

BRING AND SHARE...KINGDOM STYLE

It was so encouraging to see a strong turnout at our recent Getting to Know You gathering for Deanery lay representatives, showing as it did how much energy and enthusiasm there is amongst our laity to collaborate and share our resources. Later in this newsletter we summarise the main outcomes of our gathering and we will be working as a team to follow these through and provide further opportunities for regrouping. A further trend we have seen in the last few months is the emergence of ministry groups across the deanery with the capability of supporting and strengthening one another – for example the youth and children's ministry forum coming in July.

It has struck me reading a slim volume by Stephen Cottrell (*On this Rock*, written whilst Canon Pastor at Peterborough Cathedral) how one of the things Jesus did for His disciples before His ascension was to cook breakfast for them. They too had regrouped, by the seashore, perhaps wondering whatever was going to happen next. With the fire lit, and a fish and bread supplied by Jesus sizzling away, Jesus invites his friends to add some of the fish they have caught after letting down their nets as He had directed. What we would now call a bring and share BBQ? (But BBQ with a purpose, as Simon Peter was to discover!). Perhaps in a way, the initiatives springing out of our new Deanery are a way of bringing what we each have to offer to the table so that all may be nourished. My vision and hope for our new deanery is that this bringing and sharing will become our hallmark. Like Jesus's friends, let's all let down our nets in response to Him!



Maria Toman
Deanery Lay Chair

STORIES FROM ACROSS THE DEANERY

HOW I CAME TO BE....AN ALM

David Allen, of the Berrow Benefice Ministry Team, writes

I so missed the insight, learning, fellowship and shared purpose after a wonderful year doing the Bishop's Certificate Course in 2016.



"Never mind" said my tutor, the Revd. Biddi Kings, "something might turn up". It did; the next week she thrust a sheaf of papers into my hands- the details and application form for the Authorised Lay Ministry course. I knew instantly that I wanted to take the course. And I now realise that I was in the hands of the Holy Spirit...

With my application supported by the PCC, and endorsed and guided by my incumbent, the Revd Julie James, I opted for leading worship as my specialisation, and 2017 saw me being steered through a carefully structured, interactive and thought-provoking course led by an inspired team of Diocesan and Cathedral staff, including the Bishop, and many other notable speakers. Visits were also made to various churches and other places of worship to complete a rounded experience.

A year of wonderful Monday evenings and monthly Saturdays was rewarded with - drum roll! - a magnificent service in the Cathedral, led by Bishop John, who presented each of us with our authorisation certificates. The last step was a service at All Saints, Hollybush, where we all squashed in, to present me for acceptance by the Church Wardens of the 5 churches in our Benefice.

Since then, I have been appointed to the Benefice Ministry Team and I lead services in all our benefice churches as appropriate, often using Zoom. I take my turn too with Wednesday Morning Prayers and Friday evening Compline. I look forward to also leading

(cont...)

the beautiful 1662 sung Evensong when current COVID restrictions allow and we can be back in “choirs and places where they sing”. But fulfilment also comes from participating in the wider mission of community work, joining in Open the Book activities in schools, helping to establish needs in the area, organising events for fun or funds, attending local Synod meetings, supporting each other...My cup runneth over...

Why not come and worship with us one Sunday in our lovely surroundings? Reserve a place in one of our services at berrowbenefice.org.uk

GETTING TO KNOW YOU — a Gathering of Lay Reps

In late May we had a great meeting with Deanery Synod Lay Representatives. It was primarily a time to hear stories of what the last year has held for churches in the deanery, and to encourage one another and start to find ways we can help each other.

It was fantastic to hear how many churches have seen fantastic growth in the last year, reflected in some churches in increasing numbers joining PCC and on electoral roll. Some parishes started working more closely together, others reflecting how amidst the hardship that the last year has held, it also gave the gift of time to “smell the roses”. One parish has found it an opportunity to review PCC meetings, and to find a way to open up more space for discussion that wasn't financial. Technology has created many opportunities, with popular Alpha courses on Zoom, and shift workers now able to access services online, although the barriers of IT competency and/or access was acknowledged. There was a feeling of real hope in much of the discussion.

