

Chester

Diocesan News

May 2019

News, features, jobs...
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Growing stronger parishes

The dedication of Churchwardens is humbling



The warmth of the sun grows stronger as we sense the hope of summer to come. But for me, the true joy of May is that it's the Archdeacons' Visitation season again. At these eight services, which are open to all across the Diocese, Archdeacon Mike and I swear in around 400 Churchwardens and countless number of sidespeople. The services are always full of joy, which fits nicely with the theme of this year's *Thy Kingdom Come* events, which are also themed around Joy and are happening throughout May and June.

The sacrifice and dedication of Churchwardens is humbling to me and almost universally they are a living, breathing, illustration of extraordinary service of the Kingdom of God. Churchwardens have played a vital part in Church life since the thirteenth century, but the dedication to detail carries echoes of the diaconal ministry of the early Church. Wardens, who are officers of the Bishop, drive change, facilitate mission, support ministry and exercise wise and pastoral care to clergy and laity alike. It is a daunting task but one which oils the wheels of the diocesan machine and makes parish life possible. They all do it differently, according to their gifts and the time they can spare, but they do it unpaid, often unthanked and mostly unnoticed. We are all deeply in their debt and so please make May a month in which you love and pray for your Churchwarden.

Increasingly some churches are finding it hard to recruit a Churchwarden, and if that's your church, maybe it's time for you to step forward and offer what you can? It is a seriously important part of church life and perhaps your church needs you? The service of the church in this way may never get the publicity it deserves, so now's your chance to go and send a bit of love and thanks to a Churchwarden near you.

The Venerable Ian Bishop

Thy Kingdom Come, 2019

What started out as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 2016 to the Church of England, has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer.

Thy Kingdom Come (TKC) is a global prayer movement, which invites Christians around the world to pray between Ascension and Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus Christ.

All deaneries, parishes and churches of the Diocese of Chester are invited to

participate. In 2019, the theme for TKC is Joy.

Earlier this year, the Archbishops invited every Christian around the world to join them in prayer from 30 May to 09 June 2019.

Taking part need not be complicated. You can pray at church, as part of a group, with your family, and individually.

There are countless ways to participate in Thy Kingdom Come. For more information visit www.chester.anglican.org



Prayer walks

Why not organise a prayer walk in your local community? This could be a stroll down the street, an amble along a beach, a wander down the canal, across some fields, around the city walls, or on the school run in the morning. It can be as long or as short as you like, as organised or as spontaneous as you wish.



Prayer vigils

Some churches hold prayer vigils lasting 24 hours, a few do it for the entire 11 days. Continuous prayer is a powerful way to participate and can bring together your church community.

Keep a prayer journal

For some, drawing closer to God in prayer is best done through a prayer journal. Write down your prayers, make notes of prayers answered and unanswered. A prayer journal can be a simple way to track your prayers over days, weeks and months.

Visit the diocesan website for resources and ideas.

Your local school

Invite your school to host a prayer space. This is a great way to involve children and young people beyond your church boundary to participate in Thy Kingdom Come.



Prayer stations

Why not get creative with your very own church prayer station? Pray with music, art, texture, words, and dance. Prayer stations can be bright and beautiful, quiet and reflective, and everything in between.

Beacon events

Often working with churches from other denominations, beacon events are a great way to pool resources, ideas, creativity and energy and to hold an event that is bigger and bolder than it could be working alone.



Everyday Evangelism: Revd Glyn Jones

As a Self-Supporting Minister and co-leader of The Light Project, Chester, I teach and lead groups in mission and evangelism. While I am involved in lots of 'official activities', the part of my life which has the biggest impact is what I would call 'everyday evangelism' or what some people would call missional lifestyle.

Although I help lead outreach, take part in Alpha and help organise a variety of events, it is the small stuff that I love the best. The extent of the kingdom of heaven in our lives can be seen in the small habits and decisions we make in our everyday lives...

