

TOGETHER ^{new}

The FREE magazine from the Diocese of Rochester | Issue 1 | Winter 2018/19

GROW | ENRICH | RESOURCE

COVER STORY: OFFERING GOD'S LOVE ALL YEAR | PAGE 8



ARCHBISHOP
IN TOWN

CHURCH
GOES GREEN

REACHING
OUT @PIER



THE ADVENT SLEEPOUT CHALLENGE

AN ESTIMATED 4,700 PEOPLE WILL SLEEP ROUGH IN ENGLAND THIS WINTER... YOU CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

Take the **Sleepout Challenge**, on your own or as a community, to support Winter Night Shelters around the country.

Do you accept the challenge?
Register here now: www.sleepoutchallenge.org.uk

CHURCH URBAN FUND
CHANGING LIVES AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

Church Urban Fund, Church House,
27 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3AZ

Registered charity number: 297483 | A company limited by guarantee | Registered in Cardiff No: 2138994

CONTENTS

Welcome to the new quarterly magazine for the Diocese of Rochester! We are a diverse and vibrant community of the Church of England, covering the areas of Medway, north west Kent and the London Boroughs of Bromley and Bexley.

Whether a regular member of the Church or not, we hope you'll find a lot to interest you and a sense that we are a people Called Together to Grow disciples, Enrich our communities and Resource each other in our mission and ministry.

With the winter months finally upon us, there's plenty inside to bring you some much needed cheer. **Inside Track**, will bring you up-to-date with our latest news; from winning volunteers to how we're standing up to modern slavery.

Focus On, takes a deeper look at activities, like the church charity in Greenhithe inspired by the Christmas story, but that's giving support to local families all year round.

For challenging insight and resources, make your way to **Head Space** – while you're there, get at festive gift idea for the young ones in your life with our book review.

Then we make a final sprint - literally - to meet the new Archdeacon of Rochester in our section dedicated to **People**.

Thanks for reading and we would love to know what you think. Get in touch at communications@rochester.anglican.org

Jennifer Ross
Jennifer Ross
Communications Officer

Editor: Jennifer Ross
jennifer.ross@rochester.anglican.org
In-house design: Katerina Gerhardt
Design: CPO
Print: CPO
Front cover: Mary's Child in Greenhithe

Deadline for next edition:
15 January 2019

To discuss copy quantities or delivery, please contact communications@rochester.anglican.org

FIND US:
@CofERochester
@SeeofRochester



4



14



16



18

INSIDE TRACK

4-7 Latest news

FOCUS ON

10 Phoenix from the flames
12 ECO Church

HEAD SPACE

18 The Big Issue:
Disability and the Church
20 Resources:
New year, new you?
21 Reviews: Christmas books

DON'T MISS

22 Top 10 Upcoming events

PEOPLE

24 One to one: Archdeacon Andrew
26 Faith voices: Rachel Barnett



TAKING A STAND AGAINST MODERN SLAVERY

The Diocese's commitment to raising awareness of Modern Slavery has taken another step forward with the commissioning of 18 new Modern Slavery Awareness volunteers at a service in Rochester Cathedral.

It's the culmination of a year-long campaign called Hope 2018 – Setting the Captives Free, which has seen workshops, training and on-the-street events take place to enable churches to engage with issues such as debt, addiction and modern slavery, that are affecting members of their communities.

Tasked with working with churches across the Diocese, the growing team of anti-slavery volunteers has been specially trained to help everyone in their communities spot the signs of slavery and understand how they can help those affected.

Caroline Clarke is the Diocese's Community Engagement and Social Action Advisor and has been leading the local Church's response in partnership with The Clewer Initiative, a national

organisation helping the Church of England to detect modern slavery and The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority.

"It would be really convenient to assume that modern slavery doesn't happen in the UK, but it's increasingly clear that this is not the case."

Caroline explains that in 2013, the Home Office estimated that there were 13,000 slaves in the UK. Now charities and the police estimate it is over 100,000. It's a crime she says, that people of faith cannot ignore:

"It's easy to become immune to figures like these, to think of them as just numbers. But in fact, each one represents a real person, an individual who has been sold and used simply for financial gain."

Effort will now focus on sharing new and free classroom materials produced by The Clewer Initiative and education charity Just Enough, and to find a series of buildings within the Diocese that could be offered as reception centres, providing a safe place for those recently rescued out of modern slavery after a multi-agency raid.



NEW VOLUNTEER FUNMI MAKANJU

GET INVOLVED

Download the Safe Car Wash App

Modern slavery is often hidden in plain sight, like at a hand car wash.

The Safe Car Wash App is a free app that will ask you a few questions about the working conditions of the car wash while you use it. You may be asked to share your concerns with the Modern Slavery Helpline.

Visit www.theclewerinitiative.org/safecarwash

Join the Diocesan Anti-Slavery team

Receive e-news, attend local action groups or book an awareness-raising trainer.

Email: caroline.clarke@rochester.anglican.org



DEMENTIA BADGE

Over 100 Beavers, Cubs and Scouts headed to St Matthew's Church, Wigmore to learn how to become Dementia Friends, earning a badge at the same time. The church runs a dementia-friendly service each month and has now tasked the packs with designing a Dementia Friendly Garden for the church.



