

FAITH IN SUSSEX

The diocesan publication reaching church communities across Sussex



Black History Month

Celebrating Black History in Church Spaces on pages 18/21

RIDE+STRIDE 2026

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A Vicar's Challenge for the Trust's 70th Year

THANKED FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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The Order of St Richard Recognises Faithful Service

LOVE BURGESS HILL

/38-39

Ten Days of Faith in Action

Vitalis Ngwambi, Diocesan Racial Justice Co-ordinator is pictured on the left by Chief Hendry Bokleni's memorial stone at Newtimber with Matheson and Thembeke Nteleko from the Eastern Cape.

See story on pages 20- 21



**BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH
2026**

Black History in Church Spaces

"Celebrating the stories, faith, witness and history of Black people within the Church and Anglican Communion."

BLACK HISTORY MONTH OPENING EXHIBITION Featured Stories & Exhibits

📍 St Luke's Church, Prestonville, Brighton 📅 Saturday 3 October 2026 🕒 2:00 PM

The SS Mendi

Commemorated at St John the Evangelist Church, Newtimber

Roque Ferdinand

Commemorated at St Mary Magdalene Church, Madehurst

Project Spire

The Church of England's fund for healing, justice, and repair

Olaudah Equiano

Abolitionist, writer, & prominent voice in the struggle against the transatlantic slave trade

The Uganda Martyrs

Remembering their faith, courage, witness, and enduring legacy

Programme Speakers

Vitalis Manjong Ngwambi

Diocesan Racial Justice Co-ordinator

Flo Sparham

Anti-Racist Education Strategy Co-Lead Brighton & Hove City Council

Special Guest Poet

Marie-Paul Duwai-Sowa

Poet & Artist

Keynote Speaker

kwesi Ochosi

Project Coordinator & Archivist Lambeth Palace Library

BLACK HISTORY MONTH CLOSING SERVICE

📍 St Mary's Church, Slindon 📅 Sunday 25 October 2026 🕒 11:00 AM

Worship • Remembrance • Celebration

Commemorating Roque Ferdinand, one of the few surviving 18th-century memorials to a Black man in a Sussex parish church.

Speakers

Professor Alan Lester
University of Sussex

Vitalis Ngwambi
Diocesan Racial Justice
Co-ordinator

Marie-Paul Duwai-Sowa
Poet & Artist

Alysia-Lara
Interim Deputy Director
for Racial Justice Church
of England

3:00PM

Roque Ferdinand Memorial Interpretation Installation.

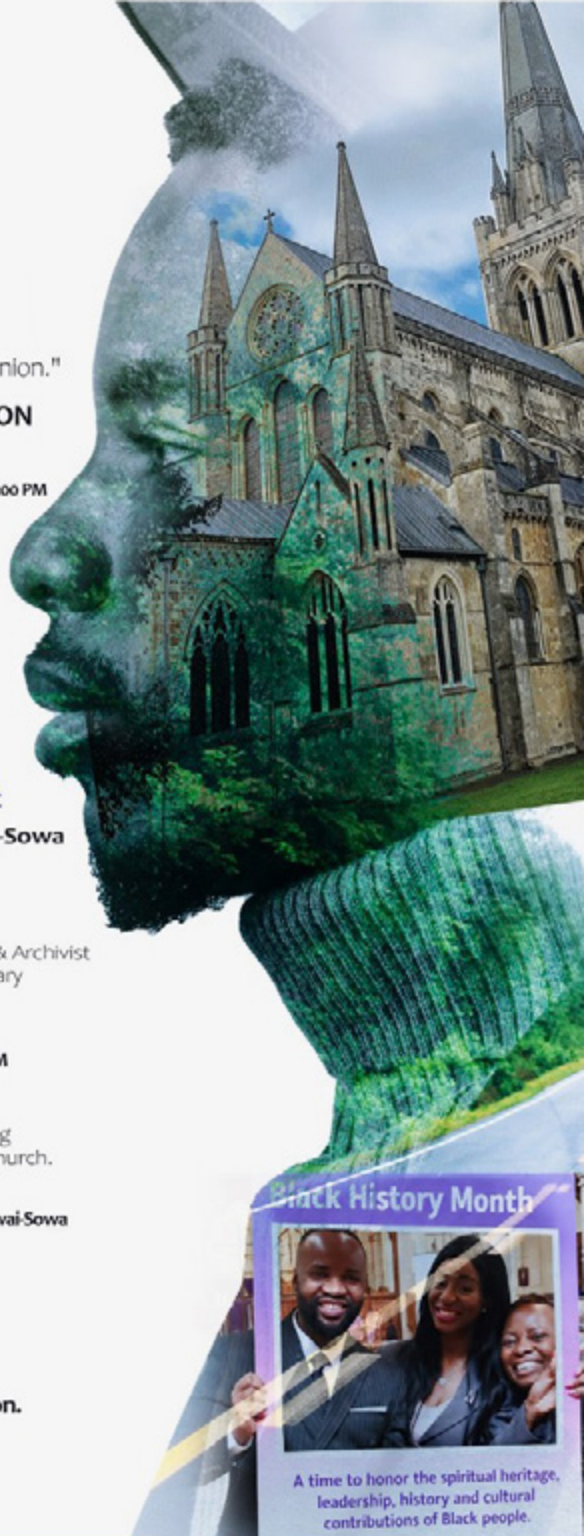
St Mary Magdalene Church, Madehurst



to KNOW • LOVE • FOLLOW 1925

Contact detail:

adminhelpdesk@chichester.anglican.org



A time to honor the spiritual heritage, leadership, history and cultural contributions of Black people.



Welcome to a truly heartening and faith filled edition of Faith in Sussex!

I am sure you will enjoy reading the latest collection of news, features, interviews and profiles as we celebrate the diversity of the household of faith across the diocese of Chichester.

There are some great stories originating from our parishes along with features recognising some of the important issues of the moment. Please do enjoy reading both about Focal ministry and the encouraging work Vitalis Ngwambi, the Diocesan Racial Justice Co-ordinator, is doing - including his meeting with the Archbishop of Canterbury at Lambeth Palace.

The feature on the Order of St Richard reminds us of the immense work undertaken by volunteers across the diocese and there is a reminder of the upcoming elections to General Synod and how you can find out more about those standing.

As usual - the comings and goings pages will be the most read - it's always interesting to see who has arrived in the diocese and who has left us with our thanks and prayers for pastures new.

Thank you to Lisa and Amber for all the work they do in producing this publication which reaches into the wider community

+Will Lewes



AUTHORISED Lay Ministry

Course Prospectus 2026/2027



Diocese of Chichester

Living the Mystery of Faith

Find out more about the Authorised Lay Ministry course. Download a copy of the prospectus from the Diocesan website: www.chichester.anglican.org/authorised-lay-ministry/

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Celebrating a
Landmark Anniversary

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FOCAL MINISTRY /22-23

Are You Being Called?

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To subscribe to Faith in Sussex magazine, please contact the communications department: communications@chichester.anglican.org

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<https://www.chichester.anglican.org/faith-in-sussex/>

Editors: Lisa Williamson & Amber Jackson
Chichester.communications@chichester.anglican.org

Editorial Support: Kate Parkin

Pictures: Pictures: Thank you for all the photo contributions.

Design: kaufcreative.com

Contact us

Diocesan Church House
211 New Church Road
Hove, BN3 4ED

Switchboard: 01273 421021

Fax: 01273 421041



www.chichester.anglican.org



Chichester Diocese



@Chichesterdio



Diocese of Chichester

NEWS

Remembrance

Remembrance is an important part of community life across the Diocese, as people gather to remember those who died, give thanks for their sacrifice and pray for peace.

Remembrance Sunday is on 8 November this year. Services, commemorations, wreath-laying ceremonies and parades will take place across the Diocese over the weekend.

On Remembrance Day, Wednesday 11 November, the nation will observe a two-minute silence at 11am.

Many churches and schools will also hold special assemblies, services and displays. At St Mary's, Slaugham, more than 8,000 knitted and crocheted poppies will form a cascade from the church tower from the end of October until the third week of November.

The display has been created by people across the five villages of West Weald Parish. Each of its five swathes represents one of the villages, with many people learning new skills as they knitted, crocheted and sewed the poppies together.

Vacancy in See

As we look ahead to the appointment of a new Bishop of Chichester, the Diocese continues to meet for prayer on Zoom at noon on the first Monday of each month.

These gatherings bring lay and ordained people together to pray for the life and mission of the Diocese, and for the discernment, calling and leadership of our new bishop. Everyone is welcome.

For Zoom details, please email Claire King at claire.king@chichester.anglican.org.



General Synod elections

Nominations for the General Synod elections opened on 14 August and closed on 7 September. 14 clergy applied for 6 places and 24 lay people applied for 7 places, and Bishop Will welcomed the strong interest.

Having attended his first Synod in York this summer, he said: "I have seen at first hand the commitment of those who serve the wider Church. Please read the candidates' statements carefully and vote prayerfully."

Candidates' statements are available on the Diocesan website's General Synod pages. Voting remains open until 13 October 2026.

Ernie Arnold Bell Fund launched

A full peal of Lessness Surprise Major was rung at St Mary's, Slaugham, on Tuesday 8 September to mark the centenary of the birth of Ernie Arnold, who was the church's Tower Captain for more than 70 years.

Led by David Kirkcaldy, the peal took two hours and 47 minutes. The team of ringers came from London, St Albans, Croydon, Brighton, Eastbourne and further afield. It was the first full peal at Slaugham for about 10 years.

The Ernie Arnold Bell Fund was launched on the same day to support bell maintenance and repairs, and to promote bellringing.

To donate, please make a BACS transfer to Slaugham PCC, sort code 40-24-33, account number 81842242, using 'Bell Fund' as the reference.

Ringers came from across Sussex, London and beyond.



Racial justice toolkit presented at Lambeth Palace

Vitalis Ngwambi, the Diocese's Racial Justice Co-ordinator, presented the Chichester Diocesan Racial Justice Toolkit to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York at Lambeth Palace.

The presentation took place during the annual gathering of the GMH/UKME Clergy, Ordinands and Laity Network. The event provided an opportunity to reflect on progress in racial justice across the Church and to share work on a new project, Black History in Church Spaces.

Read more on page 18



Vitalis Ngwambi with Archbishop Sarah Mullally

New Building Management Portal launches 6 October

The Church of England is replacing the Online Faculty System (OFS) with a new Building Management Portal (BMP) from 6 October 2026. The OFS will close on 30 September, with both systems unavailable during the transition (30 September–5 October).

The legal process for List A, List B and faculty applications remains unchanged; the BMP simply provides a clearer, more structured digital route for submitting and tracking applications, documents and decisions.

What you need to know

- **Access:** Log in via the CofE Portal (with two-factor authentication). Some users will need to complete a one-time registration to assign their role and church access.
- **Existing cases:** All current and historic OFS cases will be migrated automatically into the BMP.
- **Training and support:** Videos, FAQs and guidance will be available during rollout. Diocesan teams will share local onboarding details and contacts in due course.

For local support contact the Diocesan Church Buildings Team [here](#)

Further guidance including video walk-throughs are on the Diocesan website [here](#). There is also a [site for National guidance](#)

If you are involved in a current or future application, the diocese will provide more information about what you need to do and when. Further guidance will be shared locally during the rollout.



Church Action on Poverty Sunday

Church Action on Poverty Sunday takes place on 18 October. Churches are invited to use the free resources available for worship, reflection and practical action.

Resources include sermon ideas, prayers, hymns and suggestions for responding to poverty in local communities. Churches are encouraged to explore the materials in advance and consider how they might be used in services or other activities.

In Lewes, St Anne's will mark the day with Food, Faith and Fellowship, a lunch after the 10am service. The event will provide an opportunity to discuss how churches and communities can help create a fairer and more compassionate society. Everyone is welcome.

For more information, please contact Jane Perry at janeperry@live.co.uk.

Find out more and access the resources on the [Church Action on Poverty website](#).

St Mary's pre-school moves into new premises

Bishop Ruth and Canon Lisa Barnett cut the ribbon to open the new premises of St Mary's Church Pre-School in Horsham.

The move into the church centre building, known as The Barn, follows the dedicated work of the pre-school's head, governors and volunteers to prepare the new site.

The new premises offer greater stability and continuity, as well as a strong sense of belonging for the children and families the pre-school serves. Congratulations to everyone involved in this significant move.



Fundraising play available to Sussex churches

A candlelit Sherlock Holmes play is being offered to churches across Sussex as a ready-made fundraising event.

Watson: The Final Problem is a one-man show co-written and performed by Tim Marriott, known for *The Brittias Empire*, and directed by Bert Coules, writer of *The Further Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.

The play imagines Dr Watson reflecting on the deaths of Sherlock Holmes and his wife, Mary. It has sold out at venues across the UK and enjoyed a six-week Off-Broadway run in New York.

