

Chester Diocesan News



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Chester

#EverydayFaith across the Diocese of Chester | September 2020

At the heart of a happy school



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Into the light?

The Dean of Chester Cathedral, the Very Revd Dr Tim Stratford, looks at how we have been affected by recent events.

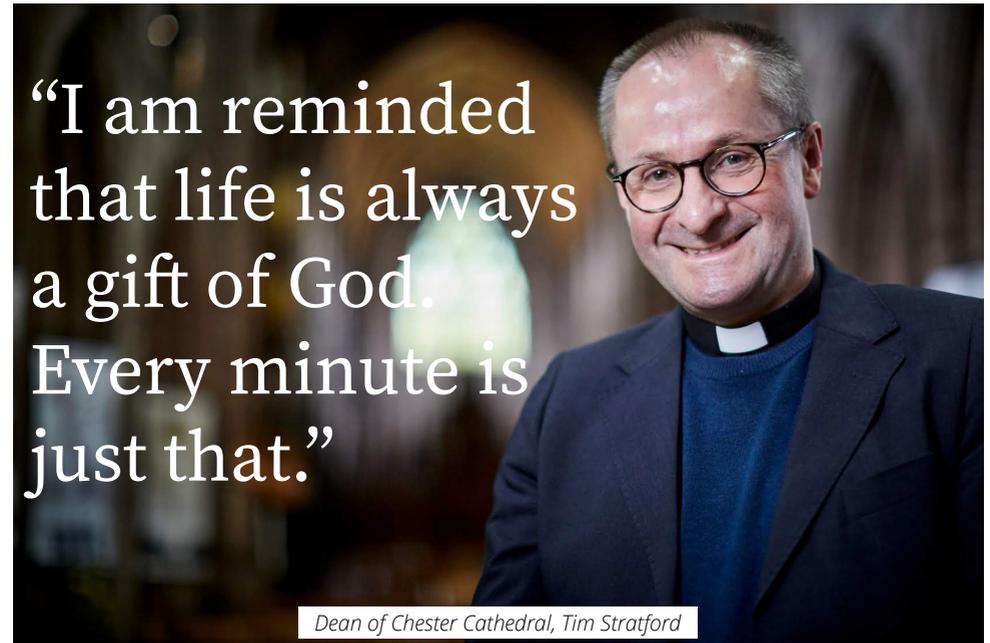
“ I don't know how you feel about the world's slow rise from the burrows of lockdown that we have needed to construct for ourselves. It seems to me that some of us have come out blinking to circulate in the fresh light of encounter with real people in real places again whilst others of us remain anxious and fearful about the dangers suspended in the air. In July our churches began to open their doors. In August the staycationers began to arrive in significant numbers at Chester Cathedral. This month children and teachers return to schools. And we will wait with bated breath to see if the R number remains below 1.0.

This all has a huge impact on our sense of who we are, our vulnerability and mortality, our relationships and neighbourliness, our willingness to interact and to assist. The coronavirus has diminished us and what we can do undoubtedly for the time being. Some of us will feel this more than others. To some extent the impact is conditioned

by our health, age, gender, ethnicity and wealth. The young are hampered in their relationship building and limited in their prospects and opportunity to learn. The aged are more vulnerable to long term and life-threatening sickness. And we are challenged about how we take account of one another.

These are times like no other that any of us have lived through, though generations before us have known the same infliction. It demands much of us spiritually. There is so much that we will have been looking forward to that cannot be as we wish it were. I am reminded that life is always a gift of God. Every minute is just that. We are not entitled to the time we are given. We have not earned life. And even when the world we occupy is reduced there is still so much to be thankful for.

Later this month Bishop Mark will begin his ministry among us but he will do so without public opportunity to occupy the seat at Chester Cathedral that belongs to his office. On 20th September he will walk past the



Bishop's seat (or Cathedra) and receive the Melanesian Crozier at the altar here then pray for the city, county and diocese. You can join us on YouTube but the gathering will be small. A public and civic gathering to welcome him into this new ministry and his seat in the diocese will take place hopefully in 2021. Our inability, to do what we would normally, captures something of the human condition we experience.

And next month I am deeply aware that our ordinands who have been preparing over the years for their ministries as priests and deacons will face a similar challenge in ordination services reduced in size. Yet there is opportunity here too. There will be resources to pray in receiving churches for their new ministries, to welcome them and to encourage.

There is opportunity for us to wit-

ness here to the deep hope that is within us and pray for a healed humanity. But it asks a lot of us all.

