

Chester

Diocesan News

June 2019

News, features, jobs...
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Growing stronger parishes

Bishop Peter announces his retirement



The Bishop of Chester, the Rt Revd Dr Peter Forster, has announced that he will be retiring from his role on Monday 30 September 2019, after more than 22 years in the post.

In a letter to clergy, published on the diocesan website, he says: "I will be retiring as Bishop on 30 September... It has been a huge privilege to serve in this Diocese, and I am looking forward to my final months in post.

"At 69, I was beginning to feel ready to retire - with Elisabeth in strong agreement! We will move to our house in Scotland, which we have lovingly built

over the past decade or so, and which is ready and waiting for us."

Bishop Peter will bid farewell to the clergy of the Diocese at a conference in June and a farewell service at Chester Cathedral is planned for Saturday 20 July - about which more information will be made available soon.

The Bishop of Birkenhead, the Rt Revd Keith Sinclair, will become Acting Bishop from 1 October 2019.

The process for appointing Bishop Peter's successor has begun.

Give attention to prayer



Church in the daily office. I have in mind words from Psalm 27:8

*'Come, my heart says, seek his face!
Your face, Lord, do I seek'.*

Prayer as seeking the face of God, prayer as entering that deep communion of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Prayer when we ask, certainly, and where we give thanks, where we need to confess. But prayer too as waiting, listening and as Psalm 95:6 would have it bowing down in worship. This is not for anyone else to prescribe; it is for each of us and all of us to seek his face, where we are and how we are, and see what happens!

Dear Friends,
After the day of Pentecost and the baptising of three thousand, the early church is described as those who;

'devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers' (Acts 2:42)

Could we at this time in the life of the Diocese focus on "the prayers" (not to neglect any of the other three dimensions, but just for the moment, give attention to prayer)?

Many churches will be holding prayer events connected with the call to pray which is "Thy Kingdom Come" from Ascension Day until Pentecost; there are some wonderful resources for parishes and schools to help us to pray. I'm thinking however not so much about whatever activity will be taking place in our own parish but about our own prayer personally.

I find the Psalms help me in my personal prayer when I don't know the words to say. The Psalms are at the heart of the corporate prayer of the

Maybe it is because we are coming to a time of great change in the Diocese that I would like to make this invitation. We will all be praying very much for Bishop Peter and Elisabeth as we approach their farewell service in July. There will be praying for the whole Diocese as we begin to participate in the process which will lead to the appointment of his successor. There will be praying for one another in this time of transition. All of this is good and indeed essential and will give us plenty of opportunity, like the early church, to devote ourselves to "the prayers", personally and together. As Psalm 27 ends:

*'I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.
Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage:
Wait for the Lord!' (Psalm 27:13-14)*

With love in Christ,

+Keith

The Church at the show

Join 80,000 other visitors at The Royal Cheshire Show. The Show takes place at its Tabley Showground on Tuesday and Wednesday 18/19 June 2019.

The Cheshire Agricultural Society have generously made a newly enlarged marquee available for "The Church at the Show", which will now be inhabiting a 30m x 10m marquee in the Rural Life area, close to the Bandstand, not far from the Main Ring.

The Show will open with a Service held in "The Church at the Show" marquee at 7.30 pm on Monday 17 June, when Bishop Peter will preach and bless the Showground.

On Show Days, there will be an 8.00 am Communion and a 2.00 pm "Service for the Countryside" taking place on both days of the Show.

Also in "The Church at the Show" on Show Days will be life-sized knitted

characters from the Noah's Ark exhibition held by Church Lawton Church last summer; Traidcraft will return with their colourful stall. Salt of the Earth will be there with their ingenious mix of science and faith. Messy Church will take place in the gazebo adjacent to the "Church at the Show" marquee, and don't miss the wedding car which will be on display outside the marquee.

Tea, coffee, squash and biscuits are served throughout the day and you will be warmly welcomed by the team of Stewards who volunteer to welcome visitors and serve refreshments. Please use the "Church at the Show" as a place to rest and a place to meet friends, as well as enjoying the various displays and services taking place during the Show.





Church awarded birthday development grant

St Peter's Church, Macclesfield, has been awarded a National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) grant of up to £121,500 towards the repairs of the church building – just in time to mark 170 years since the completion of the building in 1849.

The project, made possible by money raised by National Lottery players, will focus on making critical repairs to the church roof, together with essential repairs to the tower stonework and tower roof.

The poor condition of these areas has contributed to the church having been listed on Historic England's "Churches at Risk Register". The work should ensure it can be taken off the register soon.

Church Council Chairman, John Phillipson, says: "The NLHF gave us a grant which supported the Development Phase of the project in 2018 and we are very grateful for the generous award of this Delivery grant, which will enable us to complete the project. The church sits at the heart of our community in Macclesfield and we're delighted we can carry out this much-needed work."

As well as supporting the repair work, the grant will also contribute to the funding of a heritage engagement programme, which will help to tell the past and present story of the heritage of the church.