A performance at St Mary and St Peter's, Wilmington, raised more than £1,000 last year. The producers are now inviting Sussex churches to host similar events and can provide promotional materials. Support materials are also available from Anxiety UK practitioner Annabel Fen Marriott.

Churches interested in hosting a performance should visit the Watson: [The Final Problem website](#).

Lay ministry training opportunities for 2026–27

Applications are now open for a range of lay ministry training opportunities beginning in January 2027.

The Authorised Lay Ministry prospectus includes courses in preaching, children's ministry, pastoral ministry in Eastbourne and Horsham, rural ministry, worship and liturgy, and youth ministry.

Applications are also open for the 2027 intake of the Bishop's Certificate, following the successful relaunch of the programme.

The course offers an accessible and engaging opportunity to deepen faith, understanding and ministry within local church communities. Courses will be held in Hove, Hastings, Haywards Heath and Worthing.

For further information and application forms, please email Greg Moore at Greg.moore@chichester.anglican.org.

More information about training and resourcing for lay ministers is available on the [Diocese of Chichester website](#).

Living the Mystery of Faith

Looking ahead to 2027

Between 2026-2030 the Diocese is committed to Living the Mystery of Faith.

The aim each year is to explore one of the four portraits of Jesus provided by the Gospel writers.

This year, of course, the focus has been on St Matthew whose Feast Day is celebrated on 21 September each year.

We enjoyed a Lent Course earlier in the year devised by The Revd Tom Robson and parishes have been reading and reflecting on Matthew's Gospel throughout the year following the pattern of readings in the Lectionary.

In 2027, the focus will be on St Mark. On Advent Sunday we will be launching a year of Mark as we look forward to engaging with what is generally believed to be the first (and obviously shortest) Gospel.

St Mark's emphasis on Jesus as Son of God, inaugurating the Kingdom, is the heart of his euangelion (Gospel) which is the Good News.

Bishop Ruth has written a Lent Book reflecting on St Mark to guide us through Lent 2027: *Come Away With Me: A retreat with Jesus for busy people.* (Publisher IVP)

It is described as "a counter-cultural invitation to step away from the busyness of life to rediscover the endlessly compelling person of Jesus."

Reflecting on six key moments from Mark's Gospel, Bishop Ruth offers a fresh vision of the cosmic, eternal, and divine nature of Christ.

It is designed to be read anywhere, whether on a crowded train or in a contemplative moment in the sun and invites us to take Jesus' invitation to "come away" seriously. It also forms the backdrop to a series of Lent gatherings which will be available online and in which parishes, chaplaincies and individuals will be able to share.

Details of how to order copies of the book (proceeds to go to charity), share in the Lent Course plus information about other resources and

ideas will be shared at the start of November but planning in parishes can start now.

Six Lent gatherings hosted in various parts of the diocese, each attended by Bishop Ruth, will be live streamed so that any parish groups or individuals can attend in person or, more likely, attend the one gathering nearest to them and then watch the others on live stream or on video another night of the week.

This is all part of our commitment to growth is rooted in prayer for the ongoing renewal of ministry for mission.

In a changing world and church, we remain rooted in our inheritance and the heartbeat of faith through the Prayer of St Richard to know, love and follow Jesus day by day.

The Collect of St Matthew

O Almighty God, whose blessed Son called Matthew the tax collector to be an apostle and evangelist: give us grace to forsake the selfish pursuit of gain and the possessive love of riches that we may follow in the way of your Son Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

Ruth Bushyager

Come
Away
with
Me

*A retreat with Jesus
for busy people*

THANKS FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Forty lay people from across the diocese are to be recognised for their quiet, faithful service which strengthens church and community life.

The Order of St Richard, launched in 2019 by the bishop, is the Diocese of Chichester's annual award recognising the volunteers whose Christian service has made an exceptional difference to their parish, community and the wider area. Each year, people are nominated by their clergy and a supporting parishioner, then formally invested by the bishop during a service in Chichester Cathedral.

Since its inception, more than 220 people from over 150 parishes have received the award, each presented with a certificate signed by the bishop, a medal for special occasions and a lapel badge to wear day to day.

This year's ceremony is on Saturday, September 26, when the latest cohort will join a growing community whose service is invaluable. They include:

Josh Stockwell

St Mary's, Newick

Josh has served for many years at St Mary's, supporting the church's audio visual ministry and volunteering weekly with the local youth group. He has also taken a large group of young people to Maycamp, hosted Maycamp in 2024 and 2025 and this year helped produce a promotional video for the event. He said: "To be awarded the Order of St Richard is a huge privilege and something that came as a great surprise. I am hugely thankful to everyone who has supported me."





Tamara and Daniel Jackson

St Luke's Prestonville, Brighton

News of the award was “completely unexpected” for Tamara and Daniel, who have sought to serve their community since their early twenties “wherever that might be, in whatever way we could”. Their focus is hospitality, particularly to those often overlooked or excluded. At St Luke's this includes supporting children, families and people experiencing homelessness. Tamara said: “That has now become just normal life. Recognition of that service has never been something we have sought but we were delighted to discover that those who know us and see what we do thought to put us forward for this award.”



Ryhlva Holder

St Mary the Virgin, Willingdon

Ryhlva believes Christian faith is made up of “many strands of serving Christ in the community” and sees her gift of embroidery, especially goldwork, as one way to serve through the restoration of church textiles. Beyond the church, she finds great joy in working with others to send shoeboxes via Link to Hope to support communities overseas. She said: “I was amazed when I received a letter informing me that I had been awarded the Order of St Richard. I immediately thought of all the people around me who do so much for our church and realised what a privilege and honour this was.”

The ceremony in the cathedral starts at 3pm. Those receiving the award will be supported by family, friends and members of their church.

Nomination forms are available on the diocesan website now for 2027 nominees.



“

“It's something I never expected. You get a feeling of community, love and wellbeing just from helping other people. It's lovely that people have been able to express what they feel about us, to recognise the ways in which we serve and to give us this honour. It's God's work, really. I see it as God's work and I feel that's what we're doing in our lives.”

Val Burgess from St Mary's, Horsham

Awarded The Order of St Richard in 2025

APPOINTMENTS

Rural Dean and Assistant Rural Dean of Brighton

The Revd Alice Smith and the Revd Rich Merrick are to take up the roles of Rural Dean and Assistant Rural Dean of Brighton respectively. Both appointments will take effect from 1 October 2026, for an initial term of up to five years.

In the meantime, the Revd Canon Emma Ham Riche will remain in post as Rural Dean until 30 September 2026. We are deeply grateful to Canon Emma for her dedicated service to the deanery in this role.

Helen Garrett has been licensed in a new role as Priest in Charge of Beacon Parish, which comprises St Margaret's, Ditchling; St Martin's, Westmeston; and Streat Church. These three churches were united as one parish in October 2007.

The Revd Alice Smith said: "I am humbled and excited to have been asked to take on the role of Rural Dean of Brighton. Following the excellent work of our predecessors, Emma and Helen, Rich and I hope to continue to support parishes and clergy as we seek together to further build the Kingdom of God in this city."

Generous Giving Adviser

Sas Conradie has been appointed as the new Generous Giving Adviser. This is a partly funded post supported by the National Church of England.

Parish Development Officer

The Revd Felix Smith has been appointed as the new Parish Development Officer. Alongside this, he will continue in his role as Focal Ministry Officer for the Diocese one day a week.

This is a new role, established to work with and support parishes across the Diocese to enable, develop, and strengthen their mission and ministry. Fr Felix will help parishes to discern, implement, and evaluate their vision and strategic direction through areas such as Mission Action Plans, team dynamics, and collaborative working.

Church Buildings Team Leader

Sophie Dunn has been appointed Church Buildings Team Leader. In this role, she will act as Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) Secretary and lead the Church Buildings team, which provides guidance, advice, and support to parishes and archdeacons on the care of

church buildings, contents, and churchyards.

Sophie said: "It gives me great joy to accept the role of Church Buildings Team Leader for the Diocese of Chichester. Over the past three years working as part of the team, I have had the great honour of working with many PCC teams as they plan repairs and refurbishment projects, and I have been inspired by the high levels of commitment and devotion to our buildings that is so apparent in every corner of the Diocese."

Recent Appointments

- **Lucie Longster**
Education Administrator – 1 September 2026
- **Tami Chalmers**
Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser – 20 July 2026
- **Sophie Dunn**
Church Buildings Team Leader – 1 July 2026



Sophie Dunn

Welcome to the Revd Andrew Manson Brailsford

Bishop's Liaison Officer to LGBTQI+ Communities

The Revd Andrew Manson Brailsford has been appointed Bishop's Liaison Officer to LGBTQI+ communities across the Diocese of Chichester.

Fr Andrew writes:

"What a wonderful welcome I have received in my new position. So many people have offered their prayers and best wishes, hoping that this work will benefit members of their congregations, communities, and families.

It has been a busy time, with Gay Pride, Trans Pride, Bear Weekend, and, most recently, Dyke Pride. Alongside these events, many social groups and worshipping communities form part of the rich tapestry of LGBTQI+ life. I hope to introduce myself to more of these groups over the coming months.

We all know that LGBTQI+ communities exist far beyond Brighton and Hove. Members of those communities are

also found both within and outside our worshipping communities across the Diocese.

One of my first priorities, in response to the Bishop's direction and to conversations I have already had, is to explore creating a network of listening and supportive people across the Diocese.

I cannot do this alone, and I need your help. If you would like to join a steering group or establish a local hub of like minded people, please email me and we can explore what might be possible. A central meeting at Church House, or local meetings around the Diocese, could provide a starting point for discussion.

Building on the work of my predecessor, the Revd Andrew Woodward, I would also welcome the opportunity to meet clergy who are part of LGBTQI+ communities, or who are connected with them through family members and friends. If you would like an invitation to a social event, perhaps in January after the busy seasons of Advent and

Christmas, or would simply like to talk, please get in touch.

I know that some parishes and deaneries are seeking a positive way forward in considering how LGBTQI+ people can be included in our worshipping communities. I would be very happy to attend deanery or PCC meetings, or services, to speak with people and listen to your experiences.

It is good to know that we are not facing these matters alone. I am already in contact with the national group of Anglican LGBTQI+ diocesan representatives, who are happy to share their experience and insights. I have also been invited to work ecumenically with the equivalent officer for the United Reformed Church in Brighton and Hove.

For regular updates, please email me at revmanson-brailsford@hotmail.co.uk. Your contact details will be kept confidential."

Revd Dr Andrew Manson-Brailsford is Vicar of Brighton St George with St Anne and St Mark



**Revd Dr Andrew
Manson-Brailsford**



Sas Conradie



Fr Felix Smith



Diocesan Growth Programme

The Diocesan Growth Programme aims to strengthen parishes to help more people of all ages know, love and follow Jesus, resulting in healthier and more sustainable churches.

We are already seeing the benefits of practical support for parishes across Sussex. From funding local mission initiatives and developing new leaders to strengthening ministry with children, young people and families, the programme is helping churches explore how they can grow in ways that reflect their own context. Whatever the starting point or context, there is something for every parish that wants to grow.

Here are some early signs of its impact:

Apostolic Partnerships and Revitalisations: An initial four project awards—two in Hastings deanery and two in Arundel and Bognor deanery.

Children, Youth and Families: Five CYF worker applications in the award or approval process, covering four deaneries.

Excellent Leaders: 78 ALM candidates participating in ministry electives in 2026/27, alongside clergy taking part in four cohorts of the Kindling Network programme.

Focal Ministry: Nine Focal Ministers across eight deaneries, with a new training course for Focal Ministers.

Mission Fund: Fourteen small-grant awards across 11 deaneries made so far in 2026, with an average award of £1,600.

How can our parish get involved?

The diocesan website is the first port of call. It contains detailed information about the programme as a whole and each programme stream, together with frequently asked questions.

If your parish has an idea, we encourage one of your church officers to get in touch. The team at Church House works in partnership with parishes to develop ideas and explore how best to support your vision for growth.

Key contacts

Katy Holbird (Children, Youth & Families)
katy.holbird@chichester.anglican.org

Revd Jude Davis (Excellent Leaders)
jude.davis@chichester.anglican.org

Fr Felix Smith (Focal Ministry)
felix.smith@chichester.anglican.org

Greg Moore
Greg.moore@chichester.anglican.org

Shape the future of...

FAITH IN SUSSEX

The diocesan publication reaching church communities across Sussex

For years, Faith in Sussex has been dedicated to sharing stories of hope, community outreach, and faithful service across our Diocese. From celebrating local volunteers to showcasing innovative parish initiatives, our mission has always been to connect and inspire our diocesan family.

As the ways we communicate continue to evolve, we want to ensure Faith in Sussex remains meaningful, relevant, and accessible to everyone. Whether you read every issue cover-to-cover or simply flick through the digital edition occasionally, your voice matters.

We are conducting a brief reader audit to gather honest feedback on what works, what could be improved, and how you prefer to engage with our content.

