

Spotlight

Jan/Feb 2019

For Richer, For Poorer

An initiative that twinned churches in poorer areas of the Diocese with those in wealthier places has proved “innovative and courageous”.

‘For Richer, For Poorer’ was launched in 2013 with support from Church Action on Poverty.

Four initial partnerships, in areas including the Black Country and Stoke-on-Trent, saw parishes with significant deprivation twinned with nearby wealthier parishes with a focus on mutual learning. These eight churches eventually grew to over 30 who formed partnerships over the next four years.

The initiative allowed people from twinned churches to hear first-hand stories of each other’s struggles and joys and discuss how churches can unite together to make a difference. Key learning from it has now been distilled in a new report.

Lichfield Diocese is within the ten most economically deprived dioceses in the country yet contains areas of comparative affluence. The churches involved reflected first-hand on many aspects of poverty – including material poverty, loneliness, isolation and a lack of networks - in both socio-economic settings.

One example was the twinning of St Bartholomew’s in Penn, a relatively wealthy area on the edge of Wolverhampton, with St Martin of Tours, a smaller church in a more deprived part of the city. The ongoing partnership began with people from each church discussing their



Partnering Priests: Ben Whitmore and Stuart Powell

communities over coffee and cake and grew to see them running a joint Lent course and creating mentoring opportunities. They also worked together on a Parish Nurse project with St Bartholomew’s supporting the development of an office space for the nurse, who worships at St Bartholomew’s, within St Martin’s. “The partnership is going well and is bearing good fruit,” said the Revd Prebendary Ben Whitmore from St Bartholomew’s.

[continues on p3 ->](#)



Unity at peace memorial

Christians from our Diocese and Germany joined for a poignant service to remember those lost in both World Wars.



The Cannock Chase German Military Cemetery was the focus for an act of commitment to peace, led by Bishop Michael. With almost 5,000 burials, the site is the country's main memorial for German and Austrian nationals who died in the UK.

It was part of the annual Anticipating Advent experience with the Diocese's partners, the Nordkirche Lutheran Church in Northern Germany. The group also spent time in Lichfield Cathedral and local churches and visited the site of the Peace Woodland at Lichfield's Beacon Park which will include a Nordkirche peace tree.

The Revd Christa Hunzinger, from the Nordkirche, said: "When Europe seems in danger of drifting apart it becomes even more important that we as churches stay together and proclaim God's love and our unity in Christ."

Diocesan Lent resource

People will be encouraged to get to grips with the Bible in fresh ways through this year's Diocesan Lent resource.



'The Bible Rediscovered' is available to order free of charge. The home-grown booklet takes the Gospel readings for each Sunday of Lent and invites readers to engage with the passage using a different approach to reading the Bible.

It fits the Diocesan focus on Discipleship, alongside Vocation & Evangelism, encouraging new and rediscovered ways of Bible reading.

Lindsey Hall, Director of Vocations, said: "Engaging with the Bible as a story which shapes our lives and communities, is essential to deepening discipleship. The resource will encourage people to think about how they read, and try new ways of approaching scripture."

The booklet has been put together by a range of people from around the Diocese with an introduction from Archdeacon Paul Thomas and conclusion from Stewart Jones, Vicar of Barlaston.

To order copies of 'The Bible Rediscovered' email feedback@lichfield.anglican.org by Friday 15 February. Booklets will be posted out toward the end of February. Downloadable copies will be available from the Diocesan website.

Five lenses for reading scripture are explored, with a brief explanation of each, questions for reflection and suggestions of other passages to look at.

Re:Dress-ing the balance

A Wolverhampton church will be turned into a catwalk to raise awareness about 'fast fashion' in February. St Peter's will host the multi-media 'Re:Dress' event on Monday evening, 11 February.

It will include a fashion show where people will model clothes from local charity shops along with a market-place and clothes swap, spoken word pieces and bible readings.

The event is part of a wider Re:Dress project in the Diocese to raise awareness of the human and environmental cost of the fast fashion and textile industry. An estimated 100 billion garments are manufactured every year, often overseas in factories with poor



working conditions. This can also lead to pollution, a drain on natural resources and tons of unwanted clothes heading to landfill.

Lindsey Hall, Director of Vocations, said: "The evening will involve the local community in creative ways, let people swap unwanted clothes and provide food for thought. Re:Dress explores care for our neighbour, modern slavery and responsible consumerism as we seek to follow Christ in the clothes we buy and our awareness of the plight of brothers and sisters around the world."

