

Chester

Diocesan News

August 2017

News, features, jobs...
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Growing stronger parishes

Standing shoulder to shoulder



From left to right: Dr Fayaz, Rev Mike Loach, Bishop Keith, Mr Ibrahim Sued (leader of the Wirral Deen Centre)

The day after the Manchester bombing, Bishop Keith visited the Wirral Deen Centre - a new Mosque and Community Centre on Borough Road in Birkenhead. The Revd Mike Loach said: "The aims of the meeting were to offer practical support, to consider possible opportunities to work

together in the community and to present a clear, visible image of our shared and equal commitment to love our neighbours and strive for peace in our world - particularly significant given the horrific events of the previous day."

Journeying with Jesus



I have been reflecting on aspects of our common life brought to my attention this year as President of The Cheshire Agricultural Society, and The Royal Cheshire Show.

About 80,000 visitors attended this year's Show. These tens of thousands of people travelled to the showground for all sorts of reasons: for trade, for competitions, for fun. Travel and tourism are vital in our lives, and in all our communities.

For some travel is just part of their job, or a necessary part offering care over long distance. That kind of travel may be hard or routine, though not without value perhaps - travel promotes contact and interaction and dispels myths. Travel promotes inter-dependence at a community and national level. 'Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts,' said Mark Twain.

For many of us, though, summer is a time that includes travel for leisure. The warmer weather (we hope) of this season encourages us outside, and beyond the everyday.

The total contribution of travel and tourism to the global economy rose in 2016 to 10% of world GDP - keeping 292 million people in employment - that's 1 in 10 jobs on the planet. In Cheshire, tourism is worth about £2.7 billion: 48 million people a year visit us, 21% of international visitors come as tourists and 37,000 people are employed in providing services.

Tourism might seem like an indulgent activity, but leisure is an expression of the ancient concept of Shabbat - a day

not primarily for religious worship but for refraining from work. Leisure is not a recent concept. Jesus visited Jerusalem for religious festivals, and he knew the value of space and solitude - of coming out from the everyday and regularly went off to the mountain or wilderness to pray and be still. Medieval monastics advocated a middle way of otium (leisure) between the twin dangers of otiositas (idleness) and negotium (business). Leisure is crucial for spiritual growth and development. The wide open space and salvation are interchangeable concepts throughout Scripture and especially the Psalms. Psalm 46:10 might be translated as, 'Have leisure and know that I am God'.

We can benefit from the enjoyment of travel and leisure. And we can offer something to those who visit us. Tourism is an opportunity for our churches and Cathedrals to share something of our story. At the Cheshire Show this year, 'The Church at the Show' once again proclaimed the Good News to those thousands of visitors. As well as offering hospitality and providing a space for daily worship, we showcased some 'good news' stories from around the Diocese such as Messy Church, Salt of the Earth and Spaces of Hope.

Welcoming visitors, to our homes, our churches, our communities, is an opportunity to share the story of faith; an opportunity to invite people to find out more. In short, it is a chance for us to invite people to follow Jesus and join us on the journey.

+ Libby

For informal advice on tourism and churches contact Revd Canon David Felix on 01925 740348.

Cafe Church in Costa Coffee Runcorn



The new Costa Coffee in Runcorn 'old town' proved to be a popular venue for a new initiative from All Saints with Holy Trinity churches. A packed house attended their first Cafe Church and enjoyed an interview with Rev Derek Guest who shared his story of God's call on his life and his journey from 'sandpit to pulpit'.

Joy Guest, who helped organise the event, said: "Costa staff were very happy to stay open after hours to accommodate us. Just over forty people came to our

first event. Our format was very simple - Christian music played in the background as people arrived and bought their drinks and then everyone sat back in lovely comfortable surroundings and listened to an interview with a guest speaker who spoke of the impact God has had on their life. Free Gospels and Christian literature were offered at the end and taken."

