

Outlook

The magazine of the Diocese of Canterbury



ISSUE 4 WINTER 2010



RE-IMAGINING SOCIETY
11 page special feature

**Seasonal events
across the Diocese
this Christmas**



Contributors include:

- Jonathan Shaw
- Lord Wei
- Malcolm Brown
- Bishop Trevor

Outlook

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Holy Trinity take lead in Jubilee Debt Campaign – Page 7



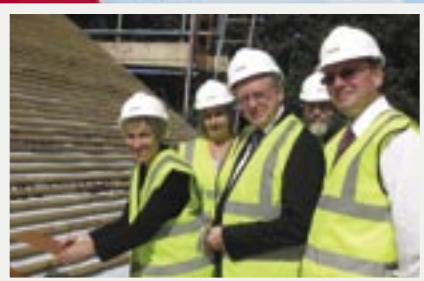
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Contact the editorial team

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FEEDBACK

We hope you enjoy the new Outlook magazine and the editor would welcome your comments: eshepherd@diocant.org

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‘What if ... just imagine ...’

The Archdeacon of Canterbury, The Venerable Sheila Watson



Poised between ‘what might have been’ and ‘what might yet be’ the old year fades and a new cycle begins. It is easy for our imagination to run riot with a myriad of lost opportunities whilst spinning impossible new dreams. Can we really let go of what has gone wrong? Dare we build a new future for ourselves and our world?

Might the impossible dream become reality this year - with bricks of hope and ‘loving our neighbour as ourselves’?

It is easy to be cynical about re-imagining society, ‘We have tried for over 2000 years and failed’. Yet still, if only for a moment, amidst the tinsel and sentimentality, the Christ child will bear ‘the hopes and fears of all the years’, to give us a glimpse of a greater reality – a new heaven and a new earth. But not just a glimpse, a Godly call to help make heaven on earth.

The Church which bears Christ’s name has a chequered history, not without serious blemishes. It is worth remembering words from Lord Denning, one of the most significant Law Lords of the 20th century: “If religion perishes in the land, truth and justice will also”. Government is maybe taking these to heart in a more positive approach to the part we and other faiths play.

Let’s not feel helpless in the face of the big questions or bewildered by the ‘Big Society’. Follow the Christ child and you will be amazed at the difference you can make.

We don’t have to be a Lord Shaftesbury or Desmond Tutu or Suu Kyi. We do have to draw inspiration, joining in with that strong sense of civic responsibility needed by Church and State. Many of our churches already do that – Street Pastors, ‘drop-in centres’ for senior citizens and youth clubs. Give thanks for them. In Kent four of the five neediest areas are in our Diocese (Thanet, Swale, Shepway and Dover). Let’s re-imagine much more for them for 2011.

With every blessing this Christmas, Sheila

Xclamation – Folkestone youth lead the way

A worship event in Folkestone, which is led by young people, is now in its third year

Tim Fudge, Youth Director at St John’s Folkestone, explains: “Around three years ago, after attending a Soul Survivor weekend, our young people decided to take control of the youth service. It was re-born ‘Xclamation’. The games were dropped and it became a worship event led by a youth band under the leadership of Sam Thomas.”

Around 60-70 now regularly attend Xclamation which is mostly held at St John’s hall, although some services for 2011 are planned to be held at the Harvey Grammar School. Each service includes an outside speaker – Bishop Trevor spoke at the service in October.

Tim concludes: “It has been great to see a group of ten teenagers develop this as a service which is attractive to Christians and to see many people bringing their friends who have had no previous contact with Church.”

More information about Xclamation can be found at: www.sjyouth.co.uk



Diocesan News

Prestigious award for Canterbury Cathedral apprentice



In September one of Canterbury Cathedral's apprentices, Sam Matthews, won a prestigious silver award at the National World Skills UK Competition for stone masonry held at Coleg Menai in North Wales. Sam, who is currently half-way through his four year apprenticeship, has been working under the tutelage of Steve Manuel, one of the Cathedral's most experienced masons, who describes him as "outstanding". Steve is responsible for the four apprentice stonemasons at the Cathedral, two of whom have only just left school. "It's vital that we have a supply of trained and skilful stonemasons for the future to keep the Cathedral and other buildings in good shape" commented Steve.

The Cathedral offers a chance for young people to learn a trade for life and currently has seven apprentices studying to become carpenters, chefs, electricians, painters and decorators and plumbers. Heather Newton, Head of Stone Masonry and Conservation, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for any young person eager to learn the craft to which many of us have dedicated our lives. The team are fully committed to passing on their skill and knowledge to the Apprentices."

Bishop Trevor to give Advent Talks in Thanet Deanery

In December, Bishop Trevor will be holding a series of Advent Talks entitled: 'Waiting for the God who comes'. The talks take place on 2nd, 9th, 16th December 2010, 7.30pm at St George's Church of England Foundation School, Westwood Road, Broadstairs CT10 2LH. The talks are open to anyone.

New water stoup in Canterbury Cathedral blessed by the Archbishop of Canterbury

The Archbishop of Canterbury recently blessed a new water stoup which has been given to Canterbury Cathedral.

The stoup is sited just within the South West door of the Cathedral, the main entrance used by pilgrims and visitors; in it, water is presented as an offering and an act of welcome upon entering the Cathedral and as an invitation to share in the Christian belief.



Stephen Cox, sculptor of the water stoup with Mrs Olivia Phillips.

The congregation of about 350 saw the Archbishop dedicate the stoup, by the use of holy oil, and incense, before he blessed the congregation, asperging it with holy water. The water stoup has been given by Mrs Olivia Phillips in memory of her husband, Canon Ferdie Phillips MC, who loved to welcome visitors to the Cathedral.

New Ministry Adviser for Generation Y

Murray Wilkinson, the new Diocesan Ministry Adviser for Children and Young People, started in his new Diocesan post just as a new report on 'Generation Y' was published.

Church House Publishing, produced the report 'The Faith of Generation Y', which reveals that those born after 1982 have had less contact with the church than any previous generation but are not hostile towards religion.

"'Generation Y' may have fewer hang-ups about the Church than their parents, but the report suggests the Church needs to provide young people with opportunities to explore and learn about a Christian faith and values, of which they know little."

opportunities to explore and learn about a Christian faith and values, of which they know little.

Murray commented: "I am very conscious of the enormous team of Youth and Children's workers, leaders and volunteers who are doing the work 'at the cutting face' in the Diocese. My role exists to encourage, inspire, and hopefully equip them in that work"

You can get in contact with Murray at Diocesan House: 01227 459 401 or by email: mwilkinson@diocant.org



Three new faces for General Synod



Left to right: Caroline Spencer, Sally Muggeridge, David Kemp, Philip Down, Bishop Trevor, Clare Edwards and Mark Roberts.

Three new representatives to General Synod were elected in October following an active period of campaigning.

Clare Edwards, Canon Pastor of Canterbury Cathedral was elected for the first time and joins the Archdeacon of Maidstone, Philip Down and Chair of the House of Clergy, the Reverend Canon Mark Roberts who were voted back on to Synod as clergy representatives.

In the House of Laity, ex-Diocesan Secretary, David Kemp and Church Warden of Tilmanstone and Chief Executive of the Industry and Parliament Trust, Sally Muggeridge, will join long-standing synod representative and Chair of the Canterbury Diocesan House of Laity, Caroline Spencer.

Elected members sit on General Synod (the parliament of the Church of England) for five years and meet twice a year, in London in February and in York in July. Many will also serve on specialist committees and commissions. The new Synod held its inaugural meeting November 22nd - 24th, during which time members heard a presidential address by the Archbishop of Canterbury and discussed the church's response to 'The Big Society'.

Could you be a 'Spiritual Accompanier'?

Rob Mackintosh, Director of Ministry & Training, is calling on lay and ordained people who may have a ministry in accompanying others in their spiritual lives, to take part in a special training course that takes place in 2011.

Rob says: "There is a need to support both ordained and lay ministers in a deeper awareness of the presence of God in their lives, a growing discernment of God's will, and a clear link with the greater mission of God in the world. Responding to this need, the second Spiritual Accompaniment Programme will begin in February 2011. We aim to develop a group of both lay and ordained practitioners to become confident and competent in their spiritual accompaniment of others. If you think you are called to this ministry please do get in contact."