How you can help:

- Take the survey: It takes less than 5 minutes to complete online, via Microsoft forms.
- Share your ideas: Tell us what stories, features, or updates you want to see more of in upcoming issues.
- Pass it on: Encouraging fellow readers and friends to participate helps us capture a true reflection of the readership.

Your insights will directly influence the direction, design, and distribution of Faith in Sussex moving forward.

Complete the form via Microsoft forms here:
[Faith in Sussex – Fill out form](#)



Black History Month 2026

The diocese will mark Black History Month in October with a programme of events exploring the theme “black history in church spaces”.

The diocese will mark Black History Month in October with a programme of events exploring the theme “black history in church spaces”.

The celebrations will bring together parish communities and friends to remember, learn from and celebrate the stories of black people whose lives, faith and contributions are part of the history of the Church and wider British society.

Black History Month opens with an exhibition at St Luke's Prestonville on Saturday, October 3, from 2pm and close with an 11am commemorative service at St Mary's in Slindon on Sunday, October 25 followed by a visit to St Mary Magdalene Madehurst at 3pm to mark the memorial to Roque Ferdinand, a servant and formerly enslaved man, one of the very few surviving eighteenth century memorials to a Black man in a Sussex parish church.

Racial justice co-ordinator Vitalis Ngwambi has been instrumental in bringing the programme together. He said: “I felt it was important to rethink how we approach and celebrate Black History Month. Too often, black history is presented as something distant from our own communities while the stories embedded in our local parishes and the diocese remain overlooked.

“There is an African proverb that says ‘a river that forgets its source will soon dry up’. Beginning with our local parish is therefore more than a starting point, it is an invitation to look closely at the histories that have shaped our communities and enriched the life of the Church but which have too often been forgotten or overlooked.

“This exhibition connects the local with the national and international, revealing the many ways black history is woven into the story of our

churches and communities. Above all, it seeks to recognise people whose lives and contributions have too often been overlooked, reaffirming their humanity, dignity and enduring contribution to the Church, the Anglican Communion and the wider world.”

Black History Month is an opportunity to recognise the contribution of black communities and to promote a fuller and more inclusive understanding of British history.

The exhibition at St Luke's Prestonville will explore significant stories that connect black history, faith and church spaces.

They include that of the SS Mendi, the troopship that sank in 1917, resulting in the deaths of more than 600 black South African servicemen. Their sacrifice is remembered through a memorial plaque at St John the Evangelist Church, Newtimber.

Black History Month is an opportunity to recognise the contribution of black communities and to promote a fuller and more inclusive understanding of British history.

The exhibition will also explore Project Spire, the Church of England's work for healing, justice and repair, reflecting on its responsibility to confront difficult histories and pursue a more just future.

Visitors will be able to read about the life of Olaudah Equiano, the black abolitionist and Christian whose experiences and campaign against slavery remind us of the powerful role that Christian faith and church communities played in shaping the movement for the abolition of slavery.

The exhibition will also remember the Uganda Martyrs, 45 Christian converts who were executed for their Christian faith. Their story is one of courage, conviction and sacrifice.

The stories demonstrate that black history is not separate from the history of the Church. It is part of our shared story of faith, witness, struggle, sacrifice and hope.

The keynote speaker will be Kwesi Ochoi, project co-ordinator and archivist at Lambeth Palace Library, who will help us explore the importance of archives, memory and the stories preserved within the Church.

The service at Slindon will feature Professor Alan Lester of the University of Sussex as guest speaker alongside Alysia Lara, interim deputy director of racial justice. It will provide an opportunity for prayer, remembrance and reflection as we consider how the Church remembers its past and how that memory can shape its future.

After the service, people will make the short journey to St Mary Magdalene Madehurst where there is a plaque to Roque Ferdinand, a West African from the Cape Verde island of Bonavista. He was purchased into enslavement at the age of 15 by Sir George Thomas Bart, governor of the Leeward Islands. Sir George eventually retired to Yapton and Roque was only released from slavery when Sir George died. Roque carried on in domestic service for the family, dying in 1789 aged 67. The plaque in his honour is one of few surviving 18th century memorials to a black man in a Sussex parish church.

Black History Month is also an invitation for parishes and schools across the diocese to engage with black history throughout October and beyond.

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland has brought together a collection



Rev Peter Dyson with Vitalis at Slindon Church



The Roque Ferdinand memorial can be seen in St Mary's church Madehurst

of resources to support churches and schools, including sermons, prayers, Bible readings, songs, poems and activities. These resources provide practical ways for communities to explore black history through worship, learning and reflection.

We encourage our parishes and schools to join us in marking Black History Month using these resources and creating opportunities to listen, learn and celebrate.

As the Church, we are drawn from many nations, tribes, peoples, languages and colours yet united in Christ. Black History Month reminds us that every story matters, every person bears the image of God and every community has a contribution to make to the life of Christ's Church.



REMEMBERING THE

S.S. Mendi

She sank in barely 20 minutes and the loss of life included more than 600 black South African soldiers. They were members of the South African Native Labour Corps on their way to France to serve the Allied cause in the First World War.

The ship that struck her, the cargo steamer SS Darro, drove a deep gash into the Mendi's hull and then carried on its course without stopping to help. In the chaos only two lifeboats could be launched and just over a hundred men were saved. In all, 616 members of the Labour Corps drowned - 607 of them black troops - together with 30 of the ship's crew.

Many of the bodies were washed up along the Sussex coast and buried locally, in graveyards at Littlehampton, East Dean and Hastings. For nearly a century the story of those men rested quietly in the soil and memory of these parishes.

That changed in June 2002, when a memorial stone was placed in the churchyard of St John the Evangelist, Newtimber, as a result of a reconciliation initiative by City Gate Church, Brighton, and a church network in the Eastern Cape.

The event was attended by the Xhosa and Mpondo royal families, representatives of the South African government, Bishop Lindsay Urwin and other church leaders, MPs, the Ministry of Defence, the South African National Defence Force and community members from both nations.

In September, the event was repeated and a second stone carrying the same words was erected in the district of Nyandeni in the Eastern Cape. A memorial plaque in the church tells the Mendi's story.

In 2017 the centenary of the disaster was marked at St John the Evangelist, Newtimber, with a special memorial service attended by Bishop Martin Warner,



In 2017 the centenary of the disaster was marked at St John the Evangelist, Newtimber, with a special memorial service attended by Bishop Martin Warner, and the church has kept the story alive ever since.

Ngaire Digby, churchwarden at Newtimber, has been busy bringing the many threads of the story together, working with the Brighton and Hove Black History Group to bring these moving tales to light. Her work has also forged a living link across the sea through her contact with Andrea Mason, the founder of Fundelaship, which works to relieve the impact of poverty and HIV.

The Mid Downland Parish, which includes Newtimber church, has just made a donation to the charity. The gift follows a recent visit to the UK by minister Matheson Nteleko and his



wife Thembeke from the Eastern Cape, who came to Newtimber to remember their ancestors who drowned on the SS Mendi and to lay flowers at Chief Hendry Bokleni's stone. The donation is specifically to help buy a new 4x4 vehicle, essential for Fundelaship's mission work in the Eastern Cape, supporting communities and providing pastoral care to disadvantaged people.

We remembered them again at Newtimber church during this year's Heritage Open Days on September 12 when the story was told of the SS Mendi and of the living memorial that links a Sussex parish to the Eastern Cape. It is a powerful reminder, as Black History Month approaches in October, that the history of black lives is woven into the fabric of our Sussex churches and churchyards.



FOCAL MINISTRY

Local leadership and a regular presence

Father Felix Smith was appointed focal ministry officer in September 2025. Since then, nine focal ministers have been identified and are being equipped to support ministry across the diocese.

Focal ministry is part of the Diocese of Chichester's Growth Strategy programme. By 2030, it hopes to support around 30 churches, particularly smaller ones in multi-church benefices. Faith in Sussex talks to Fr Felix about how focal ministry works.

What actually is focal ministry?

F: In short, it's about making sure every church has a visible, consistent local presence. In many multi-church benefices, one incumbent is responsible for several churches. They may be doing a fantastic job but they're spread across different communities. Focal ministry calls out a local leader, lay or ordained, to be a particular "face of the church" in one of those communities.

Is this getting someone to do the vicar's job?

F: No, and that's crucial. A focal minister isn't a replacement for a vicar and doesn't affect clergy appointments. It's an additional resource for the parish. The incumbent retains overall oversight, while the focal minister offers local leadership and a regular presence. This gives the vicar greater freedom to focus on priestly aspects: doctrine, the sacraments and prayer.

Can they be lay or ordained?

F: Yes. They might be a reader, an authorised lay minister, a self-supporting minister, a deacon or priest, or someone with other relevant experience and gifts. What matters is their calling, gifts and the needs of the church and community.

What might they actually do?

F: There's no standard job description. Every parish and focal minister is different. They might be involved in pastoral care, worship, prayer groups, welcoming, outreach, or work with children and families. The role is agreed collaboratively between them and the incumbent, playing to the person's gifts and responding to the needs of that church.

That sounds like being a really active member of the church.

F: It can grow out of that but there's an important difference. Focal ministry is a recognised role within the diocese. The person goes through discernment and training and receives a mandate from the bishop. It's a role rather than a new ecclesiastical office, so it doesn't grant extra permissions. That makes it easier to "pick up and put down", allowing someone to hand the role on after a period if needed.

How does someone become a focal minister?

F: There's a pathway of discernment, training and support. Once they begin training, they receive a three-year mandate from the bishop, which can be renewed. They have regular meetings with their incumbent, including

an annual review, and I provide support as focal ministry officer. The key word is collaboration. A focal minister works under the incumbent's oversight alongside the wider ministry team and congregation.

Why does the diocese think we need this?

F: We want every church to thrive and be rooted in its community. Clergy serving several churches often have to divide their time. Focal ministry offers another way of organising ministry. Instead of one person trying to be equally present everywhere, different people can take responsibility for different aspects, with appropriate oversight. That can bring greater continuity, stronger relationships, clearer local leadership and deeper connection with the community.

So this is really about growth?

F: Growth is part of it, but it's bigger than counting Sunday attendees. It's about sustainability without sacrificing mission. We want smaller churches to grow as places where people encounter Christ, where prayer and sacraments continue, where pastoral relationships flourish and where the church serves its community. The ambition is to support around 30 churches across the diocese.

Continued...



Why is local presence so important?

F: Focal ministry is about parish engagement on the ground. It sees the church as people rooted in a particular place, with the building as a gathering place for the parish. If somebody knows the people, understands the community and is there week by week, that makes a huge difference. The church becomes part of the fabric of community life.

Does that mean the incumbent gets to do less?

F: It means they can do ministry differently. If a focal minister provides consistent local leadership in one church, the incumbent may have more freedom to concentrate on other parts of the benefice while maintaining overall oversight.



It's not about taking ministry from clergy. It's about releasing more ministry from the whole people of God.

What would you say to someone who thinks they might be called to this?

F: Talk to someone, usually your incumbent first. Focal ministry isn't about creating roles for the sake of it. It's about discerning where God may already be calling people and asking what could help a church flourish.

What about incumbents who are interested?

F: Do get in touch. We're keen to talk with incumbents of multi-church benefices about whether focal ministry might help. It won't be right for every parish. The starting point is always the particular church, its community and its opportunities for mission.

Fr Felix recorded a video with focal minister Patrick Pearson Miles, pictured, and asked him about his role. In it, Patrick says: "I think the thing that will be hopefully beneficial to lots of other people is that focal ministry provides an avenue for ministry that will benefit parishes and communities around the diocese but also it will really be of benefit to incumbents who maybe are working in parishes on their own. And there's people within their setting who are already equipped, maybe even being called to be a part of this ministry."

[You can link to the video here](#)

If you're an incumbent of a multi-church benefice and would like to explore focal ministry, contact Fr Felix. More information is available on the Diocese of Chichester website [here](#). In July Fr Felix was appointed as the new parish development officer, joining the parish development team from September. He will continue in his role as focal ministry officer one day a week.

FROM INTELLECTUAL OVERTHINKING TO AN ANCHOR IN FAITH

James Mumford's story

Every year across the diocese, a wide range of people of all ages and backgrounds are presented as confirmation candidates.

Bishops Will and Ruth are delighted to hear many of the stories of those whom they confirmed - stories that are of faith surprise and wonder.

Amber Jackson from the Communications Team, caught up with one of them:

This year James Mumford officially renewed his baptism vows and was confirmed at Holy Trinity Church in Rudgwick, marking the end of a long journey away from Christianity, and the start of a new chapter.

Raised in an Anglican household, James drifted away from religion in his late teens and twenties, spending years exploring New Age philosophies and Buddhism while working in marketing. He said: "I had to go off and find my own thing." Describing himself as a "chronic overthinker" with "intellectual arrogance" who tried to work everything out for himself.

Everything changed five years ago when a series of severe accidents left him with chronic pain, mobility issues, and time off work. During long, sleepless



nights, he began tuning into late-night TV broadcasts of church services and reading classical philosophy, including Aquinas and Saint Augustine.

