

Spotlight

Sept/Oct 2017

A strategy for reaching children, young people and families across the Diocese has been re-launched at a special commissioning event.

Five years ago, Diocesan Synod backed an initial Reaching New Generations (RNG) strategy which was rolled out at a local level. It's now been reviewed and updated to help churches respond to the current culture and context and to reflect the fresh diocesan focus on the key areas of discipleship, vocation and evangelism.



Within this, the RNG Team - Laura Edwards, Libby Leech and Jon White - aim to provide churches with practical ideas, resources and tips for parishes across Lichfield Diocese.

Libby, 5-11s and Schools Enabler, said: "REACH encourages parishes to explore ministry with 0-18s as an on-going continuum rather than focusing on one age group at a time. We've identified opportunities within each age range that may not have been considered, but there are also ideas to develop projects further."

Laura, Under 5s and Families Enabler, explained that parishes "need not feel under pressure that all of the ideas are adopted but to use the resource to create a ministry that fits their context and opportunities."

The RNG Team's REACH - A Direction of Travel for Ministry with Children, Young People and Families in Lichfield Diocese - was commissioned at a service at St John's Church in Muxton, near Telford, on 16 September, by Bishop Michael.

Jon, Youth and Vocations Enabler, added: "Through REACH, the RNG Team hopes and prays that parishes will feel encouraged to invite their children, young people and their families to 'Come follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad.'"



Jon, Laura and Libby with headline guest Revd Kate Bottley at July's Encourage Festival

REACH out

In a joint statement welcoming REACH, the Diocese's bishops said: "The Reaching New Generations strategy from 2012 has borne fruit, and as bishops we're delighted to see a reinvigorated RNG Team taking stock. We wholeheartedly commend REACH to everyone in the Diocese."

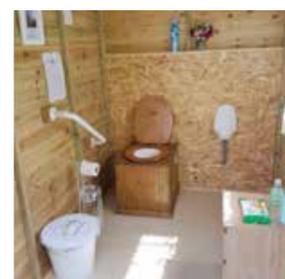


To boldly go

A small rural church that was days from closing is experiencing a fresh lease of life – thanks to a 'loo with a view'.



Petton Church is in a tiny hamlet near Cockshutt, North Shropshire, with a population of just 67. With only three people attending its fortnightly communion service, the church, which has had a local presence since the 12th century, was facing closure.



But when 15 people turned up for a public meeting with the Archdeacon of Salop, the Ven Paul Thomas, about the building's future, church warden Mona Whitfield had other ideas.

Driven by a desire to serve the local community, the most pressing need was for a toilet to make the church viable. A £2,200 grant was secured from the North Shropshire Community Care Trust for an 'eco' loo, which officially opened at the site on 30 July.

Meanwhile, interest in the church blossomed with 41 people attending its lay-led Easter morning service. Now, the Shropshire Astronomical Society is using the church – with its clear night-sky views – for its next meeting.

Mona said: "The church, in the middle of a field, is the only public building in Petton. When the

congregation dwindled to a handful, the future looked bleak. However, with encouragement from the Archdeacon and enthusiasm from the parishioners we are now looking at ways to take the church into the community and encourage the community to use our building.

"The eco loo is the first step. We hope that walkers and cyclists will come this way, discover how beautiful this corner of Shropshire is, and enjoy visiting the gem of a church - and possibly the loo."

Petton Church will also be boosted by the arrival of new vicar, the Revd Maureen Read.

Archdeacon Paul said: "The church was facing its last rites but now there's new growth and life. The loo has become symbolic of the church's desire to reach out to the community – it's such an exciting story of renewal where hope had gone."



Feat of faith

The Diocese has its first St Chad's Volunteer from Canada and has returned the favour by sending a volunteer in the other direction.

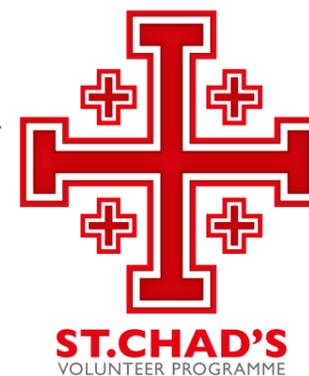
The St Chad's Volunteer Programme sees 18-35 year-olds experience placements in one of our link dioceses overseas.

