



THE
DIOCESE
OF
BLACKBURN
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN LANCASHIRE

The Bishop of Lancaster
The Rt Revd Dr Jill Duff

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Thy Kingdom Come: Thursday 30th May – Sunday 9th June 2019

I heard great things about last year's response in Lancashire the *Thy Kingdom Come* prayer initiative of the Archbishop of Canterbury, for ten days of prayer from Ascension Day to Pentecost. This initiative is in its fourth year and, astonishingly, it has caught light around the world in 114 countries, across 65 different denominations.

I'm already hearing of plans across Lancashire, such as 24-7 Prayer rooms and the new "Family Prayer Adventure Map" which will be distributed to 330,000 children in years 4,5 and 6 attending C of E and Methodist schools.

This letter is to encourage you in your praying. It is humbling and often perplexing that Jesus teaches us to ask, when God our Father already knows what we need (Matthew 6.6-13). But I so much want to take him at his word (John 4.50). I was fired up November's Diocesan Conference to be praying, as +Julian put it, "not for an Archdeacon's visitation, or a Bishop's visitation but a visitation of the Holy Spirit on the people of Lancashire".

We're working with Christians across Lancashire, so we will book-end our ten days of prayer with an **Ecumenical service**, on **Wednesday 29th May at 7pm** kindly hosted by Crossgate Church in Preston at 7pm, concluding with a **Beacon Service on Pentecost Sunday 9th June at 7.30pm** at Blackburn Cathedral.

But these are just a side show. The main prayer happens in secret and in our local context: schools, churches, workplaces, prisons, hospitals, homes. Pray in your own way. You could set up prayer stations, offer times of Benediction, run a 24-7 Prayer Room, distribute leather bands with five knots to prayer for five friends to know Jesus. There's some helpful resources on line where you can also register your events at www.thykingdomcome.global. To join in the conversation on social media, including Twitter, use #TKC2019 @cofelancs, and to let us know about local events you are holding email: karen.ashcroft@blackburn.anglican.org.

Since Lancashire has been a county of beacons, on Pentecost Sunday, why not light a beacon symbolising our prayers for men, women and children across Lancashire to be on fire with the Spirit of God so people can hear the gospel in their own languages. Beacons could be as simple as giving out candles to everyone at your Pentecost Sunday service, or to build something more sizeable on a prominent place. I leave it to your creativity!

On a personal note, I am deeply thankful and conscious of the wave of your prayer that has supported me in my first nine months as Bishop of Lancaster. It is a delight and privilege to be partners in the gospel with you in Lancashire.

Come Holy Spirit,

+jill Lancaster