

FAITH IN SUSSEX

The diocesan publication reaching church communities across Sussex



CRACKED WIDE OPEN

Diocesan Lent Course 2021

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to help with costs

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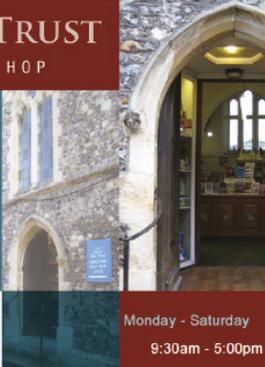
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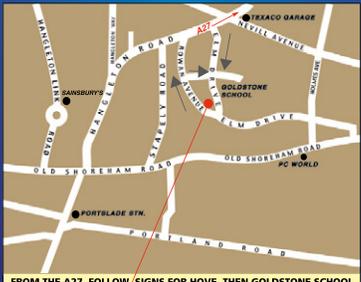
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Inspiration and learning

AS THE coronavirus pandemic continues, many of us yearn for the day when life can simply “return to normal”. And yet this global crisis presents us all with an opportunity to deeply consider what kind of “normal” we want to be part of when our communities emerge from lockdown and the task of rebuilding will begin.

While combating this virus has rightly consumed the attention of our scientists, media and politicians, the threat of the climate crisis has by no means subsided. Over the last year, most of us have cut our environmental footprint by necessity → we have worked from home, driven less, flown less, eaten locally produced food and discovered energy-saving technologies.

We have also been hugely blessed to be able to experience the beauty of the Sussex countryside and coast and been spiritually sustained by God’s revelation of himself in His creation. Now is an excellent time to consider what more we can do to live in ways that are sustainable for the future of the planet. This edition of Faith In Sussex showcases some of the ways that churches are working with their parish communities towards environmental protection. I hope the stories inspire and motivate you to take action in whatever context you live, work and volunteer.

We are also looking ahead to the start of Lent and considering how churches are preparing to observe the coming season of prayer and fasting, when most of our worship and fellowship will be online and our homes remain our primary place of prayer. In these pages you will find resources to help you journey through Lent → may it be a time when we learn to know, love and follow Jesus more closely than ever before.

“Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long.” Ps25v4-5

+Ruth Horsham



The life of God

CRACKED WIDE OPEN

Diocesan Lent Course 2021

in the paschal mystery

The suffering, death, resurrection
and glorification of Jesus

Find out more on page 12-13



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

/ 24-25

Hear how the Diocese supports students in Kenya



WHY WE VALUE HYMNS

/ 28

by Neville Manning



GIVING GENEROUSLY / 26

Helpful resources for stewardship



STEADY SUPPORT / 29

Charity continues amid uncertainty

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NEWS ACROSS OUR DIOCESE

CELEBRATIONS WITH A DIFFERENCE

CHURCH communities across the diocese went all out to provide excellent worship and other wonderful events and displays for their communities throughout Advent and Christmas, despite the difficulties posed by Covid 19.

Realising the celebration was to be different this year, many churches continued with virtual events.

Some parishes were able to continue with planned services but with smaller congregations as well as those watching online.

There were some delightful examples such as the Advent window trail at St Andrew's, Hove. The Parish of Clayton with Keymer cheered the community by spreading the joy of Christmas in the form of knitted angels.

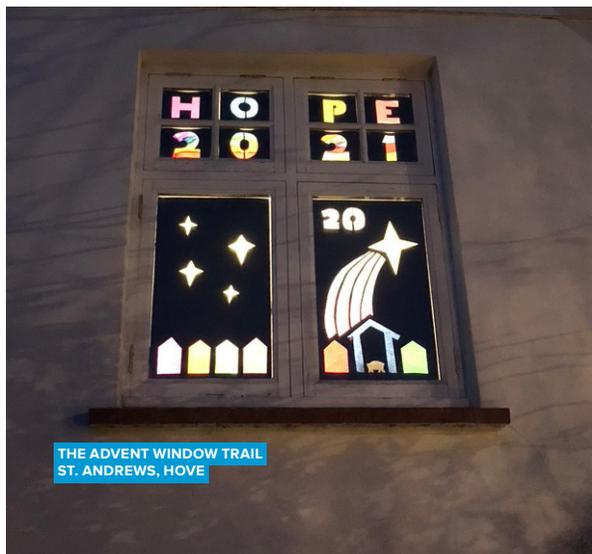
The Christmas bus from St Matthias, Brighton, toured the streets with volunteers and staff walking alongside on the pavements. The idea was to bring the fun and community spirit to the people of Fiveways, and shoppers were treated to drive-in carols in the car park at Morrisons, courtesy of the parish team at All Saints Crowborough. You can watch the YouTube video [here](#)

Chichester Cathedral held real-time and virtual carol services and visitors enjoyed the stunning nativity scene installation, created by visual arts adviser and curator Jacqueline Creswell and artist and photographer Ash Mills and there was a joyful crib and Christingle service at Christ Church, St Leonards, led by Bishop Peter Wheatley with Covid measures in place. A carol service took place outside on the parish courtyard.

Chanctonbury churches put on a mobile Christmas carols event for many of the streets around Ashington, Washington and Wiston. They sang carols, shared a Christmas message and prayed for each street as they went.

St Margaret's Church in the Beacon Parish of Ditchling, Streat and Westmeston created a unique life-sized nativity display. It formed the centrepiece of a stable experience created in the chapel at the church, and more than 1,500 visitors, including 200 children and their teachers from St Margaret's School, Ditchling, visited the nativity, many of them leaving prayer cards on the Christmas tree.

The Rev David Wallis, vicar of the Beacon Parish, said: "We wanted to invite people to step into the stable and imagine that they were there when Jesus was born. In these times when there are many things that we would love to do that we can't, we hoped this would give people a much-needed uplifting experience, both moving and joyful for people of all ages."



THE ADVENT WINDOW TRAIL
ST. ANDREWS, HOVE

CHURCH LEADER IS A HERO

A CHURCH leader at St Peter's in Brighton has been named a local hero for helping homeless and vulnerable people in 2020. Sam Coates, who is founder of the Safehaven Women's Service, was awarded the commendation by gardening centre chain Dobbies and the Teenage Cancer Trust.

Sam has worked throughout the year to support people through Brighton Housing Trust. Her work includes initiatives to deliver food hampers and furniture to the charity's accommodation for those with mental health issues and complex needs.

Sam said: "I'm incredibly proud the initiatives my team of dedicated volunteers and I have worked on have made such a difference to our local area. I'm committed to continuing to support those in need in Brighton and Hove as much as possible."



SAM COATES
ST. PETERS, BRIGHTON

LET THERE BE LIGHT

A CHURCH in Steyning is celebrating after raising more than £70,000 for a new lighting installation. Contributions came from members of the congregation at St Andrew's and St Cuthman's, the community, Friends of Steyning Parish Church and funds from the Parochial Church Council (PCC).

Vicar of Steyning Fr Mark Heather, who helped co-ordinate the fundraising effort, said: "We are so thankful to all the people who gave their time and made donations to this appeal to ensure the new lighting installation can go ahead which will enable the church to be used by the entire community. By switching to controllable, low-energy lighting, this will make a huge contribution to our ongoing plans to reduce our carbon footprint."

ARCHDEACON FOR LIFE

BISHOP Martin has appointed the former Archdeacon of Horsham, Fiona Windsor, Archdeacon Emerita. The Bishop of Chichester informed Fiona, saying: "In recognition for your distinguished service as Archdeacon of Horsham and in celebration of all that you have brought to the life of the diocese, I am delighted to appoint you Archdeacon Emerita."

Fiona was appointed to the role of Archdeacon of Horsham in 2014. After a spell of ill health last year Fiona took early retirement. Her farewell leaving services had to be cancelled due to the Covid restrictions.

Angela Martin, Forest Row, takes over the Acting role of Archdeacon of Horsham from Julia Peaty from March 1.

NEWS

HERITAGE TRUST AWARD

ST MARY'S Church in Apuldram was awarded the Ecclesiastical Award in the 2020 Sussex Heritage Trust Awards announced late last year.

The Grade I listed building was in great need of a community centre. After extensive consultation, plans were agreed for a building that was sensitive to the environment using traditional materials such as flint and Caen stone.

The church has stood amid the fields of rural Apuldram on the Manhood Peninsular for over 900 years, playing an important part in the life of the village. Graham Pound, treasurer at St Mary, said: "The Parochial Church Council and congregation of St Mary the Virgin, together with the architects Douglas Briggs Partnership, were delighted to have won this most prestigious award and thank the trust for giving it to us."