Canadian Matthew Gobbert arrived from Qu'Appelle Diocese in Canada in July and is based at Holy Trinity in Oswestry where he is living with the family of the church's Youth and Families Minister Mark Addison. Mark said: "I am having a great time. There is a lot going on in the church and I'm enjoying helping out at events at the Quinta Centre in Oswestry."

And now Catherine Crawley, from St Bart's Church in Penn, has headed to Qu'Appelle where she will use her administrative skills in the diocesan office there.

Catherine said: "I was facing several big life changes and really needed some space to reflect and refocus. When I learned that the Diocese of Qu'Appelle were actually looking for a volunteer with a particular gift in administration I had to explore it. It feels like God's way of taking me out of my comfort zone and to trust Him and to see what His plans are for me. It was good to meet Matthew and it feels like a special time with the first volunteer from Qu'Appelle coming to the diocese and me heading off there."

Before she departed, Catherine also spent time with Archdeacon Peter Boote, formerly from Stafford, who moved to Qu'Appelle several years ago. "My own life and ministry were transformed by taking part in a mission trip from Lichfield to Qu'Appelle in 2000 at Pentecost. This led to my moving to Canada, marriage and training for the priesthood," he said. "We were delighted Bishop Michael visited



Qu'Appelle and we are keen to find ways of taking our link forwards, not only through the St Chad's Volunteer Programme but also through exchanges of ordained and lay ministers."

Catherine's arrival coincided with a visit from Bishop Michael who spent a week in Qu'Appelle with his wife Julia and took part in Catherine's commissioning ceremony there. They toured the area with Peter and others, visiting local churches and Bishop Michael preached at St Paul's Cathedral.

St Chad's Volunteer Programme Co-ordinator Michael Carding said: "These are exciting days – we've got nine volunteers ready to come to the diocese and two heading out. We're always looking for parishes who can host oversee volunteers and we're keen to hear from people aged 18-35 who'd like to be based in one of our link dioceses in Canada, South Africa, Malaysia or Germany. It's an opportunity to discern vocation, use existing gifts, discover new ones and experience the richness and diversity of God's worldwide church."



L-R: The Ven Peter Boote, Michael Carding, Catherine Crawley and Matthew Gobbert

Find out more about the programme, which is supported financially by St Chad's Trust, at lichfield.anglican.org/world_mission/scv/

Thee Festival

Tens of thousands of pop fans descended on Weston Park for the annual V Festival in Staffordshire. Many of them encountered Festival Pastors from the Diocese, as Emma Cooksey explains:

“Lichfield Diocese sent a team of 16 volunteer Festival Pastors to support festival-goers and staff on site. Our main aim was to be a positive Christian presence, offering safe space, pastoral support and practical service. The majority of the team’s activity involved providing water to thirsty festival-goers and staff with about 16,000 cups of water being given over the weekend.



Left: Emma (right) with Rev Catherine Brumfitt.

Top: Inside the marquee.

Below: The team with supplies of water.

“For the first time, the team was also joined by Street Pastors from Shrewsbury and Wolverhampton. This trial of detached work across the site proved to be very successful as extra evening cover could be provided in the main arena. We are hoping to expand this in future years. We are also hoping to increase the overall Festival Pastors team and increase support offered through lost property service.

“We’re looking for more volunteers to join us next year and would particularly welcome adults aged 18 to 30 and more Street Pastors. If you would like to volunteer next year please contact David Cundill, Deputy Director of Mission, at david.cundill@lichfield.anglican.org”



“People were always pleasantly surprised to find that the water was free when everything else was expensive. This led to many comments about how wonderful it was that we were helping festival-goers, which in turn led to conversations about why we were helping and deeper conversations about God and faith.

“The Festival Pastors’ marquee was used throughout the festival as a basecamp for those wanting prayer or to use the prayer stations or at times to shelter from the bad weather! Basecamp was also used by anyone needing a listening ear or extra support, such as directions, or people who needed to be reunited with friends or tents.

Answering the Call



Almost 30 people were commissioned for lay ministry across the Diocese at a special service.

The Lay Funeral Ministers are Eleanor Aldred in Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury, Sue Vaughan in Wednesfield and Martin Bishop in Stafford,

A packed Lichfield Cathedral celebrated the diversity of calling and the range of people and ministries which will add further richness to the life of the diocese.



Stone and Eccleshall. They were the first ministers of their kind to be licensed in the Diocese as part of a new scheme, reflecting a national move to offer support to clergy and the wider ministry of the church in taking funerals locally.

These included 15 licensed as Readers, ten Authorised Lay Ministers and three Lay Funeral Ministers – a brand new role.



