

A free service bringing the ancient monastic cycle of daily prayer to millions of modern listeners has broadcast its 1,000th episode.

The Daily Prayer podcast, brings listeners together twice a day for the short traditional services of Morning and Evening.

The podcast, available both via the Daily Prayer app as well as all major podcasting platforms, was launched in March 2021. It has now been streamed more than four million times, with a monthly audience of 60,000 people.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said: "Reaching 1000 episodes of Daily Prayer is an impressive milestone."

"Being able to participate in Daily Prayer through the app has been of great help and encouragement for many to begin, sustain or develop their life of prayer."

"I often hear of people who have found a rhythm of prayer by using it. I'd like to thank all those involved in bringing the services together each day."

The services are usually led by the Revd Catherine Williams from Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire, with readings recorded by people around the country and music from St Martin's Voices in London.

The 1,000th service falls on the Feast of Mary Magdalene (22 July) with readings, psalms, and music to mark the day.

Canon Simon Wilkinson was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 2013. In the years that followed his diagnosis he continued turning to Matins and evensong to keep him "on track spiritually" – a pattern he said he followed ever since starting at Cuddesdon Theological College in the 1970s.

"It was the bedrock of my spirituality along with the Eucharist for all those 40 or so years," he said.

On discovering the Church of England's online Daily Prayer podcast, Simon expressed his relief at "not needing to carry so many bits of paper or books at the same time", as he explained:

"I have found the whole experience to be transformative for me and for many others whom I have recommended doing the same thing."

"When I am particularly unwell, I am now able simply to switch on the iPad and lie back and listen to the services."

Dr Rob Mannion, retired medical lecturer and writer, described finding "much joy and peace" in listening to the Daily Prayer podcast while unable to attend his church due to a health condition,

"From the comfort of my special armchair, I'm able to share in the worship with all the wonderful music and voices" he explained.

"We may seem to be apart" he added, "but in fact, we're brought much closer together through the online medium."

Revd Laura Martin, Curate at St John's and St Luke's Harrogate (pictured) said the Daily Prayer podcast from the Church of England was "a revelation" amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

"At that time, finding the time and energy to retreat into prayer became more difficult" she explained.

"I found that my established rhythms of prayer went out of the window with the demands of home learning, home working and the general chaos of everything."

"I established a pattern of taking a walk whilst listening to the podcast and found much needed peace, connection with God, space to reflect and a deep sense of God's presence as I walked."

She added: "It made a significant difference to my spiritual and emotional wellbeing during the winter period of lockdown."

3 min read

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