

Spirituality Network for Gloucestershire

(A Body in Association with Gloucestershire Churches Together)



From the Coordinator

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NEWSLETTER NO. 60

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Dear Network Member,

I hope you have had the opportunity for rest, relaxation and refreshment during the summer months.

Our reflection for autumn comes from Revd. Ann Morris, a retired Anglican priest who is a tutor on the Gloucestershire Course in Spiritual Direction and a member of the Spirituality Network Core Group. Ann writes:

At this time of the year I hold on to the e e cummings' poem: "i thank you God for most this amazing day." For many, autumn is their favourite season, with its glorious shades of red, orange and yellow, misty mornings, and maybe a whiff of bonfire smoke. But I always feel a sense of foreboding as the leaves flutter down, dry and lifeless, symbols of the dying summer light, and harbingers of the long, dark winter months ahead. I want to hang on to the summer, and rush ahead to the joys of spring.

The Church heralds the turning of the seasons with the Feast of Michaelmas, traditionally the first day of the farming and business year: a time for electing officials, making contracts, paying rent, hiring servants, holding court and starting school. In Italy they say: "For the feast of St Michael, heat goes into the heavens" – and the change in the weather does mean that the bugs causing summer sicknesses are either frozen or washed away. So costs and benefits! As a new year, it offers a fresh start, and a time for reflection and resolutions – and a time to move forward positively in this cycle of death and resurrection.

So even on the darkest, coldest, wettest days my resolution is to be alert for the blessings, and to end each day with the Ignatian practice of the Examen. I will review this most amazing day, both in the ordinary crunching of leaves underfoot, or splashing in a puddle, and in the unique moments of connection with those I meet, sharing a moment in the post office queue or a quiet conversation over a cup of tea. Here I will find the gift of God moments in abundance in the joyful and the sadness. And I will end my time of prayer by thanking God in the words with which the poem concludes: "now the ears of my ears awake and now the eyes of my eyes are opened."

Our planned Network event on Saturday, 19 May was unfortunately cancelled because of a lack of numbers. On this occasion we were overtaken by events - the Royal Wedding which took place on that day! We wish the Duke and Duchess of Sussex God's richest blessing on the occasion of their marriage and a long and happy life together.

I am very pleased to let you know that we *will* hold our planned autumn meeting on

Saturday, 13 October

Fools for Christ in a Challenging World A Day of Prayer and Reflection led by Angela Ashwin at Christchurch, Abbeydale, Gloucester GL4 5EQ. Cost £12. To reserve a place, please contact Revd. Liz Palin lzpalin@gmail.com 01452 741147. **PLEASE NOTE THE NEW CONTACT DETAILS FOR LIZ PALIN**

Angela Ashwin is a writer and speaker on spirituality. She has written several books about prayer and life with God, details of which are on her website www.angelaashwin.com She lives in Southwell, Nottinghamshire.

Our final Network event in 2018 is on

Wednesday, 5 December

Who do you think you are? The surprising women in Jesus' family tree. A Quiet Day for Advent led by Revd. Liz Palin at the Harnhill Centre of Christian Healing, Harnhill, Cirencester GL7 5PX. Cost £10.

To reserve a place, please contact Revd. Dr. Alison Evans CTGlos@outlook.com 01453 824034
Booking opens 1 October

Liz Palin is a vicar in the Stroudwater Benefice and lives in Frampton-on-Severn. She spent 28 years running retreat houses including Glenfall House, before entering full time ordained ministry in 2013. She is the Spirituality Adviser for Gloucester Diocese and a member of the Spirituality Network Core Group and of the Diocese of Gloucester Worship, Prayer and Spirituality Group.

All our events begin with coffee at 10 a.m. for a 10.30 start and finish at 3 p.m. Tea and coffee are provided but please bring a packed lunch.

Posters for both these events are enclosed and we do ask that you pass these on at your church and to anyone who you think might be interested.

Elsewhere, you may be interested in the Quiet Days offered by the House of the Open Door Community at Childswickham near Broadway. The House of the Open Door is an ecumenical Christian community which welcomes visitors. For details of their events, go to www.houseoftheopendoor.org or make contact by post or email to Childswickham House, Childswickham, Worcs. WR12 7HH 01386 852084 hod@houseoftheopendoor.org

Also, the Harnhill Centre of Christian Healing offers several programmes and events for those seeking personal prayer ministry, practical teaching or simply rest and refreshment. These include retreat weeks and quiet days. To find out more, go to www.harnhillcentre.org.uk call 01285 850283 or write to The Harnhill Centre of Christian Healing, Harnhill, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 5PX.

The Rudford Retreats have become very well established and take place on the third Thursday of each month. For more information, go to www.highnamchurch.org/Rudford/ or phone 01452 306433.

Other news is that when the present Spiritual Direction course finishes in summer 2019 there will be a break for a year. The Gloucestershire Course in Spiritual Direction has been running for 20 years and it is felt that a fresh look at what is appropriate for the future is needed. The break will give those responsible for running the course the space and time to plan for the next phase.

I look forward to seeing you at future Network events.

ALISON EVANS

www.snfglos.org.uk