More information and tickets are available for the event at www.lichfield.anglican.org/redress2018 or on Facebook @ReDressLichfield

Enriched by partnership

<- continued from p1 The Revd Prebendary Maureen Hobbs, from Pattingham St Chad which was twinned with St Alban's in Wednesfield, added: "We are determined as a parish to continue with our link if possible. We have always wanted to help St Albans in practical ways, but without trying to tell them what to do, so to some extent we have waited for them to identify ways in which this help could take shape. We try to ensure that, as a worshipping community, they feature regularly in our prayers. I hope in future the relationship will be seen as one of interdependence, rather than dependence."

Meanwhile, a partnership between St John's in Marchington Woodlands, a small village in East Staffordshire, and St John's Welcome Centre in Abbey Hulton, Stoke-on-Trent, led to the development of a book swapping service and community coffee morning at St John's Marchington.



Revd Preb Maureen Hobbs with Henry Ibberson and Dr Iain Coleman (all from St Chad's, Pattingham) at the For Richer For Poorer conference at Stafford in 2014

The report shows that the initiative encapsulated many of the aims of the Diocese's vision including partnering together for the common good, working for justice and modelling the richness and variety of the church and wider communities across the diocese.

Read about the early results of For Richer, For Poorer at lichfield.anglican.org/frfp-2014/ and the latest report at lichfield.anglican.org/frfp-2018/

Mental Health First Aid

Lifting the lid on taboo subjects is a bit of a habit for the Revd Dr David Primrose, Diocesan Director of Transforming Communities – death, dementia and debt have all featured in recent years alongside aging, environment and inclusion. And his latest focus is mental health.

He arranged the first Mental Health First Aid course (from MHFA England) in the Diocese to run recently, led with passion by the Revd Charlotte Gompertz, a former psychiatric nurse and now a curate in Shrewsbury.

“We need to get to grips with the idea that mental health is just as real and as important as physical health,” she says [in a video - see link below]. “The church has got a huge part to play. We talk so much in Mental Health First Aid about hope and recovery and incorporating people into communities, and how that helps their recovery, so I just think church is the best place to start doing that.”

“A huge part of the importance of having a day of rest each week is to protect our own brains, to give us full rest and relaxation and a different pace of life to enable us to go on for the next six days at most at whatever pace life throws at us.”



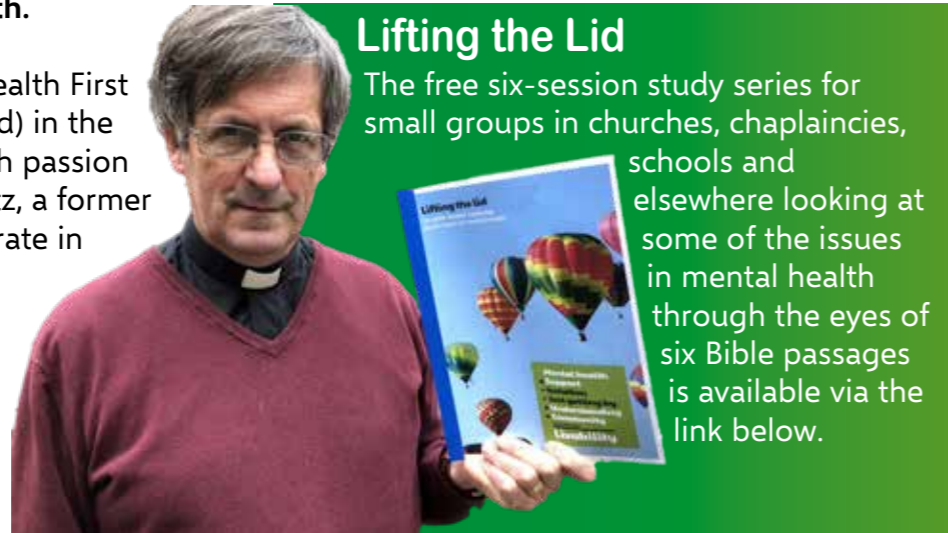
Participants were enthusiastic and motivated. The Revd Rachael Farnham is curate in Bayston Hill:

“I’ve come across a few people both while I was doing my training and personally who have been affected by mental health conditions and I wanted to know better ways to be able to help them and understand where they’re

coming from. I think the church needs to have a better understanding and be more open to the conversations. There is a lot of fear in being able to talk about mental health and what people might be going through.”