NEW 'HUB' TO GROW COMMUNITY

A simple community café with big aims has launched in Kings Hill. Seeking to bring the community together, volunteers from St Gabriel's Church, welcomed over 50 people to its first morning, which was held in the pavilion of Kings Hill Cricket Club.



#NEWREVS

A health visitor, diplomat, weights enthusiast, and probation officer are among 19 men and women recently ordained to serve as deacons and priests in parishes across Medway, north west Kent, Bromley and Bexley. Find their stories at:

www.rochester.anglican.org/ministry/new-revs



LITTLE DEEDS BRING A BIG WIN

At 89, Betty, is celebrating after winning a national competition championing church volunteers and securing £10,000 for her church, St Stephen, Tonbridge. "They're making an awful lot of fuss about me doing things that I thoroughly enjoy!" she says, although judges loved the longevity and breadth of her commitment. Go Betty!



IT'S A PUPPET!

Unexpected outcomes at a felt-tastic project in Gravesend

Since May, Loaves and Fishes at St Mary's Church, Chalk has been using puppets to offer a friendly, if fuzzy, face to new people in the area and particularly families using the pre-school which runs out of the parish hall.

With a mixture of playtime, Christian songs and stories, it's a simple idea that's starting to make an impact.

"People seem to love puppets," says the Rev Nigel Bourne, Vicar of St Mary: "I've always found they are a really good way to get people's interest."

Thanks to a cash injection from the new Diocesan Children and Young People Fund (CYP), the church was able to purchase a box full of friendly puppets,

theatre and curtain rail. The CYP fund aims to support ideas that will give children and young people lifelong encounters with Jesus; grants can fund anything from resources and trips, to food and practical supplies.

Without it, Nigel says they would have had to have been more cautious about getting started. Now though, the puppets are going down so well, they are making appearances at some of the church's main services:

"Some of our teenage members are helping to work the puppets, and so the puppets are even starting to support our ministry to our young adults too!"

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FUND

Grants are available for up to £5,000.

There are four funding rounds a year. Deadlines for the next two rounds are: 30 November 2018 and 8 March 2019.

If you have a vision or an idea for children's or youth work that needs some resource please email cheryl.trice@rochester.anglican.org or visit: www.rochester.anglican.org/mission/children-and-youth/cyp-fund



SOUTHFLEET



SNODLAND



RIVERHEAD



ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

MARKING ONE HUNDRED YEARS

From stunning hand-made poppy displays suspended from towers or draped across churches, to fascinating exhibitions and poignant services, parishes across the Diocese created creative and moving tributes to commemorate the Centenary of the Armistice.

Silhouettes of 'Tommy's' featured in many churches as part of the national There But Not There Art installation, and bells rang out at the same time across the region, in solidarity with others across the country, replicating the same spontaneous outpouring of relief that took place in 1918.



MARY'S CHILD: NOT JUST FOR CHRISTMAS.

The plight of the Holy Family, found at the heart of the Christmas story, is the inspiration for a church-based charity which will celebrate its first birthday this Advent. But, as those involved have discovered, the support they give is not just for Christmas.

"We have found that there are many reasons why people need our help, but perhaps the greatest need we find is from women escaping domestic abuse."

So explains the Rev Carol Avery, Assistant Curate at St Mary, Stone, and one of the founders of 'Mary's Child', a joint project between St Mary, Stone and St Mary Greenhithe, which seeks to support local vulnerable families: "These women often find that they and their children have absolutely nothing and we've now set up a support group to help them even further."

Supplying beds to families in poverty has become common place too: "Each week we give away beds - sometimes up to six a week - and while we're so grateful to all those who help us provide them, it's

sad to think that so many children and adults are sleeping on the floor."

Carol says that Mary's Child didn't 'just happen' but was a response to a growing need. With a popular community café already taking place at the church in Greenhithe, organisers found that they were increasingly responding to requests from community organisations and agencies, as well as individuals, to provide practical support to families in need.

"We undertook lots of prayer and discussion between our two churches and couldn't ignore the similarities we were seeing with the Christmas story; a young mum, Mary, and her husband in a strange place, with none of the comforts of a home, and relying on the generosity of others. They received gifts brought

by strangers in a borrowed manger, in a borrowed stable.

"Similarly, in our area, children are being born into families who have no settled place to call home, they are being evicted on a weekly basis and find themselves at the mercy of the authorities and reliant on others."

So, 'Mary's Child' was born.

Since then volunteers have been kept busy, providing food, furniture, clothing, toys and household equipment to people in need. The project works on referrals from charities such as Porchlight, and Early Years, as well as Social Services, Family Liaison Officers and individuals.

Carol says they've done some unexpected things over the last year, including housing a woman and two very young children made homeless, as well as fostering two Chihuahuas for an owner who was being moved to a hostel.

As they've got to know their community, they've been able to tailor the events they have put on as well. A series of Food and Fun events were held over the summer, which saw over 450 lunches and brunches served to children and to their accompanying adults: "We're now committed to running these through other holidays too. They really help us make contact with the families that are struggling the most, so we can support them with anything else they might need.

