

Youth, Children and Families' Missioner



Jonathan Masters has been appointed as the new Diocesan Youth, Children and Families' Missioner.

Jonathan worked for seven years at Christ Church Alsager as their youth leader, and he remains an enthusiastic member of the church. He is passionate about the Church being a shining beacon in communities.

Jonathan is keen to help churches in the Diocese develop and grow in their work with children, young people and families. Jonathan enjoys kayaking and walking with his dogs, Mozart and Jess.

If you would like to speak with Jonathan you can contact him by email on jonathan.masters@chester.anglican.org. Alternatively you can call him on 01928 718834 ext 231.

Empower, liberate and disciple - #MissionPossible

Chester Diocese Lay Conference 2017

In February, the General Synod gave its support to the report, "Setting God's People Free", which calls for Christians to be equipped to live out their faith in every sphere - from the factory or office, to the gym or shop - to help increase numbers of Christians and their influence in all areas of life.

The Chester Diocesan Lay Conference will offer an opportunity to discuss the report by exploring the future of lay

ministry and the proposed "culture shift". There will also be time to relax, reflect and the opportunity to meet and share experiences with people from parishes across the diocese.

The remaining available places for the conference are going fast so if you would like to join us at Swanwick in May (19th—21st) do not delay. To book: contact Jane Hood at Church House jane.hood@chester.anglican.org



Following the Way of Jesus, putting love into action, is not an easy path, but it is the heart of Easter.

In the Bible we read the story of the first Easter from the point of view of those who had known God's love in Jesus, and loved him in return. They had faithfully followed Jesus to the bitter end and watched him suffer and die on the cross, the day the church now calls Good Friday. Full of sadness and fear, they waited through the Sabbath, until they could go early on Sunday morning to show their love for Jesus in the tender, practical action of anointing his body.

Many around the world have relived that experience: awake through the night feeling hopeless and helpless. In 2016 the people of Afghanistan, India, Iraq, Libya, France, Syria, Egypt, Turkey, Indonesia, Somalia, Pakistan, Cameroon, Nigeria, the Ivory Coast, France, Belgium, the list could go on, were rocked by terrible events of indiscriminate violence. This year the list is equally long.

In those places, and in our own homes, many of us know what it is to be kept awake by grief, by pain, anxiety, guilt, by anger, disappointment, by fear. Many know what it is to be kept awake by love: up all night watching by the bedside of a loved one, holding their hand as death approaches; worrying through the dark hours about having let someone down, about what could have been done differently, about 'if only's'.

But when Jesus' followers arrived at the tomb they did not find Jesus, for he was no longer there. 'You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified', the angel tells them, 'He is not here ... look, here is

the place where they laid him'. Here was information, and the evidence of their own eyes, that nothing was as they thought.

Love is a very powerful motivator. Their love had made them brave, but now it seemed there was nothing left to love. Even Jesus' body was gone. Love had brought them back to the tomb that first Easter morning, but now, in the midst of their confusion, they ran and said nothing.

Except, of course, at some point they must have stopped running and told their story. 'He has been raised' they were told. And eventually that good news filters through to them, and renews their courage. Jesus was not where they expected because he is alive and he's gone ahead to where he promised, to be with us always. They did tell their story, and so we know that the risen Jesus is the completion of God's love and that 'perfect love casts out fear'.

The story of Easter, retold and experienced year by year, still gives us comfort. God, in Jesus, has suffered as many are suffering still. God knows how we are angry and afraid, and by the risen Jesus promises to be with us even in the darkest of times.

But the story of Easter also gives us courage. God, in Jesus, has overcome evil and even death. God gives us hope, that whatever we face, we need not be overcome by fear and anger. This Easter may we too know the comfort and courage of the risen Jesus, and tell his story.

+ Libby Lane

Wisdom from the Solomons

St Thomas' church in Hyde was delighted to welcome Bishop William Pwaisiho, Hon Asst Bishop in Chester diocese, recently. Before presiding at the Eucharist, Bishop William enthralled the congregation with accounts of life and ministry in the Solomon Islands.

Priest-in-charge, Revd Peter Hibbert, also thanked Bishop William who did much to encourage the training for ordination of Chris Andrew.