READER SELECTION

THE Reader selection conference takes place on Saturday, June 19. The closing date for applications is April 30 and all selection paperwork must be received by then. Because the discernment process for Reader ministry involves several interviews and the taking up of references it is important that prospective candidates begin the process as soon as possible and before April 1. For more information contact Jane Prestwood at jayne.prestwood@chichester.anglican.org

PLOUGH SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS

FR ANDREW Birks, vicar at St Mary's Chidham in West Sussex, was called to bless the plough on a farm in rural Chidham.

Plough Sunday is a traditional English celebration of the beginning of the agricultural year that has seen some revival over recent years. It usually involves bringing a ploughshare into a church with prayers for the blessing of the land.

Fr Andrew said: "Plough Sunday is a tradition that goes back to medieval times when the communal village plough was often stored in the parish church over the winter months. In these difficult times of Covid it has become even more important to embrace these traditions to give hope to all the people working on the land in a time of worry and uncertainty. We remember and pray for them."

It is usually held on the Sunday after Epiphany, the Sunday between January 7 and January 13.



FR ANDREW
PHOTO COURTESY OF RUSSELL
SACH - THE TELEGRAPH



FR ADAM HANDING OVER THE CHEQUE TO ST MARY'S SCHOOL

CASH FOR SCHOOLS

TWO schools in the parish of St Mary's, East Grinstead, will share £10,00 from two church trust funds. Halsford Park Primary and Baldwins Hill Primary will be able to buy laptops to help children continue their education at home or other materials needed during the pandemic.

Prayers were asked for the repose of the soul of the benefactors Augusta Stenning and Walter and Sydney Lowdell and for the schools and pupils who will benefit from their grants.

KEEPING ASH WEDNESDAY IN LOCKDOWN

Many of us will have to mark the beginning of Lent from home this year. Whilst this will be frustrating for many, the lockdown also gives us the opportunity to enter more deeply into this ancient day and season. To help you set it apart we will be publishing some resources that can be used by individuals or as a family at home.

These will include:

A simple Family liturgy for Ash Wednesday, including an act of penance and the rite of ashing

Join the household of faith across the diocese on the hour from 7am – 6pm for 5 minutes of prayer for various groups of people in need of our prayers including our NHS staff, the bereaved and the lonely.

3 short reflections from the Bishops on the Lenten disciplines of Fasting, Penance and Prayer.

A practical guide to fasting by Bishop Ruth

Web links to other resources for children, adults and families.

Find out about the Diocesan Lent course on pages 12/13

NEWS

ACROSS OUR DIOCESE

NEW RURAL OFFICER POST

THE Bishop of Chichester has announced the creation of a new rural officer for East Sussex. This role will be combined with the appointment of a priest-in-charge for the benefice of Ashburnham with Penhurst, two parishes in the High Weald, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The joint role is funded in partnership with the Ashburnham Thanksgiving Trust, an evangelical missionary-focused charity.

Richard Bickersteth, a trustee of Ashburnham Thanksgiving Trust, said: “We are delighted to be able to support the Diocese of Chichester in creating this new rural officer role and look forward in faith to seeing this resource multiply in spiritual harvest across East Sussex.”

Mark Betson, national rural officer for Church of England, said: “It is great to hear of both the recognition and support by the Diocese of Chichester and Ashburnham Thanksgiving Trust of the opportunity and needs presented in the rural communities of East Sussex. Nationally we are seeing a renewed interest by those working in staying local and people of working age looking to move to rural areas. This combined with the church growth potential in these places highlighted by the work of Theos and the Church Urban Fund in the GRA:CE project mean that this post could not come at a more crucial time.”

The rural officer will be responsible for serving the rural community in East Sussex through linking the Church with organisations with a rural focus, to offer a rural voice in the diocese and to advise and encourage parishes and senior staff on rural issues. They will operate primarily within the Archdeaconries of Hastings and Brighton and Lewes as well as the wider church. Job advert [here](#) and the deadline for applications is March 22.

COPYRIGHT IMAGES FOR PARISH COMMUNICATIONS

It is important to protect your parish when downloading images for online resources. Stock photo websites will chase parishes for payment when they discover an image has been used without seeking a copyright agreement up front.

A recent example was the use of an image of a slice of toast which was used to promote a parish event. The parish in West Sussex had to pay £300 and that was after negotiation.

Free image websites to use are [Unsplash](#) or [Wikimedia](#) but there are many more. Please ask for assistance from [Amber Jackson](#), Diocesan Communications Assistant.

Environment news

By Debbie Beer, diocesan environment officer

Climate Sunday – choose your date

Churches are being encouraged to hold a “Climate Sunday” any time any time between now and early September 2021, the beginning of Creationtide, the Season of Creation. Free resources are being provided to suit every tradition and style of worship.

During their Climate Sunday, churches are invited to do one or more of three things:

Worship: Hold a climate-focused service to explore the theological and scientific basis of creation care and action on climate, to pray and to commit to action.

Commit: Make a commitment as a church community to taking long-term action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Speak up: Join with other churches and wider society in adding its name to a common call to politicians for a cleaner, greener, fairer future

The culmination of the campaign will be a national Climate Sunday event on Sunday, September 5, 2022 to share church commitments and pray for bold action and courageous leadership at the international COP26 Climate talks in Glasgow in early November. Climate Sunday has been organised by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) with support from charities including CAFOD, Christian Aid, Tearfund, A Rocha UK and Operation Noah. Find out more and register [here](#)

Energy statistics

Please ask your treasurers to enter their energy statistics when they complete their annual finance returns this spring. This means entering how much money was spent on gas and electricity in the last year and how many kilowatts of energy were consumed. Last year 36 per cent of the parishes in this diocese completed these statistics, which isn't bad at all. We hope it will be higher this year.

Celebrate nature

From June 5 to 13, churches or wildlife groups can arrange a Churches Count On Nature event in your churchyard, spotting the plants, insects, birdlife and lichens which make these areas so special. This offers a great opportunity to invite your local community, including schools, to discover and record the wonderful wildlife on your doorstep. It is an ecumenical partnership project between the Church of England Environment Programme, A Rocha UK (which runs EcoChurch) and Caring For God's Acre. To receive an information pack in the spring, register your interest now [here](#):

Cut your carbon footprint

A programme of webinars has been put together by the National Church as a resource for churches who want to know how they can address and reduce their carbon footprint. Find out what topics are coming up and sign up or view recordings of those you've missed [here](#)

If you are already reducing your carbon footprint in creative ways, I would love to hear from you. Email: Debbie.beer@chichester.anglican.org

ALL SYSTEMS GO

FOR LENT, HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

ONE year on from the most challenging and unpredictable few weeks marking the end of Lent 2020, Holy Week and Easter, the Diocese of Chichester is on the front foot in its planning for 2021.

Churches were closed last year in the run up to last Easter as Covid-19 cases increased dramatically. Many clergy and laity embarked on a steep learning curve as services had to be live-streamed from other places with church doors locked even for daily prayers.

The bishop and cathedral responded quickly by working together to provide a series of memorable services to guide the faithful through the great events of Holy Week and Easter, thus helping parishes without the necessary online resources to worship, pray and share together.

Slowly, however, parishes adapted and developed new skills. Services were streamed. Morning Prayer via Zoom became the norm as did Compline by Facebook Live in some parishes as Bible studies and nurture groups also moved online.

As the diocese once again faces serious limitations on what it can safely offer in its hundreds of churches as Lent 2021 begins, an impressive programme of special services, sermons and plans for Holy Week are in an advanced stage of planning.

A sermon recorded by members of the diocesan team will be available for parishes to use every week between now and Easter.

The new Lent Course – Cracked Wide Open – will soon be available, providing invaluable resources for parishes to be adapted so churches can use it effectively.

The bishop is planning to join churchwardens in all 21 deaneries for the evening service Compline on different nights in Lent. Bishop Martin is looking forward to thanking them and their PCCs for all their work in extraordinary circumstances.

Meanwhile Bishop Ruth and Bishop Will are to invite clergy to pray with them in their deaneries in a similar series of night prayer services taking place during the 40 days and nights of Lent.

Ash Wednesday will, of course, be different this year. The bishop is to record a special short video message in which he will talk about fasting and prayer.

While the renewal of ordination vows service is expected to go ahead online, the Chrism Eucharists are to be delayed until they can, hopefully, take place physically later in the year.

The bishop is working with the cathedral to ensure other key moments in the dramatic events of Holy Week leading up to the resurrection of Jesus on Easter day are reflected online.