If anyone wants more information about setting up a Cafe Church in their parish they can contact Derek Guest via email: vicar@allsaintsruncorn.org.uk

Foxhill Events

Stop, Look and Listen day with the Revd. Jenny Bridgman - 11/09/2017
Jenny is Associate Vicar of Timperley, as well as being a Spiritual Director and one of the Chester Assistant DDOs.

A Day on Mindfulness with Shaun Lambert - 23/09/2017
Shaun Lambert is part of the New Wine leaders' network, who has trained extensively in counselling and psychotherapy.

For bookings or enquiries, contact Foxhill on 01928 733777

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EDITOR: Stephen Regan, tel 01928 718834 ext 233. Email stories and pictures for the **October** issue by **18 August**, to: stephen.regan@chester.anglican.org

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A Summer of Praise and Prayer

It's been an extraordinary summer of Praise and Prayer across the diocese, as June witnessed not only the largest gathering of Christians in Cheshire since the Millennium, but also the events surrounding 'Thy Kingdom Come'.

A big crowd for The Big Day Out
10,000 people, from hundreds of churches across Chester diocese and beyond, converged on Capesthorne Hall, near Alderley Edge, in early June, to enjoy The Big Church Day Out. It was led by a number of internationally acclaimed Christian ministries, bands and performing artists. These included

Pete Greig, founder of 24/7 Prayer International, the acclaimed hymn-writer Stuart Townend, and the popular Irish band, Rend Collective.

From the Wirral to Macclesfield, thousands of families brought their babies, children and teenagers for a weekend of camping, outdoor games, and an opportunity to join in worship, prayer and praise. They came as single families and also in church groups. The Diocese was the largest single group bringing 700 people.

Thousands more people are expected at The Big Church Day Out (1-2nd June 2018). Keep the dates free.

Speaking about the summer of Praise and Prayer, Bishop Keith said: "The Big Church Day Out was exactly that. It was a day out of fun and prayer and worship. It was great to see people from different parishes right across the Diocese really enjoying the atmosphere and the worship. Combining Big Church Day Out with 'Thy Kingdom Come' at the Cathedral was a gift from God, for the

prayer and worship had as its focus the petition that Jesus invites us to make. The great gift of both events was to see people's faith rising, as we cried out for our country and our communities to know the love and power of Jesus Christ in their lives. I know that many have returned with real encouragement and faith to pray."

Big Day Out reflections

"I've never felt such a spirit of joyful praise in my life," said one young mother. "It is so uplifting to see thousands of Christians worship together. My kids are loving it, and the music is just amazing. We are definitely coming back next year."

Scott & Cheryl Wilkinson from the Wirral agreed. "It has been absolutely amazing. It was so moving to stand there shining the lights on our phones in sympathy with the victims of the terror attacks in London and Manchester."

"Big Church Day Out is one of the few truly professional Christian events that caters for every member of the family. It is a truly Gospel-orientated worship event."
Ben from Westhucknall

'It is so nice to see a broad mix of churchmanship enjoying one experience. It is all about unity.'
Helen from Leigh

Thy Kingdom Come

The summer of Praise and Prayer included a spectacular celebration of Pentecost, as the Cathedral staged a Beacon Event for the culmination of Thy Kingdom Come – ten days of prayer. The cathedral was packed with 1, 400 people, representing



all our diversity and ages, meeting in a final act of praise and worship and a concerted prayer to God for the coming of his kingdom and a renewal of mission.

As the Dean, the Very Revd Professor Gordon McPhate, said in his welcome: "Thy Kingdom Come is the beginning of something, not the end of something."

During the warm and cheerful worship, the capacity cathedral congregation welcomed 47 pilgrims who had come on foot from Foxhill House and Gardens, praying and meeting with other Christians on the way.

The Director of Foxhill, the Rev Jonathon Green, said: "It was a real privilege to be part of such an important prayer pilgrimage from Foxhill. As we went along we were offered water and hospitality from people in their houses... It felt like a harking back to the real meaning of hospitality on the journey. We were coming from a place of Christian hospitality, and received it on the road."