He also noticed something distinct in people treating him during his therapy.

He said: "I was encountering people during therapy who were practicing Christians, they had this quiet calmness and compassion about them."

When his mobility improved, he started visiting St George's Church in West Grinstead, near Horsham. Chosen partly because its flat, step-free access was gentle on his physical needs.

After two years of being involved in parish life and reading Scripture and theology, James took the step to be confirmed.

Reflecting on receiving the Sacraments, James said: "You can't build a relationship with God through just

studying things like a detached academic. You have to actually get involved. You have to take a leap of faith.

Over the course of his adult life, James searched for answers in many places, only to realise he was looking in the wrong direction.

He said, "I was increasingly conscious that what I was looking for might be in the one place I was stubbornly refusing to look."

Want to know more about baptism and confirmation?

- Contact your local Church of England vicar (by email, phone, or after a service) and say you'd like to be baptised and confirmed.
- Meet for an initial chat to share your story and ask questions; they'll explain the process and next steps.
- Join the parish's preparation course/class, where you'll explore Christian faith and get ready for the service.
- Be baptised and confirmed, usually in the same service when a bishop visits, making your profession of faith and receiving the bishop's laying on of hands.



A CENTURY OF SERVICE

Pensions Board marks 100 years with visit to the seaside

The Church of England Pensions Board is marking its 100th anniversary this year and a highlight of the celebrations was a visit to Ramsay Hall in Worthing, one of its supported housing schemes for retired clergy and their families.

Ramsay Hall has particular significance in the board's history. The purpose-built

supported housing scheme, bought with a £10,000 donation and completed in 1997, incorporates its first home for clergy pensioners. With its 27 self-contained flats, chapel, communal gardens and a daily lunch, it provides a warm and caring environment for retired clergy, deaconesses, licensed lay workers and their spouses.

The visiting board members included chairman Clive Mather, chief executive John Ball, chief of staff Lee Marshall and Tom England, director of housing.

Their day began with a service in the hall's chapel, led by the Venerable Dr Tom Carpenter, Archdeacon of Chichester. Fr Tom, who joined the diocese from

"This year, we celebrate 100 years of providing pensions and retirement services to those who work for the Church."

Doncaster and trained for ordination at the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield, brought a warm and prayerful tone to the proceedings, reflecting on the board's century of service to those who have dedicated their lives to ministry.

Later the visitors met residents to enjoy afternoon tea and musical entertainment and hear first hand about life in the close-knit community which is a short walk from the Worthing seafront.

Clive gave a presentation which reflected on the history of the board and shared many anecdotes. The visit ended with the planting of a climbing rose in the west-facing walled garden to commemorate the centenary and to serve as a living symbol of the board's long commitment to those who have served the Church.

Ramsay Hall is particularly special for one resident, the Very Rev Ian Corbett who is chairman of the chapel committee. The onsite chapel offers a liturgy that reflects and represents all traditions, with services attended twice weekly by nearly all the residents.

These include Jilly and Neil Hogg. Jilly said: "The old and the new join together to

celebrate the care, comfort and community that Ramsay Hall provides every day. As the board celebrates its centenary, it was so good to be able to acknowledge such wonderful provision across such a time. Every moment matters."

The visit to Worthing was part of a wide programme of centenary events. The board was established in 1926 by the Clergy Pensions Measure, passed by the Church Assembly — now the General Synod — to serve as the pensions authority for the Church of England. Prior to that, there was no proper pension system for clergy. A century on, the board serves around 43,000 members, stewards £3.5 billion in pension savings and provides retirement housing for some 2,500 residents across its schemes nationwide.

One of the key events to mark the anniversary was a service at Southwark Cathedral, attended by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Dame Sarah Mullally, who preached at the service.

Clive Mather said the centenary was "a fitting backdrop" to the board's work. He said: "This year, we celebrate 100 years of providing pensions and



Revd Richard Moatt, Bishops' Chaplain for Retired Clergy with Pensions Board Chief of Staff, Lee Marshall, and Pensions Board CEO, John Ball.

retirement services to those who work for the Church."

The anniversary has also been marked by historic reforms to clergy pensions, including improved accrual rates and the removal of the service cap for active members, following a vote by the General Synod in July last year.

For the residents of Ramsay Hall, the centenary visit was a chance to celebrate not only the board's long history but also the personal relationships and sense of community that define retirement living in the Church's care. As one resident put it: "I feel very safe here and value the support that I am given every day."

Articles

THE MUSIC THAT FILLS MY HEART

By Kate Henwood, diocesan ambassador for The Children's Society



When I was asked if I would like to write this edition's "Articles of Faith", of course I said yes... and then had to look up the definition of said articles.

I was part of our Weald Division Girlguiding choir, The Weald Singers, and loved every moment, - both rehearsing and performing. When I sing, it takes me to a very peaceful place and nothing else matters.

I was also part of the National Foxlease Singing Circle, again through Girlguiding, when 100-plus women would get together twice a year for a weekend and sing all day and all evening - it was phenomenal.

When I moved to Worthing, I was part of the music group at St Mary's, Goring, and learnt so many songs that became firm favourites. I was introduced to musicians and songwriters like Matt Redman and Graham Kendrick and it was at this point I knew I'd found my "go to" music.

Over the years, the music I loved and the people I sang with became family, my safe space and my singing time was my time to be me.

I remember the Christmas I was pregnant with my son. I was playing my guitar at the Christmas Eve Nativity in church; the candles, the atmosphere and the music surrounded me, and I remember thinking 'I wonder if the baby will recognise this music next year at the Nativity?'

of faith.



Fast forward 12 months and my son had become a regular at rehearsals and services. So on Christmas Eve, in his bouncy chair at my feet, my son was his usual vocal self – until the music began. He lay quietly, listening, and within five minutes he was asleep. I like to think he recognised the music and the sounds from the previous Christmas.

Nine years later, the music that surrounded me in worship each week was to become so important to me that, at times, it became the thing that kept me from turning my back on my faith. My husband of 15 years was diagnosed with stage four cancer and I had to face the prospect of being a widow at 42 and having to raise our son, who was approaching ten.

Every week I had a meeting with our cancer nurse specialist in Brighton and every week I would pull up my playlist with all my most meaningful worship songs on it and play it in the car on my way to and from my appointment, at a volume that could probably be heard in space. Sometimes I'd sing along, sometimes I'd listen and sometimes I'd drive with tears streaming down my face – or all three. But that music took me to a place that was safe and where I could give all my fears and worries to God.

When I knew that my husband didn't have long left, I planned his funeral and chose music that was special to us – “Jerusalem”, which we had at our wedding, another hymn that escapes me, and “Be Still For The Presence Of The Lord”, because it was my go to on those journeys to Brighton.

Three years later, in 2015, I was diagnosed with stage four breast cancer (that's another story for another day) and whenever I went for treatment “Be Still For The Presence Of The Lord” popped into my head, like an ear worm, and it made me cry every single time.

It happened at church too. I would see it on the hymn list and think, no, today it's not going to trip me up and two verses in I'd be in tears. People around me soon learnt and let me cry, giving me a hand to hold, a hug, or simply a tissue to replace my wet, soggy one that wasn't up to the job.

And then, two years ago, one Sunday, I think at the beginning of the school year, I suddenly realised that I'd sung all of it and the tears hadn't come. Was this a one-off or had I been able to reconcile my husband's death, my cancer and the life I thought I should have had? Who knows. Obviously God knows, but I still catch my breath as the intro is played and wonder if this time it will take me back to that place.

It hasn't yet...

Many of you will know the hymn, but if you don't, have a listen: **Be Still For The Presence Of The Lord**

I hope it fills your heart like it fills mine.



70 YEARS

of supporting historic
Sussex churches

We are delighted that this year marks the
70th anniversary of the founding of the
Sussex Historic Churches Trust

It's been a busy 70 years with hundreds of thousands of pounds awarded in grants to more than 500 churches and places of worship across East and West Sussex.

By the middle of the 20th century, many historic parish churches across the UK were in a very poor state. This was the result of many social and economic factors but was exacerbated by the Second World War, during which

repair and maintenance of churches largely came to a standstill.

Matters came to a head in 1950 with public statements, including an editorial in The Times. The Church of England's Church Assembly (now the General Synod of the Church of England) established the Repair of Churches Commission to decide what should and could be done.

The commission determined that an urgent funding requirement of £4,000,000 was needed to bring dilapidated historic parish buildings back to a sound condition. In 1953, a national body was set up to oversee the process – known at the time as the Historic Churches Preservation Trust and now called the National Churches Trust.

Our primary aims remain the same as they were in 1956 - to help preserve the churches and chapels of historic and architectural interest

The national authority set out to give grants for essential repairs and restoration of places of worship of architectural and historic interest throughout the country. It soon gave rise to numerous regional trusts including in 1956, just three years after the national body was founded, the Sussex Historic Churches Trust.

All the funds held by the Sussex Historic Churches Trust are derived from donations, bequests, investments and the annual sponsored Ride + Stride event, held this year on September 12. It involved hundreds of fundraisers getting sponsored to cycle, walk or drive to visit as many different churches as possible. It is always a great way to see some of the wonderful historic buildings in Sussex and raise much-needed funds on a fun day out.

Donations come from individuals, societies and some parishes. If you are not already contributing in this way, please consider doing so. Every contribution will expand the help the trust can give.

All denominations and groups are welcome to apply for grants and all applications are considered at trust meetings which are held twice a year. Churches hoping for a grant are invited to submit a grant application via our website.

Once supporting documents have been received, these applications are then considered by the trustees. The trust favours making a significant number of relatively small grants contributing towards specific projects rather than a few large grants. The current policy is to confine grants to works of essential repair to the fabric of church buildings. Priority is given to buildings over 100 years old and emphasis is given to maintaining the structure of the building and ensuring it is wind and waterproof.

So far this year, a total of £40,000 has been awarded, including our largest grant to date - £24,000 to St Mary's in Binsted. Among those places of worship which have received awards over the years are Chichester Cathedral, St Paul's in Brighton, St Mary's in Pulborough and All Saints in Hastings.

Work at St Mary's church Binsted has begun.



St Mary's work in progress on the West Window.



A pilgrimage on two wheels

'Biker vicar' completes epic ride for Sussex's Historic Churches Trust

A motorcycling vicar visited 100 churches in five days on his new Suzuki V-Strom to raise vital funds for Ride + Stride and the Sussex Historic Churches Trust.

Rev Marcus Collie began his pilgrimage at the 12th century parish church of St Mary's in Rye and travelled to the opposite end of the county, finishing at Chichester Cathedral.

His journey took him through towns and villages across the diocese, pausing and praying at churches that have long been at the heart of community life and, in many cases, beneficiaries of the trust's grants for repairs and restoration.

Marcus, vicar of Midhurst and Rector of All Hallows, Woolbeding, undertook the pilgrimage under the banner of Ride + Stride, our annual event that encourages people to travel by bike, foot or other human power to visit churches and raise money for their upkeep.

His ambitious and high-profile challenge helped draw attention to the importance of these historic buildings and the ongoing need for support.

He said: "Our church buildings throughout the nation are a part of our heritage - they're part of our history.

"I just thought 'what would a Ride + Stride pilgrimage look like on a motorbike?'. There are 468 churches across the Diocese of Chichester so that would have taken me a month. I wondered what could be challenging but achievable and worked out that I could do 100 churches, roughly 20 a day.

"The first day was primarily one of excitement and looking forward but there was also a sense of trepidation, I was entering the unknown."

The pilgrimage proved challenging - riding for long periods meant adapting to changing weather and road conditions while nights were spent in a variety of locations.

Any good pilgrimage will have periods of time when the going is hard, if the going is easy all of the time it's not really achieving what a pilgrimage should."

On the third day he ended up at St Giles in Shermanbury where he camped on a nearby estate. That night there was a thunderstorm. Marcus said: "So there I am in a tent on my own in the middle of a wood miles from anywhere. The heavens opened and there was lightning thunder. I felt very small, very vulnerable and very alone."

"But any good pilgrimage will have periods of time when the going is hard, if the going is easy all of the time it's not really achieving what a pilgrimage should."

He was cheered by the warm welcome he received along the way. At some churches parishioners were waiting for him, ringing the bells and offering food and drink. Others offered accommodation and somewhere to shower."

After five days and 100 churches he arrived at the cathedral on August 28 in time for evensong.

Marcus is no stranger to creative fundraising. After breaking his foot in 2024, he organised a "Ride and Hobble", leading a group of parishioners who use mobility aids on a gentle route through Midhurst, finishing with refreshments in church.

Nationally, Ride + Stride raises more than £1.5 million each year, with funds split between participating churches and their county Historic Churches Trust. In Sussex, that money supports everything from urgent roof repairs and bell restoration to conservation work that keeps these buildings open and usable for worship, events, and community activities.

