

Spotlight

July/August 2017



Sunday morning ordinands with bishops of Stafford, Lichfield and Wolverhampton and acting Diocesan Director of Ordinands

#NewRevs

Twenty-two new curates were ordained at Lichfield Cathedral this month, reflecting the rising interest in exploring vocations across the Diocese.

The curates - 14 women and eight men - marked the end of two or three years of training when they were ordained as deacons by Bishop Michael over two services. The occasion followed the ordination of 11 priests at services across the Diocese a week earlier.

The new deacons will start their parish ministry in a variety of places. Five are taking on non-stipendiary roles including ex-prosecuting solicitor Viv Starkie who will minister in Mid Trent, Stafford.

She said: "I never imagined when I was 33 that I would be ordained as a minister

Newly Revd Viv Starkie, left, with fellow new curates Benjamin Care and Jill Cooper

when I was 63. I was then a Prosecuting Solicitor with the Crown Prosecution Service with two small children. I only began teaching Sunday school to avoid the embarrassment of chasing around church after a toddler! As the years passed, I increasingly felt I should be doing more. Out of the blue, I decided to take early retirement. I suddenly realised that God was calling me to ministry and that my professional skills in advocacy, my passion for justice, my concerns for victims of hate crime and domestic violence, were all just preparation for a vocation in ministry. Ever since I embraced my vocation, I've felt a bubble of joy within me."

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The Church of England around Staffordshire, northern Shropshire and the Black Country

More #NewRevs



Saturday evening ordinands with bishops of Wolverhampton, Lichfield and Shrewsbury, archdeacons, deputy registrar and the Dean.

Among three new Ordained Lay Ministers is Richard Hume who will combine his job as a funeral director in Crewe with serving his curacy in his sending parish of St Mary and St Chad in Longton. He said: "Non-stipendiary ministry has a role outside the church. It bridges the gap. It's the Church going out and meeting people where they are."



Above: Richard Hume with Bishop Geoff at the ordination. Below: Jassica will serve her curacy overlooking the Welsh border.

Jassica Castillo-Burley is swapping the bustle of parish life in Bloxwich for her new stipendiary role as a curate in Whittington and West Felton, Shropshire. She said: "Being ordained allows me to go out and minister to the whole wide world!"



One Shrewsbury congregation has managed

to produce *three* new ordinands in the current deacon crop. Anastasia Lawrence, Hannah Lins and Ana Lawrence - all former teachers - count Holy Trinity, Meole Brace, as their home church.

Anastasia Lawrence, Fi Iddon and Hannah Lins



Diocesan Director of Vocations Dr Lindsey Hall said more and more people are showing an interest in vocations including ordained ministry. "We are currently working with around 100 people who are exploring vocation either on the Pathways to Ministry course or by meeting with a Vocations Advisor."

More details about the new ordinands, including videos of Richard and Jassica, can be viewed at <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/news/2017/07/02/22-new-curates-ordained/>

For find out more about exploring your vocation contact the Vocations Team via angela.bruno@lichfield.anglican.org

Soul Food

The diocesan Spirituality Team are excited to be launching a new course this autumn called 'Soul Food'. It offers nourishment for souls who seek God and encouragement for those who want to pray but find it hard!

Course director Charles Ruxton said: "Any of us can get stuck in a rut with prayer. Perhaps we are trying to pray in a way that suited someone else. Perhaps our prayer hasn't grown up even though we have. Or we simply have a desire to grow in intimacy or responsiveness to God. In this course, participants will have an opportunity to think about their way of praying, learn about ways that have helped



Christians through the ages, and, above all, to have a go."

The course runs in Wolverhampton on Tuesday evenings or Shrewsbury on Wednesday daytimes, mostly on a fortnightly basis. Go to: <http://www.trypraying.org.uk/resources/helps/the-lichfield-courses-in-spiritual-direction>



Festival fans and first-timers are being invited to the Diocese's own mini music and arts festival at Shallowford House on 23 July.