We talked about some of the common hurdles that churches are facing and how they are looking ahead. There's some desire to find simplicity, some are looking at how to overcome the traditional/contemporary divide and move to blended services, other churches are trying to support people through change and help people feel comfortable returning.

We had a lot of positive feedback around how helpful it was to get together and share ideas, and how useful the deanery network can be in sharing resources between churches, whether that's expertise, ideas or people! We look forward to putting ideas into practice and meeting again in the autumn!

LOCKED DOWN BUT NOT OUT – The Story of Peg Productions

Steve Gray, leader of the Hanleys and Welland Open the Book team, writes

OTB teams in our Deanery have risen in different ways to the challenge of lockdown. For our team, inspiration came from our grandmothers' wooden clothes pegs - remember those? With the help of pipe cleaners, paint, fabric scraps, and props like boats and animals made from twigs, cardboard and recycled toys, peg dolls were crafted and then brought to life, in Wallace and Gromit fashion, by using Zoom recordings, smart phone photos and some clever editing by our in-house technical expert.



Six videos later, with two more in production, Peg Productions is now in full swing - and not only telling bible stories in our local primary school!

For some years, a highlight of the Christmas and Epiphany season at St James' Church, Welland has been Keith Gotobed's drama presentations, acted out by various members of the congregation. Lockdown threatened to halt this, but Peg Productions came to the rescue. Moving from bible stories to a modern setting was challenging, but our film of 'The Blanket Nativity' hit the screen at St James and was well received.

Peg Productions continues to flourish and demonstrate its usefulness in appropriate ministry settings!

VENERABLE CANON DR SALLY GAZE

The DLT is delighted that Venerable Canon Dr Sally Gaze has agreed to guide us assist the Deanery in our reflections on rural mission and ministry.

Sally served her curacy in the West Worcester Rural Team moving on to become Team Rector in the Tas Valley Team Ministry in Norfolk and then Dean for Rural Mission Consultancy in the diocese of Edmundsbury and Ipswich in 2017. In 2006, she co-wrote "Mission-shaped and Rural" (Church House Publishing).



Appointed as the he first Archdeacon for Rural Mission in January 2019, Sally said that she will "take risks" in her mission to tackle isolation and loneliness in remote communities in the UK.

Sally states, "Multi-parish benefice structures, clergy isolation, minister models, solutions to large numbers of under-used church buildings, the ageing demographic, and financial issues are challenges for many rural churches – but they are also symptoms of a bigger challenge: that society has changed beyond recognition in the last 100 years.

"Decline in rural Church is like an early warning system for the national Church. It is also part of the same cultural change which has led to a loss of social capital and an increase in loneliness and mental-health issues in rural areas."

The solution involves both mission and evangelism, she said. "We need to take risks for mission so we learn what works. We will answer questions such as how more young families can find faith, or how we can enable people who have become isolated to be cherished."

Good news?

We'd love to hear MORE stories from across the Deanery of how God is moving and building his Church. If you've got something to share, get in touch at e: sarah.kelsey@motov8.org.uk

NEWS, EVENTS AND RESOURCES

Children and Youth Worker's Forum

On **Thursday 15th July at 7.30pm**, we are welcoming all those who work and minister in these field to join us for an opportunity to make connections, share stories, and be encouraged in this vital kingdom work. We will be meeting on Zoom and joined by Emma Pettifer (Diocesan Children's Officer), Simon Hill (Diocesan Youth Officer) and Revd Ruth Walker (Calling Young Disciples (CYD) Project Director). This will also mark the formation of what will hopefully be a really useful network, which we look to gather together again for a half day in the Autumn.

