

Spirituality Network for Gloucestershire

(A Body in Association with Gloucestershire Churches Together)



From the Co-ordinator 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. 51

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Dear Network Member,

I hope you have had a good summer and that the holiday season had provided you with the opportunity for both physical and spiritual refreshment.

Our Summer Meeting held at Gloucester Cathedral on 25 July and we were pleased to be welcomed to the Cathedral by Bishop Martyn Snow, Bishop of Tewkesbury. The day was led by Revd. Nick Helm, Continuing Ministerial Development Officer for the Diocese of Hereford. He spoke about Ignatian prayer and spirituality, focussing on praying with St. Ignatius through imaginative contemplation, spiritual transformation in the Spiritual Exercises and Ignation discernment. Nick is the author of the Grove booklet **Ignatius of Loyola: a Guide for Spiritual Growth and Discipleship** Price £3.95 ISBN 978-1-85174-910-2 (available from Amazon and other bookshops) and a collection of resources to accompany this book is available as a free download from www.ignatius.soulspark.org.uk

Our Summer Meeting also included the 20th anniversary celebration of the Network and a celebration cake was cut and shared at lunchtime. In our closing prayers we were asked to give thanks to God for all the good work which has been done by the Network. During the twenty years it has been in existence, countless people have been touched by the Quiet Days, the prayer and study events, the Weeks of Accompanied Prayer, the individually guided retreats and the ministry of Spiritual Directors. Many Spiritual Directors have been trained and supported in their work. Through all this time, Revd. Pauline Green has been Co-ordinator of the Network. She was one of the founding members and has headed up the Network since its inception. To mark her retirement from that position and as an expression of our gratitude for all that she has done over the years, Pauline was presented with a card and gifts from the members of the Network – a gift token and a garden bench (which had already arrived at her home) with a plaque inscribed **To Pauline from the Spirituality Network for Gloucestershire in gratitude for 20 years of inspirational and faithful ministry.** Felicity Bayne paid tribute to Pauline's quiet dedication to the development of the Network which is now an organisation of over 300 members providing spiritual sustenance that enables so many across the denominations and across the county to grow in faith and love. Good wishes were offered to Pauline for a peaceful and blessed retirement.

Our next event is on Saturday, 10 October when we will be led by Revd. Dr. Anne Phillips in a day of reflection and prayer at St. Nicolas Church, Swindon Lane, Cheltenham GL50 4PA. Anne is a spiritual accompanist and has been a Baptist minister for over 20 years, first in a local pastorate and then as a theological teacher at the Northern Baptist Learning Community in Manchester, which is part of the ecumenical partnership in Theological Education. She will take as her theme **Desiring God**. The cost of the

day is £12 and to reserve your place, please contact Revd. Pauline Green on 01454 311936 pgreen@clara.co.uk As usual, we will start with coffee at 10 a.m. and end the day at 3.00 p.m. Please bring a packed lunch with you. As those who have been there before will know already, St. Nicolas Church is a very comfortable building with ample parking.

On Saturday 28 November our Quiet Day for Advent will be led by another Baptist – Gill Roberts who is a member of BURG (Baptist Union Retreat Group) and an experienced leader of retreats and quiet days around the country. The day is entitled **Before the Marvel of the Night** and will be held at Christ the King Roman Catholic Church, Castle Street, Thornbury BS35 1HA. The cost of the day is £10 and to reserve your place, please contact Revd. Liz Palin 01242 575547 liz.palin@northchelt.org.uk

An individually guided retreat is to be held at the Monastery of Our Lady and St. Bernard, Brownhill near Stroud from Friday 9th to Wednesday 14th October led by Mrs Rachael Willard, Revd. Chris Mason and Dr. Jennie Barrow. For more information and to book a place, please contact Sr. Mary Phillipa on 01453 883084 brownhillbookings@bernardine.org or Rachael Willard on 01242 530051 r.willard15@btinternet.com

Please do publicise these events at your Church and pass on the information to anyone you think might be interested. Even if you can't come or you feel an event is not for you, others may wish to be there.

Looking ahead to Christmas, and the celebration of the birth of Jesus, one of the titles used for Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us (Matt. 1: 23). However, God is with us not only at Christmas when we particularly think about the meaning of the incarnation. He is with us at all times and calls us into an ever deeper relationship with himself. One of the main purposes of the Spirituality Network for Gloucestershire is to enable the members and all those who attend meetings and events to draw nearer to God and discover the depth of his love for us and for the whole of creation. For each one of us that process will be different because God has made us unique individuals and we each have our own faith story to tell. As in other areas of life, what helps one person in their growing relationship with God does not help another and for that reason the Network has endeavoured over the years to provide a rich and varied programme reflecting a wide range of spiritual traditions and insights. The Core Group intends that this will continue into the future and hope that you will be encouraged in your faith journey through the work of the Network. We are currently working on the programme for 2016 and will be sending details to you well before the end of the year. If you have any suggestions for future themes or speakers, please do get in touch.

For your interest, once again the Diocese of Gloucester is sponsoring a number of events in the 'Faith' strand of the *Times* and *Sunday Times* Cheltenham Literature Festival which runs from 2 to 11 October 2015. Highlights include the new Bishop of Gloucester, Bishop Rachel, Lucy Winkett and Joanna Jepson in conversation about the role of women in the church and the future of the Church of England (Wednesday 7 October, 2pm to 3pm). To see the programme and to book, visit the **Cheltenham Festivals website** www.cheltenhamfestivals.com

In addition, there is a **Soul Food Day** at 62 High Street, Thornbury BS35 2AN approximately once a month, for up to 8 people. To receive details by email, please contact the organiser Elizabeth Vooght direct on elizabeth@vooght.com

I look forward to seeing you at future Network events.
With every good wish and blessing,

ALISON EVANS

www.snfglos.org.uk