More information is available from Rose Dale: rdale@diocant.org; tel. 01227 459401 or www.canterburydiocese.org/spiritualaccompaniment Applications will be welcomed as soon as possible.

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Frank Field MP to speak at The Gathering 2011

the gathering

Poverty Campaigner and the Member of Parliament for Birkenhead, Frank Field, will speak at next year's two day event 'The Gathering' which will be held in Canterbury Cathedral on Friday 16th and Saturday 17th September.

With a theme of 'Community and Discipleship', The Gathering 2011 will provide an opportunity for church members of all ages across the diocese to participate, share experience and learn.

Other speakers confirmed include Paula Gooder, writer and lecturer on Biblical Studies, John Bell from the Iona Community, Adrian Plass, writer and satirist and Ann Morisey, Community Theologian.

The Gathering 2011 will include a day full of activities for all ages on Saturday. The 'In conversation' event which last year saw Ian Hislop and the Archbishop banter in front of a sell-out audience will also return in 2011; further details to be announced in the New Year. Find out more online at: www.canterburydiocese.org/thegathering

Fairtrade Fortnight



Fairtrade Fortnight, which runs from 27th February to 12th March 2011, is a time to raise awareness of Fairtrade as a response to global poverty. With a theme of 'Show Off Your Label', churches, schools and organizations are encouraged to participate and run imaginative activities to promote the Fairtrade movement. Nationally there is a special focus on cotton, with an attempt at the world record for creating the longest string of hand-designed bunting. Local schools, churches and other groups can get involved by ordering a Fairtrade cotton kit from the Fairtrade Foundation and designing their own bunting triangles. Information is available at: www.fairtrade.org.uk
The Fairtrade contacts include:

- Canterbury: richardnorman@gn.apc.org
- Deal: sdelling@talk21.com
- Dover: pambrivio@btinternet.com
- Faversham: jorichards@rowallan.supanet.com
- Thanet: tammysj@btinternet.com

Parish News

Tale of Two Priests

Two priests from Canterbury Diocese were selected to participate at two different conferences in two different continents this autumn.

Justin Lewis-Anthony: Conference of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina



The Reverend Justin Lewis-Anthony, Rector of St Stephen's Canterbury was asked to be the keynote speaker at the clergy conference of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina following the publication of Justin's recent book 'If You Meet George Herbert on the Road, Kill Him: Radically Re-thinking Priestly Ministry' (Continuum).

Justin describes what happened during the conference: "For three days I explored with 160 bishops, priests and deacons the implications of the ministry of George Herbert on the twenty-first century church. To be more accurate, we explored together the way in which a false memory of George Herbert has become 'Herbertism', a rigid and impractical expectation on the way in which clergy are expected to minister, and which was never a part of the ministry of Herbert in seventeenth century Wiltshire."

Justin, who wondered if the idea of 'Herbertism' might not be relevant for priests in North America, discovered it was: "Finding a pattern of priestly ministry appropriate for our own times, is a task not just for the clergy of the Church of England, but also, for the people of the Episcopal Church. I am grateful for the chance to explore these issues with my brothers and sisters in the United States."

Sheila Porter: The Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, Cape Town



Team Vicar at St George's Deal, The Reverend Sheila Porter, went to Cape Town, South Africa in October as a participant at 'The Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization'.

The Congress, a worldwide event which happens every 15 years, aims to bring together Christian leaders from across

the world to grapple with the big issues facing the church. Sheila was invited after the Director of the UK network for Global Mission 'Global Connections' heard Sheila speak earlier this year.

Sheila describes the event: "The composition of the Cape Town Congress reflected the enormous shift of world Christianity in this century with only a small number from the UK. We gathered together to wrestle with tough issues based around the theme of 'God in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself'.

"We came away with the Cape Town commitment, which is a declaration of belief and a call to action. For me this is a passion to help make missional disciples, remembering that God's dream for our nations is far bigger than ours could ever be."



Year of Creation launched with harvest lunch

In September around 70 people filled St. Stephen's parish hall in Canterbury to share a harvest festival lunch made purely with locally produced food. This local 'feast for a fiver' used meat and produce from local farmers topped up by fruit and vegetables from parishioners' allotments.

The lunch marked the start of St. Stephen's church 'Year of Creation', a series of events which will look at the Christian response to the current economical and environmental concerns facing the world.

Future events include: discussions at the Old Beverley Pub, originally built for the parish clerk, a bird watching walk in Sheppey and a study day with the Franciscan brothers. More information from: churchwardens@ststephenscanterbury.net

Heritage Centre for St Saviour's Westgate



Joyce Whitehead OBE (in wheelchair) remembering her evacuation to Stafford.

During the summer and autumn, St Saviour's Church Westgate became a centre for heritage, hosting three exhibitions about the two World Wars.

'Children on the Move', which was opened in front of an audience of 200 on 5th June 2010 by local MP Roger Gale, documented the story of the Thanet children who were evacuated to Staffordshire in June 1940, following the fall of France.

Exhibition organizer, Dawn Crouch explains: "After France fell to enemy forces, plans to evacuate every child of school age were quickly put into

operation. Parents were given just one day to decide what to do. One evacuee wrote: 'My parents didn't want us to go, but my father was a policeman. He thought he must set a good example.'

"A common memory was the arrival in Staffordshire - which one evacuee called 'the slave market' of waiting to be chosen. Life in Staffordshire was a complete culture change as many were billeted in mining villages."

On September 18th St Saviour's invited all the contributors, their friends and families to a special reunion which Dawn describes: "Many people who hadn't seen each other for over 50 years were tearfully and joyfully re-united."

Dawn concludes: "The Heritage Centre has been a wonderful outreach of the PCC to the community."

160 years of faith and hope at St Andrew's Deal

On Sunday 31st October, exactly 160 years since the consecration of St Andrew's Deal, a special Mass was held at the church. The congregation included Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, Admiral the Lord Boyce, and the Mayor of Deal, Cllr. Ben Bano.

St Andrew's was built in 1850 by public subscription for the benefit of the fishing community of North Deal and consecrated by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd. John Sumner.

Parish Priest, Father Christopher Lindlar, praised St. Andrew's founders for their Christian hope saying: "The founders set out in faith and hope and St Andrew's has stood as a beacon of faith and hope ever since."

At the reception after Mass, Lord Boyce offered a toast to St. Andrew's, congratulating the church on its first 160 years and wishing it well for the next 160. Cllr. Ben Bano thanked St. Andrew's for its commitment to the life of Deal and for its contribution to music and the arts.



St Andrew's parish priest Fr Christopher Lindlar, centre, with from left Fr Ian Shackleton, Deal Mayor Cllr Ben Bano, Admiral The Lord Boyce, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, and Mr. John Linge.

Holy Trinity take lead in Jubilee Debt Campaign



Linda Curtis campaigning in Canterbury.

The Jubilee Debt Campaign (JDC) which seeks to encourage governments to write off the debts of the poorest countries in the world receives support from churches across the country. In Canterbury Diocese, Holy Trinity Broadstairs is an active 'Jubilee Congregation' inspired by church member Linda Curtis, who is also the secretary of the East Kent JDC Group.

Richard Podger, Chair of the East Kent JDC, explains: "The congregation at Holy Trinity has been working consistently and loyally for this cause for many years. Linda helps keep the congregation up to date with current news from JDC, for example the exciting touch-and-go issue of the 'Vulture Funds' Act which was passed at the very last moment of the last Parliament in May.

"The 'Engine Room of Prayer Group' at Holy Trinity regularly prays about the debt issue, collections have been taken for JDC and many members of the congregation also write letters to MPs and Government Ministers on the issue of third world debt."

Linda, who also runs Junior Church at Holy Trinity, commented: "I am deeply encouraged by the response of church members, and the support of the PCC who together are committed to justice for the poor."

www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk

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Church School *News*



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Canterbury Cathedral Christingle Service 2010: The young, very young and not so young are all welcome to attend the Christingle service which takes place at Canterbury Cathedral on Tuesday 28th December at 3pm

Church schools to present at the Cathedral Christingle service

Three schools will make a joint presentation at this year's Christingle service held at Canterbury Cathedral on 28th December. For over 20 years Canterbury Cathedral has hosted the popular Christingle service, which is organised by The Children's Society, where old and young light candles on specially made Christingles.