They've also been amazed at the many answers to prayer and miracles they've experienced, from unexpected gifts of money and food, to people such as an advocacy lawyer and an immigration expert



"LAST CHRISTMAS WE PROVIDED 'TREAT' FOOD TO MANY OF OUR FAMILIES, AS SO OFTEN THEY LIVE ON THE 'BASIC' RANGES FOUND IN THE SUPERMARKETS."



offering their services for free.

But witnessing so many people facing so many challenges, does Carol have hope?

For Carol, just as 'Jesus became the light of the world', the hope in Stone and Greenhithe is that 'Mary's Child' can offer 'God's light, love and hope in the community' too:

"Last Christmas, the project provided 'treat' food to many of our families, as so often they live on the 'basic' ranges found in the supermarkets. I remember taking some fresh oranges to someone and they cried, because they had been dreaming of fresh fruit.

"Another man who received one of our parcels was so down and depressed, but looked taller as he received food and care; it's in these moments I know we are making a difference."

A special service of thanksgiving for 'Mary's Child' will take place on Sunday 2 December at 3pm, St Mary, Stone.

On Christmas Day, a full lunch will be served with all the trimmings to those who need it, all prepared by volunteers from the church.

PHOENIX FROM THE FLAMES



When a fierce fire took hold of St James' Church of England Primary Academy on the Isle of Grain, in October 2016, only a small part of the school survived. Now it is rising from the ashes with a new build.

"It was a really difficult time," says Acting Head of School, Fay Cordingley, "but the children, parents and staff were really supportive."

While thankfully no one was hurt, the devastation of the fire brought uncertainty and distress to all involved; pupils in years 1 to 6 had to continue their education at a neighbouring village school.

"Our local vicar, the Rev Jill Wright, was also fantastic throughout," says Fay, "going backwards and forwards to the different schools where our children were located."

A termly service held back at St James' Church was one of the only times that the school was able to come back together as a community.

Following some refurbishment, all but two of the classes returned to the school last year, while the remaining part of the school was rebuilt. During this summer, the new school building was completed, with the whole school now back on-site.

"Our new building is light and airy and gives a real sense of space and freedom to learn. Being all back in the fold has enhanced the sense of our family and team spirit. There is a real sense of excitement and pride – we're ready now to get on and get learning."

An official re-opening will take place in April 2019 when all work is fully completed and the Head of School has returned from maternity leave.



CHILDREN IN THE NEW BOOK CORNER



SCHOOL AFTER THE FIRE



YEAR 2 NEW CLASS ROOM



ECO CHURCH

A congregation in Lamorbey, is celebrating after being awarded a silver Eco Church award and they are keen to encourage others to 'get green' too.

"We started quite small but were very determined." says the Rev Mell Jemmett, vicar of The Holy Redeemer in Lamorbey, one of a number of churches across in the Diocese registered with the national Eco Church scheme. And it really helped galvanise their efforts:

"After registering as an Eco Church, we began to really engage with our congregation and the wider community. Now we all work together to make small changes but with a big impact."

But being 'green' is not just about recycling, - it involves worship and advocacy too, as Mell explains:

"Last year we celebrated our first Green Communion with a recycled green altar cloth, with plants and flowers from people's gardens, and songs and fellowship of all ages, crafts with knitted animals and felted creatures. We are now having one every year.

"Also our very own eco warrior, Ingrid Riches, is a very special person who encourages the church to 'live lightly' and worship 'green'; she raises

money for bird boxes and nest boxes, uses her surplus vegetable growing to supply our Community Café, and allows us to enjoy her paintings of nature and wildlife."

Mell says that the award shows that all their hard work has been worth it, but they are not about to stop and would encourage others to do the same:

"The church is delighted because we all feel it is our Christian duty to do more for this wonderful earth God has entrusted us with.

"We can all live out this duty as wild Christians. I would really recommend others to find out more about how they can register and become an Eco Church and just get started!"

Eco Church is a national scheme, run by A Rocha UK, offering a free online survey and resources to help churches care for creation:

www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk

WHAT DID WE DO?

RECYCLE

We use recycled cups and cutlery for fellowship and events and use Fairtrade. We have little or no waste, and what there is we recycle or compost as much as possible.

ECO WASH

We use eco washing up liquids and hand soap, no wipes, bamboo cotton buds and biodegradable bin liners. We recycle 'grey' water from the hand wash.

BUILDING

We use low energy eco light bulbs and reduce heat as much as possible. We are looking into solar panels and our hall is having insulation installed.

