

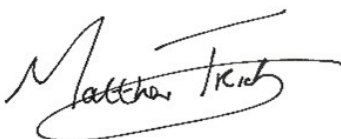
Prayer is not merely asking for help; it is communion. As St Augustine wrote, “our heart is restless until it rests in you.” In prayer, our hearts are reordered—where anxiety becomes intercession, anger becomes radical honesty, and weariness becomes healthy dependence. Jesus often “withdrew... and prayed” (Luke 5:16); if the Son of God sought the Father’s company, how much more do we? Prayer also builds courage: it teaches us to see the world truthfully and to love it without being consumed by it. “Those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength” (Isaiah 40:31). Waiting is not passivity but practised dependence—resilience for leadership, parenting, friendship, service, and grief.

Bible reading is not information-gathering but meeting, and dwelling in, the living Word: “All Scripture is breathed out by God...” (2 Timothy 3:16–17). We come with our questions and let the Spirit comfort, confront, and form us. Meditation helps the Word sink in—slowly letting Christ’s words dwell in us (Colossians 3:16). Nature, especially the beauty of Derbyshire, can restore wonder and patience as we remember “the earth is the LORD’s” (Psalm 24:1). And study is loving God with our minds (Mark 12:30), so we can “give a reason for the hope” within us (1 Peter 3:15).

None of these practices are about spiritual heroics or instant ‘wins’. They are about attention. They are ways of turning towards Jesus so that Jesus can turn us outward again. They are also wonderfully adaptable. A busy parent might pray in ten-minute fragments. A carer might read a Psalm each day. A student might find Christ in study and service. A retiree might offer the gift of time and intercession. The point is not the quantity; it is the orientation: “Abide in me... for apart from me you can do nothing” (John 15:4–5).

As we are being formed in this way, evangelism becomes less about pressure and more about overflow. New disciples are rarely argued into existence; they are often drawn to a life that radiates Jesus—steadiness in chaos, hope in sorrow, kindness under strain. Peter says, “Always be prepared to make a defence... yet do it with gentleness and respect” (1 Peter 3:15). Gentleness and respect are not add-ons; they are evidence that Christ is at work in us.

So, as this year continues to move and change, let’s choose the steady places of encounter. Let’s build on the Rock. Let’s make room for worship, prayer, Scripture, meditation, nature, and study—not as tasks, but as meeting places. And as we seek to be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what Jesus did, may our neighbours—through our ordinary, grace-shaped lives—come to know the extraordinary love of Christ.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew Trick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'M' and a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

The Ven. Matthew Trick
Archdeacon of Derby City and South Derbyshire