Marcus's achievement has already reached a wide audience after being featured on ITV Meridian (watch the segment here: [The Rev. Marcus Collie visited 100 churches in just 5 days – ITV Newsitv](#)) and BBC Radio Sussex Radio (listen to the interview here (BBC Sounds): [Revd Marcus Collie on BBC Sussexfacebook](#)).

The coverage has helped amplify the Ride + Stride message beyond church communities, reaching cyclists, motorcyclists and people interested in heritage, history and local fundraising.

Chris Whittick, chairman of Sussex Historic Churches Trust, said Marcus's initiative was "one of the most ambitious Ride + Stride fundraising activities we've heard about" and the trust was "incredibly grateful" he chose it as a beneficiary.

For Marcus, the ride was more than a physical challenge: it was a prayerful journey through the spiritual landscape of Sussex, stopping to give thanks, reflect, and ask for blessing on the people who keep these churches alive, through worship, volunteering, music, and community events.

Ride + Stride day was Saturday, September 12, but donations and participation are welcome throughout the season. Funds raised support both individual churches and the wider work of Sussex Historic Churches Trust, which provides grants for urgent repairs, conservation, and projects that help historic churches remain open and useful for future generations.

If you were inspired by Marcus's pilgrimage and would like to support the cause, you can find out more about Ride + Stride and how to get involved via the Sussex Historic Churches Trust website [here](#) and you can donate specifically to Marcus's fundraiser on Give a Little [here](#) or use the QR code:





From finance to fellowship

My Sisters' House Women's Centre in West Sussex is a charity that provides support for women affected by domestic abuse, poverty, mental ill health or social disadvantage. Stephanie Emery, from Oving, tells how and why she became a trustee.

“The charity’s main purpose is to support local women by providing responsive, trauma-informed services and empowering them to achieve a hopeful and safe future.”

Stephanie worked for many years in accountancy and financial services, most recently at JP Morgan as head of compensation and benefits for Europe, the Middle East and Africa. After retiring relatively early, she and her husband moved to Oving in 2019. They were married at St Andrew’s Church, Oving, in 2022 and have attended services there.

After retirement, Stephanie wanted to use her professional skills to support a cause close to her heart.

She said: “I always intended to get involved in charitable work, particularly with an organisation that supports women and/or children. When I saw a poster in Chichester asking for volunteers to support My Sisters’ House, I knew I had found my charity.”

She volunteered for 18 months before being asked to become a trustee in 2023.

My Sisters’ House supports women across West Sussex who are experiencing domestic abuse, sexual violence, trauma, mental health difficulties, poverty, homelessness, involvement with the criminal justice system or other kinds of disadvantage.

It also runs a programme for girls aged 15 to 19 to build confidence and understand healthy relationships and a course for mothers and children

aged seven to 14 who are rebuilding their lives after domestic abuse. Support is personalised around each woman’s circumstances, risks, strengths and goals. The charity has centres in Bognor Regis and Chichester but works with women throughout West Sussex.

Stephanie said: “The charity’s main purpose is to support local women by providing responsive, trauma-informed services and empowering them to achieve a hopeful and safe future.”

In the 12 months up to March this year it had helped more than 2,000 women, with 765 individual safety and support plans created to help women find safe ways to respond to or leave dangerous environments.

Stephanie said: “Domestic abuse is happening throughout our community at all levels of society and the charity is doing vital work supporting women in this situation.”

Trustees hold collective legal responsibility for the management and administration of a charity. Stephanie chairs the finance, HR, health and safety and

risk committee, overseeing those areas alongside the wider board.

She said: “The charity has an amazingly talented and dedicated executive team and I particularly enjoy working with them and other staff members.”

My Sisters’ House currently has seven trustees and relies on dozens of volunteers to provide its services. If you would like to learn more about it, support its work or find out how you can become involved, visit <https://www.mysistershouse.info>, email office@mysistershouse.info or call 01243 697800 during office hours.

The website sets out the services offered, how to seek help, how to donate and current volunteering opportunities, including wellbeing check-in support, community engagement and events roles.

Stephanie said: “Obtaining sufficient funding to keep the charity going is a constant challenge. Help in creating fundraising opportunities and giving regular or one-off donations would be wonderful.”



Hear Here

Open your hearts and doors for Disability Awareness Sunday

For many people hearing loss is an invisible barrier, not only to worship but to everyday conversation, friendship and belonging. A hearing aid that isn't working properly can mean missing the words of a hymn, a sermon or a chat over coffee. It can mean isolation and a slow withdrawal from the very communities that should offer welcome.

In the East Wittering area, the Hear Here project is meeting that need head on, led by Maureen Warwick from St Anne's Church.

The project brings trained volunteers into church and other community settings where they offer free hearing aid maintenance and support to people who use NHS behind-the-ear hearing aids.

Visitors can expect a warm welcome and free help with checking hearing aids

are working, re-tubing, ear mould cleaning, battery replacement, checking the fitting and advice on getting the best from the device. As well as practical maintenance, the clinics offer something equally valuable: a chance for conversation, connection and community, tackling the social isolation that so often accompanies hearing loss.

Maureen said: "This is a much-needed service which frees up hospital audiology appointments for those with more complex needs. People can be seen locally so saving often long journeys to hospital by public transport."

One elderly man with severe hearing loss and dementia said how grateful to the service he was for "giving back my hearing" after having new tubing fitted to his aids.

The Hear Here model began as a Diocese of Guildford initiative in partnership with the NHS, relieving pressure on audiology services and bringing community-based hearing care into churches. Maureen hopes it could eventually be adopted to serve all corners of Sussex.

A new community hub opened in East Wittering Village on September 11, mainly to offer support, friendship and assistance to those suffering with dementia but support for carers too. The Hear Here poster has been included in its information which is likely to attract more hearing aid users. Maureen is interested in hearing from people in other church settings who would be interested in offering this much valued support in their own area. You can contact her at maureen.warwick@btinternet.com.



Jesus welcomed everyone.

This Disability Awareness Sunday, let us follow His example

Hear Here is a powerful example of what Disability Awareness Sunday is all about: removing barriers so everyone can participate fully in the life of the Church.

This year it takes place on September 27 with the theme “one body, many parts” (1 Corinthians 12) - celebrating the truth that the Church is not complete without disabled people. Organised by the Christian disability charity Through The Roof, the day invites churches to move beyond awareness towards the ABC of disability Inclusion: Access, Belonging and Commission. Free 2026 resources include videos, a service outline and all-age worship ideas, available from Through The Roof.

Chichester Diocese has two disability advisers, Rev Jo King and Rev Brendan Martin, commissioned to help parishes ensure people with disabilities can access the life and worship of the Church.

Jo, Rector of Chidham with Hambrook & Funtington & West Stoke with Sennicotts, was commissioned in 2024. She believes it is essential that everyone is able to worship at their local church and offer their gifts to the community, regardless of disabilities, and sees her role as encouraging every parish to be truly welcoming to all.

Brendan is Rector of Frant with Eridge. For him the role is deeply personal and he has written about his son Malachi, who has profound disabilities. He said: “Although Malachi cannot communicate even his most basic needs, Malachi has taught me far more than my theological professors, more than any church leader and more than any teacher - without saying a word.”

Contact Jo 07957977438 or email jo.king@chichester.anglican.org Or Brendan on Brendan.martin@chichester.anglican.org

Whether it's a hearing loop, step-free access, or large-print resources, there are grants to help:

- Church of England Parish Accessibility Fund - open to Canterbury

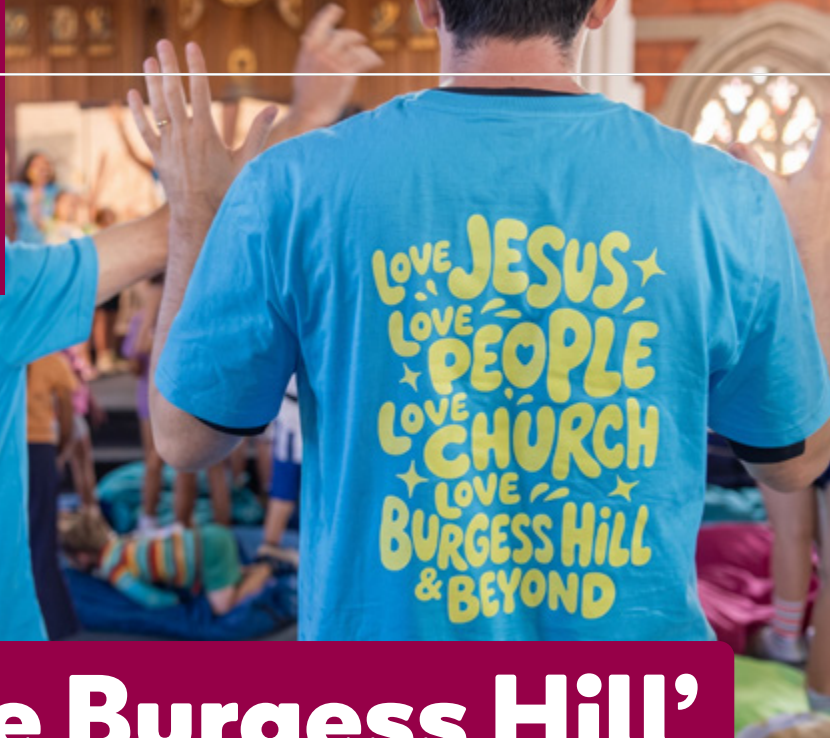
Province parishes (including Chichester) until 2028. Small grants £1,000–£5,000; large grants £5,000–£50,000. churchofengland.org | Bath and Wells guidance

- Benefact Trust - ramps, handrails, lifts, hearing loops, accessible toilets, AV equipment. benefacttrust.co.uk | 01452 873189
- National Churches Trust - access improvements and accessible toilets. nationalchurchestrust.org | 0207 222 0605
- VAT Relief - disability access works (ramps, accessible WCs, widening doors) are zero-rated for VAT
- More funders - Through The Roof lists additional sources, including the Garfield Weston Foundation and Joseph Rank Trust (Crawley). throughtheroof.org

As we approach September 27, every parish is encouraged to take at least one practical step: check your hearing loop works, review physical access and signage, provide large-print resources, invite a disabled person to share their story, contact Jo or Brendan for advice or explore hosting a Hear Here clinic.

Jesus welcomed everyone. This Disability Awareness Sunday, let us follow His example and open our doors, and hearts, wider.

PARISH NEWS



‘Love Burgess Hill’

Young people put faith into action

This summer, young people from St Andrew's Burgess Hill led a ten-day community mission called 'Love Burgess Hill'. Supported by the wider church community, 100 people from the parish took part in activities designed to serve the town, demonstrate the love of Jesus and invite local people to discover church for themselves.

Sixteen members of the youth group and six leaders lived 'on mission' at the West Watch Centre during the ten days. The project was inspired by earlier mission trips to Hereford, France and Mexico.

Olivia, 17, who had taken part in two previous mission trips, said she wanted to return because she had found them "so fulfilling and such a blessing". She added: "I'm really excited to see people's lives changed, not only the people we reach, but also those within our youth group."

Isaac, 18, said he took part because he "wanted to go out and share my faith with others and share the love of Jesus".

The 16 young people raised more than £2,800 through creative fundraising activities, including a dance workshop, craft and bake sales, and a sponsored walk. One young person cycled from London to Brighton and returned to church by midday, in time for the end of the youth group session. He received a well-deserved round of applause when he arrived.

In total, St Andrew's raised £9,000 to fund the mission, including a grant from the diocese's small-grants Mission Fund.

During the mission, the team took part in a wide range of outreach activities. At St Andrew's, they helped run a holiday club and football camp attended by around 70 children.

In the wider community, the team supported local care homes, Befriended, a charity working to tackle loneliness among older people across Mid Sussex, and Burgess Hill Pantry. They also cleared overgrown gardens and carried out cleaning and maintenance work at a community centre.



“It has been incredible to see how God has moved in the hearts and lives of our young people”

Rev Will Kemp, Vicar at St Andrew's, said: “The message we have wanted to get out is that everyone is welcome. You could be part of our church family and we would love you to come along. Jesus' love is so wonderful. You can know that love for yourself.”

The church community is encouraged that some of those invited during the mission have responded positively and signed up for an Alpha course. The church also recognises that the mission's impact may become clearer over time, both through people exploring faith and through the young people who took part.

Two members of the mission team have begun Discipleship Years at St Andrew's through New Wine's one-year programme. The programme enables young people to grow in faith, gain ministry experience and take part in Christian service.

The Venerable Angela Martin, Archdeacon of Horsham, said: “The ‘Love Burgess Hill’ mission is a wonderful example of young people putting their faith into action. Their commitment to prayer, service and sharing the love of Jesus has blessed the community and inspired people of all ages to join in God's mission. We give thanks for the lives touched this summer and pray that the seeds sown will bear fruit for many years to come.”

In the town centre, team members offered prayer, played live worship music in the park and spent time getting to know local people. The mission ended with a short service featuring stories of lives changed by Jesus, followed by family activities on the green outside the church, including face painting and ice creams.