John Phillipson adds: "This will be a great opportunity to reach out to our local community through the use of historical information, film and craft activities and we'll be supported by local artists and experts in the work. The heritage materials will be developed in parallel with the building repair work and used in an open church and other engagement events in 2020."

The PCC was supported in its application by Emily Allen, Church Buildings Missioner in the Diocese of Chester. She says: "I am delighted that the NLHF has awarded this Delivery grant to St Peter's, Macclesfield. It is 170 years old this year. What better way to mark that milestone than with a grant to carry out the essential work that will help ensure the building is loved by generations to come over the next 170 years and beyond."

It is planned that the practical work will begin after Easter. Repairs to the tower will be undertaken first. Further work to the north aisle and vestry roofs will take place in the summer to minimise disruption to all users of the building.

The building will remain open throughout the work, but the area under the north aisle and vestry roofs will be partitioned off whilst the repairs are carried out.

Everyday Evangelism:



Everyday Evangelism is a series of stories and reflections on the ways in which people and parishes in the Diocese of Chester are living out the good news of Jesus, and following him with confidence, in all areas of our lives, Monday to Saturday as well as Sunday.

Clare Doig is part of the church family at St John's Great Sutton. Away from church, she is a Palliative Care Specialist Children's Nurse at Claire House Hospice on Wirral. Here she reflects on her everyday evangelism and how her faith shapes how she acts in the workplace.

Clare Doig

"I work in Claire House Children's Hospice and have done for nearly 20 years. I have found my vocation in life and plan to be here till it's time to retire.

We look after families from before birth and up until the age of 23. For us to care for a child they must meet certain criteria, which usually means having a life-limiting or life-threatening condition. As a palliative care lead nurse, I am responsible for leading the team clinically. I specialise in managing symptoms and end of life care. I have been involved in many deaths during my time at Claire House, either supporting families or other staff.

The most common question I get asked is, 'how can you do this job, you must be an angel'. My answer is always that, 'the children are the angels'.

I feel a great privilege being a part of their life – sometimes for only a very short time – and enable them to die in peace and with dignity. We only have one chance to get this right.

So how does my faith in God help me? I can honestly say that I often question my faith and battle with it internally, but at other times it is the thing that makes me go back to work after a particularly difficult shift. Faith and my belief in what happens after death keeps me strong and I believe that the children are destined for a better life.

Many of the children I care for suffer daily with their conditions, often enduring continuous pain, seizures and other debilitating symptoms. I feel a sense of relief when these children pass, and they are at their most peaceful just prior to dying. I believe that is when they are being cared for by Jesus.

Many will question how God can do this, how he can make them suffer as they do, but I get through by believing

that God didn't do this to the children, he is in fact with them in their pain and relieving them of their difficult struggles and setting them free. I take comfort in my own personal prayer, usually asking for strength for families, but also for myself to help me do my job to the best of my ability and to thank God for his guidance.

Not everyone you meet in life feels like me and often families are very angry with God. On the other hand, parents do often want to involve God at these most difficult times but have no idea where to begin and I will help organise baptisms and visits from clergy. I will involve myself in these processes as my colleagues don't always feel as comfortable as I do.

At times I definitely question my faith and particularly struggle with the deaths of children that have been perfectly normal and healthy and then are struck down by a horrible illness such as cancer. Why does this happen? I have no answer and am still waiting.

God gives me the strength to go into work and be the happy, confident, skillful nurse that I am; my family also has a big part to play in how I get through.

Being a palliative care nurse has its struggles, but I take pride in the fact that God guided me to this vocation.

Many days at work are full of joy and happiness and that gives me the strength to face the bad days. But even on the bad days, good can happen. The death of a child that is controlled and peaceful can give the family time to be with their little one before they start their life dancing in heaven. That is what I believe is next.

I love my job, I love my family, I love my church family, and I love that God guides us. I am a very lucky person."

Events

To book or view other events, visit:
www.chester.anglican.org/events



Terrific Toddlers **28 or 29 June 2019**

Discover the importance of toddler groups, and how we can run them more effectively to grow young generations in faith. All church leaders and toddler group leaders and volunteers are welcome, including those who are thinking of just starting out on a toddler group journey.



Developing your church building: Working with the DAC **02 July 2019**

You will be offered practical guidance on how to approach the legal permissions process for projects such as the introduction of a kitchenette or building an extension. This event should be particularly useful for PCC members, fabric team members and new clergy.



Explorers of Church Building Projects: St Paul's, Compstall **09 July 2019**

The Explorers of Church Building Projects series is a popular learning programme for those interested in developing and caring for church buildings and halls in furthering mission and ministry. In June, we are delighted to be visiting St Paul's Church, Compstall.



Understanding young adult faith **09 July 2019**

This day will explore issues around young adult identity, worldview and faith formation. Including how we might reach, disciple and encourage a generation growing up without the hope of faith in demanding and uncertain times.