

Spotlight

Sept/Oct 2018



No change, no worry!

As we move increasingly to a cashless society, churches can offer contactless for weekly offerings or one-off donations at weddings, baptisms or funerals. Donations of up to £20 can be made via debit card or Apple and Android pay and included in Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme claims.

Diocesan Deputy Finance Director Jess Dace said: "Contactless is all around us, why not in our churches! It's a great way for parishes to give people another option when donating and help ease administrative burdens."

Contactless giving has arrived across the Diocese as new devices are trialled. The small terminals can be set up at the back of church buildings or passed around the pews. They are being tested in 18 parishes during a free trial period and the results so far are promising.

The rural parish of Leighton (above), between Shrewsbury and Telford, overlooks Hereford Diocese across the river Severn: City-centre St Matthews, Walsall (below)

"The devices have eight-hours of rechargeable battery life so can be left securely on a table. Donations are sent via mobile phone signal so there is no need to worry about Wi-Fi - if there is no signal the data is saved until a signal is found."

Contactless had its first outing at St Mary's Leighton, near Shrewsbury, at a baptism service. Treasurer Alison Sloan reported: "Most of the congregation had come armed with cash but one brave gentleman gave it a go and it worked as expected with no

[continues on p2 ->](#)



DIOCESE OF
LICHFIELD



Card-carrying congregations

hitches. That's a pretty good outcome for new technology!"

The Revd Jim Trood, Rector at St Matthews' Walsall which is also trialling a device, said: "One of the older members at our church said



he thought it was great, commenting, 'It's so much easier than having to find the right money to put on the collection plate'."

Jess added: "The potential for larger services and occasional visitors is tremendous. We hope this will not only raise much needed funds but also encourage people to give more freely to furthering the Kingdom of God in our journey of discipleship together. We would love to have a device in every church over the next five years."



Time to pray



Churches and individuals are being encouraged to take advantage of the new-look Lichfield Diocese Prayer Diary.

The diary has been reshaped to encourage wider use as we seek to be a Diocese where we regularly pray for each other and our communities. It reflects the Diocesan focus on discipleship, vocation and evangelism with prayers for parishes, fresh expressions, chaplaincy and schools in the Diocese along with slots for the national and international church.

Director of World Mission Philip Swan said: "We hope that this new look Prayer Diary will attract new users and expand and deepen the base of prayer which undergirds our Diocesan life."

People can also access the Prayer Diary via smartphone or tablet using the free Prayer Mate app (select 'Lichfield Diocese' from 'UK Churches' in 'Church life').

"The Lichfield Diocese Prayer Diary on Prayer Mate is accessible and easy to use," Philip added. "It also offers an easy-to-access feed from the Anglican Communion. There is a large and increasing number of other feeds available – such as the daily collects for the Church of England, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Open Doors, Mother's Union Wave of Prayer and USPG to name but a few. It is easy to adapt and shape your own personal selection."

You can download the Prayer Diary at https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/prayer_diary/ Feedback on and suggestions for the new Prayer Diary can be emailed to comms@lichfield.anglican.org

Black History Month

The Diocese is celebrating Black History Month and the enrichment that Asian, African, Caribbean and minority ethnic (BAME) people bring to the churches and communities of our own Diocese at Lichfield Cathedral in October.

Walking Together marks the 70th anniversary of the arrival of the ship Empire Windrush and the centenary of Nelson Mandela's birth.

The afternoon will be lively and interactive and include activities suitable for children with the focus on aspects of BAME experience in the Diocese through stories and testimony from lay and ordained members of local parishes as well as from well known names such as the late West Bromwich Albion player, Cyrille Regis.



Other elements will explore pilgrimage and African, Asian and Caribbean History

"I'm really looking forward to it," says Revd Preb Carl Ramsey, part of the organising team. "Not just the historic cultural context

for those of us who are black or another minority ethnicity, but because it will be a chance for all of us to build up our own diocese-wide networks for peace and justice, think about how we all stand up to racism in our communities and pray and worship together."



Photo: Wolverhampton Express & Star

Lichfield Cathedral
Saturday 13 October
2-5pm



To bring a group or book a place for yourself, sign up at www.lichfield.anglican.org/walking_together/

Toast of the town

A Stafford project that welcomes and supports homeless people moved its monthly church service into the backyard for a talk by a local priest. The Revd Alison Thomas was the guest speaker at the Sunday afternoon House of Bread Church event at CAFE43 in Browning Street.

