

## COMMENT

### after New Atheism

Matthew D'Ancona on the return of the sacred

page 16



## FAITH

### gospel of Pentecost

Andrew Davison considers the Holy Spirit in the Creed

page 19



## REVIEWS

### life as a stage play

Richard Kenton Webb's drawings on show

page 26



## JOBS

### diocese of Lichfield

chance to pioneer rural mission in Peak District

page 38

# Boost for church repairs

## Listed buildings set to receive £92m over four years

Pat Ashworth

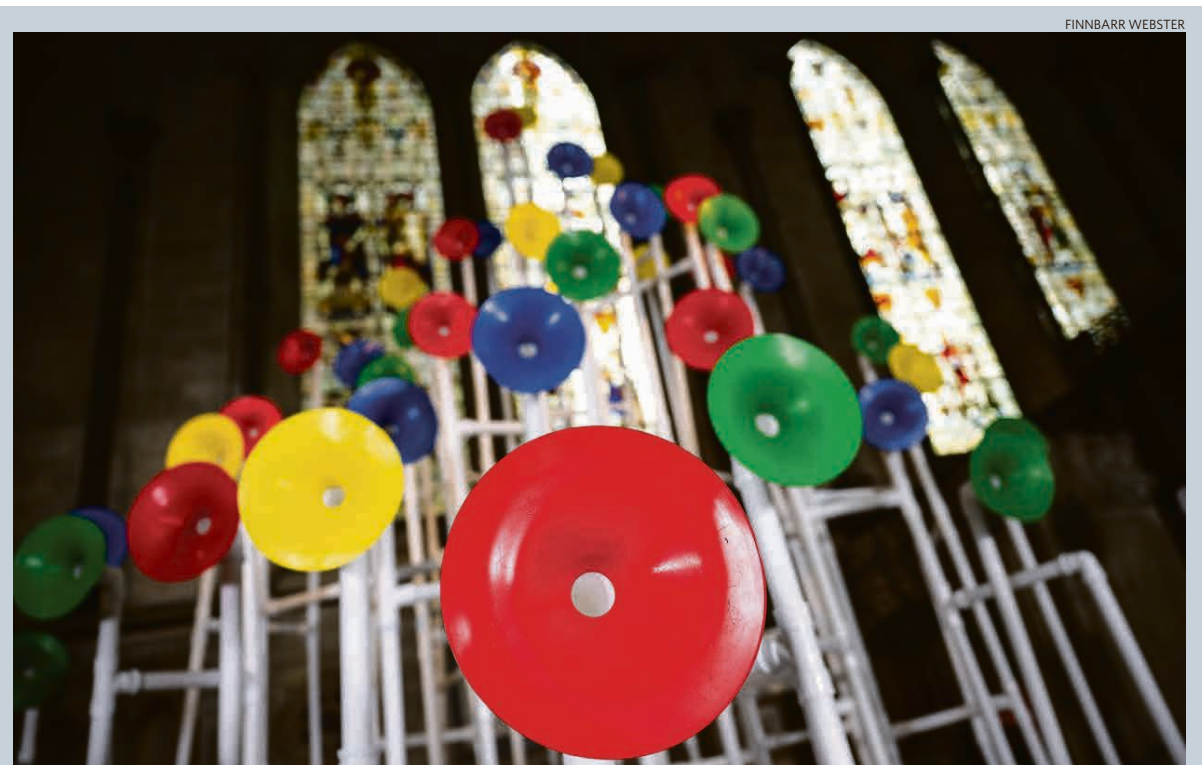
HERITAGE funding for the 14,000 listed places of worship in England, including cathedrals, is to come in upfront capital grants, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) has announced. Those in areas of high deprivation and "facing overwhelming fund-raising challenges" would be prioritised, it said on Wednesday.

The new Places of Worship Renewal Fund (PWRF) succeeds the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPWGS), under which places of worship could reclaim all the VAT paid on repairs and maintenance. Last year, the LPWGS was capped at £25,000 for each place of worship, meaning that those undertaking major repairs — such as a new roof — had to raise extra funds to cover VAT costs for the first time in two decades (News, 25 January 2025).

The new PWRF grant scheme is to be delivered by Historic England and is intended to bring places of worship in line with other heritage buildings. It has been influenced by the success of the Heritage at Risk and the Heritage Revival Funds, and, in targeting areas of greatest need, puts the emphasis on the community, DCMS says.

The DCMS's own evaluation of the LPWGS suggested that, without access to a full VAT rebate, 80 per cent of applicants may have delayed or downgraded projects, but would still have undertaken the works. Churches that had struggled to raise funds upfront in the first place described the new cap as "an insurmountable financial barrier" to crucial repairs.

Allocated funding for PWRF is £92 million, to be evenly divided



Sound the trumpet: a contemporary art exhibition, "Joyful Noise", opened at Salisbury Cathedral last weekend, bringing together painting, sculpture, text, video, and

sound to explore how joyful noise can affirm presence, belief, community, and care. It echoes the call to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord," and runs until 25 October

over a four-year term. It is designed to support a range of projects, from urgent structural repairs, physical access improvements, and the installation of new facilities to expand community use, such as disabled access or upgrading kitchen facilities.

The Heritage Minister, Baroness Twycross, launched the new fund, and opened the second round of the Heritage at Risk and the Heritage Revival Funds, during visits to Grimsby Minster and the Sir Moses Montefiore Synagogue, Grimsby, on Wednesday, where she met volunteers who care for the sites.

"Across our country, 1000-year-old Norman church towers sit at the heart of communities, with brick mills and other former industrial buildings, all too often needing sig-

nificant repair to bring them back to their former glory and create community assets for the future," she said.

"So many of these heritage sites are cared for by volunteers or community groups, and our significant heritage funding schemes are designed to back their ambitions. This targeted funding is an important step in keeping the roofs watertight and doors wide open at churches, and for bringing historic buildings back into use for the communities who care for them."

The Bishop of Lynn, in the diocese of Norwich, the Rt Revd Jane Steen, who is the Church's joint lead bishop for buildings, said: "Our church buildings are national treasures for the common good, both for

their spiritual, cultural, and historical significance, and the vital practical help they provide communities across the country. We welcome the launch of the fund and we look forward to working closely with Historic England in helping encourage eligible churches to make full use of this scheme."

Heritage at Risk offers capital funding of up to £15 million, and the Heritage Revival Fund offers up to £10 million. All three funds are open to listed places of worship and heritage sites in England. The devolved administrations will operate under the Barnett formula, aimed at guaranteeing fair distribution of government funding.

The scheme was outlined in January (News, 23 January).

# Norwich diocese buzzing with new scheme

Amelia Braddick

BUMBLEBEES are to benefit from a partnership between Norwich diocese and a social enterprise in a project to make "a meaningful contribution to local biodiversity".

The Bumblebee Project, created by Project Apis CIC, is already taking place in St Mary Magdalene's, Gorleston, the diocese said in a statement last week.

The founder of the not-for-profit Project Apis CIC, Jamie McBride, said that the project "is designed as an accessible first step for churches that may not yet be ready to host a full apiary, while still making a

meaningful contribution to local biodiversity".

He said that the project can support churches hoping to achieve an Eco Church award by "demonstrating practical environmental action within their grounds".

Under the scheme, the organisation installs a bumblebee nest containing a live colony that is already established, as this ensures an "immediate impact and a visible presence on site", unlike a traditional bee box that relies on attracting bees naturally.

Project Apis CIC also provides guidance on planting, and offers support to help the colony to thrive

and to encourage wider pollinator activity.

"We're working across Norfolk to make beekeeping and pollinator conservation accessible to everyone," Mr McBride said. "Through our work with churches, schools, and community spaces, we create opportunities for people to connect with nature, support biodiversity, and improve well-being through hands on environmental activity."

"Beyond the environmental benefits, these spaces can become places of learning, reflection, and community engagement, helping to bring people together around a shared purpose."



"It will improve well-beeing"

# Mullally expresses solidarity with Jews

### Church is committed to battle against anti-Semitism, she says

James Macintyre

THE Archbishop of Canterbury has said that the Church of England must take action to tackle anti-Semitism, and that she “cannot imagine how frightening it must be” for Jewish parents to worry about their children’s safety.

The Archbishop spoke on a visit to the Sternberg Centre for Judaism in Finchley, north London, on Thursday of last week. Hosted by Rabbi Charley Baginsky and Rabbi Josh Levy, the co-leads for Progressive Judaism in the UK and Ireland, she met rabbis and individuals training for ordination at Leo Baeck College, as well as pupils and teachers at the Akiva School.

Reflecting on a series of anti-Semitic attacks in recent months (News, 1 May), Archbishop Mullally said: “This is not a problem for the Jewish community to solve. It’s on all of us — every single member of our society — to call out anti-Semitism whenever we see it, and to oppose it without hesitation or qualification.

“For the Church of England, such solidarity must also mean action, as well as words. We are committed to

serve the whole nation by working together to tackle hatred in all its forms, knowing that violence against one group wounds us all.”

Archbishop Mullally continued: “Students at the Avika School, and at Jewish schools around the country, must enter through fortified gates.

“As a parent myself, I cannot imagine how frightening it must be to drop your children off at school and worry about them making it home safely without fear of harassment or attack.

“And yet this is the terrifying reality for so many Jewish communities — as we have witnessed a horrifying increase in anti-Semitic violence over the past few weeks, months, and years. It is completely unacceptable that you live this reality every day.”

“I am convinced our nation’s schools, colleges, and universities are at the forefront of countering religious intolerance. They can be shining examples of mutual flourishing. They can foster sensitivity and religious understanding. They can encourage young people to be enriched by challenge and encounter. They can help them grow as true neighbours and friends, as part of the same country. Let us hold that vision dear, and renew our commitment to it.”

The Archbishop paid tribute to her hosts. “It’s a privilege to be witnessing the extraordinary breadth of educational, theological, and com-



The Archbishop of Canterbury is greeted by Rabbi Charley Baginsky (centre) and Rabbi Josh Levy, at the Sternberg Centre, Finchley, last week

munity work being done by those who live, work, worship, and learn here,” she said.

“This Centre is a testament to the vibrant life of Jewish communities, and the essential contribution you make to British society. From charity work and health care, to education and the arts, your flourishing com-

munity enriches society and embodies the best values of this country.

“But, as I arrived through the security gates earlier, it was impossible to ignore the distressing truth about Jewish life in Britain today.”

In a joint statement, Rabbis Baginsky and Levy welcomed the

Archbishop’s solidarity. They said: “We are living through a time when loud voices are trying to deepen divisions between communities, and especially between faith communities.

“To have the Archbishop of Canterbury with us at such a moment was a powerful act of solidarity and care. Her presence meant a great deal at a time of rising antisemitism, and we are grateful for her clear support and willingness to stand with our community.

“Her visit also pointed to better vision of public life, one in which faith communities and minorities recognise one another’s dignity, stand alongside each other, and work together for the common good.

“Her presence meant a great deal at a time of rising antisemitism, and we are grateful for her clear support and willingness to stand with our community.”

After her address, Archbishop Mullally visited Leo Baeck College, where she met Progressive Jewish clergy and student clergy. She also spoke to Rabbi Eleanor Davis, of Finchley Reform Synagogue, where an arson attack took place last month.

The Archbishop then dropped in on several classes at the Akiva primary school, to speak to pupils about the friendship between Christian and Jewish communities.

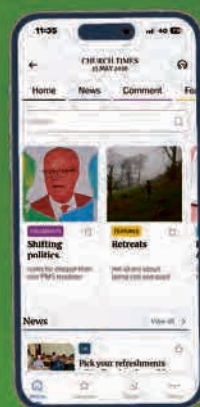
Comment, page 14

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Madeleine Davies

BOTH the Church's funding bodies and the Government should ramp up investment in cathedrals, where financial pressures are resulting in commercial bookings that risk "crowding out the sense of stillness and calm", a new report has found.

*Living Stones: English cathedrals as sacred spaces in changing times* celebrated the contribution made by the country's cathedrals, but warned that they are in "serious difficulty", with 80 per cent in structural deficit.

"The pressures of financial survival can consume so much energy and attention that there is little left for the deeper questions of purpose and mission," it said.

Produced by Theos, the report was funded by the Church Commissioners' Cathedral Sustainability Fund and the Association of English Cathedrals (AEC). It was presented to the National Cathedrals Conference in Bristol on Monday.

In addition to fieldwork at six cathedrals, where a visitor survey gathered 1375 responses, Theos commissioned a YouGov poll of 1802 members of the public. Although 77 per cent of the poll's respondents had visited a cathedral in the past three years, the report cautioned that "we are at risk of overestimating how emotionally, culturally or financially invested English people are in their cathedrals".

The report diagnosed a "warm but passive dominant posture" from the public. Many respondents were

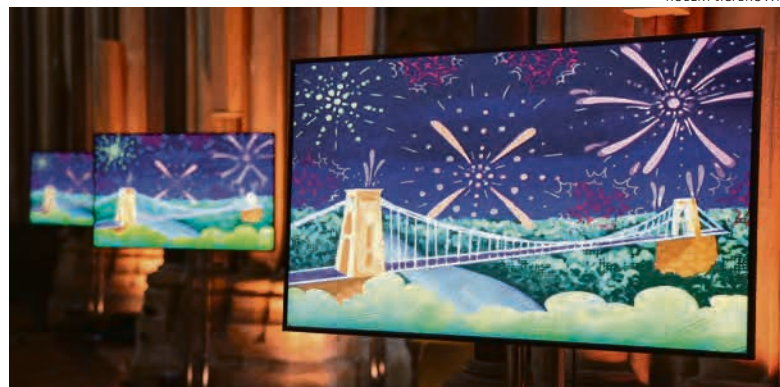
# Research on cathedrals warns of 'permacrisis'

## Visitor numbers are high, but sustained investment needed

"pleased that cathedrals exist, glad to benefit from them and even emotionally attached to them, but they do not automatically infer from this that they bear any responsibility for sustaining them".

More than half (57 per cent) of the YouGov respondents said that they were unlikely to donate to their nearest cathedral if it was in financial difficulty. Overcoming such public ambivalence required work in schools, community life, and the wider public conversation, the report said.

Recurrent themes across the fieldwork included the idea that the building itself "does much of the missionary work". Cathedrals "remain spaces where stillness, beauty and wonder can gently draw the spiritually open toward an experience of the sacred", the report



Art and Design students from the city of Bristol "took over" evensong in Bristol Cathedral using immersive light and sound projections during the conference

suggested. It said, however, that "the building — and even the liturgy — cannot communicate the Christian faith alone". Many visitors told the researchers "that they could not fully understand the beauty and meaning of the cathedral they were visiting"; and some senior clergy admitted to this as a failing.

"Collar off, I walked into the building trying to imagine I was a

first-time visitor who didn't know anything about anything," one told Theos. "I learned a lot about Catherine of Aragon and Henry VIII — I didn't learn much about Jesus of Nazareth."

It is 16 years since Theos published its first report on cathedrals. In the interim, the landscape has changed "markedly" with both commercialisation and professionalisation being two significant shifts, the report said. The latter has been "largely a positive story", it suggested. But one staff member, who "spoke for many", commented: "At the moment, cathedrals have become governing bodies with safeguarding responsibilities and fundraising activities, and, if we have any time left, we can then run a church on the side."

In recent years, commercial events at cathedrals have seen them drawn into the wider culture wars. The report revealed a degree of regret among cathedral staff, some of whom felt that "their cathedral got some things wrong in the early years,

whether it be spirits tasting events, inappropriate comedy acts, or horror film screenings, and suggested they are now more deliberate about what events they host".

The report itself said that a new, younger audience coming to a cathedral for a tribute concert "may come to feel comfortable entering the cathedral primarily as a concert venue". It continued: "Cathedrals should remember that they have only one chance to make a lasting first impression and should not underestimate its power, lest they create a new set of lasting misconceptions."

The "lotteryfication" of the funding landscape was also explored. At several cathedrals, staff described how lottery-funded projects had "influenced, and in some cases largely erased, the religious meaning of spaces and objects in favour of heritage interpretation".

The report was overwhelmingly sympathetic towards the financial "permacrisis" in which cathedrals find themselves, noting "statutory responsibilities for buildings of immense national significance, whose costs outstrip their resources by orders of magnitude".

It warned: "If cathedrals are to continue delivering the social goods that government commends them for, they will need sustained public investment."

In addition to this, the Church's national institutions should "consider going beyond" the support currently offered, such as the Cathedral Sustainability Fund, and "recognise cathedrals as central to its holistic witness and a singular means of discharging the responsibilities that come with establishment".

The report continued: "This will involve calibrating expectations to the slow-burn nature of cathedral ministry. "The return on investment in a cathedral should not be measured narrowly in new members or even visitor numbers (which have been, in fact, growing over the years), but in the provision of spiritual capital and social infrastructure for the nation, over generations."

Leader comment, page 14

## Deans to meet parliamentarians in June

Sarah Meyrick

CATHEDRAL deans are to meet MPs next month to discuss the financial sustainability of cathedrals in light of the Theos report, it was announced at the National Cathedrals Conference on Tuesday.

Sir Paul Ruddock, who chaired the Government's First World War Centenary Cathedral Repairs Fund, a £40-million conservation scheme tied to the Armistice centenary, told delegates that it was a mistake to assume that cathedrals would always be there, in spite of their popularity with visitors.

Almost ten million people visited a cathedral last year, he said. "They are, simultaneously, among the most visited tourist attractions in

England and the largest free, 12-hour-a-day public spaces in their cities. They are, I think, the only buildings in this country which combine, on the same site and often on the same day, a service of eucharist, a meeting of the local council, a graduation ceremony, a homeless drop-in, a chamber concert, a bell-ringers' practice, a school carol service, and a quiet visitor sitting alone at the back of the nave, having, perhaps, the most important conversation of their life."

Cathedrals were doing "public work, civic work, that nothing else in the country can do", almost entirely at their own expense, he said.

"None of us alive paid for them — none of us alive built them. The

question, in our generation, is whether we will leave them in a state at least as good as that in which we found them.

"I think we will," he concluded. "I do not believe that a country whose cathedrals are loved by such people is in any imminent danger of letting them go.

"But love is not enough. Love must, at some point, take out its chequebook. Love must lobby the Government. Love must serve on the fabric committee. Love must, when the bucket is passed at the back of the nave, put something in it."

After his speech, the Dean of St Albans, the Very Revd Jo Kelly-Moore, who chairs the Association of English Cathedrals, told delegates that the latest research would be shared with parliamentarians in Westminster next month.

"Conserving these Grade I listed buildings and keeping them open, safe, warm, and welcoming brings constant financial pressure — one we must address together," she said.

"A demonstration of the urgency is seen in the fact that nearly three-quarters of cathedrals are experiencing operational deficits at this time.

"With no government support — and the fact that the Church Commissioners do not have the ability to fund fabric work — the structural funding gap for repairs and maintenance of these national treasures is becoming an ever greater burden . . .

"This new research is a harsh reminder of our fragility, an opportunity to name and explore the extraordinary potential and presence of our cathedrals, and to confront the very real task of funding that ongoing service to the nation."



Jackson Brown, a 12-year-old chorister at Worcester Cathedral, jumps for joy on Easter Day with the Bishop of Worcester. He has an ambition to jump at every Anglican cathedral in England, and has just 13 left to visit. He shares the images through Instagram on his "Cathedral Jumping" account.

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**Shining a light:** St Katharine Cree, Leadenhall Street, in the City of London, has a portrait exhibition, "Voices for Transparency", bringing together photos from around the world to tell stories behind financial corruption and secrecy jurisdictions. It is open to the public until Sunday. There is the possibility of an extension to the show, if there is demand [stkatharinecree.org](mailto:stkatharinecree.org)



## Service pays tribute to infected-blood victims

Seats left empty as a reminder of those who had died

Amelia Braddick

A MEMORIAL service for people affected by the contaminated-blood scandal was held on Tuesday in St Paul's Cathedral — a place "where the spirit to sing, to shout, to scream it out is so highly valued", the chair of the Infected Blood Inquiry, Sir Brian Langstaff, said.

The service was led by the Dean of St Paul's, the Very Revd Andrew Tremlett, who offered a prayer and words of recognition: "We gather today, in this Cathedral Church, to hold before God all who have been impacted by the decades-long contaminated blood scandal.

"We publicly recognise and remember the devastation wrought on thousands of lives and the untimely deaths of loved ones."

In the 1970s and 1980s, about 6000 people with haemophilia and other bleeding disorders were treated with contaminated clotting factors containing HIV and hepatitis

viruses, according to the Haemophilia Society. Some of them unintentionally infected their partners, often because they were unaware of their own infection. Since then, more than 3000 people have died. About 1250 people were infected with HIV, including 380 children.

Giving the address, Sir Brian said: "For the nation to acknowledge human failures, to recommit to making amends, and to speak out about the truth, there are few places fitter than here at St Paul's where the spirit to sing, to shout, to scream it out is so highly valued. It is here where we can each, in our own way, but also powerfully together, remember.

"This tragedy alone would be catastrophic enough. However, it has been exacerbated by the public lack of recognition and acknowledgement.

"We pay tribute to those who have carried us to this stage and to those who continue to fight to ensure justice is delivered for all. We owe them all a debt that can never be repaid."

Empty seats, reserved throughout the cathedral, represented those who had lost their lives, "and remind us that they sit alongside us in our journey", Dean Tremlett said.

Before the service, the bells of St Paul's were rung half-muffled in memory of those who had died. Members of the congregation were invited to collect a plain envelope that contained the first name of someone affected by the scandal. Among those in attendance were the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester.

After a prayer, read by the chair of the Infected Blood Memorial Committee, Clive Smith, people were invited to open the envelope and read aloud the names. A moment of silence was then observed, during which petals fell from the whispering gallery in the community's colours: red for HIV, yellow for hepatitis, black for death.

The song "Empty Chairs at Empty Tables", from the musical *Les Misérables*, was sung by Michael Ball, who played Marius in the original 1985 West End production.

Hymns included "Guide me, O thou great Redeemer", "Lord of all hopefulness", and "Abide with me". During the latter, community members carried candles forward to be lit under the cathedral's dome.

The London Contemporary Voices Choir, led by Meg Ella Brookes and accompanied by Barny Jones, sang Emeli Sandé's "Read All About It", which included a striking *a cappella* section.

The St Paul's Cathedral Consort sang In Paradisum from Fauré's *Requiem*, and "Set me as a seal upon thine heart" by William Walton. The choir was conducted by the organist James Orford, and, during the service, the organ was played by the sub-organist, George Inscow.

The prayers of intercession were led by the Succentor, the Revd Timothy Miller, and readings included Matthew 10.26-31.

Elisabeth Buggins, a granddaughter of an infected-blood victim, read a remembrance poem, "Not numbers on a ledger". It includes the lines: "They came for healing hands, for hope in careful veins, and left with something silent that carried years of pain. A trust was placed in strangers, in science, white and clean — yet hidden in the lifeblood were truths left unforeseen."

## 'Very deep poverty' rises across UK

POVERTY in the UK is down by three per cent since 1996, but the number in "very deep poverty" has risen by 14 per cent, research from Christians Against Poverty (CAP) suggests, writes Amelia Braddick.

The charity's report *Stronger Together*, published on Wednesday to mark its 30th anniversary, draws on data from existing and new clients. "Survey respondents" or "clients", as referred to throughout the report, represent the 511 responses to a survey of CAP debt-help clients conducted last November.

The report also refers to data from CAP's debt-help case-management system, which covers 4165 UK-wide client households who had a "Financial Statement" activated for the first time in 2025. Of those, 2218 households had a "budget confirmed during the year". These groups are referred to as "new CAP clients" or "new CAP households".

In 1994-95, the proportion of people in the UK who experienced "very deep poverty" was 34 per cent, compared with 48 per cent in 2023-24. The report says that "around 6.8 million people in the UK (that's nearly half of everyone in poverty) now live in very deep poverty".

There was less of a drop in the proportion of people experiencing "deep poverty", which fell from 28 per cent in 1994-95 to 22 per cent in 2023-24. The proportion of people in "poverty" fell from 38 per cent in 1994-95 to 30 per cent in 2023-24.

The report suggests that an estimated 53 per cent of "new CAP households" with a "confirmed budget" have incomes below the poverty line (defined as 60 per cent

of the median UK income). Forty-one per cent are in "deep poverty" (50 per cent of the median), and more than one in four have incomes below 40 per cent of the median UK income (very deep poverty).

The charity says that 20 per cent of "new CAP clients" have fallen into debt owing to issues with mental health, "low income" (17 per cent), "relationship breakdown" (ten per cent), "long-term illness" (nine per cent), "problems with budgeting" (eight per cent), and "unemployment" (seven per cent).

The Chief executive of CAP, Stewart McCulloch, said: "Over the last 30 years, churches across the UK, backed by CAP's expertise, have walked alongside the most vulnerable, demonstrating God's love in action, transforming thousands of lives."

The report suggests that, today, poverty has affected a broader section of society than it did 30 years ago. In 1994-95, 13.4 per cent of working families were in poverty. In 2023-24, the figure stood at 18 per cent.

Between 1994 and 1997, 23 per cent of people were living below the poverty line, compared with 29 per cent between 2021 and 2024.

"Living in spiralling debt is dangerous. It often results in families unable to afford healthy food, and living in cold, damp unsafe properties," Mr McCulloch said.

CAP says that, over the past year, 47 per cent of respondents said that they went without food, 46 per cent went without hot meals, 52 per cent stopped heating their homes, and 70 per cent did not buy Christmas or birthday gifts for family members. [capuk.org](http://capuk.org)



## Blackpool's big day out

Madeleine Davies

MORE than 1000 people gathered in Blackpool last weekend for The Big Day Out: the first in a series of events held as part of the diocese of Blackburn's centenary celebrations.

"In all the laughter, fun, and conversations, in the acts of welcome, and in the worship, there has been a real sense of God's presence among us as we collectively marked 100 years of our diocese," the Bishop of Blackburn, the Rt Revd Philip North said.

"As we look to the future, my prayer is that this day will be deeply significant and encourage us to go on sharing that same hope with confidence — knowing that

the love of Jesus Christ is for every person and every community in Lancashire."

The day culminated in open-air worship in St John's Square, led by the Bishop of Lancaster, Dr Jill Duff, and the Revd Andy Dykes, Vicar of St John's, Blackpool, a resource church in the HTB network and part of the diocese's £3.5-million Lighting Up New Generations project. The church also hosted a "family zone". Testimonies were given by three people from across Lancashire.

The diocese was carved out of the diocese of Manchester in the early 20th century to reflect the growing population and industrial communities of Lancashire.

## Who's behind growth in Anglo-Catholicism?

The people shaping its life, discipline, and vision

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# Nationalists march; Christians listen

Unite the Kingdom rally prompts church groups to seek the peace of the city

James Macintyre

CHRISTIANS who oppose nationalism gathered over the weekend, set up listening stations at the Unite the Kingdom march in London, and ate with their Muslim neighbours.

Numbers attending Tommy Robinson's rally on Saturday were lower than the previous outing in September, according to police estimates. The Metropolitan Police reported that 60,000 attended the far-Right Unite the Kingdom march, down on the 150,000 who attended last year. Mr Robinson, whose birth name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, posted the Lord's Prayer on social media before the event. He has said that he converted to Christianity in prison last year, while serving a sentence for contempt of court.

The police reported that 15,000 to 20,000 people attended the pro-Palestinian Nakba Day rally, held at the same time.

Police figures record that 24 people associated with the Unite the Kingdom rally were arrested, while 12 were arrested in connection to the pro-Palestinian march.

The Church of England Bishops' Working Group for Promoting Unity in our Nation, set up late last year by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in response to concerns about the use of Christian symbols by far-Right pressure groups (Features, 6 February), shared a prayer on Church of England social-media channels. The prayer gives thanks for those who "build up our common life" and asks for God's wisdom to "protect the most vulnerable among us" and his help to "love all who call these islands their home".

It goes on to ask for God's protection from "the perils of division and hatred".

The working group is chaired by the Bishop of Leicester, the Rt Revd Martyn Snow. Its other members are: the Bishop of Kirkstall, the Rt Revd Arun Arora; the Bishop of Barking, the Rt Revd Lynne Cullens; the Bishop of Bradford, Dr Toby Howarth; the Bishop of Croydon, Dr Rosemarie Mallett; the Bishop of Willesden, the Rt Revd Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy; and the Bishop of Birmingham, Dr Michael Volland.

During the march, Red Letter Christians, Better Story, and Christians Against the Far Right set up a listening table to speak to marchers leaving central London. Another listening station was set up for those who felt unsafe as a result of the march. Anglican priests and Baptist ministers who oppose "the co-option of Christianity by the far Right" attended the listening stations.

The Bishop of Edmonton, Dr Anderson Jeremiah, said: "One of the major concerns of people participating in this rally is that they are not being listened to. I feel that both as a priest



A cross is held by Unite the Kingdom supporters who gathered in Westminster, on Saturday, for a march organised by Tommy Robinson

and as a bishop, the most important thing I have to do is to listen and to hear their pain.

"As a Church, we have a duty of care to pay attention and be present in the community, rather than waiting in our churches."

The Revd Sally Mann, a Baptist minister and co-director of Red Letter Christians, said: "We are here listening today because we believe that London needs peace envoys. We are creating a listening space for those who took part in the protest, and those who got caught up in it today. We are praying for the peace of our city. And we're confident witnesses to Way of Jesus — a way of love and welcome, not division and fear."

On Saturday evening, two London churches and a Muslim community association hosted the Caledonian Road Meal For Hope at Jean Stokes Community Centre, in Islington; 100 guests attended.

Part of the national A Million Acts of Hope campaign — supported by the Christian campaigning group Better Story, the Church on the Corner, in Islington, and the Al-Ashraf Community Welfare Association — it brought together residents of Barnsbury and the Caledonian Road across faith traditions.

Fergus Burnett, the director of Better Story and one of the organisers from Church on the Corner, said: "As community-focused organisations, we do see the divisions in society, but we also see countless daily acts of compassion that transcend differences and transform our communities."

"The Caledonian Road Meal for Hope is a celebration of these acts of hope, and a call to see boundary-defying love — rather than divisive anger — as the answer to the very real issues our society faces."

Also during the march, St Albans Cathedral hosted a public gathering of civic, faith, and community leaders to offer a united stance against the rise in anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and other forms of hate.

The event was organised as part of Herts Together, a county-wide initiative launched earlier this year under the banner "One County, Many Voices, Shared Future".

The Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Robert Voss, and the Dean of St Albans, the Very Revd Jo Kelly-Moore, were joined by the Chief Constable for Hertfordshire, Andy Prophet, the MP for St Albans, Daisy Cooper, and the Bishop of Hertford, Dr Jane Mainwaring.

Dr Mainwaring said: "As someone who believes in the intrinsic value of every human life, it is a cause of deep sadness and profound regret that we are

living in communities and in a country where the concept of seeing others as our neighbours, who we are called to love, is being challenged in both hidden and overt ways."

**New research.** Preliminary findings from the think tank Theos, conducted by the independent market-research agency RED C, suggest that Christian nationalism is a genuine phenomenon, but that it is less widespread than is widely assumed.

The findings suggest a gap between support for Britain's historic Christian identity and

support for exclusionary nationalist beliefs. In the survey of 1765 UK adults, 17 per cent thought that, to be truly British, people needed to be Christian. Just under half of these — eight per cent — strongly agreed with this statement.

Just one per cent considered being Christian to be the most important factor (from a list of 12) in being British. About 16 per cent agreed that people who did not hold Christian values did not belong in Britain; fewer half of these — seven per cent — strongly agreed with this statement.

Four in ten people — 41 per cent — agreed that "the law in Britain should be based on Christian values," and 40 per cent agreed that "religious education in Britain should prioritise the teaching of Christianity ahead of other faiths."

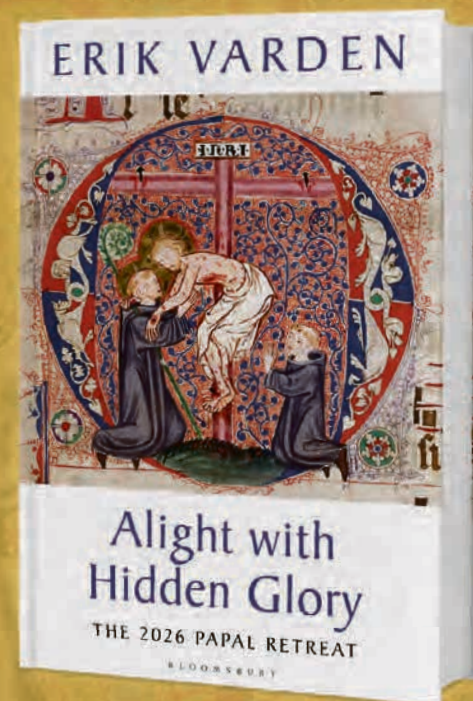
Dr Nick Spencer, senior fellow at Theos, told the *Church Times*: "Preliminary analysis of the data shows that Christian nationalist sentiment is real in the UK, but very much a minority view."

Speaking about the march on Saturday, Dr Spencer continued: "Our experience, having attended several Unite the Kingdom rallies and spoken to a number of people there, is that these [concerns] are not 'one thing', but a messy conglomeration of various sentiments, ranging from outright Muslim-hatred and xenophobia to genuine Christian revivalism and legitimate political grievance."



The Bishop of Edmonton, Dr Anderson Jeremiah (right), at a listening station set up by Christian organisations

## Spiritual reflections from the 2026 Papal Retreat



Out now

BLOOMSBURY CONTINUUM

# Kirk study: Parish system a hindrance

Membership down by more than one million in 70 years

Madeleine Davies

THE failure of a raft of initiatives to stem the decline of the Church of Scotland — proceeding at about 160,000 members per decade — is, in part, the result of clinging to the parish system, a new internal report suggests.

“The Church has a self-image and identity which is based upon its history as a national church with a parish system of a minister and a building within each geographical area, secured by its former role as a key part/member/constituent in national and political life,” it states.

“That self-image and identity served the Church well for four centuries from the Scottish Reformation of 1560 onwards but is now hampering the change needed to halt decline.”

The report, produced by the Theological Forum and the Faith Action Programme Leadership Team, was discussed by the General Assembly when it met from 15 to 18 May in Edinburgh. The report

reflects on the decline of the Church of Scotland, and offers guidance on what steps should be taken to address it.

It sets out some of the “diverse and complex” causes of decline, from a peak of 1.3 million members in 1956 to fewer than 300,000 today. It refers to widespread secularisation as a cause, but also considers “how the Church of Scotland itself may have contributed towards its own decline”.

The report refers to factors such as the church reunion of 1929, in which the Kirk joined with the United Free Church of Scotland. This created “a huge mega-structure of an institution overburdened by buildings and dependent for its operation on a tightly controlled legal bureaucracy with centralised power”.

It also refers to the shift in the 1960s towards the Left, which “did not always harmonise well with the broad conservatism of the Church of Scotland”; and the diminution of the need for Protestant allegiance and Church of Scotland membership for social or employment advancement.

A theme of the report is the Church’s alleged inclination “to protect the status quo as it believes it to be inviolable, and to implement Church law as an instrument to stifle



The new Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rt Revd Gordon Kennedy

action, innovation and development in mission, rather than to enable and encourage them”.

Alternative structures or ministries, such as pioneering, or Fresh Expressions, “can be seen as anathema to who we are”, it says. “In short, the Church by its very nature

may not be suited to the re-orientation that is required towards imaginative, adaptive, organic mission ‘on the edge’, without a significant change in mindset and ethos.”

The Church has “chosen to spread its decreasing resources ever more

thinly to preserve its identity, and to meet the widespread demand for a minister and a building”, the report says. “This, in turn, has decreased the opportunity and energy to initiate change.”

In the coming years, the Church of Scotland is expected to dispose of about 30 per cent of its churches: between 350 and 400 buildings. The General Assembly papers include a list of dozens of churches and manse approved for sale, and a warning that numbers of ministers across the Church are running “significantly below projections”, with “no realistic likelihood” of reaching the target of full 600.

While critical of existing structures, the report’s recommendations focus on spiritual practices, including the promotion of “daily personal and regular communal practices of Bible reading, prayer, and spiritual curiosity”, and encouraging all members to “speak more about Jesus than about church”.

While acknowledging a place for lament, it suggests that the Kirk’s “loss of national power and influence, of cultural hegemony and leadership, may prove to be a liberation, allowing the Church of Scotland to speak more unrestrictedly and more authentically than ever of Jesus Christ”.

## No revival in Britain, says Curtice

THE Covid-19 pandemic has had a “long-term adverse impact” on attendance at religious services in Britain, the political scientist Sir John Curtice said this week, writes Madeleine Davies.

Sir John is a senior fellow at the National Centre for Social Research, which, since 1983, has conducted the annual British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey. Respondents are selected at random from those who live in private households in Great Britain. Data are weighted to reflect the known characteristics of the adult population.

On Monday, the centre published an article drawing on the findings of the 2025 survey, carried out online last autumn.

Attendance at church services is still below pre-pandemic levels, and is lowest of all among younger people, it suggests.

A high level of variation in self-reported data over the years, however, may reflect small sample sizes.

In the 2025 survey, 4468 respondents were asked about their religious identity. Almost half — 49 per cent — identified with a religion. One in eight Christians (13 per cent), as in 2024, reported attending a service at least once a week. The figure was 12 per cent in 2021 and 20 per cent in 2018.

Overall, five per cent of all adults reported attending a Christian service each week, compared with eight per cent in 2018.

The proportion for the under-35s was four per cent. The greatest fall was recorded among the over-70s: nine per cent recorded weekly attendance last year, compared with 18 per cent in 2017.

Among those who identified with a religion, a minority reported attending a religious service at least once a week: nine per cent of An-

glicans; 15 per cent of Roman Catholics; 13 per cent of “Other Christian”; and 23 per cent of people of other faiths.

The figures suggest greater stability among Anglicans (the 2019 figure was 12 per cent, down from nine per cent in 2017). The proportion among RCs reporting weekly attendance fell from 25 per cent in 2017 to 15 per cent in 2025, although there was greater variation over the time frame in this group: the figure was 23 per cent in 2018 and 16 per cent just a year later.

The “Other Christian” proportion reporting weekly attendance halved from 27 to 13 per cent between 2017 and 2025, while the share in the “Non Christian” group also varied

significantly: from 37 per cent in 2017 to 23 per cent last year, down from 39 per cent in 2024.

“COVID-19 has, it seems, had a long-term adverse impact on religious attendance across the whole of the diverse religious landscape that exists in Britain today,” Sir John wrote in an accompanying article. “The evidence from the British Social Attitudes survey is clear: there has been no revival in Christian observance in Britain.”

Sir John’s article acknowledges the impact of sample sizes on the BSA data, which draws on responses from 519 Anglicans, 303 Roman Catholics, 931 “Other Christian”, and 254 non-Christians. [naten.ac.uk](http://naten.ac.uk)

## Pope gives public backing to Thy Kingdom Come

James Macintyre

THE Pope has backed the Thy Kingdom Come (TKC) prayer movement held between Ascension Day last week and Pentecost, this Sunday. The Archbishop of Canterbury has welcomed his message.

“These days of the ‘Thy Kingdom Come Novena’ are an especially fitting time . . . to pray that others will also come to encounter the saving and liberating love of God revealed in Jesus,” the Pope said in a video message.

“While it is true that sometimes we stumble and forget about God and our need for him, at the core of our being we know that only he can satisfy our deepest longings and our inner restlessness.”

Pope Francis also supported TKC. The ecumenical movement is now in its 11th year and, the Church of England says, has a presence in nearly 90 per cent of countries around the world.

Archbishop Mullally wrote on social media: “Thank you, Your Holiness, for this special message to Christians around the world for



Pope Leo in his video message

Thy Kingdom Come 2026. Ascension reminds us that Jesus reigns and that, through the Holy Spirit, his life continues in us.

“Our world is longing for hope, peace and renewal. As we journey from Ascension to Pentecost, let us pray together for more people to know Jesus Christ and the fullness of life we find in him.”



**Tradition:** children from Bisley Blue Coat C of E School, in Gloucestershire, celebrate Ascension Day by parading through the village, wearing traditional Victorian style uniforms and carrying flower garlands to dress the wells. The tradition was started in 1863 by the Vicar, the Revd Thomas Keble, who first held the parade in thanksgiving for the village’s clean water

A FINAL update on our *Church Times* Train-a-Priest (TAP) Fund: generous readers have given £25,657.83 this year towards the TAP Fund, which helps to support ordinands in need and those earlier in the exploration of their vocation by removing some of the barriers to participation. This will be added to the legacy that we received last year, taking the total, as we reach Pentecost, to around £105,000. Every penny that you have given

will go to people facing financial difficulty at the beginning of their journey to ministry in the C of E. Nothing is retained to cover administrative expenses. Our grateful thanks to everyone who has made a donation this year.

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CHURCH TIMES

# Lords Spiritual dissect King's Speech

Integration needs support of policymakers, argues Archbishop Mullally

James Macintyre

RELIGIOUS identity in the UK has been “misused to intimidate and divide”, the Archbishop of Canterbury has said. She called for “a renewal of hope”, “a rejection of hatred and division”, and “a turning towards one another”.

Archbishop Mullally was speaking in the House of Lords on Monday during a debate on the King's Speech, two days after 60,000 people attended the Unite the Kingdom rally in central London, organised by the far-Right activist Tommy Robinson (News, 18 May).

“As human beings, we are naturally drawn to those who resemble us or reinforce our views, particularly in times of adversity or perceived scarcity,” she said. “Yet such instincts do not lead to a flourishing society.”

She continued: “The Church of England has long held that the right of all people to practise their faith without fear must be protected. We have also seen religious identity misused to intimidate and divide. Let us be clear: to follow Jesus Christ is to love your neighbour as yourself, to love without exception, and to seek the flourishing of all.”

The Archbishop said that the task of “making strangers neighbours” became “far more difficult if those refugees for whom we hold responsibility lack clarity about whether or when they may be required to return to their country of origin”.

She continued: “We embed insecurity rather than stability when those seeking British citizenship are put through a decade-long game of immigration snakes and ladders.”

Concluding, she said: “Our debate on immigration can, however, be a source of hope: hope that attitudes can change, that fairer societies are less divided, and that daily life alongside people of different backgrounds reduces fear and suspicion.”

“Through its presence in every parish across England, the Church of England helps to build communities where people know and care for one another. In doing so, it builds bridges and fosters relationships across lines of race, faith, class, and more. In these acts of mutual care, the seeds of belonging are sown. It is this patient work of integration and community-building that policymaking must support.”

The Bishop of Newcastle, Dr Helen-Ann Hartley, spoke in the education debate on 14 May, welcoming the Government's support for “industrial renewal” and “closer co-operation with our European neighbours”. She said: “The proposed European Partnership Bill is important for regions such as the north-east. Our



**Hand of God:** “Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel: The Exhibition” features an immersive presentation of all 34 of Michelangelo's celebrated Sistine-Chapel frescoes. The show, at 1 America Square, near Tower Bridge, London EC3, runs until 6 September. [chapelistine.com](http://chapelistine.com)

relationship with our neighbours is not an ideological abstraction but a matter of practical economic significance.”

Dr Hartley continued: “As we pursue growth and competitiveness, we must resist any tendency to treat human beings merely as economic instruments or units of productivity. Every person possesses inherent dignity and worth, which no labour market can define and no economic circumstance can erase.”

“Good growth is not growth at any cost. The success of this session of parliament will not be measured solely through national growth figures or investment totals. It will be measured by whether people truly experience greater dignity, stronger communities, wider opportunity and renewed hope in the places that they call home.”

Giving her maiden speech in the Upper House on Monday, the Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich, Dr Joanne Grenfell, expressed hope that the Government “will give due weight to those whose voices are hardest to hear — individuals maintaining their innocence over many years from within prison, and the families who stand alongside them”. She continued: “Any system worthy of public confidence must be able to correct and learn from its mistakes.”

Also speaking in the justice and home-affairs section of the debate, the Bishop of Gloucester, the Rt Revd Rachel Treweek, said: “For far too long, we have let the public narrative and media headlines shape our penal policy. It is, therefore, not surprising that, too often, our system leaves people stuck in cycles of re-offending. We are not being courageous in

acting on the evidence regarding what enables change and transformation. Our long-term vision must be about reducing offending and reoffending, with a long-term aim of building stronger communities. It must be about investing in restorative rehabilitation, braver community alternatives, valued probation, and, of course, victim support, because we cannot be siloed in focusing either on offenders or on victims.”

The Bishop of Oxford, Dr Steven Croft,

spoke on Tuesday in the debate covering energy security, education, technology, and culture.

He raised the matter of online safety, asking: “Where in the gracious speech is the legislative vehicle to deliver the urgent changes needed to the online safety regime? Where is the strategic approach to AI safety? Where is the careful balancing of ethics with innovation? Where are the laws binding development on super-intelligent AI?”

## Views on burnout sought

WE LAUNCHED our survey assessing the vulnerability of clergy and lay ministers to burnout a few weeks ago (News, 24 April), write *Andrew Village and Leslie Francis*. Since then, we have had a very encouraging response, and several organisations and networks are promoting it among their members.

This survey gives you feedback on your well-being; so we are hoping that this venture will lead to a useful way for individuals and churches to keep track of well-being, which is such an important aspect of church life these days. The survey is still running; so, if you are ordained, or a lay minister with a teaching or preaching ministry, there is still time to take part.

The Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI) is a measure of work-related well-being which was developed some years ago specifically for the clergy. It measures two things related to ministry: emotional exhaustion and satisfaction.

Over the past two decades, we and other researchers have used the FBI to explore aspects of clergy well-being. We have accrued enough data from a wide range of Christian ministers to know what sorts of levels of emotional exhaustion and satisfaction are typical, what factors are associated with different levels, and some of the consequences of those different levels. Completing the survey will take about ten minutes. We hope that enough people will take part so that we can refine the tool if necessary and make it even more useful.

For access to the survey, visit [tinyurl.com/FBISTRev](http://tinyurl.com/FBISTRev) or scan the QR code online.

If you represent a diocese or network and would like to use the survey in your context, please contact us at [a.village@yorks.ac.uk](mailto:a.village@yorks.ac.uk) to discuss how we can best help you.

*The Revd Andrew Village is a professor emeritus, and Canon Leslie J. Francis is a visiting professor, at York St John University.*

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## ■ Cowherd's famous lines discovered in Rome

A LOST copy of "Caedmon's Hymn" (right), the oldest poem to be written in English, has been discovered inside a manuscript at the National Central Library of Rome by two researchers from Trinity College, Dublin. The poem, nine lines long, is said to have been composed by Caedmon, a cowherd from Whitby, after a divine visitation. Composed more than 1300 years ago, it was recorded in Latin in a copy of *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* by the Venerable Bede in the eighth century. The manuscript in Rome shows that the original Old English poem was reinserted into the Latin within 100 years of Bede's finishing his work.



## ■ New Faith Minister announced — ninth in ten years

**THE Labour MP for Barking, Nesil Caliskan, has been appointed as the new Faith Minister after Miatta Fahnbulleh resigned from the post in a letter urging the Prime Minister to resign (News, 15 May). A British Turkish Cypriot, Ms Caliskan has a degree in politics and international relations from Reading University, and led Enfield Council from 2018 to 2024. The Religion Media Centre has observed that she is the ninth Faith Minister in ten years.**

## ■ Dr Grenfell raises plight of Jason Moore in the Lords

AN ALLEGED miscarriage of justice in the conviction of Jason Moore for the murder of Robert Darby was raised by the Bishop of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich, Dr Joanne Grenfell, in her maiden speech in the House of Lords last week. Mr Moore was convicted in 2013. His case has been under consideration for six years by the Criminal Cases Review Commission. "I hope we will give due weight to those whose voices are hardest to hear — individuals maintaining their innocence over many years from within prison, and the families who stand alongside them," Dr Grenfell said. Last year, she found a key witness in the case (News, 20 June 2025).

## ■ Interim ministers to get nationally funded training

**CRANMER HALL, Durham, and Ripon College, Cuddesdon, announced this month a new director of interim-ministry training, the Revd Helen Gheorghiu Gould. The new post is funded through a share of the Church of England's £4.8-million Innovation Fund and is intended to supply nationally funded training and support for interim ministers (IMs) and transition ministers. Legislative changes approved by the General Synod in July 2015 allowed for short-term clergy appointments under Common Tenure, enabling IMs to be widely deployed (News, 17 July 2015).**

## ■ Feast to be added to Revised Common Lectionary

A NEW Feast of Creation has been added to the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) for trial use by the Consultation on Common Texts (CCT), an ecumenical body representing more than 20 denominations, which produces liturgical texts used by many Christian churches worldwide. It is the first addition of a new feast to the RCL since its release in 1983. First proposed by the Ecumenical Patriarch Demetrios in 1989, a World Day of Prayer for Creation has gained the support of several ecumenical bodies, including the World Council of Churches. In February, the General Synod took note of a report by the revision committee for a new Feast of God the Creator to be celebrated on the first Sunday in September, and referred it to the House of Bishops (News, 27 February).

## ■ 'No fundamental objections' motion to be put to Synod

A PRIVATE member's motion stating that "there are no fundamental objections to being in a committed, faithful, intimate same-sex relationship, and that such a relationship can be entirely compatible with Christian discipleship" will be debated in the General Synod in July, the Business Committee has confirmed. It has been tabled by Professor Helen King, of Oxford diocese, an authorised lay preacher, who is a classicist and the author of *Immaculate Forms: Uncovering the history of women's bodies* (Books, 20 September 2024).

## ■ United Reformed Church rebrands magazine

THE official magazine of the United Reformed Church has changed its name from *Reform* in response to concerns about its connotations of the political party Reform UK. The magazine will now be called *Reformed*.

## ■ Founder of Barnabas Fund dies

DR PATRICK SOOKHDEO, the founder of the Barnabas Fund, has died, aged 79, it was announced on Tuesday. A statement was published by TBF Trust, part of a group of charities known as the "Barnabas Family". Dr Sookhdeo led the Barnabas Fund, dedicated to supporting persecuted Christians overseas, for 22 years until his resignation in 2015. That year, he was found guilty of sexual assault and intimidating two witnesses (News, 27 February 2015). He always maintained his innocence. In 2024, the Charity Commission announced that it was investigating the Barnabas Fund over serious concerns regarding its compliance with charity law and the use of charitable funds (News, 11 October, 2024), widened to four other charities connected to it, including TBF Trust, in 2025. The TBF statement said: "Patrick served faithfully for over 50 years with courage, conviction, and devotion to his saviour Jesus Christ. His life and work a testimony to the depth of his faith and his love of our persecuted brothers and sisters."

# Green Man gets the go-ahead in Kempley

Symbol is deemed appropriate to include on headstone

Shiranikha Herbert  
Legal Correspondent

THE Green Man is a Christian symbol and, therefore, an appropriate image to be carved on a headstone in the churchyard of St Edward's, Kempley, the Consistory Court of the diocese of Gloucester has ruled.

The ruling came after Dr Polly Stirzaker, the widow of Roy Stirzaker, lodged a petition, in June 2023, for a memorial for her late husband which included a carving of a Green Man on the headstone. Her intention was to commemorate Mr Stirzaker's longstanding association with morris dancing.

The Priest-in-Charge of St Edward's indicated at the time that the proposed design relating to the Green Man might fall outside the Chancellor's guidelines. After consultation with the Archdeacon and the Registrar, they stated: "Under advisement from Archdeacon and Registrar, I cannot give permission as the Green Man symbol is not considered a Christian symbol."

The diocesan Chancellor, the



ALAMY  
The invitation to the King's Coronation in May 2023, showing the Green Man

Worshipful Mark B. Ruffell, said that the advice given by the Archdeacon and the Registrar accorded with his own understanding.

In February 2023, before Dr Stirzaker's petition was lodged, the Chancellor gave directions stating: "The court is aware that the Green Man image is linked to modern paganism as well as being a character in folklore. The fact that the image (or one similar) has occasionally occurred in church architecture is unlikely to be persuasive upon the court that it should be carved upon a memorial in a Christian churchyard." He encouraged further research into

its history. From that research, it became apparent that the history of the Green Man was complicated. There were Green Man symbols apparently carved in Gloucester Cathedral and Exeter Cathedral. In spring 2023, the invitation to the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla was issued and it contained the image of a Green Man.

The Chancellor said in the judgment: "The coronation invitation confirmed what was becoming abundantly clear — that the symbol, whatever its origins, was not regarded universally with the same suspicion that I had originally supposed. Indeed, I soon became aware that there was a body of opinion that suggested that those in the last century who had tried to link its appearance in medieval architecture to some pre-Christian pagan activity had been discredited."

The Chancellor was directed to a short paper, "The Green Man/Foliage Head as a Symbol in the Context of Christian Memorialisation", co-written by the Revd Dr Helen Hall, of Nottingham Trent University, with Professor Javier Garcia Oliva, of the University of Manchester.

That paper considered that in medieval architecture the Green Man appeared in an explicitly Christian context and was generally construed in a positive light. It had links to the Christian legends of Adam and the Garden of Eden and the quest of Seth. Trees were often linked to the crucifixion, and to winter and spring making the connection between seasonal death and rebirth. It concluded that the Green Man was a Christian symbol, as it had been used in church architecture to convey Christian truths.

The Chancellor decided that, while there was evidence that some had tried to link the Green Man to pagan traditions, he was not convinced that this was historically accurate. It was possible that the symbol might cause some discussion among visitors, but the widening body of research and the use of the symbol on the coronation invitation meant that it was highly unlikely it would cause offence or upset.

The Chancellor accepted "that the symbol of the Green Man can be seen as a representation of Christ as the new Adam surrounded by the abundance of life that he brings".



DIOCESE OF BRISTOL  
Pilgrims rest in the porch after climbing the hill to Malmesbury Abbey

## Pilgrims reach 100 miles

Pat Ashworth

A NINE-day and 100-mile pilgrimage in the diocese of Bristol concludes tomorrow at Bristol Cathedral. Pilgrims set out from Swindon on 15 May and are passing through every deanery as they travel from east to west across the diocese.

A core of five — the Revd Chris Dobson, the Revd Steve Wilkinson, the Revd Lydia Morey, and the Revd Sally Robertson, and the environment and sustainability parish officer, Belinda Martin — have been walking the full 100 miles, joined each day by people from the deaneries and by others doing a virtual pilgrimage. The pilgrimage, "Kingdom Seeds in Local Soil", is part of the Thy Kingdom Come global prayer movement, which is celebrating its tenth anniversary.

Each of the nine churches or schools visited on the route hosted

prayer, reflection, and fellowship.

Speaking on Tuesday, as the pilgrims walked from St Peter's, Dereham, Mr Dobson, the organiser, was upbeat. They had just heard about the church's plans to create a mini-pilgrimage for its 70,000 visitors.

"People can encounter the history but also the living church," he said. "They want to make it a living witness. We've been blown away by how much beauty we've found and the hospitality we've received everywhere."

The Priest-in-Charge of St Philip's, Upper Stratton, the Revd Lydia Morey, said: "As we're walking along, we're talking to each other and hearing different people's stories, what we have in common, and can share in our lives."

Belinda Martin said: "It's been a humbling experience to see so many different people active in their own unique way."



# FUTURE YOUTH



**FUTURE YOUTH (FY) is an opportunity for those aged 18-29 to spend a year growing in young people and children's ministry through placements, training and mentoring.**

**➤** FY is more than just a great experience year though, participants test God's calling on their lives by pursuing ministry in a safe and supportive environment and receiving training through a nationally run course. All placements will provide ministry opportunities across a range of ages and contexts.

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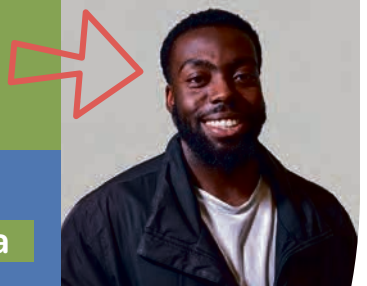
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"I love being a support for young people, being patient with them even when they go wrong, being somewhere safe for them" **Josh**

"The best thing about this year is my youth growing. I'm just really, really, proud of them. And that makes me really, happy to see their growth" **Camila**



Find out more at [cofe.io/fy](https://cofe.io/fy)



## ■ Dr Hollingworth, former Governor-General, dies

DR PETER HOLLINGWORTH, Archbishop of Brisbane 1990-2001, and Governor-General of Australia for two years subsequently, died, aged 91, on Tuesday. He resigned as the Crown's federal representative after an independent report said that, as Archbishop, he had mishandled sexual-abuse allegations (News, 26 October 2018). Not accused of any abuse himself, Dr Hollingworth apologised in 2015 (News, 20 November 2015). In March, his current successor apologised publicly to Beth Heinrich, a survivor (News, 20 March), for the failures in dealing with her abuser, the deposed bishop Donald Shearman. Dr Hollingworth had a particular interest in poverty, social justice, and welfare policy, and was a strong supporter of the ordination of women. He was named Australian of the Year in 1991.

## ■ Ebola virus in DRC and Uganda raises concerns

THE World Council of Churches' general secretary, the Revd Professor Jerry Pillay, has expressed "deep concern" over the spread of the Ebola virus in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Uganda. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared a public-health emergency: at least 600 cases of suspected infections, and 129 deaths, were reported on Wednesday by the WHO. "This outbreak is unfolding in contexts already burdened by poverty, fragile health systems, food insecurity, displacement, and the long-term impacts of conflict," Professor Pillay said. "Such socio-economic vulnerabilities heighten exposure to disease, limit access to timely care, and undermine the ability of individuals and communities to adopt preventive measures." A priest in the DRC, the Revd Jean Gisore, has emailed Anglicans in Hull and elsewhere in the UK to appeal for help with education on protection from the virus, and the provision of water and hygiene equipment. Hull has a large Banyamulenge diaspora presence. On Wednesday, Poppy Anguandia, Tearfund's Country Director for the DRC, said: "We can waste no time in mobilising faith leaders to prevent the spread of Ebola. Pastors are [giving] vital advice on washing hands, seeking medical help... and issuing guidelines on how to handle dead bodies."

## ■ Haiti church leaders to face weapons-trafficking trial

SEVERAL church leaders in the diocese of Haiti will face trial in a weapons-trafficking case, after an appeal court reversed an earlier ruling that had previously dismissed the charges, the *Episcopal News Service* reports. In April, the diocese called for a full investigation and the release of churchpeople from custody (News, 10 April). In July 2022, several senior figures in the diocese were arrested on arms-trafficking charges. One of those accused, a Zimbabwean national, Vundla Sikhumbuzo, went on the run for seven years before being arrested by the Haitian national police. He was wanted in connection with the trafficking of firearms and the attempted murder of his wife.

## ■ Tasmanian estimate for abuse payouts rises to \$80m

THE diocese of Tasmania, in Australia, has said that its total estimated liability for historical child sexual abuse could climb to \$80 million (£60 million) over the next 15 years. The figure is more than double the diocese's \$36-million estimate from 2023, *ABC News* reports. The Bishop of Tasmania, the Rt Revd Richard Condie, said that the Church's redress working group would meet to consider new options to find the additional funds needed, and that "everything is on the table."

## ■ US government sues for RC diocesan land

THE Trump administration filed a lawsuit last week in a federal court in New Mexico against the Roman Catholic diocese of Las Cruces, in an attempt to seize 14 acres of land on a mountain that is a popular pilgrimage site outside El Paso, *Crux News* reports. The land is at the foot of Mount Cristo Rey, a 720-ft mountain with a 29-ft statue of Jesus at its summit, which overlooks Ciudad Juárez, El Paso, and Sunland Park, in New Mexico. The lawsuit argues that the federal government needs the land to install barriers and other technology "designed to help secure the United States-Mexico border". The diocese, resisting the move, says: "The erection of a border wall through or along this holy site could irreparably damage its religious and cultural sanctity, obstruct pilgrimage routes, and transfer sacred space into a symbol of division. Any federal action to seize this land, construct physical barriers, or impede access to Mount Cristo Rey would constitute a significant infringement on religious freedom and the rights of worship."

## ■ CSW petition urges release of Nicaraguan pastor

MORE than 1000 people have signed a Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) petition to Nicaraguan embassies and consulates in eight countries — Austria, Belgium, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Mexico, Switzerland, and the United States — calling for the immediate release of the Protestant pastor Efrén Antonio Vilchez López on the fourth anniversary of his detention. The charity says that Mr Vilchez López was beaten and detained by police officers on 15 May 2022, and falsely charged three days later with aggravated rape and minor psychological injuries against a vulnerable person. "The charges are completely unfounded," and prison officials have refused to pass on food, medicines, and other basics, and the pastor's Bible and reading glasses have been confiscated, CSW says.

## ■ Pope's first encyclical to be published on Monday

POPE LEO's first encyclical, *Magnifica humanitas*, on safeguarding the human person in the time of artificial intelligence (AI), is due to be published on Monday. The Pope will speak at the publication event, alongside several cardinals; Professor Anna Rowlands, a theologian at Durham University; and Christopher Olah, a co-founder of Anthropic, an AI safety and research company based in San Francisco. The Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, will also contribute, Vatican News reports.

# Dean welcomes freed Palestinian Anglican

## Layan Nasir, 25, is greeted with joy in occupied West Bank

### James Macintyre

THE Dean of St George's College, Jerusalem, the Very Revd Canon Richard Sewell, has described the joy of welcoming the Palestinian Layan Nasir, back home in the occupied West Bank, after her third period of incarceration in an Israeli prison.

Ms Nasir, 25, an Anglican, returned home to Birzeit last Friday after a further eight months in the Israeli prison system. She was first imprisoned in 2021, when she was charged with involvement with a banned student organisation, a charge that her family dispute (News, 6 December 2024).

Then, in the early hours of 6 April 2024, several Israeli army jeeps arrived with at least 15 heavily armed soldiers who forced their way into the family's house, held Ms Nasir's parents at gunpoint, searched the house, blindfolded and handcuffed Ms Nasir, and took her away.

She was released in December 2024, only to be jailed again last September. She was finally released again last Friday.

"I was at her home when she returned in a car with family members," Dean Sewell told the *Church Times* this week. "Layan was released by Israeli security forces at a checkpoint near Jenin in the northern West Bank. The first joyful reunion took place there."

"They drove 40 miles from there to Layan's home, where more family and many friends had gathered to give her a rapturous welcome home. There were blaring car horns along with singing and chanting, creating a joyful atmosphere. She looked so thin, having suffered greatly in prison, but Layan's smile was infectious, and everyone experienced an explosion of joy and relief."

The Dean continued: "Typical of Layan's personality, her primary concern was not for herself but for the prisoners remaining, with whom she had shared a cramped cell, and others held in Damon prison near Haifa."

Ms Nasir told him last Friday: "The prison is like a cemetery for the living. I left 79 other Palestinian prisoners, some of whom I know well, living in really difficult conditions. Conditions — already bad — are getting worse. Prison authorities are employing practices of starvation and medical neglect. Many prisoners need medical care but they are given no access to essential services. There is so little food and what is given is very bad quality."

All of the prisoners are desperate that the world knows about all of this and that something will be done to improve conditions. The world must pay attention and must move quickly to act. It is truly unbearable."

Ms Nasir's mother, Lulu, told Dean Sewell: "The release of my daughter, Layan, creates a flood of emotions arriving all at once. . .



RICHARD SEWELL

Layan Nasir with the Dean of St George's, Jerusalem, last Friday

homes. They rampage their way through the Old City, chanting things such as 'Death to Arabs!' and 'May your village burn.'"

He continued: "It is a festival of racist hatred. . . There can be no doubt that this is certainly a 'hate march', and the fact that Israel allows and enables it every year should be a source of absolute shame for everyone who enthusiastically supports Israel as a beacon of tolerance and progress, or who simply averts their eyes from the reality."

"I know many Israelis who oppose this appalling annual event, but still it goes on, tolerated and encouraged by many and, of course, by the state authorities, including some members of the Knesset, who will be present to give it their seal of approval."

At the same time, in Gaza, vulnerable people in refugee camps and elsewhere are facing infestations of rats. The Roman Catholic aid agency CAFOD said in a statement: "Families who have already lost their homes, their loved ones, their safety, and their dignity are now fighting a new enemy in the darkness of overcrowded tent camps — rats and parasites."

"Children are waking up screaming in the middle of the night as rodents bite their fingers and toes while they sleep beside piles of garbage and sewage."

The charity said that its medical consultant in Gaza had reported "the total collapse of solid waste management" since 7 October 2023, which had "pushed the Strip into a catastrophic public health disaster."

It continued: "Flies swarm through tents carrying hepatitis A and severe diarrhoeal diseases."

A doctor in Gaza told CAFOD: "Our medical teams are treating rodent-related incidents every single day. And summer has not even arrived yet."

Relief that she is finally coming back into my arms, back into the rhythm of family, home, and familiar voices.

"There is also pride: a deep, quiet pride in her strength, in the way she endured difficult days, and in the love that stayed unbroken. At the same time, moments like this can carry exhaustion and disbelief. After so much worry, the mind struggles to accept that the waiting is over. Happiness can feel overwhelming, almost fragile, because the heart has been tense for so long."

"Most of all, there is a great feeling of love: a powerful parental love. It is the feeling of seeing someone precious return safely and realising how much of your heart lives inside another. Today my heart feels lighter, grateful, and full again as my daughter Layan returns home."

The day before Ms Nasir's release, Israeli nationalists marched on "Jerusalem Day", which commemorates the capture of the city by the Israelis after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, in what some Israelis refer to as the "reunification of Jerusalem".

Dean Sewell said: "Some who celebrate at the Western Wall behave reasonably, but those who enter in the large procession starting at the Damascus Gate typically taunt and assault any Palestinians that they see, and they will attack their shops and



DIOCESE OF CYPRUS &amp; THE GULF

**United for peace:** the Bishop in Cyprus & the Gulf, the Rt Revd Sean Semple (second from right), joined other church leaders in St Mary's Catholic Church, Dubai, at an ecumenical service of prayer for peace, on 29 April. Hosted by the Vicar Apostolic of Southern Arabia, the Most Revd Paolo Martinelli (centre), it was organised by the Gulf Churches Fellowship and the Interfaith and Ecumenical Dialogue Office of the Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Arabia. It coincided with the gradual reopening of churches in Dubai. In his opening address, Bishop Martinelli emphasised the importance of peace. "We gather together to pray because we know that peace cannot be simply a human construct," he said. "It is a gift from God to be sought, welcomed, nurtured, and spread in society through our good relationships." A dinner, which was hosted by St Mary's, followed the service

Funds were delivered through parametric insurance scheme

Rebecca Paveley

AN INSURANCE payout under an “anticipatory” finance agreement is helping small-scale farmers in Nepal before drought fully takes hold.

The \$100,000 payment is the third secured by the charity Tearfund through its parametric insurance scheme, which releases funds before the full effects of climate-related events such as drought are felt. The payout is triggered by drought conditions measured through satellite data used to assess water availability for crops.

Tearfund described the insurance as “a significant step forward in anticipatory humanitarian action”.

The first two payouts went to chilli farmers in Pakistan and small-holders in Malawi (News, 21 February 2025; 27 June 2025).

In Nepal, the funding will support 671 households in the Bajura district with food packages, tools, and drought-resistant seeds. It is also paying for the installation of water-

# Payout for Nepalese farmers



TEARFUND

Women in Bajura queue, last month, to receive food staples bought through a “drought-insurance” payout

collection tanks for small-scale irrigation projects.

Tearfund’s country director for Nepal, Pranaya Pandey Chhetri, said: “The gap between the cost of global

disasters and the finance available to respond to their impact is growing.

“We are increasingly concerned about hunger and food scarcity. Cycles of flooding and drought

makes farming extremely challenging across Asia, including Nepal, and conflict is disrupting supply chains for agriculture globally. This insurance innovation brings vital

finance to support those on the front lines of the climate crisis. This payout is helping people keep hope alive through a desperate food shortage.”

Tearfund is working with the risk-management company Global Parametrics and the not-for-profit organisation Humanity Insured to provide the new source of financing, which is intended to reduce the impact and cost of humanitarian crises.

The chief executive of the Celsius-Pro Group, the parent company of Global Parametrics, Mark Rüegg, said: “This is a powerful example of how parametric risk-transfer solutions can be used in a very practical way. Fast, pre-arranged financial aid can make a real difference to families struggling to maintain food security, build resilience, and avoid being pushed further into poverty. This is the kind of practical support CelsiusPro Group wants to deliver to climate-vulnerable communities, and it is a privilege to play a part in work that has such a clear impact.”

## Christian elected to high office in India

WHEN C. Joseph Vijay was sworn in as the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu on 10 May, the celebrations across Chennai were not just about the rise of another film star in Indian politics, write Tauseef Ahmad and Sajid Raina.

For many, his victory symbolised something deeper: the emergence of an openly Christian leader at the helm of one of the most politically influential states in India, at a time when religious polarisation increasingly shapes national discourse.

The actor turned politician, aged 51, popularly known as “Thalapathy”, led his two-year-old party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK), to an electoral breakthrough, ending decades of dominance by the Dravidian giants DMK and AIADMK. Although the party fell short of a simple majority, post-poll support from smaller groups enabled Mr Vijay to form the government.

In a country where minority leaders often struggle to rise in mainstream politics, Mr Vijay’s ascent bears symbolic weight. Christians in India constitute just over two per cent of the population, and few have reached such a powerful elected office in recent decades. Supporters say that Tamil Nadu’s verdict reflects the state’s longstanding tradition of secularism and social justice over religious identity.

Throughout the campaign, Mr Vijay avoided religious rhetoric, and instead focused on welfare, education, health care, women’s safety, and employment. His speeches repeatedly emphasised equality and inclusive governance, echoing the Dravidian political culture that has historically resisted communal politics.

“Leadership should be about people’s problems, not their religion,” a Chennai-based political analyst said following the results. “Vijay’s victory shows that voters in Tamil Nadu were more interested in governance and dignity than polarisation.”

For many Christians in southern India, the moment also had emotional significance. Churches in parts of Tamil Nadu held special prayers after the results, while social media were flooded with messages describing the victory as a sign of hope for minorities seeking greater representation in public life.

And yet Mr Vijay’s appeal went far beyond religious identity. His massive following, cultivated through decades in cinema, helped him to connect with young voters frustrated by unemployment, corruption allegations, and entrenched political families. Analysts say that his clean-cut image and outsider status attracted urban, middle-class voters, as well as rural communities dependent on welfare schemes.

Mr Vijay must now transition from screen icon to administrator while managing coalition pressures and delivering on ambitious promises.

In his first address as Chief Minister, he spoke of building a government rooted in “social justice, secularism, and transparency”. For many in Tamil Nadu, those words represented more than a political slogan: they reflected a belief that leadership in India can still transcend religious divides.

At a moment of growing polarisation nationally, Tamil Nadu’s decision to elevate a Christian leader on an inclusive platform stands out as a rare and powerful political statement.



ALAMY

TVK supporters celebrate their win

## Three Manipur pastors killed

Tauseef Ahmad, Sajid Raina

IN THE hill districts of the Indian state of Manipur, church bells were tolled in mourning this week. The killing of three Baptist pastors returning from a peace conference has shaken Christian communities across north-east India, exposing both the fragility of efforts for reconciliation and the deep fractures that define the state’s prolonged ethnic conflict.

The pastors — the Revd Dr Vumthang Sitlhou, Pastor Kaigoulun Lhouvum, and Pastor Paogoulun Sitlhou — were ambushed by armed men on a remote highway when their convoy was travelling from the conference in Churachandpur to Kangpokpi.

Their deaths have triggered grief and anger across tribal Christian communities exhausted by three years of violence, displacement, and distrust.

Church members were reported as saying that it felt like not only an attack on the pastors, but an attack on hope itself, after the men had spent their last hours at a Christian conference on reconciliation.

Christian groups across India are attempting to build stronger unity amid growing insecurity. Days before the ambush, church leaders in Bengaluru formally launched the National Federation of Churches in India (NFCI), a new ecumenical platform to bring Roman Catholic, Evangelical, and Protestant groups together as a broader national voice.

Church leaders involved in the initiative said that rising violence, attacks on pastors, anti-conversion laws, and pressure on Christian institutions had created an urgent need for solidarity.

The Manipur conflict, which erupted in 2023 between the predominantly Hindu Meitei community and the largely Christian Kuki-Zo tribes, has since evolved into overlapping tensions involving other tribal groups, including Nagas. Entire villages have been emptied, churches burned, and families dis-

placed. Trust has been shattered.

Dr Sitlhou had emerged as one of the few voices attempting to bridge those divides. His work focused on dialogue between Kuki and Naga Christians: communities of the same faith but increasingly separated by ethnic suspicion and competing political demands. Outside churches in Churachandpur and

Kangpokpi, worshippers have gathered in silence this week, some holding candles, some weeping quietly after services of prayer.

As investigations continue and accusations fly between armed groups, many residents said that the larger fear was that the killings could further weaken already fragile peace efforts.

# GREECE

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# Charity sets its sights on eye-care screenings

VisionSpring aims to assist 45,000 people in Africa

James Macintyre

CHURCHES in Africa are working with the charity VisionSpring to screen 45,000 people and give 21,000 pairs of glasses this year to those in need of them across Zambia, Malawi, and Uganda.

VisionSpring, based in the United States, is providing two-day programmes of training in screening for churches and other organisations. The church-partnership model was piloted in Zambia in June 2023, before being extended to Malawi and Uganda.

Uganda has a shortage of eye-care professionals — fewer than 40 ophthalmologists serve more than 50 million people, the charity says. The Church of Uganda manages more than 256 health facilities, which include 15 hospitals and 119 health centres. Some 80 per cent of VisionSpring's "customers" live on less than \$4 (£3) per day.

Tumwesigye Jackson, a 62-year-old tailor in the town of Rukungiri, in Uganda, described the difference that glasses had made to him. "Before I got the reading glasses, threading a needle had become one of the hardest parts of my work," he said.

"I would struggle for several minutes, get frustrated, and sometimes delay customers' clothes because my eyes could no longer see clearly. But, after using the readers, everything changed.

"I can now thread needles quickly, sew neatly, and work for longer hours without straining. These glasses have not only improved my eyesight, they have also improved my business and confidence. I serve more customers in a day and earn a better income to support my family."



Archdeacon Saka (left) at St Andrew's, Nakasongola, in Uganda

The director of health services for the Church of Uganda, Angala Ochieng Stephen, said: "Reading glasses are more than a tool for clearer vision — they restore dignity, productivity, and independence. For many clergy, teachers, farmers, tailors, and small-business owners, being able to read again means being able to work confidently, serve others effectively, and provide for their families. The role of the Church is going beyond spreading the word of God and contributing to people's livelihoods."

The Archdeacon of Nakasongola, the Ven. Samuel Saka, in Uganda, said that, being "called to read the Bible daily and faithfully preach the gospel", he found clear vision essential. "Reading glasses do not weaken sight. Rather, they restore near vision and enable many of us to continue serving effectively in ministry and daily work. Through this support, our congregation is able to remain productive, earn a living,

and improve or maintain their household incomes."

Julius Mujuni, the Uganda country lead at VisionSpring, said: "Clear vision is a critical livelihood intervention. Without it, many people cannot carry out everyday tasks such as reading, sewing, farming activities like hand pollination of vanilla, or sorting seeds. As vision deteriorates, people often lose their income, become dependent on others, their work time is limited, and they are forced to step back from their roles in their families and communities."

Mr Mujuni continued: "By identifying those in need, distributing glasses, and raising awareness about eye health, we're helping people regain the ability to work, extending their livelihood and their ability to support their families, and participate fully in daily life.

"A simple pair of glasses can restore more than sight — it restores dignity, independence, and the ability to earn a living."

# Vatican distances itself from LGBTQ+ report

Jonathan Luxmoore

THE Vatican's General Secretariat of the Synod has distanced itself from last week's working-group report on same-sex relations, which called on Roman Catholics to adopt a more positive approach to homosexuality (News, 15 May).

"These groups have worked autonomously — their reports are merely working documents," the Secretariat said in a statement to the Spanish news agency Religión Confidencial. "Our work has been limited to translating the summaries, editing the reports and their publication and dissemination, in order to be consistent with the spirit of transparency and accountability characterising the synodal process."

The brief statement followed widespread criticism of the 31-page report by one of ten working groups set up after the 2023-24 Synod on Synodality in Rome (News, 1 November 2024).

The document, co-ordinated by the Peruvian Cardinal Carlos

Castillo Mattasoglio, said that many gay RCs felt profound "solitude and isolation", and it called on the Church to overcome a "theoretical model that derives praxis from a pre-packaged doctrine".

Although welcomed by some LGBTQ+ campaigners, the report's findings were dismissed as "simply false" by the Dutch Cardinal Wim Eijk. A Congolese member of the working group, Sister Josée Ngalula, told the US-based National Catholic Register that she had not participated in drafting them.

The document was also criticised by Cardinal Gerhard Müller, a former Prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. The Rt Revd Athanasius Schneider, a leading conservative spokesman and auxiliary bishop from Kazakhstan, dismissed it as a "direct attack on divine revelation".

In its statement, the Secretariat, which is led by the Maltese Cardinal Mario Grech, said that the report had not carried its logo and could not be attributed to it.

# Forty years on, trust has aided thousands

Rebecca Paveley

AN EDUCATIONAL charity set up by a group of British students 40 years ago in Lesotho has enabled more than 1500 students to improve their prospects in life.

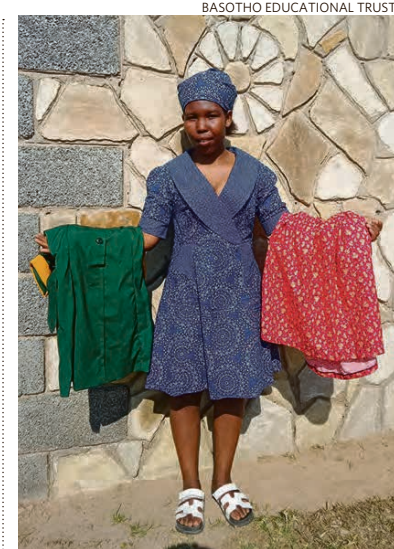
Rebecca Chandler Wilde, one of the students who visited, from Imperial College, London, in 1982, to stay at the Anglican Convent of the Holy Name, said that the group discovered that many young people could not afford even the modest fees required to attend technical school and learn the skills needed to support their families.

Most people in Lesotho live under the poverty line, poverty is particularly severe in rural areas, and there is high unemployment.

Mrs Chandler-Wilde said: "We set up the Basotho Educational Trust [BET] with one simple aim — to provide scholarships to enable the most-needy students to access a technical education that would provide them with life-enhancing skills. Over the years, we have expanded to include catering, dress-making, and computer skills. We concentrate on helping the neediest students. As long as they are prepared to work hard, and have the capacity to complete the course, we don't expect them to be top of the class. We have always been a small charity, run almost entirely by volunteers. Our money has gone a long way."

The Revd Dr Joseph Morenemele is the link in Lesotho with the British trustees. He says that 68 students are currently being supported by the charity to study on courses such as carpentry, bricklaying, motor mechanics, and home science. On average, each has supported with about £3600 of the fees.

Mpho Nkhopa, 25, was or-



Mpho Nkhopa studied fashion and design, supported by BET

phaned at an early age, and found it hard to find permanent employment. She has since been able to study fashion and design.

She said: "When I first registered with BET, I felt hopeless and uncertain about my future. Today, I am proud to say that I have gained valuable skills and confidence in what I do. I am immensely grateful for the opportunity that BET provided me, which has paved the way for a brighter future. My journey has taught me the importance of perseverance and seizing opportunities, and I am excited to see what lies ahead."

Leibe Phoofole is a member of the committee of BET in Lesotho, but originally benefited from a scholarship to complete his studies 30 years ago. He is now a college lecturer. He said: "I thank BET, because I wouldn't be where I am without their scholarship."

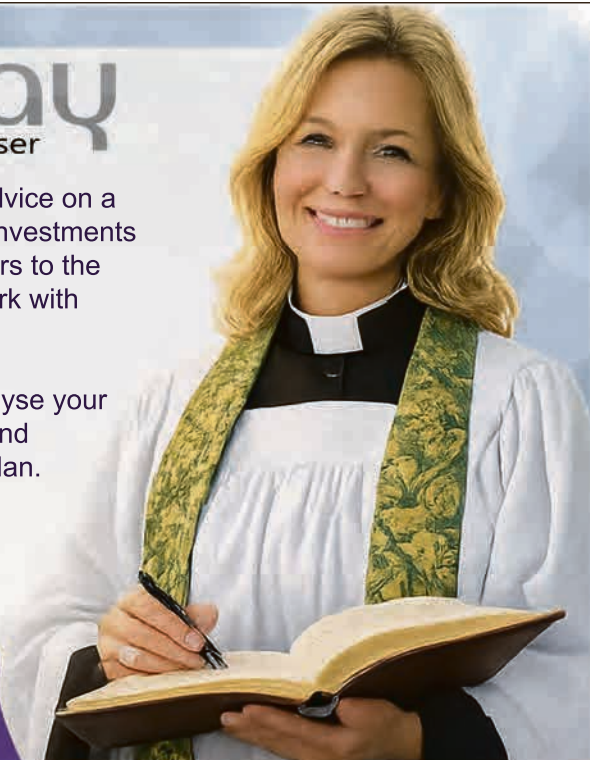
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CHURCH TIMES



## CHURCH TIMES

## Shop window

IT WILL have been news to none of the 380 people attending the National Cathedrals Conference in Bristol this week that our cathedrals are under significant financial pressure. The report from Theos published on Monday, *Living Stones: English cathedrals as sacred spaces in changing times*, says that 80 per cent are in structural deficit, and calls this a “permacrisis”. The researchers found that cathedrals were responding with resourcefulness, taking measures to diversify income streams, but that this came at a cost: the pressures of securing an income can end up consuming so much energy that there is little capacity for anything else.

Church of England figures show that 9.87 million people visited England’s cathedrals in 2024, making them among the most visited heritage sites in the country. Cathedrals are remarkable institutions — sanctuaries of stillness in an otherwise noisy world. They offer worship enhanced by an extraordinary choral tradition. They run outreach and education programmes, and stage world-class concerts and exhibitions. They mark the civic calendar and hold spaces for communal grief and celebration. They contribute £225 million annually to their local economies, and provide employment and opportunities for volunteers. They help to create community and support mental health and well-being. And the Theos researchers found that most people cherished their cathedrals and wanted them to be there. For all the public goodwill, however, the authors warn that appreciation is largely passive, with little understanding of the financial challenges or any sense of a shared responsibility for their future. The mistaken assumption is that cathedrals are comfortably off, funded by a wealthy Church of England, and/or the Government.

In short, cathedrals are places where the human spirit can breathe. As one interviewee told Theos, they are “the shop window and the powerhouse of the Church of England”. The Theos report pleads for the Church to recognise the distinctive character of cathedral ministry. It also calls on the Government to match the warm words of its 2017 report *Cathedrals and their Communities* with a solid financial commitment. “If cathedrals are to continue to deliver the social goods that Government commends them for, they will need sustained public investment,” it concludes. Armed with the Theos report, the Church Commissioners’ Project Narthex report, and a new research tool developed by State of Life (also showcased at the conference), the people running our cathedrals now have a raft of compelling evidence with which to persuade the Government of these churches’ social, cultural, and spiritual contribution to the general good. We can hope and pray that the Government listens.

## No class war in Britain

## The Church Times.

May 21st 1926

THE universal relief that followed the end of the general strike has caused it to be — to some extent — forgotten that the coal strike continues, and that until the mine controversy is settled it is idle to talk of the return of national prosperity. It would appear from their speeches that some of the more experienced leaders are now inclined to accept as a hard necessity a temporary reduction in the wages of the more highly paid workers. If it is clear that this need only be temporary, the concession would be politic, and it would be wise for men dependent on the industry to make a small sacrifice to assure continued employment and many contingent advantages at a not too distant future. . . One interesting feature of the strike was the wide popularity of the 'varsity and public school volun-

teers. Indeed, these young fellows made things go in a way that the undergraduates of the Victorian age would never have contrived. Think of the humour and high spirits with which they controlled the dense crowds on the Tube platforms. “Keep smiling!” “Nice seat for you in the next train!” “Jump in and hear the nightingale sing in the Hampstead Garden Suburb!” Everybody laughed and everybody had a good word for the joker. . . So long as we have young fellows of this sort, limited in vision perhaps, but prodigal in good nature, all attempts to stir up class war will be failures. No foreign country, America least of all, could supply in an emergency hundreds of smiling young men, brave enough to face stones and to laugh at the stone-throwers, and skilful enough to drive a motor omnibus along the Strand at mid-day without disaster.

The Church Times digital archive is available free to subscribers.



A sign is held in Golders Green, in north London, after an arson attack on four ambulances belonging to a Jewish charity, in March (News, 27 March)

## Christian anti-Semitism must be confronted

Churches cannot speak out about hatred of Jews if they do not address prejudice in their own ranks, argues **Symon Hill**

IT IS much easier to condemn something if we think that we are not part of it. When it comes to anti-Semitism, churches have historically been part of the problem. Do we have the courage to admit that, in many ways, we still are?

Church leaders have rightly expressed horror at recent anti-Semitic violence in Britain (News, 15 May). Other faith groups have made similar statements. As Rabbi Lev Taylor put it last month, “When Finchley Reform Synagogue was threatened . . . their local community came to uplift them. Mosques, churches, and community centres. The Lebanese community brought doughnuts. . . These people don’t hate us: they stand with us.”

None the less, if responses from Christians are to carry weight, we must recognise that church teachings have for centuries played a major part in fuelling Jew-hate. The deep roots of Christian anti-Semitism are still bearing bad fruit today.

I spoke in a sermon last year of the need to support innocent people under attack, whatever their nationality or religion. Referring to suffering that I had witnessed in the West Bank, I made my opposition to Israeli occupation clear.

Shaking hands after the service, I was shocked when two people made anti-Semitic comments. One blamed “Jews” rather than Israeli authorities. The other talked about an unpleasant Jewish teacher whom she had known as a child. It took me a moment to work out why she thought this was connected to my sermon.

Another example that I could cite was someone making an anti-Semitic comment to a Jewish friend who accompanied me to church.

TO LEARN about prejudice, we need to put the voices of those affected in the centre. Attempts to understand anti-Semitism must begin by listening to Jews. As a non-Jew, I have been hesitant to write about this. There is a danger that this hesitation becomes an excuse for not speaking out about the reality:

that churches are the context in which I have most often witnessed anti-Semitism.

Jesus’s Jewishness is, thankfully, discussed much more widely nowadays, but anti-Semitism continues to infect sermons and hymns.

Take the Good Samaritan. Like me, you have probably heard preachers say that the priest and the Levite failed to help because they feared ritual uncleanness.

Discussing this passage with Jews, I find that this almost never comes up. They say that the need to save life takes precedence. I am sure that most of these preachers do not intend to promote anti-Semitism, but they unwittingly perpetuate an image of Jews as ritualistic and rule-obsessed. Some prejudices could be overcome simply by listening to members of the group about whom we are talking.

As a university chaplain, I witness students of varied faiths having difficult, but fulfilling, conversations about each other’s beliefs and assumptions (Comment, 24 April). I fear that only a minority of churches readily engage in such dialogue.

One issue frequently mentioned by Jews in conversation with Christians is the much repeated — and harmfully inaccurate — claim that

“There is an urgent need for campaigners to speak out much more clearly

Jesus was crucified by “the Jews”. The order to execute Jesus was given by the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate. The situation is complicated by the Gospels’ emphasis on the guilt of Jewish leaders. But, as many biblical scholars point out, these were Jewish leaders who were collaborating with Rome. The High Priest held his position only with Roman approval. They were not represent-

ative of Jews as a whole. To acknowledge that Jesus was killed by Roman imperial power is to recognise that he was a threat to the powerful. We cannot tackle anti-Semitism without engaging with complex issues of power, injustice, and structural sin.

ALONGSIDE recent anti-Semitic hate crimes, including the murders in Manchester and stabbings in London (News, 1 May), there have been arson attacks on Muslim places of worship in Blackburn and Peacehaven. A Sikh woman in Walsall was raped by an Islamophobe who mistook her for a Muslim.

There are, sadly, many more examples. To oppose such outrages effectively means speaking out against them all.

Of course, some have an interest in narrowing the issues. Anti-Semites, ludicrously, blame all Jews for Israeli violence in Palestine. The mirror image of this bigoted claim is seen in the Israeli government’s attempt to portray anyone who speaks of genocide in Gaza — even the United Nations and Amnesty International — as anti-Semitic.

A commitment to the value and dignity of all people leads many to oppose anti-Semitism and Hamas for the same reason that they campaign against Israeli atrocities.

None the less, I am alive to the increasingly urgent need for anti-war campaigners to speak out much more clearly against the anti-Semitic attitudes that are found among a vocal minority within movements for Palestinian rights.

I cannot conscientiously do this if I do not speak also about anti-Semitism in churches. Christians are right to stand in solidarity with Jews in resisting anti-Semitism. To do so effectively, we must — to quote a famous Jew — cast the plank out of our own eye.

Symon Hill is Christian Chaplain (Free Churches) at Aston University. His books include *The Upside-Down Bible: What Jesus really said about money, sex and violence* (Darton, Longman & Todd, 2015).

Angela Tilby

## Mission of C of E is pastoral

“BE TO the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf; feed them, devour them not. . .” That charge comes from the Prayer Book’s order for the consecration of a bishop. “Remember always with thanksgiving that the treasure now to be entrusted to you is Christ’s own flock, bought by the shedding of his blood on the cross.” Those words are from the *Common Worship* service for the ordination of priests.

It is often claimed that the beliefs of the Church are best expressed in its liturgy: *lex orandi, lex credendi*. The imagery of the charge to bishops and priests is drawn from John 10, where Jesus contrasts the Good Shepherd to the thieves, bandits, hirelings, and wolves who endanger the flock. Bishops and priests are charged to *know* their flock: “the voice of a stranger they will not follow.” By drawing on these texts at ordinations, the Church of England commits itself to a ministry that is, in essence, pastoral. It is about “the cure of souls”. Priests and bishops are meant to be committed to people and place, knowing their people and being known by them.

Yet, for well over decade, the C of E has been questioning this understanding of ordained ministry. A more mission-focused ministry has been urged in recent years, to counter the falling numbers of worshippers and replace those who are dying off. Earlier this month, the Church Commissioners considered a scheme that is already being implemented in Truro diocese (News, 1 May). This is to merge 16 parishes, comprising 21 places of worship, into a single giant benefice, with only three paid and ordained area clergy, one of whom, as a pioneer, is to focus on mission, and a house-for-duty priest. Five vicarages are to be transferred to the diocese.