Each day I take three objects out with me: my phone, my keys and my wallet. When I forget one of these, it soon becomes apparent and I become unable to function as planned that day. A while back, I decided that I would add an extra essential object to my list. Packing a little wooden cross, a battered metal heart or a pocket Bible would be part of my new daily routine and, if the occasion arose, I would give it away.

So that's what I do. As a result of this little habit, hundreds of people in shops, parks, hospitals and trains

have been reminded of God's love for them. I constantly meet people in and around Chester who still keep with them the reminder I gave them and when I see them, they show me. It's often a reminder to me to pray for them and of the relationships that build on such gestures of faith.

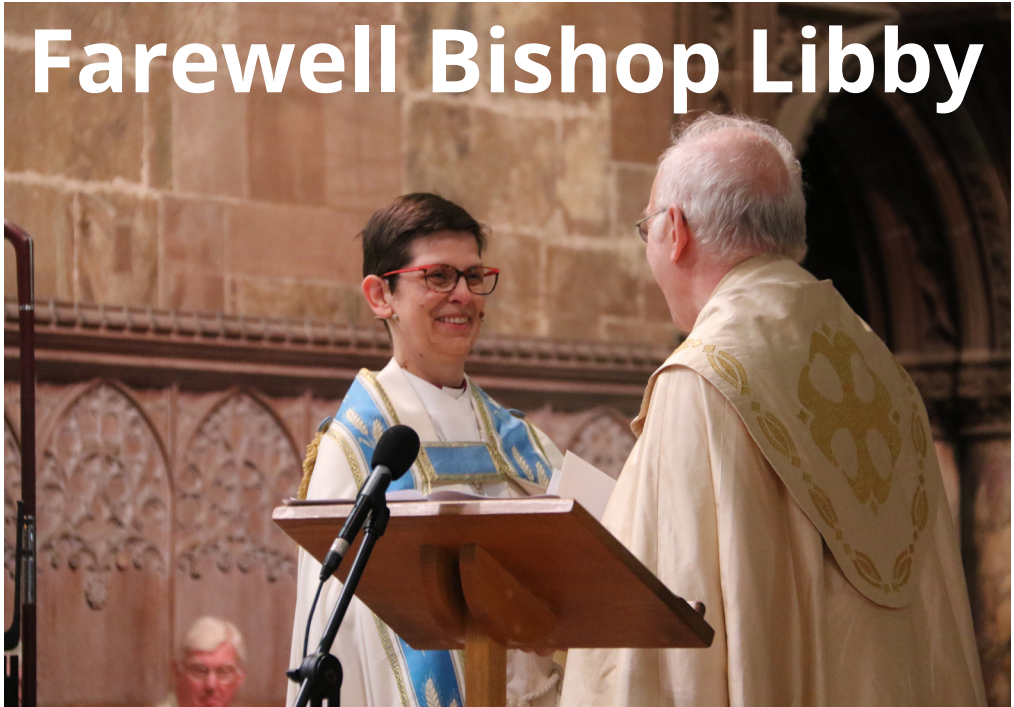
I have also noticed that when a group of friends, colleagues or a church develop this simple habit, the hundreds become thousands, and the extent of the kingdom of God spreads like a virus in our society. Developing a culture of challenge, fun and simplicity will bring life back to the routine of any group of people. So why not try a little thing. Start small. Look at what you carry around each day and plan to take something extra with you: a small reminder or a gift for a friend or a stranger. God occasionally works through our grand designs to change people's lives, but He continually responds to our small steps. This is because they are rooted in something powerful. That something is called faith.

The Revd Glyn Jones is the author of The Peg and the Pumice Stone.



Glyn is a SSM at Christ Church, Chester; Storyteller; Everyday Evangelist; and Co-Leader of The Light Project

Farewell Bishop Libby



Hundreds of well-wishers paid tribute to Bishop Libby at a special service at Chester Cathedral. The congregation bid her farewell on Saturday 30 March in what was her final act of public worship in the Diocese of Chester before taking up her new episcopal duties as the Bishop of Derby.