House of Bread was established in 2010 and provides a home-cooked meal twice a week, fresh clothing, food bags and toiletries to anyone in need in Stafford. Its volunteers run a food bank, drop-in sessions, a café, a weekly gathering where people come together to make bread to share with others, and a community garden.

HoB Church started two years ago and runs once a month with a focus on people who are new to, or outside of, the faith. Over the summer it met in the back garden of CAFE43.

Alison, who is curate at Stafford's town centre churches, St Mary's and St Chad's, has been volunteering with House of Bread for three years.

She spoke about faith and certainty in the context of John the Baptist's question "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?"

She said: "In Jesus, John saw the culmination of all God's promises to Israel. Now, he's sitting

alone in a prison and wondering: is anything really happening, is anything changing?

"We have our doubts and our fears. And it's important to remember that the opposite of faith isn't doubt. The opposite of faith is certainty. We can't be rock-solid certain. We have to summon up the courage in the dark times to take that leap of faith, to trust in God and God's purposes.

"I think people can relate to that, at any stage in their journey of faith. And it is a real privilege to be sharing in that journey at House of Bread."

House of Bread Director Will Morris said: "HoB Church is what church needs to be like when facing those at the very beginning of their Christian journey. There is nothing quite like praising God in the sun whilst hearing the birds sing in his creation."

The Bishop of Stafford Geoff Annas is also a regular visitor to House of Bread's weekly Bible study Toast. "Toast has a bit more colourful language than most Bible study groups!" said Will. "But Bishop Geoff is amazing and really does make a difference."

Find out more about at www.hobstafford.co.uk



Partnership beckons still

Lichfield Diocese enjoys a fruitful missionary partnership with the Diocese of Qu'Appelle in Canada. Bishops' Director of Ordinands Frances Wilson recently visited there before hosting Archdeacon Catherine Harper, Director of Ministry Development in Qu'Appelle, in Lichfield. Both recount their highlights...

Frances: "Only a few weeks previously, three delegates from Qu'Appelle attended our Clergy Conference, learning from our experience of ministry in multi-parishes; now I was to fly over there and listen to the experience of delegates who have recognised, and ordained, Distinctive Deacons for some time now.

"One of my strongest impressions at the Distinctive Deacons Conference was the warmth which had been fostered between the different Churches who took part, including Anglican, Roman Catholic and the Orthodox-Catholic Ukrainian.

"The Distinctive Diaconate (Deacons who remain deacons for the rest of their lives and don't 'transition' to be priests) is a ministry which clearly all denominations within Canada and the US appreciate. Deacons have a particular heart for those who are on the margins, both of society and of faith. They are 'doorkeepers', inviting people in and sending the congregation out to engage in the world; they are also 'heralds', sent out with a message from God and

'ambassadors', having the authority to speak in God's name. Most are involved in social action and pastoral care. We have much to learn in discerning this under-known vocation in our own churches and enjoying the benefits their ministry would bring.



"Seeing through another person's eyes is such a gift to us; being part of a World Church is such a gift to us – may the links we have with our sister dioceses remain strong!"

Catherine: "The purpose of my visit to the UK was two-fold. I attended the Annual Conference for Theological Educators in Hoddesdon. I then travelled to Lichfield and was graciously hosted by Frances whom I met at the conference in Qu'Appelle.

"My role encompasses discernment and pre and post ordination training, so both the conference and conversations with the Vocations Team in Lichfield served to better equip me to refine our process in Qu'Appelle. I am deeply appreciative of the wisdom and resources shared by the team.

"I have been struck by the deep impact which the connection between Qu'Appelle and Lichfield has had on the lives of a number of people in both dioceses. It is moving to hear of how visits to one diocese or the other, friendships which developed and events attended have an enduring and transforming effect on the lives of those who participated."



Pilgrims from the East

Revd Joshua Ong and his wife Deaconess Ying Peng recently came to Lichfield as part of a three month sabbatical from the Diocese of West Malaysia where Joshua is the vicar of a large church, St Paul's Petalan Jaya in Kuala Lumpur, with an Electoral Roll of over 600 people.