Tim Stratford (Dean)

Join us online to watch the Crozier service live on :

20 September at 3:30pm

[Chester Cathedral's Youtube channel](#)



Headteacher: Mrs Scott-Herron

Relationship at the heart of a happy school family

Mrs Scott-Herron, Headteacher of Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School, Warrington, says her school will be “back up and running” at the start of this month after a tumultuous summer.

“The things I’ve missed most are the conversations and interactions we have with them, not just about learning, but about life,” she says ahead of the school reopening on 07 September. “I’m looking forward to seeing everybody, we are a family and I’ve missed them. Simple as that.”

As the likelihood of a national lockdown was increasing, the emotion of that time was made even more acute when she received a phone call to say the school would be subject to a full OFSTED inspection.

“On the Monday before lockdown, I received a phone call from OFSTED. Even on the verge of a global pandemic the whole staff team wholeheartedly said ‘let’s go for it!’”

The school set about preparing for the inspection, only to be told at the 11th hour that it wouldn’t go ahead after all.

“For me, as the Head of a Church School, that’s when faith comes in. One day I was instructing my staff to prepare

for an OFSTED inspection, the next we were downing our tools and shutting the school. There was such a range of emotions, but we’re strong because of our relationships, we pull together all the time and that’s rooted in our Christian values.”

Mrs Scott-Herron took up the headship in 2014 and arrived at a school in Special Measures. Since then she has worked hard to raise standards and to change the school’s culture and ethos.

She says her school’s biggest asset is their relationships, something which helped the school to respond to the pandemic with strength and resilience.

“We had to pull up our socks, as heart-breaking as it was, we were determined to do what was right by our students and worked incredibly hard.”

Within a few weeks of lockdown, Mrs Scott-Herron and her staff were providing an ambitious curriculum and full timetable to all students. They provided laptops to families who were without, and teaching staff organised and personally delivered parcels of food to children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Two weeks prior to the end of term, the Year 10’s were allowed back into



Student: Lewis Banfield

school. At this time Mrs Scott-Herron also invited every child to come in for an interview to ensure she retained some face-to-face contact and to check in with them and their families.

Mrs Scott-Herron also made a point of personally texting individual staff members once a week.

“Most of the staff are parents themselves and are worried for their own families. We would contact them weekly, even if we didn’t have much to say, I just wanted them to know that I was here if they needed anything. Everyone has been frightened at times and managing all of that in the way we have is why we’re able to get things back up and running smoothly.”

The school will open its doors on Monday 07 September and Mrs Scott-Herron will be there at the gates to welcome her school family back home.

“Our biggest asset is our relationships, we’re a family. I can’t wait to see them. I’ve missed their personalities, their humour, and their smiles.”



Student: Alisha Emery

DUCHESS of CAMBRIDGE

chooses Bunbury photo for national exhibition

On the morning of 24 March, Beth Hayward, took out her iPhone and snapped her husband right at the start of lockdown. She didn't begin to imagine that the photo would one day form part of an exhibition by the National Portrait Gallery.

Revd Tim Hayward is the vicar at St Boniface Bunbury. "I remember it was just after Boris had announced lockdown. We went to church, put photos of people from the parish on the pews - 350 smiling faces in all. The next day my wife and I went back to the church and she took a photo."

Tim and Beth, had no great aspirations for the picture and simply used it on the church website and Facebook page. Then they heard from Lynn Hedgecoe, a new "virtual" parishioner who had only recently engaged with

