

Our Ref: +MBW

1<sup>st</sup> March 2024

Dear Friends

I'd like to invite you to join us on a pilgrimage to the Taizé Community in France that I shall be leading from 13<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> July 2024, with support from Revd Rich Miles, Missional Priest for Youth & Young Adults. This year's pilgrimage follows an amazing trip to Taizé that included people from Bath & Wells in 2023. It was so good that we want to go again!

We are sending you this invitation for three reasons:

- A visit to Taizé is one of the most positive and fulfilling activities that anyone can undertake. We spend a lot of time in church talking *about* God. A visit to Taizé enables those that go to have a big encounter *with* God. Therefore we offer you this opportunity as a way of encountering the Lord that many people have found extraordinarily enriching and life changing.
- We want to get to know you better! Often our interactions with you are brief and in larger gatherings. A week spent with you living life in community in Taizé will offer us all a much richer experience of encountering each other. Our hope is that this can only but serve us all well as we live out our calling to discipleship and our lives of Christian faith.
- Taizé has a particular vocation to offer its life to people aged under 30 and as a young adult in our diocese we'd really like to intentionally invest some time in valuing you.

Having given you the 'why', let me now let you know a little more about the 'what and the how'.

### **What is Taizé all about?**

Taizé was founded out of the conflict of WWII and is an extraordinary place to visit. Each week it offers several thousand young people from around the world time and space to breathe, to listen, to think and to live for a while to the beat of heaven. People that go to Taizé often say it's an experience that's changed their lives. You can find out a lot more about Taizé by visiting their [website](#). You might also enjoy seeing what a week in Taizé is like by watching this [short film](#).

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### **What happens at Taizé?**

Three times a day everyone gathers with the Taizé community in the church for prayer with songs, a scripture reading and silence. The worship uses the Taizé community's chants. Singing them alongside 3,000 other people from all around Europe is as different from singing them in gatherings here as is watching your local primary's year six team play in comparison to watching Liverpool play at Anfield.

Each day, the brothers of the community introduce a biblical reflection organised by language, followed by a time of discussion in small groups. This is an extraordinary opportunity to encounter the thinking, insights and perspectives of people from many different traditions and from all around the world.

The meetings at Taizé are about searching, listening and thinking about what it means to be a human being, and how we can do something to bring justice, peace and hope to our world. They provide a space where young adults can meet people their age from other countries and talk about important things. But at the same time, it is also possible at Taizé to discover how to be on your own.

In the afternoon each day there are workshops which explore themes of faith and life touching on work, society, art and culture, social justice and world peace.

Between the meals and times of prayer there is plenty of free time. In the evening there is a great time of socialising at 'Oyak' where over refreshments, there is singing, dancing and all kinds of spontaneous entertainment in the midst of the crowd. And the church is always open for those looking for quiet.

Nothing is compulsory about Taizé. The wonderful sense of freedom there makes the times of prayer and meeting tremendously compelling.

### **What are the practicalities?**

Travel details are currently being finalised. We shall be travelling to Taizé by overnight bus.

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You will need to have a valid UK passport or valid non-UK passport with valid visa (if required).

The group will be camping, so you'll need to bring your own sleeping-bag, camping mat and a robust tent. There are shower and washing facilities on site. It can be hot in France at that time of year, but it can also rain, so you will need to come prepared!

All meals are provided at Taizé – a very large communal eating experience! Different dietary requirements are all properly catered for.

The cost of a week's pilgrimage to Taizé is around £400. We are exploring if we can find some additional funding to help subsidise the trip but we'd be grateful if you could ask for assistance from your local parishes or local trust funds that could help you. If none of this avails and cost alone would prevent your joining us, please do speak discreetly to myself or Rich who may be able to offer some further help.

### **Would you like to come?**

We hope so much that you'd like to join us on our pilgrimage. We think it will be a wonderful and life-changing experience for us all. We're personally looking forward to the experience tremendously.

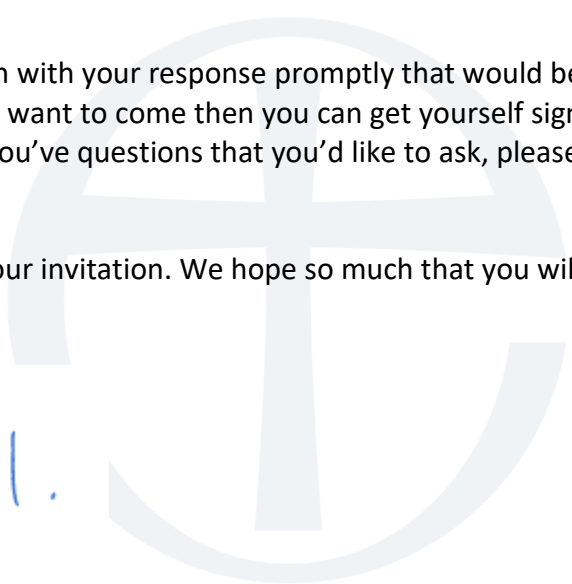
If you could get back to Rich with your response promptly that would be much appreciated or if you've already decided you want to come then you can get yourself signed up and booked on via our [Taizé](#) website page. If you've questions that you'd like to ask, please don't hesitate to be in touch.

Thank you for considering our invitation. We hope so much that you will be able to be with us.

Yours with all good wishes,



+ Michael.



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