Joshua said: "Our sabbatical began with the Diocesan Clergy Conference at Swanwick and led up to the 'Intentional Discipleship: East meets West'. It was exciting to have representatives from South East Asia to share in dialogue and learning together about this important topic.

"This whole Sabbatical experience is for me like a pilgrimage. We looked forward to going to Lindisfarne for a week

before going on to All Saints Streetly. I have found the experience

here in a rural context in the Abbots Bromley Team very interesting. For instance it was amazing to see Revd Steve Deall going into the local church schools and being able to share his faith. This is impossible in a Malaysian context.

"In fact many of the issues you face here are similar to those we face – such as how we can get children and young people to participate more in church life. I have been impressed by Messy Church and 'Prayer and Play' and the

different kinds of services to cater for different needs. Our link and partnership enables a two way communication to see how we can share our resources. You face an increasingly unbelieving society whilst in Malaysia we are surrounded by people who do believe but are of different faiths.

"In the UK Christianity is so much part of your society and culture and has been here for so many centuries whereas in Malaysia it is much more recent - 200 years or so. We will soon after the third or fourth generation be facing similar challenges. In Malaysia we have to make a conscious choice to follow Christ, or to marry in church or to have a

child baptised. The key issues are the same: how can we be true to our faith and walking in discipleship? We need to dialogue and journey together."

Ying Peng said: "Besides enjoying the opportunity to understand more about the Church of England, I am interested in how the Church has gone through the whole issue around the ordination of women and have valued speaking particularly to female clergy and some male clergy."



The church and church centre of St Paul's Petalan Jaya.



East met West

People across Lichfield Diocese welcomed a team of over 20 visitors from West Malaysia and Kuching for the five-day 'Intentional Discipleship: East Meets West' event.

The varied programme included a day in each episcopal area, seeing projects run by parishes, schools, fresh expressions and chaplaincies, and sharing worship and teaching with local congregations.

The Primate of South East Asia and Bishop of West Malaysia Archbishop Moon Hing Ng and the Bishop of Kuching Danald Jute led the delegation from the East.



Bishop Danald

At an opening breakfast event at Bishop Michael's house in Lichfield, Bishop Danald said: "We are here as we journey together, walk together and learn and be a blessing, one to the other."

Archbishop Moon Hing led a day seminar at Shallowford House on Advanced Intentional Discipleship after which delegates went throughout the diocese to take part in Sunday services in parishes with existing or new links with South East Asia.

Bishop Michael said he was keen that such parish links were supported and continue to grow. "Our call to discipleship is about learning to walk in the newness of life that Jesus promises to us and about learning how to invite others to share that journey with us," he explained.



Among new links made, a group from St John's, Ipoh, spent the week with the parish of Trentham - Revd Tom Cherian here with Esther and Revd Adrian Stone

The Revd James Gandon, who hosted one of the events in Stoke-on-Trent, added: "It was immensely encouraging to be involved and to meet various guests - including Canon Jacob Bau who came and spoke at St Andrew's."

Philip Swan, Diocesan Director of World Mission, thanked all of those who provided meals, refreshments, lifts and accommodation.



Archbishop Moon Hing Ng addressing the congregation at the event in Shrewsbury



Visitors and hosts returning from St Chad's Well to the cathedral

"Over 600 people participated in the different events during these five days. We were greatly blessed and inspired through the warmth of friendship and fellowship with our visitors. They shared with us key insights into discipleship

from their increasingly challenging contexts. We give thanks for the past 30 years of formal partnership with the Dioceses of West Malaysia and Kuching. We pray for wisdom and grace as together we look at new ways of sustaining and developing friendship, prayer, mission and parish links," he said.

More photos at www.flickr.com/photos/spotlight-dioceseoflichfield/albums/72157698671670434

Host of talents

There's an art to church life, quite literally in the case of South Staffordshire vicar Charmain Host who shares about her new student experience:

"It was a slow August day three years ago. I had been in my new post as 0.5 Vicar of Swindon and Himley for six months, long enough to realise that working part-time would only be sustainable if I did something with the other 0.5 of my life.

"I knew that it needed to be something that would stimulate and challenge me as well as take me outside of the parishes. A Google search for local Art courses led me to the Wolverhampton Adult Education Service – and a part-time course in Art and Design. One tutor there clearly had bigger ambitions for me than I did, and thanks to him, I have just completed the first year of a BA in Fine Art at Wolverhampton Art School.