GARDEN

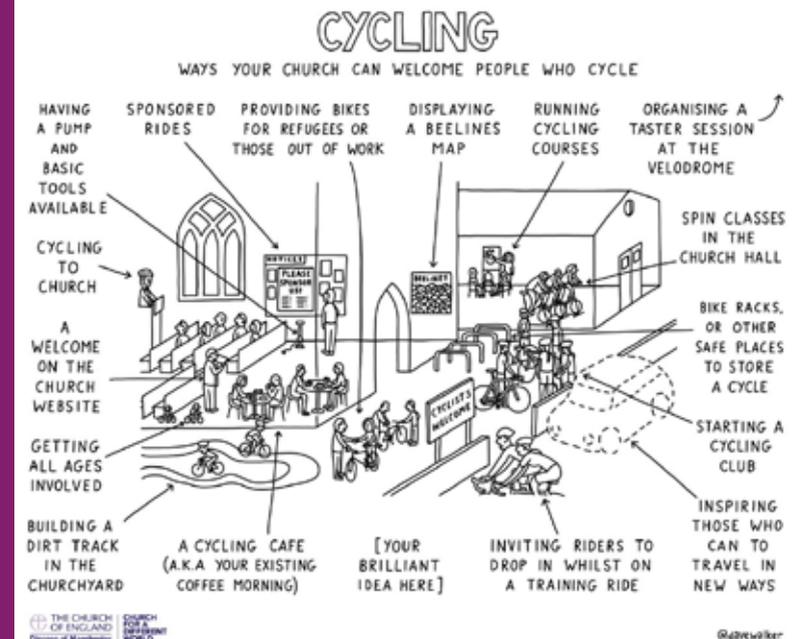
The church planted over 20 packets of organic wildflower seeds designed to attract bees and butterflies involving the Playgroup with learning and recognition charts. We have lots of British wildlife coming in and out of our church garden!



INGRID RICHES - 'ECO WARRIOR!'

Thinking about starting your Eco Church journey? Encouraging cycling to your church could be a start.

Cartoon by @DaveWalker reproduced with permission from the Diocese of Manchester.



WHEN THE ARCHBISHOP CAME TO TOWN



Prayer on the streets on a prayer walk through Chatham



Anna Chaplains supporting those with dementia are commissioned at St Augustine, Bromley Common

WHEN THE ARCHBISHOP CAME TO TOWN

There was great excitement as the doors of the regular toddler group, Little Fish, opened at St John's Church in Penge early one Monday morning, marking the first step of a two-day visit to the Diocese by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Justin Welby.

The Archbishop noted that 'you're never too young to know that God can move mountains and part the seas', as he shared with his young audience the story of Moses parting the Red Sea.

Speaking to parents and leaders of a Christians Against Poverty (CAP) advice centre that runs out of the church, the Archbishop was able to learn about the support being given to those in the area who are facing financial hardship.

And it was community outreach like this that was the theme running throughout the visit.

Uplifting and encouraging those he met across the areas of the Diocese (Tonbridge, Rochester, Bromley and Bexley), the Archbishop was himself inspired and moved by the many stories he heard, and the work he witnessed taking place within churches to support the diverse needs of their communities; from support for ex-offenders and survivors of domestic abuse, to meeting the needs of the homeless and those with mental health issues.

In a first for the Diocese, a Facebook Live event saw the Archbishop join in with an Imaginative Prayer session at the Diocese's Attic Retreats Centre in Chatham, which has reached over 18,000 people online so far.

Find 'Prayer with the Archbishop' under Latest News on the diocesan website www.rochester.anglican.org/communications/news/



Interfaith relationship celebrated at Medway Towns' Sikh Gurdwara



The Diocesan Youth Council grabs a sneaky selfie in the Cathedral



Meeting revellers at a new nightclub chaplaincy



A morning run with those sharing faith through sport

A CHURCH WITHOUT WALLS

A small band of pioneers in the riverside area of Gillingham are currently working to establish a Christian presence in this rapidly developing part of town. With no building of their own, for Terry Whittaker, Mission Leader for Reach at @Gillingham Pier, this is truly 'church without walls' and he wouldn't want it any other way.

Sitting in the bright lounge area of the Premier Inn, Terry Whittaker could be any average hotel resident about to enjoy a mini-break, or perhaps on a stop-over for business, but for Terry, this is 'church' – that's if by church you mean 'where two or three are gathered':

"We had always maintained that our meetings would be visible, that we should not hide Christ

away, but proudly do what we do in plain sight, while mindful of respecting those around us."

The first meetings of Reach actually began in a student sports bar but when, during the football season, the group found itself competing with 15 large screen TVs with live coverage, they knew it was time to move on: "Premier Inn were willing to give us a try and are now delightful hosts. They serve us drinks, turn down the piped music and allow us to be us in a really supportive way."

Originally comprising industrial docks and light engineering, Gillingham Pier is now in the process of rapid redevelopment into apartment-based riverside living. For local resident and long-term member of St Mark's Church in Gillingham, Terry had always been challenged as to how the Church was going to connect with the people of this new development:

"I was keen that the Church should be engaged at the outset, rather than waiting for it all to happen and only then start to work. It was some time after the discussions and prayers started that I realised that this was a calling for me!"

Funded under the structure of a Bishop's Mission Order less than a year ago, Terry

and his small team of volunteers have not rested on their laurels and have quickly and prayerfully begun to create an authentic Christian community in the area, one based on principles of presence, hospitality and actions, that enable people to come to know Jesus:

"Our idea is to love people into the Kingdom. We want to demonstrate a face of faith that is normal, that is beautiful and that is accessible. Much of what

"OUR IDEA IS TO LOVE PEOPLE INTO THE KINGDOM"

we do is just about being there and caring, we are not overt about being 'church', but we are overt about being loving."

And despite being surrounded by many as yet unfilled retail spaces, not having a building at this stage is, for Terry, a blessing. As Terry explains, for many non-Christians, crossing the threshold of a 'church' building is a significant hurdle – a hurdle Reach doesn't have: "It also forces us to engage in the community and find community-



TERRY WHITTAKER AT GILLINGHAM PIER DEVELOPMENT

based solutions to the various needs we meet.