The annual lay licensing service was led by Bishop Michael who said: “Readers and other lay ministers are a vital part of the ministry of the whole

Readers are lay people who have been selected, trained and licensed by the Bishop to preach, teach and lead worship in their local parish or as chaplains.



people of God, working closely in partnership with ordained clergy. I want to see their ministry honoured, affirmed and celebrated in the same way as their ordained colleagues.”

Authorised Lay Ministers are given authority to carry out specific roles such as pastoral care, chaplaincy and evangelists.

Find out more about vocations and training for ministry at

lichfield.anglican.org/vocations_and_training/

Look to the hills

The Revd Chris Densham, Ecumenical Mission Enabler for Telford & Shropshire, reflects on Thy Kingdom Come 2017:

"Last December Bishop Mark called together a small ecumenical team to consider how to best utilize the Thy Kingdom Come prayer initiative in Shropshire. A desire emerged to see the area saturated in prayer through a variety of events crisscrossing the county. We tried to use our hills as natural vantage points from which to proclaim God's saving love and grace across our communities.



What a difference a day makes: Ascension day sunshine on The Wrekin and fog over Lilleshall Hill

"On a glorious May evening almost 50 of us celebrated Ascension Day by climbing The Wrekin, our prayer stimulated by clear views over the whole county. The next day was Lilleshall Hill with views into north Shropshire and over Telford.

"On Saturday we returned to The Wrekin for a family picnic and prayer with Bishop Mark. We had Messy Church at the summit, goody bags for children and permission for a Land Rover to transport those unable to climb.

"In complete contrast was Bank Holiday Monday on Caer Caradoc with Bishop Alistair Magowan. Thick mist prevailed, but about 50 gathered, some to pray in the Catholic Church in Church Stretton and the rest to climb and

pray. Other hill tops included the Hill Fort just outside Oswestry, Clee Hill in south east Shropshire and Nescliffe and Lyth Hill, both near Shrewsbury.



DISCOVERING
THE HEART OF GOD

"Creative alternatives included a prayer fete in Bridgnorth, a prayer trail in Market Drayton, featuring knitted doves as reminders of the Holy Spirit's presence. There was also a prayer trail in Whitchurch while Churches Together in Wem created prayer spaces and Wroksardine Deanery had a Messy Prayer Walk on Haughmond hill.

"The hill walks attracted a range of people from different Christian traditions from as far afield as Cumbria and Ipswich! And it was a great encouragement to see people travel from throughout Shropshire. It was wonderful to experience the strong sense of unity and shared purpose. We're already looking forward to Thy Kingdom Come 2018."



Lichfield Cathedral hosted a Beacon Event to mark the culmination of Thy Kingdom Come.



TRANSFORMING
COMMUNITIES

The Revd Canon Pat Hawkins says: "We were delighted to hold a Beacon Event. Our friends from Wade Street Church, Lichfield got us off to a lively start in a service of praise and worship – we are very grateful

to their musicians. Bishop Mark preached, Julie Jones, Diocesan Secretary, and the Dean, Adrian Dorber, gave testimonies and the woman at the well also shared her story. Each of us was encouraged to ponder who Jesus is for us, and also challenged to pray for others to know him.

"The second part of the service offered an opportunity for engagement with prayer stations, set up throughout the Cathedral, before we came together again for Sung Compline by Candlelight, sung by the Cathedral



choir. This concluded with anointing and commissioning as we were sent out in the power of the Spirit 'to live what we proclaim'.

"It was great to welcome so many people from across denominations and traditions. It was demanding, exhausting, great fun, inspiring and moving. And yes, we will certainly be doing something for Thy Kingdom Come in 2018."



REACHING
NEW GENERATIONS



Thy Kingdom Come: Bishop Michael's celebrating Ascension Day at St Modwen's, Burton-on-Trent, and Canon Pat Hawkins who lead the Pentecost Sunday Beacon Event at Lichfield Cathedral.

Thy Kingdom Come will run between 10 and 20 May in 2018. Find out more at <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/>



From the Editor

Welcome to the latest edition of Spotlight. I'd like to introduce you to our new Online Enabler

Tamar Willoughby. Tamar is looking forward to working with parishes, fresh expressions, schools and chaplaincies to help you communicate in fresh and relevant ways online. Please get in touch with her at tamar.willoughby@lichfield.anglican.org
Pete Bate, Director of Communications



DISCOVERING
THE HEART OF GOD



GROWING
DISCIPLES



REACHING
NEW GENERATIONS



TRANSFORMING
COMMUNITIES



PRACTISING
GENEROSITY

Next Steps

People across the Diocese are being invited to have their say on the Next Steps of our journey together.