"The surprising discovery about art school is the emphasis on ideas and influences that contribute to art-making and that skill grows with practice and, much like faith, it doesn't all rest on talent.

"As a student of art I am encouraged to think about what I want to communicate to the world. What moves me, inspires me, outrages me and what am I going to respond to?

"One day I showed a student colleague around my churches. I commented that it was so familiar to me because it was my work place. He pulled me up short: 'How can you not be inspired by this? You don't realise you have access to spaces that most people don't.'

My friend was seeing things I had lost sight of.

"So, the question was, could church be revealed to others with an artist's eye? My answer was an art project I called 'The Cure of Souls'. I'm still

a beginner, learning and seeing new things. Inhabiting this new art world alongside the more familiar world of church I continue to be surprised by grace whilst exploring how each might give vision to the other."

Charmaine is available for talks at charmainehost@btinternet.com

'walk' so I'm delighted that we've just relaunched our diocesan Prayer Diary. Read more about it on page 2 and join us in praying for churches, schools, fresh expressions and chaplaincies across our rich and varied region

*Pete Bate,
Director of Communications*

Cafe Church

Café Church is church with a difference. It is a fresh expression of church that responds to our cafe culture of today where many of us enjoy good coffee and meeting up with friends.

A Sunday in June marked a special day for two churches in the Diocese. For one, St Paul's in Fazeley, Tamworth, the day marked the second anniversary of café church which began as a pilot in 2016. Café Church has grown to become the best attended service in the month with



many new families and members of the community attending.

Vicar of St Paul's, the Revd Jonathan Iddon, said "We

were finding our existing monthly all age service was poorly attended and not effectively meeting the needs of the church family nor reaching out to the wider community. It was time to try something different and innovative. Aware that people with little or no experience of church and worship can find coming to church a daunting experience we wanted to do creative all age worship in a more culturally familiar



context of a café. Although it's not everyone's 'cup of tea'(!) we are finding it is engaging

all ages (including seniors, not just families) and is more accessible to newcomers. It is experimental and evolving. We have discovered many things that don't work but it is an exciting journey to be on."



Seated around tables, instead of rows, there is coffee, croissants, cakes and an opportunity to get to know each other. It is still a service, based around a theme with a few songs, a talk, discussions and a chance to respond. It is for all ages and everyone regardless of where they are on their faith journey. Café Church is loved by new families who are just finding out about Jesus as well as mature Christians.

On the same day St Mary's Church in Market Drayton held their very first café church. Vicar, the Revd Catherine McBride says "Café Worship at St Mary's evolved out of our Messy Church gatherings. We wanted to have somewhere where those who felt comfortable at Messy Church could perhaps go a bit deeper. We have had two Café Worship services so far and, thanks to a great team, they have both gone really well. We have had around 40 people at both services; some were church regulars, but at both services we had people we had never seen before.

"The services are very interactive and the mix of discussions, activities, personal stories, music and input seems to work well and helps people engage at different levels. One highlight was when we invited each table to create a collage to illustrate one of the 'I AM' sayings of Jesus. I was amazed and humbled as each table explained what Jesus meant to them. It was very moving."

From the Editor



Spotlight which is, as usual, packed with stories from our Diocese and further afield. Prayer is a key part of our Christian

Welcome to the new edition of

the new edition of

Thank you

Mark and Mandy Rylands have said a big 'thankyou' to people from across the Diocese who generously donated towards their leaving gift.

The couple bid farewell in July at a packed service in Shrewsbury Abbey

after Mark had served for nine years as Bishop of Shrewsbury and decided to return to parish ministry in the south-west where the couple previously served and have family.

silence and one of those withering looks from Mandy that Lindsey Hall mentioned in her farewell address. So, it looks like the money will be spent 'sensibly'- on a lovely bench for our garden where we will sit together and remember many happy memories of time in Lichfield Diocese.



Bishop Michael blessed the couple after farewells were said and tributes paid by the 'other' Bishop Mark of Shrewsbury, Roman Catholic Rt Revd Mark Davies; the Lord Lieutenant, Sir Algenon Heber-Percy; ecumenical representatives; Archdeacon, Rural Deans & Lay Chairs of the Salop Episcopal Area and Dr Lindsey Hall on behalf of the Diocesan Staff.