Children from St Alphege Church of England Infant School, St Alphege Endowed Church of England Junior School and the Whitstable Junior School along with members of the St Alphege Church Community will make a presentation at the service about The Children's Society 'Thanet Intergenerational Project'. The presentation will include an all age choir, a ribbon dance and meditations focussed on how children love and value the stories and wisdom of older people.

School interaction at the Christingle service has been growing over recent years and is just one way The Children's Society is working with Church schools.

Karen Carolan Evans, member of the Christingle Committee commented: "The Christingle service offers a wonderful opportunity to gather in the Cathedral at a time of year when the spiritual is so often hidden under layers of Christmas wrapping."

Karen continued: "We are pleased that our guest speaker this year will be Bishop Trevor, who is an enthusiastic supporter of the work of The Children's Society. The invitation to attend is open to anyone, so please do join us this year."

More details about the Christingle service and information about the work of The Children's Society in schools can be obtained from the Diocesan President of The Children's Society Mr David Budd on: davidandroseie.budd@googlemail.com

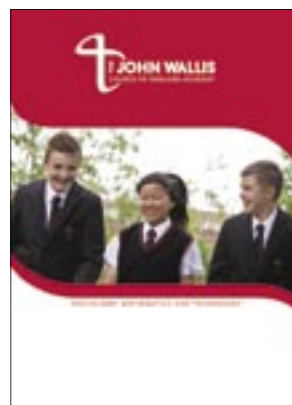
Outstanding success for St Eanswythe Primary

Congratulations to St Eanswythe's Church of England Primary School, Folkestone who achieved 'Outstanding' in their recent SIAS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools) on 15th September.

New Church of England Academy for Ashford

The new John Wallis Church of England Academy opened in September on the site of Ashford Christ Church High School. The school, which has a new logo, new school uniform and refurbished and extended buildings, is named after John Wallis a leading mathematician of the 17th Century who was born in Ashford. A new sixth form will be opened in September 2011 before the academy eventually moves into new buildings in 2013.

Read the spring edition of Outlook to find out more about the new Principal of the academy, Mr John McParland. Also you can download the new school prospectus at www.thejohnwallisacademy.org



'Topping out' ceremony at Sissinghurst's new school



Left to right: Cathy Penfold, Pauline Skinner, Cllr Gary Cooke, Revd Alan Norris and Alistair Hamilton.

To mark the mid-point of the construction of their new school building, school staff from Sissinghurst Church of England Primary School took part in a special 'topping out' ceremony at the new site in Common Road in September.

After nailing the first tiles to the roof, the new Head Teacher, Mrs Penfold, commented: "The children and staff are very excited that the building project has reached this stage and we are all looking forward to moving into these fantastic premises next Easter." During the ceremony the Vicar of Sissinghurst, the Reverend Alan Norris, said a prayer for the work.

The new school replaces the cramped Victorian site which the school has occupied since 1840 and includes many 'green' elements.

Charity project launched by St Mary of Charity

St Mary of Charity Church of England School has recently launched a charity project to help pupils become good global citizens. Children will be sending shoeboxes full of goodies to children and families in Serbia and donating furniture to a Serbian school, through the charity Blythswood Care. Earlier in the year children heard from Blythswood workers first hand and learnt about the experiences of children less fortunate than themselves.

The school, which recently achieved a 'good' SIAS inspection (Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools) was also praised in June by Ofsted for its strong Christian Ethos, who reported the school as 'a welcoming and inclusive community, in which pupils and staff feel secure and happy'.



In picture: Back row: Mrs Hann (headteacher), Mr Hope (Deputy Headteacher), Merril Haeusler (Director of Learning for Kent County Council), Phil from Blythswood, Pastor Dragisa, Mrs Wimlett and Mr Colyer, School Governors and June from Blythswood. Front row: School Council.

New School buildings for St George's Foundation School

At the end of September, Bishop Trevor joined students and staff at St George's Church of England Foundation School to officially open the new transformed school.

The new £23 million school was funded through the 'Building Schools for the Future' programme and includes new science labs, a theatre, open-plan art studio, a four-court sports hall and gym and a large open-plan space with teaching areas.

Principal, Mrs Kim Stoner who described the project as a dream which became reality, said: "We have something so unique, so special, I for one, along with my colleagues feel honoured to lead St George's Church of England Foundation School in its new chapter of history."



Bishop Trevor and Mrs Kim Stoner, Principal of St George's Foundation School.

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Organ workshops initiative through the 'Village Organist' scheme



'Can't play, won't play'. Is that a refrain you hear from your church musicians when you ask them to play the organ at church? Or perhaps you are a pianist who would like to play the organ but don't know where to start. Or maybe you are a 'reluctant' organist who is yet to pluck up the courage to play in public?

The 'Village Organist' is a series of workshops held at St Nicholas Church Pluckley in

association with the St. Giles International Organ School (based in St Giles Cripplegate in the Barbican, London and now part of the Royal College of Organists). The Pluckley scheme is designed to encourage organists of all abilities, including those new to the instrument, to play confidently and competently.

Now in its second year, with four half day workshops completed, the 'Village Organist' uses Tom Bell, a professional concert organist and tutor with the St. Giles International Organ School, to teach small classes of no more than 20.

Tom provides practical help for a whole range of issues. During the November workshop, participants received assistance with fingering and articulation, participated in a session on improvisation and learnt techniques to overcome nerves.

Participants enjoy playing the brand new Robin Jennings' organ (with modern mechanical action) which was installed in 2008 after the previous Bevington organ was irrevocably damaged in 2001.

Christine Maddrell, organist at St Nicholas Pluckley explained the rationale behind the 'Village Organist': "After the old instrument was destroyed it became apparent we would need to install a new instrument at a significant cost. The Organ Committee decided that in raising money for a top notch instrument we should also make the organ freely available for teaching and practice and use it to help encourage new musicians to become church organists."

Tom Bell added: "There is a tremendous shortage of church organists, particularly in the villages and it is important that church communities look to develop their own organists."

Anyone who is proficient on the piano can learn to play the organ and there is a wealth of music and teaching material for people of all abilities. Reluctant organists also need to be encouraged to play more, as it is only by playing publicly that they will improve."

Tom continued: "We hope the 'Village Organist' will help regular and reluctant church organists improve their technique and confidence. We also hope that the workshops will help develop a new generation of church organists for Kent."

The next workshop will be held in May 2011 and by request will deal with the topic of pedalling.

To find out more about the 'Village Organist' and the opportunities for individual lessons in Pluckley contact: Philip Bell: 01227 478 390, email: pbell@diocant.org or visit St Giles website: www.rco.org.uk

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All Saints Maidstone hosts Organ festival

An organ festival which seeks to discover and encourage young organists was held at All Saints Maidstone at the end of October. The Kent County Organists' Association, which has been held for the last five years, saw children and young people under the age of 21 compete in five classes with cash prizes.

The Director of Music at Canterbury Cathedral, Dr David Flood who acted as the adjudicator on the day, praised the standard of the playing and said the Organ Festival was useful for encouraging those learning the organ.

Evelyn Tinker, 19, the winner of the Advanced competition, received £200 and an opportunity to give a recital at the cathedral.



Left to right: Michael Bryks (Most Promising), Martin Hau, Guy Stead (Intermediate winner), William Fairbairn, Evelyn Tinker (Open and Advanced winner), Matthew Nicholls (Most Promising), Simon Lindley (Elementary winner) and Dr David Flood.

Re-imagining Society

Following the Government's spending review, England is about to undertake its biggest budgetary cuts for 20 years. The welfare state may be reduced significantly.

With the introduction of the 'Big Society' the government hopes society will take greater responsibility for itself. Policies are being introduced with the aim of allowing voluntary organisations and social enterprises to provide more public services. The government hopes to develop a culture of volunteerism and philanthropy where communities will be empowered to make a difference locally.

In this special issue, we've asked four contributors to re-imagine society, to share their reflections on how society needs to change and the role the church may play in this.

