

Spotlight

Nov/Dec 2019

New Church begins

A brand new model of church is coming to Telford. Telford New Church will be established in the heart of the town centre at Meeting Point House and in smaller New Church Communities on Telford's growing housing estates.

It will be the first church in Lichfield Diocese to pioneer this 'gathered and scattered' model and is part of the diocese's commitment to discipleship, vocation and evangelism.

The ground-breaking project is being launched following a successful bid for funding from the national Church of England's Strategic Development Fund (SDF). It will be led by the Revd Matt Beer who was licensed at a service at Holy Trinity in Wrockwardine Wood, Telford.

Telford New Church will work closely with other local churches to provide a missional base and energy for Christians locally. Its New Church Communities will meet in homes and community venues on current and new housing estates as Telford's population continues its rapid expansion. They will also gather on several Sundays a month at Meeting Point House for formation, nurture, celebration and worship.

The inter-generational project will strongly focus on reaching children and young people through engagement with local schools with several of the Communities devoted to this.

The Bishop of Shrewsbury, the Rt Revd Sarah Bullock, said the time was ripe for such an exciting

Julie Jones (Diocesan Secretary who oversaw the bid), Bishop Sarah, Emily & Matt Beer, Bishop Michael.



DIOCESE OF
LICHFIELD



The Church of England around Staffordshire, northern Shropshire and the Black Country

Telford churches develop

<- continued from p1 project in Telford. "Telford New Church is a carefully thought through project to reach new people with the good news of God's love in this complex and emerging town," she explained. "There will be 200,000 people living in Telford by 2031 and great opportunities for the Church to build and enrich both new and current communities. This is a long-term missional project which will work with people of all ages and backgrounds – especially those young people who currently have no contact with church. It represents a confidence in the Gospel and a committed desire by the Church to bless Telford and all of its communities."

Matt, who has moved to Telford after serving as Senior Curate at St Mary's Bletchley, said: "This is such a wonderful opportunity for Christians in Telford. We will spend the coming months networking with local churches, schools and community organisations and listening to their hopes for the area. This will be a locally rooted project focused on knowing and loving our communities, and finding where God is already at work. As it develops, Telford New Church will also have a visible presence at the heart of the town centre where we envisage the majority of its members will come from non-church backgrounds."



Architect's impression of how the new worship space could look

The diocese has been working closely with neighbouring Hereford Diocese, which also covers part of Telford, on the project. It has secured £1.69m from the SDF over a six-year period until 2025, with the rest of the funding coming from Lichfield Diocese.



The next 12 months will see ground-laying by Matt and a small leadership team before meetings begin in December 2020 at the newly

refurbished space in Meeting Point House, which will also be a resource for the whole diocese.

...as confirmed in Wrockwardine Wood



Ahead of the bid announcement, A Day of Prayer for Telford was held at Holy Trinity Church in Wrockwardine Wood for the new venture.

Over 90 adults and children came together to take part in craft, fun, faith and food as part of a Messy Church Celebration which also featured prayer stations for all ages. The day climaxed with 'Messy confirmations' by Bishop Sarah of two of the church's members.

#FollowTheStar

People will be encouraged to #FollowTheStar to their local church this Christmas. Advent services are often the most popular of the year with churches and cathedrals at their busiest over the festive period.

After the success of 2018's national Advent campaign, #FollowTheStar returns, offering a range of resources including Twelve Days of Christmas Wonder booklets with brand new reflections. These will also be available as daily emails and in a free app, alongside family craft activities.

As well as downloadable posters, logos and prayer cards, a new tool will allow churches to create videos to spread the word about Christmas services.

Churches are also encouraged to again display stars on their buildings and tag this on A Church Near You which has over 12m page views a year. It's essential that local Christmas services and events are added, using special tags including 'FollowTheStar', 'Advent', 'mince pies' and others as appropriate.