"We recently held an agape meal in the local gastro pub. The staff and customers were fascinated when we asked for a large glass of wine and a bread roll and even more surprised when we passed the cup and bread round between us!"

At Prospect Place, this ministry of presence is particularly evident. A 'home' for those with recognised health care plans but who are capable of independent living, it took some months to establish trust among the residents and the management and care team. But now, as a consequence of commitment, the Reach team visits at least four times each week.

They eat with the residents, visit some that are room bound and host a service there once a month on a Sunday afternoon: "It started small, but we are up to 20 attendees now. Some have faith, some have different faiths, and some have no faith, but they come and engage... Our dream is to encourage some of the local students to come - we have lonely students and lonely residents - it

feels like it must be possible."

And the future? Between now and Christmas Terry and the Reach team plan to 'up' their presence on the streets, with Sunday morning BBQs on the pier: "We'll take food for us to eat and a little more besides. We'll take flasks of hot drinks. We will have a good time together because, as a team, that's just what we do. If the tides are right, we may even cast some fishing rods. We'll just see who crosses our paths and trust that the Holy Spirit will show us all that we need to see."



HOW ACCESSIBLE ARE WE?

Following a major conference looking at disability and the Church, the Rev Rachel Wilson, Priest in Charge of St Thomas, Southborough asks, are we any further than 'warm words' when it comes to welcoming those with disabilities?

"A recent conference I attend, supported by the disability charity Livability, brought together disabled people, theologians and clergy in a series of conversations, workshops and reflections on the place of disabled people within the Church.

It was ground breaking for a number of reasons. Firstly, it was a conference where the voices of disabled people, including disabled clergy, were centre stage.

Secondly, people with a wide range of disabilities were present, not just as token participants but actively involved. The 'body of Christ' in that place looked and felt very different on that day

Yet for all that was good – and there was a very great deal that gave me cause for hope and enthusiasm - the Church still has some distance to travel before it truly recognises that social inclusion means more than simply opening our doors to disabled people.

It means allowing disabled people to flourish, both as people and in service, on equal terms within the body of Christ. It means taking the same approach to issues of disability as have been taken to issues of race and gender.

Since many churches remain seriously inaccessible, both in layout and in access to worship, it was a good start but warm words and well-meaning actions about welcoming disabled people are no longer enough and in some cases, may actually be damaging.

We have to be recognised as more than opportunities for others to minister or evangelise.

The time has come, and is indeed overdue, to recognise that welcoming disabled people on equal terms is a Gospel imperative. If we are to encourage disabled people into church, seeing



THE REV RACHEL JOINS THE CONFERENCE

Photo credit Lambeth Palace

people who look something like us is a hugely powerful invitation – the presence of disabled people is a matter of justice, encouragement and witness to those yet to come.

We who have the privilege of already having a voice within the Church need to make it happen.

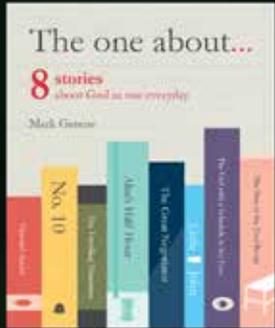
Not just as a token gesture or even as a matter of equality in secular terms, but in order that disabled people can know themselves to be 'fearfully and wonderfully made' and that the body of Christ may be more completely itself by us taking up the places within it for which we were made!.

'More than Welcome' is new material from Livability, to help churches deepen relationships with disabled people and build a church where everyone belongs. Find them at: www.livability.org.uk/resources/more-than-welcome/



NEW YEAR, NEW YOU

The start of a new year can often be a time when we take stock, look for new inspiration, and begin fresh habits. These resources might help your own journey of faith take a new direction.



THE ONE ABOUT YOU

London Institute of Contemporary Christianity
£2.50
www.licc.org.uk/ourresources/theoneabout/

Our daily lives are often very full. Full of things to do. Full of places to be. Where is God during the daily life we are dealt? This beautifully illustrated collection of eight stories of people in different settings, offers a moment to reflect on the varied, and sometimes surprising ways God works in our everyday lives.



LIFE TO THE FULL?

York Course
From £3.10
www.yorkcourses.co.uk/

'I have come so that they may have life, and have it to the full', says Jesus. And yet – if we're honest – it doesn't always feel like that. This short series, available with booklet and accompanying audio, will help you explore what it might actually mean to experience fullness in the midst of our messy lives.



PRAYERMATE APP

Available from your usual app store
Free

For those who like to do things on the go, the PrayerMate app is the perfect way to help add prayer to your daily routine. Now offering the Rochester Diocese Cycle of Prayer, receive daily suggestions of prayer for the local church, connect with the intentions of other national and international churches and organisations. You can even set a reminder to pray!

Mike Harrowing, Team Leader for High Hopes – a Christian project that runs faith-fuelled activities for schools and churches in Tonbridge – entered into the Christmas spirit for this review of children's Christmas books.



THE CHRISTMAS STORY –
By J John.

Verdict: Biblically brilliant, narratively a bit naff.

