

**Welcome!** to our quarterly Newsletter from the Diocese of Sheffield's Healing & Wholeness Group, updating you on healing & wholeness news around the Diocese.

## Happy Christmas to you all!

I have just returned from some precious, snatched God time at a weekend Advent retreat on Hospitality and Sanctuary at Holy Rood house, a retreat centre in Thirsk. It was led by Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal OBE, a methodist minister and one of the founders of the city of Sanctuary (UK) that started in Sheffield in 2005.

There I reflected on how Places of Sanctuary were in fact places of Healing, places where all are welcome.

Soon we will hear those words from the start of John's Gospel, which sum up the whole nativity story in one sentence: 'and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.'

The Greek word *skenoō* means not only 'to dwell', but also 'to tabernacle' or to create a sanctuary, a sacred place where God is present.. where God dwells.. 'and the word became flesh and took sanctuary among us', within our very DNA in fact.

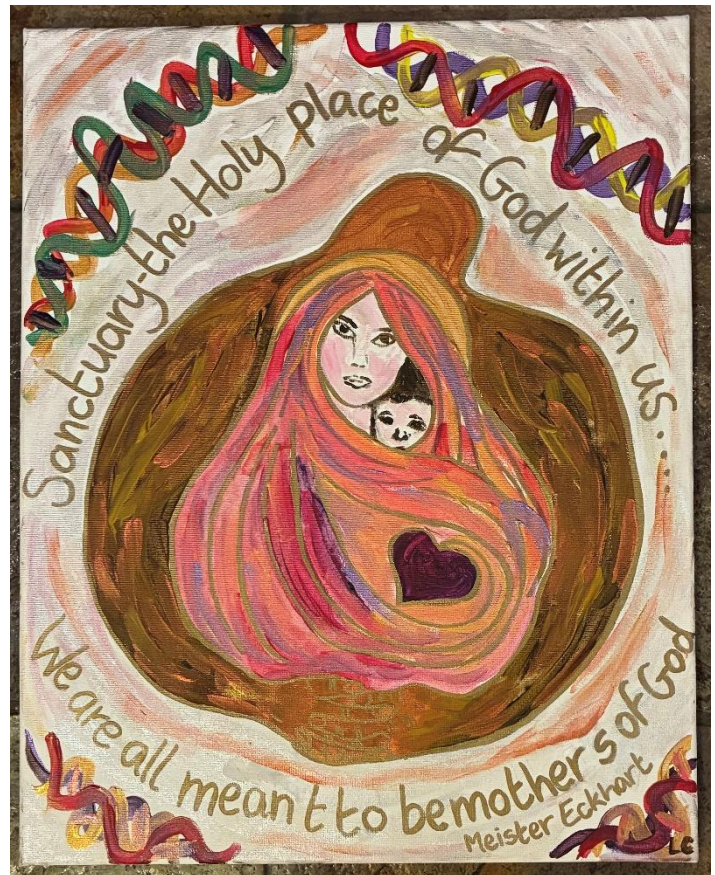
Please make sure you make space for yourself, and for God within you, this Advent!

## All God Asks

God does not require your belief;  
God does not need to be defended;  
God does not profit from being championed in the stale halls of right-ness.

All God asks is that we uncover our hearts and eyes –  
which will lead us to awareness –  
which will lead us to wonder –  
which will lead us to gratitude –  
which will lead us to humility –  
which will lead us to compassion –  
which will lead us to justice –  
which will lead us to the healing of the world.

*Gideon Heugh. Naming God*



**A link to Experiencing Wellbeing:**  
<https://www.holyroodhouse.org.uk/>

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## Reflecting on 2025

***The healing and wholeness team have had a busy year out and about around the Diocese!***

*We have visited all the Deanery Synods and led a Leadership Formation Day on Enabling Healing and Wholeness in Ministry. We have led Prayer Ministry Training in Hackenthorpe, Healing Services at St Mark's Broomhill and Rotherham Minster, a Healing Eucharist at Ulley and are due to lead another at All Saints Aston. We led a Renew wellbeing Retreat at St Polycarp's and our annual Exploration of Healing Day at St Bart's with great feedback.*



### ***In May we opened Our Renew Wellbeing Hub for the Diocese at Rotherham Minster***

If you would like to find out more about Renew Wellbeing Spaces you would be most welcome to visit! At Rotherham we are open Tues 10-12, Wed and Thurs 11-1.