Encourage Festival is an eclectic mix of music, talks, poetry, arts and craft, food and drink. As well as headliner Rev Kate Bottley (currently on Celebrity Masterchef) giving a talk and joining TGI Monday for a panel discussion, Neil Baldwin will speak about the BBC film 'Marvellous' and share further tales from his extraordinary life.



Music includes folk duo Long for the Coast, familiar hits from The Born Again Beatles, and feel-good Americana from Orange Circus Band. And there's poetry from Liz Berry and Mark Pryce. All of the contributors will encourage us to think about what life looks like when lived to the full in God's kingdom here and now. A new beer - Toast Ale - will also be available, the result of a social enterprise project using surplus bread and crusts.

Tickets and more info are available at www.encouragefestival.co.uk or call 01543 306 220.



Meeting the Maker

The Revd Julia Cody, Vicar at Perton, reflects on a poignant encounter in the Holy Land:

"The Church At Perton decided to buy a new nativity scene and were keen to get an olive wood nativity made in Bethlehem. After some searching we bought our beautiful new crib which was made by Bethlehem wood carver Jeries Facouseh.

"Sometime later, ahead of a Tettenhall Wood Benefice Pilgrimage group visit to the Holy Land, I contacted Jeries and asked if we could meet. He was really keen, but things were left vague, as he simply gave me his mobile number to call once we were in Bethlehem! Our guide called Jeries and arranged for us to meet in our hotel. We gave him a small gift - a photograph of the nativity he made, in situ, with a greeting from the church. He was touched and invited us to visit his workshop on Manger Street.

"Having closed for the evening, Jeries opened up for us, and explained the process of olive wood carving, from chunks of the ancient tree to the pieces we enjoy in Perton, and served us iced tea and homemade pastries. It was so special to meet this Christian Palestinian brother, to hear about his family, and the challenges of life in Palestine, and to assure him of our prayers.



"This was just one highlight of a life-changing nine-day pilgrimage. Based in three places - Tiberius on the Sea of Galilee, Jerusalem and Bethlehem - our packed itinerary included a trip on the lake, the ancient ruins of Capernaum, the Mount and Church of Beatitudes, and the churches of Tabgha and Mensa Christi, recalling the miracles of the loaves and fishes, and Jesus' reinstatement of Peter plus the spectacular smells, colours and hustle and bustle of Jerusalem as we explored the old city and walked the deeply moving Palm Sunday road down the Mount of Olives.

"It was fascinating to hear about projects seeking to build bridges such as the inspiring work of Musalaha, a Palestinian Christian charity working to bring reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians; and visiting the Bethlehem Arab Rehabilitation Hospital whose motto is, 'every patient is first and foremost a human being'.

"A week in this wonderful place opens your eyes to its deep complexities. King David urged his people to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Psalm 122), and when we asked our Palestinian Christian guide what we can do his response was, 'pray, pray, pray'."

Stepping out together

Hundreds of people from throughout the Diocese gathered at Lichfield Cathedral to 'Come follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad'.

The 'Come Follow Christ: First Steps' celebration laid out the Diocese's direction of travel for the next five years, with a focus on discipleship, vocation and evangelism.

After introductory worship and an address by Bishop Michael, people were encouraged to 'meander' around the cathedral at various activities including a live



Discipleship Marketplace resource area.

performance of the life of St Chad by Simon Airey, an interactive prayer area by the Community of St Chad and a



Outside the cathedral, College Hall hosted a 'Vocation Location' which featured real-life stories about people's calling while members of Sanctus St Mark's congregation in Stoke-on-Trent invited people to multi-cultural worship in a marquee on the lawn.



The event focused locally on parishes, fresh expressions of church, schools and chaplaincies and closed with commissioning four new mission initiatives: 4 Rural Youth in the Salop Episcopal Area, Church and Church School Together in Worship Mission in the Stafford Episcopal Area, Blakenhall Heath Mission Project in the Wolverhampton



Episcopal Area and a diocesan-wide Missional Chaplaincy project.

Following the 20 May event, people across the Diocese are invited to join a conversation about how we can take the Next Steps on our joint journey by sharing their stories of discipleship, vocation and evangelism.