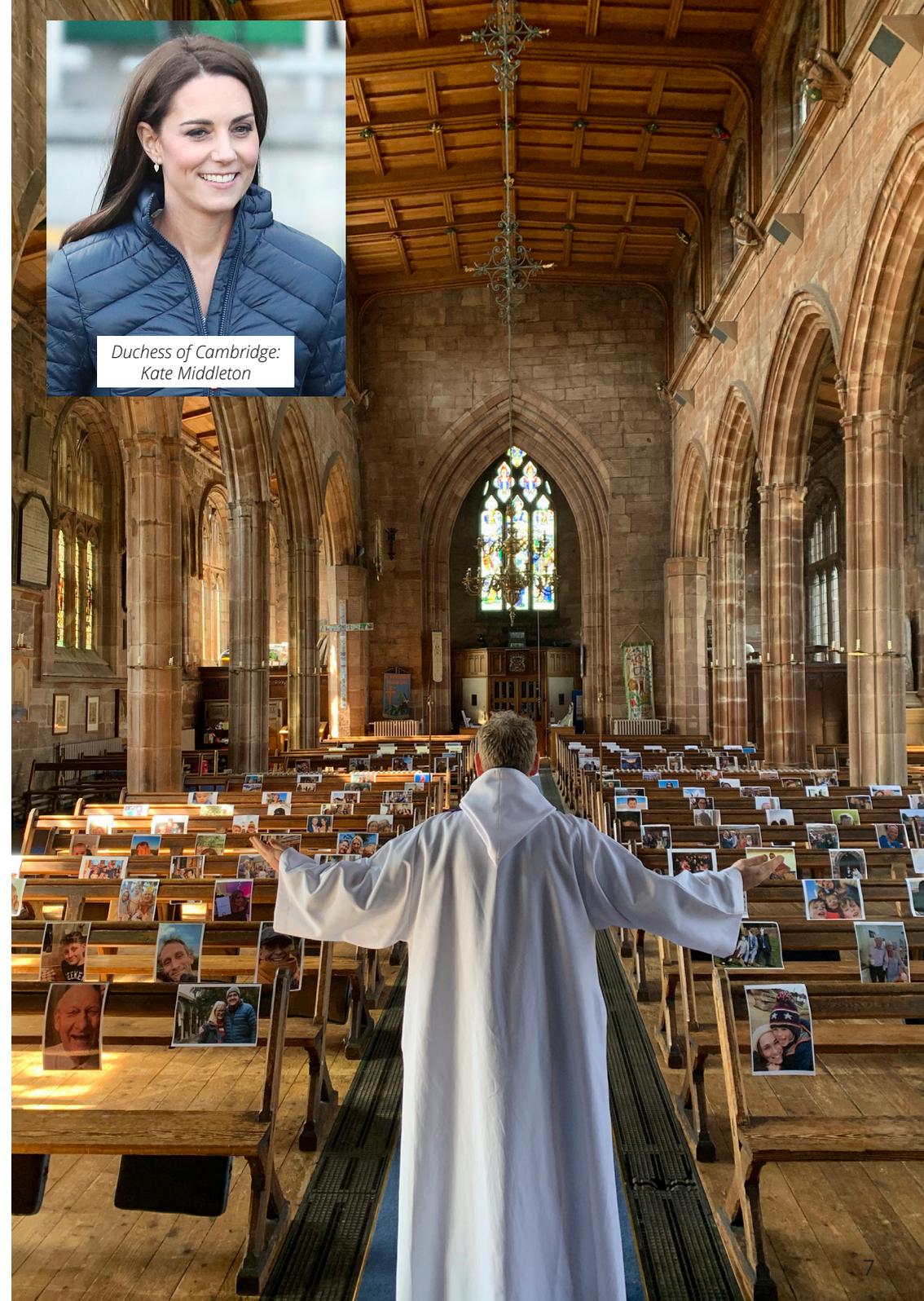
St Boniface as a result of the online services that were being produced due to the coronavirus restrictions. Lynn had seen the photo on Facebook and said she'd heard that the Duchess of Cambridge, Kate Middleton was organising a "Hold Still" lockdown photography project, in collaboration with the National Portrait Gallery - to capture "the spirit of the nation" during the coronavirus pandemic.

Tim and Beth submitted their photo and were recently surprised when they were informed that their photo had been selected to be part of the exhibition.

There were over 30,000 entries and just 100 were chosen. Moreover, the photo (shown right) has featured in many newspaper articles, announcing the final 100. The digital exhibition will [launch on 14 September](#) and a selection of photos will be shown in venues across the UK later in the year.



*Duchess of Cambridge:
Kate Middleton*



Events



Poetry Break

10 September 2020 - Online

This will be an opportunity to hear poetry from others across the diocese. Those who come will be able to share a poem or simply listen and join the conversation. [More...](#)



Let's talk about not being myself

16 September 2020 - Online

A safe online space for conversations about the challenges and changes you have encountered, and may continue to experience, as a result of the pandemic. [More...](#)



Crozier service

20 September 2020 3:30pm - Online

Bishop Mark will walk past the Bishop's seat (or Cathedra) and receive the Melanesian Crozier then pray for the city, county and diocese. View live on YouTube [More...](#)



Let's talk about loss and bereavement

23 September 2020 - Online

A safe online space for conversations about the challenges and changes you have encountered, and may continue to experience, as a result of the pandemic. [More...](#)



Let's talk about hearing God in lockdown

01 October 2020 - Online

A safe online space for conversations about the challenges and changes you have encountered, and may continue to experience, as a result of the pandemic. [More...](#)