If you're able to join us, please sign up here– <https://bit.ly/3wTyFDS>

Deanery Leadership Team Summit 2021

On **Saturday 10th July** the Deanery Leadership Team will be gathering for a time of prayer and planning for the year ahead. Please pray for us as we seek God for his direction in this and look ahead to how we can facilitate the flourishing and growth of God's kingdom here in Malvern and Upton.

Deanery Prayer Walk

"Christians facing difficult choices" is the theme of our first deanery prayer walk led by the Revd Owain Bell on **Tuesday 6th July at 2.30pm**.

On this anniversary of the death of Thomas More, who clashed with Henry VIII in matters of conscience, join with us for an hour of reflection and prayer, in a circular walk starting opposite Upton Parish Church. For further details and to register your interest, please contact Maria– mtoffice@btinternet.com



A Diocesan Festival of Flowers at Malvern Priory

More than 50 churches across the diocese are taking part in a celebration of the life and legacy of Mary Sumner (1828-1921), founder of the Mothers' Union, from **Friday 6th to Monday 9th August**.

Addressing poverty and need in urban and rural settings; campaigning for fairer conditions in society for women, children, and families; supporting marriage; enabling a worldwide fellowship of love and service linked together through the "Wave of Prayer"; listening and prayerfully responding to the needs of individuals and groups in our own communities; and working through churches, parishes and schools to encourage the growth of Christian faith in children. Nothing new? Yet everything is new and fresh and alive when the Holy Spirit moves us to work together.

Malvern Priory festival opening times are

Friday 6th August– 9.30am–4pm

Saturday 7th August– 9.30am–12pm, 3-4pm

Sunday 8th August– 12.30-4pm

Monday 9th August– 9.30am–3pm

A Songs of Praise Service on **Monday 9th August at 3pm**

Entry is free, donations are welcomed.

Everyone is also invited to come and bring a jam jar or vase of flowers- wild, bought, or from the garden- on **Thursday 5th August from 10am to 1pm**, to accompany the displays by Mothers' Union members and friends.

For more info, contact Jill Crofton - (01886) 833376,
jillcrofton@icloud.com



London Institute of Contemporary Christianity (LICC)

‘The fruitfulness that changes lives and nations ripens in the valley of everyday, Monday to Saturday ordinary living.’ – Mark Greene, LICC Mission Champion

LICC are committed to:

- empowering Christians to make a difference for Christ in our Monday to Saturday lives
- helping church leaders equip their church communities to do it, and
- fuelling a movement to reach and renew our nation

Discover resources and training to encourage and equip you (and your church) to live your whole life - where you live and learn, work and play, shop and serve - for the glory of God. Visit www.licc.org.uk.

Lynn Weston is Director of Church of England Relations and helps Anglican dioceses and churches develop a whole-life discipling culture, inspiring people to make a difference for Christ wherever they are— lyn.weston@licc.org.uk.

Church of England Vision for the 2020s

Over the last few months, a number of webinars were hosted that explored the vision and strategic priorities for the Church of England for the next decade. Topics included:

- focusing on the strategic priority to be a church of missionary disciples
- focusing on the strategic priority to be a church that is younger and more diverse
- focusing on being a church that is simpler, humbler and bolder and answering any outstanding questions collected in other webinars

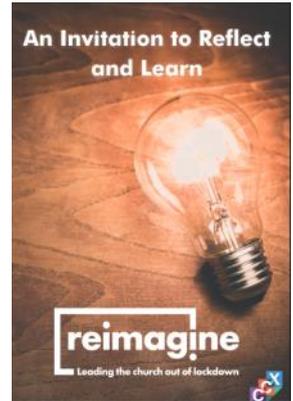
The webinars were each recorded and can be watched again online. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/3hfl5V1>.