Bishop Michael said: "The First Steps event has launched us on our direction of travel, and we are now

embarking on a phase of the journey which will take us up to the end of this church year. During this phase, we will be encouraging people to work out what the priorities of discipleship, evangelism and vocation mean for themselves as individuals and communities of faith, in every part of the diocese, at every level, and in every form of Christian presence."

You can find out more about our shared Next Steps at https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/next_steps/

Feat of faith

Peter Phillips walked 412 miles for Christian Aid and the Iona Community. Here the Lichfield Cathedral Council member recounts his 40-day pilgrimage:

"There are 65.3 million displaced people worldwide, an all-time high. Having walked from London to Paris previously, one morning last October, I declared that I would now walk to Iona.

"I discovered from Lichfield Cathedral to Iona Abbey was 412 miles. I knew I could (only) walk 10 to 12 miles a day, hence it would take me 40 days. A walk in the park, so I thought!

"Both donor organisations embraced my project with passion and I felt humbled as strangers e-mailed offering 'sleep-overs' on my route.



"Friends gathered in the cathedral as Bishop Michael said a Pilgrims Prayer and sprinkled Holy Water over me: 'Go, on your journey, in the name of Christ and may He walk with you and keep you safe'.

"For four days I was on familiar turf, born and raised in Staffordshire. After that it was unfamiliar territory. It went through my mind that refugees fleeing persecution must have the same feeling of isolation.

"Every host was wonderfully kind. For 12 hours they opened their hearts and homes to me. They fed me, offered me a hot bath and let me use their laundry facilities.



"Ten to 12 miles a day turned out to be an average. Once I walked 19 miles. At least I was assured of a warm comfortable bed whereas many refugees find themselves sleeping under bushes. To reach Scotland I crossed Shap Fell. As I fumbled my way between the two M6 carriageways the heavens opened. I received pitiful looks from motorists. I was frightened but I was reminded again of the plight of refugees.

"In Glasgow my head was turned by its busyness. I stood on a street corner and a man asked me for a light. I didn't have one, but he told me about life inside a local prison and how difficult it was to adapt to life outside.

"On day 40, the ramp of Iona Ferry was lowered. A small but enthusiastic collection of Abbey volunteers held a large notice: 'Welcome Peter...412 Miles'. I ran from the ferry, fell to my knees and kissed the jetty!

"I give thanks that Jesus walked with me. I pray he will walk with all those who are forced to flee and that, in Him, they will find refuge."

Peter's walk has raised over £9,100. You can add to this at uk.virginmoneygiving.com/peterphillips2017



Wheels of welcome

Over 50 vehicles graced the car park and adjacent green at a very unusual church event in Shrewsbury during June.

REVS 2017 was a classic car show driven by Revd Adam Gompertz and a team from Holy Trinity, Meole Brace.



Among the vehicles were a pre-war Aston Martin and Model T Ford, a 1957 limousine by Hawker Siddeley and 1970s classics such as Minis and Land Rovers. A tractor, several mopeds and camper van added variety.

The event, sponsored by Salop Leisure, attracted a large crowd of locals and enthusiasts with elements for all ages. The Trinity Centre hosted crafts and games and a car-building challenge with Lego and junk modelling, racing competition with Scalextric and computer-based driving games.

As well as a chance to gather petrolheads, the event had a serious purpose according to the Bishop of Shrewsbury, the Right Revd Mark Rylands.



"It may look like a church fete and a lovely day out but it is much more than that, actually quite serious," said Bishop Mark. "Adam is trying to start a fresh expression of church based around his passion for classic cars - and it seems to be working.

"There are a lot of people here who are unchurched but have gladly bought their vehicles along. I've noticed that they talk about their cars but then they talk about themselves and something of their spiritual journey too."

The event was the summer party for a small but growing fresh expression called the Sunday Service Station that meets monthly on the edge of Shrewsbury.

"The Sunday Service Station is in its infancy but I'm developing ideas about each one having a theme. Next month we will be asking people to bring their cars and possibly share the stories behind them," says Adam.



"It's very early days - and this is a long term experiment - but it's about taking the time to build relationships and be where people are at."