Lifting the Lid

The free six-session study series for small groups in churches, chaplaincies, schools and elsewhere looking at some of the issues in mental health through the eyes of six Bible passages is available via the link below.



“We’ve got three courses in 2019,” says David. “They’re all fully booked up already. Alongside that we’re encouraging as many people to take a six session Bible-study course called ‘Lifting the Lid’. We piloted it here in the Diocese and it’s now nationally produced free of charge, an excellent opportunity to look at Biblical characters and learn how to have intelligent, well-informed conversations about mental health.”



Course leaders Mary Hannibal and Revd Charlotte Gompertz with the first cohort at Meole Brace, Shrewsbury

More on mental health including video from the MHFA course in Shrewsbury at www.lichfield.anglican.org/mental_health/.

Promoting churches online



As people increasingly live their lives online, a church’s profile on social media and the internet has never been more important.

The good news is that there are a series of free resources available to help local parishes, youth leaders, chaplains, fresh expressions, schools and other groups get cyber-started.

Diocesan Online Enabler Tamar Willoughby explains: “We’re currently navigating a huge communication shift in our society, and it’s more important than ever for churches to be present on and engaging with online spaces.”

“With this in mind, we’ve been developing a series of webinars aiming to help you to do just that. We cover topics like having a presence online, building and designing a church website, as well as social media and how you can use it effectively as a church.”



The webinars, which are suitable for beginners and those with some online experience, include step-by-step tutorials on Instagram and Facebook and website content creation. Watch them now at www.lichfield.anglican.org/onlineenabler

You’ll also find a two-page social media strategy guide with helpful suggestions on items including goals, measuring success, knowing your audience, planning content, interaction and scheduling posts.

You can contact Tamar, who works part-time for the Diocese, for more specific guidance at tamar.willoughby@lichfield.anglican.org



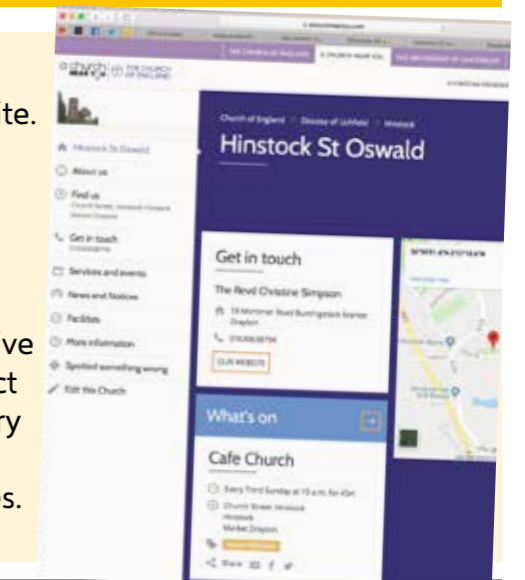
A Church Near You is the Church

of England’s tool for people to find the nearest church to them with the features that they require. With 16million views each year, it is the first website most visitors find when looking for a local church.

Looking for a church with a foodbank? After your local Alpha course? Want a church with beautiful stain glass windows for your wedding? Carol service? Easter vigil? *A Church*

Near You is your go-to site.

As well as being free, it is simple to edit and also comprehensive enough to act as the primary website for most parishes.



From small beginnings - growing grass roots youth work

Zechariah was told by the Lord to not despise the day of small things: they were just the start (Zech 4:10). Today we can be tempted to think like Zechariah when we talk about 11-18s ministry, saying that what we're doing is not enough, that we aren't enough.

The fact is, however, that small things are where great youth work begins, and faithful people across our Diocese are doing simple things to increase their confidence, vision and capacity for 11-18s ministry. Jon White, Youth and Vocations Enabler, shares three of those stories:

St George's, Glasgote

Linda and Phil Hartles weren't sure when they were asked to lead a youth cell to cover for friends who were having a baby. They knew God wanted them to serve together in some way, but was this really it? Once they started, though, the Hartles discovered a passion and talent for youth ministry: "It's been as much a blessing to us as it's been to the children," says Linda.



"We've ... watched them all grow up." Phil adds: "We're learning [from them] ourselves. They're surprising us every meeting... I get excited knowing all the potential they've got."

It's not always easy, but Linda and Phil are planning to keep going and, as part of a team, they plan on growing: "[there are] too many for the lounge we meet in, we're considering starting another group so we can cover more age-specific material."