As in other diocesan-led schemes, this represents a takeover of power and resources. While parishes are deprived of paid live-in priests, diocesan staff are increased in number and expected to “run” the diocese from the diocesan office. Meanwhile, more and more local responsibility falls on retired clergy and the laity.

Among the papers justifying Truro’s Kerrier scheme was a letter from the diocesan Bishop, claiming that “a priest-centred model of ministry is not supported by the formularies of the Church of England”. This is simply untrue, as our liturgies, our source documents, make clear. “Be to the flock of Christ a shepherd, not a wolf.”

The shepherd knows his sheep by name, and the good priest is expected to live among his or her people. It is not obvious that our mission-focused bishops recognise how “wolfish” they are becoming in their ambitions; or that they recognise that the C of E’s authentic mission to the people of England has always been pastoral, about knowing and being known — not about numbers, money, or even bums on seats. “Feed them, devour them not.”

Letter, page 17

# Providers of care need it, too

The work of charities such as the Clergy Support Trust is essential, says **Sarah Mullally**

I HAD the privilege last week of delivering a sermon at the 371st Festival of what is now called the Clergy Support Trust. With a history going back to the foundation in 1655 of the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy, which is one of the six support organisations now amalgamated in the Trust, this remarkable charity provides a lifeline to Anglican clergy — whether they are in training, serving, or retired — and their families and households, both here and across Europe.

While we would ideally live in a world without the need for such charities, the reality is that, with increasing global instability, a continuing cost-of-living crisis, and underfunded mental-health and social-care provision, financial and well-being support is more necessary than ever.

This year, the Trust has received more grant applications than ever before; the number of retired clergy applying for funding has grown sixfold in the past five years.

We know that the weight of ministry is heavy, but it is incumbent on all of us to uphold and affirm our clergy — particularly through difficult times.

ST JOHN tells us that Jesus shocked his disciples when he poured water into a basin and began to wash their feet — a job that would normally have been carried out by a servant.

In that moment, Jesus was modelling servant leadership, the sort of leadership which is both sacrificial and costly. He calls his followers to be a servant people, who wash the feet of others. For clergy spouses and their children and households, that



CLERGY SUPPORT TRUST

The Revd Nik Gower, an army chaplain, and his wife, Heidi. One of their daughters, who lives with spina bifida, has a suitable wheel chair, thanks to the support of the Clergy Support Trust

call often means supporting a family member in their service and vocation.

But these demands can be exhausting. For those working to look after the elderly, the sick, and the alienated in their parishes, ministry is often rewarding, but, at times, it can also feel relentless.

For this reason, it is imperative that we do our best to support our clergy, as they support so many of us. Those who serve in parishes, chaplaincies, and cathedrals up and down the country provide important care for their parishioners and others whom they serve, but they truly require care in return.

They cannot keep on giving, loving, and serving if they are not also being loved, cared for, and served by others. If they are to wash the feet of others, they must also be able to have their feet washed in return. If

they are to sit and listen to others, they must also be sat with and listened to. Indeed, some of the most enriching times of my life as a parish priest were when I could lean on peers for pastoral care, being reminded that we do not do this work alone, and we can go further when we travel together.

THE well-being of our clergy is incredibly important, which is why charities such as the Clergy Support Trust are essential. Coming from all walks of life, those who are called to ministry have circumstances as unique and individual as the places where they serve.

For Nik, an army chaplain, this means needing a wheelchair suitable for the needs of his six-year-old daughter, who lives with spina bifida. Thanks to the Trust, she now

has a specialist sports wheelchair, which, her father says, has changed her life. For Jun, a vicar in Northampton, it means an emergency grant to fix his car and laptop, in addition to a well-being grant that went towards a much needed family holiday in Cornwall. And, for Rebecca, a curate in Coventry, a health grant enabled her daughters to receive child ADHD and occupational-therapy assessments.

Many of us will have received care from our clergy and their households in times of both joy and sorrow — from our happiest days to our darkest moments — and support for the Clergy Support Trust is just one way in which we can help to repay that debt.

*The Most Revd Sarah Mullally is the Archbishop of Canterbury.*  
[clergy-support.org.uk](http://clergy-support.org.uk)

## Andy Burnham is a politician of place

I FIRST came across Andy Burnham in 2009 at Anfield, where he was addressing Liverpool fans on the 20th anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster. He was booed for two minutes solid as he was trying to address them on behalf of the New Labour government in which he was Secretary of State for Culture, Media, and Sport. The crowd in the Kop did not want expressions of sympathy. They drowned him out with the chant of “Justice for the 96”.

Five years later, he was back for the 25th anniversary. This time, he was met with a banner on the Kop which read “Thank You Andy Burnham.” He had not been cowed by the booing. He had been chastened — and galvanised into action, orchestrating the release of unpublished official documents relating to the tragedy.

I was unimpressed with Mr Burnham until that point. He had seemed a political weathervane: a Blairite, turned Brownite, turned Milliband, and, later, even a Corbynite. He displayed a lack of consistency in the two Labour leadership contests he fought and lost. But I learned to see his politics differently when, a decade ago, he became the Mayor of Greater Manchester, the place that has been my home for more than 20 years.

During the Burnham years, the Manchester economy has grown more than twice as fast as the rest of the UK. The boom was started under the previous local-authority regime of Richard Lees and Howard Bernstein, who revitalised the city centre, bringing people back to live there. Under Mr Burnham, the regeneration has continued apace, with massive incoming investment and improvements to the city infrastructure. The new Mayor ended the chaos in the privatised transport

**Paul Valley** gives a view from Manchester of the Mayor who wants to be PM

system, rationalising the bus network, opening new tram lines, and improving co-ordination with local railways. He built partnerships with private businesses and created incentives for investors.

And he has learned on the job. Take the tricky topic of welfare reform. Talking to ordinary people on benefits in Manchester, he discovered that the system was filled with disincentives to work. People very often needed support before sanctions, he found, and Sir Keir Starmer made the mistake of trying to be punitive first.

As Health Secretary, Mr Burnham wanted to find ways to integrate the NHS and social-care systems. The problem was that one was run by the national government and the other by local authorities. In Manchester, a £6-billion experiment brought together health and social care under a system known as Devo Manc, which has produced incremental gains. Life expectancy has increased in Greater Manchester at a time when it has declined throughout the rest of England.

Mr Burnham, who was brought up as a Roman Catholic, describes himself as “not particularly religious”, though he sent his three children to a Catholic school. But he says: “Catholic social teaching underpins my politics.” He uses moral rather than ideological language, framing politics in terms of fairness, dignity, and belonging.

His politics can be “adaptive”, in the words of Lord O’Neill of Gatley, an economic adviser to Conservative and Labour governments. But Mr Burnham has never wavered in his vision that there is “a different way of doing things than how they do them in Whitehall”.

His is a politics of place as much as party. He made common cause with the Conservative Chancellor George Osborne in promoting the idea of a Northern Powerhouse; but he took on the Tory government over the HS2 fiasco and the decision to impose harsher Covid restrictions on Manchester than on London — a stand for which the media dubbed him the “King of the North”. His strategy of building a recognisable regional identity has gained him cross-party votes in successive mayoral elections.

Perhaps his biggest achievement has gone unheralded. Without fanfare, Mr Burnham has held together the ten very disparate local authorities that make up Greater Manchester, from boroughs of different needs and political persuasions, many resentful of the dominance of the city centre, all jockeying for position.

Where Labour leaders such as Sir Keir and Jeremy Corbyn surrounded themselves with loyalists and did not listen to those they disagreed with, Mr Burnham has been able to pull together people with differing interests into a coherent whole. He has done it not through coercion or whipping, but by listening and discovering enough common ground to get everyone behind a decision and then take action on it.

Were he to become Prime Minister, that is a skill that would serve him well — and his party and country, too.

# Religious sensibility reasserts itself

**Matthew d'Ancona** detects a huge shift in politics and culture

## ANALYSIS

WELL, this I did not expect. Thirty-five years since I started writing about politics, I am both astonished and fascinated by the ever-increasing importance of religion, spirituality, and the quest for metaphysical meaning which I encounter everywhere in the public sphere. If you want to investigate contemporary power, democracy, and political argument in 2026, the old secular lens is no longer even *close* to sufficient.

Most obviously, it is impossible to understand President Trump's grip on the American psyche — now faltering, it is true — without grasping that religion has been the through-line of the 11 years since he descended the golden escalator. But there is much more to it than that.

In addition to the *Church Times* — of course — I find myself turning with growing frequency to other religious sources, voices, and platforms to help me to understand what is happening in the turbulent political world.

In the often manic and polarised controversy over artificial intelligence, Pope Leo XIV's encyclical on the new technology has, quite correctly, been awaited as an overdue intervention on behalf of humanity as a whole, as well as the Holy See. Among the many books that I have read in the past year about the challenge of polarisation, nothing holds a candle to Rowan Williams's recently published *Solidarity: The work of recognition* (Bloomsbury Continuum).

The daily newsletter that I most eagerly await is Rod Dreher's — not because I agree with everything that this Orthodox American Christian conservative writes, but because he

explores the marchlands between politics, faith, and identity with such a deft touch.

In trying to understand the evolution of Englishness, I have found Malcolm Guite's magisterial new *Galahad and the Grail* (Books, Podcast, 27 March) more instructive than the torrent of narrowly secular books on the subject.

WHAT exactly is going on? There have been, I think, three phases, overlapping but distinct in focus. They trace an arc that has much to tell us about the changing character of politics in the past three decades.

First, there was the post-Cold War era. I turned 21 in 1989, the glorious year in which the Berlin Wall came down, and so I am, inescapably, a member of "Generation Fukuyama": the cohort that bought the core argument of the Washington analyst Francis Fukuyama that we were seeing "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy".

Ironically, this was no more than a secular version of providentialism: a repurposing of divine teleology to rationalist ends. It soon came unstuck, as China showed that hyper-capitalism and authoritarianism could coexist successfully; and 9/11 shattered the illusion that the rest of the world was simply waiting politely for Western democracy to solve all its problems.

This brings us to the second phase. In response to the threat of jihadi terrorism and, to a lesser extent, the challenge posed by Christian creationism in the United States, there arose the age of the "New Atheists". Parallel to this was a growing conviction among commentators and polemicists that politics was now "downstream from culture".

It was no longer plausible to argue — as had been commonplace in the 1990s — that politics was simply a branch of economics. Everywhere, the old certainties of the Davos class, of those who believed that every political question was reducible to statistics, were being swept aside by



identity politics, by digitally turbo-charged social narratives, by online tribal conflict.

That was plenty to take on board. But it was not, as it turned out, the end of the story — not by a long chalk. The New Atheism fizzled out as quickly as it had burst into life. The culture wars rage on, but they generate much more heat than light.

SO, NOW we are in the earliest stages of a third phase, whose precise shape is not yet clear, but it undoubtedly marks a significant shift in political discourse, social patterns, and both private and group allegiance. I would characterise it broadly not as a surge in institutional religion, or church attendance, but a more nuanced flourishing of religious sensibility and the accelerated rolling back of what Max Weber famously called "disenchantment".

Everywhere one looks, the sacred, the numinous, and the mystical are reasserting themselves — not always in traditional form, of course: what

Tara Isabella Burton aptly calls the "Remixed religions" of the young are customised, consumerist, and made-to-measure rather than doctrinally coherent (Features, 7 August 2020).

That said, there is indisputably a discernible Christian edge to what is happening — and not only the "cultural Christianity" that Tom Holland's wonderful book *Dominion* has nurtured in so many (Features, 27 September 2019). There have been specific, high-profile conversions, of which the most striking was the public announcement of the former New Atheist Ayaan Hirsi Ali, in 2023, that she was now a committed Christian.

Alongside this, one cannot begin to comprehend the contemporary tech world without understanding the grip of AI millenarianism and the growing fixation with the Revelation of St John among Silicon Valley oligarchs such as Peter Thiel, who has been lecturing around the world on the advent of the Antichrist. It is remarkable — and quite

normal now — to hear "tech bros" talk with enthusiasm about the Christian theorist René Girard.

You cannot hope, furthermore, to get a handle on modern post-liberal ideology without reckoning with the Roman Catholicism that undergirds the ideas of its leading champions: Patrick Deneen and Adrian Vermeule.

And, whereas Tony Blair's spin doctors insisted that "We don't do God," today's politicians — Labour's Wes Streeting, Reform UK's Danny Kruger, and the Conservative Nick Timothy — speak much more candidly about their Christianity.

WHY should we be surprised? The collapse of trust in public institutions, the fragmentation of old social structures, the wretched prevalence of deaths of despair, and the atomisation of traditional communities — all these have contributed to a crisis of meaning, and a consequent recourse to the most resilient and fire-tested belief systems of all.

There is nothing theocratic about this; nor is the shift as straightforward as a collective embrace of traditional piety. In an age of great psychic and social stress, it is, I think, an instinctive recourse to ancient forms of metaphysical explanation which offer transcendence, communion, and wisdom to those who lead increasingly volatile, precarious, and disaggregated lives.

I do not mean to say that secularism is doomed. Rationality is essential to any civilisation. But, unaided, it has been shown to lack the sinew, stability, and heft required to hold a complex society together. That old assumption has been tested to destruction. In times of pulverising change, human beings look for an anchor.

This, I should emphasise, is not a faith claim, but an empirical observation: the recognition of what, I think, is the beginning of a hugely significant shift in politics, culture, and behaviour. It is real. And it is changing everything.

*Matthew d'Ancona is editor at large at The New World.*

# AI's real market lies in making it lethal, not safe

## VIEWPOINT

**Andrew Brown**

ONE of the most dehumanising spectacles on the internet is the proliferation of drone videos from the war in Ukraine. I see them only ever on Twitter/X, where they come wrapped in self-congratulation about how brave and resourceful the Ukrainians are, and how they are winning, at last, on the battlefield, whatever Russian propagandists may say.

All that is true, of course; but what you see, over and over again, are men in desperate terror as their death approaches them. Some throw themselves to the ground or stumble towards cover; one man attempts to hide behind a tree; most, however, turn away at the last moment, and hunch a protective arm over their heads. Then, the drone strikes them, and the screen dissolves in an explosion.

When I first noticed these, they were a lot less graphic or close up and personal. They would show a tank dissolving in a cloud of

smoke, or the bright flash of a drone hitting a distant building. It took an effort to remember that each flash or puff on the screen of my phone marked a death, and that these deaths were being served up for my entertainment and to transfer my attention to the advertisements around them. Now, there is no escaping what they show.

Several thoughts occur about this pornography of violence. The first is how very different our experience out here in X/Twitter must be from that of the people who make them (I understand that some drone operators are now women). Someone is steering the drone as it twists and swoops towards its victims. Someone picked out these strangers and chose to kill this one, and not his comrade hiding in a different ditch. Although they see on their controlling phones exactly the same pixels on a screen as we do now, we'll never see them the way they do, and nor can they see them as the spectators will.

That was certainly true in the earliest stages of the war, when every drone was manually controlled. But now they can be largely auto-

nomous. Yaroslav Azhnyuk, a Ukrainian manufacturer of AI-enabled drones, last week told the American Substacker Noah Smith: "Instead of actually [having] a trained pilot who has this complex remote controller device which requires a couple months of training to actually pilot the drone, and then having to pilot it for 30 minutes, flying towards the target, etc., etc., now you . . . have a drone, you pick [up] your smartphone, you say, 'We are here. The bad guys are here. Go and get them. And the drone goes up, flies in a given direction, localizes itself on the map, finds the dedicated area where they, the bad guys, are supposed to be, sees the bad guys, bombs them, return . . . watches . . . does a damage assessment, returns back, sits down, and then you can pick it up and watch the video.'"

Mr Azhnyuk has a product to sell, but this is probably not far from the truth. You can buy one of his drones with a daylight camera for as little as \$480, although you have to supply your own explosives. Of course, he also makes and sells specialised interceptor drones, which are smaller and faster, but are about the only thing

that might defend you against a swarm of the attack drones. This is all a world away from the talk about making AI safe. It turns out that the real market lies in making AI lethal.

The video that I watched most recently has been watched more than 11 million times, and I wonder what this does to the watchers. There have been precedents. One of the factors that led to the Iraq War, I believe, was the way in which clips of the aeroplanes flying into the Twin Towers seemed omnipresent on TV when I travelled through the United States in the autumn after 9/11.

On a purely visceral level, this must have contributed to the bellicose madness that led up to the war. But social media are worse, because they make the viewer part of a crowd. You hear what the others are yelling in the comments, and you can hope that they hear your yelling, too. What you cannot hear is any reaction from the everyday life around you, where watching people die is still regarded with suspicion, even disapproval. But, within the addictive intimacy of a smartphone screen, those voices cannot be heard.

## Place of theology in the training of the C of E clergy

*From the Revd Charles Read*

Madam, — Bishop Stephen Platten writes with passion — and some despair — about the need for theology in ministerial education (Comment, 8 May.) As someone who has been involved in delivering such training for 27 years or more, I share both his passion and despair. As he notes, theological colleges and courses have never been adequately funded — though, at least, now that is acknowledged by the national Ministry Council. Lack of funding puts stress on theological education institutions (TEIs) such that they waste time and energy just trying to balance the budget and generally feel unwanted and undervalued.

It is a pity, therefore, that Bishop Platten takes a sideswipe at regional courses part-way through his article. I have taught in a residential college (Cranmer Hall) and now on a regional course (the Eastern Region Ministry Course). Like others who have taught in both sectors, I can attest that there is no difference in formational ability or engagement with serious theological thinking between the two. Under the Common Awards programme, it is possible to see that students in colleges and courses achieve the same range of marks in academic work.

The argument about time spent in studying which Bishop Platten employs is not as straightforward as he supposes. Students on regional courses are not “non-residential”, as is often said. We prefer to say that we are providing “part-residential” training. Ordinands (and sometimes LLM students) come together for intensive periods of community life — usually a summer school of about eight days and five or six weekends away (plus weekly evening classes, which often begin with shared worship and a meal).

I observe that the community forms very quickly at the start of, say, a weekend away. The depth of theological reflection is no less that I saw in a residential college. The acquisition of habits of prayer through daily worship happens intensively. Indeed, ERMC students attend chapel seven times over a typical weekend, which is exactly as often as students at Cranmer Hall over a typical week when I taught there.

Of course, students on regional courses have big gaps between weekends away, in which they have to sustain a disciplined pattern of prayer in the midst of busy daily lives and ministries — just as they will have to do after ordination or admission as an LLM. But the experience of shared worship, meals, and community life is there.

When regional courses first began (with the Southwark Ordination Course, now St Augustine’s College), it was because the pattern of formation provided by the colleges did not work for all the candidates for ordination whom the Church had discerned were called. The courses were quick to see, however, that the value of college-based formation was preserved as much as it could be by providing significant periods of residence. We are now seeing financial pressures forcing courses to slim down some residence provision.

We need formation that works for each candidate. For some, they will be best served by attending a college full-time. For others, a part-residential course works better. The decision should be made according to what the candidate needs, not according to what is the cheapest option. Heaven forbid that someone might benefit for time in a college and also time on a course: that is nearly impossible to provide, owing to the competitive market into which TEIs are pushed.

There is indeed a shocking lack of serious theological engagement in C of E reports, in decision-making, and, sadly, sometimes in ministerial training. Bishop Platten is right to see theology nudged out by managerialism. We need our colleges and courses — both are to be valued — but we need to resource them responsibly.

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*From Canon Anthony Phillips*

Madam, — The *Church Times* (8 May) contained the call from Bishop Platten not to “let theology wither” in the training of ordinands, and a plea from Canon Tilby for more bishops like Richard Harries (Comment); two letters from Professor Robinson and Dr Horne about the

importance of university chaplains; and Fr Walker’s letter concerning the attempt by Truro diocese “to turn the entire deanery of 21 churches into a single benefice”.

Without a theologically educated clergy able to produce an episcopate able to confront the many serious political and ethical issues of our times, and a laity properly cared for both theologically and pastorally, the Church of England will itself wither into an irrelevant Protestant sect.

A radical rethink is required in the deployment of the Church’s resources. More management is not the answer.

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*From Canon Nigel Rooms*

Madam, — I feel I must respond to Bishop Platten’s heartfelt plea for theology. I agree about the importance of theology, and that it is seriously under threat in the higher-education sector. Nevertheless, as a very part-time tutor in two Anglican theological colleges, an honorary research fellow in another, and familiar with many English colleges and courses, I do not recognise the binary, presented in the article, between theology and “hard skills”.

In a post-colonial world, the hermeneutic circle connects systematic theology, biblical studies, and engagement with tradition to experience and practice, society and culture. Wisdom suggests that one can join the circle at any point, and that the task is never-ending. This is what I see happening in theological education in most of the varied pathways available now. I think of ground-breaking doctoral theological research by a friend, undertaken during ordination training. It was into the experience of Iranian refugee converts in the eucharist.

Understanding that the best theology results in good (skilled) practice and vice versa makes lifelong learning a possibility not just for the clergy, but also might return the *locus* of theology to the local church (supported by expertise in the academy) where it truly belongs to all God’s people.  
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*From the Revd Susannah Brasier*

Madam, — Bishop Platten’s excellent article says that there is one sentence from Irenaeus on the memorial plaque of Archbishop Michael Ramsey, “The glory of God is a living man.” In fact, the plaque includes the further clause, “the life of man is the vision of God”, which indeed follows in *Adversus Haereses* IV.20.7. While the first phrase is commonly quoted without the inclusion of the second, the second surely provides vital clarification of what it means to be truly alive — and adds further weight to the call to retain an approach to theology which is true to theology’s most literal meaning.  
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*Correspondents’ addresses must be supplied and will be published in full here unless requested otherwise. But the web page will display only the place name (and/or “address supplied”). The Editor reserves the right to edit letters.*

## Worship songs in light of the Soul Survivor scandal

*From the Revd Jenny Heinink*

Madam, — I understand Dr Lucy Sixsmith’s concerns raised by her upbringing in Soul Survivor circles and the way in which worship songs have at times been used to manipulate atmospheres and impressionable youngsters (Feature, 1 May). Nevertheless, should the fact that fallible human beings have misused these songs necessarily invalidate them?

I regard myself as reasonably theologically literate. Dr Sixsmith quotes songs that in the past have spoken into a place of need in me and that today I use both in private worship and when leading worship in my church (not overtly Charis-

matic) and a Christian retreat centre.

It seemed very relevant and worshipful to finish our Maundy service singing “Lost in Wonder” (“You chose the cross”), one of the songs specifically mentioned in the article. Dr Sixsmith is concerned about the frequency of songs expressing full surrender to God, but so do many of our traditional hymns.

For example, does she have the same concern about the singing of “Take my life and let it be”, in which each verse surrenders an aspect of our lives to God?

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## More to Wittgenstein’s legacy than the *Tractatus*

*From the Revd Dr Philip Goggin*

Madam, — Canon Rod Garner’s celebration of the life and thinking of Ludwig Wittgenstein (Faith, 24 April) captured the spirit and times of this towering 20th-century figure, but hardly did justice to his profound influence on theology.

Probably, that was because there was little if any reference to *Investigations* (1953). So, we missed Wittgenstein’s later thinking, which eschewed demanding empirical or logical proof for any proposition, in favour of a recognition that language can be meaningful in particular contexts — such as a religious context. We didn’t read of “language games” and “forms of life”, each with their internal logic.

Although such terms are not always used, they were seminal for Rowan Williams, Ian Ramsey, D. Z. Phillips, George Lindbeck, and countless others. Thus, for example, Lord Williams argues that we never

start from a blank slate, but always find ourselves *already* within a story, a culture, and a set of relationships which Christians would call the Church.

The many who have been influenced by Wittgenstein would probably emphasise practice and participation in a faith community rather than intellectual assent to propositions.

There is a pertinent illustration of this principle in Canon Stephen Mitchell’s letter (same issue). We can relate to Christ’s resurrection body, he writes, with conviction without “saying how or whether such a glorified body could possibly exist”. So, he concludes, “we seek . . . to live the resurrection life within our world and our communities and find the risen Christ in the lives of those around us.”

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## Truro reorganisation is the way we are managing

*From Mr David Watters*

Madam, — I write as a churchwarden and licensed lay minister in the diocese of Truro. I find it interesting that our way of coping with the 21st-century reality of being the living body of Christ attracts comment from so many whose experience is clearly very different from our reality (News, 1 May; Letters, 8 and 15 May).

We have lived in Cornwall for more than 30 years. When we came, there was a priest, it appeared, in every village and town in our deanery — possibly more than 20. One would have hoped that this would lay the foundation for thriving churches. Sadly, it was not so. When we came to look at the fruitfulness and sustainability of our deanery in the present day, we discovered that we could afford only three oversight ministers and one house-for-duty priest. How do we cope with that reality?

Well, we recognised that we could not continue as we were, and we set about recognising the ministry of Jesus involves everyone: developing strong lay leadership and forming ministry teams in a way that would have been considered unacceptable to the eucharistic movement of the 1950s.

This involved change on a large scale. In our deanery, we now have a benefice of 13 parishes, two eucharistic services each week, and several services of morning worship, with a monthly service when we meet to-

gether for a larger, more meaningful, act of worship.

I doff my hat to the successive bishops and archdeacons as they encourage us in a new and different time from the one that your correspondents seem to recall.

DAVID WATTERS  
Jasione, Front Road  
Downderry PL11 3JY

## Chester safeguarding

*From the Bishop and the Interim Diocesan Secretary of Chester*

Madam, — We write in response to the letter from Emma Ash and the Revd Robert Thompson (15 May) to make it clear that the delays mentioned are due to a backlog in INEQE’s work rather than any action (or inaction) on the part of the diocese of Chester. We have not yet received the report and share your correspondents’ frustration and the profound concern that we offer the best safeguarding provision possible.

For our part, we remain grateful for INEQE’s thorough and professional work, and have worked in partnership with them to keep the diocese informed concerning the delayed publication at every stage.  
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## CHURCH TIMES

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## Gervase Vernon

offers a reflection for the feast of the descent of the Holy Spirit

GOD needs to speak to us in our own language. As the Anglican poet Malcolm Guite puts it, “Hail your God in any language, he replies in your own mother tongue” (*David’s Crown: Sounding the Psalms*, Canterbury Press, 2021) (Poet’s Corner, 22 January 2021). When you consider the matter, that is the only way in which God can communicate with us. To paraphrase Paul, “[God] makes himself all things to all men” (1 Corinthians 9.22).

God has to make himself small enough to enter through the narrow gate of our minuscule human understanding. According to Neil D. Lawrence, the inaugural DeepMind Professor of Machine Learning at the University of Cambridge (*The Atomic Human*, Allen Lane, 2024), the bandwidth, or rate of communication, of a human brain is about 2000 bits of information per minute, while that of a computer is 60 billion bits per minute. God’s bandwidth, of course, is infinite.

GOD’S speaking to us in a language we can understand is an example of God’s humility: “Just as a human mother stoops down to reach her child, so God stoops to come to our level” (Alistair McGrath, *Christian Theology: An introduction*, Blackwell, 1993). Calvin pointed out that, in the Old Testament, God chose to speak to the patriarchs in words and concepts comprehensible to wandering nomadic tribes (McGrath, op. cit.).

When I worked as a doctor in Malawi, it was apparent that the Malawians could relate directly to the Old Testament stories in a way in which we Westerners do not: until relatively recently, they had shared a similar way of life. I recall a moving Bible study on the book of Ruth with a group of my Malawian midwife colleagues. For us Westerners, one problem with the book of Ruth is that the most important relationship is the one between Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi, not between Ruth and her husband. But for Malawian midwives, this was obvious: it was their lived, day-to-day

# Degrees of understanding

reality. They shared a kitchen and a household with their mothers-in-law, whereas their husbands they saw only briefly.

CALVIN called the concept that God adapts his words to his hearers “accommodation”. For him, this meant not only speaking in the language of the hearers, but also communicating with people whose minds and understanding had been darkened by sin (see 1 Corinthians 2.14, 3.1-3, for example).

The concept of accommodation can be found in earlier writers — St Augustine uses it widely, and not only in biblical interpretation. For him, as for Calvin later, the supreme act of accommodation is the incarnation (Edward J. Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin’s Theology*, Columbia University Press, 1952).

Humans are so different from God that, unaided, we can say almost nothing about him. It is God who has to reach out to us. And he does so through revelation — in the scriptures and, supremely, in his son, Jesus. But, in order to make that reaching out comprehensible to us, he has to accommodate his revelation to our understanding.

TO GIVE a human example, accommodation is used by teachers of chemistry. For GCSE, students are taught a model of atoms as consisting of a solid nucleus around which spin electrons, rather as planets spin around the sun. When they move on to A level, however, these same students are taught that electrons can move only in certain fixed orbits, and require a specific quantum of energy to move between orbits.

Then, if these students are fortunate enough to make it to university, they will learn that electrons are not simple little balls of matter, but can behave both as particles and as waves. Finally, the students will learn

that electrons are such that we can never know exactly both their speed and their location.

Clearly, chemistry teachers have accommodated the most accurate picture of electrons they know — the one derived from quantum physics — at several different levels, to allow for the understanding of pupils of different ages. Why should God not do the same for us?

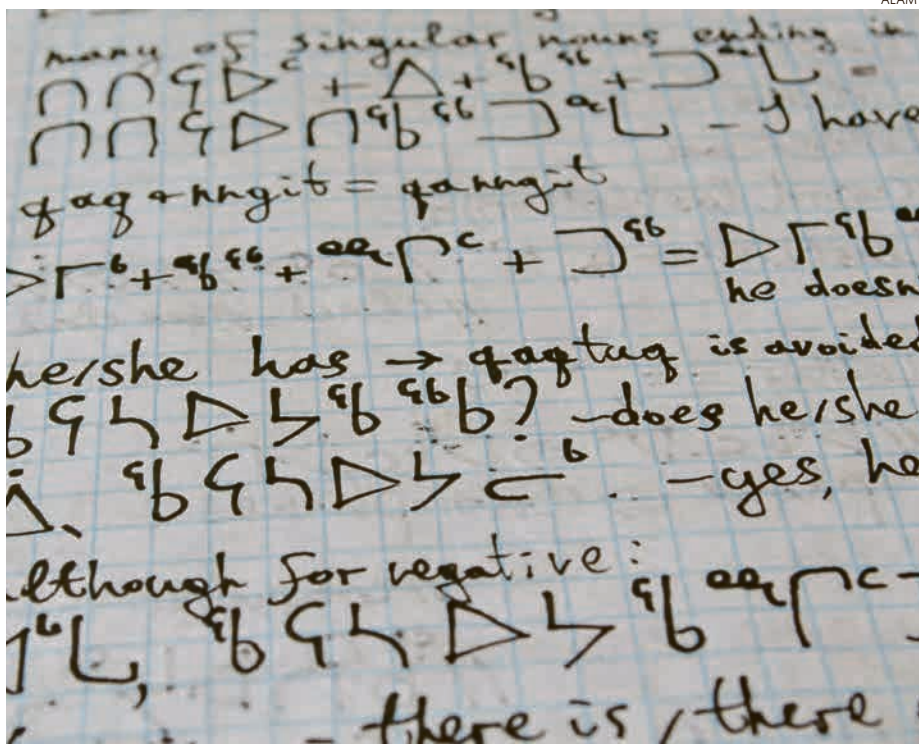
PEOPLE are sometimes advised to start reading the New Testament by choosing the Gospel that appeals to them most directly. Looking at the four Gospels, it seems as if Jesus is speaking to each Evangelist in his own language — or at least as if each Evangelist heard Jesus in his own language. Is there a parallel here with Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit enabled the crowd to hear the apostles in such a way that “each person in the crowd heard their own language being spoken” (Acts 2.6)?

John, in his Gospel, records Jesus as delivering a philosophical

discourse drenched in the Hebrew Scriptures. Mark, in contrast, has Jesus voicing the pithy wisdom of a Galilean artisan. Was this because Mark himself could hear and understand only folk wisdom and not philosophy?

THE idea of accommodation is not unique to Christian theology. It permeates the Talmud (*The Footprints of God: Divine accommodation in Jewish and Christian thought*, Stephen D. Benin, State University of New York Press, 1993). The Qur’an also teaches that God speaks to us in our own language: “We [Allah] did not send any messenger except [speaking] in the language of his people to state clearly for them” (Chapter 14, surat ib’rahim, verse 4; Sahih International translation).

The context seems to suggest that God spoke to prophets such as Moses in Hebrew, just as he is speaking to the Prophet Muhammad in Arabic. But this verse has also been interpreted to mean that, although the



ALAMY

Inuktitut language handwriting notes

Qur’an is in Arabic, it is a universal message for all.

PERHAPS Jesus really did speak rather like the Jesus recorded in John. After all, John’s Gospel has turned out to be surprisingly accurate — more accurate than the Synoptics in some archaeological details. Did Peter, the Galilean fisherman, remember and pass on to Mark only the bits of Jesus’s speeches that he understood?

This suggestion is the opposite of the widespread assumption that the words of Jesus in John are the fruits of a lifetime’s reflection and elaboration by John, inspired by the Holy Spirit, on the words Jesus actually spoke — words that are more accurately reflected in the Synoptics. Which is nearer the truth?

In the end, it matters little which is closer to the literal version of what Jesus said: John’s Gospel or the Synoptics. Jesus was, in any case, speaking in Aramaic, not New Testament Greek so neither version is a word-for-word rendering. Unlike the Qur’an, the Gospels do not claim to be a literal record of the words that God spoke.

IF GOD speaks to us in our own language because he chooses to do this, and because it is the only way in which he can communicate with us, it follows that, if we wish to speak to others about God, we must speak in their language.

Sometimes, theological education can focus too exclusively on learning about God, but we must also listen carefully, and for quite a long time, to learn the language of those to whom we are sent before we start to speak. Until we learn their language, what we have learned about God cannot be communicated.

Dr Gervase Vernon is a retired GP.

THIS Gospel made me wonder: what if there were eight “I am” sayings of Jesus? The Gospel includes seven of these sayings, all in the same form: “I am”, plus something standing for Jesus. “I am the bread of life / the light of the world / the door / the good shepherd / the resurrection and the life / the way, the truth, and the life / the true vine.” There are also two stand-alone “I am” sayings, which have no symbolic “something” standing for Jesus (8.58; 18.5). In this Gospel, in contrast, the symbolic something — water — has no “I am” attached.

What is this “scripture” referred to at 7.38? It is not in my Bible. It is not in anyone’s Bible. Commentators rummage through the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible for references to water, especially water with some miraculous aspect to it. Exodus 17.6 refers to miraculous water that is life-giving, but it is not called “living water”, and there is no trace of the “believer’s heart” that Jesus refers to. Zechariah 14.8 is another possible allusion, for it does mention “living waters”. But it is not even a

## The puzzle of living water

### SUNDAY’S READINGS

Cally Hammond

#### Pentecost Whit Sunday

Acts 2.1-21; Psalm 104.26-36,37b; 1 Corinthians 12.3b-13; John 20.19-23/7.37-39

paraphrase, never mind a quotation. Yet what Jesus says here is of fundamental importance, not only to those listening to him as he speaks, but also to generations of the faithful yet to come. In verse 39, the Evangelist offers his own interpretation of the meaning — that this “living water” is a reference to the Holy Spirit. But we only have to press the wording a little, and

his interpretation slips. The bond between symbol and referent begins to fray.

Imagine someone thirsty coming and drinking. Jesus is the symbolic water that the believer drinks, so the meaning should be that we take Jesus into ourselves, and this gives us life because Jesus himself is life. So far, so orthodox. But the “quotation” refers to water coming forth from the believer — and we cannot easily see a believer as the source of either Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

It is rather confusing. Amid the confusion, though, there are details that stand out clearly, and can be embraced without exegetical gymnastics. We can be reasonably confident, I think, that “living water”, as a physical phenomenon, refers to running or flowing water. That is, water in movement, not still or standing water. The water “lives” because it moves.

Living water was the preferred option for baptism in the Early Church, though still water could be used if necessary. There is a very early witness to this in the text called the *Didache* (“Teaching”), which was probably written at about the same time as John’s Gospel: “Baptise like this: in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, in living water. If you have no living water, use other water. If you cannot baptise in cold water, use warm. If you have neither, pour water upon the head three times in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit.”

In ancient literature, the spring of water is a symbol for desirable characteristics. The poet who drank from such a spring would be inspired, fresh, original — all infinitely preferable to the slow, muddy, mainstream waters of a broad river. “Living waters” are the mark of something

fresh and new. If rivers of living water flow out of a believer’s heart, they surely do so because Jesus has first generated them there.

How? By the same means that makes him as active in our hearts as in the hearts of his first disciples: the Holy Spirit. His first impact on us is to quench our thirst. From having our own thirst for God quenched, we are enabled to become a vehicle of that grace for others.

Another early Christian text (not quite as old as the *Didache*) refers to Christ as “a spring of living water gushing from God in a land which did not know God, the land of Gentiles”. I think its author, Justin Martyr, is on the right track in making Christ the source of living water. His words are evocative of baptism, though not as explicitly as the *Didache*. What we can safely conclude is that Jesus’s words about “living water” in John’s Gospel are not an “I am” saying, but an “It is” saying. The Pentecost gift, through baptism, becomes both symbol (living water) and referent (the Holy Spirit) in one.

The Gospel in All of the Creed: **Andrew Davison** looks at the third person of the Trinity

# I believe in the Holy Spirit

## THEOLOGY MATTERS

BY THE time we reach the clause about the Holy Spirit in the Apostles' Creed, we are hurtling towards the end (of the creed, though not of this series: following the liturgical calendar means taking clauses out of order). We may not be giving each line the attention it deserves. But what if we remain with those few words — “I believe in the Holy Spirit” — and look to find in them an announcement of the Christian gospel? Will we find it? We will, and more than could be packed into this column.

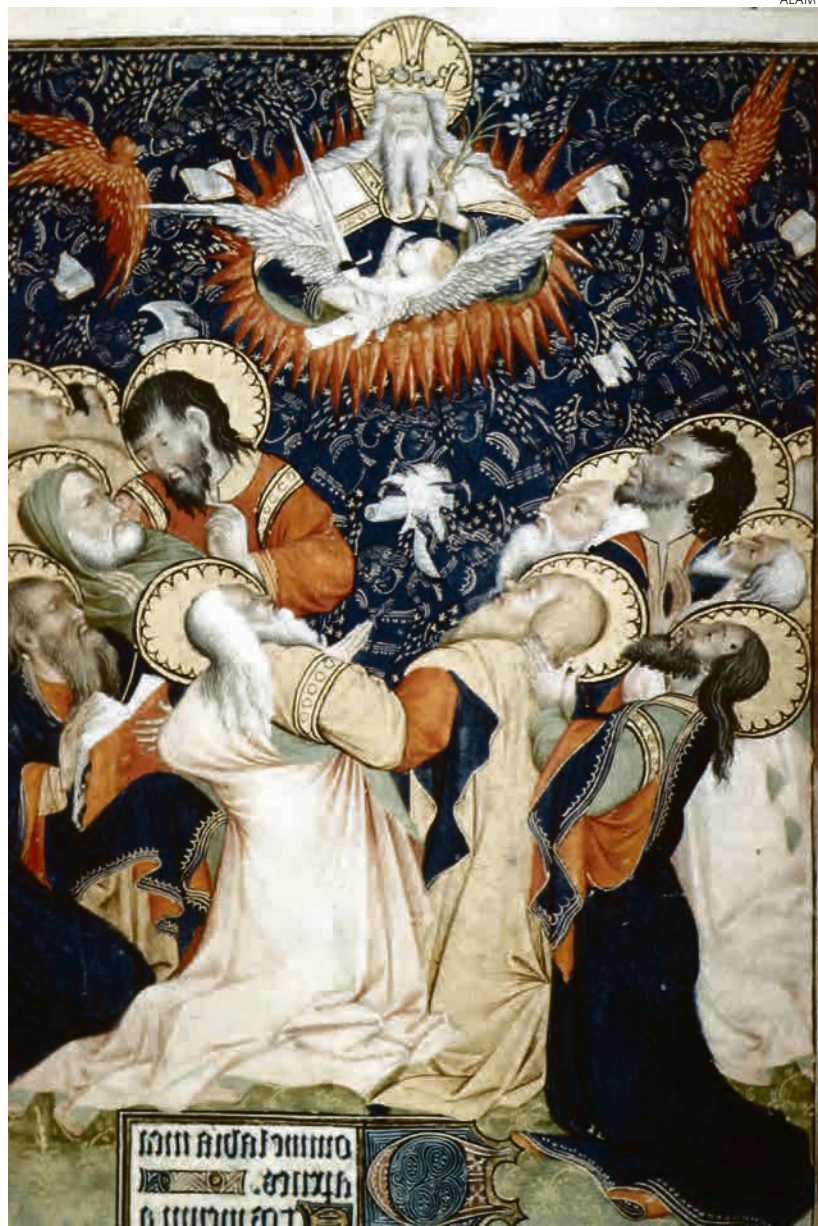
For one thing, this clause about the Holy Spirit is important for thinking about the good news because, with it, the creed has completed its profession of God as Trinity. With these words, the creed has now named Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Christian message — our Christian gospel — is good news about God as Trinity. The threefold life of God, replete in love and relation, is everything: it is where the Christian proclamation springs from, and the shape of how it unfolds, and the destination to which we are being drawn. The good news is not about forgiveness handed down from some distant generic deity. It is reconciliation with the triune God. It is the drama of being drawn into that love and relation: into the relation of the Son to the Father; into that love that is the Holy Spirit. Only with the Trinity can we really see the gospel for what it is: an invitation to be participants in the divine nature (2 Peter 1.4); an invitation to be adopted as sons and daughters through the Son; an invitation to share in the fellowship that is the Trinity, through the Holy Spirit.

THAT is all very well, you might say, but do not move too quickly on to Trinity Sunday before you have considered Pentecost. Fair enough. Then let us see that the sending of the Holy Spirit reiterates the gospel message that we first hear with the incarnation, at Christmas: “God is with us.” Christ's departure at the ascension, he tells us, opens up the way for the Holy Spirit to be sent (John 16.7; Acts 2.17-18). The gospel of Pentecost is therefore the proclamation of Christmas — “God is with us” — although in a different key.

In its way, this presence of the Holy Spirit is yet more extensive than the incarnation, since the Spirit is poured upon “all flesh” (Joel 2.28-29; Acts 2.33). In another way, for us, it is even more intimate, since the Spirit enters each person who receives him, whereas the man Jesus speaks to us externally, as one person speaks to another. There is, then, emphatically, a proclamation of the gospel in this clause of the creed, extending and completing the message of God's presence and solidarity.

THE Apostles' Creed is generally succinct. It is certainly succinct here, with six words in English: “I believe in the Holy Spirit.” Let us, therefore, turn for a moment to the Nicene Creed for some extra material. There, we read that the Holy Spirit is “the Lord and Giver of Life”. In that, too, we hear the gospel, since life lies at the heart of the Christian announce-



The descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

ment: “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” (John 10.10).

There is so much in this idea of the Spirit as “Giver of Life”. Although it takes us beyond all that we could imagine, all that is ours by nature, it does not despise nature or run it down. Far from it: the gospel opens our eyes to creation as God's gift, and to its goodness. The Spirit is the origin of life in nature, and the origin of the life of grace: to create, to save, to elevate us to a dignity beyond that of any unfallen state.

FOR those used to hearing sermons, the more familiar point might be that the Spirit, as “Giver of Life”, offers to those who turn to him a life beyond any we could imagine: a participation in God's own life — abundant life, eternal life. But there is another angle to the good news here: a proclamation about the goodness of what we already experience, but may not understand; what lies around us, but might not appreciate. Biological life, social

of redemption, it seems that often only repurposing the language of creation or birth will do (John 3.3; 2 Corinthians 5.17).

Augustine provocatively took this further, writing that redemption may even exceed creation: that it may be a greater work to make the ungodly righteous than to create righteous beings in the first place (here thinking about the hosts of heaven).

The conjunction in this psalm reminds us that the Creator Spirit does something even more remarkable than abolishing the sinful creature and replacing it with another: the Spirit renews the old, and recreates the broken.