Bishop Peter spoke of the great 'note of uncertainty' which is prevalent in the country today. "The uncertainty in our society runs deep. As Christians, we need to face up to these rather confused and complex circumstances. We need to view our society rather as our Lord did

2000 years ago when he 'looked upon the crowds with compassion, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a Shepherd.' (Mt 9:36)

"Whenever the Church has faced difficult challenges, the only answer has been to dig deeper into God, by making prayer and worship its greatest priority.



That is the challenge today, and is why the Archbishop called for a special emphasis on prayer during these past 10 days, from Ascension Day to Pentecost."

Speaking about the service the Revd Jonathan Phillips, from Christ Church Chester, said: "One of the more powerful moments in my ministry was looking at over 1200 people, all holding a tea light above their heads as high as they could! This simple gesture captured the excitement and wonderful potential of this gathering of Jesus's followers, united in prayer and worship!"

Lyn Weston, Diocesan Missioner, said: "It has been such a joy to see the parishes of Cheshire join together to pray for 10 days until finally we gather here at the cathedral. Let us cry out to God for the light of Christ to conquer."

Ongoing resources for evangelism will be available in the coming months.

Pictures are available at <https://tinyurl.com/yb9j58zp>



On the face of it, it was an easy task - bring 250 people together from across the diocese and send them back home two days later with a new sense of purpose in the service of Christ ... what could possibly go wrong?

The organising team assembled for the first time in October 2016 and gelled straight away — well that was a good start! The Renewal & Reform report, "Setting God's People Free", was a gift: the idea that "Until laity and clergy are convinced, based on their baptismal mutuality, that they are equal in worth and status, complementary in gifting and vocation, mutually accountable in discipleship, and equal partners in mission, we will never form Christian communities that can evangelise the nation", became the catalyst for the event.

If we were to help "facilitate the growth of the church in numbers and depth of discipleship" the conference needed to be different: "let's allow the delegates to ask questions about strategy of the senior staff in our diocese"; "let's show people that worship can be different but still maintain its reverence and meaningfulness";

"let's surprise people with random acts of kindness, Christian graffiti, painted fingernails(!?) and let's ask a bishop to clean shoes"; "let's have fun whilst we network [in the bar!]; "let's share what we are currently doing in our individual parishes"; "let's provide information about how to use social media".

When the day arrived a disparate group of individuals from across the diocese gradually assembled and threw themselves into the whole weekend — body, mind and spirit. Speakers informed but didn't overwhelm: workshops worked! The poster session was a roaring success. People shared their experiences on social media as they happened (#layconf17) and the networking lasted well into the evening.

And then, in the final act of worship, Bishops Libby and Keith and Archdeacons Mike and Ian anointed each of the delegates with oil and individually blessed them, sending them out as disciples to tell their own stories and speak of the risen Lord in their own communities.

By Alan Downen

God's light to shine in North West - illuminations

Parishes across the North West are being asked to support a mission initiative which will be seen by millions of people from this diocese and across the UK. The 'Jesus light' will appear as part of the Blackpool illumination this autumn and will be seen by an estimated 52 million people over its fifteen year lifespan. The dynamic new display is 15ft tall by 10 ft wide and shows a dark Good Friday cross which transforms into a resurrection scene. The light will be placed on the Promenade and lit next month from 1st September to 5th November in 2017.

Rev. Cox, who is co-ordinating the project, said; "The total cost will be £25,000. We have already raised around £13,000 of this figure which is enough to allow us to commission the work, but we are obviously still looking for further donations. The cost works out at less than ½pence per view over time and we want to encourage churches and church schools of all denominations across the UK to contribute, collectively or as individuals."

All donations made will go towards paying for the display. Any surplus will be retained for future maintenance work. To make your donation online visit <https://tinyurl.com/ybuy2amj> Gift Aid will add 25% to your donations.