Meanwhile, the diocese's #CHADLiving team have been thinking up practical ways for people to celebrate Christmas which don't cost the earth. They've produced a short video on how to spruce up second-hand jumpers rather than buying a new Christmas knitwear. This is part of the Re:Dress project to raise awareness of the human and environmental cost of the 'fast fashion' industry.

Watch the video, and find out more about #FollowTheStar resources, at lichfield.anglican.org/Follow-The-Star-2019/

Climate Change day of action across the diocese



Thousands of people from churches across our diocese – including over 600 at Lichfield Cathedral – joined to call for climate justice. They stood in solidarity with many young people and adults throughout the world who made their voices heard on 20 September.

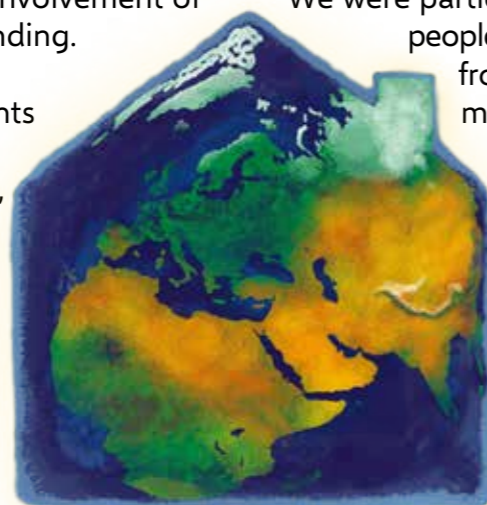


School children, bishops and media gathering at Lichfield Cathedral

Over 500 local primary school children plus teachers and others took part in a special service at the cathedral. They voiced their concerns about climate breakdown, forming a giant ring around the cathedral to call for climate justice and planted wooden lollipop sticks containing green pledges. The event took place with the full support and involvement of the schools of the children attending.



Across the diocese, over 30 events hosted by or involving churches or Church schools in Shropshire, Staffordshire and the Black Country took place. These included community clothes and toy swaps, prayer walks and stations, petition-writing, planet pledges, vigils, banner-making, worship services and craft making. At least a dozen local churches rang their bells for climate justice. A full list is at www.lichfield.anglican.org/climateactionday/



Some joined local demonstrations, including members of Trinity Churches in Meole Brace, Shrewsbury. Their vicar, the Revd Phil Cansdale, said: "It was great to see people from Meole Brace – and other local churches – get involved in the Shrewsbury Earth strike. With Sunday sermons and youth provision we'd been spending

September exploring all things Eco Church, and so this felt a really practical way of joining our voice with that of many others across the town. We were particularly struck by how it is younger people taking the lead in this, including from the church. We all have so much to learn from them, and how the gospel really can be good news for God's earth."

Children from Rugeley's Churchfield CE Primary Academy, a member of St Chad's Academies Trust, took part in activities including bottle top collection for recycling. "We had reports of our children collecting bottle tops as they walked to school!" said Headteacher Johanna Nickolls. "Each class made

a climate change pledge which they are striving to uphold and some parents also did this at home. One child now takes bags on her daily walk of their dog and fills these with litter which she then recycles at home! Pledges include switching off taps, turning off electrical devices, recycling and reducing use of plastics. I am proud of the passion and knowledge which our children shared."

Clergy across the diocese and diocesan staff were encouraged to step aside from their usual duties to participate in events, activities and advocacy.

Bishop Clive, diocesan lead on environmental matters, added: "It was wonderful to see so many people at the cathedral and in churches across our diocese leading calls for climate justice. As we follow Jesus, we are called to love the whole world and our neighbour, including the world's poorest people who are most affected by climate breakdown.



St Lawrence's Church, Biddulph



Bellringers joined the bishops' call to ring the (ecological) changes - this team met at St James' Church, Barton-under-Needwood

we stand in solidarity with them, working for justice as people of hope. We need to keep this momentum going, calling people to sustained action and prayer in the coming months. It is not too late – we can all make a difference in big and small ways."

Lichfield Diocese is committed to taking climate change seriously. In March a new Diocesan Environmental Policy and Action Plan was passed. Dozens of parishes across the diocese are registering for Eco Church – a national award that recognises and supports churches who are working to become more environmentally friendly.



