

Spotlight

Nov/Dec 2016

Guests from across the globe took part in the installation of Bishop Michael as the 99th bishop of the Diocese at Lichfield Cathedral.

As well as representatives from the Diocese, there were people from other churches, faiths and our link dioceses in the Anglican Communion including Archbishop Moon Hing from Malaysia, Bishop Ross, successor to Selwyn in New Zealand, and longtime friends



Above: The new diocesan bishop requests entry to his cathedral. Below: He was greeted and questioned by local schoolchildren

Welcome +Michael

of Bishop Michael including Bishop Laurence of Japan.

The colourful service in the packed Cathedral was also streamed live to numerous churches around the Diocese.

As the Cathedral doors opened, Bishop Michael was greeted by children who said: "We greet you in the name of Christ. Who are you and why do you request entry to this Cathedral church?" The Bishop replied: "I am Michael, a servant of Jesus Christ, and I come as one seeking the grace of God, to travel with you in his service."



Photos: Lichfield Cathedral Photographers

During the installation, the pastoral staff left on the altar by his predecessor Bishop Jonathan Gledhill was presented to Bishop Michael. He made his oaths while resting his hand on the St Chad Gospels, which date back to c730AD.

Later, a Procession of Witness through the streets of Lichfield led to a special Eucharist at the Cathedral where Bishop Michael preached and presided and his wife, Dr Julia Ipgrave, read one of the lessons.



DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD



DISCOVERING
THE HEART OF GOD



GROWING
DISCIPLES



REACHING
NEW GENERATIONS



TRANSFORMING
COMMUNITIES



PRACTISING
GENEROSITY

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

Welcoming our new Diocesan Bishop

People from all around the Diocese joined the new Bishop of Lichfield, the Rt Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave, on a three-day pilgrimage during his 'Season Of Welcome'.

They walked along a 40-mile stretch of the Two Saints Way trail from Stoke-on-Trent to Lichfield in the run-up to Bishop Michael's installation service.



Refreshments at St Rufin's church, Burston. Allegedly the first diocesan bishop to visit this small church which is almost completely hidden from the road by the village pond.

Susie and Martin Goodchild, from Shrewsbury, were among those who joined the Bishop on the first day of the pilgrimage. "Walking with a group of people from various places around the diocese was a most enjoyable thing to do," Susie said. "It was good to have the chance to get to know Bishop Michael a little bit, hear about how God led Him to Lichfield and be a part of the journey to his enthronement."



The pilgrims chanced upon the Messy Church at St John's CofE School, Stafford. After a Questions/Answer time, the children sang and prayed for +Michael.

Alongside the pilgrimage, nine services of prayer in



Shropshire, Staffordshire and the Black Country took place, culminating with an opportunity for people to renew baptismal vows at St Chad's Well in Lichfield.



Bob Winfield, Warden at St Lawrence's Church in Gnosall, said: "The congregation and community were very pleased to welcome Bishop Michael to St Lawrence's. Children from the two local church schools, the Scouts and Guides and many local people were able to meet him and chat, and he very bravely answered some well thought-out questions put to him by the school children. He came across as open, friendly and warm and the locals will no doubt forgive him for admitting to being a Leicester City fan!"

Revd Canon Dr Judy Hunt welcomed Bishop Michael to St Alkmund's Church in Whitchurch and added: "Bishop Michael's visit to Whitchurch was much appreciated. It was good that he came to this far-flung corner of the Diocese!"



In his first presidential address at Diocesan Synod, Bishop Michael spoke about the need to grow together, work across boundaries and walk in faith:

"I want to affirm our strong commitment to growth in every dimension, and the way in which it is expressed in our five themes. We need to ensure that all the parts of the body share in the growth to which we are called in this large, varied Midlands diocese."



Diocese - by place and by tradition including at Holy Trinity, Wellington (photo: Alistair Wood).

"The missional role of the Diocese, as I see it, is not to organise and impose a grand central plan but to germinate ideas and expertise, to encourage the mutual sharing of resources, to foster a culture of cross-boundary working."