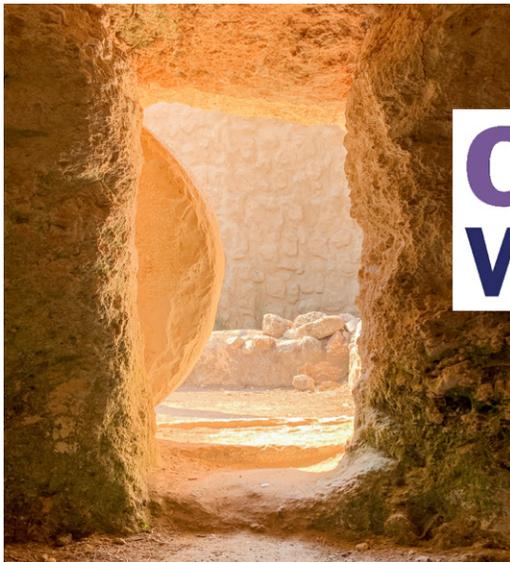
Bishop John Ford has been working with people from across the diocese to bring together some meaningful and encouraging resources for this year's Lent course **Cracked Wide Open**.

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused us to face up to fundamental questions about life, its meaning and purpose.

Many people have found this to be a time when there has been a real need to return to basics. When we have been locked down, with many of the usual activities and distractions that occupy our time unavailable, we have had to face questions concerning the very essence of our lives.

The hope is as parishes continue to communicate online in the coming weeks, **Cracked Wide Open** will seek to help disciples prepare for the coming Paschal Mystery within the wider theme of what it means to describe ourselves as part of the one church.

It has been compiled with a view to enabling discussion and reflection concerning how we, as pilgrims within the Diocese of Chichester, might be more open to the demands of the Paschal Mystery and how this requires careful attention to the mission of God and to the unity which is critical to that mission and so clearly commanded by Jesus.



The course includes:

Bible study notes for the gospel readings set for the Sundays Lent 1 to Lent 5.

A filmed reflection by Bishop Martin for use in liturgical worship on each of the Sundays from Lent 1 to Lent 5. These are short (about five minutes) and intended to be used as post-communion reflections.

Guidance notes with background reading

Guidance notes with background reading for the following conversation with Bishop Ruth and Bishop Will

A filmed conversation between Bishop Ruth and Bishop Will as discussion starters for each week.

A prayer diary for the weeks Lent 1 to Lent 5

Outline liturgies – one for each week

All the resources can be accessed via the diocesan website here

If you need help with downloading any of the session materials email Amber Jackson, communications assistant, on mailto:amber.jackson@chichester.anglican.org

If you do not have access to online facilities, please contact neighbouring parishes for help.

CRACKED WIDE OPEN

Diocesan Lent Course 2021

PARISH NEWS

ECO CHURCH GOES FOR GOLD

BUILDING a hedgehog house and switching to natural cleaning products are just two of the things that have helped a rural parish earn its eco credentials.

St Mary's church in Ticehurst, a rural parish situated on the east Sussex and Kent boundary, registered as an Eco Church in January 2019. Within a few months they achieved a bronze award and the bar was set.

Penny Evans is a licensed lay reader in the parish and chairwoman of the first eco working group for the two churches.

She said the scheme, run by ecumenical Christian conservation charity A Rocha, provided a helpful framework for assessing what the churches were already doing and what further steps they could take across all areas of church life, from its buildings and land to its community engagement, worship and lifestyle choices.

Penny said: "Some of these actions were already in place before we started on this scheme and it was encouraging to find that after only a few small steps, notably working towards Fairtrade Church status, we were able to apply for the bronze award in April 2019."

The next step was to find a suitable project that would enable them to apply for the silver award and it was after visiting a church in nearby Framfield that the next part of the plan came together.

Penny said: "I was enthusiastic to develop our churchyard into a wildlife friendly habitat. We decided to visit the churchyard at Framfield, which we knew had been developed as a wildlife haven. Here we met Sally Clifton, by chance an ecologist, who had managed the project. We invited her to conduct a plant survey of our churchyard and to speak at a public meeting in the church

where we presented our new churchyard management plan. This kick-started our ambitious churchyard project, with enthusiastic support and participation from within and outside the church, helping us to reach the Eco Church Silver Award in July 2020.

They were also given an Animal Friendly Church Award from the Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals.

Penny said: "We were delighted to get this award because we regularly hold pet services and welcome a large number of people from the local community and from miles around who would not normally come to church.

"Our Eco Church Working Group is a gathering of non-experts with a passion for the environment. We enjoy tea, cake and conversation - while tending the churchyard, and doing what we can to create a greener and more equal world.



“We have ambitious plans for the future, hoping to conduct more churchyard surveys, particularly on moths, butterflies and birds, alongside projects to encourage hedgehogs and swifts, and much more!

“Our Eco Church Working Group is now preparing for the Eco Church Gold award.”

Vicar of Ticehurst and Flimwell Rev Ashley Evans said: “I am delighted with all that our Reader Penny Evans, supported by our Eco Church Working Group, has achieved for St Mary’s Ticehurst in the area of caring for God’s creation, firstly with the Eco Church Silver Award (within 18 months of registering with A Rocha) and now being recognised by the Anglican Society for the Welfare of Animals (ASWA) as the joint winner of the Animal Friendly Church of the Year Award for 2020. This has been an incredibly rewarding experience for the church, and has involved new friendships and wonderful contributions from the wider community.”

“Our Eco Church Working Group is a gathering of non-experts with a passion for the environment.

We enjoy tea, cake and conversation - while tending the churchyard, and doing what we can to create a greener and more equal world.

The churches’ actions include:

Worship and teaching: Regular prayers, liturgies and sermons that reflect commitment to a God who cares for the wellbeing of the whole planet, its animals, people and ecosystems

Buildings: Eco cleaning products, assessment of energy use, energy efficient light bulbs and participation in Tearfund’s toilet-twinning scheme, which helps families in poor communities build a basic toilet, have access to clean water and learn about hygiene

Land: A major project to encourage more wildlife into the churchyard, including creating a summer meadow and installing bird boxes, bug boxes and a hedgehog house

Community and global engagement: Gaining Fairtrade Church status, raising awareness and prayers for overseas environmental projects, going for vegan options and LOAF (local, organic, animal-friendly, fairly traded) principles where food is shared

Personal Lifestyle: Church funds are ethically invested, LOAF and fairtrade principles encouraged, charitable giving of clothes and food to Family Support Work encouraged.

PARISH NEWS

GOD'S GREENER EARTH

RESIDENTS in a little village are taking big steps towards saving the planet with a brilliantly successful united approach. Recycling, reusing, reducing waste and rewilding is the mantra in Graffham and, as churchwarden Ginny Barrett writes, everyone is playing their part.

AS YOU drive through Graffham, a small village in the heart of the South Downs National Park in rural West Sussex, you could be forgiven for thinking life there could not be anything but green.

Then, in 2019, it began to get a whole lot greener.

On the back of the Eco Church initiative, Greener Graffham was born, taking its first breath at the annual harvest supper and a few weeks later its first few tottering steps at the village's St Giles Church.

Interested villagers (and a dog) turned out on a cold, dark evening to see what the village might do to tread more gently on the planet and to increase its resilience in the face of the climate emergency.

Some said "anything we do here is a waste of time" but we only had to look back a few months to remember two occasions when the water supply was cut off, a time when some villagers ran out of heating oil, as well as the not infrequent power cut (including one on Christmas Day) to realise our civilised existence was quite a precarious one.

A move back to a more self-sufficient lifestyle can only be a good thing, even if you are a climate-emergency denier.

The village is blessed with a shop and three pubs. All these businesses became involved one way or another, particularly in improving the range of vegan foods on offer. Stunningly tasty creations can now be had – significantly better than a bowl of chips.

One pub now even offers carbon neutral dining – diners can opt to add £1 to the bill which funds the planting of a fruit tree in the Third World.

On the back of the Eco Church initiative, Greener Graffham was born

The shop set up refill stations for everyday necessities such as dishwashing liquid and allowed us to install the Graffham Bookshelf, where donated books raise money for the Stonepillow homeless charity. The shop has an excellent range of eco-friendly shampoos and other items and is so well stocked that journeys out of the village for provisions are rarely a necessity.

Food bank collection points were set up around the village. The church extended its collection of objects for recycling to include milk bottle tops, printer cartridges, crisp packets, toothbrushes and other things and we even squeezed in an electric vehicle event.

A walking bus to the infant school was trialled and bulk orders for things such as bird seed, compost, loo paper, water butts and even visits from heating engineers were arranged.