Bishop Libby delivered a heartfelt sermon in which she thanked the people and places of the Diocese of Chester that have been a part of her ministry over the years. Citing Paul's letter to the Philippians, she said: "I've been reading and rereading it as I prepare to move: the love and hope and gratitude Paul expresses for Christ and His people in this letter, articulates much of what I want to say as I go – Paul says it better than I could, so read Philippians and know it echoes my continuing prayers for you all."

Children from Bishops' Bluecoat High School performed a special routine of

drama and dance, and a video, projected on to large screens, featured children from church schools across the diocese thanking Bishop Libby for her ministry and leadership as the Chair of the Diocesan Board of Education.

Bishop Libby was announced as the next Bishop of Derby in December 2018. Speaking on the day of the announcement, she said: "I am excited and privileged to have been called to serve as Bishop of Derby. I grew up here and my vocation was fostered here. Derbyshire nurtured me and brought me to faith and I want to love Derbyshire back."

Bishop Peter Forster, the Bishop of Chester said: "Libby has had a splendid ministry in the Diocese of Chester, and most notably over the past four years as Bishop of Stockport. We will miss her very much, but she will be an excellent Bishop of Derby as she takes her exceptional gifts to this wider ministry in the Church."

Continuing a centuries-old tradition

On Mothering Sunday, the Choir of St Saviour's Church, Oxton (right), visited its 'mother' church - Holy Cross, at Woodchurch. Visiting the mother church on Mothering Sunday - the fourth Sunday of Lent - is a centuries-old tradition and it was particularly good that choir members from Oxton could join their colleagues at Woodchurch to sing Choral Evensong.



Message of support to local Muslim worshippers



The Bishop of Birkenhead, Keith Sinclair (left), has shared a message of support with Muslim worshippers on the Wirral, following the terrorist attack in New Zealand in which 50 people were killed.

Writing to Ibrahim Syed, the leader of the Wirral Deen Centre in Birkenhead, Bishop Keith said: "We are neighbours and our God calls us to love one another. We will stand with you against any refusal to love. May God have mercy upon us and give us peace."

A celebration of all abilities

"I think it felt a little like being in heaven. It was a gorgeous, gorgeous thing to be part of." That was how the Revd Zoe Heming described a special service at Chester Cathedral.

On Saturday 09 March, over 100 people celebrated the abilities of all people. Organised by the diocesan Disability Forum, the service was designed to be as accessible and inclusive as possible.

If you would like further information about how you can make your church services more inclusive, contact Vanessa Layfield, Engagement and Inclusion Officer in the Diocese of Chester.



Explorers of church building projects: Oakhanger

A learning opportunity for parishes interested in developing and caring for church buildings and halls.

23 May 2019



Health and safety for churches

The event will enable parishes to assess their health and safety needs.

4 June 2019



C5 Safeguarding refresher training for clergy

Mandatory refresher safeguarding training for clergy who previously attended a C3 safeguarding training session.

8 June 2019



Terrific Toddlers

Discover the importance of toddler groups and how we can run them more effectively to grow in faith.

28 / 29 June 2019



Understanding young adult faith

Join academic Dr Ruth Perrin to explore issues around young adult identity and faith formation.

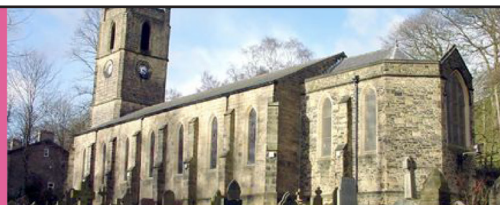
09 July 2019



Explorers of church building projects

Hear first-hand experience of planning and managing a major repair and re-ordering project.

09 July 2019



To book your place on these events and to view all of our events, please visit :
www.chester.anglican.org/events