Whilst the official church response to the Big Society is discussed, many say that churches have been enacting the Big Society for years. We feature four case studies of voluntary projects in the Diocese and show how Christian action can make a difference locally. This special issue also includes a short report on how the Diocese is being re-structured and an article providing ideas for churches seeking funding for community projects.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

The Government Adviser for the Big Society, Lord Wei, challenges Christians to play a more prominent role in public life. Kent Partnership member Jonathan Shaw describes how life may change in Kent. The Reverend Dr Malcolm Brown discusses the opportunities and challenges facing the church and Bishop Trevor makes the link between generosity and a fair society.



Jonathan Shaw



Lord Wei



Bishop Trevor



Dr Malcolm Brown

INSPIRATIONAL CASE STUDIES

Four case studies show how Christians in the Diocese make a difference locally.



ORGANISATION AND FUNDRAISING



Funding church community projects and information on how the re-shaping of the Diocese will provide more support to churches.



BISHOP OF DOVER

Generosity is the key to a fairer society

Fairness is the word of the moment. Is it fair that some parts of society will be hit harder by the spending cuts? Is it fair that the EU has increased its budget when member states are trying to reduce their spending? Is it fair that families on benefits should no longer receive more money than tax-paying working families?

Fairness lies at the heart of much of the discussion around the Big Society agenda. Despite much questioning and criticism, I warm personally to many of the themes behind the Big Society; the desire for a sense of community and for social justice.

The erosion of community values has gone so far that many basic social structures need rebuilding. The strength of the Big Society idea lies in the extent to which it reflects a Christian understanding of being human; an understanding that we are reliant on others and they are reliant on us. It reflects the nature

of God's relationship with human beings who remain dependent upon His grace for all good things. It is only when we ourselves recognise our dependence on others that we understand a little of God's love for us and His radical generosity.

Contrast this radical generosity with the selfish individualism that drives so much of our culture. Individualism where our neighbours remain unknown, where we would rather cross the street than help a drunken youth, where we buy cheap clothes without a care for workers on the other side of the world unable to earn a living wage.

Individualism is based on our freedom to reject God's love. But Individualism allows people to become alone, unsupported and lost.

As others have pointed out, and as discussed at General Synod in November, none of the

"I warm personally to many of the themes behind the Big Society; the desire for a sense of community and for social justice."

Big Society agenda is new to the church. As Christians, we are called to be a community holding fast to the virtues of neighbourliness, generosity and fellowship as we try to model ourselves on God's unconditional love.

But there is always more that we need and should be doing as we seek to build a fair society, to build a Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven. And we shall only achieve this through a genuine love for our fellow human beings and a spirit of true generosity.

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RE-IMAGINING SOCIETY: CASE STUDY 1 FOLKESTONE STREET PASTORS

Volunteering to keep clubbers and our night time streets safe

Town centres can be hostile places late at night if you are young, alone, drunk and tired. Help is now at hand in the form of Street Pastors, specially trained and equipped volunteers who patrol town centres across East Kent, helping to keep clubbers and communities safe at night.

Street Pastors is an inter-denominational church response to urban problems. The initiative began in Brixton seven years ago and now over 7,000 volunteers from Church of England and other Christian denominations work night shifts, providing help to night-revellers and party-goers in towns and cities in Britain.

“When my teenagers were growing up I used to lie in bed wishing there was someone out there to pick them up if they needed help” recounts a parent who now volunteers as a Street Pastor in Maidstone. The help offered is both practical and spiritual.

Practical help includes ordering taxis, handing out fresh water, removing broken glass from streets, helping people who have had bags or money stolen and providing flip flops for women whose feet are sore from a night on high heels. They also provide spiritual help, praying for people and talking and listening to the lonely and marginalised.

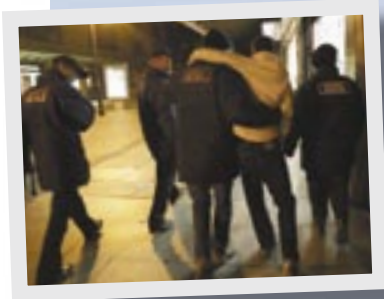
The Street Pastors work in collaboration

with local police, CCTV operators, licensed premises' staff and paramedics. Paul Davis who volunteers with the Maidstone Street Pastors explains the benefits of the scheme:

“When my teenagers were growing up I used to lie in bed wishing there was someone out there to pick them up if they needed help”

“Working in partnership with others we can help reduce crime, injuries and ‘nuisance’ incidents. We can make sure vulnerable people are cared for and by tackling a real problem in a non-judgmental way, we are transforming the perception of the church and the Christian Faith.”

Street Pastors in Maidstone has been running for two years and schemes in Sittingbourne, Ashford, Canterbury and Thanet have been launched more recently. Five congregations in Dover hope to initiate a Street Pastor scheme in the town in 2011.



Photos: The Ascension Trust.

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JONATHAN SHAW

Tackling Disadvantage in Kent

Jonathan Shaw is a member of the Kent Partnership and Ambition Champion for tackling disadvantage and a freelance Consultant. As Member of Parliament for Chatham and Aylesford from 1997-2010, Jonathan served in the Government as Minister for Disabled People and Minister for South East England.

Commentators and analysts report that the spending review will affect some communities more than others. How will this be borne out in Kent, a county of contrasts? The scale of the cuts, one senior council boss in Kent told me, sent the coldest shiver down their spine that they could ever remember and they were expecting further and colder experiences very soon. Things will not be the same after next April when the cuts begin to bite.

I do not think that the Big Society idea will suddenly produce an army of new volunteers ready to fill redundant council jobs to repair the roads, collect the rubbish or send out the council tax bills (hooray to the last one I hear you say!) but it may help to provide a focus on what our priorities in Kent should be. We need to have a clear plan that is drawn up in partnership between the County, District, Voluntary/Faith and Business sectors. If we do not, I think the pain will be longer and deeper. The Kent Partnership, which draws together representatives from these groups, has been working on this.

Whilst it is right to focus on the areas with greatest need I have often argued that we should not forget that just because someone lives in a wealthy area it does not mean that they are without need. I trained as a social worker in Surrey, not often referred to as a poor area, and I worked with children there who had as much need as those found in 'poorer' areas of the country. I think we should not miss this important point when deciding on priorities. I also think this rule should apply when taking account of rural areas; urban areas are often over-prioritised because of population.

At a recent meeting of the Kent Partnership, agreement was quickly reached

that voluntary groups were a good thing and that our communities would suffer if they were not adequately resourced. It is easy to agree with such sentiments, but the real difficulty will come when Councillors throughout Kent have to choose who gets a grant and who does not. I know what it is like to make those choices and it is not easy. I hope the work of the Kent Partnership will provide a useful guide for where priorities lie. As Ambition Champion in the area of tackling disadvantage I shall work with the Kent Partnership to ensure that the voices of the marginalised are heard.

The way forward to prosperity and to reducing disadvantage is of course through the creation of jobs in the private sector. In Kent our location places us at a huge advantage over other parts of the country, but if we are to realise our potential then we have to better develop skills in our workforce. The slogan from all political parties should be "Skills, Skills, Skills". Whilst there has been gradual improvement with children leaving school better qualified, we need to do more. The planned growth in apprenticeships could provide some of the solution and I would encourage employers to find out more about giving a youngster an opportunity; it is now easier than ever to take someone on.

Finally, and continuing the jobs theme, tackling some features of disadvantage is not always about money. Many disabled people with skills and qualifications want to work and yet cannot find work. This is largely because of the misperceptions of many employers. I am profoundly concerned that the 10% increase in the numbers of people with disabilities who work will crumble as the cuts take hold. The public sector (and organisations funded by the public sector),

employ large numbers of people with disabilities, yet the public sector faces heavy cuts. It is therefore vital that the private sector actively recruits from all sections of our communities. There is a lot of assistance out there for employers and I would encourage them to get in contact with organisations like the 'Employers Forum on Disability'.

"The slogan from all political parties should be 'Skills, Skills, Skills'. Whilst there has been gradual improvement with children leaving school better qualified, we need to do more."