After the launch of the Diocese's new direction of travel to 'Come follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad' in May, a conversation has started about how we can focus on the key areas of discipleship, vocation and evangelism over the next five years.

Letters have been sent to parishes, chaplaincies and youth workers asking them to share stories, hopes and plans about discipleship, vocation and evangelism. Special postcards for Messy Churches, fresh expressions of church and young people have also been designed, with feedback due in by 30 November.

Bishop Michael says: "Jesus calls you and me, as he called Chad our first bishop, to walk with him as disciples, in trustful and joyful confidence; through that discipleship, to discover the particular vocation to which we are summoned; and as we walk along the way, to invite others to join us in our pilgrimage."

"We would like as many of you as possible to be part of this conversation and want to hear your stories, hopes, and plans so that we can celebrate all of the ways in which we together are already investing in these three areas, learn from each other and look forward to the next steps we will take on this journey."



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Have your say by filling out a simple survey at https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/next_steps/ where there are also liturgies, postcards and other resources to help you consider discipleship, vocation and evangelism in your local context.



At May's launch in Lichfield Cathedral, Bishop Michael encouraged us to see the bigger picture of the life of the Church of England in this area through schools, chaplaincies and fresh expressions as well as parishes.

He commissioned four new mission initiatives around the Diocese, one grounded in each of those forms of local presence: 4 Rural Youth in the Salop Episcopal Area, Church and Church School Together in Worship Mission in the Stafford Episcopal Area, Blakenhall Heath Mission Project in the Wolverhampton Episcopal Area and a diocesan-wide Missional Chaplaincy project.



Journey to the font

St Paul's Church in Stafford recently held its first Messy baptism. The Revd Martin Strang tells us more:

"At our Messy Church, in June, I asked eight-year-old Ruby Strachan: "Do you wish to be baptised?" Ruby stood in front of our Messy Church Congregation and gave the official reply: "I do". Had she been able to speak more freely, she would have said something like: "I've been badgering my Mum for ages to let me be baptised!"



"This year, at St Paul's Church, Stafford, the theme for our Messy Church services

has been 'journeys' and, in January, we looked at the story of Abraham and his commitment to following God's call as he stepped out on his journey. We took the opportunity to link this to baptism and it was very exciting that this was one of the seeds which enthused Ruby on her journey.

"We welcomed her family and friends as they joined us for Messy Church. In the hall, we worked on our crafts; we then gathered in the Lady Chapel and, in the middle of our worship, we used the accessible language of the newly authorised liturgy as we baptised Ruby. After the Messy Grace, we moved back to the hall for sandwiches and cake which was adorned with a bible, a cross and Ruby's name.

"The flexible space of our Lady Chapel, with the congregation sitting in a circle, meant that,



as Ruby responded to the question "Do you turn to Christ?", she could physically turn and walk across to the font, symbolising her own commitment to the journey she has started.

"What a privilege it was for us to be involved in this special day. Ruby's Mum reflected the feelings of the family when she wrote: 'Thank you so much, we couldn't have asked for a better day'."

Libby Leech, the Diocese's 5-11s and Schools Enabler, added: "It's so exciting to see how a Messy Church is able to encourage people of all ages to explore faith and think seriously about how Jesus can be a part of their lives. The enthusiasm that Ruby showed and her persistent desire to become a part of St Paul's Church family through baptism is a great example we can celebrate and encourage in all of our parishes."



David Cundill, Deputy Director of Mission, said: "This is a really encouraging example of a growing trend of baptisms taking place in our Messy Churches which reflects the effectiveness our Messy Churches are in making and growing disciples."

You can find out more about Messy Church and baptism for children at [lichfield.anglican.org/reach/](https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/reach/)

Mind your language

A unique partnership between the Church of England and the Baptist Association in the Midlands will encourage deaf people to play a leading role in local worship.

Deaf Church brings deaf and hearing Christians together through services that use British Sign Language (BSL) as the main means of communicating. It has spread to various congregations across the Diocese in recent years.



Baptist Minister the Revd Susan Myatt has been appointed as the Diocese's new Deaf Chaplain. She will lead and coordinate monthly Deaf Church services at St Michael and All Angels in Penkridge and oversee pastoral care for deaf people across the Diocese.

