

Spirituality Network for Gloucestershire

(A Body in Association with Gloucestershire Churches Together)



From the Coordinator
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NEWSLETTER NO. 61

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Dear Network Member,

I hope you have had an enjoyable Christmas season and on behalf of the Network Core Group would like to wish you health, peace and joy in 2019.

Recently I have been reading Rowan Williams' book **Being Disciples: Essentials of the Christian Life** (SPCK, 2016). In it he speaks of discipleship as awareness and expectancy. It is a bit like being a birdwatcher (an image some of you may know already), patiently watching and waiting for a glimpse of something to burst into view. As disciples we should be watching and waiting for God to reveal himself to us in the worship of the Church, in Scripture, through other people and in the events unfolding around us in the world. It occurs to me that we all have our "favourite" ways of finding God and this is just fine because we are all different and what works for one does not work for another. However, we should not restrict ourselves to what is familiar – sometimes God will surprise us by revealing himself to us in places where we don't normally find him. So, at the turn of the year, let's be alert and attentive to God's glory wherever we are and open to trying something new in our quest to know God better.

I am very pleased to be able to pass on the Network programme brochure for 2019. It promises to be an exciting year and we hope that it will offer events of interest to you and others you know.

On **Saturday, 16 March**, Revd. Dillwyn Edwards is coming to lead a **Quiet Day for Lent**. You may remember that the Quiet Day planned for March 2018 had to be cancelled because of bad weather so we hope that the event will be able to go ahead as planned this year. **A poster for the day is enclosed. Please do share this at your church and with any others who you think might be interested.**

On **Saturday, 18 May** we are doing something new and holding a training day for people exploring the idea of becoming Quiet Day leaders. This event will be led by Revd. Liz Palin who has extensive experience in this area of work. Please do make a note of this date and pass on the information.

On **Saturday, 12 October**, we are very pleased that Revd. Shaun Lambert is coming to lead a day of study and reflection on *Christian Mindfulness*. Shaun is a Baptist minister based in Stanmore, Middlesex who has a longstanding interest in mindfulness and has trained in counselling and psychotherapy. He is an author, broadcaster and retreat leader. More information will follow nearer the time, but in view of the current interest in this subject, we anticipate that this will be a popular event.

Then on **Thursday, 28 November**, Revd. Canon Ian Bussell is to lead a Quiet Day for Advent entitled *The Gift of Presence*. As we reflect on 'God with us' during Advent we will explore the way in which Presence is life giving to us, to those around us, and to our planet.

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.

In the autumn Network newsletter, I shared the news that after the current Gloucestershire Course in Spiritual Direction ends in the summer, there will be a break of a year to give those responsible for running the course the space and time to plan for the next phase.

Revd. Ann Morris, the Course leader writes:

To all Spiritual Directors and other interested people from the Tutor Team for the course *A Companion's Way: The Gloucestershire Course in Spiritual Direction.*

After over twenty years of equipping Christian listeners, we feel it is time to take a year off teaching to review all aspects of the course - place, time, duration and content - in order to meet changing needs. We are hoping to balance the values of the age-old traditional ministry with the challenges of meeting today's requirements for professionalism: accreditation, governance, standards, ethics etc.

So when the current course ends in June 2019, we are taking the following year to consider, consult and listen - both to God and all those concerned to further the development of future spiritual companions, handing on the skills to those who will take our place.

We ask of you two things:

- Please will you hold the process, and all who take part in it, in your prayers
- Please contact us if you feel prompted to offer any insights, opinions, suggestions, or want to participate in the process in some way annmorris@dovebarn.co.uk

We expect/hope the course will start again in the Autumn of 2020 (depending on number of applicants) but will keep you posted on the website www.spiritualdirectionglos.org.uk

Other news is that the **Rudford Retreats** this year take place on the third Thursday of each month with the exception of April (Maundy Thursday). For more information, go to www.highnamchurch.org/Rudford/ or phone 01452 306433.

A new and exciting development is the **Framilode Riverside Retreats**. These will be monthly Quiet Days usually on the first Wednesday of the month but sometimes on Saturdays (10 a.m. – 3 p.m.), starting on 6 March and held at St. Peter's Church Framilode near Frampton-on-Severn. The pattern for the day will be the same each time and will be shaped around a passage of scripture appropriate to the season and will include worship, silence and quiet fellowship. The cost will be £12 including lunch. To book, please email Framilodereversideretreats@gmail.com or fill in a booking form at www.achurchearyou/14232.

Further afield, the Ammerdown Centre in Radstock, near Bath is a well-established Retreat and Conference Centre open to people of all faiths and none, with a special emphasis on hospitality, peace and reconciliation. It offers an interesting range of courses and retreats as well as private stays for individuals or groups. For more information, go to www.ammerdown.org, telephone 01761 433709, email admin@ammerdown.org or write to The Ammerdown Centre, Ammerdown Park, Radstock, Somerset BA3 5SW

I look forward to seeing you at future Network events.

ALISON EVANS

www.snfglos.org.uk