Over the nine nights before his installation, +Michael met people at churches in all parts of the

"I want us to think creatively, imaginatively and radically about how we resource ourselves in this diocese and I hope that in the new year we can begin a conversation about that which draws in all aspects of our diocesan life."

"The Diocese of Mercia, this diocese, is a borderland diocese. Living in borderlands is risky business; crossing boundaries generates anxiety; that is why we need a culture, locally of informed risk-taking, and centrally of thoughtful permission-giving."

"I do not yet know what a strategy for mission in the Diocese of Lichfield for our own time will look like, but I do know the culture of discipleship within which it needs to be set. That will be a relational culture, where we all are prepared to travel far to get to know, to encourage and support one another. It will be a hospitable culture, where we are not afraid to welcome one another, to trust one another, to be enriched by one another. And it will be a prayerful culture. All we undertake together must be soaked in prayer, for our only strength comes from God's grace. And any leadership that I or my fellow bishops can offer to you must always be a leadership which comes from our own followership of Jesus."



Watch extracts and sermons from the Season of Welcome: www.lichfield.anglican.org/a-new-diocesan-bishop/

Read and hear all of Bishop Michael's address to Synod: The text and audio are on the website at www.lichfield.anglican.org/news/2016/11/07/mercian-diocese/

Readers toast 150 years of loyal service

Almost 200 Readers from across the Diocese took part in 150th anniversary celebrations of lay ministry at a special service at Lichfield Cathedral.

Readers are lay people selected, trained and licensed by the Bishop to preach, teach and lead worship in their local parish or as chaplains.



The Bishop of Lichfield, the Rt Rev Dr Michael Ipgrave, and the Bishop of Stafford, the Rt Revd Geoff Annas, with Readers outside Lichfield Cathedral at the event. (Photo: Sarah Burgess-Parker)

The 'Loyal Toast' Service of Thanksgiving at the cathedral marked the 150th anniversary of the modern Reader ministry. It followed a series of five gatherings over two years with hundreds of Readers together from across the Diocese.

culminated in this Service of Thanksgiving, has been an opportunity to bring Readers together from across the Diocese and as a way to affirm the wonderful contribution that Readers have made to the ministry and mission of the Church of England for the last 150 years.

"As Warden of Readers I have felt proud and privileged to be associated with such a dedicated and gifted assembly of people."

There are more than 10,000 active Readers in the Church of England. Most are licensed to a parish but some are chaplains in prisons, hospitals, hospices or schools, a few are in charge of parishes.



He said: "The ministry of Readers is essential in the Church of England – in some places it is the main ministry that keeps a church going. I firmly believe that there should be parity of esteem of Readers and ordained clergy."

The Ven Paul Thomas, the Warden of Readers, said: "The series of gatherings, which



Photo: Elaine Evans

Readers gift their services to the Church so do not receive payment. They are supported by the Central Readers Council based at Church House,

Westminster, and in this Diocese by the Warden of Readers, the Associate Warden of Readers and Diocesan staff from Ministry, Vocations and Training.



Learn about the experiences of local Readers Helen Babiay from Wednesfield and Philip

Taylor of Stafford as well as more about the role and training of Readers in Lichfield Diocese at www.lichfield.anglican.org/reader_training/

Away from it all



Families under strain are being offered much-needed quality time away thanks to a Christian charity.

During 2016 they were able to send eight families who had or were experiencing stress away for a break – totalling 18 adults and 17 children – at a cost of £4,500.

The Mothers' Union 'Away From It All' (AFIA) holiday project is providing welcome breaks for people across Lichfield Diocese.



Despite the fact that prices increase during school holiday periods, Mothers' Union members strive to support the project through prayers and fundraising.

One Mum who benefited wrote: "I had fled from my husband with two of my daughters because of domestic violence and mental abuse. We had nothing. Mothers' Union gave us a wonderful week together as a family. This wasn't just a holiday – it was a chance to talk to my daughters and understand how they were feeling: we'd been through such a traumatic time. The holiday was so peaceful, the girls loved the freedom. Not just freedom of space to run and play, but freedom to be themselves and feel safe. Thank you so much."

