

Intercession Day

Recently two Diocesan strand groups, members of the Development Teams for Prayer & Spirituality and Worship & Liturgy worked together to run an Intercession Day with members of the congregation of St Michael and All Angels, Helensburgh. Around 18 folks took part, including members of St Mary's Port Glasgow with their Rector, the Revd David Gifford. Everyone was made very welcome by our Helensburgh hosts.



Team convenors, the Revd David Wostenholm and Dr John Davies with Gill Young and Maureen Russell put together four sessions, taking one each. In **the first session**, David gave an overview of Prayer as a formal expression of worship within the life of the congregation. The importance of Intercessory Prayer as the place where we try and bring before God the needs of the Church and the World. Intercession may also bring its own particular pain where it resonates with the hurts and frailty of our human needs. He emphasised that Intercessory Prayer is just one form of prayer in what Basil Hume described as "TRYING to raise our hearts and minds to God".

In **the second session**, John gave a fascinating overview of the development of the place of the Intercessions in the Eucharist from the earliest periods of the Church. At different times, the roles of both clergy and lay people varied in the Intercessions. Since the Liturgical Reform Movement, the laity have had an increasingly important role as intercessors. **The third session** was led by Maureen on the place of the Lectionary Readings in preparing particular Sunday's Intercessions, and how we might develop skills for using these passages. She invited groups to read the following

Sunday's Scripture and talk about any resonance or theme they felt speaks to us today and how we might connect these in the Intercessions. In **the fourth session** Gill concluded the day with practical exercises on our experience on the receiving end of prayers and as intercessors ourselves – this was illuminating! The exercise has also produced a set of handouts on Prayer/Intercessions in the Eucharist and a wee list of practical "Dos and Don'ts" for intercessors in public worship.

It is hoped the Intercession Day was helpful and informative. It was also a learning curve for the leaders of the sessions – perhaps other congregations in the Diocese may be interested in having a similar event in their church – please get in touch with Diocesan Office if you want to find out more!

Maureen Russell