"Care of creation should be at the centre of the Church's mission – not the margins. Young people are leading the way and as a Church

The creation theme will continue at this year's Selwyn Lecture at 10am on 14 November at Lichfield Cathedral. The cathedral's former Canon Chancellor, now Bishop of Sheffield, the Rt Revd Pete Wilcox, will speak on 'Human beings in time and space: Genesis 1-2 and the challenge of climate change.' All are welcome.



See a video from the event at www.lichfield.anglican.org/news/2019/09/20/thousands-join-climate-action/

Word on the Street



Christians from across the Black Country celebrated the work of their churches in a special evening with the Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street.

St Matthew's Church in Wolverhampton hosted the Christian Community Conversation which allowed the West Midlands Mayor and his team to hear first-hand the ideas groups have to tackle some of the big issues of our time. It featured round-table discussions on mental health, skills and youth unemployment and homelessness.



Around 100 people participated, representing churches, charities and other faith groups at the evening who will help form a peer Christian social action network in the Black Country.

Andy Street said: "I thank the communities from across the Black Country for bringing this

together. We were talking and learning about some of the big social issues, the hard ones to solve – homelessness, youth unemployment and mental health. It's great to have the experience of all these groups brought to bear together. Faith communities play an incredible role in binding communities together. The Christian community plays a leading role in that effort."

The conversation was organised by Transforming Communities Together (TCT) – Lichfield Diocese's joint venture with Church Urban Fund – in partnership with West Midlands Combined Authority and Black Country Churches Engaged. TCT's Chair David Primrose said: "It was wonderful to see so many people from local churches at the event sharing a real confidence in the gospel and a love for our communities. It will help provide an evidence base, moving forwards, to make sure that the work we carry out reflects the richness and variety of these communities as we seek the common good together, working for justice as people of hope."

The event also hosted a marketplace which featured some of the great work involving churches across the region, including organisations like Black Country Urban Industrial Mission, Places of Welcome and Dementia-Friendly Churches.

Chaplains come together

How do chaplains use the language of vocation to help others and build the kingdom? That was the question at the heart of the first meeting of Lichfield Diocese's new Community of Chaplains, inaugurated by the Bishop of Lichfield in October with a day of study, prayer and rest.

Twenty-five chaplains from 19 chaplaincies gathered. Between them, they represented education, prison, health, workplace and other settings. The day-to-day tasks of chaplaincy vary widely across such settings. The Community of Chaplains therefore uses the language of discipleship, vocation and evangelism to explore what unites chaplains at a deeper level. Many attending were surprised to see how much they had in common with each other.

Chaplains minister outside the church. Chaplains therefore have to think carefully about how to call upon the specific language of the Christian faith.



With this in mind, the inaugural meeting of the Community of Chaplains investigated the language of vocation which has become central to Lichfield's shared direction of travel. Many people have a deep but maybe hidden sense of vocation – the idea that their life has a purpose. If such a sense can be recognised as potentially a call from a God of love, this gives fruitful territory for a conversation between a Christian chaplain and someone they meet. Often in chaplaincy settings such as prisons and hospitals, people we meet are already

driven to asking the 'big questions' about themselves and what they are for. Vocation is clarified by prayer and encounter with scripture, so a rich vocational conversation can become evangelistic too.



The chaplains reflected on the story of Zacchaeus, asking 'what does this reading say about chaplaincy?' and 'what does this reading say about vocation'. In another session they looked at the different roles of the chaplain: as pastor, prophet, missionary, sacramental presence, and leader of worship. In the final session those present explored how to shape encounters around vocational questions, and for some chaplains at least, this was the most valuable moment as the theory became practice.

Chaplains have traditionally been ordained and stipendiary, but there are other modes too. Some who gathered were parish priests with an additional chaplaincy role, for example to a local fire station or school. Increasingly, chaplaincies benefit from lay volunteer chaplains too, who often have a wealth of experience to offer. Whatever the mode, chaplaincy offers a space where their faith can be put into practice and developed further.

