

The Community of St Hugh



A Handbook for Members



DIOCESE OF LINCOLN
faithful · confident · joyful



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Welcome from Bishop David


'Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain' wrote the Psalmist. Here in Lincoln Diocese we have set ourselves a huge vision: to build a healthy, vibrant and sustainable Church transforming lives in greater Lincolnshire. None of us believes that we can achieve this in our own strength or merely by our own efforts: prayer is the key to seeing God work through, over and above our own endeavours.

There are many ways of praying. Alone or in small groups; liturgically or extemporarily; with words, with actions, with music, or in silence; in church services or in our own special places. But Jesus did promise that when his people agree in prayer, there is extra power. Prayer in community formed the bedrock of the Christian Church, as it had Judaism before.

If we are to build that kind of a Church in our diocese, we need a community of committed pray-ers to fuel the hard work of our local Christian communities and our central administration. Like several other Anglican dioceses we have created such a community in our Community of St Hugh, a scattered group from all around the Diocese united by a common desire to deepen their prayer lives and to cry out to God for the renewing of our mission and ministry, and committed to a Rule of Life which includes regular prayer for the Diocese.

This handbook introduces the life of the Community of St Hugh, explains a little of how it works, and invites you to join in this great adventure of prayer. Please read it prayerfully, and consider whether God might be calling you to be a part of this community.

With God's blessing,



+ David Grimsky



The Collect for St Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln

O God,
who endowed your servant Hugh
with a wise and cheerful boldness
and taught him to commend to earthly rulers
the discipline of a holy life:
give us grace like him to be bold in the service of the gospel,
putting our confidence in Christ alone,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Supporting materials and resources

As the community develops and grows, the diocese will support members by developing resources and organising regular events.

The following resources will be available via the Diocese of Lincoln website:

Morning prayer

Midday prayer

Evening prayer

Compline

A series of weekly homilies

Access to a Spiritual Director

Community prayers

Monthly emails with news, stories, resources and prayer pointers, with opportunities for feedback and your own contributions

We are planning to provide some initial training for people who wish to develop a rule of life using this material. For information about the initial training and all other resources and events visit www.lincoln.anglican.org/communityofsthugh

or contact:

discipleship@lincoln.anglican.org 01522-50 40 49

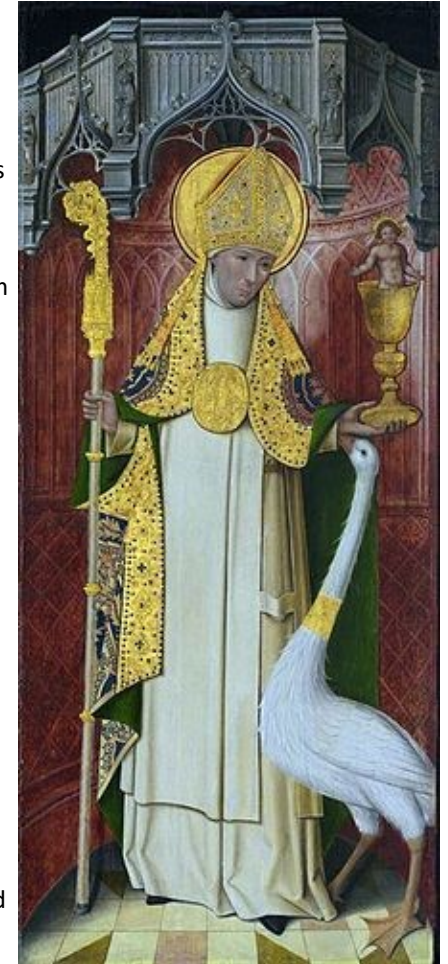
Who was St Hugh?

Hugh was born around 1140 in Avalon, near Grenoble in France. As a child he grew up as part of a priory alongside his father, since his mother had died when he was eight years old. He was sent to boarding school until his father returned from soldiering and took him to live in the Priory. At the age of 18 Hugh was ordained deacon and around the age of 24 became the prior of a neighbouring cell.

He left that post and committed himself to duties as a Carthusian monk at Grande Chartreuse where he became procurator, or treasurer. He was then headhunted by King Henry II who was setting up a Carthusian convent at Witham in Somerset. He was the prior at Witham for 10 years before being made Bishop of Lincoln in 1186, a role which he had initially rejected.

Hugh travelled endlessly, confirming children, consecrating churches and burying the dead. His sense of justice was recognised by the Pope and by the three kings under whom he served, as he was made judge over some of the most important legal cases of the time. Hugh was a critic and friend to those kings. He was friend to the oppressed, tended to lepers and risked his life preventing a group of Jews from being killed. Hugh revived the schools in Lincoln and is probably most famous for rebuilding the cathedral after it had been destroyed in an earthquake. Hugh is often pictured with a swan that is said to have taken its residence in Stow and made a special attachment to Hugh, eating from his hand and protecting him from attack.

Hugh died in 1200 after 14 years as the Bishop of Lincoln and was canonised in 1220 by Pope Honorius III.





