

Forum for

# URBAN<sup>†</sup> SPIRITUALITY

At Newport Cathedral

## Introduction

The cathedral chapter has adopted the concept of 'urban spirituality' as a distinctive component of the cathedral's spiritual life. Urban spirituality is essentially a theology of place, committed to finding God in the concrete reality of the city and post-industrial landscape.

Our approach is not restricted solely to the urban context. We believe that the animating questions, guiding principles and foundational scriptures can support the growth of a spirituality of place across diverse contexts and locations. Our prayer is that the development of urban spirituality brings about transformation for individuals, communities and wider society.

## The animating questions

We believe that a robust and life-enhancing spirituality of place can be developed by prayerfully asking:

- What does serving in an urban context *reveal* to us?
- How does serving in an urban context *impact* us?
- What does serving in an urban context *demand* of us?

## The guiding principles

We believe that God is calling us to be:

- **Prayerful** – asking how, by listening, we are able to craft better stories for individuals, communities and society.
- **Pastoral** – considering how, by loving, we are supporting, encouraging and enabling individuals, communities and society.
- **Prophetic** – contemplating how, by learning, we act and speak for individuals, communities and society as we mature as agents of God's mission.

## The foundational scriptures

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**‘But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.’**

Jeremiah 29, 7 (NRSV)

A theology of place is outward focused, whilst also stressing the reciprocity of welfare. Can you identify an institution or organisation whose welfare, peace and prosperity you might pray for regularly?

**‘The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.’**

Psalms 116, 6 (NRSV)

A theology of place encourages a positive and appreciative attitude. When you think of the city, or your own context, what do you appreciate, value and cherish?

## From prayer, to practice, to partnership

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Urban spirituality normally finds its most local expression in practical ways. Indeed, James teaches us that ‘faith without works is dead’ (James 2, 17). The cathedral is active in service and a partner to many communities and groups. Working with others of goodwill, supporting their efforts, and recognising their expertise and leadership, is an important aspect of urban spirituality. The cathedral supports, resources and promotes the welfare of our city in various ways:

- **Pantry on the Hill** – resourcing school and community healthy eating schemes.
- **Eden Gate** – supporting the street homeless and insecurely housed.
- **Mind on the Hill** – promoting mental health.
- **Newport Pride** – celebrating diversity, equity, justice and human dignity.
- **Stow Hill Community Centre and Raven House** – supporting our neighborhood foodbanks.
- **Politicians and civic leaders** – praying for, engaging with and challenging those charged with civic and public policy.
- **St Woolos Sinfonia, cathedral music and the Guild of Bellringers** – enjoying and celebrating our musical tradition.
- **Ecumenical and interfaith community** – committing in prayer to peace and goodwill together.
- **Newport Rising, the Chartists and the campaign for the statue of Lady Rhondda** – bringing into the present our political heritage and history.

And many, many more! As you read the list above, can you identify any passages from The Bible that resonate? Could you write your own prayer for the mission of the cathedral and the emerging Forum for Urban Spirituality?