

Chester

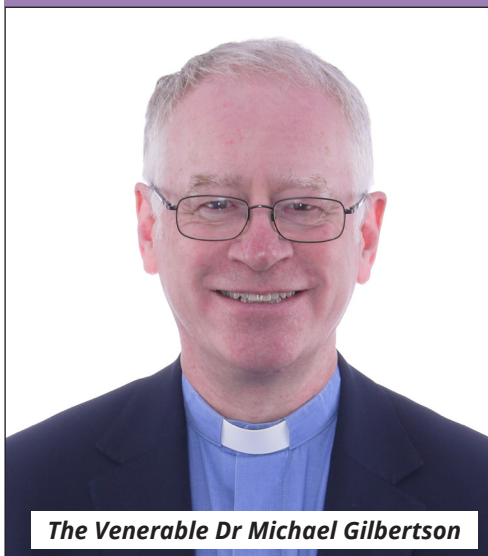
Diocesan News

August 2019

News, features, jobs
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Growing stronger parishes

Growing Faith



The Venerable Dr Michael Gilbertson

The psalmist writes: 'we will tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.' (Psalm 78:4). Passing on the faith to the younger generation has always been a key task for the church.

Earlier this year, the Church of England began an important and inspiring initiative called Growing Faith. The idea is to encourage the whole church to take seriously the place of children and young people. Recent research shows that 76% of Christians came to faith under the age of 18, so how the church relates to younger generations really counts. And that's not just about what

goes on in church. It's about schools, and crucially, the home.

Growing Faith sets out a vision 'where children young people and households are coming to faith, growing in discipleship and confidently contributing to the Kingdom of God through the community of faith.' Lots of areas of the church's work are relevant here, including mission and evangelism, work in schools, developing ministry, and initiatives like Setting God's People Free, which encourages lay and ordained people to live out their faith in everyday life.

This is not just about teaching the faith to children and young people. It's also about enabling them to play their full part in the life of the church here and now. To include them fully in worship, to give them opportunities for leadership, and room to explore faith and life without fear of being judged.

Growing Faith wants to see:

- Every parish creating expressions of church where children, young people and households are actively involved, growing spiritually and have their voices heard.
- 100% of Anglican parents recognising the importance of sharing faith with their children and actively engaging in this responsibility.
- Clergy and lay ministers who are confident in supporting households in sharing faith at home.

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- Congregations which nurture and support the faith of children and young people.
- Churches which serve and are served by their local school communities, actively building strong relationships between church, schools and households.
- Children and young people who are confident to share their faith with their peers and families.

Resources and ideas are going to be provided for churches, schools and households to help them join in.

As I go round the diocese, I am often encouraged by all that we are doing in ministry among younger generations. At the same time, if we are honest, we know we face a major challenge in reaching children and young people, who are often under-represented or missing in our church communities. So *Growing Faith* is timely and inspiring. The love of God in Jesus Christ really is for all ages.

The Venerable Dr Michael Gilbertson

Funeral for Bishop Ron, 1926 - 2019



Rt Revd Ronald Brown

The former Bishop of Birkenhead, the Rt Revd Ronald Brown, has died aged 92 after a long period of ill health due to kidney failure.

Bishop Ron was Bishop of Birkenhead from 1974-92.

The funeral took place at 11:00am in Chester Cathedral on Friday 28 June.

The former Bishop of Chester, the Rt Revd Michael Baughen, writing in the CDN in August 1992 ahead of Bishop Ron's retirement in the September of

that year, paid tribute to him. He wrote: "His sensitivity as a colleague has been very special. He can so often see underneath one's outward countenance and empathise with burdens and responsibilities. He has also on many occasions thought further about an idea that may not have seemed a good one to him at first and come back to say that he thinks that is the right way after all. So many of you reading this CDN will have your own memories, appreciation and special praises for what this very special servant of God has meant to you across the years."

In an interview published in the CDN in September 1992, Bishop Ron remarked on his long ministry as Bishop of Birkenhead. When asked about his thoughts on becoming a bishop, he said: "Astonishment is not too strong a word - then apprehension and then acceptance of God's call. I hope the job would be as satisfying and enjoyable as being a parish priest... I have had great pleasure and satisfaction in being a bishop."