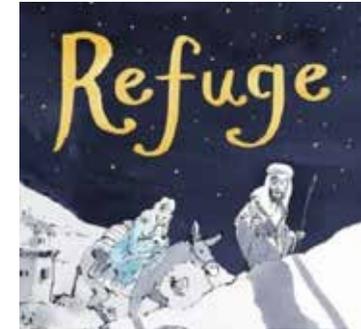
For 6yrs+

J John has does a great job of really capturing the theology and purpose of Christmas. It tells the big salvation narrative of the Bible really well, whilst still finding time for specific topical insights, "the wise men...remind us that Jesus came to earth for everybody, wherever we come from".

Of the three, this was most attractive to my daughter - it looks like a sticker book, so she was minorly disappointed! Its illustrations are rather lovely and colourful, the typeface is pleasant to read and nicely arranged.

In its bid to be biblically accurate though, the actual story of Christmas is rather lost.

£5
www.canonjjohn.com/store



REFUGE
By Anne Booth

Verdict: Evocative, gentle and powerful.

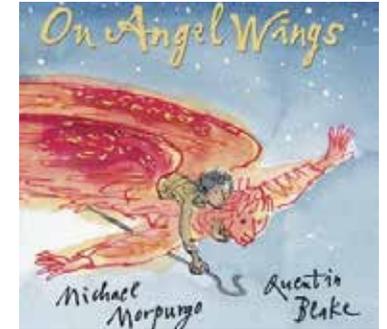
For 2-6yrs

This is a beautiful and almost mystical imagining of the Christmas story through the eyes of a Donkey. It has a wonderful way of capturing the deeply personal and lonely journey which Mary and Joseph went on with their precious cargo. The gray-scale water colour images draw you in, with the bright yellow on the final pages providing a striking light of hope. – it works as a story for the bedroom, and large group readings.

A free audio book comes with the book, though frankly you'll probably read it better

Of the three, this got us thinking the most.

£7.99
ISBN: 978-0-8576-3771-0



ON ANGELS WINGS
By Michael Morpurgo

Verdict: Christmas Eve in a book!

For 4-10yrs

This is about the wonder of the first Christmas, and the wonder of hearing the "news of great joy". Not strictly a Bible story, it is still very much a Christmas story that allows children to imagine what happened, through the eyes of a shepherd boy caught up in the almost incomprehensible importance of an otherwise mundane evening.

It is very much the kind of book you want to read in your pyjamas, with your hot chocolate, after you've put the carrots out for Rudolph! A timeless magical quality that centres the celebration on Jesus – much like Christmas itself.

£5.99
ISBN: 978-1-4052-2175-7

TOP10 EVENTS NOT TO BE MISSED



BETHLEHEM – TOWN OF HOPES AND FEARS
December 9, 6pm
St Matthew's Church, Wigmore

An opportunity to remember and pray for those living in 21st Century Bethlehem, with pictures and recent reports from the place itself - organised by the Diocesan Friends of the Holy Land.



BLESSED IS SHE WHO BELIEVED ADVENT QUIET DAY
December 13, 10am-3pm
St Benedict's Centre, West Malling

An Advent Quiet Day exploring Mary's journey and the promises of God in Mary's life and our own. Led by Centre Manager, Tracey Jones. £20 incl. refreshments. Bookings email: bookings@stbenedictscentre.org



50TH ANNIVERSARY CHRISTINGLE SERVICE
December 15, 12noon
Rochester Cathedral

Celebrate 50 years of Christingle and The Children Society's work with young people, at this service led by the Diocesan Youth Council and Children and Young Peoples' Mission and Ministry team.



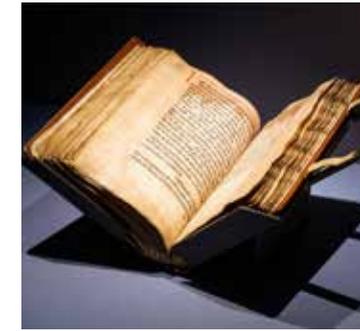
COMEDIANS AND CAROLS
December 22, 7:30pm-10pm
Christ Church, Chatham

An evening of laughter, sing-songs and mince pies. Compered by Paul Kerensa (writer for BBC1's Miranda and Not Going Out) Advance tickets £7.50 Call 01634 907055 or visit: www.luton.church



LIVE NATIVITY
St Mary's Church, Kippington
December 24 at 3pm

Who doesn't like a 'live' nativity? Come dressed as a shepherd, one of the magi, or an angel! There will be a life-size stable, and a married couple who have had a baby recently, acting the part of Joseph and Mary.



600 YEARS. 180 SPECTACULAR TREASURES
British Library
Now until February 2019

A unique chance to see Rochester Cathedral's, Textus Roffensis - the earliest surviving code of English law - alongside other treasures such as the Lindisfarne Gospels in this stunning exhibition.