Little did we know that a few months later we would be shut away in our homes in the midst of a global pandemic, comfortably surrounded with our bulk buys. We were well under way with our compost and seed sharing and our growing grew in earnest.

Rozie Apps, editor of the parish magazine, is a permaculture fiend. Helpful articles on sustainability and wildlife are a regular feature of the monthly magazine, which is given free to all households and is available online.

Her profusion of vegetables is available to buy from a purpose-made stall, which is also a great benefit for campers enjoying staycations.

By the end of the summer, recipes for excellent chutneys and jams circulated to deal with the surplus of green tomatoes and other fruits. Many of these preserves found their way into this year's Christmas mobile home produce stall, which raised hundreds of pounds for the village church which, like many others, had a tough year.

One thing that has huge impact on the planet is the heating of our homes. We have some good systems already in operation in the village. One landowner's woodland management plan is carried out in such a way that it provides sufficient woodchip to provide for the whole estate's residential hot water and heating requirements via its two biomass boilers, supplying ten properties. This encourages proactive



THE POPULAR VILLAGE VEG STALL

woodland management, much via coppicing of chestnut and hazel, which in turn encourages biodiversity and habitat management. How many people can say the heating of their water actively encourages wildlife?

Our new Graffham Buy, Sell, Swap, Giveaway and Wanted Facebook page has been a great success having more than 350 members, with 200 plus posts in the past four weeks alone, offering items as diverse as bird tables, furniture, surplus building supplies, toys, clothes, home-grown produce, vehicles and parts – anything and everything. Finding a use for unwanted stuff is such a good feeling.

Recently many of Rev Vivien Turner's church services have been online and, since children in the village last year requested that creation is prayed for each week, these prayers are being heard by a wider audience than ever before. We may be a small community but with the encouragement of Eco Church and Creation Care we can all have big aspirations.



MAGAZINE EDITOR ROZIE APPS WITH SOME OF HER VEG

Chichester Diocesan Officer Rev Debbie Beer said: "It's so exciting to hear about St Giles Church and Greener Graffham – a great example of how joining Eco Church can inspire a church to take action with their local community to care for the planet. I'm impressed by how much is happening in Graffham to reduce the village's environmental impact and build a more resilient and sustainable shared life. In partnering with their communities churches have so much to give and receive, both practically and spiritually."

Eco Church is a scheme run by A Rocha UK which equips churches to care for God's creation through their worship, buildings, land, community engagement and individual lifestyles. There are currently 364 bronze, 145 silver and eight gold Church of England Eco Churches. Churches can complete an online survey to be considered for an Eco Church Award at either bronze, silver or gold level.

PARISH NEWS

THINGS WERE MEANT TO BE

A VICAR had a “Who Do You Think You Are?” moment after researching his family history.

Rev Peter Doodles felt just like a subject on the popular TV show when he discovered, to his surprise, that he has family links stretching back centuries to the parish where he is now ministering.

He even has connections to Herstmonceux Castle in his parish of Herstmonceux and Wartling.

Rev Doodles began his investigations after receiving an email from Australia.

It was from a family member on his mother’s side who had traced their genealogy.

Rev Doodles said: “When I journeyed through the story of my family, I noticed, much to my amazement, that there was a lot about Herstmonceux, Herstmonceux Church and Herstmonceux Castle.”

Although born in the East End of London, Rev Doodles is now a firm fixture on the South Coast. He is assistant priest at his benefice, takes services



in Ashburnham Chapel and was a volunteer Beachy Head chaplain for four years.

But he had no idea his roots here were so deep.

After quizzing his relation in Australia, he discovered he was related to “the Sussex nobility families of Dacre and Fiennes”. He said this was quite a shock as he left school at 14 with one qualification before becoming a motor mechanic.

He said: “Both names are major and integral parts of the history of Herstmonceux Castle, the Church of All Saints Herstmonceux and the local area over many hundreds of years.

“The tomb of the two Sir Thomas Fiennes, father and son, is situated where I have, unknowing of my relationship to them, robed for services over the last five years. This tomb is in the Dacre Chapel in Herstmonceux Church.

“However, the two figures on top of the tomb are not of the two Fiennes family members that are in the tomb. These are of the Lord Hoo’s family members and were once in Battle Abbey. Incidentally, and by seeming coincidence, I live in the nearby village of Hooe.

“Lord Thomas Hoo once possessed the Manor of Wartling and I am also privileged to take services in the Church of Mary Magdalene, Wartling.

“Lord Thomas commissioned an illuminated religious book, a ‘Book of Hours of the Sarum Use’. I studied theology at Sarum College Salisbury and not only that, Lord Hoo’s daughter, Anne Hoo, married Sir Thomas Fiennes.

“Sometimes I think to myself that things were meant to be.”

WELL PREPARED WITH OUR DIGITAL TOOLBOX

THE Covid pandemic has forced major changes for all churches - though some have found it a less painful experience than feared.

The parish of Herstmonceux and Wartling discovered moving to online worship during lockdown was a smooth operation, thanks to technology.

Rev Peter Doode is assistant priest at the two churches in the parish. He said: "Due to the temporary voluntary closure of some churches in East Sussex, in January the parish found itself without a congregation in the pews but it still had a church congregation and its local community to serve.

"During the first lockdown, church giving was certainly one part of life that rapidly changed. While many in our congregations use a standing order for their giving, others do not. Cash is now less popular due to the possibility of cross-infection and most people now prefer to use credit cards.

"In response to that we shared the cost of a credit card reader that used a wireless router. Additionally, we thought this would be ideal for the festival services, as well as for weddings and funerals. A credit card reader would be an asset.

"Then lockdown happened again and we were asked to close our churches for public worship.

"We had been having evening prayer Zoom services to supplement what were, until lockdown, our normal services but obviously more was now required and the wireless router gave us that opportunity.

"We needed a service that looked and felt just the same as a normal church service, a Zoom shared home communion service, so those involved felt as though they were participating and sitting in the pews.

"It was obvious from the start this would need the host and the minister to be two different people, the host to operate the waiting room and control the microphones and the minister to behave as though the service was a normal Sunday communion service.

"Our St Mary Magdalene Wartling PCC secretary Penny was the host and since she was in the Borders, a very remote host indeed.

"We ran a test at the church and it proved it could all work. Any teething issues were dealt with, including changing the position of the laptop. Light from the window behind



the altar made me appear as though I had a halo. Changing the angle of the laptop solved the problem.

"Audio was another issue. My idea of playing music from a stereo I had brought with me was abandoned, although it sounded good in the church it was not adequate for the purpose. The laptop's internal microphone was perfectly OK, as was the internal camera.

"The operation was carried out using equipment that we had and so nothing else extra was needed to be purchased for the service.

"The service went very well and we are now up and running and able to use every tool in the toolbox, digital or otherwise, in order to keep in touch with each other and to spread God's word.

"We must always be prepared especially for events far beyond our control. Just like the wise bridesmaids in the parable, whatever the future holds, we also need to be fully prepared."

PARISH NEWS

RURAL CHURCHES GROW AND BLOSSOM

HIGH Hurstwood is a small rural village of 1,000 people, nestled between Uckfield and Crowborough. With financial support from the Strategic Development Fund, Holy Trinity Church formed an Apostolic partnership with All Saints in Crowborough through the part-time sharing of an associate minister.

Two families joined from All Saints and the church ambitiously sought to double the congregation, with the aspiration of tripling the giving within three years. Three years later, when Covid has overshadowed everything, the shoots of life and love, laughter and faith are evident, producing a robust harvest like the parable of the sower, even in the face of hardship and trial.

Being a loving church is about developing our love for one another by spending time with each other after the services. Working together to care for others has been key to spiritual and numerical growth.

In John 13:35 Jesus says “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another”.

The church is providing for all ages every week through Sunday School, Messy Church, family services, evensong etc. It encourages all ages to attend regularly and gives specific responsibilities and roles to young and old, for example the children’s music group and choir - It has never had so many children taking part in the services!

It “seeks the common good” through Friday Fun Club, a club for five to 11-year-olds, the annual holiday club, Trinity toddlers and involvement in the village fete and school, all helping the church and community flourish.

A member of the Holy Trinity congregation gave their personal reflection of growth.

They said: “For me, what has changed is that I feel part of a thriving church family, one that has direction and is alive.

I have gone from attending Messy Church once a month and family service to attending every week, organising the Messy Church breakfast and craft and I am a member of the PCC. My faith has grown immensely.

“Could I call myself a Christian? Three years ago I was confirmed, but did I wholeheartedly believe it or mean it? It is easy to say the words of the Creed parrot fashion or recite the Lord’s prayer without thinking.