**Contact Rev Louise at:**

**[healing.ministry@sheffield.anglican.org](mailto:healing.ministry@sheffield.anglican.org)**

***Being prayerful • Being present • Being in partnership***

**[www.renewwellbeing.org.uk](http://www.renewwellbeing.org.uk)**

**[churchofengland.renew-wellbeing-spaces](http://churchofengland.renew-wellbeing-spaces)**

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***On Nov 15<sup>th</sup> we held a morning on Whole Person Care, led by the PRIME team of medical educators at St John's Owlerton - see attached summary of the fantastic feedback and a brief article written for us by Stuart Winnall from the prayer ministry team at All Saints:***

“As a new recruit to the Wholeness Team at All Saints Ecclesall, I accepted the invitation to PRIME's Whole Person Care Day. I had no idea what to expect, but I wasn't disappointed. A wide range of people from different backgrounds attended, and the conversations flowed easily from the moment we arrived.



Although PRIME (Partnerships in International Medical Education) originates from the medical profession, the focus of the day was on how churches can recognise and support the needs of the whole person. Physical, psychological, socio-economic and spiritual health were all explored through a range of formats that made the material accessible and engaging.



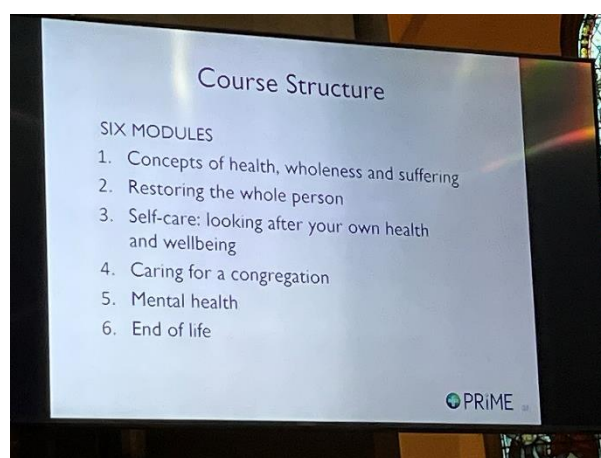
We were also introduced to a variety of resources, organisations and local groups, so we all left feeling aware of a broad network we can signpost people to when they're struggling with any aspect of wholeness. We were encouraged to consider both existing and new ways our churches can support the wider community, and how to communicate these opportunities effectively.

It was a fantastic day, and the hours passed in a flash. The worship was wonderful too. Thanks to everyone involved in organising the event, and to our hosts at St John's Owlerton. -*Thank you Stuart!*



***Dr Emma Hayward, a Christian GP and Educator at Leicester Medical School also runs a 6 half-day course on Whole Person care. If anyone who was not on the day at St John's would like to know more about this or would like me to see if we can put it in Sheffield Email me: [healing.ministry@sheffield.anglican.org](mailto:healing.ministry@sheffield.anglican.org)***

How the church & Healthcare Workers can work in partnership to restore those with disease to wholeness.



**Click here for more information about Prime:**  
[PRIME services - PRIME](#)

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## Looking Forward to Healing and Wholeness in 2026..

**Please pray for the Healing and Wholeness Team as we start to plan for next year. Let us know your thoughts on content and venue. Do you want to host?**

*Thoughts so far include:*

- *An Exploration of Healing Day: Space to reflect on, resource each other & explore Healing Ministry together*
- *What does Healing look like in the context of Disability? A joint event with the Disability team*
- *Churches as places of Sanctuary and Healing where all are welcome*

## **Finally STOP PRESS & PUT IT IN YOUR DIARY!**

I've been talking to +Pete about how next year 18th Oct, St Luke's Day, falls on a Sunday.

Why not start thinking about having a Healing Service in your church on that day? Particularly the 3 churches dedicated to Luke: Lodge Moor, New Rossington, & Worsbrough Common.

+Pete suggests that we might be able to hold a 'Healing Ministry' Sunday with a central flagship Healing service somewhere central like the cathedral.