### In the Old Testament

“When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.” (Psalm 104.30)

IT IS easy to forget the Holy Spirit's work in creation (Genesis 1.2). One of the two great Western medieval hymns to the Holy Spirit offers a corrective, addressing the “Creator Spirit”. Our verse from a psalm connects the Spirit in creation to the work of restoration or recreation. When biblical authors are searching for language that is powerful to express what God offers by way

### Quotations

“Knowledge of the divine persons was necessary for us . . . chiefly, that we may think rightly about the salvation of the human race, accomplished by the Incarnate Son, and by the gift of the Holy Spirit.” *Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae I, q. 32, a. 1, reply to the objection 3*

“The Spirit flew away from us because of sin, but the one who knew no sin became one of us so that the Spirit might become accustomed to remain in us. . . . Therefore, Christ receives the Spirit through himself for us, and he restores to our nature the original good.” *Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John, Book II, ch. 1, on John 1.32-33*

“Through the Holy Spirit comes the restoration to paradise, the ascent to the kingdom of heaven, the return to adopted sonship, the freedom to call God our Father and to become a companion of the grace of Christ, to be

called a child of light, to participate in eternal glory, and generally, to have all fullness of blessing in this age and the age to come. We see as in a mirror the grace, as already present, of the goods laid up in store for us in promises, and we enjoy these goods through faith.” *Basil, On the Holy Spirit, ch.15.36*

“For as God alone can properly bear witness to his own words, so these words will not obtain full credit in the hearts of men, until they are sealed by the inward testimony of the Spirit.” *John Calvin, Institutes, I.7.4, I.72*

“The external word is of no avail by itself, unless animated by the power of the Spirit.” *John Calvin, Commentary on the First Twenty Chapters of Ezekiel, on Ezek. 2.1-2*

“The Father justifies effectively; the Son, meritoriously; the Holy Spirit, applicationaly.” *Herman Bavinck, Reformed Dogmatics, IV, 205*

our time — often now expressed as “post-human”, or “anti-human” — on two fronts at once. It opens up upon a destiny beyond what the created order could offer, with new heavens and a new earth, while also insisting in new and dazzling ways on the value and dignity of creation, and especially of human life. Hence, so many in the Anglican social tradition have said that it follows from Christian theology to be active in the provision of good drains.

life: these, too, are the Spirit's work and gift.

There seems to me something important here about the gospel. It both promises a life beyond nature and yet also celebrates the life and nature given in creation in new and forceful ways. It takes us beyond God's gift in creation; it also calls us to acknowledge that gift, and to live richly within it. The gospel of the Spirit as Giver of Life meets the nihilism of

### In the New Testament

“Now the Lord is the Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom” (2 Corinthians 3.17).

THIS verse turns up as an interjection within Paul's discussion of how a Christian should relate to the law. Although this verse emphasises freedom, the suggestion is not that the Holy Spirit dispenses with the law, as if that meant setting aside what the law teaches us about right and wrong, or the character of God. Instead, the Spirit helps us to live according to the character of God out of love, rather than fear. It internalises the law for us and helps us to delight in holiness. That is what it means here for the Spirit to bring freedom.

Paul underlines that in the next verse. This freedom is rooted in the transformation of who we are: “We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness.” This reminds us that the gospel promises a truly extraordinary newness of life: making us holy through the holiness of Christ, and free by the freedom of his Spirit.

FINALLY, at least for this brief survey of the gospel in the creed's clause about the Holy Spirit, we should recognise that the Spirit is named as “Holy”. In this we hear the gospel's call to repentance, since the Spirit is holy, but we are not. That call is not only God's challenge and warning, but also his gift, since God wishes to work true holiness in us, conforming us to his Triune holiness (Leviticus 11.44-45; Matthew 5.48; Romans 8.29; 2 Thessalonians 2.13 — and notice the Trinitarian pattern in 1 Peter 1.2).

To see here another aspect of the gospel in all of the creed is also to be shown the gospel in all of Christian ethics. If holiness is God's gift — a participation in his life, through the Spirit who is the Giver of Life — then ethics is not primarily about rules (and certainly not rules to be obeyed for the sake of obeying rules), but an invitation to be imitators of God, caught up in his fellowship, sharing in “righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Romans 14.17).

Perhaps, then, seeing the creed in a new light, as a commentary on the gospel, might lead us to see Christian ethics — with all its rigours — in a new light as well. There is also good news in all of our ethics. Consider Paul's list of the fruit of the Spirit, where there is both the call to repentance (they stand in stark contrast, he writes, to the “works of the flesh”), and such a promise: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5.22-23). This, too, is the gospel.

*The Revd Dr Andrew Davison is Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford, and a Canon Residentiary of Christ Church.*

# All that shaped a Punjabi princess

Members of Indian royalty became entwined with the British during Queen Victoria's reign, says **Sundeep Braich**

THE first Sikh and Punjabi queen to live in Britain, Maharani Jind Kaur, died at Abingdon House, Kensington, in 1863, at the age of 46. She was the youngest wife of the Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Lion of Punjab, who had once worn the Koh-i-Noor diamond. In 1849, her son, Maharaja Duleep Singh, as a child, had surrendered the diamond to Queen Victoria and converted to Christianity, becoming one of Victoria's favourites.

After 13 years of separation, in imprisonment and exile, Jind Kaur was reunited with Duleep in India in April 1861, and sailed with him to England. Despite the Maharajah's royal title and his favour at the British court, the two years between his mother's arrival and her death in 1863 produced no proposals of marriage alliances with English or European aristocracy. For the first known Sikh-heritage marriage in a Christian ceremony, he was to look beyond England and Europe for a bride.

Jind Kaur was initially interred at the Dissenters' Chapel, in Kensal Green Cemetery, before her body was returned to India for Sikh rites. Afterwards, her son consulted missionaries at the American Presbyterian Mission in Cairo before marrying Bamba Müller on 7 June 1864 — not in a church, but at the British Consulate in Alexandria.



The enameled gold bangle owned by Maharani Bamba Duleep Singh is set with table-cut sapphires from Jaipur, India, and dates to c.1850

Bamba was the daughter of a German merchant and a formerly enslaved Ethiopian woman, Sophia, who were not married. Bamba became known as Maharani Bamba Duleep Singh, and bore Duleep three sons and three daughters.

His second marriage was to an English chambermaid, Ada Douglas Wetherill, from Lambeth. Their two daughters became the last-born Duleep Singhs — although, as an exhibition in Kensington Palace, "The Last Princesses of Punjab: Sophia Duleep Singh and the Women who Shaped Her", explains, Queen Victoria did not support the second family as she did the first, because she did not recognise Ada's daughters as legitimate heirs.

The exhibition marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Jind Kaur's third granddaughter from her son's first marriage: Princess Sophia Duleep Singh. A suffragette and wartime nurse, she was granted a grace-and-favour residence at Hampton Court Palace, where an English Heritage blue plaque now recognises her work for women's rights. She was a god-daughter of Queen Victoria, and this is as much an Anglican story as a Sikh and Punjabi one.

A GOLD-framed portrait of Maharani Jind Kaur draws visitors into the exhibition. Painted by George Richmond in the year of her death, it is alive with the jewel

A "No Vote, No Tax" banner from 1908. Princess Sophia played a leading part in the Women's Tax Resistance League



tones of the Lahore court — deep blue, flashing emeralds, and crimson rubies threaded through silver and pearl.

Across the room, in a case devoted to Princess Sophia's mother, sits the enameled gold makara bangle that Duleep Singh gave Bamba shortly after his mother's death. It has the same deep blue along the outer band, the same crimson enamel scrolling around the field, the same emerald winding through the manes of the two facing creatures at the clasp.

The bangle had been Jind Kaur's. Mothers passed such heirlooms to their daughters-in-law, and Duleep had performed the gesture on his mother's behalf. A Sikh mother-in-law and a Christian daughter-in-law who never met are held together across two display cases in the same colours, across the threshold that the makaras were believed to guard. Images of the makara, an ancient mythological water creature, are carved into the gateways of South Asian temples. It is also an emblem of fertility and marriage. But the royal line was not to continue past the last-born Duleep Singh from the second marriage, Princess Irene, in 1889.

IN THE family tree, one last princess is absent: Princess Sophia's only sister-in-law, Princess Victor Duleep Singh, wife of the eldest of Duleep and Bamba's children, Prince Victor. It was she who challenged English aristocratic convention by marrying an Indian prince in an Anglican church.

It was in St Peter's, Eaton Square, in London, on 4 January 1898, that Prince Victor married Lady Anne Blanche Alice Coventry, youngest daughter of the 9th Earl of Coventry in what the next day's *Daily Telegraph* called "the first socially important wedding of the year".

The Vicar, the Revd John Storrs, officiated. The hymn was John Keble's "The voice that breathed o'er Eden", and the address drew on a sermon by another Tractarian



Clockwise, from top: Sisters, Catherine, Sophia, and Bamba Duleep Singh, dressed in elegant white gowns, at the 1895 debutantes' ball

leader, Edward Pusey, on marriage, placing the ceremony firmly in the High Anglican tradition. Among the wedding gifts was a piece of silver inscribed: "To Prince Victor Duleep Singh on his marriage, from his godmother, Victoria, R.L., 1898."

Lady Anne appeared in a *Country Life* frontispiece in August 1898, being recognised after marriage as HH Princess Victor Duleep Singh. Thirteen years later, in January 1911, another frontispiece showed Princess Pauline Duleep Singh, her mother named by mistake as "Lady Anne Duleep Singh". A mixed-heritage princess of the right age had been assumed to be the daughter of the famous 1898 marriage.

The following week, Princess Sophia wrote in: "My half-sister, Pauline Duleep Singh, is the elder daughter of the late Maharajah Duleep Singh of Lahore by his second wife: Lady Anne and Prince Victor never had children.

It has been suggested that Queen Victoria privately instructed Lady Anne never to have a child with Prince Victor, and to live abroad with him. The source is a single letter, dated January 2001, from an unnamed great-nephew of Lady Anne, recalling a conversation that, he says, he had with her in the 1950s. The letter is addressed to a private collector, Peter Bance.

Because the letter is in a private collection, it has not been independently assessed, and its full contents are unpublished. There is no record of the alleged instruction in Princess Victor's or Queen Victoria's own words, and no evidence that Prince Victor or his family knew of any such arrangement. Whether the marriage was childless by command, circumstance, or choice remains unclear.

Prince and Princess Victor rest together in Monaco under the inscription "My peace I give unto you." The reference cited is John 19.27, although the words are from John 14.27. John 19.27 reads: "Behold, thy mother!" — a reference

to motherhood, set into the stone of a threshold-crossing marriage that has since raised questions about motherhood and children. Whether by coincidence, error, or design, this quiet misalignment between inscription and citation has been there ever since.

PRINCE VICTOR died in Monte Carlo in 1918. Lady Anne lived on, widowed, for 38 more years, dying the year the foundation stone of the new Coventry Cathedral was laid.

The last surviving child of Duleep Singh, Prince Victor's sister and Lady Anne's sister-in-law, Princess Bamba, died the following year, and with her the Sikh royal line of Punjab came to its end. She is buried in a Christian cemetery in post-partition Lahore.

On New Year's Day, as the current exhibition was being prepared, Coventry Cathedral hosted Langar Aid, a feeding humanity project by Khalsa Aid: the Sikh and Punjabi tradition of communal eating brought into a Christian space built on the hope of resurrection from ruins and reconciliation after conflict.

People of every race, background, and faith were welcomed to share their first meal of the new year beneath John Piper's baptistery window, its golden yellows, blues, reds, and greens the same colours as glow in George Richmond's portrait of Jind Kaur, and in the enamel of the makara bangle that her son passed to his bride.

A chain of mothers and daughters-in-law who never met are held together across centuries by a painting, a makara bangle, and a stained-glass window in the same vibrant colours: "My peace I give unto you" (John 19.27) and "Behold, thy mother!" (John 14.27).

*Sundeep Braich is a heritage detective investigating the Duleep Singh family and the Koh-i-Noor diamond story. The exhibition at Kensington Palace, Kensington Gardens, London W8, runs until 8 November. See [hrp.org.uk](http://hrp.org.uk)*

# Pain behind the miraculous story

Faith and family support helped the Paralympian Victoria Arlen through years of mental-health struggles, she tells **Rebecca Paveley**

VICTORIA ARLEN'S story is often told as a narrative of miraculous recovery and extraordinary physical resilience. As a young girl, she was struck by two rare neurological disorders, which were initially misdiagnosed and left her trapped for years in a body that would not respond. Eventually, she became a Paralympian and TV presenter, but the story she tells in her new book reaches beyond this miracle to a mental-health crisis.

The recovery that the world saw, after four years as a teenager with locked-in syndrome, is, the book explains, only part of her story. What followed were years of trauma, anxiety, and depression — struggles that emerged long after her physical health appeared to stabilise.

Although her experience is extreme, the book that she has written about her recovery from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), *The View Is Worth It*, is intended for a wide audience, particularly those navigating mental distress. It is, she says, the book she herself needed when she felt most alone — one that offers companionship rather than prescription. "I just wrote from a place of 'What did I need at that time?'" she says. "I needed to feel seen. I needed to feel heard."

Looking back, Ms Arlen, 31, recalls a profound isolation that lasted throughout her twenties, when she was at the height of her fame. There was, she says, "a lot of toxic positivity" surrounding her story — an expectation that resilience meant moving quickly past pain.

Public pressure to continue to appear to manifest a miraculous recovery worsened her mental health. From the outside, she appeared to be flourishing, winning three silver medals and one gold as a swimmer for Team USA in the 2012 Paralympic Games, learning to walk again after a decade of paralysis, starring on TV in *Dancing with the Stars* (the US version of *Strictly Come Dancing*) in 2017, and building a successful broadcasting career. Internally, however, she was struggling.

"I thought living in a constant state of panic was normal," she says. "I didn't know how to say, 'This is not OK.'" When asked what the word "fame" meant to her at that time, she answers bluntly: "My trauma being glorified."

Her understanding of trauma developed gradually. Eventually, she came to recognise the pattern as PTSD, but, by then, anxiety had embedded itself into her daily life. She describes years of sobbing in hotel rooms while travelling for television work.

The years between physical recovery and acknowledging the psychological consequences were shaped by public pressure and huge



ALAMY

Victoria Arlen finishes first in her 400m Freestyle S6 Heat in the Paralympic Games in London in 2012

expectation. Her story had been told publicly when she was still a teenager, positioning her as a symbol of resilience. This brought with it pressure to remain consistently strong. "There was never a convenient time to not be OK," she says.

INSTEAD, she turned to achievement, convinced that it would eventually bring relief. In retrospect, she sees this as another form of coping which masked the underlying issue. "I really thought that achieving the next thing was going to finally make me feel better," she says. "I almost anaesthetised my pain with achievements and accomplishments."

Behind the TV image of curated success, she was contending with depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. Her early medical experiences compounded the feeling that she needed to hide her symptoms. Initially misdiagnosed as a psychiatric patient when she was in fact suffering from transverse myelitis and acute disseminated encephalomyelitis, she came to associate expressing her distress with dismissal and disbelief.

The point of rupture came in her twenties. "I didn't know that panic attacks every day were not normal," she says, "or crying, or feeling like I just wish I would get hit by a bus. I was really struggling, but I didn't know who to tell, because I didn't want to let anyone down." She pauses before continuing: "I was really good at playing this character where everything was good."

In 2021, this led her to attempt to take her own life. She called her mother, Jacqueline, at 3 a.m., expecting to reach voicemail and leave a final message. Instead, the phone was answered. "She stayed on the phone with me until sunrise," Ms Arlen remembers.

In the days that followed, her mother travelled to be with her, and together they began to address what had remained unspoken for years. Therapy has brought her new understanding, particularly of the cumulative nature of trauma.

Her mother remains a central figure in her life. Ms Arlen describes her as "really good at meeting me where I'm at". She continues: "You just need one person who's willing to jump into the water and remind you that you can swim."

This sense of accompaniment shaped her intention for her book. She hopes that it might reach those who do not have such a person in their lives to answer a desperate call at 3 a.m.

What she calls her recovery from "Rock-bottomville" has not been smooth. Another serious relapse — her fourth in three years — left her hospitalised and temporarily unable to walk at the end of last year. At one point, she told her mother she wanted to abandon everything, including the book itself. Her mother asked her to read the manuscript not as the author but as someone she intended to write it for. It became, she says, a "full-circle moment".

"It definitely was a massive turning point for me, and maybe it had to happen before this book could come out," she says. "There were a lot of blessings that came in the midst of all that, too."

LEARNING to care for herself has required both practical changes and a shift in priorities. For years, she directed her energy outward, responding to expectations and obligations that came with a career in the spotlight. Now she is learning to recognise her limits, to rest, and to set boundaries.

The change is neither instinctive nor complete. It includes small, deliberate decisions — choosing rest over productivity, allowing herself to step back from the work days when she needs to. "My therapist has been big on accepting where I'm at," she says.

Her faith is a consistent thread through her story. As a child in New Hampshire, she was brought up in a Christian home. But it was during her illness, when she could not communicate outwardly but remained fully conscious, that prayer became central.

"When nobody could hear me, I thought maybe God could hear me," she says. "Maybe this God guy could hear me." She began praying constantly during the years she was trapped in her body.

In an earlier book, *Locked In*, she recounted some of the abuse that, she says, she experienced from healthcare workers during that period. She describes a night when she remembers a nurse throttling her until she almost lost consciousness. "I re-

member just praying to God and saying, 'Help, help, help,'" she says. "I definitely didn't want to go out like this." She remembers the nurse suddenly stopping and rushing from the room.

"At that point, I knew that God was real, and I knew that he was listening," she says. "And then I said a very bold prayer after that. I said, 'Look, if you need to take me home, take me home. But I can't do your work in this hospital bed. So, if you give me back my life, if you give me back my voice, I'll use my voice to change the world and help others like me.' Two weeks later is when I

started blinking and letting my family know that I was in there."

She describes faith as both anchor and lifeguard through her physical and psychological trauma — in a God who, she says, "just keeps showing up for me". Writing this new book was part of what she sees as a promise to use her experiences to help others. She remains cautious, however, about being framed publicly as a finished success story. "Healing isn't linear," she says. "It's literally a bumpy, windy road. You just have to stay the course."

Remembering Jesus's own time in the wilderness, she says that mental suffering is compatible with a committed Christian faith.


"Anxiety is mentioned more times than we realise in the Bible," she says. "Jesus found himself in the wilderness. If I'm sharing my rock-bottom moment, it maybe encourages someone. A goal for me is continuing to use my voice, keeping my promise to God to really help people and make an impact. Obviously, I want to make my parents proud. But I want to make God proud too, and honour this fifth chance at life I've been given after everything that's happened. I want to make the most of it."

*The View Is Worth It: Unlocking the beauty in life's peaks and valleys by Victoria Arlen is published by David C Cook, £18.99 (Church Times Bookshop £17.09), 978-0-8307-9177-4.*

DISCOVER

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# Innovation in the choir stalls

Cathedral-choir history was made 60 years ago, when girls sang for the first time, discovers **Ed Beavan**

A HANDWRITTEN note in the Chapter service book of St Davids Cathedral, from 20 April 1966, reveals a moment of unexpected ecclesiastical and social history. The organist and music director, Peter Boorman, had scribbled in the record: "Boys did not arrive — used six girls from Ysgol Dewi Sant." That day, in Britain's smallest city, the girls became what are believed to be the first female singers in a British cathedral choir.

The event 60 years ago came about owing to a set of extraordinary circumstances. On 20 April, St Davids Cathedral was the venue for the BBC Home Service broadcast *Choral Evensong*. Mr Boorman had taken up his position in St Davids in 1953, but struggled for a decade to recruit boy choristers. On that particular Wednesday, calamity struck when it emerged that no boys were available, owing to an outbreak of measles in local primary schools.

Seeking a speedy solution, Mr Boorman approached the girls' choir at the nearby secondary school Ysgol Dewi Sant, under the stewardship of the music teacher and cathedral sub-organist Rosalyn Charles. The Dean of the cathedral, Canon Edward Jenkins, and the headmaster of Ysgol Dewi Sant, David James,



ST DAVIDS CATHEDRAL

The choir at St Davids in the 1960s, conducted by Rosalyn Charles, teacher at Ysgol Dewi Sant

understood the urgency of the situation, and permitted the six girls to be excused from class to rehearse.

The broadcast went ahead as planned, much to the relief of the clergy and Chapter. Three months later, the Chapter approved the admission of girls into the choir as full choristers.

Meg Rees, who was a chorister at St Davids much more recently, from 2014 to 2018, has become an expert on the story, after coming across it in her research for her dissertation as part of her music degree at Bristol University.

"I had no idea until I researched the topic that the girls were introduced so much earlier than in other institutions across the UK, which

was wonderful, and I thought, 'Why hasn't anybody written about this? This is definitely one for the history books.' Peter Boorman had a real recruitment crisis for boys in the choir. He would call families to ask about their sons, and even made a recruitment poster saying, 'Boys Wanted: Alive, Desperate', parodying the old Wild West."

There were two main reasons that it was so difficult to find boy choristers at the time. "Firstly, St Davids didn't have a cathedral choir school, and therefore no flow of boys coming in, and, secondly, it was a farming community, and many boys were expected to go out and help with farming, which was paid, and became a more attractive activity for boys."

Her dissertation, "Welcomed with Open Arms: Girl choristers in St Davids Cathedral", was based on interviews with former choir-girls, and Rosalyn Charles. Ms Rees says that it is "really special" that St Davids was so ahead of the curve. "Local people should be proud of it. It speaks to the relationship between the cathedral and the local community, because to do that back in the 1960s was virtually unheard of."

Her Ph.D. research suggests that such acceptance might not have happened in a large cathedral city. "There was a real backlash when girls came into Salisbury Cathedral Choir in the 1990s," she says. "People were saying this was the end of cathedral choirs as we know it. The response in St Davids was dramatically different. Those that sang in St Davids were well known and respected members of the community — the local butcher, people who worked on the lifeboat. They were grateful the girls were able to come and continue the music making of the choir."

ROSALYN CHARLES, now 84 and based in Haverfordwest, grew up on a farm in Pembrokeshire, and was just 22 when she arrived as a music teacher at Ysgol Dewi Sant in 1964. She immediately set up a choir and music society, bringing in professional instrumentalists to accompany the school choir on ambitious pieces such as Bach's cantatas.

She has fond memories of the live broadcast when Mr Boorman sent out an SOS. "The girls didn't have any background in church music or the order of evensong; so it was quite challenging for them, but I was fairly confident of their ability to sightread. They had to learn pretty fast. I was singing with them as support."

She was aware that the request for the girls to sing was unusual. "I did realise it was quite a departure from the norm at the time, but it worked out very well, and they continued with girl choristers from that time. All the local people were happy with the girls' going into the choir."

Many radio listeners believed that they were listening to a male choir, Ms Charles says. "Peter had a letter after the broadcast from an eminent organist, congratulating the boys on their tone quality, which shows the girls did

very well. They'd never sung canticles, responses, or psalms; so they had to pick it up very rapidly."

Ms Charles attended a reunion evensong on Sunday 19 April in St Davids Cathedral to mark the 60th anniversary of the girls' debut. "I wondered if the girls would recognise me: I hadn't seen some of them since they were 17 or 18."

After her time at St Davids, Ms Charles went to Edinburgh University to do a Master's degree in organ music before going on to teach at Reigate Grammar School, in Surrey. Many of her students went on to have careers in music, as did some of the St Davids choirgirls.

ANN SHUTTLEWORTH, whose father was churchwarden at the time and who was christened, confirmed, and married in St Davids Cathedral, was one of the original six who sang in the live broadcast. "I remember we performed in the choir rather than the nave, but it wasn't a big thing that the girls were going to sing in the choir. I don't remember it being exciting, I just remember it being, 'Oh, we're singing.' Singing was something we did. Other people might have found it hilarious, but my sisters and I always sang, and in the car we'd be singing the Magnificat after joining the choir."

"I have great memories of Peter Boorman, who wasn't just an organist. He played French horn and double bass, and he used to let us try and play them in the canony. I always felt it was an enormous privilege."

Mrs Shuttleworth says that she was not really aware of the groundbreaking nature of their presence in the choir. "I remember going somewhere which declared it the first place to have girls in the choir — Salisbury Cathedral, I think — and I thought, 'No you weren't: we were!' There wasn't a fuss, because it was our parish church. It wasn't a big deal, and we didn't have a choir school; so it didn't ruffle any feathers."

Jane Leggett, now 74, was one of the first girls to take up a permanent place in the choir soon after the 1966 event. Her first memories of singing in the cathedral choir come from the summer of 1967, when she was 16. Now based in Aberystwyth, she describes the choir experience as something that has served her for a lifetime.

"It was a tremendous experience, really, and I valued it enormously then; and, quite frankly, I've valued it throughout my life. I was the first person to do A level music at the school, and we had an inspirational teacher in Rosalyn Charles. The whole thing made a huge difference for me, because I went off to study music at university, then became a classroom music teacher myself."

"I was aware that it was quite unusual at the time. It was a very practical reason that the girls started to sing, because there weren't enough boys, and Peter Boorman knew there were girls at the school with reasonable music-reading skills. We were definitely well aware that we were going into a very special tradition, where boys were the choristers. It was exciting for us at the time: the opportunities it gave us."

"I wouldn't have known this music, but we started to sing Britten, and were brought into liturgical repertoire, which I don't think we'd have experienced otherwise. We got to read music, which is so good for singers, and I've also been grateful for that. When you're brought up 'falling off the edge of Wales', you're very grateful for that opportunity."

Mrs Leggett attended and enjoyed the reunion evensong last month, as ex-choristers sang with the current choir — although this time she was singing lower alto instead of soprano. "It was a great honour to go back and sing, and very moving."

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# Soul Survivor in retrospect

**Mike Starkey** reviews a book on coming to terms with the scandal

**When the Music Fades: Power, surrender and the Soul Survivor generation**  
**Lucy Sixsmith**

Canterbury Press £16.99  
(978-1-78622-615-0)  
Church Times Bookshop £13.59



EACH summer, when my older children were teenagers, they went to Soul Survivor with the youth group from a neighbouring church. Sometimes, I acted as chauffeur. At its peak, the event hosted more than 32,000 young people under canvas, with its heady mix of worship music, Christian teaching, and fun activities such as skateboarding.

Its roots were in the Charismatic Evangelical Anglican church St Andrew's, Chorleywood, and its (still extant) Soul Survivor daughter church in Watford. The Soul Survivor festivals eventually shut up shop after the summer 2019 event. In 2023, a Church of England report upheld complaints of coercive behaviour, and inappropriate relationships over many years, against Soul Survivor's founder and main leader Mike Pilavachi. The worship leader Matt Redman and other team members have since spoken out about their own experiences of abusive behaviour from Pilavachi.

Another young person at the same Soul Survivor events as my teenagers was Lucy Sixsmith (Feature, 1 May), now a Cambridge lecturer in English literature. Sixsmith does not offer a forensic account of the failings of Soul Survivor — lessons learned, recommendations for future church policy: these are contained in the 2024 independent review by Fiona Scolding KC. This book is something more personal: a wistful, lyrical meditation on having been the idealistic teenager lost in the crowd, sing-

ing along with tearful fervour, and on trying to make sense of life and faith now that the music has faded. As you might expect from a Cambridge literature tutor, it is beautifully written.

The book opens in 2004. The author is in her mid-teens, helping at Soul in the City, the Soul Survivor mission to the outer London Borough of Bexley. It ends with her revisiting Bexley 20 years later and sitting in a quiet communion service in the parish church. Between these bookends, the structure is thematic, shaped around motifs in worship songs popular at Soul Survivor and the author's own "fruitcakey charismatic" home church in Bath. Each motif is explored through a collage of personal, literary, historical, and cultural snapshots. These include her later years living in Moscow, Stella Gibbons's *Cold Comfort Farm*, 15th-century English mystics, P. G. Wodehouse, and the ministry of Charles Simeon in Cambridge in the early 19th century.

A key motif in the worship songs of Soul Survivor was surrender: submitting oneself wholly to God, sacrifice, self-denial, "I can't but HE CAN". The author questions how helpful this constant emphasis was for insecure adolescents yearning to be loved and valued as they were. Likewise, the theme of power. At the time, reference points for lyrics about power would have been John Wimber's *Power Evangelism* and *Power Healing*, and falling down under the power of the Spirit. In hindsight, she recognises power dynamics at play which were more ominously human.

Sixsmith is similarly uneasy about the mirror held up to young people in the worship lyrics. They were the Revival Generation, History Makers, living in Revival Town, for Such a Time as This — at a stage of life when they had little personal agency and barely knew who they were themselves. Saving the world as God's chosen is quite a burden of expectation when you still haven't done your GCSEs. In contrast, the author now finds quiet satisfaction in the everyday. If there is a lesson to be salvaged from it all, she suggests, it is the value of the ordinary.

At the end of the book, we see the author sitting in a liminal space somewhere between faith and doubt, in the back pew of Bexley Parish Church, uncertain whether to receive holy communion or not. Sixsmith gives eloquent voice to the spiritual hesitancy still felt by many young adults whose dreams once took flight in the summer marquees of Soul Survivor. Burned by holy fire; burned in other ways, too. *The Revd Mike Starkey is a London-based writer. He writes on issues of faith and culture at: flaneurnotes.com*

RAHA NIK-ANDISH is the pseudonym of a writer whose short paperback, **Tehran Diaries: Dispatches from Iran under siege** (Profile, £7.99 (£7.19); 978-180649-158-2), offers an insider's view, introducing recent (previously published) essays.



PHIL DRAPER

**A church and its rider:** "Mells. The peaceful setting for one of the best Somerset towers," writes Phil Draper in his *Churches of Somerset* (Amberley Books, £15.99 (£14.39); 978-1-3981-2345-8), in this publisher's popular county series. The south porch is the latest part of St Andrew's, c.1500, and "Visitors may be surprised to see a soldier riding a horse at the west end of the north aisle." The rider is Edward Horner, of the family at the manor house. He died in 1917 after being injured in the Battle of Cambrai. The memorial is by Sir Alfred Munnings, on a plinth by Lutyens. Fifty churches are discussed and illustrated with fine colour photos

## Anglicanism's elusive identity

**Robin Gill** reads what Episcopalians in the United States think

**Wisdom, Knowledge, and Faith: New essays on the future of theology and the Episcopal Church**  
**Robert MacSwain and Kelli Joyce, editors**

Church Publishing Inc. £21.99  
(978-1-64065-825-7)  
Church Times Bookshop £19.79



AUTHORS of the 14 essays in this interesting collection were asked by the editors to reflect on: how they became theologians; what themes were central to their work; and what their vision was for the Episcopal Church in the United States today (now in serious numerical decline). It consciously mixes autobiography with theological analysis.

Professor Kathryn Tanner, at Yale, reflects thoughtfully at the outset on "The Anglican Way in My Work". She sets the tone for the highly eclectic approaches to American Anglican theology that follow. Like most other contributors, she draws extensively and ecumenically from wide-ranging theological sources. Given that both Michael Ramsey and Stephen Sykes (and early Newman before them) failed to find an Anglican theology that was ubiquitous, distinctive, and unique, this eclecticism is hardly surprising.

A final essay by Sameer Yadav, at Baylor, explores "The Future of the Via Media in the Episcopal Church". While acknowledging his background as a Hindu and then a conservative Evangelical Christian, he currently deploys a very tentative concept of liminal Anglicanism. In this he views an Anglican *via media*

as a way of negotiating a path that responds to widespread theological and social fragmentation, albeit with a eucharistic focus. It is ironic, though, that he now worships in a Baptist church. Very confusing and, perhaps, typically Anglican!

Actually, judging by other contributors, it isn't. Most of them — largely brought up in other denominations (as were both editors) — record their discovery of inclusive Anglican eucharistic worship as their entrée into the Episcopal Church. They do, though, note a widespread neglect of theology in Episcopal congregations, although, ironically, it is the dogmatics of Karl Barth (and, less often, Anglican Tudor divines) that predominate. Unsurprisingly, the works of Rowan Williams are cited by many, but it is Barth who is used at much greater length.

In contrast, 20th-century Roman Catholic theologians are often ignored: Karl Rahner is mentioned in passing twice, but Edward Schillebeeckx and Raimon Panikkar not at all. Even the highly creative RC theologians at Boston College are overlooked.

Despite this serious omission, it is good to see academic theology valued. Contributors view it as a rigorous way of exploring Christian faith, as it was for me when I wrote my youthful Ph.D. on modern Christology (thankfully unpublished, following Maurice Wiles's shrewd advice). Scott MacDougall, formerly at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley, articulates this well:

"Theology is an intellectual and spiritual discipline that puts the scriptural witness, human knowledge and experience, and the deep history of God's relationship with God's people into conversation in order to produce a coherent, compelling, and faithful account of Christian truth that both shapes and is shaped by

Christian practice in a specific time and place."

Rahner and his Catholic successors might well have agreed with this definition of theology, as Joy Ann McDougall, at Emory University, implicitly demonstrates. She refers approvingly both to Rahner and to the Episcopal Church's "reasoned approach to faith that accepts challenges from other sectors of society... [and also] the sacramentality of the world through artistic expression".

Manifestly, Scott MacDougall's definition does not fit just Anglican theology. Instead, he argues that Anglicanism "does not prescribe what people must believe but instead pushes the boundaries of Christian theological imagination out as far as possible". Perhaps that explains the theological pluralism so evident in this fascinating collection and why even Ramsey and others finally failed to pin down Anglican theology. *Canon Robin Gill is Emeritus Professor of Applied Theology at the University of Kent.*

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### new titles just published

**Evil, Suffering, and God: Theological soundings** by Owen F. Cummings (Cascade Books, £15 (£13.50); 979-8-3852-6267-0).

**Thomas Merton** by James Finley (Orbis Books, £18.99 (£17.09); 978-1-62698-654-1).

**The Monastic World: A 1,200-year history** by Andrew Jotischky (Yale, £14.99 (£13.49); 978-0-300-28700-4). *New in paperback*

Selected by Frank Nugent, of the Church House Bookshop, which operates the Church Times Bookshop.

# Taxonomy of mission

But now its credibility is quite another matter, says **Peter Sedgwick**

**Types of Christian Mission: An introduction**  
**Stephen Spencer**  
SCM Press £30  
(978-0-334-06403-9)  
Church Times Bookshop  
£24



STEPHEN SPENCER is a very well-established author and educator who has published widely, and it is a delight to see one of his staple books (Books, 29 November 2007) updated and published with a new title. He has for many years written both SCM Study Guides on Anglicanism, mission, and church history, and also books on William Temple.

This book does not disappoint expectations, and his experience of teaching in theological institutions and his current post as Director of Theology in the Anglican Communion means that he knows what students find helpful, and he can engage with the dynamics of the Anglican Communion. His highly readable style, his ability to present contemporary theologians in an accessible manner, and his wide reading mean that this book will immediately become a text that will be used in theological institutions and churches.

Spencer identifies six types of mission, which are: apostolic; Orthodoxy (where he includes Taizé, in a

fascinating juxtaposition); Christendom and Establishment Christianity; the conversion of souls, including Methodism and Pentecostalism; building the Kingdom, or social action; and nurturing discipleship. All this is related well to the Galilean mission of Jesus, with examples and quotations from individuals in each section; a helpful reading list; diagrams and boxes that illustrate his ideas; and an excellent set of questions at the end of each chapter. It is a model of how to structure an educational text, and I am sure that it will be widely used. On the back cover are commendations from staff at Cranmer Hall, St Padarn's, Cardiff, and Fuller Seminary in the United States, and I echo those comments.

There is one caveat that I wish to make, and it is a difficult but inescapable topic to raise. Over the past 15 years, I have been a member of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC). In our current work, we have reflected on the difficulties of moral discernment. It is not simply that the "Enlightenment Project" has fallen into war, oppression, and environmental disaster, but that the Churches have also lost credibility, owing to racism, sexual abuse, and much else.

Nevertheless, the epoch-making theology of Karl Barth, much cited, rightly, by Spencer, was written by someone who committed adultery with his research assistant (see the recent biography by Christiane Tietz, *Karl Barth: A life in conflict* (Books, 28 May 2021)); Stephen Neil, a magisterial historian of mission, again cited by Spencer, was

a serial abuser of boys, and this was covered up (Dyron Daugherty, *A Worldly Christian: The life and times of Stephen Neil*, 2021 (Books, 8 April 2022)); Jean Vanier and several church leaders abused many; and, finally, the Archbishop of the West Indies has called for reparations for slavery.

ARCIC has struggled greatly with this. Spencer calls for "credibility" and "vulnerability". The deep question is how mission, which is, indeed, all-important, can be carried out, given these failures. There is no easy answer, but Spencer should have mentioned this as a challenge.

Despite this omission, however, this is a wonderful book, which inspired me a great deal. Students entering into ministry, parishes, and dioceses all alike need a guide to the current state of the debate in each topic of Christianity. Not only is this book a masterpiece as an educational resource, but it could also serve as a template for a similar book on Anglicanism when he retires from his current post.

*Canon Peter Sedgwick formerly chaired the Church in Wales Doctrine Commission, and was Principal of St Michael's College, Llandaff.*

## With a sage in the galleries of Paris

This story about seeing art is misconceived, **Susan Gray** concludes

**Mona's Eyes**  
**Thomas Schlessner**  
Europa Editions £20  
(978-1-78770-585-2)  
Church Times Bookshop  
£18



PERHAPS in French this novel is insightful about art and family psychology, but in English translation it is a clunky *mélange* of cardboard characters, behaving improbably and spouting clichés about Old Masters.

Mona, the titular heroine, is a ten-year-old girl, who temporarily loses her sight, and may — for reasons sketchily explained — have only one more year of vision left to experience. Or Mona's condition may be psychological, a reaction to the troubled marriage of her parents, Camille and Paul. Paul runs a precarious business selling American memorabilia and likes to drown his sorrows with a drink or three, while Camille is a "model employee" at a temp agency, holding family life together.

Into this domestic fog strides Camille's father, Henry, known as Dadé, a retired war reporter with an eye patch, telegraphing the action and horror that he has seen, and meaning that he must know a thing or two. Conveniently for the plywood plot, what Dadé knows is that his granddaughter's condition would respond better to seeing art at the Louvre, Musée d'Orsay, and Beau-

## Dead set against 'going to heaven'

**J. Tyler Brown** reads a sequel to Tom Wright's *Surprised by Hope*

**God's Homecoming: The forgotten promise of future renewal**  
**Tom Wright**  
SPCK £24.99  
(978-0-281-08915-4)  
Church Times Bookshop £22.49



*SURPRISED BY HOPE* by Tom Wright (Books, 4 April 2008) reminded readers that death was not to be evaded but defeated; that the object of creation was fully the object of redemption; that the resurrection of the body was the ultimate horizon of Christian expectation. *God's Homecoming*, styled that earlier book's sequel in this volume's opening pages, addresses an even more fundamental question: What is the ultimate destination of God himself?

Unlike the earlier book, *God's Homecoming* answers with a sweeping, if necessarily whistle-stop, biblical theology. "*The Bible speaks with one voice of God coming to live with humans. Of God coming to be at home with us humans*" (emphasis original). These pages are saturated with quotations of scripture, and particularly the Old Testament, something that those familiar with the styles of both Tom and his alter ego N. T. Wright will recognise and appreciate. Readers are borne along on the currents of prophecy and promise, gathering steam as the story of Israel's God coming to dwell with his people rolls toward a climactic fulfilment.

The book's primary thesis is that this fulfilment has now taken place in the "coming home" of God in Jesus, the human face of God, and the Holy Spirit, the pledge of the world's suffusion with divine presence. The Kingdom does not merely wait for a future return of Christ, but has already been powerfully inaugurated.

Thus, the arrival of God on earth and not the soul's arrival in heaven is central; living with God in a renewed creation rather than beholding God in the beatific vision is primary.

Texts that seem to complicate this picture ("apparent exceptions") are judged, in a regrettably brief discussion, as marginal or misunderstood if taken to support a larger role for "heaven" within Christian hope (see 2 Corinthians 5.1-6; 2 Timothy 4.18). Nevertheless, readers will be glad finally to learn at page 296 that the intermediate state prior to the resurrection "will be a genuine time of conscious delight" in the Triune God's presence.

The lens of "God's homecoming" allows the author to reframe the whole of Christian life: worship, evangelism, and prayer; the sacraments of baptism and eucharist; the "polychrome" witness of the Church. All these mark the coming of God to this world.

One question worth pressing concerns the relative weight given to the second coming of Jesus alongside the author's central claim that he has already "come home". Given the book's explicit "double coming" scaffolding, why should "too much focus on that ultimate hope" occlude the Gospels' central themes and support the "going-to-heaven story"? Much may depend on whether the "return of YHWH to Zion" occurs only once, with Jesus's second coming chiefly coinciding with the fuller filling of earth with divine glory, or whether the second coming completes the return of Israel's Lord to Zion (as seems clearly stated at page 298). On the latter reading, the two "comings" are inextricable and always mutually interpretative.

The book's opening Advent framing seems best understood to point in just this direction: the coming of Israel's Lord is staged in two parts, first in humility and then in power, first in rejection and then with welcome in Zion (Matthew 23.39; Luke 13.35; Roman 11.26-27).

The book is warmly recommended. *Dr J. Tyler Brown is Junior Research Fellow in New Testament Studies at Keble College, Oxford.*

bour than attending her weekly psychologist appointments. In *Mona's Eyes*, depriving a child of medical attention is presented as the heroic course of action.

So begin the 52 Wednesday visits to famous artworks in Paris galleries, where Mona's practically mute agreement with Dadé's leaden pronouncements confirms his diagnosis: "Henry wasn't entirely sure what Mona meant by that, but he had noticed her unusual ability to perceive things, an almost magical power of analytical discernment." Some children have the very rare musical gift of "absolute pitch", and Mona seemed to be endowed with a kind of "absolute vision".

But Mona's vision falls short of offering X-ray-level scrutiny, allowing Dadé to give yet another awful art-history lecture in front of a Frida Kahlo portrait at the Beaubourg: "No," Henry teases her, "you're talking nonsense because the *Mona Lisa* isn't a canvas; Leonardo painted it on a fine panel of poplar. And this painting isn't on canvas either: the self portrait is painted on a sheet of aluminium, and combined with what's known as *fixé sous verre*, or 'reverse painting on glass.'"

The kindest interpretation for *Mona's Eyes* is that its art-historian author, Thomas Schlessner, wanted to communicate his enthusiasm for art to a wide audience, and hoped that fiction was the right form. Yet, even the cover of the English version strikes a duff note, as Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring* hangs in the Hague, not Paris. If only Dadé had put them right.

*Susan Gray writes about the arts and entertainment for The Daily Telegraph, The Sunday Times, and the Daily Mail.*

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# The sent and the sent-to

David Brown considers reflections on church-planting and its results

**Participation and Church Planting: Perspectives from scripture, doctrine and practice**

Joshua Cockayne, editor  
SCM Press £50  
(978-0-334-06379-7)  
Church Times Bookshop £40



AS READERS of the *Church Times* will know, although central authorities are strongly supportive of church-planting as a means of advancing the mission of the Church, there continue to be many critics of its impact, both on neighbouring churches and on the resultant profile of the new community. “Participation” in the title of this book, therefore, deceived me into expecting an attempt to address how a more united front could be achieved. That was not to be so, however. Only the final 70 pages (Part 3) could be seen to engage with such questions. Instead, the rest of the book was of quite a different character.

Here, the issue was the sense in which such work could be appropriately described as participation in the divine mission towards evangelism, and so that is where we ought to begin. Inevitably, allusion is made to 2 Peter 1.3-8, and a *missio Dei* found in the Trinity which respects those helped and addressed. One contributor (Elizabeth Hare) makes much of the variety of creative involvement in the story of the building of the Tabernacle, while another (Helen Miller) follows Richard Bauckham in noting an unusual difference in message between what is seen and what is heard in this Christian “war scroll”.

Somewhat surprising is the opening essay from Dru Johnson, who puts at its front the controversial promise to Abraham that his descendants’ land will stretch from the Nile to the Euphrates. That repeated declaration is described as part of “God’s intention of planting his people to mushroom them out”, and, as such, a principle that can be applied elsewhere. Another surprise is how often appeal is made to St Thomas Aquinas, even as focus is given to the possible reasons for Christian decline.

Little attention is given in these first two sections to what precisely might be meant by respecting those to whom the mission is addressed. An exception is a story that Alan Torrance turns against himself. As a young lecturer at Aberdeen, he led a mission of his students to the seaside town of Montrose. He was all for a church-based initiative, but his students proved right in moving the location to where young people might prove happier: the neutral territory of a hotel basement.

As I have already indicated, however, I found the reflections in the final part the more interesting. This opens with an impressively frank

piece from Pete Ward, indicating that his own earlier excessive ecclesiocentrism had held within it the roots of where he would prove to fail.

This is followed by a description of two workers’ attempt at “radical inclusion” in their work. The project concerned was based in Rochdale, and their aim was to make everyone “known, seen, and loved”, including those on the far boundary of neurodiversity, such as those suffering from autism, ADHD, and dyslexia. One success story is told of how an autistic young man was eventually encouraged into leadership within the youth group.

The next article might be described as bravely included, as it speaks of the impact on the author’s successful church of a plant introduced near by. A lesson of more careful, even intense, listening was drawn. Finally, an arts pioneer minister (Gill Sakakini) draws attention to how often her successes were the result of others still on the fringe.

Apparently, this is only the first of a series of reflections on church-planting, organised from St John’s College, Durham. As such, the initiative is most welcome, not least given the resources placed in this direction but still relatively unsuccessful in drawing in new Christians (about ten per cent of the new congregations, according to one author).

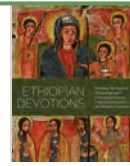
The Revd Dr David Brown is Emeritus Wardlaw Professor of Theology, Aesthetics and Culture at the University of St Andrews.

# Ethiopia: saluting the cultus

Nicholas Cranfield on a richly illustrated book from the Smithsonian

**Ethiopian Devotions: Paintings, illuminated manuscripts, and processional crosses from the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries**

Marilyn E. Heldman, editor  
Smithsonian £38  
(978-1-58834-807-4)  
Church Times Bookshop £34.20



FOR the late Pope Francis SJ, the image of the Virgin and Child in the papal basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore was the first port of call for his devotions whenever he returned to his diocese. He asked that on his death he should be immured alongside it: a wish that was granted.