“Over these last three years, life has thrown many challenges in my direction but my growing faith in Jesus has given me the strength to face each one. I have noticed a dramatic change in my approach to crises. I know Jesus is with me. Rev Mark [Ashworth] has shown me the way by leading us through the Bible passages, I know I believe and from the moment I realised this I have not looked back. I am confident in my faith and can say ‘I am a Christian’ without doubt.



“Instrumental in growing my faith has been understanding God’s word through the Bible. It is not about following mortal leaders and favouring particular incumbents but actually it is about following Jesus. Mark has repeatedly shown the connection between the Old Testament and the New and this approach to his address each week has strengthened my understanding of the prophetic meanings of the iconic Bible stories from the Old Testament which has led me to recognise and understand the Holy Trinity of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit as One.

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another”

“Life Explored, Christianity Explored and Discipleship Explored have all played a part in deepening my faith from building my confidence to recognising how the Bible holds the key to Jesus being part of everyday life. Coupled with the Lent courses and joining the families house group has enriched my understanding of the Bible. The fellowship of the house group guides me and comforts me and, particularly in Covid times, the weekly Zoom meeting connects us and we can share in prayer and Bible study giving us all inner strength and enabling us to grow in our faith. There is a bond in the group which gives us all strength and reminds us to make Jesus part of every day.’

Here are some prayer points that Holy Trinity would appreciate over the coming year:

Discipleship: A growth in Christian maturity and fellowship

Evangelism: Growing our outward looking ministries and invitations.

Prayer: Keeping on our knees – depending on God for true lasting growth.

Also please be praying for the Diocesan SDF bid team as it finalises the application for the 2021 SDF grant

FOR THE EARTH WILL BE FILLED
WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE

Glory of the Lord

AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA.

By Karen Hill, Mothers' Union president

AT THE heart of Mothers' Union is our prayer life. We began in prayer and listening to God. Our projects came as an answer to prayer. What is said of Mothers' Union members is that "they pray with their feet moving, their work is their prayer".

Mothers' Union started in Hampshire, in the tiny village of Old Arlesford in 1876, 23 miles from Aldershot. It is easy to see how we became a worldwide movement in 84 countries, we certainly prayed with our feet moving then too. From early on members wanted to be linked together, to know that at any time another member was praying for them and for their work.

In July 1920, about a hundred worldwide representatives of the Mothers' Union met in London. So powerful were the relationships forged during the week of discussion and prayer that definite steps were taken to maintain common commitments and goals. The Wave Of Prayer was born. So began the wave of prayer that ebbs and flows around the world over a 24-hour period.

Each year at the end of February it is our turn in Chichester Diocese to pray with our Mothers' Union Prayer Link Dioceses across the world for three days -- from Friday, February 26, to midnight on Sunday, February 28. Our link dioceses are Mundri in South Sudan, Madi and West Nile in Uganda, Isuikwuato in Nigeria and Seoul in South Korea.

In the past members have often prayed in small groups. Covid-19 has changed things but it does not mean we cannot meet together so members are being offered the opportunity to meet on Zoom on Saturday, February 27, at 10am. This will be live-streamed through our Facebook page. During these unusual times everyone is welcome to join us in prayer. This short service will be open to everyone across the diocese.

Chichester Mothers' Union has a lot to pray for and we are using Covid-19 as the ideal opportunity to review policies, to pray and then to look at our projects and question whether they are relevant and if so, how to sustain those projects.

Join Mothers' Union in Prayer on Saturday 27th February at 10am - This short service will be live streamed from their Facebook page.

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Safeguarding is key

PARISHES across the diocese responded well to last year's national review into the handling of all safeguarding cases across the Church of England.

Colin Perkins, diocesan safeguarding adviser, reported almost 100 per cent level of return, even though parishes were facing the challenges of lockdown at the time. Work is now well under way to ensure every known case has been responded to appropriately.

Mr Perkins said: "The recent report from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) reminds us that we simply cannot consign safeguarding failures to the past. Victims of abuse continue to live with the trauma of what happened and any case that has not been responded to previously may mean an ongoing risk in the present."

The aim of the national review is to ensure all known cases of concern about the behaviour of clergy and church employees towards children and vulnerable adults have been dealt with appropriately and the needs of survivors have been responded to supportively and adequately.

The Diocese of Chichester has set up an advisory group, which includes an adult survivor of abuse whose contribution is vital to the work being undertaken, and four independent reviewers

who are now working to ensure every case has been responded to appropriately. The reviewers bring a wealth of experience in safeguarding.

Katrina is a qualified social work manager with over 15 years experience in front line child protection teams. Her experience includes working with children who have been subjected to neglect, physical, emotional and sexual abuse as well as children who have been exploited and trafficked.

Jane holds a judicial appointment, was a district Crown prosecutor with special responsibilities for victims of abuse /trauma and has received specialist training to achieve best evidence from survivors of trauma. She is also a trained bereavement counsellor.

Julie is a recently retired Detective Sergeant from Sussex Police. She has spent half her career specialising in Child Safeguarding and Adult Protection. Significantly she spent the last 6 years of her career working with a variety of Statutory and Non Statutory agencies within a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub. She has extensive experience of real time safeguarding investigations and risk assessment. Additionally she has contributed to a number of child protection individual management and serious case reviews.

Paul is a recently retired detective superintendent from Hampshire Police who led on child abuse, serious sexual abuse and homicide.

The skills of the reviewers complement each other well. They are all professionally curious and confident to challenge which is key to that definition of "independent".

It is hoped that survivors have confidence in the reviewers, not just by their credentials but also their desire to safeguard vulnerable members of society as they have done throughout their professional careers. Survivors can be assured any identification of a safeguarding risk, no matter how old the incident was or who was involved, will be brought to the attention of the safeguarding team and other authorities if necessary.

Past reviews have failed to engage with survivors and give them a voice. This review is very much survivor focused and is looking at a broad spectrum of safeguarding issues, not just child abuse, and includes domestic abuse, adult abuse and financial abuse.

Survivors should feel confident to contact the reviewers if they have any concerns and can do so by contacting Claire Coles, project manager for Past Case Review 2, at Claire.coles@chichester.anglican.org

Making a difference

News from overseas

NAIROBI, KENYA

CHICHESTER Diocese has had Companion Links with the Anglican churches in West Africa and Kenya since the Sixties. Over the years it has built mutual fellowship and cultural exchange through hospitality and worship. Churches and individuals in Chichester Diocese have supported link dioceses by offering grants to students studying in a recognised college.

One is Carlile College in Kenya and two students who have completed their courses with a supporting grant from Chichester Diocese are Jane Wambui Irungu and Martin Abel Lenaola.

They recently spoke to Father Andrew Birks via Zoom. Fr Andrew is priest in charge of Chidham parish in West Sussex and a member of the Diocesan Overseas Council.

Jane, 34, who is married and a mother, studied for a diploma in Christian mission and civic responsibilities.

She told Fr Andrew: "I was, and am, so much involved in teens' ministry in my church and in the society. My ministry also involves empowering women and caring for children who cannot speak for themselves. I am involved in mentoring these groups, women, teens and children.

After graduation I am planning to continue with studies and do a degree in community development in St Paul University. I will be learning as I also serve my community in Baringo Diocese.

"I really want to thank you so much for your support towards my studies at Carlile College. Sincerely speaking, if it was not for you I could not have managed to do my diploma, which will help and equip me to continue serving my community, who need not only to be preached to but also to be educated on ways to improve their standards of living."

“On behalf of myself and Carlile College community, I would like to say thank you very much for your great support”

Carlile College’s Mission School trains evangelists who, after training, are strategically placed within the Anglican Church in Africa and any other church organisation with specific areas of engagement. Most graduates are serving as evangelists who help organise and mobilise the church for community outreach through open air meetings, revival meetings, Bible study and the like.

They also serve in Sunday School ministry, women’s ministry and youth ministry and among the less fortunate in the society. The college has grown to be a pan-African institution, drawing students from nearly 20 countries in Africa.

Martin Lenaola, 30, studied for a diploma in Christian mission. He is now a priest in the Diocese of Maralal in Samburu County.



JANE WAMBUI IRUNGU

He said: “I was ordained, and I am now working in children ministry as a curate in the pro-cathedral. I was born and grew up in a very remote area and grew up as a partial orphan after I lost my mother in the year 2002. We were a family of six in number, I being the second born.

“My mother passed on when I was still young and because my father was a drunkard man, I separated with him and I went to stay with my grandmother who brought me up with a lot of challenges. I started rearing chicken to enable me to go back to school. And after a period of two years God opened another door for me and I joined the secondary school. Every Saturday I could sell eggs to have the school fee.



