Faith at Work in Worcestershire
Christian care in the economy

FWW Prayer Guide: October 2026 – Ideas and Reality

We have the political party conference season beginning this month and the budget at the end. In fact, Reform, the Lib Dems and Labour had their conferences in the last week or so of September, but the Conservatives, Greens, SNP and perhaps others are in the first week or so of October. Lots of promises have been or will be made, and then many people think there will be a dose of reality in the budget on 28 October.

The parties not in government can promise cuts without concern for the people affected or tax cuts without explanation about how it adds up, plus extra spending without explanation of where the money will come from. The governing party has to be a bit more careful, but party conferences are a time of ideas and inspiration. Maybe we need some of that – so long as it's not too far from what might be possible.

The other side is the pressure of 'the markets' and anxiety about government debt levels and borrowing, leading to speculation about spending cuts or tax rises to pay for the things our politicians would like to do. The reality for ordinary people is cost of living pressures, with energy prices going up on 1 October, a feeling of threadbare public services and a decaying public realm, and anxiety about international threats and defence spending. There is pressure on politicians for immediate changes as well as big ideas for the future, all the time constrained by tight public finances.

Many people feel cost of living pressures and may be reining in their spending. Businesses will be affected, especially where that spending is discretionary, for example in hospitality or some areas of retail. They also feel the pressures of business rates, energy costs, increased National Insurance and the minimum wage, especially for lower paid staff. Some business rate relief has been provided or is promised, as are grants to revitalise some town centres and more powers at some point for mayors and other politicians.

If this is a quiet time for businesses, they will be looking forward with some hope for the rush leading up to Christmas. So much depends on the coming quarter, where particularly for many parts of retail a large part of the profits for the year are made.

We listen to promises from politicians at the beginning of the month and wait for the budget at the end to see what rabbit, if any, might be pulled out of the hat, alongside the reality of our nation's financial situation.

Lord of grace and gentleness. We pray for a world in which even ordinary humanity fails so often. We pray for those who are called government ministers – servants – in every nation. We pray that those who lead and take on themselves great responsibilities may not simply wish to be seem great in the eyes of others, but may genuinely serve their peoples, searching continually for policies and strategies

which will be for the good of all, especially the weakest and most vulnerable. We ask this for the sake of him who is both servant and Lord, Jesus Christ.

(Christopher Avon Lamb)

- We pray for our political leaders, for government ministers, opposition leaders and party members, and all members of parliament.
- For regional mayors, councillors and others who occupy political office at various levels of the governance of our country.
- For advisors, those who work in 'think tanks', all who work on and devise policy ideas and proposals.
- For civil servants and others who also advise and carry out policy when enacted.
- For communications staff, journalists and others who communicate ideas and report and comment on what is proposed.
- For all of us affected by changes to government policy or just anxious about ideas being floated that might matter to us – on benefits or taxes, etc.
- For businesses affected or anxious about costs and taxes; small business owners, managers, staff whose jobs may be on the line
- That we all may think of the common good rather than just our own well-being.