Nearly two decades later, Revd Chris now assists at St Thomas'. Revd Chris spoke of the importance of his time there, both in terms of his spiritual development and also the firming-up of his call to ordination. "I see my current service at St Thomas' as going just some way to being able to say a huge thank you both to the congregation and Revd Peter for that vital period."



Twins 80 year songs of praise

Twins, John and Peter Manning, recently celebrated serving 80 years in the church choir at St Andrew's, Crewe. John and Peter began singing at the church in 1937 and have sung at more than 4,000 Sunday services and countless weddings.

The Archdeacon of Macclesfield attended a special evensong where John and Peter were thanked for their service. The Revd Lynne Cullens, Vicar

of St Andrews, said; "I think it must be almost unprecedented to have twin brothers serve the church in this way for such an extraordinary length of time. It was a joyous evening for us in Crewe, worshipping God and thanking these two unique individuals for their service to the church as faithful choristers."



Chester Diocesan News

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DISTRIBUTION: phone **Inprint Colour**

on **01270 251589** and ask for Mark Heywood.

Chester Diocesan Board of Finance is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England (no. 7826) and a registered charity (no. 248968).

Ringling the Good News

A ring of bells has been installed at St Thomas Stockton Heath. Sarah Downes, one of the new bell ringers at the church, tells us about this very unusual process.

“In the spring of 2016 ten bells arrived at St Thomas’ church. Eight came from a redundant church in Bollington and two had been cast from new. They were blessed and then raised up to their new home. The bells had to be hung and fitted so could not be rung until November. Through the long warm summer of 2016 the apprentice ringers of St Thomas visited many other church bell towers to ‘learn the ropes’.

24th November was chosen as the date

for the ‘test ring’. This important event would establish how the tower might stand up to the simultaneous movement of ten bells. As the tower had never before housed a ring of bells, there was a degree of anxiety. The bells rang out, the sway was evaluated, the walls felt and the decibels measured. All was fine. Ringing could now commence.

Practice nights at St Thomas began, though still under the watchful gaze of the tutors. A month later a small band of five rang the bells for midnight communion on Christmas Eve, and the front six rang in the New Year.

The Dedication Service took place on the 8th of January 2017. It was packed with friends from the ringing and local communities, as well as representatives of all the organisations, groups and individuals who have contributed to the

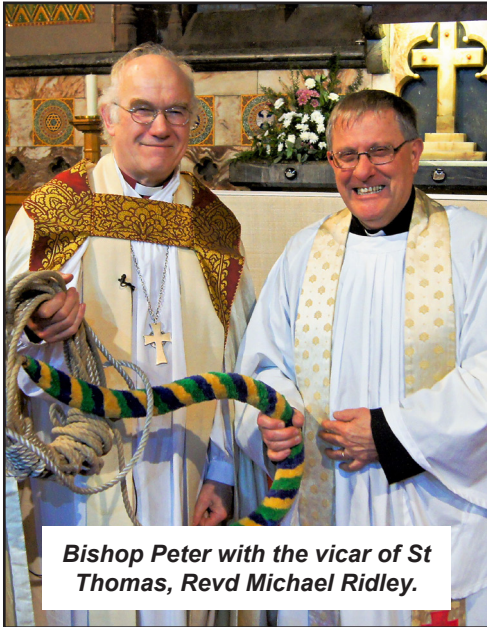


The new bells in readiness for the Blessing Service in 2016

wonderful achievement. Bishop Peter spoke entertainingly of his various encounters with bells. Then the moment came. The bells rang out. The ringers of Bollington were the first to ring following the dedication service. As the former

custodians of eight of the ten bells there was genuine delight to hear 'their' bells ringing once again within the diocese."

See the video: A short video charts how it all happened at goo.gl/HskqAf



Bishop Peter with the vicar of St Thomas, Revd Michael Ridley.



The new ringers

Thy Kingdom Come events revealed

Internationally renowned musicians, a member of the magic circle and thousands of Christians from across this diocese are set to take part in Thy Kingdom Come this summer.

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement which the Archbishop of Canterbury is inviting people around the world to join. It runs for ten days between Ascension and Pentecost from 25th May – 4th June 2017.