Anyone interested in taking part or supporting REVS in prayer or as a mission partner is invited to contact Adam on 07917 248973. In addition, Revd David Cundill (Diocesan Deputy Director of Mission on 07540 841403) has a particular interest in supporting and advising churches and groups considering fresh expressions.

A video and a longer version of this article can be found on our website at <https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/news/2017/06/23/congregation-classic-cars/>

Stained glass is pits perfect

A Cannock Chase church is proudly mining its heritage thanks to a specially-commissioned stained glass window.



St Thomas' Church in Huntington has unveiled the new East Window which features a memorial to the former local Littleton Colliery.

Bishop Clive took part in the dedication service of the window which has Jesus holding a mining lamp at its centre-piece, representing the Light of the World. Scenes from Cannock Chase and a miner carrying a pit

and a shovel are shown in the left and right lancets.

Revd Alexandrina Mann, minister at St Thomas', explained: "The East Window project has taken a number of years to bring to fruition and has been funded by public and congregational donations as well as church funds.

"The window echoes the area's mining heritage and recognises that Huntington was, up until just over two decades ago, a close-knit mining community with a strong sense of identity and belonging. This community spirit continues and is particularly noticeable

amongst the congregation of St Thomas', which is often referred to as 'the small church with a big heart'."

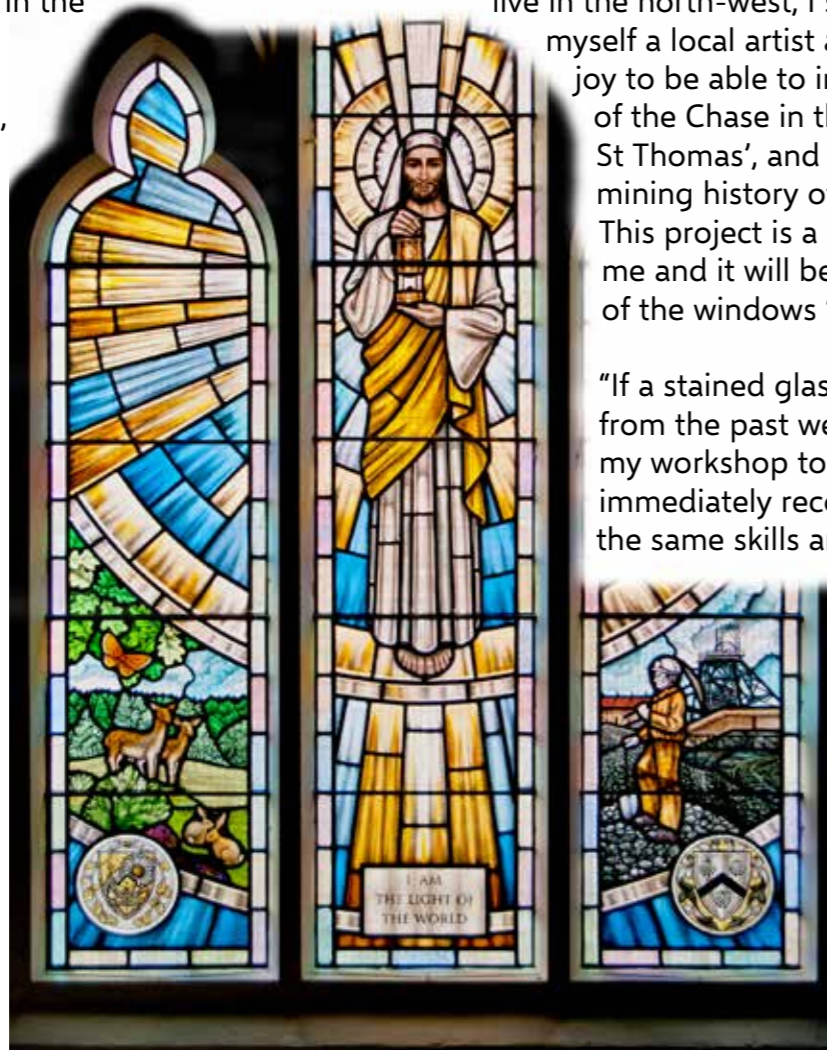
The window was designed by West Yorkshire-based architectural stained glass designer and artist Deborah Lowe and her colleague Graeme Scott.