Called to chaplaincy? The Community of Chaplains continues to grow as we discover those in Lichfield with a chaplaincy role. To join the community, or to explore the vocation of chaplaincy, please contact simon.foster@lichfield.anglican.org, Chaplaincy and Mission Strategy Enabler

The 'E' word

A series of new short videos filmed with people in our diocese seeks to show how sharing our faith need not be as hard as we sometimes fear.



Evangelism is one of our three diocesan priorities - along with discipleship and vocation. The four videos feature people from local churches, including young adults

from the Church Hill Praise congregation at St Matthew's In Walsall.

They explore what evangelism is, good and bad experiences of it and how people arrive at faith. The videos are ideal for use as discussion starters in small groups or church services and are freely available on Youtube and at www.lichfield.anglican.org/DVE/

discipleship vocation evangelism

They were released to coincide with the launch of the diocese's new Mission Team. Based at Three Spires House in Lichfield, the team works with the diocese's schools, parishes,



fresh expressions, chaplaincies, along with Lichfield Cathedral, to energise, resource and support them in mission and evangelism. Mission

and evangelism are the calling of all forms of Christian community and ministry. The team

supports that by providing:

- News, learning and the latest issues and good practice
- Knowledge, skill and processes development for those in our frontlines
- Facilitation and support for teams and networks
- Insight and resource to senior clergy and staff;
- An interface with the national Church.

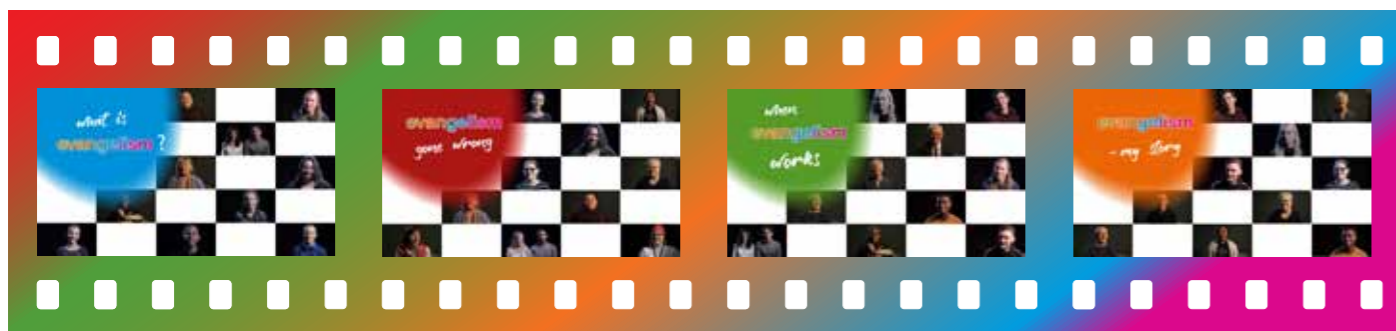


Lindsey Hall, Discipleship, Vocations and Evangelism Strategy Enabler, said: "Reflecting the diversity of God's creation, we recognise that each school, parish, fresh expression and chaplaincy has its own unique context and community, as of course, does the cathedral. Mission and evangelism are therefore particular and distinctive in every setting. We want to work

collaboratively with people as experts in their own mission field. Discovering evangelism and mission in context can be joyful as well as challenging and we look forward to sharing and supporting the diocese's frontlines in that."



Find out more by emailing Mission Coordinator Richard Barrett richard.barrett@lichfield.anglican.org or ringing 01543 622592.



Letters pray



So often, when life gets tough, people might say a prayer. Whether or not you would say you believe in God, it's something that lots of people still do - but many find it difficult, or would prefer someone else to say one for them.

All Saints Church in Wellington, Telford, have recently installed a new prayer postbox, called 'Say one for me'. People can simply take a card from the holder, write a prayer, and post it - and the team from the church will pray it in confidence.