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***News and Resources for your ministry and those Healing Services we know about round the Diocese are all on our Healing and Wholeness page of the diocesan Website: [Healing & Wholeness](#)***

***Get in touch!***

We are always keen to hear what is going on in your Healing and Wholeness Ministry around the Diocese, so if you have held a healing service or event, have set up a wellbeing space or resource or are planning to do so, please get in touch with us so we can share ideas and let people know. We can help with resources and communications. Please join our Facebook group to share ideas and resources: [Healing & Wholeness in the Diocese of Sheffield | Facebook](#), and we have a dedicated webpage too, [Healing & Wholeness](#)

**You can contact me, Rev Dr Louise Castle:**  
**[healing.ministry@sheffield.anglican.org](mailto:healing.ministry@sheffield.anglican.org)**

**God Bless you all,  
Louise**

*Rev Dr Louise Castle*

*Bishop's Advisor in Healing and Wholeness  
Diocese of Sheffield*



Finally.. Thoughts on Healing Ministry and disability from Rev Monica Sutton, an SSOM & recently retired diabetic nurse on the Healing & Wholeness team.

As a child, I attended a Church of England traditional church. I was a brownie and a guide. I went to Sunday School and eventually became a Sunday school teacher.

And yet I don't ever remember hearing two vital messages. The first being that God loved me unconditionally and the second that God heals.

It therefore was a bit of a shock when, sometime later as a student nurse, I attended a Pentecostal church and discovered the reality of both of these truths. I still struggle with the fact that God loves me unconditionally, although I believe it to be true.

The nature of God's healing remains a somewhat mystery to me. I have anointed people for healing and have seen with my own eyes the most amazing physical healing. And yet there are many who do not experience such healing in the way they are seeking and I find myself asking why this should be so.

Is it because for one reason or another Christians do not pray for healing, finding it unnecessary in the days of the NHS? (can this be really true?).



Is it because Christians feel they do not have sufficient faith to pray for healing, or that gifts of healing are reserved only for those who have that specific gift?

Or is it (as was the case in the Pentecostal church) that the person requesting healing had unrepented sin in their lives which blocked the healing power of God?

I'm sure any of you reading this will have your own equally valid ideas and experiences that you could add to this list.

However, laying this to one side, we are left with many people attending our worship services who have not experienced healing in the way that they would like.

As I age, I have become progressively more disabled. My mobility is dodgy but at least I can walk with assistance. My vision is blurred but I am not blind and not affected by dyslexia. My hearing at present is OK (so best not to be rude in my presence) and I do not suffer with mental health issues.

But I have become increasingly aware of the fact that many of our church services are not happy or even kind places for people who have any type of disability (hidden or overt) and I fear that attending our services may make them feel excluded and worse rather than better as they can emphasise their inabilities, and maybe confirm their fears that they are second class citizens as far as God and the church is concerned. I am also aware that some have stopped attending church because of this.

A few months back I attended the retirement service of a very old friend of mine. He is a priest and over past 20 years has lived with Multiple Sclerosis. He now heads up the disability team in his diocese, and I was particularly interested to attend his retirement service with a critical eye as to how it might be for those attending with disability.

There had clearly been some thought into the service, making it as accessible as possible. There were people there from the MS society who had never been in a church before, and they were made to feel as much at home as possible. When I asked my friend how he felt it had gone his reply was very positive except that he should have had someone signing for those who were deaf.

There had clearly been much thought put into the service but thinking about these changes, there was nothing that could not be achieved by any or most of our churches if we put our mind to it. I am told we have funds and advice for churches who seek help. We need to be more disability aware instead of presuming that everyone who comes through our doors are in perfect health and able bodied.

We live in a budget careful world and I do not suggest that we spend our resources unwisely, but what I would suggest is that when we are planning our worship we think 'disability'. Can we change the background of our presentations from white to dark blue which is far easier to read. Can we increase the font size from an 8 to a 12/14, and use Tahoma font which is easier to read than Arial. These simple

changes cost nothing but can make a huge difference to our elderly or disabled congregations.

Maybe as one of our church new year resolutions we can pledge to make our churches more healing focussed and more disability friendly. What do you think?

Monica

*That's All for this Quarter..*

*Thanks for being part of the Sheffield Diocese Healing and Wholeness Community!*

*Happy Christmas!*

*The Healing and Wholeness Team*