

Advent Sunday this year will mark the beginning of the 'Year of the Bible', which is a Diocesan initiative to help us engage with the Scriptures, both individually and within our worshipping communities.

The Old and New Testaments are foundational for our faith and its practice. In all our acts of worship we engage extensively with the Bible and so spend a lot of time listening to, and reflecting upon, sacred Scripture.

Consequently, it makes sense that we ought to know more about it. For instance, at the most basic we need to be able to find our way round the Bible which is like a library of books all in one volume. Would we know where to find 1 Samuel or 2 Chronicles? Would we know the name of the last book in the Old Testament? Would we know what the Apocrypha is? This is all basic, foundational knowledge that will help us to engage with the Bible on our thinking, our worship and our prayer.

As we go a bit deeper, it's helpful for us to be able to date when different parts of the Bible were written and what their historical context was (which often explains partially why they were written). It's fascinating to identify (particularly in the Old Testament) what kind of literature we're dealing with - for instance, is it a legal document, history, poetry, worship songs or doctrine and theology? In the New Testament it's illuminating to identify the slightly different presentations of Jesus in each of the Gospels. In reading

the Epistles (which of course are the earliest parts of the New Testament) it is moving to read about how Paul wrote about his own spiritual experience of the Risen Christ turning his life upside down and how the other Epistles shaped the early Church's understanding of Christ and his work of salvation.

At the end of the Year of the Bible, the hope is that we will be more knowledgeable about the Bible; that we will be much more excited about the Bible and so will want to spend more time reading our Bibles; and that importantly we will be more able to make connections between the Bible and our everyday lives and decision-making.

So the Year of the Bible will hopefully help us to grow in understanding and knowledge of the Bible. But above all it will help us to grow spiritually. The Bible is a place where we can access the life of God and so in the words of Thomas Cranmer it is by 'reading, marking, learning and inwardly digesting' the words of Scripture that we are given the resources to share in and live out the life of God.

CELEBRATING

Year of the Bible 2017 across the Diocese

THE YEAR OF THE BIBLE

November 2016 – November 2017

NOVEMBER 2016

27 November ADVENT SUNDAY

DECEMBER

- Launch of The Year of the Bible on 4 December (the Second Sunday of Advent) with people bringing their Bibles to church
- Launch of the School Art Competition
- The Bible Society's campaign 'Live the Bible'

JANUARY 2017

- Travelling Roadshows around the Diocese on 'Exploring the Story'

FEBRUARY

- Travelling Roadshows
- Book at Breakfast at the Cathedral on 8 and 9 February at 9.00am Discussing Simon Taylor's book *How to Read the Bible (without switching off your brain)*

MARCH

1 March ASH WEDNESDAY

- Lent Course – Hear the Word of the Lord
- Archdeaconry of Brighton and Lewes Lecture on *The Bible and Science* on 23 March at 10.30am at Holy Cross, Woodingdean

APRIL

9 April PALM SUNDAY

16 April EASTER DAY

- Lent Course – Hear the Word of the Lord
- Judging of the School Art Competition

MAY

25 May ASCENSION DAY

- Archdeaconry of Hastings Lecture on *The Bible and the Media* on 17 May at 6.00pm at St John's Upper St Leonard's
- Nine Days of Prayer between Ascension Day and Pentecost focused on 'Thy Kingdom Come'

JUNE

4 June PENTECOST

- Archdeaconry of Horsham Lecture on *The Bible and Politics* on 14 June at St Mary's Easebourne
- Cathedral Chancellor's Lectures on *The Bible in the Public Square* at the Cathedral (dates and speakers to be confirmed)
- Bible Courses using Resources from the Bible Society

SEPTEMBER

- Archdeaconry of Chichester Lecture on *Biblical Criticism in a Secular Culture* on 5 September at 3.00pm at St Nicholas', Arundel.

OCTOBER

29 October BIBLE SUNDAY

NOVEMBER

26 November CONCLUSION OF THE YEAR OF THE BIBLE

- Cathedral Study Day on 4 November led by Professor James Dunn and Professor Steve Moyise entitled *Troublesome Texts: Exploring Difficult Parts of the Bible from The Song of Songs to the Book of Revelation.*

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

- On the website, there will be recommended books on the Bible, starting with books recommended by the Bishops for Christmas
- There will be available a range of resources for personal study or for groups including *The Bible Course: Get the Big Picture; Making Good Sense of the Bible;* and *Lyfe.*
- Schools and parishes are encouraged to use Open the Book for collective worship and in schools the new resource for Religious Education Understanding Christianity will be used.
- Parishes are encouraged to think about events that could be organised around the theme of the Bible such as the use of the Lumo films on the Gospel of St Luke and the Gospel of St John.