Once thought to have been painted by St Luke himself, this 14th-century icon both is symbolic of the authority of the Mother of God and was particularly important to the Society of Jesus.

The Jesuits came to Ethiopia in

1555 to convert the Copts; theirs was a short-lived mission, as they were expelled in 1633 by Emperor Fasilädäs. St Francis Borgia, who became the third Minister General of the Jesuits in 1565, obtained permission from Pope Paul V to allow the Santa Maria Maggiore icon to be copied. Countless woodcuts and

GIFT OF JOSEPH AND PATRICIA BRUMIT



An Ethiopian triptych, *Mary and the Christ Child with the Twelve Apostles*, from the book under review. The Virgin has a special place in Africa’s “Maryland”

# Less doing and more thinking

Adjust your ministry to children and teenagers, suggests Jennie Hogan

**Growing Together in Faith: Thinking theologically about ministry with children and teenagers**

Emma L. Parker and Sarah Strand  
SCM Press £25  
(978-0-334-06652-1)  
Church Times Bookshop £20



EVERYONE wants to see more children and young people in church. We are offered here a thoughtful, original, and subtle approach to how faith rather than numbers might flourish in churches, schools, and communities, too.

Both authors speak from vast experience as clergy and theologians based at Cranmer Hall, Durham, teaching modules on nurturing the faith of children and young people. Their intentions are refreshing and clear: “This book is for anyone interested in exploring the theology that underpins ministry with children and the visions of all ages learning, living, and growing in the Christian faith together.”

Calls to action and finger-pointing are, thankfully, resisted. Many may be relieved to note that there are no “to-do” lists; neither are there practical tips to try for ourselves. Instead, the tone is reflective and creative. Theological investigation fuels the search to discover how things might be different and fruitful for everyone.

Over and again, thinking “about” God rather than “doing” God is privileged. For instance, chapter one examines God’s relationships with children in scripture. We soon learn how children over and again reveal Christ’s presence to the adults, turning on their head facile presumptions that grown-ups know best. In chapter two, we discover models of how faith tends to develop or dry up in young people’s lives. Subsequent chapters investigate how, in the Church, faith can be grown in various ways. It might become more abundant if it was passed around rather than passed down. If we honour the whole body and bear witness to the “*koinonia*”, so evident in the Early Church, transformation is more likely.

Throughout, we are challenged to listen to children, as this has the potential to change the way in which churches think about the place for children in the liturgy. Can adults be curious as children are curious? What might adults miss out on if the

children are always hurried into Sunday school so that the adults can do the “serious stuff”?

The authors write about fascinating discoveries after interviews with children from the age of four to the teens. One five-year-old, when asked who God is, sounds as though he has swallowed St John’s Gospel: “God is the son of God who helps everybody and helps us make better choices.” We hear of a four-year-old in prayer saying: “Thank you for the joy-ness you have. Come in.” Another piece of research reveals how faith is and is not shared and experienced at home. This can challenge our presumptions about how children develop a theology of their own.

Such is the depth of thought throughout here that it is unsurprising to discover the authors’ insistence that prayer is at the heart of growth and change. Privileging being over doing can genuinely become a rich source of transformation. “Prayer can fall into the erroneous practice of using prayer as a warm-up act before the ‘real’ ministry.” It is an encouraging and fitting end to a book that is, all at once, serious, optimistic, and reflective in its endeavours to transform the lives of adults as well as of children in their encounters with God and one another.

The Revd Jennie Hogan is a psychotherapist.

engravings were widely circulated, influencing iconography in Ethiopia and elsewhere.

After an opening introduction to Ethiopia’s tradition of Abrahamic faith — Islam had arrived by the 12th century — Marilyn Heldman’s second chapter, in a book that was planned as a catalogue for an exhibition at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African Art in Washington, DC, shows that the cult of Our Lady Mary was established long before the Jesuits arrived.

It had been forcibly imposed by imperial decree. Emperor Zär’a Ya’eqob, who ruled from 1434 to 1468, committed his country and the Church to commemorating Marian feasts and prescribed that all Christians prostrate themselves at the name of Mary. Those who refused, arguing that such prostration was fitting only for the Triune God, were excommunicated.

In a third chapter, Getatchew Haile explains that Ethiopian Orthodox Christians believe that by an unbroken covenant (*Kidan*) the beloved Son granted their land to the Virgin — Maryland — when she asked him for a country as her title. Consequently, devotees at the liturgy focus their eyes on Mary and not on the infant Jesus when an icon of the Virgin and Child is placed on the altar.

A fourth chapter (by Denis Nosnitsin) explores the witness of the saints, especially of Sts George of Lydda, Cyriacus, and his mother Julitta, John the Baptist, and Alexius. This takes up from the first chapter, with the richly decorated church of Gänätä Maryam, built by the Emperor Yekuno Amlak (1270-85).

The final chapters offer a survey of relations between Church and State from the 13th to the 16th centuries and of the late Solomonic (Gondär) Period.

Throughout, the book is richly illustrated, showing the wealth of colour which the Copts use in liturgical art and the consummate skill of their metalworkers, drawing from collections far beyond those of the Smithsonian.

This highlights a folding processional icon nearly four metres wide (The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, in the other Maryland) and Harvard’s “Covenant of Mercy” triptych, in which the harrowing of hell has Christ raise Adam with his right hand as Eve desperately tugs at his left sleeve as if to hitch a lift. Both, with their deep black eyes, swivel their gaze to penetrate the mystery of the Second Adam.

At the time of writing, the museum, which celebrated its 60th anniversary year in 2024 and joined the Smithsonian in 1979, is still open. Since December 2024, it has been led by John Lippiana, Under Secretary of State for Museums and Culture. Heran Sereke-Brhan is the assistant director and recently (23 January 2026) opened an exhibition: “Here: Pride and Belonging in African Art” is curated to give voice to artists who “claim belonging” in the LGBTQ+ African community. With the federal funding of the Smithsonian open to fulminations from the White House, this is a bold venture, risking, no doubt, secular excommunication.

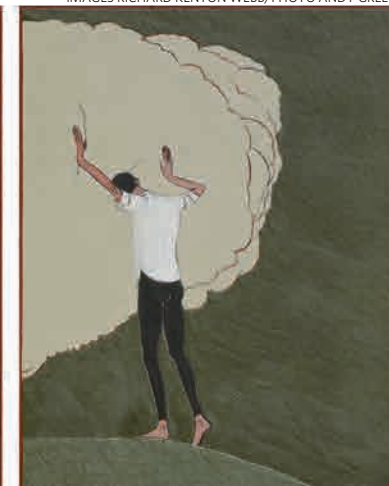
Canon Nicholas Cranfield is the Vicar of All Saints’, Blackheath, in south London.

## Jonathan Evens views an artist's reflection on his life and the mystics

"ALL the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." Have you ever imagined your life as a stage play? Richard Kenton Webb has, and his series of drawings, *Passion*, sees his experiences as a victim of iconoclasm portrayed as a story with parallels to that of Christ. While this may sound presumptuous, is it not what we are all called to, as we follow in the footsteps of Christ, becoming imitators of him and players in the five-act drama of salvation history?

Webb's own passion experience came firstly through "the pockets of academic disdain for painting" which he has had to navigate in his professional life as an art educator. Within a three-month period in the early 2020s, his full-time teaching post of 15 years ended, he started a new position, and moved to Devon, and then Covid struck. He found himself alone in a hut in the woods by the sea, teaching online, away from his family.

Exhausted, broken, and alone in the lockdown, he experienced grief as he reflected on his experiences in teaching. In response, he began a cycle of drawings inspired by the Passion of Christ. Through these, he began to understand his own passion in the events of the Passion while, by



Images Richard Kenton Webb/Photo Andy Green  
Acknowledging English Iconoclasm, No.1: Early English Mystics by Richard Kenton Webb, in his exhibition at Benjamin Rhodes Arts, in Shoreditch

# To suffer and contemplate

out-scaping his experience and belief, he found comfort, healing, and restoration.

In intensely worked and deeply felt charcoal and chalk images, where tone and line are balanced to suggest colour, Webb sets his figures on stage as players in symbolic tab-

leaux that are both scenes from Christ's Passion and depictions of the betrayed artist-teacher. This figure is betrayed by, as Hugh Adlington writes of Webb's image *Assassins*, "long-gowned academics" poring "over a clipboard, conspiring". It is such as these that have changed education so that it has "become very narrow, very pigeonholed, very word orientated and very digitally biased". As Adlington notes, "the allegorised Christ of Webb's *Passion* is the suffering artist — betrayed, vilified, crucified, before coming at last to miraculous rebirth and transcendence".

Webb's reflection on iconoclasm extends beyond the context of contemporary academia, however, and also encompasses the impact of the English iconoclasm that, as Webb explains, for more than 120 years, obliterated much of "our rich and vibrant visual past". Between 1540

Continued on page 28



Acknowledging English Iconoclasm, No.3: Early English Contemplatives by Richard Kenton Webb

## Cambridge 'first'

CUSTODIAN of a choral tradition enjoying global respect, St John's College, Cambridge, has stolen the show with its new organ.

The college has replaced a neo-classical Mander of 1990s vintage with an instrument built by Harrison & Harrison, incorporating historic "Father" Willis pipe-work to create an exemplary English Romantic voice. Tonally resplendent in the inaugural recital of 8 May, given by the renowned organist of Notre-Dame Olivier Latry, this new addition to Gilbert Scott's chapel sounded warm, bright, balanced, and authentic, in a popular Gallic sequence book-ended by Bach arranged by Henri Messerer and Marcel Dupré.

Elsewhere in a five-day festival celebrating the organ's installation, ample scope to hear the instrument with the choir was provided by concerts and services, including commissions from Cecilia McDowall and the Johnian Fellow Tim Watts, and solo contributions from the virtuosi David Hill and Wayne Marshall. For Latry, however, the

Nicholas Williams hears Olivier Latry play the new organ in St John's College Chapel

challenge was to showcase the instrument's versatility and character through the agency of his vast technique and musicianship. These were visibly present in the gripping video projection of the four-manual console, commanding rapt attention.

The hands, of course, were mesmerising, in numinous webs of filigree passagework, daring runs of extraordinary agility, and in the ecstatic repeated notes of his eagerly awaited improvisation. Themes chosen were the chant *Victimae paschali laudes* and, most appropriately, the Magnificat from Michael Tippett's evening canticles, a 1961 George Guest commission for the college's 450th anniversary. Here, as in the original, the Trompeta Real stop, retained from the Mander, rang out in stentorian tones.

Yet, however loud overall, whether in the opening Bach-Messerer Chaconne from Bach's *Second Violin Partita*, or Franck's *Troisième choral*, or Alain's *Litanies*, there was capacity for yet more volume, a tribute both to Latry's expert registrations, reproducing the distinctive Cavallé-Coll sound, and to the builder's grasp of the instrument's unique performing space.

Conversely, the final bars of the *Andante sostenuto* from Widor's *Symphonie gothique* were a mere vibration from the pedal's 32-ft Contra, while the duetting lines of Bach's *Sicilienne* BWV 103, transcribed by Vierne, can rarely have been heard with greater clarity. There was exceptional colour, too, in Vincent Paulet's atonal *Élégie*, timbre supplanting pitch to offer pure treble tone in a brief, striking interlude.

Vierne's *Carillon de Westminster* charmed the capacity audience, no less delighted by the encore of the Bach-Dupré *Sinfonia* BWV 29. But, for the dedicated team bringing this project to fruition, it was surely an evening of unalloyed satisfaction. Look on BBC Sounds (Radio 3's *Classical Live*) and prepare for a new chapter in the evolving legacy of this priceless institution.

## Quest for a father

Stephen Brown sees the story of a boy

LÁSZLÓ NEMES, the Oscar-winning director of *Son of Saul* (Arts, 29 April 2016), continues, in *Orphan* (Cert. 15), to examine fatherhood. Andor (Bojtorján Barabas), a Jewish boy, struggles to find this absent parent. The mother, Klara Hirsch (Andrea Waskovics), had, during the Nazi occupation of Hungary, secreted her baby in a children's home before hiding herself. When they are reunited post-war, *Orphan* swiftly moves to 1957 after the failed Hungarian uprising against the Soviet Union.

With still no sign of Mr Hirsch, Andor starts his own enquiries. During one abortive attempt to locate his father, he is detained by the police. Klara secures his release, explaining that her husband was sent to a camp during the war. Unaware of this and desperate, Andor frequently takes himself off to a private place and addresses the words "Dear Sir, dearest father" into the void. He quickly runs out of anything else to say. It is left to us to decide whether he is communicating with his biological parent or praying. Either way, it is a despairing request for a moment of revelation.

Andor looks to his Jewish heritage for assistance. He joins his friend Sári (Eliz Szabó) at her family's Seder. There is a certain irony in the grandfather's pronouncing "The adults and the children fled to Egypt. But only the children entered the promised land." The Holocaust and the Soviet invasion cast doubt on such a destination for Andor's generation. That said, *Orphan* has an

unmistakable, if not exactly subtle, affinity with Andrei Tarkovsky films, in which a divine perspective informs hope. Nemes suggests that even in humanity's darkest hours an inner voice might allow us to remain human.

As director, he takes a *via negativa* approach, defining fatherhood in terms of what it is not. Biology alone cannot nail it, and nor can nurture, as we see in the form of Mihály Berend (played with great relish by the French actor Grégory Gadebois). A butcher by trade, he took money to hide Klara from the Nazis and has a dubious, violent character.

Nevertheless, there seem to be genuine attempts to be a good father to Andor, if only the compromised Klara can persuade him. Better some father than none? Throughout the film, the boy regularly storms off at any such suggestions. As yet, Andor doesn't accept that the *search* for his true father (even though so far unachieved) can in itself be something positive. Understandably, a world based on oppression, past and present, cages him in.

Mátyás Erdély's cinematography mimics Andor's situation. We get extreme close-ups of the boy against blurred and drab backgrounds, often seeing him through bars or other impediments that restrict full vision of who he is. Even a beautifully illuminated Ferris wheel becomes a visual metaphor of power, its Soviet red star symbolising imposition on people who wish to live by another kind of faith. And, while the wheel repeats its hamster-like turnings, we know that it will come to an end. We cannot kill the past, but freedom occurs in this film when looking for someone, human or divine, to watch over us begins to transcend oppression.



Andor (Bojtorján Barabas) and Klara (Andrea Waskovics) in *Orphan*

# Naples, with Stanley

## TELEVISION

ANOTHER season of *Tucci in Italy* (all episodes streaming on Disney+) enabled me to indulge my enduring affection for short, Italian men (I am married to one, after all) and for the tastiest, most beautiful country on earth. Sorry, England! I adore you, too, but when it comes to culinary delights — and the weather — Italy wins every time.

The ever-stylish actor Stanley Tucci is back, eating, exclaiming, and lip-smacking his way through all the places he's not visited so far. The series begins with a trip to Campania and its capital, Naples, which has far more to recommend it than just pizza. This famously loud city, defined for so long as a hotbed of organised crime, and with a history of hardship, is enjoying something of a second renaissance. It has an impressive energy, and, like the rest of Italy, is home to fiercely partisan people who defend their region with vigour. "We are at war with Emilia-Romagna," a Neapolitan chef said as he stuffed a pepper with ricotta. "We stuff everything."

This brought back memories of the time that I made the mistake of trying to order a Coke at a bar in Lecce, only to be firmly told, "We only sell Puglian products," reflecting a defiant provincialism that is unimaginable in the UK. Each region in Italy has a distinctive character, and I find Italians' unapologetic national pride, expressed through food, inspiring. Campania is a region that exists in the shadow of Vesuvius. There is an acknowledgement there of the fine balance between life and death.

This is a great series for lovers of

food and travel, exploring the complex connections between land and people. Tucci says that the best way to understand a country is through its food. I can't wait for him to explore England through our pies and chips.

*The Future with Hannah Fry* (BBC2, Wednesday of last week) is a six-part series presented by this engaging mathematician, exploring a range of contemporary dilemmas, including privacy and data, clean energy, and rewilding. Episode One raises the possibility of a 150-year-old life, and asks whether it might be possible for humans to extend their biological clocks. How might we do

this — and, crucially, would we even want to?

Ageing and the concept of defying time are pet topics of mine; so I would have appreciated a six-part series on this question alone. This is more a shallow dip than a deep dive into an immensely complex area. Professor Fry, who studies patterns in human behaviour, meets a bio-hacking influencer, an epigenetics scientist, and a man who discusses the Japanese concept of *ikigai*: purpose and meaning. Do we want to live long, or just to live well? I know what I would choose.

Jayne Manfredi

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The Emmy-winning American actor Stanley Tucci returns for a second series of *Tucci in Italy* (all episodes streaming on Disney+)

# Information by ear

## RADIO

**DESERT ISLAND DISCS** (Radio 4, Sunday) showcased the BBC's chief North America correspondent, Gary O'Donoghue.

One of broadcasting's most recognisable figures, partly on account of his blindness, he shot to international fame in 2024 after conducting a gripping interview, minutes after the attempted assassination of President Trump, with an eyewitness who claimed that he had tried to warn the Secret Service about the gunman.

Mr O'Donoghue felt that blindness could be an advantage for a journalist, since it trained one from childhood to listen intently and to take other people's radically different perspectives into account — and many people also found it harder to shut the door in the face of a blind reporter.

As the pace of events has become "mind-boggling and mind-blowing", his most interesting observations were on how he managed information. Blind people cannot skim articles or timelines, but must absorb content in a "linear fashion". He finds this process time-consuming; but I wonder whether it isn't also a fireguard against the worst of the attention-sapping digital distraction that is so much a part of contemporary life. I also learned that the Bible runs to 48 volumes in Braille. I'm not sure how that compares with Mr O'Donoghue's chosen book: Bertrand Russell's *A History of Western Philosophy*.

This year's **A Celebration for Ascension Day** (Radio 4, Thursday of last week), from St Martin-in-the-Fields, conducted by the Revd Dr Sam Wells, with the Archdeacon of

Salford and Bolton, the Ven. Dr Rachel Mann, preaching, was an opportunity to broadcast unashamedly intelligent and highly cultured Anglican worship. The gospel singer Becca Folkes provided an interesting study in musical contrasts with the St Martin's Singers, as did the spoken-word poet Storm Cecile.

John Donne's "Ascension", read by Baron Hastings of Scarisbrick, was the theological and emotional crux of the service. Dr Mann linked the theme of God's "uprising" with her own dramatic conversion experience in the 1990s, from atheist philosopher to seeker after the Christ who offers an eruption of love into a world divided by hatreds and ravaged by unaccountable power. Stirring stuff.

A contrasting approach to presenting the faith is offered by street preachers. Christians are as likely to find them irritating as anyone else, and vox pops on **Sunday** (Radio 4) found a variety of views on the streets of London, with refreshingly strong support for freedom of expression in public — although the man told that his recently deceased parents were in hell was, unsurprisingly, less keen.

Members of the Ichthus Christian Fellowship, offering hot chocolate to students in Greenwich, said that they rarely engaged in preaching, as such, now, but preferred one-to-one conversations with people who approached their stalls for a chat. Dr Rachel Jordan-Wolf, of Hope Together, reported increased interest among young people in engaging with forms of public witness, such as Bible tables. Who says nice guys finish last?

Gerry Lynch

## CAPTION COMPETITION

A SELECTION of this week's entries:

"After two hours of looking, the crow that stole the Vicar's cross was finally spotted in the rafters" (Philip Lickley); "Right! Who's volunteered to paint the ceiling, then?" (Jennifer Starnes); "This must be at least the 51st church we have been to in Rome" (Richard Hough); "We won the nobel prize when we removed the bells from up there" (Helga Brandt); "That's where it's been leaking" (David Marsden); "Just a few weeks in — how are things going, Your Grace? They're looking up!" (John Saxbee); "High mass" (Mairead O'Sullivan); "Dame Sarah and cohort, why do you stand looking up towards heaven for the ascended Christ? Or are you intrigued at St Augustine

transforming darkness into light with the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons?" (Dev Nallathamby); "I regard it as central to my mission to eliminate unsightly cobwebs, while also allowing space for spiders to flourish" (Simon Perry); "That's where Ralph Fiennes rested during the filming of *Conclave*" (Brian Stevenson).

"Up there is a cobweb we have spent five years trying to remove" (Bill de Quick); "Don't stand there looking up to heaven!" (David Porter); "The Lord is watching over us always! I will show you. How many fingers am I holding up, dear Father?" (Sophie Boatman); "It's a bird. . . It's a plane. . . It's Superman!" (Rob Stoltz); "And up there, just above

your throne, is the hole that lets the pigeons in. You need to be careful when sitting there" (Robin Almond); "With Ascension Day approaching, clerics gather to practise a relevant degree of astonishment" (Denis Mestrustery); "Owing to bad weather, the Ascension took place indoors" (Mary Hawkins); "I could have sworn that Ascension was next week" (Tim Abraham); ". . . and that's where we've stored all the Living in Love and Faith files" (Michael Black); "How to get the Dean down from an Ascension Day stunt that had gone badly wrong?" (Don Manley).

LAMBETH PALACE



The Archbishop occasionally doubted whether she should have agreed to be patron of the Bat Appreciation Society  
Martin Kettle

"After witnessing a bird entering the cathedral, it was agreed that this was indeed a true bird of prey" (Caroline Doyle); "They hoped that their re-enactment of the Ascension wasn't going to be followed by a re-enactment of the destruction of the Temple" (Michael Foster); "Look! A UFO — Unidentified Flying Ordinand!" (Jo Mash); "Ah, yes . . . there's the leak the Lord's been testing us with" (Chaz Griffiths); "And it's a lot warmer in here since we had the rose window double-glazed" (Valerie Ganne); "And we had the ceiling redesigned by Laurence

Llewelyn-Bowen" (Rob Falconer); "And this is where the roof used to be before the lead was pinched" (Paul Fitzpatrick); "Look, there goes the last Labour voter!" (Nigel Greaves); "Can it be true? Lo, he comes with crowds descending!" (Barbara Huntley); "Awaiting the first Amazon drone delivery — God help us" (Sue Cobby); "Vicar, do we need a faculty for our new colony of bats in the belfry?" (Robin Morgan).

As ever, the winner receives a prize of Fairtrade chocolate, courtesy of Divine Chocolate. [divinechocolate.com](http://divinechocolate.com)

ANDREW ALLEN



Have a go at our next caption competition. The photograph shows the choir of Exeter College, Oxford, on top of the college's tower on Ascension Day, after they had sung choral matins. Send your entries by email only to [captioncompetition@churchtimes.co.uk](mailto:captioncompetition@churchtimes.co.uk) by 9 a.m., Monday 1 June

## QUOTES OF THE WEEK

Because I love this land so much, I want to share it with other people who live here, people who come here. That's what real patriotism is

Luke Larner, *Priest-in-Charge of St Andrew's, Luton, TUC video, 14 May*

We have a pornography epidemic, we have a malicious gossip epi-

demic, and we have the cultivation of resentment as a tool of politics, and I've had enough of it, frankly  
*Will Self, author, Sunday with Laura Kuennsberg, BBC1, 17 May*

Importantly, the process of reading was, for the medievals, not some kind of fact-acquisition. Wisdom, for them, was not seen to be in a set of ideas. It was in our encounter with words, with friends, and with God

Elise Morrison, *the Telegraph, 14 May*

## appointments

**BEAKEN.** The Revd Dr Robert Beaken, Priest-in-Charge of Catsfield and Crowhurst (Chichester), to be Rector (diocesan correction).  
**BROWN.** The Revd Thomas Brown, Assistant Curate of Conisbrough, to be Oversight Minister and Priest-in-Charge of Denaby Main (Sheffield).  
**BYRNE.** The Revd Sharon Byrne, Assistant Curate of Teversham, to be Priest-in-Charge (Vicar-designate) of Buckden with the Offords (Ely).  
**CHARMLEY.** The Revd Mark Charmley, Rector of St Philippe de Torteval, and of St Saviour's with the St Apolline's Chapel, Guernsey (Salisbury), to be Vicar of Kirdford with Plaistow and Wisborough Green (Chichester).

**COORE.** The Revd Jonathan Coore, formerly Minor Canon and Succentor of St George's Chapel, Windsor, and Chaplain of St George's School, Windsor, now Chaplain of HM Prison Swaleside (Canterbury).  
**DAS.** The Revd Pathikrit (Peter) Das, Assistant Curate of St George's, Doncaster, to be Vicar of St John the Evangelist, Spitalgate, with Earlesfield, and Associate Rector of St Wulfram's, Grantham (Lincoln).  
**LING.** The Revd Adrian Ling, Rector of South and West Lynn, and Hon. Canon of Norwich Cathedral (Norwich), to be Vicar of St Annes's, Heyhouses, St Annes-on-the-Sea (Blackburn).

**McINNES.** The Revd Dr Louise McInnes, Assistant Curate of Whiston and of Herringthorpe, to be Oversight Minister and Vicar of the Cornerstone Benefice (Sheffield).  
**MORGAN.** The Revd Victoria Morgan, Chaplain of the Earl Mountbatten Hospice, Newport, to be Rector of Rowner and Diocesan Estates Missioner (Portsmouth).

**PAINE.** The Revd Sharon Paine, NS Assistant Curate in the Elham Valley Group (Canterbury), now Associate Priest.

**PARTRIDGE.** The Revd Stephen Partridge, Team Vicar in the Lytchetts and Upton Team Ministry, to be also Assistant Rural Dean of Poole and North Bournemouth (Salisbury).

**POLLARD.** The Revd Joshua Pollard, Assistant Curate of St Alban's, South Norwood (Southwark), to be Vicar of St Andrew's, Kingsbury (London).

**RICHARDS.** The Revd Joanna Richards, Rector of St Dunstan with Holy Cross, St Mildred's and St Peter with St Alphege, Canterbury, and Hon. Canon of Canterbury Cathedral, to be Chaplain of HM Prison Elmley (Canterbury).

**ROUT.** The Revd Thomas Rout, Priest-in-Charge of Stanford-le-Hope with Mucking (Chelmsford), to be Rector.

**SANDER-HEYS.** The Revd Jemma Sander-Heys, Vicar of Oakworth, to be part-time Priest-in-Charge of Battleyford (Leeds), and part-time Lecturer and Tutor of the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield.

**SIM.** The Revd Amanda Sim, Priest-in-Charge of Blackmoor and Whitehill (Portsmouth), to be Vicar.

**SMITH.** The Revd Deborah Smith, Residential Warden of Dovedale House, to be Chaplain of Launde Abbey (Lichfield).

**SWYER.** The Revd David Swyer, Vicar of Portslade and Mile Oak (Chichester), to be Priest-in-Charge of St Martin's, Salisbury, and of St Peter's, Devizes (Salisbury).

**THATCHER.** The Revd Penelope Thatcher, NS Priest-in-Charge of Titchfield (Portsmouth), now Vicar.

**VINCE.** The Revd Andrew Vince, NS Assistant Curate in the North Blackwater Benefice (Chelmsford), to be Associate Priest, remaining Assistant Agricultural Chaplain.

**WALKER.** The Revd Michael Walker, Priest-in-Charge of St John the Baptist, Southend (Chelmsford), to be Vicar.

**WALLIS.** The Revd Andrew Wallis, Vicar of Christ Church, Coromandel Town, New Zealand (Auckland; Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia), to be Chaplain of St Michael's, Beaulieu-sur-Mer, France (Europe).

**WELHAM.** The Revd Clare Welham, Priest-in-Charge of Liss (Portsmouth), now Rector.

**ZUBLER.** The Revd Eric Zubler, Interim Priest of Trinity, Mobile, Alabama, USA (Central Gulf Coast; ECUSA), to be Chaplain in the Costa Brava, Spain (Europe).

## deaths

**ADAMS.** — On 9 May, the Revd Roger Charles Adams: Curate-in-Charge of St Barnabas's, Uphill (1966-71); Rector of Ramsden Crays (1971-78); South West Area Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society (1978-84); Priest-in-Charge of St Augustine's, Plymouth (1984-85); Team Vicar of Emmanuel, St Paul Efford, and St Augustine, Plymouth (1985-90); Vicar of Christ Church, Paignton (1990-2001); aged 89.

**FAULTLESS.** — On 6 May, the Revd Patricia Doreen Faultless: OLM of Glascoate and Stonydelph (2005-25); aged 72.

**HALLETT.** — On 2 April, the Revd Peter Duncan Hallett: Priest-in-Charge of Samslesbury (1980-81); Blackburn Diocesan Assistant Director of Religious Education (1980-2000); Assistant Curate of St Ambrose's, Leyland (1991-94); Vicar of Lostock Hall (2000-09); Priest-in-Charge of Farington Moss (2003-09); Vicar of Lostock Hall and Farington Moss (2009); aged 83.

**JOHN.** — On 3 April, the Revd Robert Michael John: in New Zealand (1978-87 and 1988-94); Assistant Curate of St James's, Swansea (1987-88); aged 80.

**JONES.** — On 11 May, the Revd Thomas Glyndwr Jones: Assistant

Curate of St Mary's Islington (1965-69); in the USA since 1969; aged 84.

**MELLOR.** — On 7 May, the Revd Kenneth Paul Mellor: Vicar of St Mary Magdalene's, Tilehurst (1980-85); Menheniot (1985-94); Rural Dean of West Wivelshire (1988-96); Hon. Canon of Truro Cathedral (1990-94); Canon Residentiary and Treasurer of Truro Cathedral (1994-2003); Rector of St Peter Port, Priest-in-Charge of Sark, and Dean of Guernsey (2003-14); Hon. Canon of Winchester Cathedral (2003-14); Master of St Nicholas's Hospital, Salisbury (2016-21); aged 75.

**NICHOLSON.** — On 13 May, the Revd Rodney Nicholson: Vicar of St Bartholomew's, Ewood (1978-90); St Paul's Low Moor, Clitheroe (1990-2014); Priest-in-Charge of Chatburn and Downham (2003-14); Hon. Canon of Blackburn Cathedral (2006-14); aged 80.

**RICHARDS.** — On 3 May, the Revd John George Richards: Team Vicar of Shirley (1992-96); Priest-in-Charge of Yardley Wood (1996-2000); Vicar (2000-13); aged 78.

**YATES.** — On 11 April, the Revd William Herbert Yates: Vicar of Porthill (1969-78); Rector of Norton-le-Moors (1978-84); Church Aston (1984-2000); aged 91.

## New archdeacon

THE next Archdeacon of Wells is to be the **Revd Joanna Stobart**, currently Chaplain to the Bishop of Exeter. Originally from west London, Ms Stobart was a primary-school teacher before her ordination in 2016, and established the Southwark Cathedral Education Centre. She trained at Sarum College and served her title in the Yatton Moor Team Ministry before becoming the Vicar of Ilminster and Whitelackington, both in the diocese of Bath & Wells. Between 2021 and 2025, she was the Assistant Area Dean, then the Area Dean, of South Somerset, also representing the diocese on the General Synod during this time. She moved to Exeter last year. The Bishop of Bath & Wells, Dr Michael Beasley, has described her appointment as "coming home. She is someone with huge ability, who loves our diocese, loves Somerset and rural ministry."

## recollections

*The Revd Tim Evans writes:*

FURTHER to the Bishop of Sheffield's obituary for the **Rt Revd Andrew Watson** (Gazette, 13 March 2026): Andrew was a supporter for many years of the Ugandan charity WATSAN, based in the North Kigezi and Kinkizi dioceses. It works with communities there to provide safe drinking water and sanitation.

He established a very warm relationship with WATSAN's first director, the Revd Eric Kamuteera, who writes from Uganda: "Andrew was a generous person. I do not know how WATSAN would have survived after WaterAid had stopped direct funding from the year 2000, were it not for the constant love and unending thoughtful support of my associates at Ridley Hall, Cambridge, including Andrew and Beverley Watson."

"Later on, Bishop Andrew Watson became the WATSAN patron. In 2013, on his visit to North Kigezi and Kinkizi dioceses, he wanted to build up an awareness of the problem of poor water and sanitation. So he went to several poor rural areas that remained largely unserved to see gravity schemes under construction, and water springs. He also experienced improved sanitation and good hygiene facilities in many places."

"He preached touching sermons. More importantly for the Kamuteeras, he has been a conscientious pastor/bishop at a distance, and prayed for us by name. He never wanted me to call him 'my Lord Bishop' or even 'Bishop Andrew': just Andrew. He was a humble man and a servant of God. He found time to participate, physically and vir-

tually, in fund-raising activities for the support of WATSAN programmes in south-western Uganda, despite his busy schedule. He loved and cared for people's well-being and welfare not only in his diocese, but in other countries. I will miss him in many ways. He is in the hands of his Creator he loved and served."

*Mike Hall writes:* Further to the Revd Richard Kirker's obituary of the **Revd Dr Malcolm Johnson**: in his retirement, Malcolm occasionally took services at St Mary Magdalene's, Littleton, in Middlesex, when the parish priest, Fr McAvoey, was away. He did this with humility and grace, modestly introducing himself as "Fr Fill-In". He never drew attention to his heroic work in support of the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement or for the homeless in east London. He was quite simply a good man.

*Dr Jane Clements writes:* It was inevitable that any reflection on the life of one such as the **Rt Revd the Lord Harries of Pentregarth** (Gazette, 8 May) would have to omit something. It was a little surprising, however, that the obituary made no mention of the interfaith work that was such a large part of his life.

When Bishop of Oxford, he chaired the national Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) from 1992 to 2001 and took an active part in it. Memorably, he drew record crowds to a Cambridge CCJ meeting on the subject of "the Moral Case Against God". Many of those who were present were probably disappointed that, while he provided a very stimulating session, his theology turned out to be quite orthodox.

## resignations and retirements

**HARROP.** The Revd Eileen Harrop, Priest-in-Charge of Gainford and Winston, and of Ingleton and Staindrop, and Hon. Canon of Durham Cathedral (Durham): 1 June.

**MARR.** The Revd Jane Marr, NS Assistant Curate of Blackmore and Standon Massey (Chelmsford): 31 May.

## To suffer

*Continued from page 26*

and 1660, making an image of God (such as the painting titled *Trinity*, which confronts us as we enter the exhibition) was seen as idolatry and heresy. This was in direct reaction to "a deep and rich heritage of image-making" which had for "well over a thousand years" "represented God".

Fourteen centuries of visual creativity were lost to iconoclasm, and Webb's *Acknowledging English Iconoclasm* triptychs are visualisations of what was lost, including our understanding of medieval poets, English mystics, and "the many Mystery, Morality and Miracle plays that were actively acted out all over England bringing communities and classes together".

By viewing Webb's *English Iconoclasm* images, we enter deeply into the experience and nature of mysticism through images visualising the extent of the Cloud of Unknowing and the approach to it or the possibility of climbing the ladder of perfection and reaching for the light of Christ.

These mystical images are formed,

however, from the stuff of earthly existence, meaning that Webb recognises that mysticism has an incarnational rather than a solely visionary basis. Making his own paints by physically mixing oils and earth pigments, he works with the dust of the earth to fashion the substantial stuff of paint, which is then applied to his canvases with palette knives, brushes, and fingers, as he physically shapes its form. With some of these images, he also scribes or scores into the wet paint to indicate the force of storms in these lives and images.

Webb writes that, by re-imaging what the English iconoclasm destroyed and by "re-imaging God's self-sacrifice and death" by placing himself inside it, he is trying "to make some sense of living in this violent world, where human beings are capable of such acts of hatred, anger and stupidity". These wonderfully realised and achingly beautiful evocations of self-sacrificial and mystical love are themselves expressions of hope in the face of senseless destruction.

*"Richard Kenton Webb: Passion drawings + English Iconoclasm Paintings" is at Benjamin Rhodes Arts, 62 Old Nichol Street, London E2, until 27 June. Phone 07768 398428. benjaminrhodes.co.uk*

# Dame Averil Cameron

*Kenneth Shenton writes:*

EMERGING as one of the world's most distinguished scholars of late antiquity and Byzantium, Dame Averil Cameron, who died on 7 April, aged 86, also made a significant contribution to our understanding of early Christian historical writing. Indeed, from her youthful days as a Sunday-school pianist and occasional organist, through to her appointment as the first female Warden of Keble College, Oxford, the Church played an important part in her long and illustrious career.

In the wake of the sacking of Dr Martin Neary as organist of Westminster Abbey, in 2001 she led — while chairing (1999-2005) the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England — a review of the future governance of the Royal Peculiars, namely Westminster Abbey, St George's Chapel, Windsor and the Chapels Royal of St James's Palace, Hampton Court, and the Tower of London.

Born on 8 February 1940, in the Staffordshire market town of Leek, Averil Millicent Sutton was the only child of paper mill worker, Tom Sutton and his wife Millicent (née Drew). Educated at Westwood Hall Girls' High School, where she became Head Girl besides excelling in the classroom, she also made her mark as a musician. Having successfully studied Greek during her lunch hour each day, in 1958 she won a Hughes Exhibition to read ancient history and philosophy at Somerville

College, Oxford. Four years later, having graduated, she married a fellow Greats graduate, Alan Cameron. The couple would have two children before divorcing in 1980. They began their married life in Glasgow, where he was appointed to a lectureship in Latin. While there, receiving a graduate scholarship, she made a start on her doctoral thesis.

In 1964, they moved to the capital when her husband was appointed to Bedford College in the University of London. Twelve months later, she became an Assistant Lecturer and then Lecturer at King's College, where she was appointed a Reader in 1970. From 1978 until 1989, she served as Professor of Ancient History. Her outstanding scholastic credentials also put her in demand further afield: as Visiting Professor at Columbia University 1967-68; at the Collège de France in 1987; the University of California at Berkeley 1985-86; Princeton 1977-78; and the Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies in 1981. From 1990 until 1992, with a Wolfson Fellowship from the British Academy, she was able to visit and excavate historic sites in Israel and Cyprus. Founder of the Society for the Promotion of Byzantine Studies, she also chaired the British National Byzantine Symposia.

In 1994, Cameron was elected to succeed Dr George Richardson as the 11th Warden of Keble, one of the first three women heads of houses, elected for former men's colleges

that year. Finding only one woman Fellow in the college, she sought to increase their number. As Keble was patron of 65 Church of England livings, she was soon active in the appointment of incumbents.

In tandem with her commitment to academic rigour, she also had a particularly inclusive vision for the college's future. She was a passionate supporter of the arts, an performance spaces were enhanced, rooms were refurbished, finances were improved, and the conference trade was put on a much more professional footing. Alongside the development of a Centre for Advanced Studies, the acquisition of the Acland Hospital site near by provided increased provision for graduates. One project very close to her heart came to fruition in 2011, a year after her retirement: the opening of the newly built Kenneth Tickell organ in the chapel.

Throughout her career, she also proved to be a fine writer, providing a wealth of articles and critiques for a wide range of specialist periodicals and journals, including the *Classical Quarterly* and *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*. Writings on a more expansive canvas included *The Byzantines*, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity*, *Byzantine Christianity*, and *Byzantine Matters*. As Editor of the *Journal of Roman Studies*, she published editions of previously unreleased Byzantine texts.

During the 1990s, she co-edited



KEVIN EDWARDS/KEBLE COLLEGE

and revised three volumes (12-14) of The Cambridge Ancient History: *The Crisis of Empire, AD 193-337*; *The Late Empire AD 337-425*; and *Late Antiquity and Successors AD 425-600*. In 2008, with Ian Archer, she co-edited *Keble Past and Present*. Later works include *Transitions* and *A History of Byzantine Christianity*, published by SPCK (2017).

After retiring from Keble, be-

tween 2010 and 2023 she chaired a new organisation, the Oxford Centre for Byzantine Research. Its aim was to raise funds to extend and consolidate the coverage of Byzantine studies in the university. President of the Ecclesiastical History Society 2005-06, she also chaired the directors of the Oxford Patristics Conference. Appointed CBE in 1999, she became DBE in 2006.

*The Rt Revd Graham James writes:*

WILLIAM IND (known as Bill to everyone), who died on 22 April, was born on 26 March 1942. His father was a soldier in the First World War, and this family military background enabled Bill to gain a scholarship to the Duke of York's Royal Military School at Dover. Arriving as a boarder when only nine, he learned how to live in institutions without allowing his individualism to be crushed. He became the school cricket captain (he was a crafty leg-spin bowler) and played rugby, too, as a chunky scrum half.

The influence of his school chaplain was considerable, and his vocation to the priesthood developed during his teens. While reading English and history at Leeds, he lived in the Hostel of the Resurrection, run by the Mirfield Fathers, before transferring to Mirfield itself for his theological training. An exact contemporary was John Flack, later Bishop of Huntingdon, and they became lifelong friends, known in the college as "Tweedledum and Tweedledee".

Bill met Frances Bramald while in Leeds. She trained as a teacher and went to West Africa for a couple of years before returning to London and marrying Bill, who was by then one of five curates at St Dunstan's, Feltham. At Feltham, after morning prayer and the eucharist each day, Bill's training incumbent, John Perry, took his curates, all suitably dressed in cassocks, to roam Feltham High Street. There was a visible pastoral presence. Wherever Bill ministered thereafter, he was always visible, giving priority to pastoral engagement with "all sorts and conditions".

# The Rt Revd Bill Ind

After a brief period at St Joseph the Worker, Northolt, Bill and Frances moved to Basingstoke. As Team Vicar responsible for the Popley district, Bill had no church building. The Anglican congregation was given hospitality by the local Roman Catholics before St Gabriel's Church was built in 1991. Bill and

Frances lived in one of the larger council houses, and they became immersed in the lives of those around them, along with their three sons, Michael, Martin, and Philip.

Various other ministries came Bill's way, and he was never good at saying "no". Along with being a Team Vicar, Bill became the Direc-

tor of Ordinands for the diocese of Winchester as well as Vice-Principal of the Aston Training Scheme, which provided foundational training before candidates went to theological colleges. Bill thought that his diocesan bishop, John V. Taylor, was an inspiration. The admiration was mutual.

Few team vicars move directly to the episcopate, but in 1987 Bill received an invitation to be Bishop of Grantham. I first met Bill, Frances, and the family when, in my early months as chaplain to Archbishop Robert Runcie, I looked after the arrangements for their overnight stay at Lambeth Palace before Bill's consecration.

Rural Lincolnshire was a new experience, but Bill loved the characters he met in the parishes, and on one occasion, arriving unrecognised and unusually early for a service, he was asked to move chairs "because the Bishop was coming". He did so before revealing himself, and, of course, won hearts as a result. The lady who asked for his help said in her defence, "You don't look like a bishop from behind."

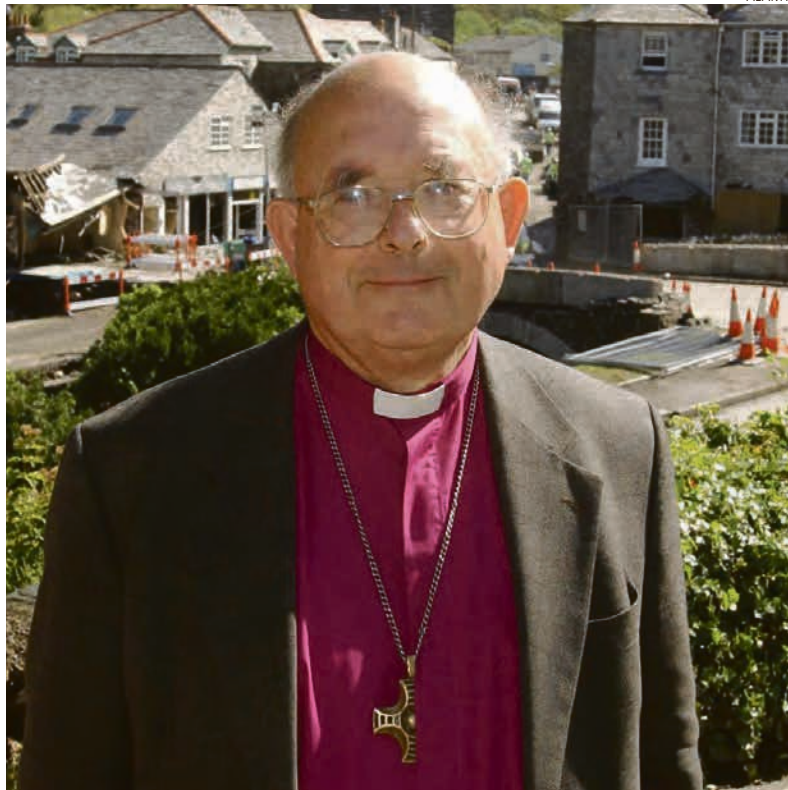
A decade in Grantham was followed by 11 years as Bishop of Truro. Bill was loved throughout Cornwall, especially by lay people within and beyond the Church, who appreciated his unforced delight in all things Cornish. If bishops of Bill's generation were expected to be more bureaucratic and managerial, Bill failed to get the memo. It wasn't that he had no strategy, but it was rea-

lised more in engagement and encounter than in policy papers. Nowhere was this better reflected than in the two BBC series, *A Seaside Parish* and *An Island Parish*, about daily life in the Boscastle group of parishes and the Isles of Scilly respectively.

Bill featured strongly in the series on the Scillies, being entirely himself on camera. His unfailing interest in the people he met, along with his sense of humour, was compelling. He was awarded the Trelawny Plate in 2007 "for his outstanding contribution to Cornish life".