MARTIN ABEL LENAOLA

“On behalf of myself and Carlile College community, I would like to say thank you very much for your great support to me to complete my studies with care. Thank you once more for your love and support toward my studies.”

By supporting the training of students at Carlile College, our diocese is making a difference to new priests and mission in parishes in our link dioceses. We look forward to continuing our long and positive co-operation with Carlile College in this important work. The Diocese of Chichester has official links with six dioceses in the Province of West Africa - The Gambia, Guinea, Freetown in Sierra Leone, Bo in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cameroon - and five in Kenya - Nakuru, Nyahuru, Kericho, Maralal and Baringo.

For more information, contact Rev Christine Keyte at companionlinks@chichester.anglican.org



Giving generously

An update on parish giving and helpful resources by John Kemp, diocesan parish adviser for finance, stewardship and governance.

During 2019 regular planned giving from our parishioners fell by two per cent, amounting to £300,000 when compared with 2018, but total giving, including fundraising and legacies increased overall by two per cent as our parishioners continued to support their churches generously.

In 2018, over 47 per cent of UK payments were made using card, compared with 28 per cent for cash. Total cash transactions have fallen from 60 per cent of all transactions in 2008 to 28 per cent in 2018, a figure that is projected to decline to nine per cent by 2028.

Income from collections on the plate or via donation boxes, amounting to £2.4 million, is the fifth largest source of donations for churches within our diocese, after planned giving, legacies, special appeals and gift aid. A combination of the shift away from cash

and inflation saw our parishes' total collection income fall by one per cent in real terms between 2018 and 2019. That works out at a loss of some £60 per church, but this is being met by the shift to other forms of generosity, about which there are many encouraging signs.

Providing the option to make contactless donations will:

- Shift from cash to card, stabilising that form of additional income
- Offer greater choice for a generous donor to give to our churches
- Engage with a wider range of visitors, especially those who are not regular churchgoers and may never carry cash.

Not only is cashless giving increasing, but our churches are moving to an online presence with pages on their own websites, on A Church Near You, or on Facebook or other social media. Online giving can be enabled through a simple donate button on your online presence. Parish Buying has many contactless devices available, as well free

instructional videos to get you started with setting up online donation methods. Churches wanting to investigate cashless and online giving should contact their parish adviser for more information and assistance.

Free resources to encourage generosity

National church is providing free resources to encourage generosity amongst parishioners as a way of increasing our churches' impact in our parishes through parish ministry. They can be viewed and downloaded [here](#)

Parish Buying also has plenty of resources to enable online giving on their website as well as instructional videos to help users set up the facility. Check [here](#)

Other ideas for fundraising can be accessed on the official Church of England Parish Resources website [here](#)

Cash support is available



STAYING on top of grant fundraising in these difficult times is no small task. The Covid-19 pandemic has stretched many parish budgets to breaking point.

Incomes have fallen as churches have run up costs in alleviating hardship in communities and finding new ways of reaching people.

Grant-funding opportunities have been changing almost weekly. If you are having trouble keeping up or wondering where to find the money for a particular project, get in touch with Katherine Prior, Chichester Diocesan fundraising adviser. She is always happy to provide tailored advice to PCCs on their funding needs.

Current Covid-related funding includes Allchurches Trust's Hope Beyond grant scheme, which offers up to £50,000 for projects directly responding to new or increased need brought about by the pandemic, including those that address loneliness and mental health problems exacerbated by coronavirus. Projects to adapt

buildings for better post-Covid-19 access and to improve digital access to activities such as live-streaming of services and training in online resources are also eligible. The grants will be awarded on a rolling basis until the fund is used up, so it pays to apply sooner than later. <https://www.allchurches.co.uk/what-we-fund/hopebeyond/>

There is also the government's Covid Winter Support Fund for grants up to £5,000, accessed via the Sussex Community Foundation. If your church runs a food bank or is delivering essentials to vulnerable families you may be eligible for support. Alternatively, if your church hosts such a community initiative, you may be able use your charitable status to help it apply to the fund. Grants are primarily to support households with children and households experiencing or at risk of poverty during the pandemic. https://sussexgiving.org.uk/named-funds_posts/covid-winter-support-fund/

Sussex Police's Community Safety Fund is open until February 8 to support crime reduction and community safety initiatives. Eligible projects must engage with and support people, so it is not for fixed deterrents such as CCTV, alarms and fencing. A project to educate people about internet fraud and doorstep scams or a community gardening team that tackles vandalism in a churchyard could win support. <https://www.sussex-pcc.gov.uk/about/news/community-safety-funding-available-during-testing-times/>

Katherine regularly posts funding opportunities, for both building projects and activities, on the diocese's Church Buildings Facebook page. Follow the page for the latest funding news:

<https://www.facebook.com/DioChiBuildings>

BY REV NEVILLE MANNING

WHAT I VALUE

About Hymns

SOMETIMES when things we take for granted are removed, we learn to value them. Living through the unprecedented time of coronavirus in which congregational singing has not been allowed, with only small choirs allowed, has meant many of us have been saddened by this silence imposed from on high.

It is also a good moment to think about why we value hymns. One of our most respected hymn writers, Bishop Timothy Dudley Smith, responsible for “Tell out my soul”, “Lord, for the years” and many others, said in *A Functional Art: Reflections Of A Hymn Writer* that hymn singing has a threefold purpose: praising God, confirming faith and uniting us in fellowship. I can’t think of a better statement of why hymns are valued.

Firstly, praising God. In my days as an incumbent I always felt the first hymn in any service needs to be God-focused, not about me and my needs, however pressing. So, for example, “Praise, my soul, the king of heaven” is better than “I need thee every hour”. We always have much God to praise as one known to us in three ways (Father,

Son and Holy Spirit), the God who creates and sustains, who redeems and renews, and who comes to us now as our helper and guide. That note of praise must be large enough to embrace not only the joys but also the sorrows. We take our cue from the Psalms where there is space for both praise and lament, something we have been reminded of in these restricted times. For example Tate and Brady’s hymn, based on Psalm 34, is relevant: “Through all the changing scenes of life, In trouble and in joy, the praises of my God shall still my heart and tongue employ.”

Secondly, confirming faith. Often our understanding and grasp of Christian belief is shaped by the hymns we sing. In the 1850s Dr R W Dale in Birmingham said: “Let me write the hymns of a church, and I care not who writes the theology.” Years ago Mrs C F Alexander wrote hymns as a way of helping her Sunday School children to know what Christian belief and the Creeds were about. That was the reasons for hymns like “All things bright and beautiful”, about God as Creator, and “There is a green hill far away”, about Jesus and the Cross.

Thirdly, uniting us in fellowship. I wonder how many realise that hymn books are a wonderful ecumenical resource linking various traditions together. A service might include “Praise to the holiest in the height” by John Henry Newman (Anglican turned Roman Catholic), “Come, let us join our cheerful songs” by Isaac Watts (Congregationalist), “Dear Lord and Father of mankind” by J G Whittier (Quaker), or at Easter “The day of resurrection”, translated by J M Neale from a hymns sung centuries ago in the Eastern or Greek church. This shows us that what unites us is greater than what divides.



STEADY SUPPORT

An update of FSW's work by Martin Auton-Lloyd. CEO of FSW



The Sussex Charity for Children
Since 1890

IT'S A FAR from normal start to the new year but work carries on for FSW, albeit with a few changes.

Usually at this time it is looking forward, planning events to raise funds and activities for families, organising staff days and seeking opportunities to meet supporters and engage new ones. Life is different but FSW must still plan and work towards returning to "normal" while accepting that things could change – again – at the drop of a hat.

Change is something the families of FSW have come to accept during 2020. FSW has adapted its way of working so it can still engage with them when, and how, they need it. For some families that is via social media, for others it has been walks in the park, on the seafront or the Downs so they could talk and find emotional support.

Parents have shown a great sense of strength and at times been amazing in how they have coped. So too have our practitioners. Since March 23 last year, our 11 practitioners have made 2,339 "visits" by phone, app or in person and have worked with an average of 288 adults and 295 children each month.

Every month, families who need one are sent a food box from FSW. It contains enough basics to give a family of four some 20 meals in the month plus breakfast cereals, tea, coffee, biscuits, snacks, tinned fruit, cleaning products, toiletries and sanitary products to help make the family budget go further.

In the last nine months, we have made 1,037 deliveries of food plus 91 free-range turkeys at Christmas and a further 1,500 plus emergency top-up bags.

In February, every food box will contain some form of craft or activity pack, in March every child will get a book for World Book Day and every mother will get a gift for Mothering Sunday and of course, we hope to be able to send Easter Eggs in April.

