



St Philips

St Philip's Prayer Warrior Group on WhatsApp

Purpose of the group

The purpose of the St Philip's Prayer Warrior Group is to provide a space where personal requests for prayer can be shared within the congregation. These are often related to unexpected events, for example, a sudden health need or something that is happening soon, such as a scheduled operation. The group is not a forum for wider intercession concerning world events or the ministry and mission of St Philip's Church.

Defined Terms

St Philip's Prayer Warrior Group – a WhatsApp Group specific to the congregation of St Philip's Church, Bath in which Group Admin Members post Prayer Requests from the congregation, for the congregation. The group is part of the prayer life of St Philip's Church and is conducted with the oversight of the vicar and the churchwardens.

Group Admin Member – the members of the group who hold the administration of the St Philip's Prayer Warrior Group and have sole ability to post Prayer Requests onto the WhatsApp group chat. Current Group Admin Members can be found in the 'group information' on WhatsApp, listed as 'Group Admin'.

Participant – a member of St Philip's Church, Bath, who is listed on ChurchSuite and is part of the St Philip's Prayer Warrior Group. The current list of Participants can be found in the 'group information' on WhatsApp.

Prayer Request – the only WhatsApp messages that can be posted on the St Philip's Prayer Warrior Group. Only Group Admin Members can post Prayer Requests.

Senior Leadership Team – As of 2023: Revd Paul Ferguson; Jules Ferguson; Revd Liza Wortelhock; Revd Matt Vaine.

Safeguarding Team – the current team that oversees Safeguarding at St Philip's Church, Bath. Details of Safeguarding Team members can be found on the Safeguarding notice board in the lobby of the church, on the church website or by contacting the church office or a member of Senior Leadership Team.

ChurchSuite – St Philip's Church database.

How to Join

1. Participants must have a mobile phone with WhatsApp installed. If a congregation member does not have a smart phone that can install WhatsApp, they will need to send Prayer Requests via normal text message to a Group Admin Member, who will post the request on the WhatsApp chat.
2. To use the Prayer Warrior Group, Participants' details, including mobile phone number, must be recorded on ChurchSuite. Prospective members who do not have a ChurchSuite login, are required to complete a 'Connect Card' at the welcome desk, checking the box that says: '*Add me to your Prayer Warrior Group on WhatsApp*'. This is a prayer group for the members of St. Philip's Church family only. Participants' personal details will not be shared with any 3rd parties.
3. Please note that by joining a WhatsApp group, Participants' phone numbers will be available to all the members of the WhatsApp group.
4. Participants can opt out of the WhatsApp group at any time.

How it works

1. This is a "Read Only" group - Prayer Requests will be posted onto the group via a small number of Group Admin Members only. Participants will not be able to post Prayer Requests directly to the group, nor will it be possible to post responses to the group. This will ensure that the group is not inundated with messages, replies and emojis.
2. To make a Prayer Request, Participants send a personal WhatsApp message (or text if they do not have a smart phone) directly to a Group Admin Member of the Prayer Warrior WhatsApp group.
3. Please use the following format:
 - 3.1. Start the message with 'PR' (which stands for 'Prayer Request' and will help the Group Admin Member to identify the message as a St Philip's Prayer Warrior Group request among their other personal messages.
 - 3.2. Add the date (this helps with clarity)
 - 3.3. Provide a short message to outline:
 - Who has asked for prayer: name yourself if you would like prayer or the person on whose behalf you are making the Prayer Request
 - A brief outline of the situation as appropriate
 - What you would like prayer for (this might feel like stating the obvious but unless you say, others will have to guess)
 - End the message by saying who the message has come from – it may well mean your name is on there twice, that is ok. Clarity on where the request is from is important
 - Please aim to limit your Prayer Requests to 40 words max.
4. The Group Admin Member will then post the Prayer Request onto the St Philip's Prayer Warrior WhatsApp group.

Example:

20/02/24: Please pray for Debs Ross who is struggling with knee pain. For pain to reduce and for her visit to London on 23/02/24 to go ahead. Thanks Debs Ross

5. Sending a Prayer Request on behalf of another person:
 - 5.1. Always obtain permission first
 - 5.2. Agree the wording with them before you send
 - 5.3. Make it clear in your message that they have agreed

Example:

20/02/24: Debs Ross has asked for prayer for knee pain to reduce and for her to be able to visit London 23/02/24. She has agreed to this message being sent. Thanks Janet Worth

This format means that the Group Admin Member will be in no doubt about the Prayer Request; that the information contained in it can be shared with the Prayer Warrior Group on WhatsApp; and that permission has been obtained where appropriate.

Guidelines

1. Scope - any Participant in the group can submit a Prayer Request.
2. Dates - even though WhatsApp shows the date when a request is posted, please use dates in every Prayer Request as a reference, rather than 'tomorrow' or 'this Thursday' which can be confusing if the message is not read straight away or if there is a delay in posting.
3. Permission - Participants may send Prayer Requests concerning themselves or their own children if they are minors. Permission *must* be obtained for everyone else. Participants should not assume that their spouse, parents or grown-up children would like them to submit a Prayer Request on their behalf.
4. Sociable hours - we all lead different lives and so please only send Prayer Requests to a Group Admin Member between 7.30am and 9.00pm wherever possible.
5. The Group Admin Members will endeavour to post Prayer Requests within 24 hours of receipt. If a Prayer Request has not been posted within 24 hours, please contact an alternative Group Admin Member.
6. Confidentiality - all Participants of the Prayer Warrior Group *must* maintain strict confidentiality. (The *only* exception to this requirement is in cases of Safeguarding concern – see below). Sharing information learned from a Prayer Request is prohibited and not the purpose of the group. Permission must be obtained from the person concerned before any information can be shared outside the WhatsApp group. Do not forward messages from the group. Do not share anyone's phone number from the group. Do not save anyone's phone number to your own phone without their express permission.

7. Please be aware that all Prayer Requests are forwarded to Senior Leadership Team so that they can keep up to date with present pastoral needs.
8. Safeguarding – if any Prayer Request gives you any cause for a safeguarding concern, please contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team or the Safeguarding Team, in person, by phone or by email. The Safeguarding Team's email is safeguarding@stphilipstjames.org. Please 'cc' a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
9. The Group Admin Members reserve the right to delay posting a Prayer Request, and/or first consult with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (and Safeguarding Team if deemed necessary), if they have any concerns about confidentiality, permissions from 3rd parties, safeguarding concerns or simply due to a lack of clarity regarding the specifics of a Prayer Request. The person who made the Prayer Request will be notified and reasons provided.
10. The Group Admin Members reserve the right not to post a Prayer Request at all if the request is deemed inappropriate, contrary to the purposes of the group or detrimental to the culture and ethos by which the group is run. This decision will only be made in consultation with the vicar. The Participant who made the Prayer Request will be notified and reasons provided.
11. If any Participant has any concerns, or requires clarification, about the operation of the group, they are invited to contact a Group Admin Member at first instance, following which they are welcome to contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team.



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