



Devon Church Leaders urge prayer at New Year

Hope 2008 is a national initiative encouraging and inspiring Christians to work together for the benefit of their communities in 2008 and beyond (visit www.hope08.com). It will enable churches to express Christ's transforming love to those amongst whom we live and work. Together we recognize Hope 2008 as a wonderful opportunity for Churches Together groups and other Christian networks in Devon to act as one body and speak with one voice in witness of our one Lord. We continue to strongly commend all local churches to join together in this venture.

We urge Christians to gather together on New Year's Eve to pray for Hope 2008 activities in their communities and across the county. We ask you to pray for fresh opportunity to engage with your community in mission and that our outreach and service will engage with the needs of today's society and express the reality of our faith. Pray that churches will engage in partnership with each other and with their communities to show the kindness of God. Continue to pray for the needs of your communities.

Our prayer is that Hope 2008 will encourage churches in Devon to work effectively together in the service of the Gospel both in mission and social action. Let us listen to God's voice as we prepare to engage in action through Hope 2008. Let us join in praying that lives will be transformed, communities will be blessed, faith will be renewed, churches will be encouraged and God's peace will reign.

Rt. Revd. Michael Langrish
(Anglican Bishop of Exeter)

Rt. Revd. Christopher Budd
(Roman Catholic Bishop of Plymouth)

Revd. David Grosch-Miller
(Moderator of United Reformed Church South Western Synod)

Revd. John Carne
(Chair of Plymouth and Exeter District of the Methodist Church)

Revd. Jez Brown
(Senior Regional Minister, South West Baptist Association)

Major Cliff Bradbury (Divisional Commander, South Western Division of the Salvation Army)

Rt Revd Bob Evens
(Anglican Bishop of Crediton & Chair of Churches Together in Devon)

Rt Revd John Ford
(Anglican Bishop of Plymouth)

Stories

Exeter Cathedral – Christians of every denomination are asked to gather at the Cathedral to pray for all the people of Devon. From 11 pm until 7 am each hour will be led by different churches giving opportunity to pray in different ways. People are welcome to stay for an hour or for all night with bacon baps being served for breakfast.

South Molton – Christians in the town are gathering for a New Year's Eve party, after which they will take time to pray for their communities.

Barnstaple – Christians from the area will gather at Grosvenor Church from 8.30 pm on New Year's Eve until 12.10 am to eat and then pray together.

Christ Church, Estover in Plymouth – the chapel will be open for prayer between 6 and 8 pm on New Year's Eve. At 11.30 pm Christians will gather to pray for the people who live in the estates around the church. Through a Christmas card distributed with the free newspaper, people are being invited to telephone or e-mail their requests for prayer.

Churches Together in Plymouth are encouraging congregations across the city to pray at New Year and are distributing prayer cards inviting neighbours, friends and work colleagues to join them. The card reads:

Please join us as we pray for:
courage for the decision-makers;
wisdom for the business leaders;
compassion for the carers;
and commitment from us all to bring hope to those most in need.

God, please bless our city with:
safety on our streets;
love in our homes;
peace in our relationships;
friendship for the lonely;
help for the struggling;
healing for the sick;
comfort for the dying.

Help us to celebrate what is good;
reject what is evil;
and share your love with everyone.
Amen.

County-wide Initiatives

<i>Big Hope</i>	Easter - use the Hope resource book for new ideas to mark Easter. FNXtra – youth project in Exeter (8 – 12 April)
<i>Hope where you live</i>	3-5 May - offering acts of kindness and practical service to our communities. 24 - 26 May - Big Cream Tea - offer a free cream tea wherever and however you wish to your community.
<i>Hope Explored</i>	September - arrange an enquirers course.
<i>Gift of Hope</i>	Christmas 08 - we are working on an exciting county wide proposal to mark Christmas. More details next year!