

Looking Back

ideas for managing grief and anxiety in the New Year



Alone[Together] Prayer Rhythms

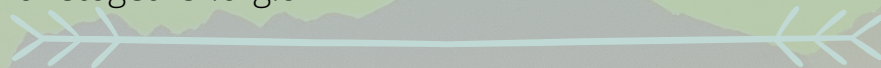
On/Offline: Online

Alone[Together]

Affordability: Free

Alone[Together] was a series of resources developed by the Benedictine community during the initial stages of lockdown to provide daily prayer rhythms, poetry, and insights on how to cope with this form of isolation. Monks and Nuns with experience of chosen socially distanced lives, and even individuals such as hostages who were forced into isolation, offered their wisdom and advice, covering topics such as how to structure your days and how to cope with not being able to grieve in the way you anticipated. While new resources stopped being produced in June 2020, they are all still available to view on the website.

Link: <https://www.alonetogether.org.uk/>



Dealing with Loss Prayer Station

On/Offline: Offline

Prayer Stations in Schools

Affordability: £

For many people, 2020 involved forms of grief and bereavement that were unlike any other, particularly with the struggles around spending time with the dying and commemorating their passing as normal. As a result, this idea from Prayer Stations in Schools may be valuable to church members as they approach their first full year without a loved one. While it is designed for a school setting, it can also be adapted for a church environment: "This activity is designed to encourage pupils to express their feelings of grief and their needs and to bring them to God if they want to. Pupils can take a piece of paper on which they can write their feelings thoughts or prayers. [...] They can then take their paper to the wire wall, roll it up and put it in a hole. The wire wall is significant as it represents the Cross, Jesus suffered on a cross and God grieved for Him. God understands our feelings and our needs when we grieve."

Link: <https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/resources/140>



Finger Prayer Labyrinth

On/Offline: Online

The Diocese of Bristol

Affordability: Free

The Diocese of Bristol has created this printable finger labyrinth resource to guide users through a meditative prayer exercise that can be easily done at home. They have also offered suggestions for different prayers that can be offered at each stage of the labyrinth journey.

Link: <http://www.bristol.anglican.org/content/pages/documents/1589184286537883191.pdf>

Prayer Spaces at Home

On/Offline: Offline

Prayer Spaces in Schools

Affordability: £

The team behind Prayer Spaces at School have created dozens of very simple, free, 'Prayer Spaces at Home' ideas that are quick to organise and accessible for all ages. These cover a wide range of topics, including ideas around reducing anxiety and staying hopeful, that would be great for approaching the New Year.

Link: <https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/prayer-spaces-at-home>

Honour Wall Prayer Station

On/Offline: Offline

Prayer Spaces in Schools

Affordability: £

Whether it is someone who has recently passed or who has been absent for a long time, the start of a new year can be a prompt to make us remember those we have lost. This idea from Prayer Station in Schools encourages participants to remember someone who is missing from their lives, providing an opportunity to express how they feel and encouraging them to remember that person positively. They suggest: "Put a large piece of paper on the wall, and write the words 'Honour Wall' in the middle. Put the ribbons, pens and cellotape on the floor. Pupils are invited to wrap a piece of ribbon into a simple loop and tape it onto the wall, to represent someone who is missing from their lives, someone they have loved and lost. If they want to, they can write something about the person below it, something that they are grateful for, a characteristic or memorable moment."

Link: <https://www.prayerspacesinschools.com/resources/86>



Socially Distanced Prayer Stations

On/Offline: Offline

The Diocese of Canterbury

Affordability: £

As the Diocese of Canterbury point out, using prayer stations within a church building can be particularly helpful for those who are new to prayer, but at a time of social distancing we need to be careful with how these are presented. This document offers some useful tips. For example, avoid drawing people together to a single point, but rather consider a series of "prayer prompts" around the church. Use large and bold visuals (posters, objects, artwork) that can be seen from at least 3m away, and potentially place them (for example) high up on a pillar so people have to stand further back to look at them. Avoid encouraging people to touch things - if you use objects to prompt prayer, ensure that they are out of reach in some way. You could plan out a (one-way) series of stopping points which may be connected to one another, so there is a sense of journey around the church, or are alternatively separate spaces expressing different ways into prayer. Place a laminated sheet of scripture near each symbol to prompt prayer or reflection. They have also suggested four types of prayer you could encourage in different spaces, with guides for each - contemplation; lectio divina; Intercession; and gratitude.

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

Prayer Walk In Church

On/Offline: Offline

The Diocese of Canterbury

Affordability: Free

Even without dedicated prayer stations, church buildings can of course be great environments for prompting prayer. The Diocese of Canterbury encourages visitors to "use the existing space and imagery within the church and slowly walk around the building, looking and listening for how these might prompt you to prayer." They offer a detailed example for prompts that could be offered in a church building, but this would have to be adapted for each space.

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



Church Grounds Prayer Walk

On/Offline: Offline

The Diocese of Canterbury

Affordability: £

While it may not be as appealing as in the height of summer, church gardens and grounds can still provide a powerful space for prayer and reflection in approaching a New Year - especially in situations where access to indoor spaces may be unsafe or regulated. The Diocese of Canterbury encourages church leaders to take a slow walk around the grounds and try and see the space anew, and how it may prompt invitations to prayer (for example, a tree with large roots encouraging people to consider where they put their roots in challenging times). These points of reflection can then be marked out, offering written invitations to pray and reflect at each point. These could be standalone or have a shared theme - for example, the 1 AM sayings of Jesus.

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

Life Story Quest

On/Offline: Online

Life Story Quest

Affordability: Free

With the pandemic making many people feel further apart from their loved ones than ever before, the Life Story Quest scheme is seeking to help families stay connected through sharing their life stories with one another, through providing resources on different topics that prompt reflection and conversations.

Link: <https://www.storyquest.life/>

New Year Prayer and Reflection Spaces

On/Offline: Offline

BeSpace

Affordability: £

BeSpace have created a 3-page sheet of ideas and guidance for running New Year's themed prayer spaces, particularly in schools. These all centre around "Looking" - Looking Back over the year that has gone, Forward to the year to come, Around to help others, etc. While these are designed for schools, they would also work within a church setting and many are suitable for all ages.

Link: <https://bespace547587990.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/new-year-activities-outline.pdf>



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

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/>