Reimagine—Navigating Church Post-COVID

“Christ is the Lord of a history that moves. He not only holds the beginning and the end in his hands, but he is in history with us, walking ahead of us to where we are going.” Thomas Merton

Reimagine is a great set of resources— originally developed in Leicester Diocese - which will help you reflect and think through the process of churches in a post-lockdown world. We used some of their questions with our Deanery Lay Reps and they were a great resource. There are a number of tools available including small group resources, ideas for community building events and some suggestions for what the church of tomorrow might look like. These are available on the Diocese of Leicester website and the CCX website here—

<https://ccx.org.uk/visual/reimagine/>



Chaplaincy—West Mercia Police

A vacancy for a volunteer chaplain to West Mercia Police in the Malvern area is needed in the very near future. The post requires regular visits, usually by arrangements with the Safer Neighbourhood sergeant. The role is pastoral and is open to anyone who feels called to this ministry. As with any pastoral ministry, confidentiality is essential.

The post is rewarding and valued by the local police forces: There is always a welcome when visiting.

There is an extensive security checking process by the police before acceptance, details of which will be provided.

For further details, please contact Rev. Tony Whalley (serving chaplain, Malvern) – (01684) 562897, tony.rosemary@btinternet.com

Please get in touch if you have news, events or resources to share
with the wider deanery network –
e: sarah.kelsey@motov8.org.uk

BOOK REVIEWS

THE CHOSEN – encounter Jesus the way His followers did

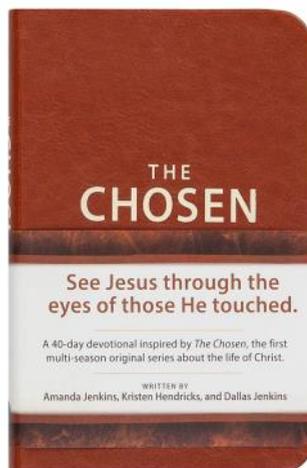
Every follower of Jesus in the Gospels had a not-so-great before. A brash fisherman. A pious religious leader. A demon-possessed woman. A thieving tax collector. Christ's love saw beyond their brokenness and forgave. Jesus revolutionised the lives of those who followed Him. And He's still doing it today.

This forty-day devotional inspired by The Chosen TV series, will draw you closer to the Messiah. Each devotion contains a Scripture, a unique, relatable look into a Gospel story, suggestions for prayer, and thought-provoking questions that can Impact you in the same way as those Jesus met when He was on earth, leading you further in your relationship with Christ.

We can all identify with the sinners, but we can also be transformed as we realise that when Jesus looks at us, He sees the people He is creating us to be. See Jesus through the eyes of those who knew him best; people who loved, served, and followed Him. Explore the backstories of people like Mary Magdalene, Peter, Matthew, Nicodemus, and more – “stories of rebuke and hope, of sin and forgiveness.”

Perfect as a gift. 176 pages.

Lyttelton Well Bookshop



 The Lyttelton Well
your local Christian bookshop

Open Monday to Saturday, 10am to 4pm

**6 Church Street, Malvern WR14 2AY
(next door to Malvern Priory)**

t: 01684 573702

e: bookshop@lytteltonwell.co.uk

HOW TO PRAY— Pete Greig

"A must read for anyone who finds praying difficult."
Peter Buchanan

If you are really good at praying and already know when to pray, what to pray and how to pray, then you don't need this book. If, like me, you sometimes find it all very difficult, then this book is a must read.

It is described as a simple guide for normal people. I found it easy reading and honest, with plenty of practical tips and examples. After reading the first few pages I kept a highlighter with the book, but had to be very self-controlled to avoid highlighting whole pages.

Pete's advice to all of us is, keep it simple, keep it real and keep it up. My advice to you is get a copy from The Lyttelton Well. Even better, get 2 or 3 and that's some birthday presents sorted!

It's probably the best book I've read this year.

Peter Buchanan

Deanery Synod Lay Representative,
All Saints, Malvern Wells & Wyche



Read any good books lately?

If you've got a book recommendation that you think would encourage the church of Malvern and Upton Deanery, we'd love to hear from you.

e: sarah.kelsey@motov8.org.uk

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