Deborah said: "I grew up in Staffordshire and was inspired by nature and the landscape around me from an early age and enjoyed many family walks on Cannock Chase. Although I now live in the north-west, I still consider

myself a local artist at heart! It was a joy to be able to include elements of the Chase in the windows for St Thomas', and to study the mining history of the area too. This project is a special one for me and it will be lovely to think of the windows 'at home'.

"If a stained glass window artist from the past were to arrive in my workshop today, they would immediately recognise exactly the same skills and techniques that have been utilised since windows first started to be created. These methods of production have remained unaltered over many centuries."



Photos: John Twinning - twinningfineart.co.uk

All ears for 20 years

Fountains Christian counselling service recently celebrated its 20th birthday. Counsellor and Trustee Wendy Bishop talks about its impact across the Diocese:



"There was a great feeling of excitement and anticipation as people arrived at Shallowford House. Some travelled a considerable distance but most were from Staffordshire and Shropshire. All were there to celebrate Fountains, the Christian counselling service founded 20 years ago.



"The service grew from the vision of the late David Gardener, a Stafford clergyman who lectured in counselling at Keele University. Wishing to bring his Christian faith into counselling, David produced and led the course 'An Introduction to Counselling in a Christian Context' at Shallowford. A group was trained to assist the pastoral work of clergy. Those trained wanted to be used more fully and so David's vision enlarged to set up a counselling service. In this David was joined by the Rev Jim Needham, also from Stafford. We were delighted to welcome David's wife Rosemary.

"As I reviewed the 20-year journey, God loomed ever larger. In times of difficulty, when resources seemed insufficient God was very clearly at work. Vision evenings were held to seek God's leading. New people joined the service, bringing inspiration and fresh ideas just at the right time. The review concluded with Jim Needham and Joan Furlong, one of the first counsellors, sharing joyful reminiscences of the early years.

"Speaking was Revd Jeff Leonardi, for many years the Bishop's Advisor for Pastoral Care and Counselling. Jeff was involved from almost the beginning as consultant supervisor and in retirement continues as a supervisor. He gave a spell-binding talk on spirituality in the counselling process.

"A moving time of worship followed, with prayers, a meditation led by counsellors and music



led extremely sensitively by Paul Critchley. The morning was a time of great joy, blessing and inspiration. The presence of God was clearly sensed in every part of the programme."

Fountains counsellors work in Stafford, Stoke, Cannock and Market Drayton, accepts people of any or no faith, is non directive and helps those who cannot afford professional fees. Find out more by ringing 07980 387847 or visiting www.fountainscounselling.org.uk



From the Editor

Thanks for picking up your latest edition of Spotlight. I hope you enjoy the inspiring stories of life across our vast and diverse diocese. It was

great to see many of you at the 'Come Follow Christ: First Steps' event. See p5 to find out how you can play your part in our Next Steps together. Wishing you all a fantastic summer!

Pete Bate, Director of Communications



Reach for the spires

A redundant church building in Wolverhampton has been saved for future use as a result of Diocesan intervention. St Luke's Church in Blakenhall has been empty for eight years since unaffordable repairs forced its closure. The congregation moved into the adjacent St Luke's School where they continue to thrive.



The team also involved experts in repairs by roped-access who have previously worked on Canterbury Cathedral and Westminster Abbey.

High winds on the day reduced the amount achieved then, but the roped access was set up so the scheduled work was completed over the next two weeks.

Necessary restoration costs estimated at around £1million were beyond the means of the congregation and, through the uncertainty, a strong local campaign developed hoping to ensure the building's survival. The Diocese of Lichfield took on responsibility for the building with the intention of finding an alternative use.

"The repairs we've been undertaking are quite basic," said Andy Mason, the Diocese's Director of



In the meantime, ongoing works to assess the numerous issues reached a stage in May that some urgent repair work was needed on the spire:



Ed Morton, structural surveyor to the project said: "Using the crane is the most economic and pragmatic way of getting the work done. It is between six and nine times cheaper than the alternative of putting scaffolding around the tower."