Mark said: "May we thank the Lichfield Diocesan family for the incredibly large cheque you gave us. It was extremely kind and Mandy and I were overwhelmed by the generosity of so many people.

"Obviously, Mandy and I have started to discuss how to spend it. I suggested a new fishing rod and cricket bat but then I received

"Having relinquished my 'bishop's car', the remainder will probably go towards a car. Thank you for your love, friendship and company in the Gospel - all that we have received from Lichfield Diocese. We look back with huge thankfulness and will not forget you in our thoughts and prayers. Please continue to pray for us."



My Cup Overrunneth

Team spirit and episcopal ambition. As summer draws to a close, so does another cricket season, and especially poignantly for the members of the Diocesan Cricket team. For we have come to the end of an era, one filled with unprecedented success and golden memories.

On the day of my announcement as Bishop of Wolverhampton, back in 2007, I was asked by our then Director of Communications, Gavin Drake, what I most wanted to achieve in my new role. I unaccountably went off message and failed to speak of doubling the size of every congregation by 2020. What I actually said was that I wanted to win the Church Times Cup with Lichfield!

Four years later the dream became a reality as we held the trophy aloft, triumphing over Bath and Wells in our first ever appearance in the 60 year history of the competition. Joy unbounded! And joy shared with the large number of supporters from different parts of the Diocese who had got up ridiculously early to make the journey to London.

That has been our only victory, though we have made the final on four subsequent occasions. We have often come tantalisingly close but in recent years the muscular and far more youthful London team have just prevailed.

This year it was Bristol who ended our dream in the semi-final, a match which saw two of our key players depart to pastures new, one of whom was of course Bishop Mark Rylands. Responsible for many wonderful innings over the years, Bishop Mark was both the most congenial but also the most competitive player I have played with! And he found the temptation to use

clergy cricket as a recruiting mechanism for the Shrewsbury Episcopal Area quite irresistible.

Our dressing room has always been a crucible of diversity, with not only every tradition within the Church of England represented, but also ministers from other denominations enriching the mix. None more so than our late, great, skipper, Jeff Reynolds, from whose peerless banter there was no escape, and who managed to combine the sober responsibilities of being a Methodist Superintendent with playing in a soft rock band. His royalties from CD sales helped him buy his round. Unforgettable Anglicans include Peter Hart, ex professional footballer, whose batting style owes more to baseball than to the MCC coaching manual, but whose mighty blows have scattered both sheep and spectators over the years, and Phil Searle, the narrowboat dweller with a thunderous laugh.

Our dressing room has been a place where we have tried, not always successfully, to treat triumph and disaster just the same. It has been a place of support, encouragement and friendship, and on

occasions, good disagreement. A place where theological differences can be aired and respected, without bats disappearing through windows. On a good day, in the aftermath of a good win, where everyone has been able to contribute, it has felt a special privilege to be part of that Body, diverse but unified, joyful, if rather sweaty. As one in our sense of purpose, but fully aware that for each of us, there is a greater goal, a higher purpose, even than winning the Church Times Cup. How special it is to share that bond with one another, and with all those who have faithfully supported us over the years. +Clive Gregory

The victorious team of 2011





Come follow Christ
in the footsteps of St Chad

DIARY

REVs + BBC Songs of Praise

Sunday 16 September
0900-1200
Montford Bridge Cafe

REVs is a regular Sunday car meet sharing cars, food and life. People are welcome to join with or without their classic cars for coffee, bacon and chat.

More details:
facebook.com/revssundayserVICestation/
079172 48973

For a full listing of events in the Diocese, visit lichfield.anglican.org/ events

Let us know about your events by email to comms@lichfield.anglican.org

Innovate Mission

Innovate Mission, devised by a team in the Diocese, is aimed at 14-18s with the potential to be leaders in their local church and community, who will be

accompanied by their youth leaders
Three sessions beginning Saturday 22 September at St Matthews Walsall
Full details:
www.lichfield.anglican.org/innovate



Walking Together

A celebration for Black History Month of the enrichment that Asian, African and Caribbean Christians bring to the churches and communities of our own diocese.

Lichfield Cathedral
Saturday 13 October 2-5pm

To bring a group or book a place for yourself, phone 07946 771495 or sign up at lichfield.anglican.org/WalkingTogether