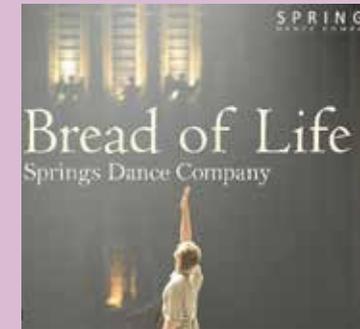
1WON YOUNG PEOPLE'S MIDNIGHT ICE SKATE
February 1, 11pm-1am,
Gillingham Business Park

Young people from across the Diocese are invited to join this annual get together of fun and fellowship. Get your skates ready! Cost is £5. Contact Sarah Cabella on 01634 560024



FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT
February 25 to March 10

More and more churches are making the connection between trade and poverty. Find details of how to become a Fairtrade church, or hold an event during the fortnight at: www.fairtrade.org.uk/Get-Involved/Current-campaigns/Fairtrade-Fortnight



BREAD OF LIFE
February 2019 onwards

Springs Dance Company returns with this stirring production exploring how God is building a community of love with Jesus at the centre. Bookings for churches and schools now being taken. www.springsdancecompany.org.uk

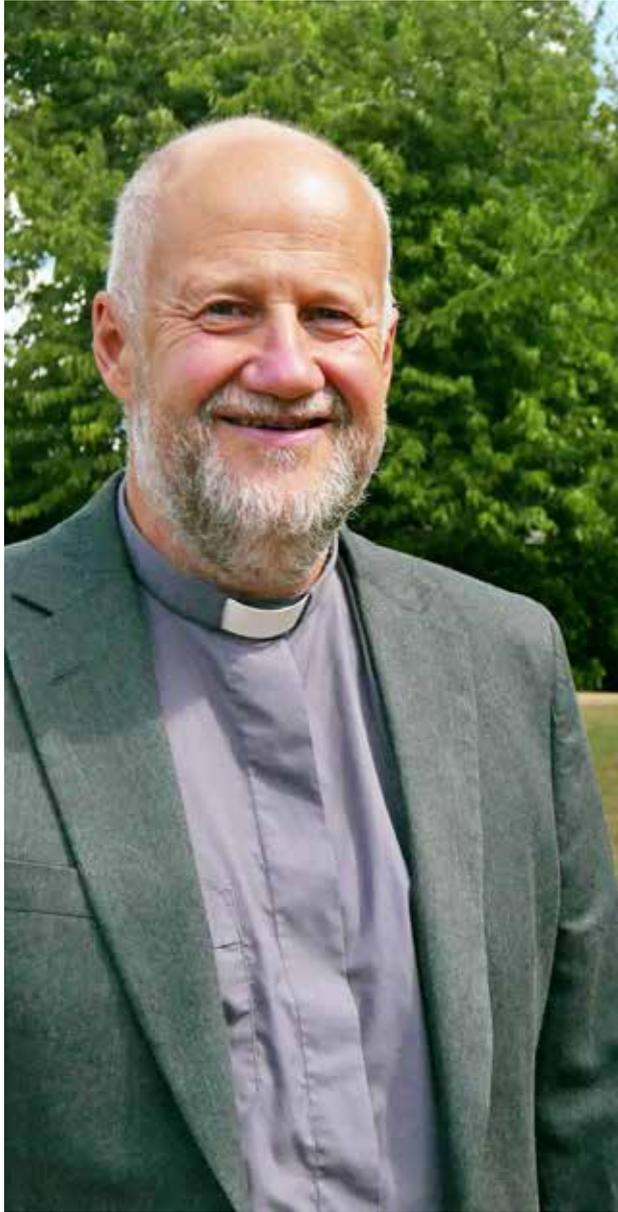


#LENTPILGRIM
March 6, 2019

Look out for materials from the national church to take you on a journey through the 40 days of preparation before Easter. For regular church-goers and explorers alike, visit www.churchofengland.org/lent

ARCHDEACON ON THE RUN

We caught up (finally!) with the running enthusiast and new Archdeacon of Rochester, Andrew Wooding Jones, to find out just what makes him tick.



So, what does an Archdeacon actually do?

We support the mission and ministry of the churches in our Archdeaconry – a geographical area in the Diocese. We work closely with clergy, church wardens and the people of each parish to help them carry out their duties and to ensure church buildings are cared for.

How did you come to faith?

I came to faith through an Easter Christian Union holiday organized by Skinners' School in Tunbridge Wells when I was twelve. We had recently moved as a family from Manchester to Kent and I was struggling with the transition. The Easter story had a major impact on me as I recognised and received God's love and his plan for me.

Can you remember a particular moment when you felt called to ordained ministry?

I was about 16 I shared my feelings with the curate in my local church who affirmed me in my sense of calling. Looking back it was very significant for me that what I was sensing was taken seriously even though it was clearly not going to make a difference immediately.

Who inspired you when you were growing up?

I was always an avid reader - particularly crime thrillers and biographies. The pioneering missional work of David Wilkerson in New York as told in 'The Cross and the Switchblade' and the perseverance

of Douglas Bader in 'Reach for the Sky' were both inspirational in different ways.

Is there a particular passage of scripture that is important to you?

Hebrews 12 has been so important to me – because it sums up our call to intentional Christian discipleship in community - I wrote a book called 'Running the Race' highlighting the challenge of keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus.

Have you ever been given a particularly good piece of advice? What was it?