Property who has overseen the project. "The problem is that they're high up. We're talking the use of a 62m crane to get the staff up there."

Meanwhile, negotiations with a Birmingham businessman have resulted in a deal that will see the building saved and converted into an antiques emporium. The new owners are set to spend the significant sum needed to restore the building to a safe and usable condition.

Watch more about the work at <https://youtu.be/jqleYBlv-fl>



Ed Morton (left) with roped access expert Dan Donovan

Foundations from failure

This is the time of year for school exams and end of term speech days. Many will be successful in their exams this summer but some will not get the results they want or need. Some students will receive prizes at speech day but many will not. I still remember the feelings of failure at messing up my A Levels 38 years ago and not achieving the results that were expected of me.

We may be tempted to think that 'successful people' are those who are always successful, who seem to sail through life moving from one achievement to the next. However, that is usually not the case. Winston Churchill, as Prime Minister, boldly led Britain to victory in World War II. However, 25 years before that, as First Lord of the Admiralty, he championed a World War I military attack that ended in disaster—Gallipoli. Churchill believed that he had the solution for breaking the impasse of the trench warfare in Northern France by opening up a second front away in the Dardanelles in North West Turkey. The Battle of Gallipoli, however, became a slaughter and quickly morphed into a stalemate just as bloody, just as pointless as that on the Western Front. In the first month after storming the peninsula, the Allies lost 45,000 men. The ill-fated Gallipoli Campaign lasted nine months before the evacuation of the last Allied troops in January 1916. Each side sustained 250,000 casualties with 46,000 Allied

troops and 65,000 Turkish troops dead. Gallipoli was a disaster and in May 1915 Churchill was demoted to an obscure cabinet post. He remained haunted by the failure of Gallipoli for decades but somehow he did not allow it to defeat him. When he took the office of Prime Minister in 1940, he wrote, "All my past life had been a preparation for this hour and for this trial." That included Gallipoli. Later in life, Churchill would say that 'success is going from one failure to another without giving up'.

'success is going from one failure to another without giving up'.

This would seem to be true in Christian discipleship, too. It is well documented how Peter made a mess of following Jesus and disowned him in a cowardly manner when Jesus needed him most. Peter misunderstood much about Jesus but there was one thing he really understood: he knew that Jesus was one who forgave sins. That one thing he learnt and it meant that Peter was able to keep on and on, after failure. He never, finally, gave up. Peter fell at all the fences but he just picked himself up and struggled on, blinded with tears and covered in mud. It was this quality that Jesus must have seen in him – this refusal to ever accept defeat. After his resurrection, Jesus put Peter back together again and even recommissioned him as leader of the apostles.



Failure is on the map in everyone's life. The key seems to be recovering from it, not being defeated by it - allowing God to pull us up off the floor when we have fallen. When we fail we may be sorely tempted to agree with Homer Simpson: 'You tried your best; you failed miserably. The lesson is: never try!' However, as followers of someone who died and rose again from the dead, there is a better way.

+Mark



Come follow Christ
in the footsteps of St Chad

For a full listing of events in the Diocese, visit
lichfield.anglican.org/events

Let us know about your events by email to
comms@lichfield.anglican.org



Encourage Festival: A one day mini music and arts festival celebrating God's call to us all.

Saturday 23 July 13.00-evening
Shallowford House

DIARY

YOLO @Stafford Castle

You Only Live Once is a social group open to all who experience loneliness in one way or another. We will create new friendships and build relationships together encouraged by John 10:10.



You Only Live Once
Life In All its Fullness

Saturday 5 August 11am -
Meet at the Railway Inn pub
by Stafford Castle to walk,
explore & eat

More info: Clare Spooner
01543 306094 /
yololichfield@gmail.com

RNG Strategy Commissioning

Saturday 16 September
St John's Church, Muxton,
Telford TF2 8RJ

A celebration of exciting
ways that parishes are
reaching 0-18s