Susan, who was born profoundly deaf, has established a Deaf Café at Rising Brook Baptist Church in Stafford where she is a minister. She works with Baptist churches nationally on deaf issues and is a trustee of Deaf Anglicans Together.

She said: "I love to find unity across the whole church and it is important to me that both deaf and hearing Christians are able to worship, pray and enjoy their faith together, using British Sign Language as our main language.

"I am passionate that deaf people are empowered and encouraged to worship God in their own language and to explore their faith using creative and visual ways in prayer, bible study, drama and crafts. I also feel called to help the hearing Christian community join in with

this so that deaf and hearing together can express their faith and worship. I hope that all this will lead us to a deeper relationship with Jesus."

Susan will work alongside local Anglican priests who use BSL and will support her with the celebration of the eucharist. She carries on the crucial work of previous chaplain the Revd Dr Leonie Wheeler who established and developed Deaf Church in the diocese, aided by Dr Gill Meller.



Commenting on the new partnership between the diocese and the Heart of England Baptist Association, Bishop Michael said: "Working across Christian denominations in this way is a practical outworking of the Gospel by showing that there is greater strength in unity as we serve together."

Find out more by emailing Susan at sm@baptist-heartofengland.org



A kind of blasphemy

I have never been in such demand on a Sunday morning. Interviewed by 12 different local radio stations, from York to Cornwall, Hereford to the Channel Islands. All because I had referred to 'blasphemy' and 'the cross' in a single sentence.

The event that had started it all was a demonstration by a far right group, who I will not dignify by naming, in Wolverhampton City Centre. This was a feeble affair with only 20 people, all from outside Wolverhampton, taking part. However, some of those that did, were seen to be brandishing wooden crosses. It was their use of the cross that I referred to, in a statement, as 'a kind of blasphemy'. My justification for the strength of the language I used was the strength of their racist ideology. For this particular group, the fact that we are an island nation consisting entirely of people who have migrated here over the centuries, is a most inconvenient truth. So they



round their necks, the cross has a deeply personal significance. It is a tangible reminder, one that we can touch, feel, cling to, of our own personal relationship with Christ. More

generally it is surely the ultimate symbol of love, 'for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son...'. It is the ultimate reminder too that love, true love, demands sacrifice.

I have memories, as a choir boy, of processing around our church singing all 11 verses of the well-known hymn which features the refrain 'Lift high the Cross, the love of Christ proclaim'.

The crosses that were lifted high on that demonstration did not proclaim the love of Christ but rather the fallen nature of humanity, enslaved by our hateful prejudices towards one another. It is our responsibility as Christians to reclaim the cross as a symbol of love, with the power to unite and heal, bringing a message of hope not hate. In our digital media age, it may prove costly to speak out against those who would pervert the message of the gospel and traduce the most sacred symbol of our faith, but how small a price to pay compared with the ultimate sacrifice made out of love for us all.

+Clive Wulfrun

It is our responsibility as Christians to reclaim the cross as a symbol of love

prefer to pretend that this country has people who naturally belong here and deserve special treatment, whereas everyone else, 'foreigners', have no right to be here. It is strange but true that one of the leaders of this group has a distinctly continental sounding name, the result apparently of her Dutch ancestry...

Why, the radio stations asked, did such a group like to brandish crosses when they marched? I was hardly the person to answer for them, but a look at their website suggests that they like to style themselves as defenders of Christianity in this country.

Photo: Express and Star

Love Your Churchyard
 Full of opportunities and issues - learn about great ways to use them for community, ecology, theology and legally!

Saturdays 10.30-3.30:
 30 September - Penn Fields (Wolverhampton)
 7 October - St Giles' Newcastle
 14 October - West Felton

DIARY

Hat-tê-bāh - Young Refugee Awareness-Training

Training aimed people who may come across refugees in their work or who might be influencers of others.

Monday 13 November
 10:00 – 16:00 - Newchapel
lichfield.anglican.org/hattebah

A Prisoner's Journey

Hear first hand from a serving Senior Prison Officer.

Wednesday 11 October
 7pm - 9.00pm - College Hall,
 The Close, Lichfield.

theresa.willmore@lichfield-cathedral.org

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

Reason for Hope

Shropshire Churches Conference
 Keynote speaker:
 Revd Dr Michael Lloyd, Principal of Wycliffe Hall

Saturday 18 November -
 Holy Trinity, Meole Brace
lichfield.anglican.org/reason-for-hope