When I first felt as a teenager that God might be leading me towards ordination someone described how I had glimpsed a mountain in a range of mountains that would come into view

“LET US RUN WITH PERSEVERANCE THE RACE MARKED OUT FOR US, FIXING OUR EYES ON JESUS...”
HEBREWS 12 VERSES 1 TO 2

more clearly over time. That was very important in helping me not to be impetuous about vision becoming reality but to be patient about God's timing.

How do you like to relax or let off steam?

In the last eighteen months, encouraged by Margaret my wife, I have started to run. My running group Beginners to Runners has been an incredible source of encouragement. I ran my second marathon in October.

Do you have a favourite food?

I trained in Hotel Management and enjoy a wide range of food but a roast shank of lamb is hard to beat!

How do you think your friends would describe you?

I hope my friends would say that I am fun to be with, currently a little obsessed with running, sometimes offer some wisdom, and value time with them around the table.

What are you looking forward to most in your new role?

I am really excited by our call to be confident as disciples and I am looking forward to helping parishes to explore our identity as Christian disciples seven days a week.

Do you have any favourite family Christmas traditions?

On Christmas Eve finding Jesus is a treasure hunt involving jelly babies! Our 12 years at Ashburnham Place celebrating Christmas as an international christian community were very special and memorable - particularly my attempts as Father Christmas to find innovative ways to arrive, which included climbing through a first floor window into a Community Gathering, motor bike, sports car, and the bucket of a tractor.

Andy took up his post in September. Prior to this he was Interim Co-ordinator for Clergy Ministerial Development in the Diocese.





ALL 'ALB-ED UP' RACHEL AT THE COMMUNITY OF ST ANSELM

FAITH VOICES

Rachel Barnett from Chatham joined the growing number of young people bucking society's apparent trend for "commitment-phobia" when she spent a year in a religious community. Why? And what was it like? She shares her story.

"It's really what I want, but I feel very scared at the prospect of giving God what is clearly more than an inch."

This extract from my journal sums up pretty well how I felt about applying to the Community of St Anselm, a community of 20 – 35 year olds from different countries and Christian traditions, living together for ten months at Lambeth Palace.

I was curious at the idea of spending a year in prayer: What would happen if I listened to God for a whole year? Actually listened? It could be amazing, but also pretty risky. How would people react to my decision to take a year out of a sensible job – I was teaching in Moscow – and exchange it for a bright white alb and a chunky wooden cross?

I needn't have worried, everyone was very positive.

Living in community, you do life together. We cooked, ate, had teaching, went on retreats, did sport, served in local charities, and shared our hopes, fears and struggles together. And this was all within a daily rhythm of prayer.

That meant that no part of our lives, relationships, study and so on could be hidden from Jesus and his transforming power. It wasn't an easy ride, and the difficult parts were not what I expected them to be.

But it was a year where we all saw God at work, moulding us, challenging us with the example of Jesus before us.

For me, I began to move from a place of looking for approval from other people to finding my identity and value in Christ.

That's what happened when I gave God more than an inch. And now? I'm still not sure, but I'm not worried; I have got used to God leading me in his own timing.



Any spare change?

Giving money to a homeless person may help them eat for another day.

Donating to us can help them to rebuild their life.



Donate using the form below, on our website, or by texting 'CHTW18 £3, £5, or £10' to 70070

Please accept my/our donation of: £250 £100 £50 £25 £15 Other £ _____

I enclose a cheque postal order charity voucher (payable to **Church Homeless Trust**) or charge my Visa Mastercard CharityCard Maestro

Name _____ Card number

Address _____ Expiry date Issue no.

Postcode _____ Phone _____

We need your post-code to process card donations

We will never sell your data, and we promise to keep your details safe and secure. Further details of how your data is used and stored are available on churchhomelesstrust.org.uk/privacypolicy. We always send receipts for donations.

We'd also like to send you information about our work up to three times a year. If you would prefer not to receive this tick here

If you would prefer updates by email, please provide your email: _____

giftaid it

Gift Aid. I want to Gift Aid my donation today, and any future donations I make to Church Homeless Trust.

I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer. I understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference. I understand that other taxes such as VAT and Council Tax do not qualify. I understand the charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 that I give.

Signed _____ Date _____

Please return your form to: Church Homeless Trust, Can Mezzanine, 49-51 East Road, London N1 6AH

☎ 020 7269 1630

✉ info@churchhomelesstrust.org.uk

🌐 www.churchhomelesstrust.org.uk

Charity No. 802801

RCX18

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS
AT ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

Sat 1 & Sun 2 December - 12.30 & 3pm

Carol Service (Christmas Dickens)

A service of favourite Christmas carols and readings

Sun 2 December – 6.30pm

Advent Procession

Fri 7 December - 7.30 pm

Messiah & Carols for All

(Ticketed Concert)

Sat 15 December - 12.30 pm

Christingle Service

Fri 21 December - 7.30 pm

Sat 22 December - 7.30 pm

A Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols

CHRISTMAS EVE

Children's Nativity Service - 3.00 pm

**Evensong with Benjamin Britrens. A Ceremony
of Carols** - 4.15 pm

Midnight Mass - 11.30 pm
(doors open at 10.45 pm)

CHRISTMAS DAY

Holy Communion (BCP) - 8.00 am

The Eucharist of Christmas Morning - 10.30 am

All are welcome at any of these Services

www.rochester-cathedral.org