



The United Benefice of Orsett, Bulphan and Horndon-on-the-Hill

Role Description – Prayer Leader/Intercessor

Responsible to:

The Prayer Rota organiser and through them to the Rector

Person specification:

- To be a person of integrity who seeks to serve in a gracious, Christ-like manner and who treats each member of the Parish with respect and dignity
- To support the ministry and mission of the Church through their work
- To uphold the Vision and Values of the Church and support the Rector through prayer and a positive attitude
- To be present, available and reliable
- To maintain confidentiality and share any concerns with the Rector

Key roles and responsibilities:

- To lead the congregation in prayer on occasions agreed with the person who does the rota and to swap with another person, if unable to do this and, if unable to come, at the last minute, to let one of the Churchwardens know
- To attend services in the Benefice regularly and have a good understanding of the worshipping life of the Church
- To prepare either formal or informal prayers, to be delivered in services
- To be aware of the prayer books in the churches, in which people write prayer requests, and also the prayer resources in the vestries of all three churches and to compose prayers, in line with the document Leading Prayers/Intercessions
- To be aware of the Lectionary Readings for the day and also festivals, themes and seasons of the Church's year

Safeguarding:

- To read and adhere to all aspects of the Benefice Safeguarding Policy
- To complete a Parish Form, providing 2 references, and a Confidential Declaration Form before commencing the role.
- To undertake an enhanced DBS check if required.
- To complete online C0 and C1 basic safeguarding training

Role description created June 2020

Leading Prayers/ Intercessions

Introduction

1. What is prayer?

ACTS

Adoration: Praising God

Confession: Confessing our sins

Thanksgiving: Thanking God for all that he has given us

Supplication: Presenting our requests before God.

And it is the supplication bit that is the most closely linked with intercessions. The other parts, the A,C and T, are covered by the liturgy for the rest of the service, whatever service it might be.

When we lead intercessions, we are leading the congregation in bringing the needs of others before God. Asking God, on behalf of others.

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings should be made for everyone....so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. 1 Timothy 2: 1,2.

Of course, Jesus himself did the work of interceding on the cross – being the mediator between humanity and God...

Christ Jesus, who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Romans 8: 34

But we, as Christians, still need to bring the needs of the world before God.

2. What should intercessions include?

Traditionally Anglican Intercessions have covered:

- The world,
- Our nation,
- The community,
- The church,
- Individuals.

But intercessions can take a different form. There are many books containing different examples.

3. In writing intercessions we need to:

Be aware of the Bible readings for that particular Sunday: And then, hopefully, the intercessions can link in with the theme of the sermon.

Be informed globally, nationally, locally and within our church family: It is always good to have sight of a newspaper, or mobile phone or the internet, the names of people within our own Benefice who are ill,

suffering or bereaved, projects happening in our Benefice, the church magazine, names of those in leadership roles in the church.

A word for preachers was famously “prepare with a Bible in one hand and newspaper in the other”

Be specific: For example:

- We pray for the people in who have just suffered an earthquake. May they find help to
- We pray for Messy Church. We pray for energy for those leading it, we pray that people will come and that through it they may come to a faith in Jesus.
- We pray for Mary.... (But be very careful about specifics. We need to be mindful of confidentiality and ensure that prayer is not gossip. So, in it is often better just to pray for the name in the knowledge that God knows the situation anyway, rather than divulge personal information. If in doubt, ask the person concerned what they would be happy about you praying for.)
- But we also need to ask that God’s will be done, as the Lord’s prayer clearly states. And we need to recognise that God’s will is not always our will!!

Be sensitive to different learning/engaging styles: Whilst some people are able to listen to words easily, other people are easily distracted and find it easier to engage with the prayer when they have something visual to focus on, or something to write down or ‘do.’ In all services, whether Family, Morning Praise or Holy Communion, it is important to have a range of styles to accommodate the different ways in which people engage with God.

Be aware of who is in the congregation: Make sure that the intercessions can be understood by all who are there. If there are lots of children, use straight forward language. If there are lots of people who have mobility problems, rather than ask them all to come out and light a candle, perhaps give them a piece of paper to write something on and ask a younger person to collect them. If there are people with particular additional needs, try to make sure that they are able to engage.

Keep them simple: Short sentences are best, at whatever age service. Whilst we need to be specific, we don’t need to elaborate prayers with unnecessary detail. We also need to make the responses simple so that people can remember them. Sometimes it is helpful to print out in large font the responses, so people aren’t trying to remember the response instead of listening to the prayer.

Allow for some space: This can be for people to say their own quiet prayers or it can be for people to write their responses on a piece of paper to be collected or it can be for people to call out, for example, the name of a country etc, or it could be to go to the front to light a candle.....

Be mindful of time: Ideally intercessions shouldn’t be longer than about 3 minutes. If you are doing something visual or practical, they can be a bit longer.

4. How do I start?

There are a number of resources which can be helpful:

Each church now has a set of 4 books which will be kept in the vestry for people to borrow, (but please make sure you return them!) which give templates or ideas for leading intercessions.

- **John Pritchard's two Intercessions Handbooks:** These include a range of different ideas including some visual/musical/practical suggestions
- **Katie Thompson's Intercessions for Young People:** These are prayers in straightforward language but are suitable for both young people and adults. They can be used as a basis upon which to build and are linked to the Church's calendar.
- **Ian Black's Intercessions for years A, B and C:** These are also linked to the church's calendar and can be used as a basis upon which to build or just as a starting point for ideas.

Other people who have written good intercessions books and resources are Susan Sayers and David Adam, whose books you might like to have a look at.

5. Practical advice for when you actually lead the intercessions:

Use a microphone: Even if you have a loud voice or can project your voice, please use a microphone. There are some people who rely on the hearing loop to hear and if people don't use the microphone, it means that those people are excluded from participation.

Teach the congregation the responses before you begin the prayers of intercession: For example, 'When I say 'Lord in you we trust.', please respond by saying, 'We look to you for help.' Or when I say, 'Lord hear us,' you say 'Lord graciously hear us.' And make sure you practise this before you begin the intercessions.

Normally intercessions end with the leader saying:

'Merciful father' and then the congregation join in with

'Accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our saviour, Jesus Christ, Amen.

However, intercessions do not have to end with this, but if they don't, make sure that they have a clear end and that people know that they have finished by you saying a clear 'Amen' or something like, 'We draw these prayers to a close by blowing out this candle,' etc.

Speak slowly and clearly: Even though you will be using a microphone, please speak more loudly than normal. The sound systems in the 3 churches do not always pick everything up!!

Bring yourself: You are made in the image of God. Your prayers do not need to be the same as those of the person who led the intercessions last week! If all our prayers were the same, it would be tedious, and people would not engage.