Bishop supports call for churches to combat knife crime

Rt Revd Keith Sinclair

Churches will be encouraged to offer a place of sanctuary for young people as part of efforts to combat knife crime and serious youth violence.

The proposal was part of a key debate held at the Church of England's General Synod in July.

The news came a day after a 14-year-old boy was seriously injured in a stabbing in Handbridge, Chester, in June.

The Rt Revd Keith Sinclair, Bishop of Birkenhead, says: "I was shocked and saddened to learn that a boy of 14 has been seriously injured in Chester. My thoughts and prayers are with him and his family.

"We can all do better at reducing violence in our society. Our churches

are uniquely placed to offer a spiritual dimension to our communities and I welcome the debate at General Synod to explore what practical and pastoral measures our church leaders and churches can take to support those at risk of violence or affected by it."

The Revd Canon Dr Rosemarie Mallett, a priest in Angell Town, south London, and a prominent campaigner in combating knife crime, will lead the debate at the General Synod in York.

She will call for churches to take a range of practical measures - from providing knife amnesty bins, to training clergy and other leaders to protect young people potentially vulnerable to 'county lines' exploitation.

Meet your new Ordinands



An actor, a former “militant atheist”, and a former employee of a travelling circus troupe are just three of the 22 men and women who were ordained at Chester Cathedral on Sunday 30 June.

The Revd Steph Morris

The Revd Steph Morris followed her dream of travelling the UK with the Chinese State Circus before she found herself following God’s call to serve people closer to home.

Steph says: “I dreamed of the circus lifestyle; travelling the UK and beyond. I was quite shy at that point in my life and going to the circus brought out my personality. I met some interesting people during my time wading around muddy circus fields!”

After returning home, Steph settled in Cheshire and started a family. As a regular churchgoer, she found herself



Revd Steph Morris

taking on greater responsibilities in church, until one day, she couldn't ignore the call to the priesthood any longer.

Following her ordination, Steph will continue her training in the parishes of Bosley, Sutton, Wildboarclough, and Wincle, on the outskirts of Macclesfield.

She says she hopes to use her ministry to work with children and young people and strengthen relationships between her church and local primary school.

For more photos of the day see our Facebook gallery

The Revd Josie Tuplin

The Revd Josie Tuplin was ordained in June. Her journey to faith and ordination has been long and testing, describing herself in the past as a "militant atheist".

She says: "If I think back, I almost can't believe where I am today in relation to that. I went off the rails quite badly; I lost something of myself.

"I believed that religion was for children, or for people who weren't that bright, stupid or needy. I was smug and arrogant and deluded. The irony is, I had no control of my life; I was a mess."

A turning point came at her aunt's funeral. A committed Christian, her aunt had requested that there be no eulogy, but asked that her Vicar simply declare that she had worshipped for 90 years and "died in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection."

Josie says: "That was it for me, I thought, 'if it's good enough for her, then it's good enough for me.'"

She says of herself at that time: "I hurt people quite a lot, and I wasn't able to help myself."

Despite this, Josie's faith journey began in earnest following her aunt's funeral. Shortly after she met her husband, an academic, with whom she will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary in September.

She says: "My husband is a strong



person, someone who I couldn't harm and didn't want to harm. That was a turning point. As soon as I turned that corner, I knew that God was calling me back to be with him."

Josie has worshipped in the parish of Oxtan St Saviour on the Wirral for 38 years. Following her ordination, she will leave the parish to complete her training in the neighbouring parish of Woodchurch.

The Revd Steve Murphy

The Revd Steve Murphy is a trained actor with a host of acting credits to his name, appearing in films such as *Children of Men* and TV shows *Emmerdale*, *Coronation Street* and *Hollyoaks* – his most recent appearance was in BBC1's *In The Club*. He was also ordained in June but has battled doubt in his own motivations and faith along the way.

His mum was ill for a long time before



Revd Steve Murphy

she died when Steve was in his early 20s. He'd helped to care for her through her illness and says that he became very angry with God.

"She had MS; it's such a thief of an illness. I had difficulty coping and when I was in my early 20s, I gradually drifted away from Christian things."

Despite attending church as a child and a teenager, Steve says he spent 20 years away from God: "I turned my back on God and withdrew from any form of connection with church," Steve says. "The thing that sticks out from that time is that when you do move away from God, you need to be clear about who's moved: it's not God."

