

Spirituality Network for Gloucestershire

(A Body in Association with Gloucestershire Churches Together)



From the Coordinator Revd. Dr. Alison Evans
Britannia Cottage,
High Street,
King's Stanley GL10 3JD
01453 824034
malcolm.alison@btinternet.com

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NEWSLETTER NO. 56

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Dear Network Member,

Easter blessings to you all! May the hope and joy of the risen Christ be with you and those you love through this Easter season.

One of the hymns I have enjoyed singing recently is *Christ is alive!* by Brian Wren. It can of course be sung all through the year as a celebration of the Easter message that as Christians we worship a living Saviour. Easter is above all the victory of love over sin, hatred and death and the possibility of new life out of the old. Just as the crucified Jesus was transformed at the resurrection so our old life is transformed, and this is God's gift to us again and again throughout our lives.

In the past, Christian faith was understood as being about preparing for death and about what happens when we die. I am glad to say that we have moved away from that to a much better understanding of what it means to be the people of God in the present. Our relationship with God begins now in this life and continues beyond our death. The final verse of the hymn is a reminder to us that in each generation we must wrestle with the message of the gospel and interpret its meaning for our own time in order to make sense of our lives and to enable us to live authentically as Christians in the world as we know it.

Christ is alive and comes to bring
good news to this and every age,
till earth and sky and ocean ring
with joy, with justice, love, and praise.

Here is a reminder of the events organised by the Network during the remainder of 2017. All our events start with coffee at 10 a.m. and finish at 3 p.m. Tea and coffee are provided but please bring a packed lunch.

Saturday, 17 June A Day of Study and Reflection on *Contemplative Practice in the Modern World* led by Canon Patrick Woodhouse at St. Nicolas Church, Swindon Lane, Cheltenham GL50 4PA. Cost £12. To reserve a place, contact Mrs Gay Robins gabrielle.robins@btinternet.com 01452 611215

A poster for the Summer Meeting is enclosed. **Please do pass on these details at church and to anyone who you think might be interested.** If you need any further information, let me know.

Saturday, 23 September A Day of Prayer and Reflection *Encountering the Collage of God: poetry, experience and faith* led by Canon Mark Oakley at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church, St. Patrick's Court, Brockworth, Gloucester GL3 4HL. Cost £12. To reserve a place, contact Revd. Liz Palin liz.palin@northchelt.org.uk 01242 575547. Booking opens 1 July

Tuesday, 5 December A Quiet Day for Advent: *The Spirituality of Mary* led by Canon Paul Williams at Tewkesbury Abbey Parish Room, Church Street, Tewkesbury GL20 5RZ. Cost £10. To reserve a place, contact Mrs Penny Lidstone penny@lidstone.net 01452 741410. Booking opens 1 October

I am also pleased to tell you about **Rudford Retreats** which is an exciting new venture based at Rudford near Highnam, just outside Gloucester. This is a monthly quiet day held on the 3rd Thursday of each month 10am – 3pm and is run by a small team: Rev Helen Sammon, Rev Liz Palin & Mrs Rosie Clifford. Retreat dates planned for 2017 are 18 May, 15 June, 20 July, 17 August, 21 September, 19 October and 16 November.

Drinks are served on arrival and later in the morning and a simple lunch provided. Participants may wish to share in conversation with others during these times or continue in quiet. The days are suitable for those familiar with retreats, as well as for those exploring such days for the first time. Each retreat stands alone. Some may wish to come occasionally and others more regularly. The programme of each day follows the same pattern, allowing those present to be refreshed by the rhythm of prayer, fellowship and quietness.

To book, complete and return the [booking form](#). If you have any questions please contact the team on rudfordretreats@gmail.com or phone 01452 306433. The cost of each day is £12, payable in cash, or cheque to 'Rudford PCC', to be brought on the day. Numbers are limited so early booking is advisable. For more information, go to www.highnamchurch.org/Rudford/

Also starting in 2017 is *A Companion's Way*, the new Gloucestershire Course in Spiritual Direction. The two year course begins in October and is based at the Marist Centre, Nymphsfield, near Stroud. For more information, please go to www.spiritualdirectionglos.org.uk or contact the course administrator Revd. Deborah Curram, Windyridge, Amberley, Stroud GL5 4AA 01453 872546 gisdcourse@gmail.com

If you would like to make a donation to the bursary fund which is used to support the training of the next generation of Spiritual Directors, please send a cheque (made out to the Spirituality Network for Gloucestershire) to the Network treasurer, Mrs Penny Lidstone, The Pike House, Saul, Glos. GL2 7JD

Much of the work of the Spirituality Network for Gloucestershire is about drawing on the deep wells of tradition which come out of the experience, prayer and thinking of past generations of Christians in order to nourish the spiritual lives of Christian people today. On the internet there is a wealth of material which can be used in this way and in future newsletters we plan to highlight some of the websites which we think you may find helpful.

By way of introduction, the **Retreat Association** website www.retreats.org contains much useful information to help you explore and deepen your journey with God through retreats and other events at locations all over the country. In addition, it offers downloadable resources on prayer, spiritual direction, quiet days and other related areas and is well worth a look. Also, at this time of year you may like to look at the **Quiet Garden Movement** website www.quietgarden.org. Quiet Gardens are low cost, accessible, outdoor spaces for prayer, contemplation, rest and inspiration in a variety of settings and a number are to be found in Gloucestershire and the neighbouring counties.

I look forward to seeing you at future Network events.

With every good wish and blessing,

ALISON EVANS