Employing people with disabilities is good for all in society. The positive effect of employing disabled people was described to me by a mother who had just given birth to a baby with Down's syndrome. She understandably had a mixture of emotions but was transformed when a member of the cleaning staff looked at her baby in the cot at the end of her bed and said "what a lovely baby". The cleaner was a young woman with Down's syndrome and the mother not only enjoyed the comment but immediately saw that her daughter could take her place in society later in life like the member of the hospital staff.

I have lived in Kent all my life and I am sure that by harnessing our collective efforts we will find our way through the cuts and job losses and emerge with a stronger and more sustainable economy, one that really bears down on disadvantage - but it will not be without a lot of effort.

Funding & Community Projects

Christian communities are well placed to support their neighbourhood through outreach projects; congregations provide a good source of volunteers and church buildings can be adapted for a wide range of uses. But most projects will require additional funding.

Stewardship Adviser, Liz Marsh, suggests churches go through the following checklist before fundraising for community projects.

✓ What is your vision? Is God involved?

The mission of your church should be at the heart of any project you undertake, and any project should begin with your community. It is important that your church family is enthusiastically behind this vision if your project is to be successful.

✓ What do you want to do?

In any funding application you will be expected to supply a 'statement of needs'. This is where you set out what you are trying to do and how it will benefit your community.

✓ Consult your community

Talk to your others in your community to find out if similar projects are operating or planned or if there is anyone else (local charities/other faith groups) with whom you could work in partnership. This will help ensure your project has a genuine need and is supported locally.

✓ Do your sums

You will need a detailed budget, and doing it right at the beginning will demonstrate you know what you are doing. If you are planning to employ someone – for example a project manager or community worker – draw up a job description at an early stage.

You will also need to draw up a business plan.

✓ What is your exit strategy?

Potential funders will want to know whether your project is sustainable. If you want to employ someone, consider what you will do when the initial funding finishes.

✓ Where will the money come from?

- Parish reserves – if you have any reserves, funders will expect you to use them.
- Trusts and other grant making bodies – whilst money is available trusts are unlikely to fund the entire project and competition for funds is tough. Tailor your application to the trust to ensure you meet their criteria.
- Think about approaching wealthy individuals who have some kind of connection to your cause.

✓ Fundraising events

Whilst you'll never raise £80K from jumble sales an enormous amount can be raised in parishes by ingenious local fundraising events.

More information and useful web sites

The Christian Stewardship pages of the diocesan website www.canterburydiocese.org has a list of trusts and other grant giving organisations.

The stewardship department is happy to help in any way.

Call Liz Marsh on 01227 459401, email: emarsh@diocant.org

Other information can be found at: www.churchcare.co.uk

Diocese re-structures to provide more support

The Diocese is re-structuring to provide greater assistance to churches in the Diocese as they grow, support their communities and develop ministry.

The first change is to increase the support offered through the work of the Archdeacons by appointing a third Archdeacon rather than a new Bishop of Maidstone. Under proposals for future consideration a new Archdeaconry of Ashford will be created from the Deaneries of Ashford, Dover, Elham and Sandwich. This will be headed by Archdeacon Philip Down who will change titles to become the first Archdeacon of Ashford.

The other change sees a re-shaping of the core work of the Diocese onto five key areas.

Communities and Partnership

A new area that will aid churches with their work in communities. Once recruited the new Archdeacon of Maidstone will give leadership and support to this work and a specialist officer will also help churches develop partnerships and seek funding for community projects.

Local Church Development,

A new area that will support church growth by integrating discipleship, mission, vocation and stewardship and will be supported by the work of the new Diocesan and Deanery Mission and Ministry Committees. Archdeacon Philip will give leadership and support to this work.

Ministry and Training

Will develop ordained and lay ministers for flexible and sustainable ministry. Archdeacon Sheila, alongside her cathedral, national and archdeaconry responsibilities, will offer leadership and support in this area.

Education

Will include the Board of Education (with Bishop Trevor as a board member) and will cover work with schools, higher education establishments, children, young people and families.

Resource Management and Compliance

Will connect finance, property, communications and human resources and will be the engine for the work we do.

For detailed information on the re-structuring of the Diocese visit: www.canterburydiocese.org/diocesansynodnews

RE-IMAGINING SOCIETY: CASE STUDY 2 THANET KIDZ KLUB



An ecumenical initiative which runs a Saturday morning club and provides family support

Around 60 children, aged between five and eleven years, work as a team searching through a confetti of paper for tiny scraps inscribed with words that will spell a sentence to a memory verse. Earlier the youngsters were throwing wet sponges at a leader, and after watching a pantomime and learning about a parable, the children will join together for prayer.

These children come from mainly two estates in Ramsgate which represent some of the most deprived wards in the country. None of the children are members of a church community but every Saturday in term time, their parents bring them to enjoy a morning of fun, games and to learn about Jesus.

Thanet Kidz Klub is an ecumenical initiative which runs a Saturday Morning club at the Marlowe Academy and also provides family support and development work in schools.



“I guess you could say this is the Big Society in action”

Around 100 children regularly attend the morning sessions and each youngster is also visited during the week. In partnership with Fegans (local Christian Charity) pairs of specially trained volunteers visit family homes and drop off an activity sheet relating to the next Saturday morning. Most often the visits provide an opportunity to build relationships with the child and his or her family members. Sometimes the visits provide an opportunity to pray with the family or to help in other practical ways.

Project leader, Melody Mednick explains: “Visiting is central to the work of Kidz Klub. In recent weeks we have been able to help children who might have issues at school and various families have asked us to pray for them. We visited one family where Mum and Dad were having relationship problems and alongside Fegans were able to provide some form of relationship counselling.”

Thanet Kidz Klub launched in May this year following two years of prayer by members of local churches. Melody, who was previously involved as a volunteer at the Canterbury Kidz Klub, became project manager last September and spent six months sleeping on friends’ floors as she persuaded churches, the local council and charities to donate money and resources, that enabled the project to get off the ground.

Over twelve Thanet churches now provide volunteers, money, gifts-in-kind and prayer support and local voluntary and statutory organisations and local schools also support the growing scheme. Around 25 adults volunteer for the initiative including a number of ‘rookie’ leaders (under 18’s) who also help.

Melody concludes: “Kidz Klub is so important as it is about local churches loving local people. I guess you could say this is the Big Society in action. Christians should actively serve local people. By getting out there we can make a difference to our community and ultimately we can show people the love and hope of Jesus.”

Thanet Kidz Klub runs a weekly Saturday morning club (term time) from 10.30am – 12 noon at the Marlowe Academy.

More information from Melody Mednick
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LORD WEI

The Big Society and the Church

Lord Nat Wei, a Christian, is the Government Adviser for the Big Society and co-founder of Britain's Teach First programme.

It has stimulated lively debate, inspired policy across government, and invited all of us to think about how we would interpret and apply it in our lives. At its heart, the Big Society represents a fundamental shift, which though it was conceived before the current financial crisis, recognises that we can no longer run our society in the same way as we have done over the last sixty years. 2012 represents a watershed moment in our history where more people will leave the workforce through retirement than enter it, putting permanent pressure on government finances. This, combined with changing lifestyles enabled by technology, the inability to solve some of our most intractable social problems through state action alone, and the shift of economic power from West to East, requires a different model, which combines the best of the welfare state to provide protection and security for the vulnerable and basic services for all, with room for individual and collective responsibility and creativity.

The Government's focus is on releasing power to citizens; reforming public services so that innovative and compassionate third party providers and front-line professionals can operate in a more humane, flexible, and independent way in the community. Empowered neighbourhoods will have more say and influence over local services and planning, catalysing social action that frees people to support each other with less interference from bureaucracy – with more encouragement to contribute in whatever way they can.

But the government cannot act alone. The public sector will need to work with the private and voluntary sectors to support citizens. And extra care will need to be taken by all parties to ensure that the least connected citizens can participate – whether through the training of community organisers, finance from the Big Society Bank, or through the Community First local endowment building programme targeted at deprived areas with low social capital.

Yes, the necessary reductions in public expenditure will be painful, not least for many organisations in the voluntary sector, but in a little over 6-12 months huge opportunities will emerge for charities and social enterprises to be involved in service delivery and to be paid for their results, for those seeking social investment to grow their work to start to receive it, and for those operating locally to get commissions from citizens and communities directly.