For further information, and application forms, please contact lichfieldmu.afia@gmail.com

Mothers' Union members in the diocese are continually raising money for the many projects they run, including AFIA.



"I firmly believe that there should be parity of esteem of Readers and ordained clergy"

The new Bishop of Lichfield, the Right Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave, spoke at the celebration and led prayers of re-dedication for the Readers, as well as hosting a question and answer session with Readers before the service.

Remembered Hero

Remembrance Sunday was an extra-special occasion for a retired Stafford clergyman who was awarded one of the highest distinctions by the French Legion of Honour for his role in the D-Day landings.

Revd Preb Dick Sargent was just 19 when as a Royal Navy sub-lieutenant he was tasked with landing troops on Utah Beach in the early hours of 6 June 1944. This began with a 11-mile voyage from his ship, the SS Empire Gauntlet which had been moored out of range of German guns, to guide a wave of assault craft carrying 180 troops to the Normandy beaches. He landed the troops and then spent half an hour in the water getting boats off sandbanks.

Now 92, Dick was informed in September that he had been appointed the rank of Chevalier

in the Ordre National de la Legion d'Honneur. He was presented with his insignia at the Remembrance Sunday service at Sandon Parish Church.

Sylvie Bermann, Ambassador of France to the UK, wrote to him: "As we contemplate this Europe of peace, we must never forget the heroes like you, who came from Britain and the Commonwealth to begin the liberation of Europe by liberating France. We owe our freedom and security to your dedication, because you were ready to risk your life."

Dick, who served as Rural Dean in Stafford before his retirement in 1989, said: "I am very delighted that what we did that morning has been recognised in this way – it fits in very well with Remembrance Sunday."



Why Remember?



In the wake of Rembrancetide, it is worth taking a moment to look past the politics and ills of war and focus on those who pursue peace, sometimes with the ultimate cost - so argues Revd Vic Van Den Bergh, honorary chaplain at the National Memorial Arboretum (NMA).

Having attended a service marking the 100th anniversary of the start of the battle of the Somme at the NMA recently I found myself engaged in conversation by someone who wondered why we did it. "After all," they said, "There's nothing to celebrate, is there? Not only that," they continued, "But there's nothing glorious about war – so why do you continue to impose your jingoism on the rest of us?"

Whilst we might speak of our funeral services as 'a celebration of a life', it is more generally correct to see as a 'commemoration' that which we do when it comes to those dates marked by poppies, bugles and a military presence. It is never a celebration of death - not that of our own, or those against whom we contended – for though we use the term to speak of 'those in glory', glorifying war is neither the intent nor the reality.

So what is it we do when we engage with Armistice, Remembrance Sunday or any of the many other memorials of battles, conflicts and campaigns and those engaged in them? Let me try to explain it with three short points:

- We gather to remember, and pay our respects to, those who marched away never to return and to remember all who have been victims of war and oppression – then and now.
- We seek to remember all those who have bear within themselves (in body, mind or spirit), the scars of conflict (including those left behind).
- We seek to commit ourselves to work for a world where humility, justice and mercy are the guiding principles in our dealing with all people and nations and to commit ourselves to working for peace and reconciliation; remembering all who serve throughout the world at this time.

These three elements are present (or should be) in every act of remembrance we undertake.



There are services in the grounds of the NMA every day of the week and many of these are celebrations, the family milestones, whilst others are reminders of service given and of those we see no longer. It is a place where remembrance, commemoration, celebration and reflection are to be found.



A Christmas Near You

Bring #JoyToTheWorld

Churches across the Diocese are being urged to take advantage of a new website which acts as a 'shop window' for their Christmas services.

The Church of England is inviting parishes to visit AChristmasNearYou.org/upload before 1 December to register their Christmas church services. Almost 700 services have already been added for parishes Lichfield Diocese.

www.AChristmasNearYou.org will be live on 1 December for anyone to be able to find the nearest Christmas services to them (or search for services in a particular location). It will be able to filter by date, whether there will be carols and accessibility such as wheelchair access, sign language, parking and more.

