.

As a diocese we want to encourage more and more of our church buildings to be left open during daylight hours, not just for this ten-day period, and to this end we are researching suitable literature and prayer leaflets to help those who wander into church to pray and find out more about the Christian faith. We will also be making attractive 'Church open' banners available and offering advice and guidance from Ecclesiastical Insurance to allay any fears about leaving churches open for visitors. The Archdeacons' Visitations in May will also focus on the ministry of welcome, and sidesmen and women will be specially invited to attend.

To mark the start of *Thy Kingdom Come* there will be a 'beacon event' in the cathedral at 7.30pm on Wednesday 24 May, the Eve of Ascension Day. We have chosen this date so as not to clash with events and services that you may be planning in your parish. Please mark this date in your diary and plan to bring a group from your parish. Further details will follow in due course.

Thank you for your partnership in prayer. Let us pray that through *Thy Kingdom Come* we will be deepen our prayer for mission and become more effective witnesses for Jesus Christ.

With my prayers and blessings



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