Revd David Sims, curate at All Saints, says: "I am really excited about this opportunity to show something of God's love to the people of Wellington, and Telford & Wrekin. I believe that whether or not people would call themselves a Christian, God loves them, longs to hear their heart, and listen to their prayers'.

A harvest yarn

A plan to plaster the insides of a church building in wool went down a bomb in the Black Country.

Nine months of knitting by the Place of Welcome, Craft Club and Ladies Fellowship at St Mark's Church, Shelfield and High Heath, led to the 'Yarn Bombing' which raised £300 for St Giles Hospice.

Harvest was the theme for the knitted squares which including a farmyard, aquarium and safari and covered the altar, piano, pillars and other



areas of the church, coordinated by Sue Jewkes and Ann Vaughn and dreamt up by Angela Ball. Local children from Greenfield Primary School also contributed a knitted Noah's ark and food was collected for Walsall North food bank. Following the harvest festival, the squares will now be re sewn into blankets for adults and premature babies in Rwanda.



Focus on building projects

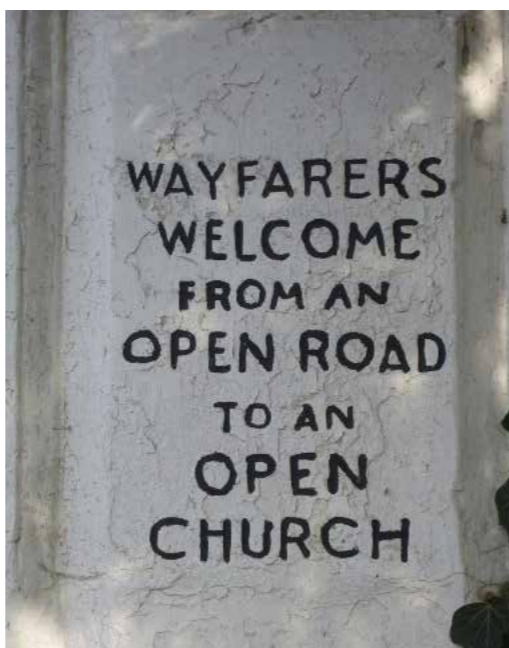
A new part-time role has been created to help parishes get more focussed support with their major church building projects.



Church buildings are a physical expression of the Christian faith, designed and constructed as places of worship and community. They are also a tangible link with the past and are recognised as having national historic, cultural and artistic significance.

- Understanding building conservation and design issues i.e. what works may be possible in a listed church
- Developing the necessary documentation for faculty/ planning applications
- Identifying funding sources for listed church building projects
- Understanding building fabric repair issues and prioritising repairs identified in a QI report.

For more information and contact details: lichfield.anglican.org/church-buildings-team/



As custodians of listed church buildings, many parishes must balance the needs of their church community, their building's needs and the requirements of heritage conservation. Helping parishes to achieve this careful balance is the purpose of the Church Buildings Development Officer, Kristina Williamson (previously DAC Secretary).

Kristina will offer help and advice in respect of larger parish projects involving church buildings of heritage value. Specifically, she can help those parishes whose churches are listed with:



From the Editor

As we prepare to celebrate the coming of Emmanuel - 'God With Us', I hope you'll have a few minutes to enjoy this edition of Spotlight. If you're thinking of visiting church over

Advent, check out local services and events in your area on the A Church Near You website (achurchnearyou.com). And a very Merry Christmas to you all!

A builder's vision

A tourist visiting Italy came across a construction site. "What are you doing?" the tourist asked the three stonemasons. "I'm cutting the stone," answered the first. "I'm cutting stone for 1,000 lire a day," the second said. "I'm helping to build a cathedral," said the third.

I like this anecdote because it speaks to me of the importance of vision. The third stonemason was able to lift his eyes above the daily routine of his work to envisage the final result. His contribution was a part of something much bigger and together all of those involved in the project would produce something tremendous and beautiful – a cathedral dedicated to the Glory of God.