Dean Gargano, Youth Pastor at St Andrew's, said: “It has been incredible to see how God has moved in the hearts and lives of our young people through the four mission trips we have undertaken. They have seen God at work through answered prayer and people coming to faith. These experiences have ignited a passion for following Jesus wholeheartedly and sharing the good news that Jesus died and was raised to life for all. Mission trips are a vital part of discipleship for our young people at St Andrew's.”

Rev Gareth Harper, Associate Vicar at St Andrew's, said: “Our young people are amazing. They have inspired the rest of the church and people of all ages to take part in mission.”

Holy Trinity Cuckfield Shed

A profoundly Christian act of hospitality. A church has opened a new community space designed to bring people together, share skills and combat loneliness.

The Cuckfield Shed, run by Holy Trinity Cuckfield, is already beginning to make a difference in the area. It is part of the Men's Sheds movement, which provides welcoming spaces where people can meet, work on practical projects and enjoy friendship and companionship.

Rev Daniel Valentine, vicar of the Benefice of Cuckfield and Bolney who dedicated and blessed the new facility, said: "At Holy Trinity we believe the church exists not simply for those who worship on Sundays but to be a blessing to the whole community every day of the week.

"Our shed is a wonderful expression of that vision. It offers friendship, purpose and practical activity in a welcoming environment where people can belong without pressure or expectation.

"At a time when many people experience loneliness, a loss of identity after retirement or simply a lack of meaningful social connection, creating a place to share skills, conversation and companionship is a profoundly Christian act of hospitality.

"We are delighted to support an initiative that strengthens our community, nurtures wellbeing and reminds people that they are valued, needed and never alone."

The Cuckfield Shed was officially opened by Alan Carter, mayor of the Independent State of Cuckfield, who cut the ribbon. It meets on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons, from 2pm to 5pm, and all are welcome.

To find out more about Men's Sheds, visit the UK Men's Sheds Association website. You can contact Holy Trinity Cuckfield at reader@holytrinitycuckfield.org.



Members Tony Lawrence, a long-time church member, and Alan Carter, left, have been helping to build benches for the newly cleared community garden, creating something practical that will benefit all



Alan Carter officially opened the shed which was blessed by Fr Daniel Valentine

My vocation for this season

When vicar Lisa Barnett was diagnosed with cancer she was forced to step back from 17 years of active parish ministry.

It was a big moment for Lisa, mother of three young children and the devoted team rector of St Mary's in Horsham.

Yet in the midst of treatment, she discovered a profound truth - that illness does not have to be a detour from God's purpose but can be a calling in its own right.

For many, a cancer diagnosis feels like a complete halt to everyday life and purpose. But for Lisa, an afternoon with a friend shifted her mindset.

She said: "A week after the second dose of a very tough chemotherapy regime, I saw a friend. I had discovered that during this fortnightly chemo I would only have three good days when I was feeling well enough to see anyone.

"As we sat, she asked me if I was finding it hard not to be living out my vocation as a priest while I went through cancer treatment.

"I took a deep breath and tried to explain that it felt OK because I knew that this journey through cancer was my vocation for this season.

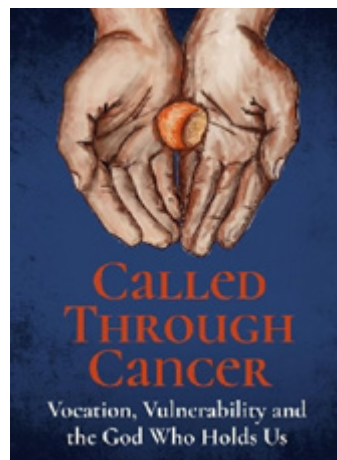
"I saw the surprise on her face as she contemplated the idea that I could use the words 'cancer' and 'vocation' in the same sentence. Yet I knew that what I had just told her was a deep, God-given truth. That conversation stayed with me and became the inspiration for my book."

Lisa, officially Rev Canon Lisa Barnett, has used her experience to write a book, *Called Through Cancer*, which offers encouragement to anyone coping with suffering.

She said: "My hope for the book is that Christians might be given confidence that even through disruptions to our hopes and plans, God is still with us and there are still opportunities to receive His love and be a vehicle of that love for others.

"Even during cancer treatment, we are still being called by God. I hope that people might discover through it a renewed confidence that even when we're not sure what we believe, even when we can't pray and we don't feel able to hold on to God, God continues to hold on to us."

The book is not only for those in hospital. Lisa designed it to be a guide for anyone trying to make sense of pain and faith.



She said: "Called Through Cancer is for anyone wanting to think about God's presence in suffering, both for their own journeys and to support others. Whether you are navigating a diagnosis yourself, supporting a loved one through treatment or leading a church community through hardship, the book offers pastoral wisdom and practical hope."

Lisa's book can be bought online from all good retailers for £11.99. She is also available for book events where it would be available for £10. Lisa can be contacted on vicar@horshamstmarys.org.uk. She has set up a Facebook page for the book - just search "Called Through Cancer".

SAFEGUARDING NEWS



Across the Diocese, Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) play a vital role in helping churches remain safe and welcoming environments for children, young people and vulnerable adults. Their responsibilities are wide-ranging, from supporting safer recruitment processes and monitoring safeguarding policies to responding appropriately when concerns arise.

Currently, 327 volunteers serve as PSOs in our parishes. Some have been carrying out this important ministry for many years, while others are just beginning in the role. Recognising both the wealth of experience and the need to strengthen support for them, the Diocesan Safeguarding Team has been working to establish collaborative networks across deaneries, creating opportunities to meet, share resources, learn from one another and provide mutual encouragement.

“It was a good opportunity to link in with other local PSOs and begin to build a support network and use each other’s experience and knowledge.”

Sue, Hurst Deanery

Charlie Parker, the Diocesan Learning & Development Officer explains “The groups are not intended for discussing specific safeguarding cases or situations, which should always be referred to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team. Instead, they offer an additional layer of support for those carrying safeguarding responsibilities in their parishes. The focus is on wellbeing, shared learning and peer support”

The networks are peer-led and entirely voluntary. Each group decides for itself how often to meet, where meetings are held and whether they take place in person or online.

“The overall vibe for rural PSOs is that it can feel very lonely at times, and groups like this are vital. It’s great to have somewhere to reach out and share concerns or worries with people who understand. We had a brand-new PSO with us as well, and she was feeling rather overwhelmed by it all. Hopefully she left feeling a bit happier.”

Emma, Midhurst Deanery

Many PSOs have already experienced the benefits of connecting with others in similar roles.

“We now have eight members in our WhatsApp group and have met twice so far. The group provides a supportive space to share experiences, policies and role descriptions, as well as practical help with the safeguarding dashboard. It has made what can sometimes feel like a rather isolated role much less so.”

Beryl, Hastings Deanery

Support networks have already been established, or are currently being developed, in 15 of the Diocese’s 21 deaneries. The Diocesan Safeguarding Team hopes to see this support available to all PSOs across the Diocese.

If you are a Parish Safeguarding Officer and would like to attend an existing group or explore starting one in your deanery, please contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team.



PSO SPOTLIGHT



Meet Emma – from the parish of Easebourne, Lodsworth & Selham

How long have you been a PSO?

For about three years now.

Why did you take up the role?

My mum was the Parish Safeguarding Officer before me, and when she became poorly, I helped her. After she passed away, I was asked if I would to become the PSO.

Also, because of my Girlguiding and school background, so people felt I had the right experience for it.

What's the most rewarding part?

For me, it's offering in person training locally — both Basic and Foundation — for people within our deanery. It gives those who struggle with



online training a chance to get involved, and it feels more personal. You get conversations you wouldn't have online, and people often bring different ideas or perspectives.

What's the biggest challenge?

Sometimes the role can feel daunting, especially when you're the only person in the parish doing it. But we've tackled that as a deanery by creating a safeguarding network, where local PSOs can share ideas, support each other, and pool training. It's made such a difference.

Do you have any tips for other PSOs?

Keep things positive. When I started, my goal was to help people see safeguarding as something positive within church life — not a burden. When you help your parish

navigate it gently and together, people are much more willing to get on board.

Build a good relationship with your incumbent. It feels much more like a team effort, and when your incumbent supports your ideas, the congregation usually follows. I've been very lucky, and I hope others have that same support.

Also, helping with the welcome team on a Sunday helps you get to know people — both regulars and new faces. It helps them get to know you too, which makes conversations about safeguarding feel more natural.

And finally... the parish dashboard is my new friend! Having everything in one place makes finding documents and updates so much easier.

Need to raise funds? Think beyond the buckets of water.

By Caroline Roope, Fundraising Adviser for Church Buildings

What are the steps you need to take if you are planning to make changes to your building or churchyard? It's a question that can seem overwhelming at the outset.

Knowing where to start is often the hardest part, particularly if your project involves multiple elements or phases of work. What is the best approach? Who will be responsible for fundraising activities? Is there a fundraising strategy? How can a church raise such a large sum when it has never fundraised before? Little wonder that just the thought of fundraising can deter a church community from the outset.

Fundraising for a church building project can feel daunting, particularly if you have never done it before, but it can be an extremely rewarding activity that brings the community together, reinvigorates parish life and, most importantly, helps build a sustainable future, not just for the church itself but for the people who use it.

The good news is that with patience, planning, people (of course) and often prayer too, many churches across the diocese have successfully secured the funds they needed to help their church building not just survive but thrive.

Successful fundraising isn't really about the building at all. It's about people. Whether it's connecting with your local community and asking for their help, or making your church a welcoming, safe space for new user groups, people are at the heart of all church projects and mission work and should naturally be at the heart of every fundraising activity or funding application.

But when you have buckets catching water in the nave and issues with crumbling masonry, the focus naturally falls on securing enough funds to fix the problem.





What are you hoping to achieve beyond fixing your church building or re-ordering its interior?

You might think your project to repair the roof, install a toilet, upgrade the kitchen or replace the ancient heating system speaks for itself but funders are looking for projects that support people. This means those that build strong relationships in and across communities, reduce loneliness, help more people to reach their potential or provide safe, warm spaces for people to come together, whether that's for worship or simply to connect with others.

Sometimes this means you will need to improve and enhance your project to unlock new funding opportunities. Could you create a "heritage hub" for your community or run a programme of engagement events for local schoolchildren? Can you provide volunteer or work experience opportunities for young people as part of your project? Providing opportunities for people is often the difference between a successful application that inspires funders and one that falls flat.

Keep the bigger picture in mind and think beyond the buckets of water.

Are you fundraising ready?

Have you...

- Secured the relevant permissions for your work?
- Agreed the scale and scope of your project?
- Agreed how much money you need to raise?
- Assembled a team of enthusiastic fundraisers?
- Canvassed opinions on your project from within your church and outside it?
- Created a fundraising strategy?

If you are ready to begin fundraising you can start to consider which funders are a good fit for your project. You can find out more about approaching funders on the guidance sheet [here](#)

If you are not quite there yet, here are some points to shape your discussions:

What are you hoping to achieve beyond fixing your church building or re-ordering its interior?

What is your vision for ministry and the church and does your project align with it? Potential funders are more likely to invest in a church that has a clear and inspiring vision of what it can achieve with funding, than a parish that simply wants a quick fix that maintains the status quo.

Who will benefit from funding beyond your congregation? Can you broaden your outlook and outreach?

Have you spoken to non-users of your church in the community? Often speaking to those who don't currently engage with your church and its ministry can inform your project planning if you are aiming for growth.

Have you approached the church buildings team for informal advice? If not, you can find their contact details [here](#).

Asking yourselves these questions will help you determine whether your project balances the needs of the church building while respecting its historic fabric and benefiting the wider community.

The central Church of England website has a whole section on capital projects and the steps you need to take if you are planning to make changes to your building or churchyard. It can be found [here](#).

There is also lots of useful information on the Parish Resources website under the funding pages [here](#).



EVERYONE BELONGS HERE

Have you ever felt excluded? What did that feel like? We all like to be included, don't we? Whether it's in a conversation with friends and wanting to know what the latest news is or being picked as part of a team, we all have that sense of wanting to belong.

When it comes to church services, these can sometimes be a very overwhelming experience for children and young people who have additional needs, as they are generally aimed at those who are neurotypical. This creates some obstacles in participating.

For those children and young people who are neurodiverse, loud, bright and cluttered services can make it difficult to concentrate on what is being said. Service times and seating can also potentially be an obstacle.

The truth is we can never fully meet everyone's needs but we can make reasonable adjustments that do not have to be onerous and time-consuming tasks. We can make small adaptations that allow everyone to feel a sense of belonging. Feeling that your church family wants you to feel included, valued and seen is a huge gift. I believe it is more than possible and have seen it work beautifully in so many churches.