Wrockwardine Deanery Youth Café

Wrockwardine's Di Woolridge started in 2014 in a Deanery with 12 churches and only two children over the age of 11. "We brought together four adults whom had



shown an interest in young people and would help us think through the process [of beginning something for 11-18s]," says Di, who also invited one of their young people to be part of the team. In May 2015 they launched a monthly youth café making space for young people to spend time together, play games, make crafts and

worship on a monthly basis – a hybrid, somewhere between open youth group and more discipleship-focused work. Today, that café has a number of committed young people and volunteers, sends young people on camps and residentials, and has launched a youth service with other churches in the area.



St Mary's, Bushbury

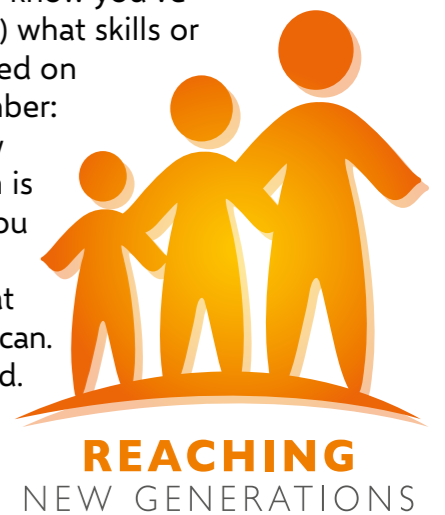
Over recent months, the Ministry Team at St Mary's Bushbury recognised: "a priority for us as a church to grow young [and]

put our arms around the next generation," says Vicar Revd Ian Poole. The team knew that they wanted to develop what they had to offer children and young people but didn't know how to progress. Things changed when they invited people in the congregation with an interest in children's and youth ministry to gather for a one-off meeting and explore how to do something different. Those asked "felt honoured," says Ian, "because [we were] asking their advice, not because we were asking them to do it [all]." A team formed from that first gathering to take responsibility children's and

youth ministry at St. Mary's. Currently, the team are recruiting new workers. "We are building the capacity for when we get to the next stage," says co-ordinator Mike Hotchkiss. Once they've done that, they'll know what they can do sustainably.

Your Small Beginning?

So, what is your small beginning? You might begin by asking a) what do you want to be different for the 11-18s in your community? b) how would you know you've achieved it? and c) what skills or people do you need on the team? Remember: the Reaching New Generations Team is here to support you as you go – get in touch with them at rng@lichfield.anglican.org or visit lichfield.anglican.org/rng for more ideas and resources.



Hope amidst horror

Bishop Michael led a team of people, including school pupils, to the National Holocaust Centre as part of a Diocesan Book Club visit.

The centre, near Nottingham, is the UK's only dedicated Holocaust museum. It opened in 1995 to remember the six million Jews and millions of other victims of the Nazi regime.

It was the focus of a visit from the book club who discussed their latest read, Dietrich Bonhoeffer's 'Letters And Papers From Prison', while there.

Three students from Lichfield Cathedral School also took part in the trip where they listened to and met Holocaust survivor Edith Kurcz Jayne, whose family fled for their lives from Vienna in 1938, relocating to Lisbon and later the US.

One of them, Josh Rooke, said: "The Museum gave us a real insight into the atrocities which befell the Jewish people in the Second World War. I was overwhelmed at the horrific events and suffering, which will resonate with me emotionally for a long time."

Bishop Michael, who is the Chairman of the national Council of

Holocaust survivor Edith Kurcz Jayne beneath her passport photo as a child. (right) and with Josh Rooke, Mali Lewelyn-Cook and Tom Dickinson from Lichfield Cathedral School (below)



Christians and Jews, added: "It was sobering to go with a group from the Diocese to learn more about how such a horrendous and calculated series of events destroyed the lives of so many ordinary, innocent people. But it was also wonderful to hear stories of hope and life, like Edith's, and to witness dozens of primary school children, who were also visiting, show such an interest through their honest questions to her."

Displays also highlighted the 10,000 refugee children who were sent to Britain to escape the Holocaust using 'Kindertransport' from 1938.



The centre was the brainchild of brothers James and Stephen Smith following a visit with their mother Marina to Israel's national Holocaust museum Yad Vashem in 1991. It has a memorial

garden and two permanent exhibitions, one on the history of the Holocaust and another tactile journey – aimed at younger children – which travels through a boy's personal experience of the atrocities in World War Two.

