



# Thousands of us will pray in castle grounds

IT will be an amazing occasion when we can pray for our region in the open-air with Christians from all denominations.

We hope to unite thousands of people in the grounds of Portchester Castle on Pentecost Sunday to mark the end of 10 days of prayer. It will be the climax of our diocese's response to the national Thy Kingdom Come initiative, which now spans 64 denominations across 114 countries.

We'll bring together worshippers from churches across south-east Hampshire and the Isle of Wight for a Picnic and Prayer event on the afternoon of June 9. We're meeting in the iconic Portchester Castle because it has been the site of Christian prayer for 1,000 years.

It's the first time our diocese has hosted a Thy Kingdom Come 'beacon' event and is the first one to be held in a castle.

The idea is that worshippers might come straight from Sunday morning services for a picnic from 1pm. Church families will spread out on the grass and share their food, with

the chance for children to enjoy family-friendly activities. Then, at 2.30pm, we'll spend 90 minutes worshipping and praying for people across our region to know Jesus – and for God's Kingdom to come in every sphere of society – through a variety of creative prayer styles.

A worship band will lead us in Pentecost praise, then the congregation will be led in different styles of prayer from the stage. That might include liturgical prayer, prayer in smaller groups, times of silence, physically-active prayer and writing prayers down.

Meanwhile, there will also be small prayer booths around the Portchester Castle grounds, which will include creative prayer stations where adults and children can pray in more innovative styles.

The event marks the end of 10 days of prayer, which will see worshippers in our diocese pray individually at home, with fellow-worshippers at church, and with those of other denominations in their villages, towns and cities.

The Pentecost event will be led by our mission development officer, the Rev Andrew Hargreaves. He said: "Christians across the world will all be praying together during these 10 days, between Ascension Day and Pentecost, as part of the global Thy Kingdom Come prayer initiative.

"It came out of a desire by the Church of England to make personal evangelism a top priority. Thy Kingdom Come has been a fantastic way to get us on our knees and to pray for our friends to embrace the Christian faith. There's a huge array of resources available to help us to find different ways of praying. We'll be making use of some of these innovative ways of praying on the day."

The event is likely to include an Act of Commissioning, which would see Bishop Christopher sending us back to our parishes to witness to those for whom we have prayed.

Worshippers from the Isle of Wight will be offered free coaches to bring them over the Solent and to Portchester Castle. And a car park that can accommodate 1,000 cars will be opened next to the castle. For details of Thy Kingdom Come events, see: [www.portsmouth.anglican.org/thykingdom](http://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/thykingdom).