He inherited me as his suffragan bishop before I moved to Norwich. We travelled to say the morning office with each other regularly, a reminder of the firm disciplines that Bill followed in his devotional life. He was spiritually grounded in the Catholic tradition without ever being fussy leading worship. His mind was full of curiosity, and he was always sharing what he had just discovered. He knew a lot about wild orchids and birds. He had a wide hinterland. He never lost his fascination for God, as his witty and yet serious sermons illustrated; for he saw God everywhere.

Bill was excited by language and used words creatively, which is why it was so tragic that he could not express his thoughts clearly in recent years, owing to dementia. In retirement in Melksham, Bill and Frances made new friends, and he was well cared for in his final weeks and months, dying peacefully on 22 April. I have noticed since his death how frequently Cornish people smile with gratitude when they speak of Bill Ind. May he find rest and joy in eternal life.



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For an informal discussion please contact  
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lholt@Salisbury.anglican.org • 07713490076

For full details of this vacancy including the parish profile,  
please visit: [http://ctjob.uk/JN14832](https://ctjob.uk/JN14832)

Closing date: **Thursday 11th June**  
Visit and interview: **Monday 29th and Tuesday 30th June**

An enhanced DBS (with home check) is required.



### Vicar

#### St Andrew's, Sneyd Green, Stoke on Trent

*"Come and see for yourself"*

John 1:46

Are you a shepherd with a pastoral and servant heart committed to preaching and living the truth of God's word? Is the Holy Spirit calling you to lead us?

We are a vibrant church, rooted in our local community, looking for someone who will lead in discerning fresh vision and strategy for a new season of growth and can steward healthy church culture which is spirit-filled, creative and safe. Someone who is:

- passionate about Jesus and making disciples and loves God's word and presence.
- an excellent communicator and has significant experience of leading ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit.
- inspirational and encouraging.
- Strategic and forward thinking.
- Visible and community minded.
- Warm and wise in communication.
- Strengthen our vision and equip God's people.

Full details from [lichfield.anglican.org/vacancies](https://lichfield.anglican.org/vacancies)

Enquiries: please contact the Bishop of Stafford's Office  
[gemma.trueman@lichfield.anglican.org](mailto:gemma.trueman@lichfield.anglican.org)

All applicants should normally have 3 years' experience in the Church of England or another Anglican church in the British Isles.

Closing date: **18 June 2026**

Interviews: **6 July 2026**

### Associate Priest

#### St Thomas Clapton, Hackney



St Thomas Clapton Common is seeking an Associate Priest with a passion for Mission and Congregational Development.

This is an ideal role for someone who bridges traditions in the church and who wants to explore what it means to minister in a traditionally sacramental parish looking to do a new thing.

- A person of warmth and good humour, who is pioneering and pastoral.
- Passionate for congregational development.
- Experienced in helping individuals and groups grow in their faith.
- Able to work collaboratively with colleagues and the wider community.
- Someone with a lively faith, rooted in prayer.
- At home in the sacramental tradition with energy for creative mission and new worshipping communities.

For an application pack, please contact  
Jonathan Neary ([pa.stepney@london.anglican.org](mailto:pa.stepney@london.anglican.org))

For more details about St Thomas Clapton,  
please visit [http://ctjob.uk/JN14834](https://ctjob.uk/JN14834)

Closing date: **26th May 2026 23:59** • Interviews: **18th June 2026**

**All appointments are subject to acceptable pre-appointment checks, including a satisfactory Enhanced DBS Check.**

*The Diocese of London is committed to creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive workforce which represents our context and wider community. We are aware that those of Global Majority Heritage/United Kingdom Minority Ethnic (GMH/UKME), women, and disabled people are currently under-represented among our clergy and workforce, and we particularly encourage applications from those with the relevant skills and experience that will increase this representation. Diocese supports Access to Work grant applications.*



### Priest in Charge - Christ Church, Southborough

An inspiring leadership opportunity at Christ Church, Southborough - a warm, welcoming evangelical church known for its relaxed, friendly worship and deep love for the Bible.

#### What we think we need!

- A Pastor who can minister to and lead our congregation
- A Visionary who will be able to develop and drive our long-term vision forward
- A Team Builder, someone who wants to work with and utilise people's skills

#### In addition, we seek someone who:

- Is an enthusiastic Bible-believing person who lives, teaches and preaches based on Biblical principles and is open to the leading of the Holy Spirit
- Can demonstrate success in pastoral care and organising a pastoral team
- Can empathise with all ages in the congregation and community
- Is able to nurture and develop spiritual growth in individuals, and identify their spiritual gifts
- Has the ability to work with primary school children and build on our children & youth work
- Has a passion to know God and make Him known in the community
- Be willing to act as foundation governor at the local primary school
- Possesses a sense of humour and sense of fun!

Visit <http://ctjob.uk/JN14818> for an application pack or contact the Patronage Team • [patronage@cpas.org.uk](mailto:patronage@cpas.org.uk)

Closing date: **28th May** | Visits and Interviews: **25th June**

*This post is subject to enhanced disclosure from the DBS*

### Priest-in-Charge in the Ludlow Benefice



The Bishop of Hereford is seeking a priest who is:

- a spiritually confident leader
- a strategic thinker
- outward-looking & approachable communicator
- a collaborative team member

who will value the distinctive characters of the three parishes and churches as they work together to grow our community of faith within the Benefice of Ludlow, a thriving medieval market town located on the edge of the Shropshire Hills Natural Landscape.

For further information, please contact the Archdeacon of Ludlow's EA: [Debbie.Venables@hereford.anglican.org](mailto:Debbie.Venables@hereford.anglican.org) or 01588 673571

**Closing date: 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026**

Parish visits: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2026 Interview date: 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2026

**For the full profile and to apply please go to <https://hereford.anglican.org/xdb/vacancies>**

We are committed to equal opportunities and diversity and welcome applications from all suitably qualified clergy. As UKME/GMH individuals are currently under-represented within our Diocese we would particularly welcome applications from these candidates.

This post requires Enhanced DBS clearance.



### Team Rector (full-time) for the South Gillingham Team Ministry (Gillingham Deanery/Medway Towns)

The South Gillingham Team comprises the four parishes (one PCC) of St Matthew's Wigmore, St Paul's Parkwood, St Peter's Bredhurst and All Saints Hempstead. All four churches are known as friendly, welcoming and inclusive places, eager to continue working together to build on all that God is doing in the benefice.

The Bishop of Rochester, in consultation with the TM Patronage Board, is seeking to appoint an experienced, enthusiastic and strategic Team Rector to work alongside the committed licensed lay ministers and volunteers. There is also budget available for a Team Vicar, and the Rector will be part of appointing that clergy colleague who will support you in the exciting mission and ministry opportunities in this part of our Diocese.

#### In particular we would hope our new Rector will:

- Have a strong, passionate faith and prayer life, with a heart for mission, evangelism and growth, and with experience in creating and implementing outreach activities.
- Be a good communicator and preach the Gospel in a way that is accessible to all.
- Value collaborative working, happy to delegate and share responsibilities.
- Be committed to working across the whole Team, being a visible and friendly presence in all four churches and communities.
- Be able to recognise potential in people and want to encourage and nurture their gifts and vocation.
- Have good experience of working with schools and families.

For full details, please see the Parish Profile which can be downloaded from the 'Vacancies' section of the Diocesan website [www.rochester.anglican.org](http://www.rochester.anglican.org) or by following this link: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14873>

(Applications should also be made using this link)

Any queries, or to arrange an informal discussion with the Archdeacon of Rochester about this vacancy, please contact Fiona Porter in the first instance by emailing [fiona.porter@rochester.anglican.org](mailto:fiona.porter@rochester.anglican.org)

Closing date for applications: **Sunday, 21st June 2026**  
Interview will be held in July; date to be confirmed

*The wider a group's diversity, the smarter, wiser, and more compassionate and creative its decision making becomes. We are committed to achieving diversity throughout our Diocese by seeking UKME/GMH colleagues and those from a wide range of backgrounds, to help us create a culture of inclusion and belonging.*



### The Dean & Chapter of Ely wish to appoint a Vicar of Melbourn and Meldreth

Set in attractive South Cambridgeshire countryside, our two villages form welcoming and active churches with strong community connections.

Following a period of growth, we are seeking a vicar who will build on this and lead us into the next chapter of our life together.

#### We are praying for someone who:

- has a warm and welcoming faith
- is open, inclusive and flexible in worship, ministry and mission
- values diversity and is a people person who will engage warmly with our communities
- will encourage continued growth, including among families

We can offer a six-bedroom vicarage, a supportive team of volunteers and a desire for growth.

Informal enquiries welcome: please contact the Archdeacon.

For an application form and parish profile email [archdeacon.cambridge@elydiocese.org](mailto:archdeacon.cambridge@elydiocese.org) or see the Diocesan website via: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14804>

Closing date: **29 May 2026**  
Interviews: **3 July 2026**

*The Diocese of Ely is committed to safer recruitment practices for people working or volunteering with children and adults and therefore this position is subject to an DBS enhanced disclosure.*

TOGETHER WE ARE



### RECTOR: BOX RIVER BENEFICE

Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

We are prayerfully seeking to appoint an incumbent who is:

- Self-motivated with a strong commitment to pastoral care and a diverse ministry.
- An engaging and inspiring communicator
- A prayerful teacher with a clear sense of vocation
- Seeking a fresh challenge and an exciting new role
- Approachable, with a good sense of humour

If this resonates with you, we invite you to respond to our call. The five rural parishes of the Box River Benefice are located in beautiful countryside in south west Suffolk.

**Closing date: 5 June 2026**

**Interview dates: 29 and 30 June 2026**

For an informal conversation please contact:

[archdeacon.david@cofesuffolk.org](mailto:archdeacon.david@cofesuffolk.org)

**01473 252829 | 07900 990073**

Full details can be downloaded from [www.cofesuffolk.org](http://www.cofesuffolk.org)

Enhanced DBS check required



[www.chelmsford.anglican.org](http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org)

The Diocese of Chelmsford is currently looking to fill the following post

### Priest in Charge

**Emmanuel Forest Gate and All Saints' Forest Gate**

Emmanuel and All Saints' are two parishes located in Forest Gate in the heart of the diverse, multi-cultural deanery of Newham in East London. The Vicarage is a few minutes walk from both churches with easy access to Forest Gate Station on the Elizabeth Line.

Are you someone who can:

- Embrace the tradition of these two churches whilst welcoming and nurturing change.
- Join them in their journey of faith and service in the community.
- Help their congregations to flourish and grow.



Closing date for applications: **21 June**  
Interviews: **30 July**


If you think you may be that person, we would very much like to hear from you.

To arrange for an informal conversation about this role, or for an application pack and Parish Profile please email The Archdeacon of West Ham's office on [a.westham@chelmsford.anglican.org](mailto:a.westham@chelmsford.anglican.org) application forms need to be returned to this address.

Appointment subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure

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**PRAYGROWSERVE**  
*Inspiring Faith in Devon 2035*



**TEAM VICAR (0.5) and Growing Faith Worker (GFW) (0.5)**  
in the Brixham Mission Community


■ **ROLE**  
We seek a full-time colleague to work alongside our Team Rector and Associate Priest, in this renowned fishing community in the beautiful English Riviera. The GFW element is funded by the national church for a minimum period of three years, with the possibility of a further three years. The Team Vicar will share in the cure of souls in the Brixham Team, and in addition the GFW will:

- Prioritise children, young people and families outside the church, going to where they already are rather than expecting them to come to us.
- Build trusted relationships with local schools
- Support households to explore faith in accessible, everyday ways.
- Build teams, by training and supporting volunteers
- Enable and encourage young people to lead



■ **CLOSING DATE:**  
8<sup>th</sup> June 2026


■ **INTERVIEW DATE:**  
23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> June 2026

■ **MORE DETAILS:**  
Revd Philippa Bellows, Team Rector in the Brixham MC on 07568 334347 or philippa.bellows@icloud.com  
We encourage applications from women, UKME & disabled people who are underrepresented in the Diocese.  
Role subject to an enhanced DBS check.



[WWW.EXETER.ANGLICAN.ORG/VACANCIES](http://WWW.EXETER.ANGLICAN.ORG/VACANCIES)



**PRAYGROWSERVE**  
*Inspiring Faith in Devon 2035*



**PRIEST IN CHARGE (0.5)**  
in the Seaside Parish of Malborough, Salcombe and South Huish


■ **ROLE**  
We seek a Priest in Charge for our friendly and diverse single-PCC benefice in the beautiful South Hams, serving vibrant rural and coastal communities, with a strong sense of mission, hospitality and community engagement, and with well developed administrative resources and a strong ministry team to support our priest's work. We are looking for a priest who:

- will build relationships with the community
- is able to engage with children, families and young people through schools as well as church
- will teach the Christian faith in a way which connects with everyday life
- is an approachable minister able to offer pastoral care, across a wide demographic
- understands the rural nature of the parish and the seasonal rhythm of visitors

■ **CLOSING DATE:**  
8<sup>th</sup> June 2026

■ **INTERVIEW DATE:**  
23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> June 2026

■ **MORE DETAILS:**  
Ven Douglas Dettmer, Archdeacon of Totnes on 01626 832064 or ADT@exeter.anglican.org  
We encourage applications from women, UKME & disabled people who are underrepresented in the Diocese.  
Role subject to an enhanced DBS check.



[WWW.EXETER.ANGLICAN.ORG/VACANCIES](http://WWW.EXETER.ANGLICAN.ORG/VACANCIES)



**PRAYGROWSERVE**  
*Inspiring Faith in Devon 2035*



**PIONEER MINISTER**  
**St Mark, Ford, Plymouth**

St Mark's is seeking a relational, mission-minded Pioneer Minister to lead the next phase of an established church plant in a resilient, proudly working-class community. Rooted in prayer and shaped by real relationships, St Mark's is a young, intergenerational church where children and families are central to church life.

We are looking for a warm, Spirit-led leader with a confident faith in Jesus, at ease in pioneer ministry, creative in worship, and passionate about sharing the gospel in everyday life.

Come and help shape a Christ-centred church known for welcome, hope, and joyful "holy chaos".


■ **CLOSING DATE:**  
9<sup>th</sup> June 2026

■ **INTERVIEW DATE:**  
24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> June 2026

■ **MORE DETAILS:**  
Ven Jane Bakker, Archdeacon of Plymouth on 01752 858382 or adp@exeter.anglican.org  
We encourage applications from women, UKME & disabled people who are underrepresented in the Diocese.  
Role subject to an enhanced DBS check.




[WWW.EXETER.ANGLICAN.ORG/VACANCIES](http://WWW.EXETER.ANGLICAN.ORG/VACANCIES)


**DIocese of OXFORD**  
*A Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world*

**VICAR**  
**St Mary's Headington, Cowley Deanery**

St Mary's Headington, a single-church benefice in Cowley Deanery, is seeking a vicar who is excited by the message of the Gospel and has a heart for God and for community-minded mission.

**We are looking for a vicar who will:**

- Offer a balanced ministry of word and sacrament, guided by the Holy Spirit
- Support Bible-based discipleship and mission
- Bring people to faith in Jesus Christ and see the church grow
- Engage, through preaching, with a broad range of listeners with varying outlooks, ages and understanding
- Welcome, value and encourage everyone to use their gifts
- Engage with schools and other community groups

**We offer:**

- A warm, diverse and engaged congregation, already deeply rooted in parish mission
- An opportunity to lead stage 2 of our building project, 'Building to Serve'
- An invitation to seek fresh vision together for the next phase of our church life
- A renovated church, with improved facilities
- Four-bedroom house with garage and large enclosed garden

For the Parish Profile, job description and to apply please visit:  
<http://ctjob.uk/JN14808>


Further information about the Diocese is available at:  
<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/>

The deadline for submission of applications is 26 May 2026.

Shortlisting will take place on 28 May. Interviews expected to take place on 4 June, applicants are encouraged to keep this date free.

For further details contact the Archdeacon of Oxford, the Venerable Jonathan Chaffey on archdeacon.oxford@oxford.anglican.org.

This post is subject to enhanced disclosure from the DBS


**DIocese of OXFORD**  
*A Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world*

**Associate Priest**  
**(House for Duty: 2 days plus Sunday)**  
**Ray Valley Benefice**

We are seeking a House for Duty Associate Minister to serve in the Ray Valley Benefice, living in a well appointed four bedroom house in Ambrosden. Ambrosden is a charming Oxfordshire village offering a peaceful rural lifestyle, with convenient access to Bicester's amenities, shopping, and transport links to London and beyond.

**What we would like you to offer us:**

- A visible spiritual presence and strong communication skills
- A desire to journey with us and grow confidence in faith and outreach
- Willingness to engage with ageing congregations, young people, schools and military personnel
- Encouragement of fresh ideas and participative worship (e.g. Taizé, café church)
- Experience of, or understanding for, rural multi parish benefice ministry and team working
- Leadership in building relationships across our village communities

**We can offer:**

- A warm and friendly welcome
- Supportive congregations and PCCs
- Support from the Rector and Benefice Administrator
- The opportunity to develop your ministry and growth in Christ

For an informal discussion, please contact  
**Associate Archdeacon Jane Haslam** at  
[jane.haslam@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:jane.haslam@oxford.anglican.org)

For the benefice Profile, and to apply, please visit:  
<http://ctjob.uk/JN14829> and click on the Diocese of Oxford.  
Further information about the Diocese is available at  
<https://www.oxford.anglican.org/>

Closing date: **2nd June 2026**  
Interviews: **25th June 2026**

DBS Enhanced Disclosure is required.


**DIocese of LONDON**  
**WILLESDEN AREA**

The Bishop of Willesden seeks to appoint

**A Rector for St Marys Acton**

St Marys is an inclusive Christian Community with the Eucharist at its heart.

We are wonderfully positioned in Acton's market square and seek to reach out to our diverse and dynamic community in Christ's name.

**We are praying for a Rector who will:**

- Be a person of prayer and deep personal faith, open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- Offer confident, compassionate, and visible spiritual leadership.
- Work collaboratively with us in growing our congregation and outreach to the community.

**We offer:**

- A supportive and collaborative PCC
- An opportunity to minister in the vibrant and exciting centre of Acton

Further details available in the parish profile and role description available from the Bishops office:  
[bishop.willesdenPA@london.anglican.org](mailto:bishop.willesdenPA@london.anglican.org)

Closing date for applications: **Friday 5th June 12:00pm**  
Parish visit: **Monday 29th June**  
Interviews: **Tuesday 30th June**

Enhanced DBS clearance will be required.

*The Diocese of London is committed to creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive workforce which represents our context and wider community. We are aware that those of Global Majority Heritage/United Kingdom Minority Ethnic (GMH/UKME), women, and disabled people are currently under-represented among our clergy and workforce, and we particularly encourage applications from those with the relevant skills and experience that will increase this representation.*



**Priest in Charge  
St John's Walton**

**Full-time permanent stipendiary role**

St John's Walton and St Peter's Holymoorside, located in Chesterfield on the edge of the beautiful Peak District National Park, together form a warm, prayerful and mission-minded church family, rooted in Scripture and eager to grow in faith, unity and outreach across two vibrant worshipping communities.

This new season offers an exciting opportunity for a collaborative, Spirit-led priest to help shape a shared vision, nurture ministry across all ages, and guide the parish through a hopeful future that includes developing St John's as a potential resourcing church and strengthening connections with the wider community.

- A loving, prayerful church family
- A parish eager for vision and growth
- Strong lay ministry and team culture
- A well-maintained, spacious vicarage
- A beautiful and strategic location

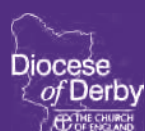
The Diocese of Derby is committed to safeguarding. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check. For information on safeguarding, recruitment checks and how we process your data, visit: <https://bit.ly/DODSaferRecruitment>

**Enquiries to:** The Venerable Matthew Trick  
Acting Archdeacon of East Derbyshire  
[matthew.trick@derby.anglican.org](mailto:matthew.trick@derby.anglican.org)

**For further information and to apply please see:**  
<https://derby.anglican.org/en/about-us/vacancies.html>

**Closing date:** Noon on Thursday 4 June 2026  
**Interview date:** Thursday 25 June 2026

Transformed Lives | Growing Church | Building Community  
**THE KINGDOM OF GOD - GOOD NEWS FOR ALL**



**Team Rector for  
Buxton with Burbage  
and King Sterndale**

**Full-time permanent stipendiary role**

**Buxton is a thriving market town in the beautiful landscape of the High Peak of Derbyshire known for its cultural heritage as a spa town, and its internationally renowned Buxton International Festival and Opera House.**

**We are seeking an experienced, enthusiastic, pastorally hearted, missional priest to work collaboratively with us to:**

- deepen relationships with God through developing discipleship, lay ministry and leadership
- serve our local contexts developing community partnerships and new worshipping communities
- make new disciples through visitor engagement, creative and performing arts
- extend our diversity and outreach by developing a communication strategy
- equip our core team for mission leading collaboratively and supervising the Team Vicar, staff and volunteers
- shape our structures for mission holding oversight of 5 churches and supporting the Team Vicar in welcoming 3 new churches into the Team
- sustain our resources leading on income generation, generosity and financial resilience.

The Diocese of Derby is committed to safeguarding. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check. For information on safeguarding, recruitment checks and how we process your data, visit <https://bit.ly/DODSaferRecruitment>

**Enquiries to:** Archdeacon of Derbyshire Peak and Dales,  
[nicky.fenton@derby.anglican.org](mailto:nicky.fenton@derby.anglican.org)

**For further information and to apply please see:**  
<https://derby.anglican.org/en/about-us/vacancies.html>

**Closing date:** Noon, Friday 5th June 2026  
**Interview dates:** Wednesday 26th June 2026

Transformed Lives | Growing Church | Building Community  
**THE KINGDOM OF GOD - GOOD NEWS FOR ALL**



**Associate Minister**

**Mission & Evangelism OR Pastoral Care & Discipleship**

Andover Parish is entering a significant season of growth and renewal. We are looking to appoint **2 Associate Ministers in the coming year (one now)**, with complementary giftings, to join our team at this pivotal moment.

These roles broadly focus on:

- **Mission, Evangelism & Social Transformation OR**
- **Pastoral Care & Discipleship**

Applicants are welcome to apply for either role. However, we are primarily seeking the **right people**, and are open to **shaping responsibilities around the passions, experience, and gifting of those appointed.**

**The Opportunity**

Working closely with the Rector and staff team, you will help lead a growing, multi-site parish with a strong sense of shared vision and growing momentum. Depending on your gifting, this may include:

- Leading and developing mission and outreach
- Planting a new family-focused congregation
- Building pathways from community engagement into faith and discipleship
- Strengthening pastoral care, belonging & welcome
- Developing discipleship and small group life
- Developing leaders across a wide range of ministries
- Helping shape a church culture marked by prayer, encouragement, and spiritual growth

You will join a **dynamic, collaborative team** that prays, worships, and laughs together, with a shared commitment to seeing lives transformed by Jesus Christ.

**We're looking for someone who:**

- Is a priest of the Church of England, confident in Word, Spirit, and Sacrament
- Brings emotional intelligence, humour, and courage

Closing date: **28th May at noon**  
Interviews: **10th & 15th June**

Application pack available here: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14867>

An enhanced DBS check is required

**⚪ DIOCESE OF DURHAM**

The Bishop of Durham is looking to appoint a

**PRIEST IN CHARGE  
of  
St. HILDA'S, HARTLEPOOL**

The Bishop of Durham invites applications for the position of Priest in Charge to serve the parish of St. Hilda's, Hartlepool.

Sitting on the striking Hartlepool Headland, St Hilda's is a wonderful place to live and serve the Lord. The church is built on the site of Hartlepool Abbey, and owes its name to St Hilda, who was Abbess for around 8 years before her move to Whitby.

This is an exciting time to be joining St Hilda's Hartlepool. Having undergone a large refurbishment and beginning several exciting partnerships, the church is hopeful that this is the beginning of a new chapter in their life together.

St Hilda's are praying for a Priest in Charge who can help them be a sustainable hub for social, civic, and spiritual life, that continues the legacy of St Hilda in Hartlepool for generations to come.

**For more information or an informal conversation, please contact the Archdeacon of Sunderland: [Archdeacon.of.sunderland@durham.anglican.org](mailto:Archdeacon.of.sunderland@durham.anglican.org)**

Closing date: 1st June 2026  
Interviews: TBC

Further details: [www.durhamdiocese.org/vacancies](http://www.durhamdiocese.org/vacancies)

**⚪ DIOCESE OF DURHAM**

The Bishop of Durham is looking to appoint a

**TEAM VICAR - HELM Group**

The Bishop of Durham invites applications for the position of Team Vicar to serve the parishes of Ebchester St Ebba and Medomsley St Mary Magdalene in Plurality; and Leadgate St Ives, known as the HELM Group.

This is a full-time post in a collection of 3 semi-rural parishes and 4 churches in the Derwent Valley on the outskirts of the town of Consett in north-west County Durham. This is an exciting opportunity for someone who is seeking a new challenge. In time, the HELM Group will become part of the newly-formed Derwent Valley Team Ministry. This team ministry covers Consett and the surrounding villages, incorporating the western half of the deanery. It will comprise of a Team Rector and two Team Vicars. The pastoral scheme has deliberately been left open so that those coming into these new posts can decide how best to encourage mission and growth across the area.

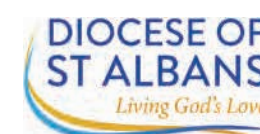
If you are a priest with a missional and pastoral heart, who can build relationships with children and younger people, who is open to new ideas, and capable of relating well to people from a variety of backgrounds with good humour then we would love to hear from you.

**For more information or an informal conversation, please contact the Archdeacon of Durham, Ven. Libby Wilkinson: [Archdeacon.of.durham@durham.anglican.org](mailto:Archdeacon.of.durham@durham.anglican.org) Telephone 07436 399917**

Closing date: 18th June 2026  
Interviews: 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2026

Further details: [www.durhamdiocese.org/vacancies](http://www.durhamdiocese.org/vacancies)

The Acting Bishop of St Albans seeks to appoint a full-time interim (3yrs) **Priest in Charge** for Streatley with a Chaplain role for Keech Hospice



This diverse role in a semi-rural and suburban setting, combined with hospice chaplaincy (1.5 days p/w) is situated to the north of Luton. The variety of ministry makes this an exciting opportunity. Finances of the benefice need to be strengthened, but you will have the support of willing and able volunteers.

**We hope to appoint someone who:**

- is an inspirational and resilient priest who will lead us and work with us in developing our links with the community around us
- will help us to grow in number and in faith through good teaching and study, and by encouraging curiosity
- is an approachable and spirit filled priest who is encouraging, enabling, and welcomes everyone
- has a calling to chaplaincy, who is empathetic and will help to bring comfort to those in need at the end of their life, while also providing support to their families and the wonderful staff and lead the spiritual care volunteers
- will joyfully share in our faith and love of music, and seek out new opportunities to reach out to new disciples

**We offer:**

our love, prayer, and friendship, and a place to develop your ministry with our support, and the opportunity for inspirational chaplaincy work within a dedicated and professional local charity team.

To arrange an informal conversation or to apply, please contact the Archdeacon of Bedford's PA, Revd Tricia Reed at: [tricia.reed@stalbandsdiocese.org](mailto:tricia.reed@stalbandsdiocese.org) or 01727 818167

Closing date for applications: **9am on 9th June 2026**  
Interview date: **Tuesday 30th June 2026**

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## The Bishop of Kensington and the Dean & Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral seek to appoint a Priest in Anglican Orders as Vicar of St Nicholas, Chiswick

St Nicholas church, located close to the River Thames, in Chiswick, West London, is an inclusive parish firmly in the liberal catholic tradition, with a strong liturgical worship tradition in a modern catholic style. With good existing connections into the local community, the congregation is looking to develop further opportunities for service and outreach, and to build and grow the church in numbers and spiritual depth.

### To assist in this, the next Vicar will:

- Draw on a secure and deep Christian faith to give clear and confident leadership in mission within the Parish, whilst demonstrating a genuine love for all those to whom they minister.
- Be able to think strategically, and to help the church discern and prayerfully develop a clear and collaborative vision.
- Be community-minded, people-focused and instinctively inclusive. They should be able to demonstrate a track record in empowering people to exercise and grow their own gifts and talents within the church, including developing and releasing those with leadership gifts.
- Have experience of actively supporting work with young people and be able to help the parish develop its ministry to children, teenagers and young families.

For further details and an application form please contact PA to the Bishop of Kensington, Emma Hughes  
Email: [emma.hughes@london.anglican.org](mailto:emma.hughes@london.anglican.org);  
Telephone: 0207 932 1180

Closing date: **Monday 8 June, midday**  
Interviews: **Tuesday 7 July 2026**

*Enhanced DBS is required*

*The Diocese of London is committed to creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive workforce that represents our context and wider community. We are aware that those of United Kingdom Minority Ethnic/Global Majority Heritage, women, and disabled people are currently under-represented among our clergy, and we particularly encourage applications from those with the relevant skills and experience that will increase this representation. The appointment will of course be based on merit alone.*

## Rector of Ledbury with Eastnor



### The Bishop seeks a priest who:

- Has experience of working in and managing teams and able to bring together people of differing views.
- Is a consultative leader who delegates effectively.
- Is a person who has experience of and is comfortable with a variety of styles of service/worship and understands both urban and rural ministry.
- Is a person of vision, open to the Holy Spirit, who will lead us together in enabling people within the benefice to hear the gospel and to experience God's love.

#### Further information, please contact:

**Ven Derek Chedzey, Archdeacon of Hereford**  
07395 887050  
<https://shorturl.at/YOx6l>

Application closure date: **31<sup>st</sup> May 2026**

Interview date: **23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> June 2026**

We are committed to equal opportunities and diversity in Hereford Diocese and welcome applications from all suitably qualified clergy. As UKME /GMH individuals are currently under-represented within our Diocese – we would particularly welcome applications from these candidates.



## Vicar of the Benefice of Shephed and The Oaks in Charnwood and Oversight Minister

We are seeking a prayerful, strategic and outward-looking priest to serve our benefice, bringing together a growing town church and a rural village community.

You will provide spiritual and strategic leadership within the benefice and also as Oversight Minister of the Beacon in the Forest Minster Community in the Diocese of Leicester; helping shape vision, build relationships between churches and support shared mission and ministry.

Our churches are distinct yet united in a desire to grow in faith, deepen discipleship and share God's love. We are strongly lay-led and seek someone who will enable and encourage others into ministry.

We are looking for a priest who will lead in prayer, vision and mission, develop lay ministry, engage the community and lead worship across a range of traditions, with a commitment to safeguarding and pastoral care.

Further details in the parish profile.

For an informal conversation, contact The Ven Claire Wood on 07534 225493 or email [claire.wood@leicestercofe.org](mailto:claire.wood@leicestercofe.org)

Application forms and parish profile are available from:  
<http://ctjob.uk/JN14813>

or from: **Paige Bradshaw-Jones**  
07454620223 • [paige.bradshaw-jones@leicestercofe.org](mailto:paige.bradshaw-jones@leicestercofe.org)

Closing date for applications: **Wednesday 27th May**  
Interviews: **Thursday 18th June**

*We are committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of everyone within our church community. We follow the Church of England's Safeguarding Policies and the relevant statutory legislation and guidance. We believe that safeguarding is everybody's business. Subject to enhanced DBS. Occupational Requirement for the postholder to be an Anglican priest.*



## Archdeacon of the East Riding

**Might God be calling you to share in Living Christ's Story here in the Diocese of York?**

The Archbishop of York is seeking a senior colleague who, working closely with the Bishop of Hull, will share in the leadership, development and encouragement of the Archdeaconry of the East Riding and the wider diocese.

The archdeaconry has a rich variety of contexts, including the City of Hull, vibrant market towns, extensive rural areas, and striking coastline and communities.

The archdeacon will work collaboratively to fulfil their statutory responsibilities, seeing them as an instrument for mission and the building up of the people of God

They will be a spiritually grounded, resilient, and self-motivated priest who can work strategically and will also embrace the many day to day demands of the role. We are looking for someone who will bring:

*a commitment to mission and the nurturing of discipleship, experience of supporting and enabling the ministry of others, and an ability to engage empathetically across diverse contexts and cultures.*

This post is subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure.

For more information visit: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14810>

Closing Date: **28 May 2026** • Interview Date: **2 July 2026**

*The Diocese of York is committed to promoting equality. Applications are invited from qualified candidates from all backgrounds, and particularly from those with life experiences and ministry which reflects the valuable diversity of our communities.*

## TEAM RECTOR

### in the South Cotswold Team Ministry

*with responsibility for the Parish of Coln St. Aldwyns, Hatherop and Quenington*

The Bishop of Gloucester seeks to appoint a Team Rector to this large Team Ministry, set in a beautiful part of the country. This is a time of new opportunities in the Team with a number of new appointments and an energy to work together in creative ways.

#### In our Team Rector, we are looking for someone who will:

- be at the heart of a supportive, visionary, diverse team
- prioritise enabling and resourcing lay and ordained local leaders
- help us put children and young people at the centre of all we do – especially building relationships with our schools
- explore with us the development of a pattern of ministry that will be both fruitful and sustainable for years to come

#### In the Vicar of CHQ Parish, we hope for:

- a priest with pastoral warmth, who will be visible in our communities
- a good balance of enjoying tradition and excited by creativity
- an organised and collaborative leader
- a faithful disciple who will lead others in worship and faith

Preliminary details and application forms are at:

<http://ctjob.uk/JN14812>

For an informal discussion call  
Katrina Scott, Archdeacon of Cheltenham, on 07484 967570  
Applications to Debbie Long, Archdeacon's PA, at  
[dlong@glosdioc.org.uk](mailto:dlong@glosdioc.org.uk) by **10am on Thursday 28 May 2026**  
Interviews **Friday 19 June 2026**

*The Diocese of Gloucester is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All are expected to share this commitment.*

*All appointments are subject to acceptable pre-appointment checks, including a satisfactory Enhanced DBS check.*



## The Archdeaconry of Berkshire



### Part time Team Vicar (0.4)

#### Benefice of Bradfield, Bucklebury and Stanford Dingley

Looking for something new?

We are a newly created Benefice of three rural parishes with a new Team Rector and would love a new Team Vicar to make our team complete!

You will work alongside ordained colleagues and lay leaders in the three parishes but will have a particular focus on the two church communities closest to where you will live in Bradfield Southend. The spacious rectory has been recently renovated to a high standard and is set in a delightful location. The churches in our Benefice enjoy a range of worship styles (traditional and contemporary) and we long to see God's Kingdom extended in this beautiful area. We have a particular desire to reach out to children and their families but will focus the post on whatever gifts you can contribute.

If you would like to have an informal conversation about this post, please contact the **Team Rector, Steve Newbold**  
Tel: 0118 227 5674 • Email: [steve@2bsd.org.uk](mailto:steve@2bsd.org.uk)

*All appointments are subject to acceptable pre-appointment checks, including a satisfactory Enhanced DBS Check.*

More details including profile, role description and to apply here:  
<http://ctjob.uk/JN14802>

Closing date for Applications: **Wednesday 27 May 2026**  
Interviews: **Wednesday 17 June 2026**



### Rector – The Culworth Benefice

(Part Time or House for Duty)

Culworth Benefice is a welcoming rural benefice of four parishes set in the beautiful countryside of south Northamptonshire. This is a benefice with a strong sense of community, where village life is vibrant and churches are valued and visible. Each parish has its own distinct character, yet together we share a genuine commitment to collaboration, hospitality, and mission.

We are seeking a priest who:

- Is a prayerful and confident leader, grounded in the life of the Church
  - Enjoys rural ministry and values the role of the church at the heart of community life
- Is relatable, approachable, and keen to nurture both faith and friendship
- Will encourage growth—spiritual, numerical, and missional—while cherishing tradition

This is a deeply rewarding post for a priest who delights in people, place, and partnership, and who feels called to serve God in a flourishing rural benefice with a hopeful future.

For an informal conversation please contact:

The Ven. Richard Ormston

archdeacon.northampton@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

Applications by: Noon 17 June Interviews: 22 and 23 July

Details: [www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/vacancies2](http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/vacancies2)



### Rector – Castor Benefice

(Full Time)

A well-established rural benefice with Castor, St Kynaburgh's, at its heart. Rooted in the Liberal Catholic tradition, with Eucharistic worship, strong pastoral care, and a clear commitment to inclusive and welcoming ministry.

We offer:

- Thriving congregation with a lively choral tradition
- Strong lay involvement
- A commitment to children, families and schools
- Voluntary children's worker, retired assistant priest

We are seeking a priest who:

- leads collaboratively
- nurtures faith across all ages
- is a visible pastoral presence within village life.

The benefice lies just west of Peterborough, offering the best of rural village life with excellent transport links, including fast rail connections to London.

Informal enquiries:

The Ven. Alison Booker, Archdeacon of Oakham  
archdeacon.oakham@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

Applications by: Noon 27 May Interviews: 22 and 23 June

Details: [www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/vacancies2](http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/vacancies2)



### Associate Minister – Emmanuel Group of Churches, Northampton

The Diocese of Peterborough seeks a mission focused Associate Minister to serve within the Emmanuel Group of Churches, a vibrant Local Ecumenical Partnership on the east side of Northampton.

Emmanuel brings together three worshipping congregations, a community café and a foodbank, and is rooted in a diverse urban context where church and community meet.

Working alongside the Team Rector and ministry team, the Associate Minister will help:

- strengthen missional focus and discipleship
- grow and deepen links with schools and community projects
- engage confidently with digital communication and online presence

The post is set within a diverse urban parish centred on a busy shopping area, offering significant opportunities for mission and service.

Informal enquiries:

The Ven. Richard Ormston, Archdeacon of Northampton  
archdeacon.northampton@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

Applications by: Noon 27 May Interviews: 22 and 23 June

Further details and application information:  
[www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/vacancies2](http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/vacancies2)



[www.chelmsford.anglican.org](http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org)

The Diocese of Chelmsford is currently looking to fill the following post

#### Vicar Designate for St Barnabas Woodford Green and St Alban's Great Ilford

Once appointed the two roles will be brought together under a plurality Order.

We are looking for a priest of the Society, with an evangelistic heart, deeply rooted in the Catholic tradition, who will lead these two churches with joyful confidence in their mission to these diverse communities.

We are praying for a Priest who will develop and strengthen our ministry to young people, and be a gifted pastor, communicator, and teacher of the Faith.

St Barnabas and St Alban's are both in the Barking Episcopal Area of the Diocese of Chelmsford, situated in the London Borough of Redbridge in London's East End.

The parishes are affiliated to the Society of St Wilfrid and St Hilda and are under the episcopal oversight of the Bishop of Richborough.

Closing date: **28 June 2026**

Interviews: **3 August 2026**

If you think you may be that person, we would very much like to hear from you. To arrange for an informal conversation about this role, or for an application pack and Parish Profile please email **The Archdeacon of West Ham's office** on [a.westham@chelmsford.anglican.org](mailto:a.westham@chelmsford.anglican.org) application forms need to be returned to this address.

Appointment subject to a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure



[www.chelmsford.anglican.org](http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org)

The Diocese of Chelmsford is currently looking to fill the following post

#### Associate Priest (House for Duty)

##### The Theydon Parishes

The Theydon Parishes are seeking a prayerful, collaborative Associate Priest (HfD), sharing ministry across three parishes, three congregations and four distinctive churches. The Benefice is set in an attractive mix of rural and suburban Essex, with excellent links to London.

The role involves Sundays plus two days per week (with some flexibility based on agreed responsibilities). A large four-bedroom house with a generous garden overlooking fields is provided.

Working closely with the Incumbent, the Associate Priest will lead and preach across the Benefice, share in pastoral care and occasional offices, support lay ministry and volunteer teams, and contribute to the mission, discipleship and community engagement across the Benefice. This role also offers the opportunity to lead one area of our agreed priorities.

We are seeking someone who is warm, approachable and community-minded; committed to collaborative ministry; comfortable with central-traditional worship; and supportive of lay leadership.

For more information contact: René Horner, PA to the Archdeacon of Chelmsford: [rhorer@chelmsford.anglican.org](mailto:rhorer@chelmsford.anglican.org)

Benefice Profile and application form available from our Diocese website: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14511>

Closing Date: **12 noon on 26th May 2026**  
Interviews: **TBC**

[jobs.churchtimes.co.uk](http://jobs.churchtimes.co.uk)



#### Priest in Charge of Stone Cross with North Langney

St Luke's, Stone Cross with North Langney, is a friendly and welcoming parish church on the outskirts of Eastbourne. We are nourished by worship in a modern Catholic tradition. We are a lively community, and we believe there is enormous potential for further growth.

We are looking for a priest with:

- an engaging personal faith.
- the desire to minister in the modern catholic tradition.
- a commitment to community ministry and outreach to people of all ages.
- strong pastoral skills.
- personal resilience, warmth and a good sense of humour.
- a passion for schools' ministry and
- a track record of building a team.

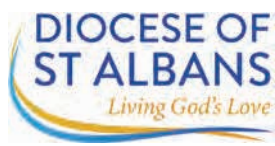
The parsonage is a modern four-bedroomed house within walking distance of the church and is well-served by shops and road and rail links. A committed PCC and team of volunteers is ready to support our new priest in the next chapter of St Luke's life.

For an informal conversation about the role, please contact the Ven Russell Dewhurst, Archdeacon of Hastings on 07827 275649

For more information and to apply, please visit:  
<http://ctjob.uk/JN14851>

Closing date: **21st June 2026**  
Interview date: **23rd July 2026**

# JOBS.CHURCHTIMES.CO.UK



## The Benefice of Standon and The Mundens with Sacombe

The Church Pastoral Aid Society,  
The Provost & Scholars of the King's College of Our Lady &  
St Nicholas in Cambridge and Mr Ralph Abel Smith  
seek to appoint a **RECTOR** for this United Benefice

We are looking for an enthusiastic, missional Rector with a pastoral heart, who is a good faithful Bible teacher. They will reach out into the community and have a commitment to working with children and families and raising up new leaders.

The United Benefice of Standon and The Mundens with Sacombe is a friendly, welcoming, non-judgmental family, has a strong tradition of choral music and a good outreach with monthly concerts, a café and a baby and toddler group. The Benefice straddles the A10 about 8 miles north of Hertford and Ware, and midway between London and Cambridge, each about 25 miles away.

### What we expect of you:

- Biblical teaching, relating this to people's everyday activities
- Leading with authority, working collaboratively with existing leaders, whilst discerning the gifts of others and helping them to develop
- A missionary spirit
- Supportive of our strong music ministry
- Encourage discipleship of all church family members, developing house groups, training courses and study groups
- Ready to socialise with us, laugh with us and love us.

Potential candidates need to contact The Venerable Janet Mackenzie, from whom further details can be obtained.  
Email: [archdhertpa@stalbins.anglican.org](mailto:archdhertpa@stalbins.anglican.org)

Appointment to this position is subject to satisfactory enhanced disclosure via the DBS

For full details of this vacancy go to: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14453>

Closing date: **Monday 8 June 2026, 12 noon**  
Interview date: **Wednesday 1 July 2026**



Diocese of Rochester  
called together

The Bishop of Rochester seeks to appoint a  
**Priest-in-Charge for the Benefices of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Borough Green (0.5) and St Mary the Virgin, Platt (0.5)**

Borough Green and Platt are neighbouring parishes in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty — a mile apart, with overlapping communities and a shared conviction that God is calling them into a closer future together.

Borough Green is a large, busy village, well connected by rail to London and road to the wider county — and its church reflects that energy, reaching actively into a growing community. Platt, just a mile away, is quieter and more rural in character, and its church is deeply rooted in the close-knit life of a smaller village — with strong lay ministry, deep links to its Church of England primary school. Both villages share a Central tradition.

### We are looking for someone who will:

- Lead confidently and collaboratively across two parishes with different characters
- Build trust and find common ground as both communities move towards a shared future
- Nurture and develop strong lay teams in both churches
- Be visible and engaged in village life, schools and the wider community
- Bring energy for mission, particularly among families, children and young people
- Work with both PCCs to help shape what this benefice can become

In return you will find warm and willing congregations, experienced lay teams, a shared part time administrator, sound finances in both parishes, and a well-appointed four-bedroom vicarage in the centre of Borough Green.

Full details: [www.rochester.anglican.org/xd/vacancies](http://www.rochester.anglican.org/xd/vacancies)  
Applications via: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14815>  
Informal enquiries to Archdeacon Nick Cornell via:  
[sa.hamlyn@rochester.anglican.org](mailto:sa.hamlyn@rochester.anglican.org)

Closing date for applications: **8 June 2026**  
Parish visits & Interviews will be held on: **8 July 2026**



The Diocese of Southwark



## Priest-in-Charge of St Mark's Kennington and St Stephen's, South Lambeth

St Mark's and St Stephen's are two diverse and community-focused evangelical churches entering into a formal process of merging parishes. We are seeking a priest-in-charge to lead us through this exciting transition and help us grow together.

### We are looking for someone who will:

- Provide strong Bible-based teaching and leadership with the flexibility to adapt to our different congregations and contexts
- Encourage, inspire and unite our two congregations in the merger process, maintaining worship in both churches
- Equip us for outreach in our urban context, strengthening links with local communities and groups using our buildings
- Build strong relationships, discipling individuals and the wider congregation and supporting those training for lay and ordained ministry
- Oversee key projects, including building refurbishment and development
- Support our two thriving church schools, with a heart for young people and their families

We warmly encourage prospective applicants to visit our services.