Find out more about the museum at www.holocaust.org.uk/

For information on the Diocesan Book Club email lindsey.hall@lichfield.anglican.org

*National Holocaust Memorial Day is 27 January. Find out more at <https://www.hmd.org.uk/>

Ring the changes for a year



Kenneth (centre) was commissioned in Lichfield Cathedral last January by Bishop Michael. Accompanied by Revd Jim Trood (rector of St Matthews), Diane Edlin (former warden) and Revd Philip Swan (SCVP Trustee).

At the end of 2018, we said farewell to Kenneth Bau, a St Chad's Volunteer from Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia who spent a year with St Matthew's Church in Walsall. He shares his experiences:

"Prior to coming to the UK, I was a university student, majoring in Hospitality Management. I completed my studies in December 2017 and begin my St Chad Volunteer Program in January 2018. I was based at St Matthew Walsall.

"Before I came to Walsall, I had a Skype chat with Revd Jim Trood (Rector of St Matthew's Walsall) and Ben Butterfield (the Children & Youth Worker). They mentioned to me that Walsall is a diverse place. I expected Walsall would be like Malaysia with its multi-culture,

race, etc. Now I know that actually Britain is quite similar to Malaysia. I think the only difference is the weather!

"Most of the week, I was involved in children's and youth work from Monday until Wednesday, and on Friday. Part of the week I taught the Chinese language as well. I also learnt bell ringing. Last but not least, I was involved in the worship band at church.

"There are so many highlights. I think one of the unexpected highlights in Walsall has been learning bell ringing. It was quite fun learning a new culture at St Matthew's. One of the major highlights for me is ringing for weddings in December.

"My plan for next is to come back to the UK again next year to continue my studies at the University of Wolverhampton.

"I would say to people who are thinking about joining the St Chad's Volunteer Programme to pray to God and just go for it. You won't regret joining the St Chad's Volunteer Programme.



ST.CHAD'S
VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

Could you be next?

The St Chad's Volunteer Programme is a two-way adventure for young adults (18-35) from Lichfield Diocese and all our link dioceses - in Canada, Malaysia, South Africa and Germany. For more information visit lichfield.anglican.org/scvp/

"It is a good time for you to build your relationship with God and a good opportunity to explore various cultures around the world too."



Welcome churchyard

St. Michael on Greenhill Church, Lichfield has been given a National Lottery 'Awards For All Grant' of £10,000 to help them manage their ancient 9-acre Churchyard. The church's Ray Allen tells us more:

"With support from Lichfield Diocese and the charity Caring For God's Acre, a management plan was devised to manage the churchyard so it is more welcoming and attractive for people and wildlife.



Robin Taylor of SSCE and Ray Allen, project leader at St Michael's with the new compost bins (left). Members of St. Michael's Working Party getting ready for a morning's work in the Churchyard.

the Staffordshire Ecology Recorder. People are pleased to use the churchyard as a learning resource and increase their botanical knowledge.

"The Church also received £1,500 from South Staffordshire Community Energy's Community Fund. This grant has been used to help purchase new compost bays as it was felt it would be good in to have a designated compost area for green waste from used flowers and plants. The resulting compost can be used as mulch in new, open areas. Plastic wood was used for the construction and a Leicester company, Eco Plastic Wood, made, delivered and installed the compost bays. The church is showing the importance of re-cycling plastic materials and making compost for its own use in the churchyard.

"St Michael's is pleased with the progress of the churchyard project and, as stewards of God's creation, looks forward to welcoming more people and wildlife to the peace of God's acre."



For information about applying for a grant from South Staffordshire Energy Fund go to staffsfoundation.org.uk/southern-staffordshire-community-energy-community. Caring for God's Acre have a website at caringforgodsacre.org.uk

"A working party was formed and people from the congregation and the wider community have been meeting regularly to do maintenance including removal of brambles and holly; weeding and tidying graves; planting wild flowers; and clearing moss. Members also have the opportunity to chat over coffee and cake. Working together in this way contributes so much to health and wellbeing.

"The Lottery grant has enabled the services of Mark Duffell, a professional ecologist. Many people came to a training session he conducted after which he helped groups to survey trees and wildflowers in the summer. After two more of these days in the spring, a report will be produced listing all the trees and flowers identified with copies also given to



From the Editor

Welcome to 2019 and the New Year edition of Spotlight! We hope you'll have time to read some of the hope-filled articles,

including our feature on growing a youth group from small beginnings. We'd love to hear your stories of transformation and life this year, so please do get in touch.

Pete Bate, Director of Communications

No defence for deference

As we enter the new year, Bishop Clive is alert to a clash of theological truth and cultural hangover.