The Community of St Hugh

The Bishop of Lincoln's hope is to see every person grow in their relationship with God, and for each one of us to be faithful in our worship, confident in our discipleship and joyful in our service. The Community of St Hugh is a way for people in the diocese, both individuals and churches, to make a personal commitment to working towards this.

The Community of St Hugh takes its inspiration from Lincoln's most famous Bishop, Hugh, and is a modern-day example of a monastic order or

community. In the 3rd and 4th centuries, as Christians were no longer persecuted and Christianity eventually became a legal religion in the Roman Empire, many Christians felt called to a deeper, and in some cases less corrupt, faith, withdrawing from the world into desert places to live out lives of prayer and worship.

As these communities grew and expanded leadership structures were put in place, usually with an overall leader or abbot to guard the vision and lead the community forward, and an administrator or prior to take care of the day-to-day running of the community. The modern monastic movement grew from these early expressions, but more recently communities have been formed among people not physically living together, but joined through a common adherence to a Rule of Life, or spiritual lifestyle.

The Community of St Hugh is one example of this type of community of prayer, and our aim is to pray specifically for the transformation of lives throughout the diocese, and so to fuel the witness and ministry of local churches across Lincolnshire.

Members of the community will be scattered across the diocese and wider afield but will be joined together through living out their lives shaped by three rules, and by commitment to quarterly gatherings.

You do not need to take life-long vows: each September there will be a rededication service when you may recommit to the life of the Community, or not if your calling has moved in a different direction.

But why?

It is worth asking yourself where you hope that this Rule of Life might take you, and setting some annual goals. This form might be an aid as you think this through for the year ahead.

The 'in order that' line helps you to think about not just *what* you'll do, but *why* you'll do it.

By developing a Rule of Life I hope to achieve the following things over the next year:

In order that _____

In order that _____

In order that _____

In order that _____

It can be helpful to make yourself accountable in a 'holy friendship' so that you are not alone in living out your Rule of Life. A separate leaflet gives information about this vital aspect of discipleship.

Community Rule 3 – Joyful in Service

By God's grace, I will be joyful in the service of others, loving them as God loves me.

Things you might include:

- Volunteering at a local church or charity
- Becoming a helper, Bishop's visitor or governor at a school
- Offering to hear young children read at school
- Learning to listen to those in need
- Cooking food for a neighbour who is unwell or going through a life event
- Visiting someone who is sick at home or in hospital
- Organising a Big Lunch for your neighbours or community
- Being an advocate for a cause that you care about
- Being involved with local or national politics, bringing a Christian perspective



The Community Rule

Rule 1 – Faithful in Worship

By God's grace, I will be faithful in worship, seeking to love God with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my mind.

Rule 2 – Confident in Discipleship

By God's grace, I will grow in depth of discipleship, becoming more confident in my relationship with Jesus Christ.

Rule 3 – Joyful in Service

By God's grace, I will be joyful in the service of others, loving them as God loves me.

The Community of St Hugh is for anyone who wishes to deepen their own discipleship and spiritual life, and who has a heart to see local churches renewed and effective in bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to their communities. In addition to following the three rules, as a member of the Community of St Hugh you will be encouraged to pray specifically and earnestly for

The renewal of the Diocese of Lincoln as it seeks to be a healthy, vibrant and sustainable church, transforming lives in greater Lincolnshire.

An outpouring of the Holy Spirit across the diocese.

Individual parishes and benefices, and other intentions outlined in the monthly diocesan Prayer Diary.

The Community of St Hugh has been developed to enable everyone in the diocese to be able to become a member, so that even if you are already committed as part of another order or community you can also choose to be part of this community.

What is a Rule of Life?

Rules of life have been developed over the centuries to help people develop a pattern to their lives, drawing together the habits and activities they are involved with, both within the life of the Church and in their Monday to Saturday lives.

A separate leaflet suggests how you might go about discerning and writing up your personal rule of life. Here are some suggestions about what areas might be covered in your Rule.

Community Rule 1 – Faithful in Worship

By God's grace, I will be faithful in worship, seeking to love God with all my heart, with all my soul and with all my mind.

Things you might include:

- A pattern of Daily Prayer (Morning, Midday, Evening, Compline or Night Prayer)
- The Eucharist
- Private prayer
- Commitment to a local church
- Grace before meals
- Reading and meditating on God's Word
- Seasonal services: Easter, Christmas, Harvest, Mothering Sunday ...
- Healing Services
- Fasting
- Feasting
- Attending a national festival or conference
- Solitude and silence



Community Rule 2 – Confident in Discipleship

By God's grace, I will grow in depth of discipleship, becoming more confident in my relationship with Jesus Christ.

Things you might include:

- Finding a Spiritual Director or Soul Friend
- Being part of a small prayer group (triplet)
- Developing other 'Holy Friendships'
- Joining a homegroup, prayer group or study group
- Reading the bible
- Spiritual or theological reading
- Listening to podcasts
- Nurture courses or further study
- Abstinence
- Sharing your faith with people
- Praying with your spouse and children
- Helping to stimulate more prayer in the life of your church