All this might sound removed from the church and life as a Christian. But there is much in common between Biblical principles and the Big Society: the focus on relationships and community, the passion for social justice – to ensure the small are protected from vested interests and supported by the big – and in the humility to realise that man-made solutions are necessary but not sufficient. There is much in common also in the willingness to listen to and hear from communities, including the Christian community, recognising its distinctive values and beliefs, and in not wanting to suppress them, but creating spaces for public discourse in which different views can be heard and respected. Some have said recently that the cuts undermine social justice, and Big Society itself, but again the approach to tackling poverty stems from similar convictions that man cannot live by bread alone. The only way to ultimately transform lives is to restore people to full participation in society – through work, through relationships, through purpose – not through a narrow focus on pure economic transactions which over time can undermine all that which makes life worth living for.

What opportunities exist then for churches and Christians to participate in shaping and moulding the Big Society? As individuals there is much in it that will allow us to associate more with each other, less fearfully and bound by rules, to serve our neighbours and build trust, to use all of our skills to support and invest locally in causes that we

care about. As organisations, there will be much in it to explore the role that churches play as 'hubs' in the community, potentially hosting public services such as job centres and post offices and even libraries, as well as youth activities, education, and other charitable activities. As a movement, the Big Society challenges us as Christians to take a more prominent role in public life, to shape the market, the voluntary sphere, and public services so that they are more loving, less monolithic, and more open.

As organisations, there will be much in it to explore the role that churches play as 'hubs' in the community, potentially hosting public services such as job centres and post offices and even libraries, as well as youth activities, education, and other charitable activities.

Of course the church and Christians should not be expected to accept the Big Society unthinkingly. There is a window of opportunity to help to shape it, make the most of it, and fill it with practical action at many different levels. Archbishop Rowan has said the Big Society is not fully thought through. He is partly right. For once Government has chosen not to claim to be able to think through everything for everyone. There is much good thinking from the church and other parts of society to learn from and there is time and space for Big Society to be a common endeavour that represents our collective thinking. I look forward to working closely with others to help shape and realise this vision and I believe many will be found within the church as well as across society as a whole.

RE-IMAGINING SOCIETY: CASE STUDY 3

ALL SAINTS HELPS A NEIGHBOUR

Churches and organisations in Canterbury joined together to help a family from the Vauxhall Estate in October.

The family came forward following contact made through the new 'Street Klub' which is run by members of All Saints Canterbury.

Curate, the Reverend Norma Bracewell explains: "The family were finding it hard to live in their house, which was in a shocking state and in need of some TLC. Chris Penfold, member of the Leadership Team, contacted local churches and did the rounds of DIY shops securing generous offers of help. We were delighted that Homebase donated £240 worth of materials. A work party mainly made up from 'Change Youth' (about 25 young people) and headed by Chris Penfold, gathered to pray at All Saints, before setting about the repairs, cleaning, decorating and gardening. There is still work to be done and we will pursue it and I also hope in future to help the father learn to read"



"I think this was a wonderful example of various Canterbury churches working together to do God's work. It wasn't just talked about, it was DONE."

Norma continues: "I think this was a wonderful example of various Canterbury churches working together to do God's work. It wasn't just talked about, it was DONE."

The All Saints Street Klub meets every other Sunday afternoon (weather permitting) on the Vauxhall Estate and holds activities and games for around 40 children from the area. The parish hope to create a shelter so that the Sunday sessions can continue even in wet weather.



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MALCOLM BROWN

Life after the Spending Review

The Reverend Dr Malcolm Brown is Director of Mission and Public Affairs for the Archbishops' Council of the Church of England

It is encouraging to see how quickly the churches have begun to articulate again their fundamental concern for the most vulnerable. The Chancellor's Spending Review means we face afresh the prospect of deep poverty, social exclusion and widening inequality, with all the human misery and community desolation which so often attend periods of recession. Were we seduced by the Blair years into thinking that things could only get better? It certainly seems as if the church's concern for the ethics of society was submerged for too long beneath a more introspective focus on personal ethics. But it will be important to ensure that growing poverty, unemployment and social fragmentation are not accompanied by a repeat of the mistakes which were made, alongside many moments of grace and glory, in that doleful decade.

"We have to earn our voice, against vocal opposition, through the attractiveness of our message and our visible commitment to building a better world."

These are not the 1980s as far as the Chancellor is concerned, if only because he has fewer tools in his toolkit than his predecessors. Deregulation of financial structures and the globalising of markets have left every nation far more vulnerable to credit agencies and markets which lie well beyond the policy reach of national government. His options are profoundly constrained and it would be hard to get a grip on the culture of bonuses and vast salaries even if he wanted to. The hegemony of a single economic model over the last 30 years has left no philosophical alternative, only a rather technical debate about the speed of cuts and the balance between spending reductions and tax rises. This debate is important – and serious economists disagree strongly – but we are

all working within the model which arrived in 1979 as a relatively untried economic experiment.

These are not the 1980s for the church either. The context of default secularism, accompanied by strident atheism in public places, has changed our social and political engagement. We cannot take any basic sympathy for the church for granted in high (or low) places, nor can we assume a right to a voice in the public square. We have to earn our voice, against vocal opposition, through the attractiveness of our message and our visible commitment to building a better world.

The balance of power within the church has shifted too. Building up the church and attending to our missionary calling claimed the agenda in the introspective decades and the vulnerability of the church is still a fact. The risk is that, in a time of austerity and inequality, social concerns will be seen as an alternative to the task of building a flourishing church rather than both being integral to the church's authentic witness.

One of the most hopeful signs today is the extent and depth of evangelical social action, often in some of the most hard-pressed areas. Thirty years ago, evangelicals were inclined to dismiss Christian action among the poor and vulnerable as implying salvation by works. That suspicion has largely disappeared as the authentic theological imperatives of service and compassion have been better articulated in terms of God's redeeming grace. But the need for good theology has not diminished. In the 1980s, action was too often grounded upon half-formulated theological motifs which didn't fit the context.

The energy and drive generated by compassion for others and rage at avoidable injustice may manifest the Holy Spirit's call to action, but it needs, now more than ever, to be accompanied by a clear understanding about

why and how action is rooted in the Bible, doctrine, ethics and worship.

It may be a tall order, but shaping the church for an era of austerity is a job for activists, theologians, liturgists and intercessors. Christians need to know their need of each other as never before.

Rowan Williams attacks Coalition over Big Society and spending cuts

Bishops warn David Cameron's Big Society will be undermined by welfare cuts

Can religion rescue Dave's Big Society?

Following the government Spending Review, Church and Big Society have been making the headlines.



RE-IMAGINING SOCIETY: CASE STUDY 4

PASTORAL CARE IN MARDEN

A village that cares



Last year, six volunteer drivers made 55 trips to local hospitals, doctors and dentists.

“In our village, we are all involved in caring for one another” says The Reverend James Robertson when he describes the strong history of pastoral care in Marden. The church, St Michael and All Angels, plays a central role in co-ordinating a number of initiatives which support the community.

Running for nearly twenty years, the hospital transport scheme provides help with transport to and from medical appointments for the elderly and infirm. Last year, six volunteer drivers made 55 trips to local hospitals, doctors and dentists. James explains how the service

works: “Our drivers support the people they give lifts to by helping them from the car into the clinic, and sitting with them as required. A small charge is made to cover costs but this service is so much more than a taxi service.”

The church also runs a ‘Village Café’ every Friday in the village hall. A rota of volunteers (many are from the church) serve tea and coffee and homemade cakes. Up to forty people of all ages, from young mums to pensioners attend each week, using the café as a place to chat and meet people and hear news from the Community Warden and others.

Marden Church also runs a special group for villagers who are on their own. The ‘First Monday Group’ meets on a monthly basis. Around 15 people including pensioners who have lived in the village for many years and new residents of the sheltered housing scheme come and enjoy an hour and half of company, pastoral support and refreshments.

James concludes: “The church plays a vital role in supporting the community. Getting out there and offering practical help is ‘Christianity with its sleeves rolled up’. We all have a role to play.”