The Archbishop of Canterbury caused a flurry of media attention before Christmas when he was quoted as saying "God is not male or female. God is not definable". He elaborated by explaining that all descriptions of God "were to some degree metaphorical" and that His Characterisation as "father" could not be understood in exactly the same way as an earthly father.

Despite such theological wisdom, the Christian image of God as a male heavenly father runs deep and has permeated our church structures for almost two millennia, ever since the early church embraced the idea of hierarchy with, inevitably, males at the top and a God with male attributes set over all.

With the advent of women priests and bishops, the Church of England appears a little less patriarchal but deference to, and a preference for, male authority still runs deep. Witness the huge number of parishes which have still never had a woman vicar. The mantra "father knows best" is a default assumption in many places rather than a historic relic, although the "father" in question may equally well wear a sharp suit as a flowing cassock.

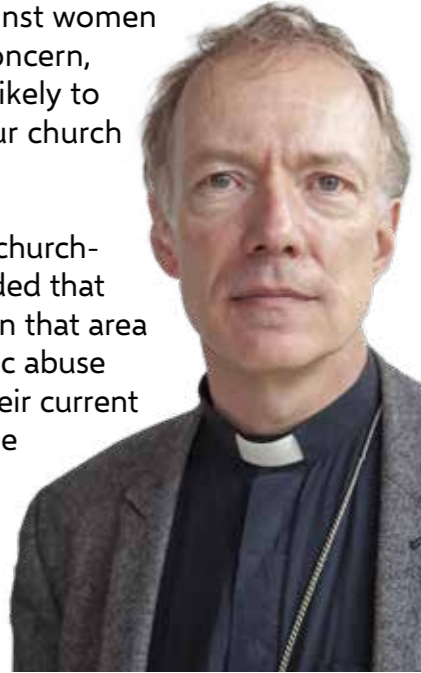
The unspeakable crimes of abuse that have been facilitated by such a culture will forever shame the church, and the Church of England will continue to fall under the spotlight as the national safeguarding enquiry continues its

investigations in 2019. But while our awareness of abuse tends to centre on the abuse of children and vulnerable adults, domestic abuse perpetrated by men against women should cause us equal concern, especially as it is just as likely to be taking place within our church communities as outside.

In 2018 research among church-goers in Cumbria concluded that one in four churchgoers in that area had experienced domestic abuse and/or violence within their current relationships. This is in line with UK wide statistics about the prevalence of domestic abuse.

We cannot pretend that this is an issue that does not affect those within our churches, but we do have a choice as to whether we ignore it or whether we use our awareness as a basis for action. A starting point might be to consider what appropriate forms of pastoral support could be offered to those suffering from forms of domestic abuse. How and where might safe places be created? What resources would be needed to make our churches places of sanctuary and healing? Questions, the answer to which "father" may well not be the person who knows best, but which must be addressed if our churches are to be the conduits through which captives are set free and fear is cast out by love.

+Clive
*The Rt Revd Clive Gregory
Bishop of Wolverhampton*



There are many resources for those concerned about or suffering domestic abuse. If an emergency or criminal offence is taking place, always contact the police on 101 or 999.

Other support is provided by Pathways Project (Staffordshire - 01543 442610), Women's Aid (national 0808 2000 247). Local Authorities run safeguarding services related to domestic violence. If issues involve a parish church, contact the Diocese Safeguarding team on 01543 306030 or (out of office hours) 0845 120 4550 and alert the Parish's Safeguarding Coordinator.





Come follow Christ
in the footsteps of St Chad

DIARY

Hidden Voices training

What would it look like for people to join together to raise awareness of modern slavery, protect those who are vulnerable and welcome survivors into their communities? New from The Clewer Initiative, a day to help parishes and communities respond well and includes modules on understanding modern slavery, prevention, detection and restoring dignity.

Beacon Conference Centre in Stafford (ST18 0GB)
Wednesday 29 January,
10am-4pm: £10 including lunch. Book via james.henderson@ttogether.org.uk.

Re:Dress

A church will be turned into a charity shop catwalk to raise awareness about 'fast fashion'.



St Peter's Church, Wolverhampton
Monday 11 February, 6.30-8.30pm

For tickets, visit lichfield.anglican.org/redress
or phone 01543 306223



A conference exploring new worshipping communities
Keynote speakers: **Revd Dr Michael Moynagh | Andy Milne**
Saturday 9 March 2019 - Aldridge Parish Church
lichfield.anglican.org/refresh/01543 622592