These adjustments can include providing sensory boxes with ear defenders, fidget toys and wobble cushions to thinking about the length of our sermons as well as considering how we welcome people through our doors. Announcements or posters on our walls are informative and helpful but this can sometimes feel

overwhelming to someone who already has quite a busy mind and creates a challenge to those with processing difficulties.

It is important to recognise that "additional needs" is not "one size fits all". In general, it is important to ask the person in question what helps to regulate them in those situations. If the child is very young and struggles with verbal communication, ask their parents what works best for their child. Families of those with additional needs generally already have very good coping systems and can help to make church a more inclusive space if we involve them in our decision making and planning. They are your super power in making church available to all.

There are lots more specifics we can help with, including training, resources and events. A growing number of churches are pro-actively making space for those who have a seemingly unconventional way of navigating church. Our Space is a parent support

group which meets at St Mary's Church in Broadwater, Worthing, and provides an incredibly supportive space for parents of children with additional needs. Other churches have created sensory spaces in church and summer clubs geared to families with children with additional needs

Being new to Chichester Diocese I am still learning of churches who are doing incredible work but so far I have been blown away by the creativity and heart to serve our families.

If you are a church who is actively creating inclusive spaces or services for our children and young people with additional needs, then please get in touch. It would be wonderful to have an ever-growing network of those who wish to create a safe and inclusive space.

We don't have all the answers but together we can work to make church an even more inclusive and welcoming space for our children, young people and adults with additional needs.



The diocese will be running a training day on the October 24, which begins with a morning teaching session with Mark Arnold from Urban Saints. Mark is an absolute whizz at all things additional needs and speaks from a personal viewpoint as well as professional. The afternoon includes a panel of experts who will help navigate and advise on any questions you may have around additional needs and neurodiversity. If you are interested in booking this training, there are still spaces available - use the link here: [Try Booking](#)

GIANT INFLATABLES AND LATE-NIGHT WORSHIP... IT MUST BE...



This year more than 300 young people from churches across the diocese will gather for Maycamp at Plumpton Racecourse, a weekend festival designed for worship, creative arts, games, sports and community.

The event, held at Plumpton Racecourse, offers young people the space to build lasting friendships, stretch themselves and explore a deeper relationship with God.

Ruth McCormick, a youth leader from Brighton, said: "It's brilliant for young people to be out of their comfort zone and have those moments to choose what faith is for them."

One camper said: "I've invited my friends to Maycamp so they can have the same experiences as me. Two of them have a faith and one of them doesn't, but it's a really easy introduction into it. It's not too heavy or full-on."

Teaching is developed to introduce young people to deeper

"It's brilliant for young people to be out of their comfort zone

spiritual understanding, communicated in a relatable way. There is plenty of fun to be had with sports tournaments, giant inflatables and late-night worship among other activities.

Another camper said: "The seminars put things into a perspective I can understand. For example, we were talking about breathing and that being similar to God breathing with you. It just makes it so much easier to comprehend."

Over its long history, May Camp has welcomed thousands of young people through its gates. While the activities and themes evolve, the core purpose remains the same: providing a safe, open space where the next generation can worship Jesus, deepen their faith and

see that they are part of the bigger household of faith while having fun.

Dan Jenkins, diocesan youth officer, said: "It's a privilege to be part of the legacy of Maycamp which has been running in this diocese since the early 80s. There are hundreds of people for who Maycamp is a key part of their testimony and calling into ministry.

"We strive to continue to make Maycamp not just an action-packed fun event but also a place where young people find community, explore answers to big questions and encounter our living God."

The festival will run from May 28 to 31. Visit <https://www.maycamp.org> for 2027 ticket bookings.

If you would like to join a regular mailing from the Youth Team please contact Dan.jenkins@chichester.anglican.org

Diocesan Harvest Appeal

ARISE AFRICA

STOP THE VIOLENCE. START THE HEALING.

Standing with Our Global Church Family

This year, the Diocese of Chichester Harvest Appeal will support Open Doors' Arise Africa campaign, standing alongside Christians who have been displaced by violence and conflict across sub-Saharan Africa, including Cameroon. Open Doors is an international Christian ministry that has supported persecuted Christians for more than 70 years through practical assistance, discipleship, advocacy and prayer.

A message from the Bishop of Horsham

"Harvest is a season of thanksgiving, generosity and sharing God's gifts with others. As we give thanks for God's provision in our own lives and communities, we are also reminded that we belong to a global family of Christians.

This year, I am delighted to commend the Diocese of Chichester Harvest Appeal in support of Open Doors' Arise Africa campaign. Across sub-Saharan Africa, millions of Christians have been displaced by violence and conflict, yet local churches continue to serve their communities and bear witness to the hope of Jesus Christ.

Through this appeal, we have an opportunity not only to give toward practical and spiritual support, but also to stand in prayer and solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ. I hope churches across the Diocese will join in learning from, praying for and supporting those who continue to follow Jesus in the midst of great challenges.

Thank you for your generosity and partnership in this year's Harvest Appeal."

+Ruth

Bishop of Horsham

The Arise Africa campaign

Across sub-Saharan Africa, millions of Christians have been forced from their homes by violence and conflict. Many have lost homes, livelihoods, places of worship and loved ones. Yet amid these challenges, local churches continue to serve their communities, care for vulnerable families and share the hope of Jesus Christ. The Arise Africa campaign seeks to support displaced Christians and strengthen the local church as it responds to one of the largest displacement crises affecting Christians in the world today.

Scan or [click](#) to support the Diocese Harvest Appeal



NEWS FROM

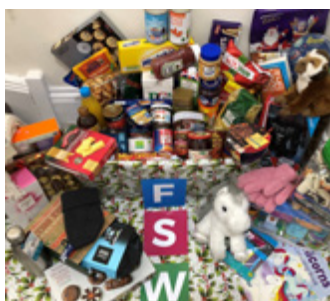


The Sussex Charity for Children
Since 1890

Family Support Work is almost set in stone. There are periods when we focus on the families, ensuring they have a good time (such as summer), and periods when we focus on building their strength and resilience, which is most of the year. But in Garton House, from the 1st of September, our focus switches from the families we support to the family that supports us — namely, you!

Why the change? September marks the start of the season of giving for churches, with many of you collecting food for us during Harvest Festival.

An essential part of supporting our families is the food bank. The annual donations we receive from schools and churches at this time of year allow us to build up a store to keep us going all year. Last year, over 60 churches sent us harvest food, and over 40 schools donated too. Of course, food is important, but for those who can't get to the shops, monetary donations are just as valuable, helping FSW top up on whatever we're missing.



Harvest is only the start. For six weeks we receive almost daily deliveries — thank you, it really does make a difference.

Then everything changes on the first Sunday in November, when St Michael and All Angels Church, Southwick, holds the first toy service supporting our work. That's the signal to set up the toy room, ready to receive gifts from across the Diocese: books, toys, games, craft kits,

dolls, cars, Lego, colouring books, and anything else that will make a great Christmas present. It doesn't have to be expensive — as long as it's new, we'll pass it on.

We also receive gifts for parents. At many of our Christmas parties, children pick and wrap a gift for their parents, instilling the idea that Christmas is about giving as well as receiving.

As Advent dawns, our toy room overflows, and other rooms take on new purposes — especially the Chocolate Room! It's dedicated to sweets and treats for our Christmas hampers (around 200, or 4 large carrier bags each), packed with shareable treats, festive food, and easy meals like tinned hot dogs and meatballs. Bridgers Farm in Hurstpierpoint kindly donates 80 turkeys for some lucky families.

For ten weeks, the office team is surrounded by chaos — but it's chaos that brings real good. To support us with food, toys, or hampers, contact Spencer on 01273 832963 or spencer@familysupportwork.org.uk. Donations can also be ring-fenced for Christmas support.



Mothers' Union, around the corner & around the world

By Michele White, President of Mothers Union Chichester

The 150th year of Mothers' Union has been marked in many ways by many people and in many places. Members in Chichester Diocese have prayed in high places, held fundraising events, attended special services, reflected on the past and looked forward to what is to come.

But it's not over yet - there is still time to join us and join in.

On October 17 from 10am we have our autumn gathering at St John the Evangelist Church, Knoyle Road, Brighton. Please join us as we meet for fellowship and to consider issues of racial justice and the environment, particularly in relation to the work of MU worldwide.

We are delighted to be welcoming Vitalis Ngwambi, the diocesan racial justice officer, and Buff Stone, the diocesan environmental officer, who will lead us in our time together. We will also be joined by Naomi Herbert from the central charity at Mary Sumner House, who will share with us news about MU development projects overseas. I believe that there may even be a game involved.

We'll be back at St John's at 2pm on Saturday, December 12, for an afternoon of carol singing, crafts, cake and Christmas hot dogs. This is an event for all the family, hosted

by Rev Emma Ham-Riche with musical accompaniment kindly provided by Rev David Stone. There will be lots of opportunities to choose your favourite carols from booklets provided.

What a special way to conclude this 150th anniversary year, as we proclaim "Joy to the world, the Lord is come, let earth receive her King".

The Cathedral welcomed members, friends and supporters of Mothers' Union Diocese of Chichester to the Cathedral for Evensong as part of the organisation's 150th anniversary celebrations.





CHURCHES SCREEN EYE-OPENING FILM

Churches and community venues across Sussex are showing *The People's Emergency Briefing*, a public information film fronted by naturalist and broadcaster Chris Packham.

It has been shown at more than 2,000 community venues across the UK since its premiere in April and Sussex has been at the heart of the response, with more than 20 towns and villages hosting screenings in churches, community halls and cinemas (see map of venues).

The 50-minute film builds on the landmark National Emergency Briefing held at Westminster Central Hall in November 2025, where leading UK experts presented evidence to more than 1,200 politicians and decision-makers. It sets out in clear and accessible terms the risks the climate and nature crisis poses to food security, water supplies, national security, health and the economy and, crucially, what can be done in response. You can sign Chris Packham's petition to get a national televised briefing here

In Henfield, residents of all ages gathered alongside local councillors and the parish vicar, Fr Joe Padfield, for a screening hosted by Sustainable Henfield 2030, which was followed by discussion.

Fr Joe said: "It was an eye-opening event and most of us there were shocked by what we saw and heard. This film really does need to be seen by as many people as possible and I have written to my MP as part of the campaign to have the film shown on prime-time television across the major broadcasters."

“I encourage churches to invite their wider community and show this film. It’s a wake-up for us all.”

Further screenings followed in Steyning and Horsham, with Horsham Churches Together encouraging congregations to use the film as a catalyst for their Eco Church work. Karen Park, Eco Church lead for Horsham Churches Together, said: “Showing this film would be a great way to start or continue your Eco Church journey.”

In Shoreham, Rev Jane Bartlett, vicar of Church of the Good Shepherd, said: “We were delighted that so many people wanted to come and see this film, including our local MP and councillors. The church was completely full and everyone seemed to value the opportunity to listen to trusted scientific experts, especially at this time when there is so much reckless misinformation and climate change denial being promoted. We had time for community discussion afterwards and refreshments. There was something hopeful about coming together as a local community and facing up to the reality of our challenges alongside possible solutions.”

The Church of England is backing the initiative as part of a wider coalition that includes the Roman Catholic Church, CAFOD, A Rocha UK, Tearfund and Operation Noah. Together they have launched a call to action and a Church Resource Pack, urging the

nation’s 38,500 churches to host screenings, invite their wider communities and MPs and follow the film with discussion.

This effort sits alongside the Church of England’s own commitment to reach net zero carbon by 2030, a target set by General Synod in February 2020 in recognition that “the global climate emergency is a crisis for God’s creation and a fundamental injustice” (Church of England).

The Rt Rev Graham Usher, Bishop of Norwich and the Church of England’s lead bishop for the environment, has encouraged churches to embrace the screenings wholeheartedly:

He said: “I encourage churches to invite their wider community and show this film. It’s a wake-up for us all. Its message to care for climate, people, nature is urgently needed, not least so that we might live and act as Jesus would have us be.”

For Sussex clergy, the screenings offer a practical way to connect faith, community and creation care.

Diocesan environment officer Buff Stone said: “A recent screening at St George’s Kemp Town attracted over

150 people to watch the film and join in discussions afterwards. The film makes a serious impact but in the groups afterwards many local connections were made with groups working together to find solutions to the polycrisis we face.

“With new screening dates being added across Sussex all the time, churches are proving once again that they are places where communities can gather not only to worship but to learn, to talk and to act.

“I urge all of our churches to seek out local connections with energy and environment groups, if they haven’t already done so, and agree a screening date in a church building or community building. Share the event on all your publicity channels.”

To find a screening near you, or to host one at your church, visit the interactive map at nebriefing.org or download the Church Resource Pack to get started.

Upcoming events in churches include St John the Evangelist, Brighton, on Friday, September 25, at 7pm and St Michael and All Angels, Southwick, on Thursday, October 29, at 7pm.

WARM AND WELCOMING SPACES

By Gareth Martin, diocesan net zero carbon officer

Parishes and churches have many opportunities to put “Hope For All Creation” into practice and changes we make show our care for God’s creation.

