**Why 10 Days of Prayer?**

**2 Chronicles 7:14 New King James Version (NKJV)**

14if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Speaking to us through this verse, I believe, are the reasons why. Important to grasp initially is that this verse starts with a question or an offer, ‘…If…’ so regardless of whether there is an organised space waiting to facilitate this for us in September it’s not a done deal. The Lord is constantly making an offer that needs a response from us. Importantly it is us, His bride that he is calling when He says ’…called by My name…’

We will need to ‘…humble…’ ourselves because we are in His presence, before Him and this laying aside of our own agendas is crucial. In the humbling He will show us when we have been doing His will and when we have not. Many, including myself have been doing good things but are they Gods good things? He asks us to ‘…humble…’ ourselves in His presence, set aside our own agendas in order to obey Him when he says, ‘…seek My face…’In doing so He can then show us where we’ve slipped up and what we need to ask forgiveness for. This can be personally but also as a body. There may be things that have happened in our area or our nation that the Lord wants us to repent of and ask for forgiveness as part of a reconciliation process. Once we know what we need to turn from He can lead us away from it in order to ‘…turn from our wicked ways…’ The Hebrew word for turn here is shüv, to return, turn back. In other words to turn back to God.

This shows us our part of a covenant which prepares us for His amazing promise in return, ‘…then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.’

I believe this is an offer from Him to the nation because He loves us so much. He’s told us what we need to do so that He can forgive us and heal our land. It is this process that the Lord could lead us through during the 10 days of prayer.

**Why 20th-27th September 2017?**

The Hebrew word Teshuva captures a movement. It means to turn, to turn away from and turn towards God.

The Feast of Trumpets, Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New year is on the 20th September. It is then followed by the 10 days of awe and ends with Yom Kippur, The day of Atonement on September the 30th. These 10 days are the final 10 days of a 40 day appointed season of prayer known as Teshuvah.

**Why Forbury Gardens?**

I believe the Lord sees this as a spiritual sanctuary. It is former Abbey ground and was traditionally the courtyard where monks met with the public. For borough meaning the borough before. According to the twelfth century chronicler William of Malmesbury, the abbey was built on a gravel spur "between the rivers Kennet and Thames, on a spot calculated for the reception of almost all who might have occasion to travel to the more populous cities of England". It was considered the borough before all the cities of England.

**How does 10 days of prayer connect to the rebuilding/renovations of Reading Abbey and the excavations to exhume the body of Henry I?**

During its heyday The Abbey was one of the pilgrimage centres of England. It was dedicated to St.James of whose symbol, the Scollop shell acts as a sign to welcome pilgrims. The Scollop shell can be seen in the park and is even repeated on the shield of Reading Universities flag.

What better way to celebrate ‘Reading Abbey revealed’, the renovations to the Abbey and the re-opening to the public than by celebrating the place of pilgrimage Reading Abbey once was.

Henry I built the Abbey out of an act of repentance, a turning. It’s conception was out of an act of Teshuvah so it wouldn’t be out of place to mirror that in the spiritual in the same spirit that it was built in, an act of Teshuvah.

The God initiated prayer call from The Church of England is a challenge to try praying, proclaim ‘Thy kingdom come’ and unified by prayer to ask God for His will to be done. Of course pilgrims from all over were drawn to this place to do just that. It is my understanding that His will is for our Nation to turn back to Him so that He can heal our land.

I imagine the whole context of the prayer and seeking His face will be as an act of praise and adoration of Him so I'm expecting much of what we do will be through songs and music. My hope is that as we worship Him and speak with Him that His presence will be very close to us.