I was reminded of this when I read recently that the Sagrada Familia Cathedral in Barcelona is finally due to be finished in 2026. The first stone was laid in 1882 and its architect, Antoni Gaudi died in 1926 and is buried in the crypt. His vision has been 'caught' by others who have continued his work and taken his ideas forward.

For 'vision' to be successful it has to be shared by others. That is why a good Mission Action Plan needs to evolve out of a Parish Away Day where all have had the opportunity to contribute their ideas and suggestions.

Our nation at this time is lacking in a clear shared vision. Consequently people want to go in their own direction and are critical and ungenerous about other possibilities. We have to be honest and say that wherever we are in the continuing Brexit saga, our nation has been torn into shreds and it will take time before we have a sense of being reunited.

As a Church we have a role to play in serving our communities by bringing people together to share their vision for the future and to help identify common threads. For example, as a grandfather I want my grandchildren to grow up

safely, have a roof over their heads, food on their plates and an education that will enable them to do what they want to later in life. Surely, this unites me with all other grandparents?

Once shared vision is established there needs to be discussion as to how this vision can be turned into a reality. A vision without a task is a dream. A task without vision is drudgery. But the two together are the hope of the world. We need to think and pray about the specific roles that we can play in this process. Perhaps too many of us are content to 'cut the stone' rather than 'build the cathedral'.

This is going to be a long process but a journey of 1,000 miles begins with a single step and I would encourage every worshipping congregation in our diocese to pray about the contribution that you are going to make in this process of reconciliation.

We are working on a shared vision for our diocese to guide us during the coming decade. This 'Direction of Travel' is a work in progress and there is much consultation, reflection and prayer still to happen but it is already exciting and offers all sorts of possibilities.

As Ann and I move on to the next phase of our ministry, we are thrilled that we are leaving a diocese that is in such good heart and positive about future growth. We are less thrilled at leaving so many wonderful friends but are really grateful for the privilege of being able to be part of the journey and can only thank you for your love, support and prayers.

May God bless you as your vision enables you to build not a cathedral but God's Kingdom!

*Rt Revd Geoff Annas
Bishop of Stafford*





Come follow Christ
in the footsteps of St Chad

DIARY

Greenhouse Launch

Learn how it works and how to be involved.
With Bishop Michael, Michael Moynagh/
Heather Cracknell (from the national Fresh
Expressions team) and David Cundill.

16 November, 10am-4pm at
Aldridge Parish Centre -
Book via 01543 622592 or
[lichfield.anglican.org/
greenhouse](http://lichfield.anglican.org/greenhouse)

Life Events Diary training

Imagine a simple bit of software that can
boost parish ministry, helping catch all the
steps leading to a wedding, christening or
funeral and keeping up with the families
afterwards. Learn how to use it here!

Thursday 9 January, 9.30am-4.30pm -
Beacon Centre, Stafford. £20 - book via
lichfield.anglican.org/LED2/

Holding to Truth and Love

(Lichfield Diocese Evangelical
Fellowship) with Paul Harcourt,
national leader of New Wine.

Saturday 30 November,
9.30am-12.30pm - St John the
Baptist Church, Westhead
Avenue, Littleworth, Stafford
ST16 3RP. Free admission.

Selwyn Lecture - 'Human Beings in time and space: Genesis 1 -2 and the challenge of climate change'

The annual lecture will this year
be given by former Canon Chancellor
of our cathedral and current Bishop
of Sheffield, Rt Revd Pete Wilcox.

Thursday 14 November, 10am-
1.15pm, Lichfield Cathedral. More at
lichfield.anglican.org/selwyn2019/

Everyday Faith

The biennial Shropshire Churches Conference
returns hosted once again by the Bishops of
Ludlow and Shrewsbury.

Saturday 16 November, 10am-3.15pm - Holy
Trinity Meole Brace. Tickets (£8) from [www.
trinitychurches.org/everyday/](http://www.trinitychurches.org/everyday/)

For a full listing of
events in the Diocese, visit
lichfield.anglican.org/events
Let us know about your
events by email to
comms@lichfield.anglican.org