As well as events happening in parishes across the Diocese, there are a number of exciting Diocesan events planned (see menu opposite).

The Cathedral Celebration

The week ends with a major celebration in the Cathedral at 5.30pm on 4th June. The service includes a special liturgy

gathering prayers from every deanery and features Stuart Townend and Steve Legg.

Stuart Townend is one of the leading worship songwriters of his generation: from “How Deep the Father’s Love” to “In Christ Alone”, his songs are sung in churches and at events around the world, and his lyrics are acclaimed.

Steve Legg is an evangelist and a member of the ‘Magic Circle’. Steve uses a unique blend of comedy, mystery and visual parables to communicate the Christian message of hope through Jesus. His TV appearances have been seen by millions, he has performed at major church events and in venues including the Royal Albert Hall and Wembley Conference Centre to name just a few.



Kindom Come Menu

25th May to 2nd June

Foxhill prayer week

25th May to 2nd June

Prayers said by Deaneries in the
Cathedral

2nd - 3rd June

The Big Church Day Out at
Capesthorn Hall

4th June

Pilgrimage walk from Foxhill to the
Cathedral

4th June

Thy Kingdom Come celebration
at the Cathedral

How to get involved

The Thy Kingdom Come section of the Diocesan website has resources for parishes and further information about the Diocesan events or you can call Anne Cody on 01928 718834 ext 263 or email her at anne.cody@chester.anglican.org

You can also use the following contacts for specific events: Foxhill prayer week-call Jonathon Green on 01928 733777; Deanery Cathedral services-speak to your vicar and ask for a prayer card; The Big Church Day Out - book online via the Diocese of Chester web page or call Anne Cody on 01928 718834 ext 263; Pilgrimage walk-call Jonathan Green on 01928 733777; Main Cathedral Celebration – Booking via the Diocese of Chester web page or call Anne Cody on 01928 718834 ext 263.



Silent Hollywood stars would have loved Foxhill retreat

The lead actors from Star Wars and The Amazing Spider-Man, who recently struggled with an eight day silent retreat, would have loved the short version planned at Foxhill.

The 'taster' silent retreat, called Breathing Space, runs from 9th to 12th May 2017 and includes two whole days of silence. There is an introduction on the Tuesday night, then silence on the Wednesday and Thursday ending with breakfast and communion on the Friday morning.

Revd Canon Anne Samuels, from the organising team, said; "Breathing Space is for anyone seeking to live within the Christian Faith. It would also be fine for people in different kinds of ministry or service who would like to lighten the load or become less busy."

There will be plenty of space for rest and relaxation - including walking in the

woodlands and using the dedicated art space. People will be allocated to a prayer guide, whom they meet each day for about 30 minutes, and who will suggest ways to relax and ways to pray (perhaps with a passage of Scripture).

The cost is £195 and includes three nights' single en-suite accommodation and all meals. A bursary is available. To book, call: 01928 733777 or email foxhill@chester.anglican.org

Note: A silent retreat may not be helpful for the recently bereaved or those experiencing great stress who may require more structured support.

To book call Foxhill on 01928 733777



Fifty gather to explore calling

Our annual Called to Serve event recently brought together more than 50 people wanting to find out more about the four licensed ministries that Chester Diocese offers: Pastoral Worker, Reader, Church Army and Ordained Ministry.

The event was held at Foxhill Centre for Prayer, Study and Mission. The morning was an opportunity to share, gather information and explore personal vocation in an open and relaxed atmosphere. It is also an opportunity to

hear about the Foundations for Ministry course and people who have already embarked on the four various pathways.

Input was provided by staff members involved in these ministries. It was wonderful to welcome Helena Roulston, one of the Young Vocations Advisors for the Diocese, along with Helen Oakley, a member of a new monastic community, and Br Thomas Seville from the Community of the Resurrection in Mirfield.

Thanks to all who attended and contributed to the morning and to Foxhill for hosting this event.

Foundations for Ministry

Discover your gifts and calling while learning with others. This course is open to anyone who wants to grow and develop in Christian ministry and forms the first

year of training for Reader and Pastoral Worker ministries. The next course begins in September. For further information or an application form please contact Peter Bacon on 01928 718834 ext 237 or email ministry@chester.anglican.org