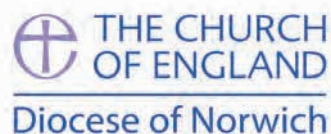
For further information and to apply, visit:  
<http://ctjob.uk/JN14847>

For an informal conversation about this post, please contact the Archdeacon of Lambeth, the Ven Simon Gates:  
[simon.gates@southwark.anglican.org](mailto:simon.gates@southwark.anglican.org)

Closing date: Sunday 14 June 2026  
Parish visit for shortlisted candidates: Saturday 4 July 2026  
Interview: Monday 6 July 2026

*To be appointed to an incumbent status post in the Diocese of Southwark, a priest must have served a title post in an Anglican church in the British Isles. We aim to be a diverse and truly representative Diocese, and particularly welcome applications from people of UKME heritage.*

This post is subject to a DBS enhanced disclosure



## EXCITING OPPORTUNITY PRIEST IN CHARGE & TEAM VICAR (2 full time posts) HUNSTANTON AND SAXON SHORE BENEFICE

The Hunstanton and Saxon Shore benefice is prayerfully seeking both an experienced Priest-in-Charge and Team Vicar to make Christ known and to help us discern our vision to be a church for all, across the town and villages. These coastal parishes are situated within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in northwest Norfolk.

There is an active ministry team of an Assistant Priest, 5 retired clergy with PTO, and lay led support.

There are two well appointed clergy houses within the benefice.

These two posts are complementary, offering flexibility based on your gifts and experience. Together you will:

- Lead and develop worship that is rooted in tradition yet open to renewal
- Encourage lay leadership and nurture discipleship
- Share in pastoral care across town and villages
- Engage creatively with schools, community groups, and visitors
- Support mission initiatives that reflect the unique opportunities of coastal life

You will be part of a supportive team that values collaboration, prayer, and mutual encouragement.

For an informal discussion about these posts, please be in touch with the Archdeacon of Lynn, The Ven. Catherine Dobson on 01362 709200 or email [archdeacon.lynn@dioceseofnorwich.org](mailto:archdeacon.lynn@dioceseofnorwich.org)  
More information can be found on the Diocesan website.  
<http://ctjob.uk/JN14876>

Closing date: **9th June (9.00am)**  
Interview date: **22nd July**



DIocese of WINCHESTER

## VICAR

### of Lyndhurst and Emery Down and Minstead

We are three churches, one parish in the heart of the beautiful New Forest praying for a leader who can help us in our mission to be a welcoming, thriving and growing Christian family that is serving at the heart of the wider community.

We serve a population of 3,409 situated in beautiful countryside not far from Southampton and the stunning beaches of the South Coast.

### We are seeking a Priest who can

- Help us to share our faith as we seek to serve people of all ages in the wider community
- Help us to see a true revival across the Parish
- Grow our work with children and families with the support of a new Children and Families Worker
- Develop and support our Anna Chaplaincy work
- Help us to work as one family across the three churches

### You will find

- An active, supportive and enthusiastic lay ministry team
- Strong community
- Growing children and families' work

For an informal conversation with the Bishop of Southampton contact her PA: [rhiannon.balme@winchesterdiocese.org](mailto:rhiannon.balme@winchesterdiocese.org)

Closing date: **28 May 2026 at 12 noon**  
Interviews: **9-10 June 2026**

Application pack available at: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14807>

An enhanced DBS check is required



## Vicar of St Mary's Longfleet

St Mary's Longfleet (SML) is a growing charismatic evangelical church seeking a new vicar to join us as we step into our next season of life and mission.

We are a large, multigenerational church family, united by a love of Scripture, sung worship and the work of the Holy Spirit. Gathering across three Sunday services, we value deep Bible teaching, warm community life and a culture of prayer. Children, youth and young adults are a significant part of our church, and Life Groups sit at the heart of our discipleship and pastoral care work. SML is recognised as a Diocesan Mission Hub; we aim to develop leaders and serve as a Diocesan resourcing church, supported by ten-year Strategic Mission & Ministry Investment funding.

We are seeking a leader of leaders, who is prayerful, theologically grounded, collaborative and can lead a large and diverse congregation. They will need to be able to steward complexity, develop leaders and staff, delegate effectively and hold a broad charismatic evangelical congregation together with grace and integrity while guiding the church faithfully through growth and change.

This is a significant call, bringing both challenge and joy, and offering the opportunity to lead a healthy, prayer centred and expectant church with the resources and headroom to shape the next season, not merely maintain the present.

Visit <http://ctjob.uk/JN14819> for an application pack or contact the Patronage Team • [patronage@cpas.org.uk](mailto:patronage@cpas.org.uk)

Closing: **noon 26th May** | Visits & Interviews: **16th & 17th June**

This post is subject to enhanced disclosure from the DBS

# How to advertise your vacancy

- ✓ Agree the job specs
- ✓ Contact us on **020 7776 1010** or **ads@churchtimes.co.uk**

✓ **WE DO THE REST!**

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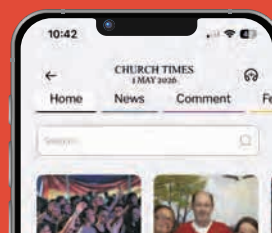
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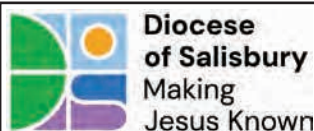


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## House for Duty Team Vicar For Golden Cap Team

2 days plus Sundays

Are you seeking a role that focuses on the pastoral aspects of priesthood set in a beautiful part of Dorset? Do you enjoy ministering as part of a team? Are you passionate about people knowing the love and compassion of God, and supporting them in their walk with Christ? If yes, then this role might be for you!

We seek someone with a compassionate heart to minister alongside the Team Rector, and lay and ordained leaders to develop a pastoral team across the rural and coastal communities of our Benefice, comprising 12 churches.

### Someone who:

- Finds joy in gently enabling and resourcing others
- Is a good listener and communicator, able to engage with people across our communities, including the many visitors
- Has some flexibility in leading worship across a range of different styles
- Would enjoy offering worship opportunities to those who are living in our two key residential homes
- Can support the team with our Life Events Ministry across the Benefice, particularly funeral ministry

### We can offer:

- A growing and diverse team who faithfully seek to share God's love within the communities that make up this area
- A fledgling, yet supportive and prayerful, pastoral team
- A 3 bedroomed house with stunning sea-views over Lyme Bay in the beautiful coastal town of Lyme Regis, with all that it and the surrounding countryside and villages have to offer
- The breath-taking beauty of this benefice where Marshwood Vale meets the Jurassic Coast,
- A flexible role with time to pursue other interests

For full details of this vacancy, please visit:  
<http://ctjob.uk/JN14855>

Closing date: **Thursday 18th June**

Visit and interview:

**Monday 6th and Tuesday 7th July**

An enhanced (with home check) DBS is required



## Called to lead in pioneering rural mission in the Peak District?

The new **Alstonefield Deanery Mission Area** aims to:

- enable growth in Discipleship, Vocation and Evangelism across a rural deanery which is numerically small but geographically large.
- facilitate sustainable, lifegiving, mission and ministry across the Deanery.

We are looking for **two full-time and one house-for-duty** highly motivated and dynamic priests with a heart for rural mission, who bring both experience and enthusiasm for collaborative working to lead the newly formed mission area, to complete a team of four clergy.

Each role:

- is rooted in its own local family group of parishes
- has a deanery-wide mission portfolio
- works alongside a strong lay ministry team.

One of the FT posts will include the responsibilities of the Rural Dean/Mission Team Leader.

## Is God calling you to join the team?



Please scan the QR code for the recruitment pack or visit [lichfield.anglican.org/vacancies](http://lichfield.anglican.org/vacancies)

For an informal conversation please email [bishop.stafford@lichfield.anglican.org](mailto:bishop.stafford@lichfield.anglican.org)

All applicants should normally have three years' experience in the Church of England or another Anglican church in the British Isles.



Closing date:  
**18 June 2026**

Interviews:  
**8 July 2026**

## Volunteer Vacancy

Place your **Volunteer Vacancy**  
in print and on our recruitment job site.

For more information please  
contact the advertising team.

Email: [ads@churchtimes.co.uk](mailto:ads@churchtimes.co.uk)  
Tel: 020 7776 1010



## Associate Vicar for Mission

St Martin-in-the-Fields is a community of hope, reimagining church and society through culture, commerce, compassion and congregational life. Together we meet God in the truth of Jesus, the beauty of holiness and the gift of humble encounter.

On the retirement of Revd Richard Carter, we are seeking a dedicated, talented and faithful priest to invigorate our congregation for mission, meet Christ in the stranger, and discover the Spirit at work around us. This is an opportunity to work with a dynamic team in a growing church with a national profile. The role involves oversight of the community's encounter with those on the edge and its attractional formational and informative events.

For further information contact: [peopleandculture@smitf.org](mailto:peopleandculture@smitf.org)

At the Heart. On the Edge.

Applications close on: **31 May 2026**

Interview Date: **Wednesday, 1 July 2026**



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
BIRMINGHAM

### Vicar

#### Benefice of Ward End, Holy Trinity with Bordesley Green

Four miles east of Birmingham's city centre.

The Bishop of Birmingham and the Aston Patronage Trust are seeking a faithful, compassionate and empathetic priest to be our next incumbent. Our three churches are firmly established at the heart of each community they serve and are deeply committed to sharing the gospel of Jesus in the midst of a multi-lingual, multi-faith and multi-cultural 'presence and engagement' setting.

The ideal candidate will be:

- An inspiring collaborative leader who has good communication and people skills and can nourish and manage a variety of teams and projects
- Organised, focused, and hospitable to those within and beyond existing congregations and networks and engage well with the challenges and joys of being church in a diverse area
- Able to see the missional potential of working within largely Muslim neighbourhoods whilst supporting the missional endeavours and aspirations of the existing worshipping communities

Please read our profile: [www.cofebirmingham.com/vacancies](http://www.cofebirmingham.com/vacancies)

This post is subject to an enhanced DBS Check

Those interested are encouraged to contact the

Archdeacon of Aston The Ven Phelim O'Hare:

[phelim.ohare@cofebirmingham.com](mailto:phelim.ohare@cofebirmingham.com)

Closing date: Sunday 7th June 2026

Visits & Interviews: Thursday 2nd July 2026

We welcome applications from all suitably qualified people, particularly those under-represented including persons of Global Majority Heritage.



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
BIRMINGHAM

### Rector of Kingsbury, Baxterley with Hurley and Wood End, and Merevale with Bentley

The Kingsbury Baxterley group of Churches are a single parish of five villages with five churches in the North Warwickshire countryside. The patrons and the Bishop of Birmingham are seeking a visionary, compassionate and enthusiastic priest to be the next incumbent. We are looking for a priest who will embrace the challenges and opportunities of rural ministry, and who is able to resource and equip our committed and faithful disciples to growth and deeper engagement with our local communities.

The ideal candidate will be:

- An energetic leader who will bring enthusiasm for life and laughter in our communities
- Able to communicate well with those who come to church and those who do not
- Be able to build up and strengthen our already vibrant 'unity' and treasure our 'small' congregations
- A collaborator with other parishes/schools/organisations in our Oversight Area.

Please read our profile: [www.cofebirmingham.com/vacancies](http://www.cofebirmingham.com/vacancies)

This post is subject to an enhanced DBS Check

Those interested are encouraged to contact the

Archdeacon of Aston The Ven Phelim O'Hare:

[phelim.ohare@cofebirmingham.com](mailto:phelim.ohare@cofebirmingham.com)

Closing date: Monday 15th June 2026

Visits & Interviews: Monday 13th July 2026

We welcome applications from all suitably qualified people, particularly those under-represented including persons of Global Majority Heritage.



### Priest in charge of the parish of Ste Marie du Castel

We wish to appoint a priest for a 0.2 stipend post (with various allowances and accommodation provided) in Guernsey following the retirement of the Rt Revd Nicholas Drayson. The Deanery of Guernsey is attached to the Diocese of Salisbury.

The small congregation in one of Guernsey's historic churches seeks a prayerful, outward-looking priest with a heart for growing Christ's Church in depth and number, rooted in the Sacraments, Scripture and joyful worship. A warm, collaborative leader, they will unite the parish in mission, communicate the gospel to all ages, and welcome families and individuals at every stage of faith.

There is also a possibility of a 0.5 post if this post is linked to another parish shortly to become vacant.

Further details on the Diocese of Salisbury's website and at <http://ctjob.uk/JN14872>

For informal enquiries, please contact the **Dean of Guernsey, the Very Revd Tim Barker**, at [dean@deanery.gg](mailto:dean@deanery.gg) or 07781 166095.

**Closing date: Monday 1 June.**  
**Interviews: late June.**



[www.chelmsford.anglican.org](http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org)

The Diocese of Chelmsford is currently looking to fill the following post

The Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral/Bradwell Episcopal Area

### Rector of Langdon Hills St Mary & All Saints

Is God calling you to South Essex?

The Chapter of St Paul's Cathedral is seeking a Rector to lead this prayerful, welcoming, and Spirit-filled parish in Langdon Hills with two church buildings, one parish family, and a deep desire to see people come to faith and grow as disciples of Jesus. The parish is praying for a Rector who will walk with them on the next stage of the journey and inspire them to get closer to God.

If you think this could be you, do please get in touch.

If you would like an informal conversation about the role, please contact the Archdeacon of Southend.

Closing date: **18th June** • Interviews: **21st July**

Details on [www.chelmsford.anglican.org/vacancies](http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/vacancies) or from the Archdeacon of Southend: [a.southend@chelmsford.anglican.org](mailto:a.southend@chelmsford.anglican.org) • 01268 779345



### Priest in Charge (Part-Time)

St. Francis Anglican Chaplaincy

Tenerife South

SUNDAYS AND TWO DAYS A WEEK

We are seeking an enthusiastic priest to guide our congregation through new and exciting challenges. The ideal candidate will demonstrate passion, leadership, and a commitment to our community.

#### Candidate Profile

- Committed to the rich Eucharistic and liturgical life of the congregation.
- Acts as both a spiritual and pastoral leader, supporting the growth of faith among our members.
- An effective communicator who can connect with the diverse nationalities represented in our worship community.

For more information, please contact: **Rev. Anne Brown**, Email: [chaplain@fuertechurch.org](mailto:chaplain@fuertechurch.org) • Tel: +34 711 00 78 13

For a recruitment pack and the chaplaincy profile, please contact: **Dr Barbara Omoro - Appointments Secretary** Email: [europe.appointments@europe.anglican.org](mailto:europe.appointments@europe.anglican.org)

Closing Date: **Thursday, 18 June 2026**  
Shortlisting: **Monday, 22 June 2026**



The Archdeaconry of Berkshire

### The Benefice of St Luke, Maidenhead is looking for a Vicar

St Luke's Maidenhead is a friendly single-church parish, where we pride ourselves on our inclusivity, welcoming everyone to worship with us and to discern the path that Jesus Christ is calling them to follow.

#### We are looking for a vicar who:

- Will help us to grow and deepen our faith in Jesus Christ and engage in new ways of serving our communities;
- Will maintain and enliven our various styles of worship: both traditional and more contemporary;
- Will help us grow our work with young people, support our thriving toddler group and close links with local schools, and grow this ministry through innovative initiatives and fresh inspiration;
- Has practical ideas about how to engage with incoming residents and invite them into our church family;
- Will encourage us in strengthening our hospitality through fellowship and music.

#### What we can offer:

- Care and support from our welcoming congregational family;
- A dedicated staff of administrator, Children and Youth leader and Director of Music, Associate minister and Lay minister, as well as a team of strongly committed volunteers;
- A refurbished, energy-efficient 4-bedroom vicarage right next door to our church building;
- A great location in a growing town with excellent connections both into London and across the country.

All appointments are subject to acceptable pre-appointment checks, including a satisfactory Enhanced DBS Check

More details including profile, role description and Person Specification and to Apply here: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14878>

Closing date for Applications: **Monday 15 June 2026**  
Interviews: **Wednesday 8 July 2026**



### Ripon Cathedral Benefice Associate Priest (House for Duty)



The Area Bishop of Ripon, the Dean of Ripon as incumbent, and PCCs wish to appoint an Associate Priest within the Ripon Cathedral benefice, responsible for the parishes of Bishop Monkton & Burton Leonard.

The Associate Priest will work with enthusiastic PCCs and congregations to develop the life of the two churches in this thriving parish.

To apply please visit: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14831>

Closing date for applications: **17th June 2026**  
Interviews: **2nd July 2026**



THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
DIOCESE OF WORCESTER

### Chaplain to the Bishop of Worcester

Join the Diocese of Worcester as Chaplain to the Bishop and play a pivotal role at the heart of diocesan life. This unique and rewarding position offers the opportunity to support, advise, and work closely with the Bishop, helping to shape a culture rooted in faith, hope, and love while serving communities across Worcestershire and Greater Dudley. As a trusted confidant and leader within the Bishop's Office, you'll combine pastoral care, organisational expertise, and spiritual leadership to enable others to flourish and ensure the effective delivery of key priorities. If you are a committed priest with strong interpersonal skills, a servant-hearted approach, and the ability to navigate complexity with wisdom and grace, this is an exceptional opportunity to make a meaningful and lasting impact.

Please apply by **1st June 2026**  
via the Church of England webpage: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14894>



### RECTOR

#### Benefice of The Brickhills & Stoke Hammond

We are a Benefice made up of four churches in four distinct villages, seeking a spiritual leader who is passionate about the mission of rural churches and can inspire others with their vision. Someone who is approachable, empathetic and a good communicator and relationship builder.

#### We are looking for a Rector who:

- Engages with the community, being actively involved with church and village events.
- Embraces the challenge of pastoral care, visiting and comforting the elderly, sick, bereaved and lonely.
- Seeks to grow the church, reaching out to draw in more people, especially younger people and children.
- Has a flexible approach to worship, with services and sermons relevant to today's society with modern hymns, as well as traditional services.
- Takes a collaborative approach to leadership, working and communicating with the PCCs and wider community.
- Is well organised, good at administration, responding to requests in a timely manner and promoting and making use of modern technology.

#### What we can offer:

- Warm and welcoming church congregations with an established and varied pattern of worship and prayer, some led by experienced lay preachers, one of whom is licensed.
- Four established churches that are well rooted in their communities and with good links to their local schools.
- Committed and supportive PCCs, that work well with the Rector, both independently and together.
- The quality of life of a rural setting, but the benefits of being close to a vibrant urban community with fantastic road and rail connections to larger cities.

To apply and see the full role description and Parish Profile please visit: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14880>

For more information please contact: **The Ven Cassa Messervy, Archdeacon of Buckingham** on [archdeacon.buckingham@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:archdeacon.buckingham@oxford.anglican.org) • 01865 208264

Closing date for applications: **18th June 2026 (midnight)**  
Interviews: **14th July 2026**

Enhanced DBS Disclosure required.

**EMAIL US FOR A QUOTE**  
[ads@churchtimes.co.uk](mailto:ads@churchtimes.co.uk)



### VICAR (House For Duty)

Benefice of Berton & Hulcott  
Archdeaconry of Buckingham

At St James the Great Church, Berton you will find an inclusive Church Family dedicated to honouring God through our worship, actions, service and fellowship.

We are seeking an experienced Parish Priest, who has a clear and deeply rooted faith, secure in both their spiritual & personal life, to join us on the next stage of our journey.

A person of prayer, guided by God, who has a particular interest in helping us build upon our existing links with children & families.

Someone who can inspire our active Church Family and help us grow as a church for the Glory of God.

"One the object of our journey, one the faith which never tires, one the earnest looking forward, one the hope our God inspires."

Please come and visit us, a very warm welcome awaits you.

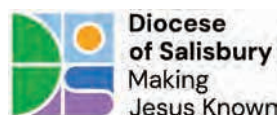
For an informal discussion, please contact the **Rev. Canon Chris Bull, Associate Archdeacon of Buckingham** on 07481 343440 or [christopher.bull@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:christopher.bull@oxford.anglican.org)

To apply and see the Parish Profile please visit: <http://ctjob.uk/JN12985>

Closing date: **17 June 2026 (midnight)**  
Interviews: **TBC**

Enhanced DBS Disclosure required

## JOBS.CHURCHTIMES.CO.UK



### Team Vicar of St Barnabas, Bearwood near Poole and Bournemouth Canford Magna Team

St Barnabas is a lively, welcoming church family at the heart of its expanding community with great opportunities for mission and fresh vision. St Barnabas love Bible teaching, worship, embrace the ministry of the Spirit, and are praying for the leader God is calling to take them forward in discipleship and mission.

The previous incumbent leaves a growing Children and Families ministry, a deepened partnership with the local primary school, and refreshed community outreach that has embedded St Barnabas more deeply in the life of the estate.

The church is part of a supportive and dynamic team in the Canford parish, with the Team Rector at the Lantern Church. Could you be the person God is calling to this beautiful part of Dorset to join in what God is already doing in Bearwood and the wider parish?

Here are some of the key things we are praying for in our new leader...

- **Discipleship:** Someone who models a vibrant personal walk with God and can cultivate a church-wide culture of discipleship to Jesus across all ages.
- **Pastor and Evangelist:** A faithful shepherd with an evangelistic instinct - someone who will care for the congregation and lead them in outreach.
- **Leader of Leaders:** Someone who inspires trust, releases people into ministry, and helps every member live out their calling, within and beyond the walls of the church.
- **Vision and Mission:** Someone able to discern what God is doing, articulate fresh direction, and help release St Barnabas in its vocation to witness to Jesus in Bearwood.
- **Community Focus:** Someone who enjoys building community partnerships and can help the church engage creatively with the opportunities that new housing and community growth are bringing.

If that sounds like you — on a good day! — we hope you'll prayerfully read the parish profile and get in touch with Mike Tufnell (Team Rector) [miket@thelanterchurch.org](mailto:miket@thelanterchurch.org), or Assistant Archdeacon Lucy Holt [lholt@salisbury.anglican.org](mailto:lholt@salisbury.anglican.org) or on 07713490076

For full details of this vacancy please visit: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14886>

Closing date: **Thursday 11th June**  
Visit and interview: **Thursday 2nd and  
Friday 3rd July**

An enhanced DBS  
(with home check) is required.



### Associate Minister (HfD) for the Benefice of Latimer and Flaunden (2 days/week including evenings, plus Sunday)

We are looking for an Associate Minister (HfD) to serve our two churches of St. Mary Magdalene, Latimer, and St. Mary Magdalene, Flaunden, and to work within the wider Benefice Team in return for occupation of a well-appointed four-bedroom house in Latimer village. These two beautiful village churches (a mile or so apart) form part of the wider Chenies Benefice. They lie just outside the M25, to the north of the commuter towns of Chorleywood and Amersham, and in the beautiful Chess Valley.

We are looking for the right person with a deep faith in Jesus Christ and a strong sense of calling, who:

- lives out gospel ministry faithfully, naturally and confidently
- will lead us forward as together we worship God and serve Him
- enjoys rural ministry and village community life
- welcomes the opportunity to encourage families while ministering equally to the more elderly amongst our congregations
- will relish the challenge of seeing our congregations grow and flourish.

We can offer:

- A warm and friendly welcome
- Welcoming congregations and committed and supportive PCCs
- The support of the Rector and the Benefice Administrator
- An opportunity to live in a community surrounded by beautiful countryside with excellent local schools and good transport links to London
- Opportunities to develop your own ministry, vocation and growth in Christ
- Full reimbursement of expenses

Lay and ordained, we are all looking forward to meeting the person whom God is calling to minister with us in these parishes and in the Team.

For more information please contact:  
Rector David Whale on 01494 762233 or  
Revd Canon Chris Bull, Associate Archdeacon of Buckingham at:  
[christopher.bull@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:christopher.bull@oxford.anglican.org)

To apply and see the full role description and Parish Profile  
please visit: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14230>

Closing date: **Thu 11 Jun (midnight)**  
Interviews: **14/15 Jul 2026**

**Enhanced DBS Disclosure required**

[jobs.churchtimes.co.uk](http://jobs.churchtimes.co.uk)

### Priest in Charge (part-time, half-stipend)



St Margaret's New Galloway

An attractive opportunity for a priest to live and serve the people of one church in a beautiful corner of rural south-west Scotland. A warm welcome awaits someone who can inspire us in our worship and in carrying out God's work in the community.

Our primary objective is to keep an active Episcopalian presence in the Glenkens and make the teachings of Jesus relevant in a contemporary world.

As our Priest-in-Charge has recently been promoted within the Diocese, we are looking for a new Priest, on a half-stipend with a charming Rectory next door to the church.

We are praying for someone who can respond to the spiritual needs and practical concerns of our church-family. Our warm and welcoming congregation actively participate in our worship as well as being committed to outreach locally and further afield. And recent growth plus changes in local worshipping patterns has given us a chance to extend our reach within the wider local faith community.

New Galloway, Scotland's smallest Royal Burgh, is a delightful and popular village with a level of recreational activity that is unusual in a rural area. Next door to the church is the 4-bedroom Rectory with driveway, garage, garden and outbuildings.

Next steps: contact details, Church Profile information including video, and Application Form, available via <http://ctjob.uk/JN14893>

Closing date: **12noon 3 July 2026**



### TEAM RECTOR OF SADDLEWORTH

We seek a prayerful, pastoral, outward-looking priest to lead our seven village churches, rooted in community life and united by a shared commitment to worship, service, and mission. We value collaboration, humour, and a strong sense of belonging — across generations and traditions.

The ideal candidate will have a **heart for rural ministry**, a **commitment to safeguarding**, and enthusiasm for work with **children, young people**, and families. They should be confident leading varied worship, working with clergy colleagues, lay leaders, PCCs, volunteers, and encourage **faith and discipleship** within an **Inclusive Church** setting.

We offer a warm Christian welcome in a beautiful countryside context and a community proud of its heritage, with real opportunities for growth. A fondness for brass bands would be advantageous — we're world-famous for them!

Full details can be found online at either <http://ctjob.uk/JN14628>, or the Clergy Vacancy section at [www.manchester.anglican.org](http://www.manchester.anglican.org)

Applications close on **Monday 15th June 2026**  
Interviews will be held on **Thursday 16th July 2026**



### JERSEY DEANERY Channel Islands



His Excellency  
the Lieutenant-Governor of Jersey  
seeks to appoint a

### Rector of St. Saviour, Jersey

We are looking for a Priest with a pastoral heart, who will be visible in the community and lead, inspire and encourage us in worship, in growing disciples and reaching out in mission and ministry to the people of this parish.

This is an exciting opportunity to work in a single parish benefice with Freehold within a central ecclesiology which is both rural and suburban, with good connections to local schools in a unique and distinctive Island community.

For more information and an application pack, please contact the Dean of Jersey, The Very Revd Mike Keirle [dean@jerseydeanery.je](mailto:dean@jerseydeanery.je) Tel number: 01534 720001 or visit the Jersey Deanery or Salisbury Diocesan website for further information.

Closing date: **Monday 26th June 2026**  
Interviews in Jersey on **20th & 21st July 2026**



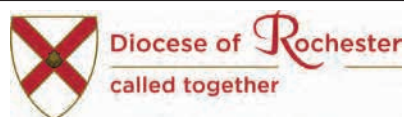
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Email: [ads@churchtimes.co.uk](mailto:ads@churchtimes.co.uk)



**The Bishop of Rochester seeks to appoint a Team Vicar (full time) for the The Benefice of Kent Downs & Malling Team**

We are looking for a Team Vicar who will work alongside the Team Rector to:

- develop and strengthen the spirituality of our congregations
- work with the individual churches whilst honouring their distinctive identities
- encourage and shape an evolving Team, developing strategic priorities across the Benefice
- be a skilful pastor ready to equip and enable others
- be imaginative and creative in mission and community engagement
- thrive in, and manage, a complex context

In return we offer:

- Parishes willing to work together and embrace and support new ministries
- A core vision to engage with families, children and young people
- A beautiful location with good facilities and excellent community spirit
- Administrative support and committed ministry teams
- A Team that values personal well-being, and the need for rest and retreat
- A five bedroom Vicarage located just off the High Street in West Malling opposite the church

Full details are in the Parish Profile, which can be downloaded from the 'Vacancies' section of the Diocesan website ([www.rochester.anglican.org/diocese/vacancies/](http://www.rochester.anglican.org/diocese/vacancies/))

To apply please use the following link:  
<http://ctjob.uk/JN13437>

If you wish for an informal chat with the Archdeacon, Nick Cornell, prior to application, please email Executive Assistant, Sal Hamlyn in the first instance on [sal.hamlyn@rochester.anglican.org](mailto:sal.hamlyn@rochester.anglican.org)

Closing date for applications: **4 June 2026**

Parish visits and interviews will be held on: **1/2 July 2026**

**Vicar of Winshill & Bretby and Priest-in-Charge of Immanuel, Stapenhill**



Are you a prayerful, collaborative leader with a heart for mission and community? We are seeking someone who will:

- **Inspire worship and discipleship** across three distinct churches, embracing their varied traditions while encouraging growth and creativity.
- **Be a visible presence** in Winshill, Bretby and Stapenhill, building relationships within the church and wider community.
- **Lead with openness and sensitivity**, working alongside committed lay teams to nurture faith and strengthen outreach.
- **Engage with all ages**, especially children, young people and families, and develop links with local schools and organisations.
- **Champion inclusion and pastoral care**, offering hope and hospitality in contexts of social and economic challenge.

These parishes offer a rich mix of rural and suburban life. St Mark's in Winshill is a hub of community activity with strong outreach and eco-church commitment. St Wytan's in Bretby provides a faithful rural presence with deep roots and a warm welcome. Immanuel, Stapenhill, serves a growing estate with a flexible building and a vision to be the spiritual heart of its community. Together, they share a longing to grow younger, deepen discipleship, and explore new ways of being church.

You will be supported by experienced churchwardens, PCCs, and a dedicated ministry team. The vicarage is a spacious four-bedroom home in Winshill, close to schools and local amenities.

*The Diocese of Derby is committed to safeguarding. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check. For information on safeguarding and recruitment checks, visit <https://bit.ly/DODSaferRecruitment>.*

**For an informal conversation, contact:**

The Venerable Matthew Trick,  
Archdeacon of Derby City and South Derbyshire  
[matthew.trick@derby.anglican.org](mailto:matthew.trick@derby.anglican.org) | 01332 388684

**Closing date:** Thursday 28th May 2026, noon

**Interviews:** Tuesday 30th June 2026

**Apply at:** [derby.anglican.org/vacancies](http://derby.anglican.org/vacancies)

**Vicar of the United Benefice of Dalston with Cumdivock, Ivegill, Raughton Head and Wreay**



We are four rural parishes on the edge of Carlisle, each with its own distinct character, but united by warm community life, strong lay partnership, and a shared vision of "sharing the love of Jesus."

We are praying for a priest who will communicate the gospel with clarity and imagination; nurture discipleship and equip us to be witnesses in the world. You would be at home both in village lanes and lively school assemblies. You will find vibrant congregations of different styles and traditions, committed volunteers, flourishing schools, and communities that take pride in working together.

**You will be:**

- an inspiring communicator and confident preacher
- grounded in prayer and pastoral presence
- someone who values rural life and listens well
- eager to encourage gifts in others
- able to work joyfully across a range of worship styles
- a steady, visible presence in village life

**We offer:**

- four active churches at the heart of their communities
- two self-supporting curates, a Licensed Lay Reader, and a part-time administrator
- thriving Church of England schools across the benefice
- a comfortable four-bedroom vicarage in the centre of Dalston
- Congregations who work hard, laugh easily, and welcome warmly

If your vocation is to help rural churches grow in confidence, deepen in faith, and serve their neighbours with generosity, we would love to hear from you.

**For more information please contact Archdeacon Ruth Newton:**  
[archdeacon.north@carlisle-diocese.org.uk](mailto:archdeacon.north@carlisle-diocese.org.uk) • Tel: 07919792051

This is a full-time stipendiary post (£31,840 as at April 2025)

For more details and application pack please visit:  
<http://ctjob.uk/JN14363>

Closing date: **31 July 2026**

Interview date: **2 September 2026**

Transformed Lives | Growing Church | Building Community  
THE KINGDOM OF GOD - GOOD NEWS FOR ALL



**TEAM VICAR**

in the South Cotswolds Team Ministry

*to be our schools' ministry lead  
to be missionally rooted in Kempford  
to support our ministry in the villages*

The Bishop of Gloucester seeks to appoint a Team Vicar to this 5 Villages team, who want to build thriving, future-proof parishes for generations to come. They are working with an evolving Team and Deanery vision to deepen the sense of community belonging, strengthen outreach, and ensure that the church remains a place of refuge, faith, mission and service for all ages.

**We are praying for a collaborative leader who will:**

- encourage openness and new ideas to reach out to people of all ages in our communities
- lead our Team vision to ensure that schools are at the heart of our mission
- enjoy and embrace the variety of life, liturgical traditions and communities in our expanding villages
- work as part of the deanery family, especially with a soon to be appointed Deanery Operations Lead, lay and ordained colleagues

**What we offer:**

- welcoming and loving communities, our full and prayerful support and a collaborative and dedicated team that values the gifts and strengths of all

Interested? Preliminary details and application forms are at:  
<http://ctjob.uk/JN14163>

For an informal discussion call: **The Ven Katrina Scott, Archdeacon of Cheltenham, on 07484 967570**  
Applications to Debbie Long, Archdeacon's PA, at [dlong@glosdioc.org.uk](mailto:dlong@glosdioc.org.uk) by **10am on 15 June 2026**  
Interviews: **Wednesday 1 July 2026**



**TEAM VICAR**

Crediton and Upper Creedy Valley

**ROLE**

**This is an incredibly exciting time for us as we explore a new model of shared ministry across our rural communities. Working closely with the Ministry Team, we long for a collaborative leader who will join us in:**

- Deepening our spiritual life (be a prayerful practitioner, embracing our different traditions with creativity and innovation)
- Pioneering our vision (working alongside the Ministry Team to develop the dispersed minister model of church)
- Connecting our communities (seeking to be a visible presence in community life)
- Embracing rural ministry

**CLOSING DATE:**

19 June 2026

**INTERVIEW DATE:**

8 & 9 July 2026

**MORE DETAILS:**

Ven. Andrew Beane, Archdeacon of Exeter  
[ade@exeter.anglican.org](mailto:ade@exeter.anglican.org) - 01392 425577



We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds and particularly encourage applications from women, UKME and disabled candidates, who are currently under-represented in our diocese. This role subject to an enhanced DBS check.

[WWW.EXETER.ANGLICAN.ORG/VACANCIES](http://WWW.EXETER.ANGLICAN.ORG/VACANCIES)

[www.chelmsford.anglican.org](http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org)



The Diocese of Chelmsford is currently looking to fill the following post

**Vicar of St James, Collier Row and St John's, Havering-atte-Bower and Priest in Charge of St Thomas, Noak Hill**

**Do you feel called to support active lay ministry?**

**Are you excited by a wide range of opportunities?**

**Have you experience of bringing the Gospel to children, young people and families?**

These two parishes, on the edge of East London, are looking for their next priest. They are praying for somebody who can build on a rich tradition of active lay ministry and community engagement. Especially in the development of work with children, young people and families.

St James and St John are one parish and one worshipping community gathering in two buildings, St Thomas's sits within a rural and commuter belt community on the very edge of London. Both church communities are lively with high levels of lay ministry, busy congregations and much going on. They are actively exploring the possibility of becoming a plurality and we envisage that the person appointed as priest in charge at St Thomas's will become their vicar.

The three communities sit on the edge of London, with fantastic transport links into London and out into Essex. The vicarage is a large house located in the middle of the three communities.

Parish profile and Summary of Standard Terms of Appointment are available from our diocese website via: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14599>

To arrange an informal conversation about this role, or for an application pack please contact Julie Nagle, PA to the Archdeacon of Barking at: [jnagle@chelmsford.anglican.org](mailto:jnagle@chelmsford.anglican.org)

Closing Date: **3rd June 2026**

Interviews: **6th July 2026**

Role subject to an enhanced DBS check

# JOBS.CHURCHTIMES.CO.UK



## Vicar (House-for-Duty post) St Francis L. E. P. Church, Banbury

We are an inclusive Ecumenical community – encouraging difference, welcoming diversity and seeking unity where we can. St Francis' is a church with a big heart, a strong sense of community, and a deep desire to grow in faith and service. We are ready for a vicar who will share our journey, nurture our gifts, and offer compassion and vision within our shared ministry.

We are praying for a vicar who embodies the following qualities:

- Prayerful and Spirit-led
- Compassionate and inclusive
- Collaborative and empowering
- Visionary and outward-looking

We seek a vicar who will journey with us in our vision—one who will inspire, empower, and join with our other partner ministers in leading us into the next chapter of our shared life.

A modern vicarage is provided.

For an informal discussion, please contact the Venerable David Tyler at: [archdeacon.dorchester@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:archdeacon.dorchester@oxford.anglican.org)

For the Parish Profile, and to apply, please visit: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14651> and click on the Diocese of Oxford.

Closing date: **Thursday 11th June 2026**

Interviews: **Friday 10th July 2026**

**DBS Enhanced Disclosure is required**



## Incumbent of Rotherfield with Mark Cross (0.5)

Rotherfield and Mark Cross are situated in East Sussex's High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The villages are close to Tunbridge Wells, with good transport links to London, and within easy reach of the South Downs and the English Channel.

St Denys, Rotherfield is an ancient Grade 1 listed parish church in the centre of its village, with distinguished wall paintings and historical features. The vicarage is situated nearby. St Mark's, Mark Cross is a dual-purpose building, used as a community centre for the village in addition to its use as a worship centre. There is a thriving parish life throughout the benefice, with active house and prayer groups, and a wide range of cultural and social activities. There are supportive PCC and ministry teams. The combined electoral roll is 168 with a Usual Sunday Attendance of around 55.

The benefice enjoys very close links with the Church of England (VA) primary school at Mark Cross, rated as 'Good with outstanding features'.

The Bishop of Chichester is seeking a pastoral priest, with a prayerful, scripture-based faith in Jesus Christ, to lead this benefice to growth in faith, worship and prayer, and to be active in mission and service to the community.

For an informal chat, please contact the Ven Russell Dewhurst, Archdeacon of Hastings, at [archhastings@chichester.anglican.org](mailto:archhastings@chichester.anglican.org) or 07827 275649.

For the parish profile and to apply please visit:  
<http://ctjob.uk/JN12609>

Closing date: **28th June 2026**  
Interview date: **31st July 2026**

## CHURCH TIMES CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING DEADLINES

SPACE BOOKING DEADLINE  
**5pm Friday for the following Friday**  
COPY TO BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN  
**12 noon on the following Monday**

[ads@churchtimes.co.uk](mailto:ads@churchtimes.co.uk)  
[jobs.churchtimes.co.uk](http://jobs.churchtimes.co.uk)



## Vicar: Castle Churches Benefice

The Castle Group of Churches is situated to the east of Maidstone, Kent at the foot of the North Downs, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

We are a group of five churches; our congregations have enthusiasm and commitment to our faith and mission within our area. Our aspiration is to connect with our community and support God's mission at home and in our places of work.

We are looking for a vicar who is flexible in their approach, can use the gifts of the people in the parish, has imagination and enthusiasm, and who will grow our children's work.

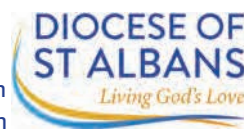
Closing Date: **Sunday 21 June**

Interviews: **Friday 17 July**

Apply  
here



The Acting Bishop of St Albans seeks to appoint a Team Vicar for the Dunstable Team Ministry with responsibility for the Priory Church



Leading the ministry and mission at the historic Priory Church brings an opportunity to serve the whole community and to build strong partnerships with the civic authorities and community organisations, as well as build on the musical tradition and youth work.

We hope to appoint someone who:

- will preach in a faithful way that supports, encourages, develops and challenges everyone
- has the proven ability to lead, manage, encourage, and work collaboratively across the team
- will develop work with families, young children and youth
- is an enabler and will develop gifts in people of all ages
- is a good communicator, a team player, and is approachable, kind and compassionate.

We offer:

- a warm, supportive church family and ministry team and committed administrative and lay support
- opportunities to shape the future of a historic parish at a time of renewal and growth.

To arrange an informal conversation or to apply, please contact the Archdeacon of Bedford's PA, Revd Tricia Reed at: [tricia.reed@stalbandsdiocese.org](mailto:tricia.reed@stalbandsdiocese.org) or 01727 818167

Closing date for applications: **27th May 2026**  
Interview date: **17th June 2026**



[www.chelmsford.anglican.org](http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org)

The Diocese of Chelmsford is currently looking to fill the following post

Bradwell Episcopal Area

## Vicar of Southend All Saints & Priest in Charge of Prittlewell St Luke

All Saints and St Luke's are two parishes located less than a mile apart who are on a journey of working closely together. They are in the brand new city of Southend, in walking distance of the seafront, with excellent transport links to London and access to Southend airport.

Are you someone who can:

- embrace their traditions of worship whilst welcoming change
- join them in their journey of faith, service and community
- help their congregations to flourish and grow

If you think you may be that person, we would very much like to hear from you.

Closing date: **4 June 2026**  
Interviews: **6 July 2026**

Details on <http://ctjob.uk/JN13555>  
or from the Archdeacon of Southend  
[a.southend@chelmsford.anglican.org](mailto:a.southend@chelmsford.anglican.org) • Tel 01268 779345



## Vicar

### Cannock and Huntington; Hatherton

Where are you?

Our children say ... "We want a Vicar, so contact us and do the funny interview". This is an exciting opportunity for someone with vision and drive to serve our churches on the edge of the beautiful Staffordshire countryside. Without a doubt we are unique!

- Our theological tradition includes the more formal liturgy of a town centre Church, to the less formal fellowship of a small but well maintained country church, and that of a close knit ex-mining community.
- We seek a new Vicar to help guide us in outreach to our community, in the developing of our gifts and mission and ministry in this diverse community.
- We have a ministry team of ordained and lay ministers working across the two Parishes supported by committed full time office staff, and congregations deeply involved in the life of their respective Churches who are keen to develop opportunities for further outreach and fellowship.
- The Parish of Cannock and Huntington has close ties with the Civic authorities and local schools who use the Church on a regular basis.
- There is a tradition of preaching and discipleship within our Church together with many fellowship activities for those both within and beyond the Church itself.
- The appointed priest will find supportive congregations who will encourage a proper work-life balance, an attractive and well-appointed house, the Parish Church having a modern and well used Hall and facilities.

Full details from [lichfield.anglican.org/vacancies](http://lichfield.anglican.org/vacancies)

Enquiries: Archdeacon of Lichfield's Office - **01543 306145**  
[archdeacon.lichfield@lichfield.anglican.org](mailto:archdeacon.lichfield@lichfield.anglican.org)

All applicants should normally have 3 years' experience in the Church of England or another Anglican church in the British Isles.

Closing date: **25 June 2026**  
Familiarisation day: **w/c 13 July 2026**  
Interviews: **22 July 2026**



Follow us @churchtimes



## Rector - Parish of Holcombe and Hawkshaw

Are you a prayerful, Spirit-led priest with a heart for people, a love of Scripture, and a passion for mission? The Parish of Holcombe and Hawkshaw, on the edge of the West Pennine Moors in Greater Manchester, is seeking a new Rector and Mission Community Leader for the next stage of our journey. We are a welcoming, outward-looking parish with three supportive worshipping centres, offering a range of worship styles – from traditional Anglican liturgy and choral worship to informal, all-age and contemporary services. At the heart of our life is a shared vision: loving God, loving our neighbours, and sharing Jesus with all.

We are looking for a vicar rooted in prayer and confident in Bible-based preaching and teaching; someone able to engage people of all ages, encourage diverse worship, and empower both ordained and lay leaders. You will value pastoral care, be committed to safeguarding, and have the vision to lead growth in faith, discipleship and community engagement.

The parish is supported by an enthusiastic ministry team, strong links with local schools, a part-time Children and Families Lead, and a range of missional activities. A substantial vicarage is provided next to St Mary's, Hawkshaw.

For an informal conversation, contact Archdeacon Rachel Mann at: [rachelmann@manchester.anglican.org](mailto:rachelmann@manchester.anglican.org)

Visit <https://www.cpas.org.uk/jobs-ministry> for an application pack or contact the Patronage Team: [patronage@cpas.org.uk](mailto:patronage@cpas.org.uk)

Closing date: **3rd June Noon** • Visit & Interviews: **1 July**  
This post is subject to enhanced disclosure from the DBS

**RECTOR (HOUSE FOR DUTY)****St Mary the Virgin, Weston Turville, Buckinghamshire**

Found in a leafy conservation area, between the lofty Chilterns and peaceful canal-side paths, our single church parish is expectantly preparing to welcome 7,000 new residents to worship alongside us. A swift commute to London gives us confidence that the green shoots of growth we are seeing with new families are only set to continue. With pioneering potential and long-term Diocesan support, we seek a new Incumbent who is excited by that prospect.