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What's on in the Diocese

Saturday, December 18th 2010

Ringlestone hall fund to be boosted by harp concert

Young harpist, Tamara Young, is to give a harp recital in aid of the re-build of the new community hall on the Ringlestone Estate, Maidstone. The event will include works by Fauré, Hindemith, Grandjany.

Parish priest the Reverend Jackie Cray explains the fundraising initiative: "Currently the Ringlestone estate has no real community provision and the only small hall left will be bulldozed by Easter time to make way for new housing. It's urgent the church provides a good community resource as well as a worship centre for Ringlestone and those from the Springfield development."

The concert takes place on the evening of Saturday 18 December, 7.30pm at St Faiths Church, Maidstone. Entry is free and a collection will be taken afterwards. All are welcome.



Tamara Young

Christmas 2010

Churches across the Diocese will be holding special services for Christmas, including many carol services, crib services and Christingle services. Please check your local church website, noticeboard or parish magazine for details. You can also find a list of winter events in the Diocese: www.canterburydiocese.org/whatson/parish

Sunday 12 December Annual Candlelit Christmas Concert

St. Mildred's Church, Preston-next-Wingham, 4pm. The programme will include a mixture of Christmas, classical and light music for soprano, two clarinets and piano. Tickets £8, (children £5), including mulled wine and mince pies, from 01227 722513.

Sunday 12 December Concert by the Invicta Singers

St Mary, Willesborough, Ashford, 7.30pm. Contact: Paul Gardner: paul.gardner80@ntlworld.com

Thursday 23 December Carols in the Market Place – Faversham

Do come along to the Churches Together Community Carol Singing event which is now in its 34th year. The Gospel Mission Band will accompany the singing. Starts at 7pm.

Friday 24 December 'Search for the Christ Child'

St Martin of Tours, 3.30pm. A village enactment starts at St. Martin's Church. Mostly an outdoor event so wear warm clothes. Hot drinks and mince pies in the village hall after the event. Collection for the Children's Society. Contact Tikki Gulland, Tel: 01622 737471.

Friday 24 December Crib Service

St Andrew's Buckland, Dover, 5pm. Donkey led procession from the rectory car park where the first part of the service will take place and then to church for the remaining part. Contact Petra Kerr Tel: 07881 948459

2011

Wednesday 19 January 2011 St Peter's Contemporary Theology Group

What is the point of singing hymns?

With The Very Reverend Robert Willis, Dean of Canterbury. St Peter's Methodist Church, Canterbury, 7.45pm - 9.15pm. St Peter's Contemporary Theology Group is an ecumenical gathering open to all who are interested in lively discussions on contemporary themes in the theology and religion. Details from: ted@tedbishop.co.uk

Saturday 22 January 2011 Bach's 'Christmas Oratorio' Performed by Canterbury Choral Society

Canterbury Cathedral Nave, 7.30pm. Tickets from the Marlowe Theatre on 01227 787787 or via the on-line box office: www.newmarlowetheatre.org.uk

Saturday 5 February 2011 Giant Bring and Buy Sale at Canterbury Cathedral

The Chapter House, 10.30am - 1.30pm. Lots of different stalls and refreshments - please bring donated items to the Chapter House on Friday 4th February from 14.30pm to 17.30pm or on the day from 9.30am. For more details and on how to donate please call: 01227 865292.

Saturday 5 February 2011 60's music night with Simon Lane and band

St. Nicholas-at-Wade Village Hall, 7.00pm - 11pm. Proceeds to Friends of St. Nicholas Church.

Saturday 12 February 2011 Canterbury Cathedral Choir Concert

All Saints Church, Military Road, Canterbury, 7.00pm. The Choristers will perform works by Purcell, Mendelssohn and Rutter and there will be two organ solos. Tickets £8 available from Chris White 01227 455978, Revd Michael Stace 07831 174 900 or at the door.

Saturday 12 February 2011 Trash and Treasure Sale

St. Nicholas-at-Wade Church, 9.30am - 12.00 noon.

Saturday 26 February 2011 A day with Jennifer Rees-Larcombe

Eastling Village Hall (ME13 0BA), times 10.00am - 4.00pm, (tbc). A day of worship, prayer, study and inspiration led by Jennifer Rees-Larcombe. All welcome, full disabled access. To book please contact Jan Beckenham via The Rectory, Newnham Lane, Eastling, Faversham ME13 0AS or Tel: 01795 890487. Cost is £5 per person.

Friday 4 March 2011 Women's World Day of Prayer, Canterbury

St Andrew's United Reformed Church, Watling Street, 11.00am. St Thomas' Catholic Church, Burgate, 7.00pm. Interdenominational services prepared by Christian women of Chile. Contact Jane Nicholas 01227 785356.

Saturday 12 March 'Ways in Prayer'

Canterbury Diocesan Interim Spirituality Group. 10.00am - 3.30pm. Franciscan International Study Centre, Canterbury. To include a choice of three workshops:

- Music and Prayer with Music Therapist and Theologian Janet MacDonald.
- Praying with Icons with Julia Butterworth, former Diocesan Adviser in Spirituality.
- Are there patterns in our personal stories? with Brian Chalmers, Scientist and Priest.
- The Spirituality of Hospitality with Chaplain to the Living Well Amanda Evans.
- Sacred Space with Peter Ashman, Rector in Elham and Anne Rees, Spiritual Director.
- Making Connections - Exploring the links between the body, the mind and the spirit in our prayer with Helen Connell, Jacqui Cotteril, and Michael Morris.

More information from Rose Dale, Diocesan House: 01227 459401. Programme and booking online: www.canterburydiocese.org/waysinprayer

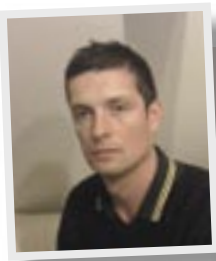
Saturday 19 March 2011 Worship & Liturgy Day 'Celebrating Easter'

St Mary Bredin, Canterbury, 10am to 3.30pm. A day for Clergy, Readers and ALM Worship Leaders, led by The Revd Professor Paul Bradshaw, Professor of Liturgy at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, and Christopher Irvine, Canon Librarian at Canterbury Cathedral. Information from: Rose Dale, Diocesan House: 01227 459401.

Programme and booking online: www.canterburydiocese.org/whatson

For a full list of events in the parishes visit www.canterburydiocese.org/whatson/parish

To receive a full list of parish events by post, please send an A5, self-addressed envelope (with large letter stamp) to: What's On, Diocesan House, Lady Wootton's Green, Canterbury CT1 1NQ



TALKING POINT RICHARD BARNARD

Can we consider ourselves as disciples - is it possible to be a disciple today? Richard dicusses further.

“Are you a disciple?”

When is the last time anyone asked you that on a Sunday morning walking into church?

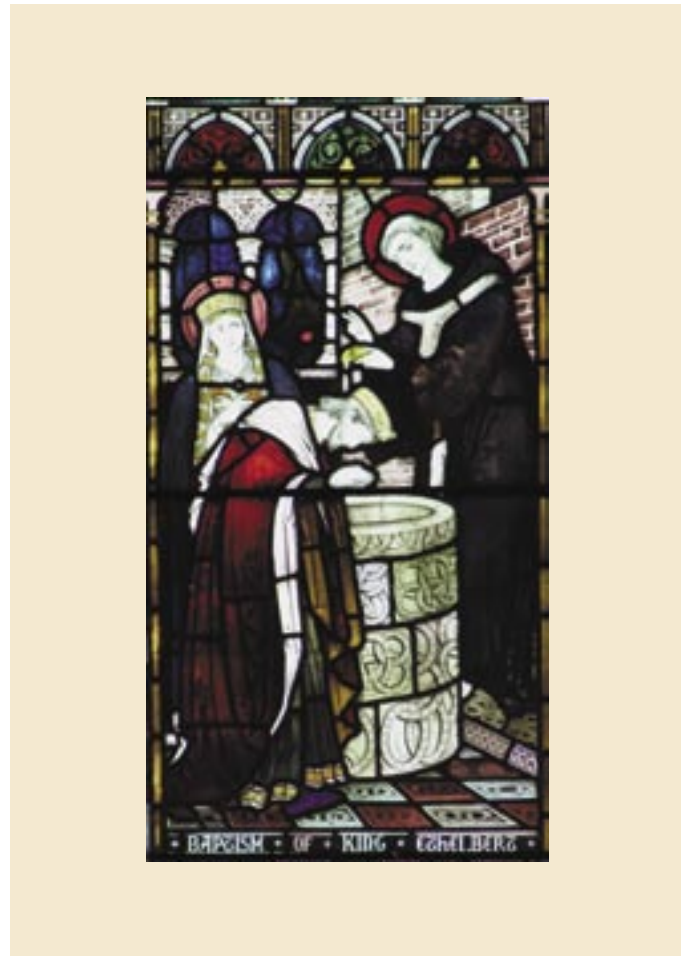
You may have been asked to join the Emmaus or Alpha course, the flower rota, or intercessions list, or if you're really special, asked to go to a vocations event. But asked bluntly whether you are a disciple of Jesus is not something that has ever happened to me.

