

# Coming Together

*prayer and discipleship ideas for the New Year*



## *Candles of Hope and Light*

*On/Offline:* Offline

The Diocese of Bristol

*Affordability:* £

Originally conceived as an idea for the Advent and Christmas season, this suggestion from the Diocese of Bristol could also be a great opportunity to bring some light into the January darkness around your local communities. The idea is to purchase some simple tealight candles and attach a small message of welcome and hope - perhaps along with a New Year reflection - and place them around the local area for the community to take home. You could invite your congregation to help put these together and spread them around.



## *Distanced Discipleship Groups*

*On/Offline:* Online

Survey Respondent

*Affordability:* Free

We have found that small groups have had a key role during lockdown, they have provided pastoral care within their groups to support one another as they can share fears and anxieties in their safe community group. They have been meeting weekly or fortnightly throughout to share their faith and study the Bible, and have met more often and in a more relaxed way online than they did before.



## *More Tea, Vicar?*

*On/Offline:* Offline

Survey Respondent

*Affordability:* Free

Once we were able to, I have offered a 'More Tea Vicar' service and travelled round to quite a few people - church folks and non church folks - to have tea in their gardens, which gave a wider perspective on things. I am still continuing this. People call me or I call those who I feel may like a cup of tea!





## Vulnerable Buddy System

*On/Offline:* Offline

Survey Respondent

*Affordability:* Free

We have developed a "Buddy System" through lockdown where we have paired up vulnerable people with those able to help with shopping, talking on the phone, or other similar tasks.



## Prayer and Care Chain

*On/Offline:* Offline

The Diocese of Bristol

*Affordability:* Free

One way to keep your congregation connected and pastorally caring for one another, as well as spiritually nourished, is to launch what the Diocese of Bristol calls a Prayer and Care Chain. This consists of a number of daily telephone chains across your congregation, with a Bible verse passed down the chain each day and each person asking the next whether they are ok and what they can pray for that day. This could be achieved through a traditional phone line or through digital messaging apps.



## Pastoral Dog Walking

*On/Offline:* Offline

Survey Respondent

*Affordability:* Free

A lot of my pastoral care through the week is on a one to one basis, and that's not necessarily always taking place in the vicarage it's 'let's go for a walk with my dogs'. As a result, I've got a regular walking ministry with individuals who will come and just have a walk and a chat, unburden and everything else. I think that's often better on a walk than sat in a vicar's study!



## Mindfulness Online

*On/Offline:* Online

Survey Respondent

*Affordability:* Free

On a Wednesday evening at nine o'clock we do a sort of mindfulness session for around 15-20 minutes live on Facebook. It is very similar to compline but it's not liturgically heavy, and it's sort of got foundations in the examen process from Ignatian spirituality. As a result, it's about looking back at the day and the week, and it's not participatory but rather it's encouraging a time for 15-20 minutes of meditation and reflection together, guided by one of the church leaders.





## Prayer Walk Around the Local Community

*On/Offline:* Offline

The Diocese of Canterbury

*Affordability:* Free

The past year may have led to a change in relationships with our local communities - for better or worse - and the New Year is a great time for church leaders and congregations to actively pray for their local areas as we think of what has been and what is to come. The Diocese of Canterbury suggest an imaginative approach, walking the local area imagining that you are walking alongside Jesus and asking Him to help you notice things and prompt you to pray about them. Alternatively, as a church you could provide a guided prayer walk around the parish that could be downloaded by parishioners or collected physically.

*Link:* <https://www.canterburydiocese.org/content/pages/documents/1592390108.pdf>



## Lockdown Remembering Project

*On/Offline:* Offline

Survey Respondent

*Affordability:* Free

We are currently setting up a 'remembering' project in the community to give people the chance to mark and reflect on the lockdown time.



## Congregational Cards

*On/Offline:* Offline

Survey Respondent

*Affordability:* Free

Members of the congregation responded very positively when I wrote a personal card to each one. That personal response on top of the on-line services, was important.



## Zoom Coffee Mornings

*On/Offline:* Online

Survey Respondent

*Affordability:* Free

Over lockdown we have had online coffee mornings once a week as well as tea and cake on a Friday afternoon, and that's been really important for keeping in touch with those who can pop in, and allowing them opportunities to catch up with one another



## Hope Spaces

*On/Offline:* Offline HOPE Together and 24-7 Prayer

*Affordability:* £

HOPE Together and 24-7 Prayer are encouraging churches to invite their local communities to experience God in prayer through the use of creative prayer stations, whether in their own buildings or more neutral spaces. They have offered clear guidance on how to run prayer spaces in the local community (including how to find a shop as a location if you don't have a church space to use), as well as printable logos and posters for your Hope space. They have also provided ideas for six prayer spaces: Rest; Peace & Justice; Forgiveness; Directions; Hope; and Pray.

*Link:* [https://www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/328363/HOPE\\_Spaces.aspx](https://www.hopetogether.org.uk/Groups/328363/HOPE_Spaces.aspx)

## The Wellbeing Journey

*On/Offline:* Offline Life Story Quest

*Affordability:* £

HOPE Together with KingsGate Church, Peterborough, have created a brand new series to help churches lead their communities on a journey to physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing. Presented by Simon Thomas and Joanna Abeyinka-Burford, and featuring contributions from leading experts in different fields, the 8 part video series and accompanying 50-day book guides participants through a wide range of different areas of wellbeing in life. They have offered everything a church would need to run the course, and are also developing a course specifically for young people.

*Link:* <https://wellbeingjourney.org/>