Our fuel fund is supporting families who struggle with their bills to ensure this time at home is not only safe but they are all warm and have enough fuel to cook food.

As we give this practical support, our practitioners are there with the family, helping them to move on, supporting them as they try to overcome the challenges they face. Currently we are supporting

more than 300 families across the diocese and we can only do that because you are there for us.

As we receive donations of food, toys and money, we know that they are sent with love, prayers, and a deep sense that each one of us wants something better for the families. For the staff, knowing there are hundreds of our supporters praying for us on a regular basis does give us the strength to adapt and change but most importantly it gives us the strength to be a constant presence for the families we support.



On a mission to work together

THE education team is preparing to launch its “Growing Partnerships” document, aimed at developing a joint approach to mission between schools and their parish churches.

Did you know there are 37,000 pupils in our Church of England schools across the Diocese of Chichester? They are spread over 155 schools. Such a wide reach gives the church a unique opportunity to engage with the community in a daily, meaningful way.

We see strong evidence of effective work across the diocese with many schools and members of the clergy working closely together. This has a real impact on the localities they serve.

The purpose of Growing Partnerships is to offer a framework and a set of ideas to guide and challenge schools and clergy as they seek to work together even further. It is based on the good practice we have found and it builds upon those firm foundations.

Director of education Trevor Cristin said: “Growing Partnerships is designed to be a positive resource for schools and churches as they explore the future together. It is not supposed to be a tick list or even a defined programme but rather we think it will offer ideas and stimulate conversations that will take God’s mission in our parishes forward even further.”

“The school community are now very much aware that the clergy are there for them.”

When Rev Paul Doick accepted the invitation to be interviewed for the Parish of Henfield with Shermanbury and Woodmancote, one of the things that excited him was the presence of a Church of England School.

Paul, who is also rural dean of Hurst and chairman of the Diocesan Advisory Board, said: “Almost seven years later the relationship between the church and the school still excites me, particularly as our partnership has grown in that time. And I think that the word ‘relationship’ really does highlight what makes any partnership special.

“As the rector I’m involved in the life of the school every week, and not just because I am the chairman of governors. Of course, I lead collective worship (the largest congregation I get!) but I have also helped interview for both our headteacher and deputy head and I and my foundation governor colleagues have helped develop a distinctively Christian vision for our school. And that vision is expressed so wonderfully in the words of our mission statement, ‘unlocking the potential in everyone’.

“The Church of St Peter’s and its school share the symbol of the crossed keys, and it was that which helped us to reflect on what we want for everyone involved in our life together. Unlocking the potential of any church school requires hard work and vision by staff and governors alike, but it also needs much prayer and a sharing of values.

“We have found that works best when we share in things together and we have done that by opening up the church to more school services. A good example was the decision to move our Christingle service from a Sunday afternoon to make it the final school service before Christmas.

“Almost 400 children, rather than 50, now get to experience that worship, even if some staff are worried about candles.

“Before the pandemic we have been able to invite children and their families to events in church like ‘Art In Advent’. This fantastic event involved the children creating some wonderful art at school which was displayed around the church. Parents were invited to view the art after they had picked their children up and we could offer them refreshments. We also invited the children to come and experience a labyrinth prayer space in church that we were using for a parish week of prayer and this was wonderfully received. Prayer weeks in school and prayer in the playground have all been possible because of our growing relationship and partnership.

“The school community are now very much aware that the clergy are there for them. They know we pray for them and they know we are there to be a listening ear. Both school and church are important organisations in a village community and what better recognition can any rector get when so many of the children wave and shout hello in the street.

“I wouldn’t say that our partnership is perfect. There is so much more to be done. But the church community is beginning to see that the school is theirs and the school community is beginning to acknowledge that the church is theirs too. One of our school



values is respectful and we have linked that to Romans 12.10, ‘...love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour’. School and churches can work together more effectively when they do just that. It takes time and of course, and as I have already said, much prayer, but I would not have it any other way.

“The Growing Partnerships document will be circulated early in the new year and over the coming months there will be information sessions with our archdeacons and rural deans and training sessions aimed at both clergy and headteachers so that the key messages can be shared and the good practice that we see in place built upon. The education team hope that this will be an important lever for development and growth in partnership as we all seek to see God’s mission in our parishes grow across the diocese.”

The Growing Partnerships launch will culminate in the headteachers’ conference at the Ashdown Park Hotel, Forest Row, in the summer months.

CATHEDRAL NEWS

Reflections on a time like no other

IN A YEAR like no other, Chichester Cathedral's celebrations for Advent and Christmas were also like none experienced before. Under the banner of Drop Down, Ye Heavens – referring to the ancient Advent antiphon *Rorate caeli* “Drop down ye heavens, and let the skies pour down righteousness” – the cathedral found innovative ways to reach the community, the diocese and beyond to share the comfort and joy of Christmas.

Carol services

With limited seating capacity and public singing prohibited, the cathedral presented both a pre-recorded and live-streamed carol service. The pre-recorded service – A Carol Service from Chichester – had subtitles and was available on the cathedral website and was also distributed to care-homes, schools and other local groups.

The Chichester Nativity

In mid-December, the cathedral unveiled The Chichester Nativity, a major art installation which heralded the heroes of the Covid-19 pandemic from the local community and across East and West Sussex. Created by visual arts adviser and curator Jacqueline Creswell and artist and photographer Ash Mills, it was a unique presentation of

the Nativity story for 2020 in an immersive photographic installation in the style of a renaissance tableau.

Characters in the scene were drawn from local organisations, charities and medical services and paired symbolically to the roles within the Nativity. Participating organisations included BBC Radio Sussex, the Bell Tower Drop-In, Chichester District Food Bank,

Chichester Festival Theatre, Heart, Sanctuary In Chichester, Stagecoach, Stonepillow, Wellington Grange and Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

The project was an immense success which received excellent feedback.

Online resources

Throughout Advent the cathedral provided a daily online calendar of reflections, art, music and spiritual resources.

The Advent Procession on December 6 was one of many live-streamed services. Others included the cathedral carol service, First Evensong of Christmas, Midnight Mass and the Christmas Day Eucharist.

Resources accessed from home included activities for children and families, exploring the story of the Nativity. There were even Christmas craft videos presented by cathedral chancellor Dan Inman in his best “Blue Peter” style.

Zoom in to learn

THE cathedral is running online courses via Zoom throughout the winter and Lent. They are open to all and further details, including pre-course reading and how to sign up, can be found on the learning section of the cathedral’s website. Sign up by February 15 for the Lent Lectures and Lent Bible Study.

Exploring the Bible at Chichester Cathedral: The New Testament

Join an online exploration of the New Testament. There are six sessions, each lasting an hour, and participants are sent optional reading and online resources for private study to accompany their progress through course.

Led by the cathedral chancellor, the Reverend Daniel Inman, each session is a lecture with powerpoint but with space for questions at the end. Even if you can’t join in on the day, videos are available subsequently for those who sign up.

Lent Lectures 2021: Who do you say that I am?

Christian perspectives for shaping the new normal

The pandemic presents us with many challenges. The medical challenge is the most urgent, but behind it there is a widespread sense that things cannot go on as before, from the way we value key workers to cherishing values such as self-sacrifice and community that we had rather lost sight of. We ask: “What will life after Covid be like? What can we hope for? What values will shape the new normal?”.

Christian insights have much to offer in response to this deeper challenge and they are explored in this series of Lent Lectures given by Canon Dr Peter Sills based on his book, *Light In The Darkness: Exploring the path of Christian hope*.

The lectures will be given on Thursdays during Lent at 10am, followed by time for questions, ending by 11.30am. Recordings will be made available afterwards.

Lent Bible Study: The Letter Of St James

Lent is a time for pondering how we respond to God’s call in our lives and what it means for our faith to make a difference to the way we live.

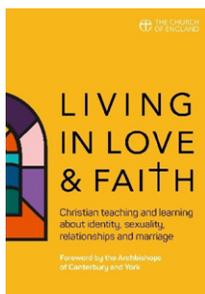
Alongside our Lent Lectures and the New Testament Course, the cathedral is offering small Bible study groups on Zoom during Lent focusing on a book that explores some of these themes in the New Testament: *The Letter Of James*.

All you need is a Bible (and an optional cup of tea) in hand. It is informal and relaxed and all are welcome. There are five sessions lasting about an hour with about six people per group.