We do love confusing ourselves (and never mind newcomers!) with talk of confirmation classes, discussion of spiritual questions and debate about where we are on our “walk with Jesus”, and that's before we start talking in acronyms! But all of these terms just seem a churchy way of trying to talk about discipleship - where in our enthusiasm not to offend anyone, we never actually reach our point.

“Are you a disciple?” seems to me the most simple starting place.

Of course it's often said by our very clever university (and often privately) educated clergy, that Jesus himself used questions to answer questions and often didn't give it 'straight'. This over liberalising (perpetuated by the liberal elite in charge), doesn't seem to me, to recall accurately the way Jesus is recorded in the Gospels as scrutinising his disciples. In our over-protected and closeted western lifestyles I am not sure many of us could deal with this level of scrutiny. Is that why we appear happier to be Christians rather than disciples?

Is discipleship possible today? Is not the hardest part of following Christ transferring our good intentions, or our words, into deeds? We, as the church corporate, are good at words, but we are not good at talking straight. What was the church's corporate response to the spending review – not criticism of the fact that the poorest and most disadvantaged will be hit the hardest, but a meek thank you to the government for retaining the Listed Places of Worship Grants Scheme.



‘Is not the hardest part of following Christ transferring our good intentions, or our words, into deeds?’

My point is that if words must come first, they must also match our rhetoric. The way to achieve this is to remember that discipleship is not a question of our own doing, or striving for our own advantage, but a matter of making room for God, so that s/he can live in us.

So I say again “Are you a disciple?” Outside of a specifically Christian world, (and that's where most of us spend our lives in the post-Christendom west), the word disciple might better today be called apprentice. This is where things get interesting. We Christians may hesitate, or flatly refuse to call

ourselves disciples, but if I ask a young homeless person I'm working with if they are an apprentice of Mr Davies, their bricklaying tutor, they will respond with a resounding yes!

Please note that I didn't ask them if they were any good at it! The question is, are you a disciple (or apprentice) of Jesus the Christ? If I use disciple/ apprentice interchangeably, it helps us to see disciples as people studying, in the company of others, to be followers of Jesus. That would be a big point for me as it helps us realise that discipleship is defined by a commitment to learn from Jesus

and not primarily about what you believe about him. People want to be apprentices of Mr Davies the bricklayer because they know his teachings are something that work when put into practice. They don't concern themselves with discussions about his qualifications or where he was born or who his mother and father were. His teachings really work when put into practice.

I hope you can tell from this short piece that I am not averse to criticising the church I love, if I think it needs to be. But I do say a loud 'amen' to the '24/7 live it!' year of discipleship and the plans in this diocese to spend 2011 asking the question “Are you a disciple?” Now is a chance for us all to apprentice ourselves to Jesus in a solemn moment and in doing so, let those around us know, as it is only through our community that we may achieve this.

Therefore I ask again - Are you a disciple?

Thinking of the apprentice metaphor, I think it is only appropriate to end with...

You're hired!!!!

Richard Barnard is a father, member of St. Alphege Whitstable and a struggling disciple of Jesus Christ. He works with homeless people and volunteers as an organiser of football/sport for disadvantaged communities.



For more information on the 24/7 live it! Year of Discipleship please visit: www.canterburydiocese.org/247liveit

MEET THE PEOPLE

Sid Sloane

Sid Sloane, one of the most well known BBC children's presenters, will be playing the title role in the Pantomime Robin Hood, which will be performed at the Canterbury Marlowe Theatre Arena, in December and January. Sid, who hosts a local radio show and is a presenter for BBC Worldwide is also a trained life-coach.

What are your childhood memories of pantomime?

Sadly I don't think I ever went to a pantomime as a child. But I do remember Christmas being a wonderful time at home.

What do pantomimes teach us?

The main message of pantomime is that good can overcome evil. Pantomime works on many levels and Robin Hood is no exception. Children sub-consciously accept the message that if you do good, things will work out well.

If you could perform in a nativity play – what role would you choose?

I would choose to play Joseph as Joseph was the confirmation name I chose.

So you were brought up a Roman Catholic?

My Mum raised five children on her own on an estate in Wimbledon – although my Dad was around he wasn't really involved in our upbringing. The father figure in our lives was religion. Mum instilled in us a great sense of discipline and a keen sense of right and wrong.

When I was twelve or thirteen years old my Mum allowed me to choose whether or not to keep attending church. Around this time we were also allowed to study another religion at school and I chose to study Rastafarianism. I came to understand that there are a lot of people with a lot of different views who all have a claim on God.

I believe religion is a form of spirituality. I am a spiritual being with a strong belief in higher power whom I choose to call God. I have faith, but my faith is not attached to any particular religion.

Do you think the Pope's visit important?

I remember when Pope John Paul II visited Britain in 1982 as he stayed at the Apostolic Nunciature which overlooks Wimbledon Common, just 400 yards from our estate. There was a wave of excitement that washed through the estate. People were so keyed up; my brother and I ran out and followed the crowd through Wimbledon Parkside to try and get a glimpse over the high wall. Our efforts were repaid as the Pope came out on the balcony and waved.



The press coverage leading up the visit of Pope Benedict XVI seemed more cynical than Pope John Paul II's visit back in 1982, but I do think his visit was important.

You seem to remain eternally young – how do you manage that?

Maybe I am eternally lucky! I live life by just trying to stay in the moment. Some people always look back, others are always planning ahead, but I remain in the day. I have started to recognise how valuable this is and I think this keeps me young and helps me relate so well to children.

Tell me about your training as a life coach?

I am passionate about helping children to discover who they are and helping them to achieve their potential.

There are so many gems at the bottom of the ocean, so many gems on every estate sparkling away. I believe that if you unearth a few of them you can find more. I am interested in working with families on estates and using life-coaching techniques to help families communicate better with their kids. At around the age of eight to ten, children look at their peers and start to feel pressure to behave in a certain way. I say you can do

whatever you want, you just need to believe in yourself.

In one area of my work I go into schools and perform 'Sid the Kid' which includes personal poetry, mime, interactivity and songs. The show helps teach children the power of positive thinking and can really help boost children's self-esteem.

You also are an Ambassador for 'Action Against Hunger'?

'Action Against Hunger' is a really valuable charity. It is shocking that children are dying in the world because they are undernourished and in the west people are malnourished because they over-eat.

I help link schools to the initiative 'Run Against Hunger'. Together we encourage children to learn about the severity of global hunger. We empower children to become part of the solution by fundraising and taking part in a sponsored run.

Have you performed with your Panto co-stars John Thomson and Dave Lee before?

No, I have never worked with them before. Dave is your local star and John has a great pedigree for performance and comedy. I play the straight guy but my part is also quite comedic. I am looking forward to this more than anything I've done before!

Do you know Canterbury?

My partner and I recently went to a wedding in Whitstable and enjoyed a lovely weekend getting to know the area. I look forward to discovering Canterbury and I will definitely attend a service at the Cathedral whilst I am in town.

See Robin Hood!

From Saturday 4 December 2010 to
Sunday 9 January 2011 at the
Marlowe Theatre Arena, Kingsmead,
Canterbury.

For more information or tickets call:

01227 787787

www.newmarlowetheatre.org.uk