It took a lot of time for Steve to be convinced of where God was calling him. For years he "dodged" the call as something "holy people do."

He says: "I thought that was what people who are wiser, cleverer, more spiritual and faithful do. I've had to

learn that doubt isn't the opposite of faith; questioning and doubt are part of our faith journey.

"I've also come to terms with the fact that God calls us for who we are not who we think we should be".

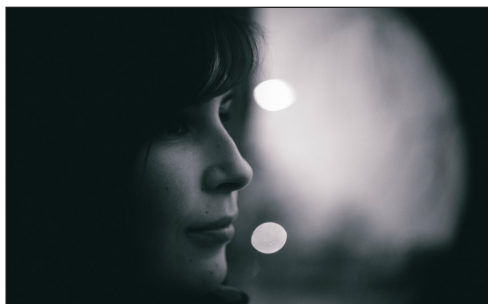
Steve hopes to use his own life experiences in his ministry to better understand other people's experience of God.

Steve will complete his curacy in the parish of Prestbury as a Self-Supporting Minister and will continue to work in communications for Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust.

Is God calling you?

There are a number of roles in the Church. Could God be calling you to one of them? For an informal conversation and to discuss where God may be calling you, contact the Ministry Team at Church House on T: 01928 718834

Spiritual abuse and the Church



There is a growing concern within the Church about spiritual abuse, but what exactly is it, how can you recognise it, and how can we create healthy church cultures to help ensure spiritual abuse is minimised?

Dr Lisa Oakley, a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Chester, delivered a day's training at Church House, Daresbury, to around 40 church leaders and explained what spiritual abuse is and equipped delegates with the tools to recognise and respond to it.

According to Dr Lisa Oakley, spiritual abuse is, "a systematic pattern of controlling and coercive behaviour in a religious context. It is a form of psychological and emotional abuse."

The faith-based context is what makes spiritual abuse distinct from the psychological and emotional abuse of the type reported in other contexts.

However, Dr Lisa Oakley says that spiritual abuse is often found in sexual or physical abuse that happens within a faith-based context.

It's perhaps for this reason, more than others, that it is important churchgoers can recognise and respond well to spiritual abuse; the controlling behaviour might be part of the reason why sexual abuse is often not disclosed.

Lisa says: "At its most extreme,

spiritual abuse includes the use of scripture. For example, getting people to do things by quoting passages of the Bible. It might involve the idea that God is complicit or the suggestion that this is what God wants to happen, or threats of spiritual consequences: if you don't do this, you won't go to heaven. It might also include the notion of divine position, the idea that God put me here so, therefore, you can't question me. It could include superiority and elitism; we're the best church, we've got the 'real truth'."

So how should you respond to a disclosure of spiritual abuse?

Much of the same principles learned in safeguarding training apply to disclosures of spiritual abuse.

Lisa says: "A good response to any type of disclosure should include a safe place for someone to speak, listening well, and validating the person disclosing the information. Though in addition, I would say it's important to recognise that this person might be very fearful; they might be used to a situation in which there is a right and wrong answer. Giving people real choices about how they choose to proceed or respond is vital."

Have you been affected?

Have you been affected by spiritual abuse? Have you witnessed it at church? If you have a concern, please speak to Pauline Butterfield, Diocesan Safeguarding Officer in the Diocese of Chester.

For further support, contact Replenished, a charity that aims to provide a safe place and space for survivors of spiritual abuse.

Events

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



Managing Events in Your Church **07 September 2019**

This interactive workshop for people who run events in and for their church will give the basics of event management and planning and will be delivered by two senior UK events management academics with decades of professional events experience in the industry.



Explorers of church buildings: Audio/Visual at St Mary's **26 September 2019**

Hear why and how St Mary's decided to install new audio/visual equipment of a projector and screen in the church building and the difference it has made to church services. There is also an opportunity to hear about other improvements.



How to write a successful grant application **12 October 2019**

You will learn and develop skills in writing strong fundraising applications, understand what the funders are looking for, how to identify grant making trusts and about establishing a clear fundraising strategy.



Myers-Briggs Workshop **15 October 2019**

Hosted by Julia McGuinness (*left*) the Myers-Briggs model can help us identify our own personality preferences and appreciate our particular gift of personality. The model can also enhance understanding and ability to communicate with those different from ourselves.