BOOKS AND REVIEWS

BY CANON JOHN TWISLETON



LIVING IN LOVE AND FAITH

CHRISTIAN TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT SEXUALITY, RELATIONSHIPS AND MARRIAGES

THE Living In Love And Faith (LLF) material provides a wealth of resources for us to share together over the coming months, writes the bishop's LGBT liaison officer Fr Andrew Woodward.

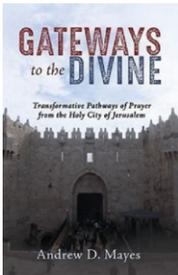
It begins with an introductory day for clergy on May 7, led by Dr Eeva John. The issues raised, as we reflect on these resources, will touch us all in various ways. The LLF book and accompanying material will encourage us to listen to one another's "stories" with dignity and respect. Such encounters can broaden our own visions as we continue, in our diocese, to be built together into the Body of Christ. While these conversations may not be easy, with compassion and sensitivity we can celebrate the diversity revealed within the communities in which we are called to serve and offer an inclusive welcome to all as we seek to live out the good news of Jesus Christ.

The diocesan advocate for Living In Love And Faith is the Archdeacon for Brighton and Lewes Martin Lloyd Williams. He said: "How do we live in love and faith? What a challenging question! It's a question that in many ways Christians should probably ask every day.

"Of course, the question has been brought to the top of the agenda by issues of identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage. These have been the hot potato subjects in the life of the Church for some time. Everyone is going to approach these issues with a degree of trepidation, anxiety and fear. Nobody escapes challenge of these questions. But the good news is that these new teaching materials, Living In Love And Faith, have been born out of a profound experience of listening, listening to scripture and listening to human stories.

"Therefore, I have hope. Over the coming weeks there will be a range of ways in which we can all engage in the listening process. You can start now if you want to. The materials are all online here and the videos provide a good introduction. The opportunity before us is not simply to sort out a divisive issue and solve a problem, but to enter more completely into the richness of God's grace."

Mirfield Publications 2019 £6.50 ISBN 978-0-902834-48-4 112pp



GATEWAYS TO THE DIVINE

ANDREW MAYES

THIS is a profound exploration of both the soul of Jerusalem and the human soul and how we get transformed into what we were made to be. This accessible book highlights age-old spiritual disciplines, invites friendship across faiths while affirming God's unique showing of his face in Jerusalem and its missionary implications. Andrew Mayes takes us to the Jerusalem he is familiar with, its prayer and passion, opening up testimonies across faiths, using the city gates as a device to frame his book on transformative spirituality. It provides a confident, challenging exploration of contrasting spiritualities within Jewish, Muslim and Christian faiths and identifies common themes like the invocation of divine names, the importance of the heart and the role of the body in prayer.

Cascade Books 2020 £17 ISBN 978-1725260412 170pp

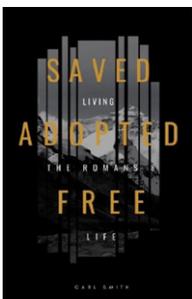


MAKING SPACE FOR GOD: AN INVITATION

NICOLAS STEBBING & PHILIPPA EDWARDS

“DON’T just do something, stand there!” By reversing this common saying the authors capture the standing still of monasticism in the midst of the world’s busyness. Nicolas CR and Philippa OSB use the image of making space to capture the invitation to stability, conversion of life and obedience in the Rule of St Benedict. The authors draw out the meaning of “conversion of life” as “trying to discover how our lives need changing and doing what we can to put those changes into effect”. Christianity is presented as pathway to deeper humanity with monasticism as an icon of the communal ideal set out for us in acts chiefly lived out in families and churches. This short book would suit enquirers about the religious life and a wider circle of spiritual enquiry.

Mirfield Publications 2019 £6.50 ISBN 978-0-902834-48-4 112pp



SAVED, ADOPTED, FREE: LIVING THE ROMANS 8 LIFE

CARL SMITH WITH FOREWORD BY JIM PARTRIDGE

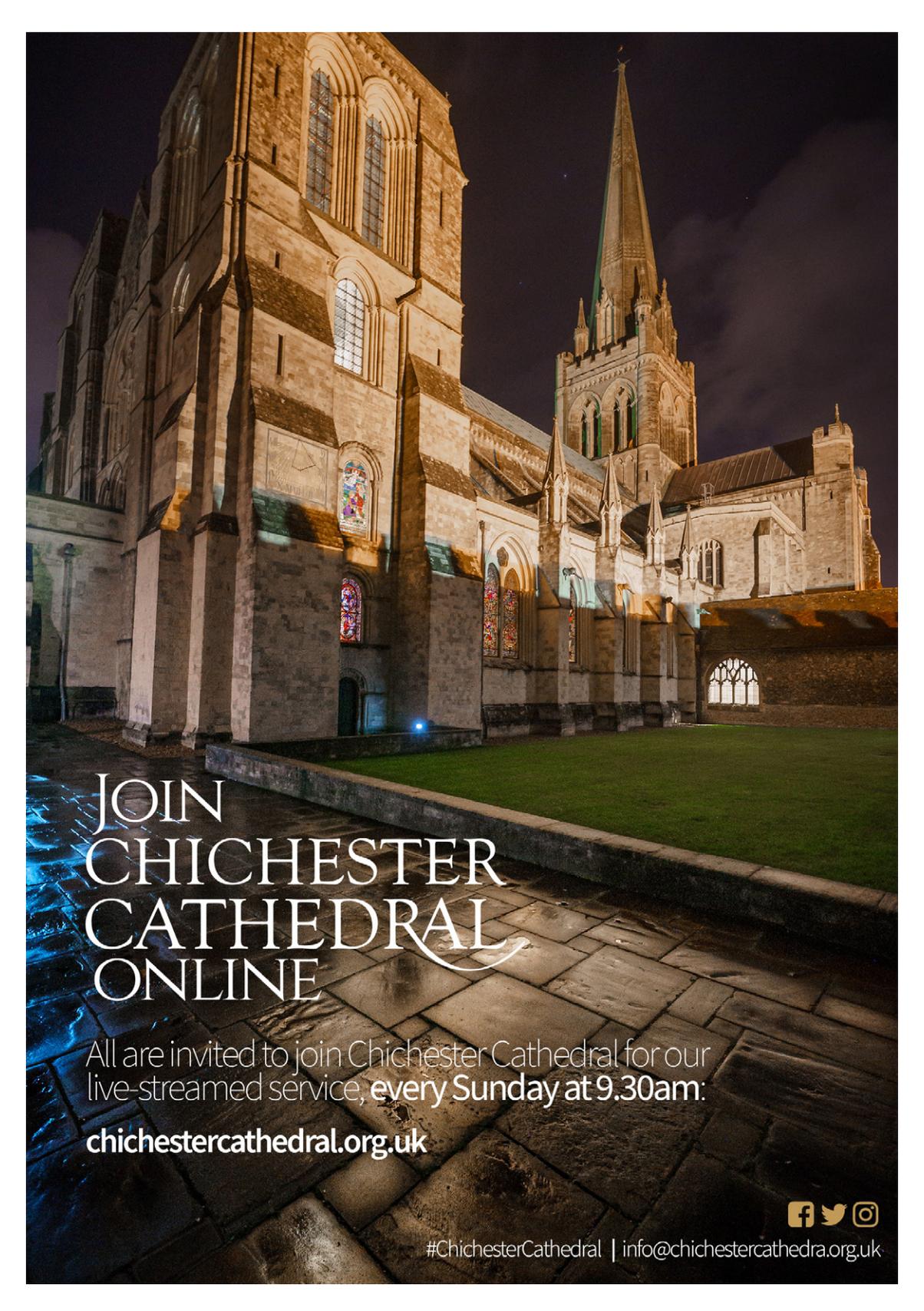
CARL was reading the letter of Romans while on a train and was struck by how many of the well-known and popular Bible verses were in chapter eight. He realised that this chapter of the Bible had some significant truths about our identity as Christians and wanted to explore further how this chapter could help new Christians to learn some of the vital lessons about our identity.

What Carl has sought to do through this book, is to write an accessible resource to equip Christian disciples with some tools for how to approach their scripture reading.

Jim Partridge, author of the foreword, writes: “[Through this book] we get to ‘taste’ the goodness of these words and as we do we develop a fuller understanding of who God is, who we are as His children and what it means to be adopted into His family. Something we all need to grasp to a greater degree.”

Carl Smith is Rector of St Mary’s, Slaugham and St Mark’s, Staplefield Common

Independently published SBN-13: 979-8578426919 191pp, paperback £7.99



JOIN CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL ONLINE

All are invited to join Chichester Cathedral for our
live-streamed service, **every Sunday at 9.30am:**

chichestercathedral.org.uk



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