**We are looking for a Rector who:**

- is compassionate, both outside the church walls and within
- will maintain our current style of Common Worship eucharistic services
- will help us to grow in faith and engage in new ways of serving our communities
- is capable of addressing churchyard disagreements, with tact and understanding
- has ideas about how to engage with incoming residents and invite them into faith
- would be willing to consider expanding the role in the future, when funds allow

**What we can offer:**

- A happy and welcoming church community who have a tradition of loving their Priest well
- A beautiful and accessible Grade I listed C13 church with a well-appointed rectory nearby
- An enabling and missionally minded patron and helpful volunteers in the congregation
- A competent team of bellringers, a well-maintained pipe organ and an RSCM-affiliated choir

For more information please contact:

Revd Canon Chris Bull, Associate Archdeacon of Buckingham on 07481343440 or christopher.bull@oxford.anglican.org

To apply and see the full role description and Parish Profile please visit: <http://ctjob.uk/JN13715>

Closing date: **9th June 2026 (midnight)**  
Interviews: **15th & 16th July 2026**

Enhanced DBS Disclosure required

**Priest in Charge (Vicar Designate)****St James Newchapel and St Thomas Mow Cop**

Is the Holy Spirit calling you to joyfully lead our church communities into their new partnership together?

We're looking for a Spirit-filled vicar who is a good bible preacher and teacher who will:

- Lead our parishes into greater relationship with each other
- Increase the effective evangelistic life of both churches
- Encourage our discipleship, particularly through small group learning
- Help us develop connections with children and families (eg through local schools) to introduce them to Jesus.

Our communities are on the North Staffordshire/Cheshire border, close to beautiful countryside. We're resourceful worshipping communities who are known for our warm welcome, prayerfulness and commitment. We're excited for what God might have for us in this next phase of our journey. Please have a look at our profile to find out more.

Full details from [lichfield.anglican.org/vacancies](http://lichfield.anglican.org/vacancies)

For an informal conversation please contact Andy Wooding Jones from CPAS ([awoodingjones@cpas.org.uk](mailto:awoodingjones@cpas.org.uk)) or the Bishop of Stafford's Office

([gemma.trueman@lichfield.anglican.org](mailto:gemma.trueman@lichfield.anglican.org))

All applicants should normally have 3 years' experience in the Church of England or another Anglican church in the British Isles.

Closing date: **4 June 2026**  
Interviews: **29 June 2026**

**Rector: Ham Hill Villages Benefice**

The Bishop of Bath and Wells, Church Patronage Trust and Christ Church Oxford seek to appoint a Rector to the Benefice of Ham Hill Villages.

We are seven welcoming, rural parishes nestled around historic Ham Hill in the beautiful South Somerset countryside. We are seeking a rector to lead us with vision, love and faith, and join us in our mission to bring the knowledge and love of Christ to all in our communities.

**We are praying for someone who:**

- Has a love and respect for God's Word.
- Can organise, direct, delegate and manage.
- Will support and foster both traditional worship and new expressions of church life.
- Can embrace the joys and challenges of rural ministry in our seven different parishes.
- Has a love for people, a sense of humour, and a desire to be present in village life.

**What we can offer you:**

- A Ministry Team of 4 Lay Ministers, one SSM, two PTO and one LWA.
- Committed lay involvement in worship, mission and administration.
- Growing schools and families work.
- A Benefice administrator and safeguarding officers.
- A home in a beautiful part of God's rural creation.

Is God calling you to build on what we have begun, with the vision and faith to see what could be and the strength and enthusiasm to lead us forward?

Can you bring energy, warmth, and a collaborative spirit to help us deepen discipleship, strengthen village links, and share God's love widely?

Come and work with us! With His help, we will grow God's Kingdom together

[www.hamhillchurches.org](http://www.hamhillchurches.org)

Closing Date for applications: **12 noon on 11 June 2026**  
Visit and interview: **7 and 8 July 2026**

Full details and an application pack from:

**The PA to the Archdeacon of Wells**  
**01749 685147 • [adwells@bathwells.anglican.org](mailto:adwells@bathwells.anglican.org)**  
*An enhanced DBS disclosure is required*

**Vicar of Bagshot**

We are a welcoming, traditional, inclusive and supportive church community, whose vision is to be a blessing to all. We seek a new vicar who will lead us with faithfulness, creativity and pastoral care in this new season of ministry.

**We are praying for a leader who:**

- Preaches and teaches thoughtfully
- Will develop our ministry amongst children and families
- Cares pastorally across all ages
- Has a passion for outreach and growing community.

**We offer:**

- A single church with an engaged and welcoming congregation, and adjacent family vicarage
- Commitment to the Clergy Wellbeing Covenant
- Committed teams, a well-maintained building and excellent facilities
- A healthy overall financial position.

Closing date: **16 June 2026**

Interviews: **21 + 22 July 2026**

For more details and to apply please visit  
[www.cofeguildford.org.uk/clergyvacancies](http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/clergyvacancies)

**Rector of Esher**

Our parish has two wonderful churches - Christ Church, known for its choral music and liturgical worship, and St George's, offering an intimate setting and powerful sense of community.

**We seek a Rector who:**

- Lives a joyful faith, with spiritual insight and a gift for teaching
- Communicates with imagination and enthusiasm
- Leads with kindness, integrity and inclusivity
- Is open-hearted, with a forward-looking perspective
- Is approachable, pastoral and present.

**We would like our new Rector to help us:**

- Grow our children, young people and family ministry
- Deepen our life of prayer and friendship
- Develop worship that reflects the breadth of our parish
- Strengthen service locally and in the world.

We offer a spacious rectory, a short walk from both churches, a supportive PCC and dedicated staff team. We have two church schools, primary and secondary, linked to the parish.

Closing date: **27 May 2026**

Interviews: **1 + 2 July 2026**

For more details and to apply please visit  
[www.cofeguildford.org.uk/clergyvacancies](http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/clergyvacancies)

**Vicar of Nork with Burgh Heath**

We offer an exciting opportunity for a vicar to join us as we unite, consolidate and grow in God's vision for our parish.

**Could this be you?:**

- A capable leader with energy, empathy & inspiration
- Rooted in Scripture and alive to the work of prayer, Jesus and His Spirit
- Approachable, caring, collaborative, forward-thinking
- Comfortable delegating, encouraging others to use their gifts
- A strong communicator, who helps people grow in Christ-like maturity.

**We offer:**

- Welcoming vicarage in green surrounds, 30 minutes from London
- A supportive, enthusiastic team eager to grow in faith, fellowship and mission
- Commitment to the Guildford Clergy Wellbeing Covenant

See our Parish Profile using the link below - come and join us!

Closing date: **3 August 2026**

Interviews: **TBC**

For more details and to apply please visit  
[www.cofeguildford.org.uk/clergyvacancies](http://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/clergyvacancies)

# JOBS.CHURCHTIMES.CO.UK

**House for Duty**  
in the Pontesbury &  
Stiperstones Benefices



—Diocese of—  
**Hereford**


**An exciting post for a mission-hearted, prayerful priest with a passion for ministry in a rural setting.**

An opportunity has arisen for an **Associate Minister (HfD)** in the Pontesbury & Stiperstones Benefices located in the beautiful Shropshire countryside, close to the Mid Wales border but just 10 miles from Shrewsbury and its amenities.

**For the full profile and to apply please go to**  
<https://hereford.anglican.org/xdb/vacancies>

For further information,  
please contact the Archdeacon of Ludlow's EA:  
Debbie.Venables@hereford.anglican.org or 01588 673571  
**Closing date: 14<sup>th</sup> June 2026**  
Parish visits: 13<sup>th</sup> July 2026 Interview date: 14<sup>th</sup> July 2026

We are committed to equal opportunities and diversity and welcome applications from all suitably qualified clergy. As UKME/GMH individuals are currently under-represented within our Diocese we would particularly welcome applications from these candidates.  
This post requires Enhanced DBS clearance with Barred Lists check.



**Transformed by Christ**

Prayerful Pastoral Prophetic

The Bishop of Norwich, in collaboration with the  
Bishop of Thetford, seeks an

### Archdeacon of Norfolk

to serve an archdeaconry comprising market towns and rural and coastal communities in south and east Norfolk, and the Waveney part of Suffolk.

We are looking for a prayerful priest who will contribute warmly to our life together, who will relish seeking solutions, identifying opportunities, working to mend divisions, and blowing on embers, and who shows:


- collaborative and trusted leadership
- strong pastoral and missional commitment
- strategic thinking and organisational awareness
- gifted communication and public representative abilities
- personal resilience, integrity and safeguarding commitment
- practical competence and leadership enabling skills


The Bishop of Norwich encourages applications from diverse backgrounds as a way of discerning God's will and calling.

Further details at <http://ctjob.uk/JN14898>

Closing date: **4pm, 26th June**, with applications sent to  
[sophie.bell@dioceseofnorwich.org](mailto:sophie.bell@dioceseofnorwich.org)  
Interviews will be held in Norwich on **15th and 16th July 2026**.

The Bishop of Thetford, The Rt Rev Ian Bishop, would be happy to have informal conversations about the role.  
[bishop.thetford@dioceseofnorwich.org](mailto:bishop.thetford@dioceseofnorwich.org)





### Assistant Vicar (0.5), Children & Young Adults Focus

Parish of St Mary, Portsea

The primary purpose of this role is to assist the Vicar – recently appointed to the role of Archdeacon of Portsdown – in providing leadership across parish groups, supporting the Pastoral Offices, and developing ministry with young families, children, and young adults. You will also contribute to the wider Parish Ministry Team and work alongside local clergy to foster collaborative ministry across the inner city of Portsmouth.

Find out more at [portsmouth.anglican.org/jobs](http://portsmouth.anglican.org/jobs).  
Closing date: **June 19th, 2026**.  
Interviews: **July 27th & 28th, 2026**.

*Jesus-centred, Kingdom-seeking*

[portsmouth.anglican.org/jobs](http://portsmouth.anglican.org/jobs)

[jobs.churchtimes.co.uk](http://jobs.churchtimes.co.uk) [jobs.churchtimes.co.uk](http://jobs.churchtimes.co.uk)



**HISTORIC ROYAL PALACES**



## Chaplain of the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace

**A rare opportunity to lead a historic place of worship serving a regular congregation and a global visiting public.**

Situated in the heart of Hampton Court Palace, the Chapel Royal has stood at the heart of royal devotion for more than five hundred years. Its walls have witnessed the passing of history and the continuity of worship that endures to this day. Today, the Chapel Royal remains a working chapel: shaped by the language of the Book of Common Prayer, rooted in tradition, and open to all. Within the life of a busy palace, it offers a space for reflection and encounter — where heritage and faith are lived, not simply preserved.

At an exciting time of development, including plans for a girls' choir, we seek a Chaplain with the vision to help shape the Chapel's future ministry in a way that builds on this rich legacy.

This is a role of both stewardship and renewal, with significant opportunity for the new Chaplain the shape a ministry in partnership with the Chaplain team and wider Historic Royal Palaces. For more information, and for an informal conversation to assist your discernment, please visit our recruitment partners website; [www.gatenbysanderson.com/job/GSe132005](http://www.gatenbysanderson.com/job/GSe132005)

Location: Accommodation available on site but not required  
Closing Date: 17:00 on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026

*\*It is an occupational requirement in accordance with schedule 9 paragraph 1 of the Equality Act for the holder of this role to be a practising Christian.*

## UPCOMING FEATURES

19 June  
**RETIREMENT YEARS**

17 July  
2026  
**ORDINATIONS**

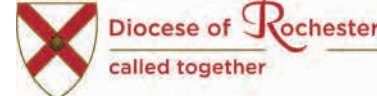
11 September  
**EDUCATION**

2 October  
**FINANCIAL PLANNING**

23 October  
**ADVENT BOOKS**

30 October  
**MAKING A WILL/LEGACIES**

13 November  
**FORMATION & AFTERCARE**



The Bishop of Rochester and the Patron, Church Society Trust, are seeking to appoint a

### PRIEST-IN-CHARGE for CUDHAM & DOWNE

(Orpington, London Borough of Bromley)

*[Three-year interim appointment]*

**Are you a caring, approachable and enthusiastic priest with a passion for mission?**

Cudham and Downe are rural villages on the edge of the London Borough of Bromley. The warm and friendly congregations of these two communities are looking forward to welcoming an Interim Priest-in-Charge who will lead them to growth through mission and ministry.

The ideal candidate will be a prayerful leader who is:

- Warm and naturally engaging, comfortable leading formal and informal worship and ready to reach into village life with love and enthusiasm.
- Has a gift for engaging with children, growing our children & young people's ministry while embracing the continuing needs of the older generation.
- Able to lead us in spiritual and numerical growth and oversee the running of the churches.

Full details can be found in the Parish Profile, which can be downloaded from the 'Vacancies' section of the Diocesan website ([www.rochester.anglican.org](http://www.rochester.anglican.org)) or by following this link: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14897> [Applications should also be made using this link]

Any queries, or to arrange an informal discussion with the Archdeacon of Bromley & Bexley about this vacancy, please contact her EA (Fiona Porter) by emailing [fiona.porter@rochester.anglican.org](mailto:fiona.porter@rochester.anglican.org)

Closing date for applications: **Midnight on Sunday, 14th June 2026**  
[Interviews will be held on **7th July**]

*The wider a group's diversity, the smarter, wiser, and more compassionate and creative its decision making becomes. We are committed to achieving diversity throughout our Diocese by seeking UKME/GMH colleagues and those from a wide range of backgrounds, to help us create a culture of inclusion and belonging.*

## Team Rector Christ the King Redditch

This benefice of four very different parishes seeks a part-time Team Rector (.6) who will rejoice in diversity and lead us in proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to our communities. Joining an able team of clergy and lay colleagues, you will be someone who relishes working collaboratively and developing the gifts of others. For the right person there may be an opportunity for a role to be held alongside this one on the diocesan Mission and Ministry team – see the profile for details.

**We hope to find a Team Rector who is:**

- a team player who values lay ministry;
- passionate about encouraging spiritual development, supporting and equipping others for ministry;
- from a central tradition but comfortable exploring different worship styles;
- keen to engage with the communities we serve;
- enthusiastic to engage in the wider Redditch Mission Area.

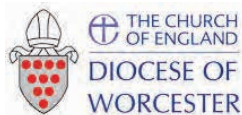
For an informal chat about the role call  
Archdeacon Nikki Groarke: 01905 773301

Parish Profile on <http://ctjob.uk/JN14903>

Application forms and details from:  
**The Bishop's Office, The Old Palace,  
Deansway, Worcester WR1 2JE**  
Email: [bishop.worcester@cofe-worcester.org.uk](mailto:bishop.worcester@cofe-worcester.org.uk)

Closing Date: 5th June 2026  
Interviews will be held on 22nd July 2026

The Diocese of Worcester is committed to increasing diversity in appointments. This post is subject to enhanced DBS.



### APPOINTMENTS

## SUBSCRIPTIONS

You could have a copy of the Church Times sent to your home every week.  
Feed your spiritual needs with a subscription to the Church Times.  
Send for details to: Church Times Subscriptions, 13a Hellesdon Park Road, Norwich NR6 5DR

### ⊕ DIOCESE OF DURHAM

## The Bishop of Durham is looking to appoint the IME2 AND 1<sup>ST</sup> INCUMBENCY ENABLER

The Bishop of Durham is seeking an emotionally intelligent, innovative and experienced person to form the ordained leaders of Durham Diocese as part of the Growing Leadership Team.

This person would be responsible for the IME2 and 1<sup>st</sup> incumbency programmes, guaranteeing content is both in line with the National Qualities and the Transformation Strategy of Durham Diocese.

The Bishop is looking for a person with excellent communication and people skills, ensuring successful curacies and a smooth transition into Incumbency.

**For more information or an informal conversation, please contact the Growing Leadership Strategic Lead, Annwen Stone: [Annwen.Stone@durham.anglican.org](mailto:Annwen.Stone@durham.anglican.org)**

Closing date: 29<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Interviews: TBC w/c 15<sup>th</sup> June 2026

Further details: [www.durhamdiocese.org/vacancies](http://www.durhamdiocese.org/vacancies)



## The Bishop of Durham is seeking to appoint a DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF VOCATIONS & ORDINANDS

Are you collaborative, discerning, and able to perceive the potential in people? The Bishop of Durham is seeking an ordained person who is passionate about raising, selecting and forming tomorrow's leaders.

Over the past few years, Durham Diocese has developed successful pathways for both lay and ordained leaders.

We are looking for someone to build on this for the future, in a diocese prioritising mission and discipleship.

**For more information or an informal conversation, please contact the Growing Leadership Strategic Lead, Annwen Stone: [Annwen.Stone@durham.anglican.org](mailto:Annwen.Stone@durham.anglican.org)**

Closing date: 29th May 2026

Interviews: TBC early July 2026

Further details: [www.durhamdiocese.org/vacancies](http://www.durhamdiocese.org/vacancies)



The Church of England  
in Essex and East London  
Diocese of Chelmsford



## Diocesan Secretary and Chief Executive Officer

Chelmsford is one of the largest and most diverse dioceses in the Church of England, serving more than three million people across Essex and East London. Spanning urban, suburban, coastal and rural communities, it encompasses areas of both significant deprivation and opportunity. Rooted in this diversity, the Diocese is committed to loving God and neighbour and sustaining a faithful, hopeful and lasting presence. Following deep listening and discernment, its shared direction is expressed through Travelling Well Together, shaping culture, values and common life as the Diocese seeks to live with grace, creativity and courage in the midst of change.

As Diocesan Secretary and Chief Executive Officer you will play a pivotal leadership role, working closely with the Bishop and the Bishop's Leadership Team to provide executive leadership to the Diocesan Board of Finance and staff team, ensuring strong governance, effective operations and wise stewardship of resources, while modelling the values of Travelling Well Together.

We seek an empowering and inclusive leader with a proven record of strategic and operational leadership in complex environments. You will be financially capable, comfortable with ambiguity, and skilled in influencing across diverse stakeholders. Above all, you will be a committed Christian\* called to serve the mission, values and life of the Diocese of Chelmsford.

This is a rare and compelling opportunity to help shape the future of a diverse and dynamic diocese at a critical moment in its journey. For further information, and for an informal discussion about your suitability, please visit:

[www.gatenbysanderson.com/job/GSe132344](http://www.gatenbysanderson.com/job/GSe132344).

Closing date: 17:00 on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June

\*It is an occupational requirement in accordance with schedule 9 paragraph 1 of the Equality Act for the holder of this role to be a practising Christian.



Church of England & Church in Wales



## Chief Executive and Chief Education Officer for the Church of England

The National Society for Education (NS) is the Church of England's national education office, with a legacy of over 200 years enabling children, young people and adults to flourish through education that is deeply Christian and serves the Common Good. The NS supports diocesan boards of education, influences national policy at senior government levels, and has an growing presence across Further and Higher Education.

Over the past decade, the organisation has grown significantly in scale, reach and influence. It now works within a complex and evolving education landscape shaped by policy change, increased accountability, devolution, and global uncertainty. The Church of England and Church in Wales remain influential voices, committed to collaboration, inclusion and excellence in serving the Class of 2040, maintaining a key focus on supporting the work of dioceses and growing influence at a system level.

The NS seeks an exceptional leader to serve as Chief Executive and Chief Education Officer for the Church of England. This influential role combines organisational leadership with national system engagement across dioceses, education sectors and government. The postholder will lead strategy, operations, culture and performance, and act as the Church's senior voice in education. The successful candidate will bring senior leadership experience, deep system knowledge, strong judgement and communication skills, and a corrigible, inspiring Christian faith\*.

This role offers a rare opportunity to shape the future of education nationally with the distinct and hope-filled voice of the Church, building on a strong legacy while leading confidently into the next phase of impact and service. For more information, and for an informal conversation about the role and your suitability, please visit our recruitment partners website: [www.gatenbysanderson.com/job/GSe129896](http://www.gatenbysanderson.com/job/GSe129896).

Closing Date: 17:00 on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2026.

\* It is an occupational requirement in accordance with schedule 9 paragraph 1 of the Equality Act for the holder of this role to be a practising Christian.



## Head of Vocations (Including DDO responsibilities)

The Diocese of Leicester is seeking to appoint an experienced priest with a discerning heart, a deep-rooted spirituality and a refined sense of curiosity, who will be the lead senior diocesan officer for the nurturing, identification, and discernment of ordained and lay vocations.

Overseen by the Sponsoring Bishop, supported and integrated within the Parish Transition and Ministry Development Team, this person will inspire, equip, challenge and support individuals, leaders and communities at all levels throughout the Diocese of Leicester in the development and discernment of vocations.

To find out more about this opportunity and to apply please visit:  
<http://ctjob.uk/JN14835>

Closing date: **Thursday 11th June 2026**  
Interview Date: **26th June 2026**

We particularly welcome applications from UK Minority Ethnic/ Global Majority Heritage candidates, especially those of Black descent, who are currently underrepresented in our organization.

The Diocese of Leicester, part of the Church of England, is committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of everyone within our church community. We follow the Church of England's Safeguarding Policies and the relevant statutory legislation and guidance. We believe that safeguarding is everybody's business.

This post is subject to enhanced DBS disclosure and proof of right to work in the UK. This post has attached to it an occupational requirement under the 2010 Equality Act, Part 1, Schedule 9, that the person should be an ordained member of the Church of England (clerk in holy orders).

## The Diocese of Guildford seeks to appoint a Mission Enabler – Mixed Ecology

The Diocese of Guildford is seeking a Mission Enabler to encourage and support parishes to develop a mixed ecology approach to mission and ministry.

The Mission Enabler role supports the diocesan vision of Transforming Church, Transforming Lives by embedding a "mixed ecology" approach across the diversity of the diocese, building on priorities such as growing disciples and developing younger, more diverse communities. This relational outward-facing position works with Clergy, lay leaders, and volunteers to support the development of new worshipping communities and fresh expressions of church. A key focus is enabling parishes to engage children, young people, and families as part of a broader, more inclusive vision of church life.

We are looking for someone who:

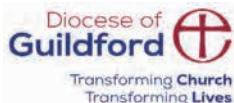
- Has experience of starting or developing New Worshipping Communities or Fresh Expressions, especially those that include children and families
- Expressions, especially those that include children and families
- Is at ease working with a wide range of people across different church traditions
- Can effectively facilitate and lead workshops and group sessions
- Brings a good understanding of the Church of England and parish life
- Is well organised, collaborative, and reflective in their practice
- Has a high level of integrity and discretion, and the ability to handle confidential
- information with diplomacy and sensitivity.

Above all, we are looking for someone with a passion for the gospel enabling churches to grow, who combines wisdom, imagination and patience - someone who is able to walk alongside others as they discern how God is at work in their communities.

To apply, view our benefits and the full job description go to:  
[cofguildford.org.uk/diocesanjobs](http://cofguildford.org.uk/diocesanjobs)

Closing date: Sunday 7 June 2026

We will shortlist and interview on a rolling basis as applications are received and we reserve the right to close the vacancy early.



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### ORGANISTS & LAYWORKERS



## Tenor Lay Clerk

A vacancy has arisen for a Tenor Lay Clerk in Westminster Cathedral Choir.

In addition to its liturgical duties in the Cathedral, the internationally acclaimed choir gives concerts both at home and abroad, and is well known for its recordings and broadcasts.

Further details, including a more detailed job description and an application form, can be found at [jobs.rcdow.org.uk](http://jobs.rcdow.org.uk)

For any further information, please email:  
[musicadmin@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:musicadmin@rcdow.org.uk)

Closing date: **Friday 29 May 2026 at 12 noon**  
First round auditions: **9-11 June 2026**

Second round auditions and interviews: **23-25 June 2026**



SAINT FIN BARRE'S  
CATHEDRAL • CORK

## Assistant Director of Music

Saint Fin Barre's Cathedral seeks to appoint a suitably qualified and dynamic musician to work within the Cathedral and in the wider diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross from 31st August 2026

The Cathedral Choir sings three times per week during term time and consists of a boys' choir, girls' choir and paid Lay Vicars. This full-time post includes accommodation and will involve working with the clergy and Director of Music, accompanying the Cathedral Choir, training the choristers, and working in schools as part of the Diocesan Church Music Scheme.

For application pack (by email only) contact:  
[music@stfinbarres.ie](mailto:music@stfinbarres.ie)

Closing Date: **Friday, 5 June 2026**  
Interview Date: **Tuesday, 23 June 2026**

## CARLISLE CATHEDRAL

Director of Music  
Employed by: Carlisle Cathedral  
Hours: 40 hours per week over 6 days  
Salary: £43,500

The Chapter (governing body) of Carlisle Cathedral is delighted to invite applications for the post of Director of Music, a distinctive role at the heart of the Cathedral's worship, mission, and life.

This is an exceptional opportunity to lead a vibrant Music Department of dedicated staff and volunteers, shaping a musical ministry that inspires, uplifts, and enriches the worshipping community and wider Diocese, in alignment with the Cathedral's Vision and Strategy 2026.

We are seeking an outstanding musician who is passionate about sacred music, committed to collaborative ministry, and eager to play a central part in the continuing life, witness, and future of Carlisle Cathedral. The successful candidate will share our values, embrace our mission, and help realise our vision through creativity and excellence.

For Further details and an application form see the careers page on the website: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14875>

Closing Date: **19th June 2026**  
Date for Interviews: **Thursday 9th & Friday 10th July 2026 (2 days)**

*Carlisle Cathedral is committed to safeguarding & protecting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Applicants must be willing to undergo the relevant safeguarding checks including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service, appropriate to the post.*

We invite applications for

## ALTO, TENOR, and BASS Choral Scholar/Section Leader

roles at Selby Abbey to begin in September 2026, or as soon as possible afterwards.

With a value of £3500, and a modest time-commitment, this is an opportunity for musicians to play a key role in helping develop the musical life of the Abbey and its choir, whilst gaining experience and training in an inspirational setting.

For further details visit: <https://www.selbyabbey.org.uk/>

Closing date: **29th May 2026**



## Director of Music

Our welcoming, inclusive church in north London seeks a Director of Music to grow the church's mission through a collaborative, entrepreneurial ministry of choral music.

Salary: £8000 PA

Apply at <http://ctjob.uk/JN14576> by **5 June**.



## Head Verger and Sacristan Role at Tewkesbury Abbey

Tewkesbury Abbey is one of the great sacred spaces of England: a place of daily worship, rich heritage, music, welcome, and mission at the heart of our town. For over nine centuries the Abbey has stood as a sign of faith, hospitality, and service, drawing together local worshippers, visitors, pilgrims, and tourists from across the world. Today we remain committed to being both a living parish church and an open, generous presence for all.

We are recruiting for a new Head Verger and Sacristan to play a vital part in this calling. This is a role rooted in service, care, and leadership, ensuring that the Abbey is a place where worship can be offered reverently and confidently, where clergy and choirs are supported, and where all who enter are received with warmth and professionalism. The Head Verger and Sacristan is central to the smooth running of our liturgical life, the stewardship of our extraordinary building, and the coordination of a dedicated team of vergers and volunteers.

For full details and to apply click here: <http://ctjob.uk/JN14864>

Deadline for applications is **Wed 10th June 2026**



## ORGANIST

Belsize Square Synagogue is proud of its rich musical heritage, with services predominantly featuring liturgical music born out of German romanticism. We employ a full-time Cantor and have three choirs (professional, community, and youth). We are seeking a regular organist due to the imminent departure of our current incumbent, who has served the community for over twenty years.

Principal duties consist of regular Friday evenings, Saturday once per month and ad hoc festivals and rehearsals. Possible/optional conducting required.

Other details:

Remuneration will be based on a per service and per rehearsal fee. Annual earnings in the region of £7,500, plus other opportunities.

Applicants should include CV and a statement outlining your suitability for this role. Applications will be followed by an interview and audition process. Email [office@synagogue.org.uk](mailto:office@synagogue.org.uk) for further information.

Engagement on a self-employed basis.

Closing date **29 May**. The successful applicant will be asked to begin in late June/early July.



## Little Saint Mary's Church, Cambridge

is looking to recruit a new

## ORGANIST & DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

2.5 days / week  
Salary £20,000

Fine Kenneth Tickell organ

Well-resourced and flourishing adult choir with choristers  
Full liturgical schedule in the catholic tradition of the Church of England

This vacancy arises from the appointment of our former Director of Music, Andrew Reid to Hereford Cathedral

For more information please go to our website: [www.lsm.org.uk](http://www.lsm.org.uk)

Closing date for applications: **12noon on 28th May 2026**  
Interviews: **5th June 2026**

SITUATIONS VACANT

YOUTH WORK

**Personal Assistant to J.John**

Are you passionate about helping people in their journey of faith and looking for a new opportunity to work as part of a friendly team? J.John and Philo Trust are looking for an enthusiastic and organised Personal Assistant to join the team at Philo Trust supporting J.John's administration.

The position of Personal Assistant is an essential role within the organisation to ensure J.John's many engagements are planned and prepared to best ensure our charitable objectives are fulfilled.

To find out more about this role and to apply, please visit: [jjohn.com/employment](http://jjohn.com/employment)

Closing date: 12 June 2026



**CHILDREN AND YOUTH COORDINATOR (PART-TIME)**

Ely Cathedral is seeking a capable and enthusiastic person to lead our youth activities. The post holder should have experience of working with children of all ages, leading worship and working effectively with volunteers.

There is a genuine occupational requirement that the post holder is a practising Christian. Duties include overseeing the cathedral's ministry to children and encouraging and nurturing their faith through existing and new services and activities.

The post holder will be required to undertake an Enhanced DBS check with barred list (child workforce) and specific safeguarding training necessary for the role.

Closing date: **midday, Monday 1st June 2026**

Further information on this role, and an application form, can be found on our website: [www.elycathedral.org/about/careers](http://www.elycathedral.org/about/careers)

Applications should be sent to [HR@elycathedral.org](mailto:HR@elycathedral.org)

**Community Youth Worker**  
**St John's Fishponds, Bristol**  
 22 hours per week  
 £28,000 pro rata  
**Lead and shape a creative, relational role**  
 For further details, and an application pack please contact [administrator@kingswaybenefice.org](mailto:administrator@kingswaybenefice.org)  
 Closing date: Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2026  
 Interviews: w/c 13 July 2026  
 serving the community, worshipping God [stjohnsfishponds.com](http://stjohnsfishponds.com)

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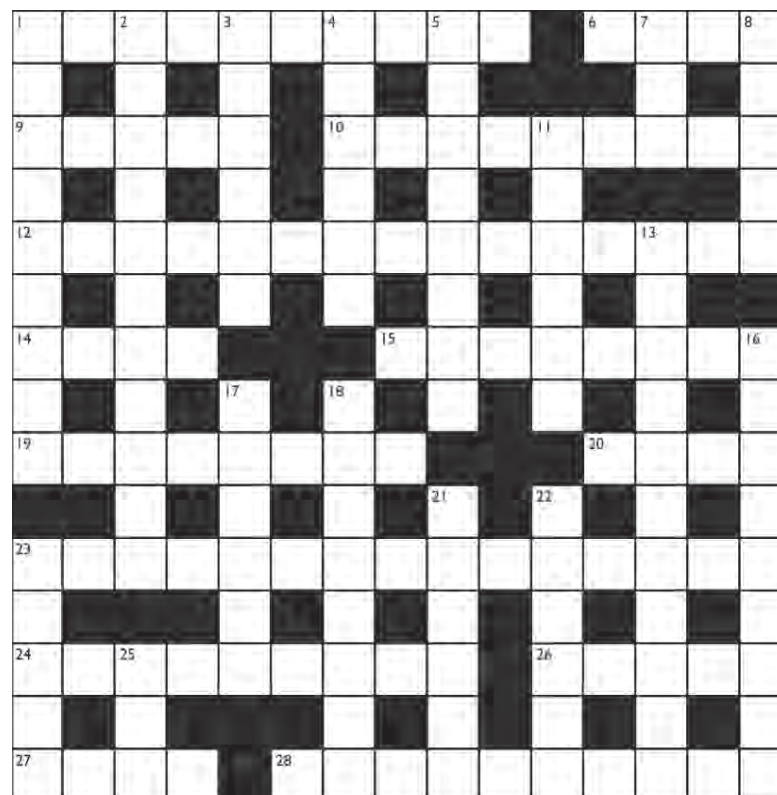
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**Crossword No. 1773**  
 by Chris Leyland



Across

- 1 Setter, so flipping healthy for extremely old one (10)
- 6 Junk needing charts on return journey (4)
- 9 Sects making reductions in expenditure saving a quid (5)
- 10 Sound of eye plucked is about ultimate in tabu in Roman novel (1,8)
- 12 Versus a saint — odd? C'est la vie, strangely for these guys (6,9)
- 14 A bit of a turkey attributed to parson at Christmas? (4)
- 15,25 Trump will announce this momentous event (8,3)
- 19 Oiled and toe-in adjusted... (8)
- 20 ...part of Cadillac lubricated for RAC? (4)
- 23 Poisonous mushroom in gardening lot? Yes, unfortunately (10,5)
- 24 Heartless intimidation of the French couple at rock bottom (2,7)
- 26 Where one digests religious reading matter? (5)
- 27 Flirts, talking of your smile initially (4)
- 28 Given Greek punishment Socrates'd to suffer accepting one (10)

Down

- 1 Anglican party consumed by passion for Balkan state (9)
- 2 Levite's son, I recycled boxes? (11)
- 3 Saint that's Major or Minor in heaven filled with universal love from the start (6)
- 4 Prophet in jail? He is being punished (6)
- 5 Riverbed deposit, entirely uranium (VI) found on bottom, not top (8)
- 7 Greek character from Memphis (3)
- 8 You'd find me organising Semites' escape, slaves originally (5)
- 11 Free? Unfortunately not for starters, say, bill coming up (6)

- 13 See Lesotho gain extraordinarily religious teachers (11)
- 16 Thanks editor, but not complete latitude accepted in columns (9)
- 17 Ran back line on board ship causing tangles (6)
- 18,25 Ready, say, by implication for event shortly after Christmas? (3,5,3)
- 21 Annoying bedfellow dear? Er, on some embraces when tossing (6)
- 22 Pen taken round half of Latvia translated Latvian, say (6)
- 23 Perplexed Ted is believer denying epiphany (5)
- 25 See 15 across and 18 down

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Solution to No. 1772



## POET'S CORNER

**Malcolm Guite** finds poetic associations in the Italian university town of Pavia

I WRITE this from the Collegio Ghislieri, in the ancient university town of Pavia. The college was founded in 1567, though the university itself is far older than that, as there is evidence of teaching there going back as early as 1361.

I am here to deliver a lecture on Tolkien and, as I explored the city this morning with Marco, the student who invited me, he was happy to point out a pair of narrow medieval towers, facing one another, and to tell me that student fans of *The Lord of the Rings* enjoyed referring to them in English borrowed from Tolkien's title as the "Two Towers".

Marco then disappeared into a library to prepare for an exam that he had just before my lecture, and left me to explore the city on my own.

It is some years since I visited Italy, and I had forgotten how good it was to be in one of its old towns, the narrow streets leading into beautiful café-lined piazzas, with their tables out in the sun and their effortlessly stylish clientele lingering over a morning cappuccino and a copy of the *Corriere della Sera*.

It all brought back vivid memories of a magical year when I was 16, and my father had a sabbatical in Rome. We lived in the Viale Aventino, and it was in that year that I acquired my taste for coffee, and also first drank and happily enjoyed a little vino, judiciously watered down by my parents, around the family table.

THERE was always poetry in the air for me that year, as I visited the Keats-Shelley memorial house by the Spanish steps, the house in which Keats spent his last months and where he left this world.

It is my first visit, though, to Pavia; but it also has poetic associations for me, as I first came across the name of Pavia in a medieval Latin poem, the Archpoet's "Confession".

I had read Helen Waddell's glorious translation of this poem while I was in the sixth form, but I took the opportunity, while I was at Cambridge, to do a course in medieval Latin and have a go, not very successfully, at translating the poem myself.

This anonymous 12th-century troubadour took the nickname Archpoet (*Archipoeta*), because he was, for a while, in the household of the Archbishop of Cologne, and, since he was serving an archbishop, why not style himself an archpoet? His famous poem the "Confessio", with its glorious celebration of wine, women, and song, and its scathing satire on the pretensions of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, found its way into the *Carmina Burana*, which is where most people first meet it.

The Archpoet was one of the vagantes, "The Wandering Scholars", as Waddell called them in her classic book of that name. The lifestyle of these troubadours is well set

out in the "Confession" (her translation):

Hither, thither, masterless  
Ship upon the sea,  
Wandering through the ways of air,  
Go the birds like me.

And it is later in this poem that he celebrates

Pavia for its beauties and its taverns:  
Pavia, where Beauty draws  
Youth with finger-tips,  
Youth entangled in her eyes,  
Ravished with her lips.

Well, I shall leave the beauties and ravishments to the youth of this student city; but I hope that, before I leave, as an elderly archpoet, to taste a little wine in a tavern, and prove the truth of the Archpoet's assertion:

As the wine is, so the verse:  
'Tis a better chorus  
When the landlord hath a good  
Vintage set before us.

## NOTEBOOK

Pat Ashworth

### Letting go

THE microwave and I have been itinerant for the past seven months around the house where I have lived for the past 50 years. We are renovating, reconfiguring, and extending it, using the same builders who — after the sudden death of my husband in 2011 — converted the garage into a study that looked companionably out on to the street. Catapulted into widowhood as I was, that lifeline enabled me to continue writing and to still feel part of the outside world.

What you do with a house over time defines the stages of life as clearly as Shakespeare's seven ages of man, as pictorially as a height chart to be exclaimed over on a kitchen wall. Experiencing my sister's death in 2024, and her crises in the years that preceded it, led us to reflect on future-proofing generally, and to conclude that it was ideally something to be done way before any need arose. For dwelling alone as people got older seemed, from everyone's point of view, the least desirable way to live. So, here I am, about to enter two-generational living, as my daughter, her partner, and their dog prepare to move from the city estate with which they have become jaded into space that we have been able to design for greener living, with — but not on top of — one another.

Pooling our resources and combining two households is an awfully big adventure. My mindset is already changing; for, as I contemplate unpacking the myriad boxes returned from storage, I reflect that — aside from the books, and some treasured bits and pieces — I have missed very little over the months of making do. So, what is in the boxes and do I really need it? My husband was fond of telling the children, as we piled up the car for departures to university, that he left home with a single holdall ("Yes, Dad, you've told us. . ."). I think he would approve of what we're about.

### Attentive audience

THE pictures of Archbishop Mullally's meeting with Pope Leo in the Vatican earlier this month take me instantly back to October 2003 and the equivalent first meeting be-

tween Archbishop Rowan Williams and Pope John Paul II. They were operating a "pool" for the many journalists who had flocked to Rome for the occasion — a system whereby a small group is present to observe the meeting, and afterwards relays to the rest what it was like.

The nun in charge gave me the news that I was to be one of the select bunch. I set three alarms in case, by some dreadful chance, I might oversleep; and, on my way to the Vatican Palace, I darted into a clothes shop to buy a top more befitting the occasion than the one I had packed.

I shall never forget the walk through the palace to the inner sanctum, the Pope's private library. Chamber after chamber becomes more lavish, more ornate, more gilded, designed to impress and awe. The further you go, the smaller you feel. In the library, I remember the already frail Pope John Paul sitting stiff, upright, and immaculate in his chair. The sight of the two men greeting one another was a moving moment and felt truly historic.

It came to our turn. I don't know about the other press members, but I had not expected to be personally introduced to the Pope. I have a close-up photograph of the moment that I am stooping to kiss his hand. And I'm thinking, "This is the Pope. For this one moment, it is just me and the Pope."

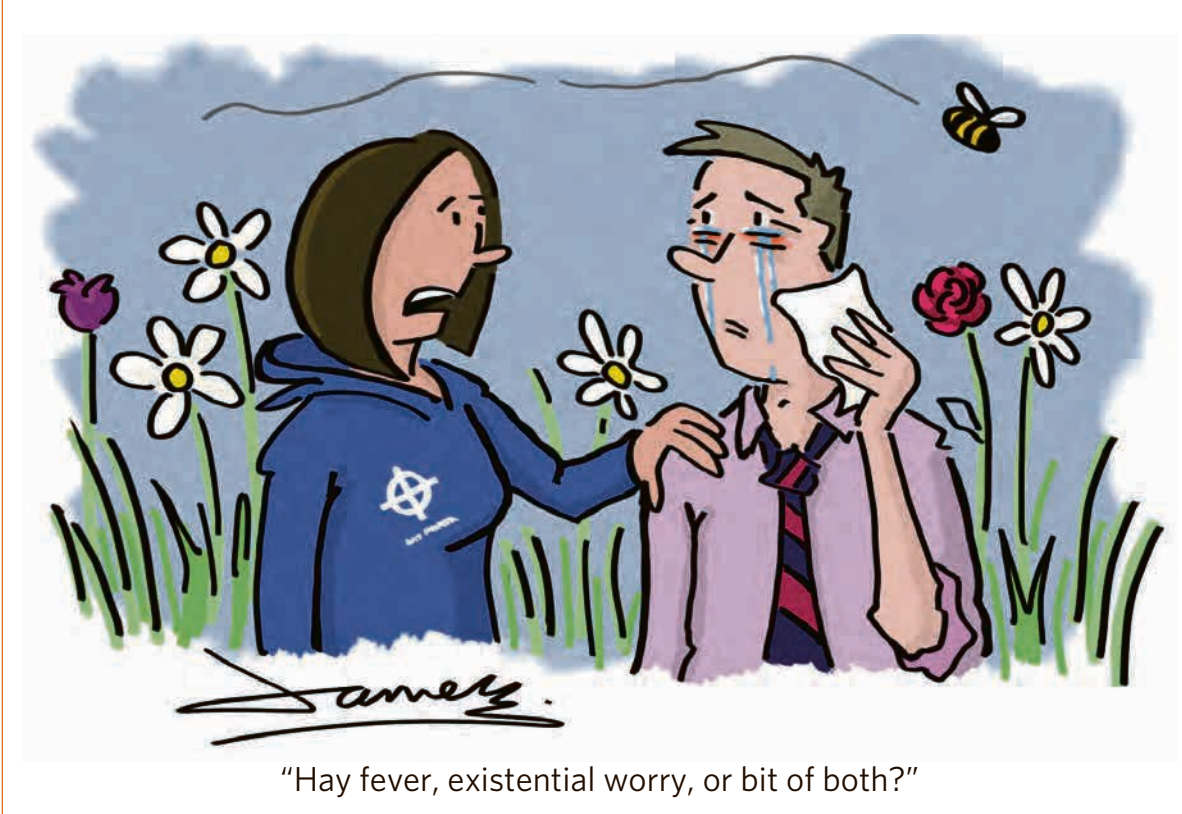
The irony is that, while my mother's family were Roman Catholics and my sister and I were duly baptised as such, our mother eventually left the Church. What prompted her decision remains a mystery and, aside from being a bridesmaid at the Catholic wedding of an older cousin, I don't recall ever going to mass. We went, in fact, to a Methodist Sunday school.

When I was 11, our family was received into the Church of England. And I, the non-Catholic, am the one who gets to meet the Holy Father. Knowing heads would probably nod at the affinity I sometimes feel when walking into a Catholic church, and voices murmur about there being more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy. The photograph is in one of the boxes — and I won't be discarding that one.

### Local hero

LATE autumn, winter, and early spring have passed me by while my life has been in flux. It has been a

## JAMES MELLOR



"Hay fever, existential worry, or bit of both?"

little like the time during lockdown: theatre projects waiting impatiently in the wings, a calendar of tightly controlled days (the builders start work at 7.30 a.m.), and not straying too far from home. It is just as well I'm tethered to my home ground because, as the daffodils come in abundance and then the bluebells, there is much to do to prepare for a new season of visitors to the community heritage site of which I'm a trustee. My ears prick up when I hear a tribute to the late Sir Neil Cossons on Radio 4's programme *Last Word*, because I had not long polished a plaque to him at our Old Church Tower.

The ancient tower survived wholesale destruction by Victorians needing a bigger, grander church. Sir Neil came to open it for us after we had secured funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore stonework, preserve key artefacts, and bring modest visitor facilities to the site.

On opening day, the man who had been director of the National Maritime Museum and the Science Museum, and who became chair of English Heritage, cut the ribbon with as much evident pleasure as he would have done at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum, of which he was the

first director, and which went on to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as famous for its workers' houses as its mighty bridge.

He was born and brought up just a couple of miles down the road, and was at school with one of our volunteers. It was a junior school where his father — who had a passion for industrial history and taught miners' night classes — was head. Sir Neil went to a grammar school near by and never forgot his roots.

### Choral foundation

SPRING has yielded to early summer while we have been up there serving coffee and homemade cakes. Now it's May and Pentecost, and soon to be Trinity.

The Church's year has been, as always, a stabilising factor — the choral offering, in particular, a pivotal point as measurable as the depth of the trench dug in the garden.

We are doing a new anthem — Joanna Forbes L'Estrange's "God the Holy Trinity". "I chose to describe in music the three-in-one nature of the Trinity by restricting myself largely to three-part harmony, sung by S/A/Men, and by employing D-sharp within the harmonic framework of A

major, which creates a tritone," she writes in her composer's note to the sheet music.

Ah, Joanna Forbes L'Estrange. You have no idea how refreshing all that sounds to me — how much that is music to my ears amid the language of screeding and tiling, roofing and plastering, and against the soundscape of hammering and drilling. "Above all, when singing the piece, please form the words as one would when reading the prayer aloud." Amen to that.

Pat Ashworth is a journalist and playwright.

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