Reducing carbon emissions from church buildings is one of the most practical steps we can take. This includes moving from gas or oil heating to electric systems, buying electricity from a green tariff supplier and, where possible, generating electricity with solar panels.

The Church of England Environment Programme offers guidance to help parishes identify how they can reduce their carbon emissions.

Modern heating can create warmer, more welcoming buildings for worship and community events. Older gas or oil boiler systems are often ill suited to large, historic spaces. Modern electrical heating focused on people’s comfort, such as radiant wall and chandelier heaters, or air source heat pumps with underfloor heating, can provide more consistent warmth.

Replacing heating systems requires investment but becomes more attractive when existing boilers reach the end of their life, especially given lower

running costs and improved comfort.

Not all parishes in Chichester Diocese will progress at the same speed. Some have already made big changes, some have taken small steps and many are at the start. We are all on a journey.

St Wilfrid’s is heating people, not buildings

St Wilfrid’s Church, Bognor Regis, has been reducing its carbon footprint through practical measures including LED lighting, thermostatic radiator valves in the hall and office and ongoing repairs to window frames and mullions to improve efficiency.

In May 2025, the church replaced its ageing, noisy and costly gas-fired hot air heating system with eight electric infrared “Halo” chandelier heaters and six wall-mounted radiant heaters. The old system struggled to keep the nave warm and in winter, people often wore coats during services.

The infrared heaters “heat the people” rather than the whole space, an important distinction in a building with 45ft ceilings and limited insulation. They can be switched on just 20 minutes before a service or event and turned off immediately afterwards, cutting energy use.

Feedback has been positive, with many reporting greater comfort and liking the appearance of the new heaters.

The Church of England guidance on reducing carbon emissions from church buildings can be found [here](#).

SOUTHERN DIOCESES NET ZERO CONFERENCES 2027

HOPE

for all creation

SAVE THE DATES:

Saturday 16th January, 10am to 4.30pm, Burgess Hill
Sunday 13th February, 10am to 4.30pm, Winchester

Book now for our 2027 conference

Chichester Diocese, in co-operation with the Dioceses of Guildford and Portsmouth, will be holding a one day conference on Hope For All Creation on Saturday, January 16, next year. It will feature reducing church building carbon emissions.

It will be hosted by St Andrew’s Church, Burgess Hill, and will be an opportunity for parishes to come together, learn and share experiences. The keynote speaker will be Ruth Valerio, environmentalist, theologian, author and former director at Tearfund and A Rocha UK

[Book here](#)

A second conference is planned for Saturday, February 13, in Winchester.

HOPE FOR ALL CREATION:

A theological response to the environmental crises
By Rev Buff Forbes Stone, diocesan environment officer

“We have been gifted a world of breath-taking beauty, astounding abundance and intricate interconnection. It is a world God declared good and loves.”

So begins the introduction to the House of Bishops’ teaching document *Hope For All Creation*, a theological response to the environmental crises.

It gives comprehensible and accessible answers to the question “why should Christians care about climate and nature catastrophes unfolding around us – and what should we do in response?”.

The book is divided into three parts:

See:

The first part explains the current environmental situation in scientific terms, helping us to understand the inter-relatedness of all life and how humanity is affecting those complex relationships with disastrous consequences.

Reflect:

This section delves into the riches of scripture and Christian tradition, drawing out how there is hope for all creation when human

beings recognise both their rebellion against their place in creation and their responsibility to tend and nurture all life. Hope grows from Jesus’s action to reconcile all things to himself, God’s promise to renew all creation and the Spirit’s empowering of us to act.

Respond:

The final part helps us find practical actions to live out our penitence and discipleship locally, nationally and globally. We are called to engage personally but also within our local communities, as a national church and within the Anglican Communion and other church partners worldwide.

As Christian people, we have the spiritual resources found throughout the Bible and traditions of lament for what is wrong, calling for repentance to change our ways, speaking and living prophetically in order that others may hear and respond and acting in faith and love for all our neighbours, near and far.

This is God’s wonderful world. Jesus died to reconcile all things to himself (Col 1:20) and the whole of creation is longing for the action of the



Spirit through the children of God (Rom 8:20,21). *Hope For All Creation* is an excellent resource to sustain in this endeavour.

The book is available from Church House Publishing <https://chpublishing.hymnsam.co.uk/books/9781781405642/hope-for-all-creation> and downloadable from: cofe.io/HopeForAllCreation

Further reading and resources including links to webinars at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/environment-and-climate-change>

As environment officer, I can visit PCCs or deaneries to discuss *Hope For All Creation* and there will be teaching sessions online and at Church House, Hove. Contact me at environment.officer@chichester.anglican.org

ORDINARY TIME

An opportunity to stop, think and reflect

By Gary Cregeen - Rural Officer for East Sussex

We all know the rhythm of the seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter. Living in the countryside deepens that awareness, but “seasons” also shape our human experience, times of joy and sadness, learning and working, loving and losing. In rural communities like ours, we also mark agricultural moments: Ploughing, Lambing, Rogation, Lammas and Harvest.

The Church has its own pattern of seasons, often called the Church Year or Christian Calendar. Its twofold purpose is to retell and explore the story of God’s love revealed in Jesus Christ and known through the Church, and to connect that story to everyday life for those who follow Him. We are currently in “Ordinary Time”, which began on Trinity Sunday (12 June this year) and runs until the fourth Sunday before Advent (1 November – All Souls).

“Ordinary Time” may sound dull, but most of life is ordinary. Daily routines such as shopping, washing, cleaning, gardening, working, eating, resting, sleeping, putting out the recycling, all form the rhythm of life. We often notice their value only when they are disrupted. For many farmers, harvest would normally dominate this time of year.

Yet excess rain earlier in the year, followed by drought, has devastated crops in some areas. Grass has stopped growing, forcing livestock onto winter feed, and a bluetongue outbreak has led to the culling of thousands of animals. These extraordinary pressures make people long for the “ordinary” – even as climate change suggests this disruption may be the new normal, calling us to adapt.

In Ordinary Time we are invited to stop, think and reflect on the people, things and routines that sustain our day-to-day lives. As we do, we can begin to see the wonder, beauty, truth and joy in the everyday. Within the Church Year, this points to a deeper truth: in Jesus Christ, the eternal life of God is made visible in ordinariness. Jesus was extraordinary precisely because He first became utterly ordinary, born as one of us. He called ordinary people into His new community and used mundane things, fish and bread, wine and farming, work and weddings, not merely as illustrations pointing beyond themselves, but to reveal glory in the ordinary all around us.

As we move through autumn and continue in Ordinary Time, may we grow more attentive to the wonder, joy

and presence hidden in routine moments. Watch for them: very ordinary, yet full of glory.

Rev Gary Cregeen, Rural Officer for East Sussex & Rector of Ashburnham with Penhurst.

You can download a copy of the latest Rural newsletter, Cultivate from the Diocesan website.



Welcome Derek

Bishop Ruth has appointed Rev Derek Welsman as Rural Affairs Officer for West Sussex. Derek will be formally introduced at the forthcoming rural conference on 9th October.

CHICHESTER DIOCESAN RURAL CONFERENCE

9th October

‘BEING RURAL : BEING FRUITFUL’

with Keynote Speaker: Revd Dr Mark Scarlata author of ‘Wine, Soil, and Salvation...’

Friday 9th October 2026
(9.45 am to 4 pm) at The AgriCentre, Plumpton College, BN7 3AE

Use the QR code or click [here](#) to book your place.



HYMNS WITH REV NEVILLE MANNING

HOW GREAT *Thou Art*

Did you know that one hymn which has been high in the Songs of Praise poll of favourite hymns is “How great Thou art”, otherwise known as “O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder”? It was also included a few years ago in a book of 40 favourite hymns by the TV presenter Pam Rhodes.

The original version of this well-known hymn came from Sweden. Carl Boberg was a government senator and a poet. Back in 1885 he found himself caught in a thunderstorm. It was followed by a rainbow over the nearby bay. At home he opened his window and heard birdsong as well as the sound of church bells. It all prompted him to sit and write the words of this hymn. In due course the hymn was translated into both German and Russian. In 1927 Stuart Hine, a Christian missionary, and his wife came across the Russian version. Stuart translated the then three verses into English. The fourth and final verse was prompted by a meeting with a European refugee in Sussex, of whom there were many, several of

O LORD MY GOD, WHEN I IN AWESOME WONDER

them having come from Poland. The refugee had been separated from contact with his wife, never expected to see her again on earth, but looked forward to being reunited with her in the heavenly home. Stuart also found that the great hope for many of those refugees was to return home. Stuart was moved to write that final verse: “When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation and take me home—what joy shall fill my heart!”

Stuart Hines’s translation was one of many, but his was the one which eventually became well-known. The hymn became largely forgotten for several years. Eventually it was used in the campaigns of the American evangelist Billy Graham in the mid 1950s and beyond and became very popular. It was

often sung by George Beverley Shea. Dr. Graham said that the reason he liked it was because it glorifies God and focusses on God rather than on ourselves, unlike some hymns. He used it as frequently as possible. Since then it has appeared in several hymn books, often of very different persuasions. The hymn has also been translated into many languages and has been recorded many times

The hymn itself is a hymn of praise. The first two verses focus on the wonders of the created world: all the works which God has made, the stars, the thunder, the woods, the forest glades, the singing of birds, the mountains, the brooks, and the gentle breeze. The other two verses focus on the wonder of God not sparing his Son but sending him to die for us, ending with the thought of the home that Christ has gone to prepare for us. Whether sung at Harvest time or Passiontide or other times it is still very popular.



Cathedral News

A "MOST FRIGHTENING" COMMISSION

Few pieces of modern art are woven so completely into the life of a cathedral as John Piper's tapestry behind Chichester Cathedral's High Altar.

Dedicated on 20 September 1966, it has formed the backdrop to worship, prayer and pilgrimage for 60 years. Yet one of their most recognisable treasures emerged from a project that its creator later described as his "most frightening" commission.

John Piper (1903-1992) was one of Britain's most influential twentieth-century

artists, celebrated for his paintings, stained glass, prints and designs for churches and historic buildings. His work combined modern artistic ideas with a deep appreciation of architecture, landscape and Christian symbolism. When Walter Hussey, Dean of Chichester from 1955 - 1977, invited Piper to create a major new work for the Cathedral, both men embarked on what would become one of the most significant church art commissions of the post-war period.

Despite his reputation, Piper was entering unfamiliar territory. He had never

created a tapestry on this scale before and as a result, the commission demanded years of experimentation, correspondence and revision as he worked with specialist weavers in Aubusson, France, a centre of tapestry-making for centuries. Letters from the period reveal debates about colour, scale and composition, while Piper continued refining his ideas long after the commission had begun.

When others considered a painting behind the High Altar, Piper argued that a tapestry stretching across the Victorian screen would work more powerfully with the Cathedral's architecture.



That instinct proved remarkably successful. The tapestry's vibrance and graphic symbolism draw in your eye as soon as you enter the Cathedral, contrasting the Cathedral's ancient stone and Victorian woodwork.

The commission also reflected Hussey's vision for the Church. Throughout his ministry, he championed contemporary artists, believing that creativity and faith belonged together. The partnership with Piper helped establish Chichester Cathedral as a place where visual arts could flourish, responding to and inspired by the Cathedral's rich story.

Nearly six decades after its dedication, the tapestry continues to inspire those who encounter it. Generations have worshipped beneath it, and countless visitors have paused before it, often without realising the uncertainty, risk and determination that brought it into being.

It is this story that lies at the heart of *Glowing + Alive*, a major exhibition at the Cathedral exploring the creation of the tapestry, the relationship between Piper and Hussey, and the artistic vision behind one of Britain's most significant twentieth-century ecclesiastical

artworks. Through letters, photographs, vestments and archival material, visitors can discover the people, conversations and decisions that helped shape a work which remains at the heart of the Cathedral's life and worship today.

Glowing + Alive is on display at Chichester Cathedral until Sunday 3 January 2026. Admission is free, with donations welcome. The Cathedral is open Mon – Sat (9.00am – 5.00pm) and Sun (12.30 – 2.30pm). Further information, visit: www.chichestercathedral.org.uk/GlowingandAlive

CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL

ART & FAITH



Chancellor's Autumn
Lectures 2026

Join us to explore how artists across the centuries have
expressed the divine through colour, form and imagination.

Tues 22 Sept

The Theology of the Icon - Symbols
and Images in Christian Art

Tues 6 Oct

Three in One and One in Four - The
Trinity and the Evangelists in Art

Tues 20 Oct

The Sacred and Place - John Piper
and Modern Art in the Church

Tues 3 Nov

Smashing Images - The Case
Against Artwork in the Church

Entry from 6.30pm at Vicars' Hall, Chichester Cathedral.
Spaces cost **£10.00** per session and prior booking is essential:

CHICHESTERCATHEDRAL.ORG.UK

Charity Number: 1205740