People will also be able to find which Christmas services are serving mince pies or mulled wine! For smartphones, the website will be able to use geolocation to find where the person is and show which Christmas services are happening nearest to them.

To promote the website and accompanying Christmas social media campaign, there will be four videos on the

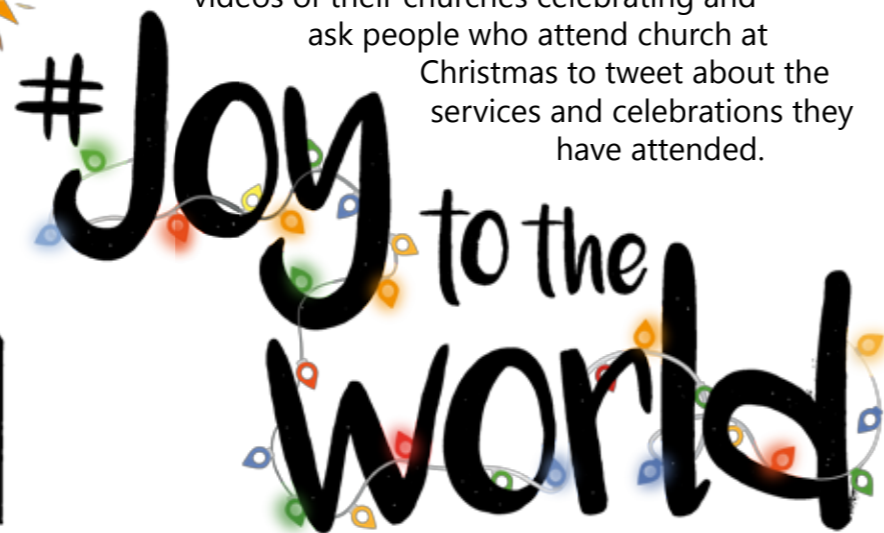


theme of Christmas joy. The videos star Gogglebox vicar Kate Bottley, comedian Paul Kerensa, Matt Woodcock and Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons Rose Hudson Wilkin - each talking about a moment of Christmas joy in their lives.

Pete Bate, Director of Communications for Lichfield Diocese, said: "This is a fantastic, free opportunity for churches to spread the message far and wide about what they have planned this Christmas. Are you singing carols, having mince pies or mulled wine? The more information you can add the better."

The website will be supported by a social media campaign from the launch of the website, right up to Christmas Day using the hashtag #JoyToTheWorld.

Churches will be encouraged to share photos/videos of their churches celebrating and ask people who attend church at Christmas to tweet about the services and celebrations they have attended.



Hispanic Noel



selection of prayers, or they can write their own. It all ends up back in church at the schools' carol service on a Friday afternoon."

Curate Revd Becky Richards, from Tixall with Ingestre, said Posada was very popular in their parish: "We use figures that older people from our two congregations have knitted, so the figures themselves aren't breakable. Our older gents make the crib.

Using Posada to build community over Advent

Originating in Hispanic countries to celebrate the nativity story, Posada is a period of time during Advent when figures from the nativity story travel around different households in the community and stay there for one night.

Families can sign up to take part and then become hosts to the holy family for one night during Advent. During this time, children have an opportunity to learn more about the Christmas story, and everyone can meet others from their community as the figures are passed from one house to the next.

Two parishes in the Diocese use Posada in slightly different ways. Denise Keen, from St Mary's, in Mucklestone, explained that Posada works well through the church's strong links with the local Church of England school.

She said: "We have a midweek Sunday school after school, and children who go to this make the Posada figures. We launch the journey of Mary and Joseph at a family service in church where families can sign up to receive it, but children can sign up at school as well."

"A book comes with Mary and Joseph so that children can record photos, and there's a

"The figures travel around in a story bag with a copy of the Christmas story, plus a diary into which all those who host Mary and Joseph can write in their experience. Also included in the bag is an Advent candle and this can be lit and burned down one section on the night which Mary and Joseph stay with the family.

"There's a short dialogue people can say on the doorstep when they pass the figures over to the next person. It encourages families to visit each other, and the rota includes older contacts, who have no children, so it gets them meeting a wider set of people around them. People have found this really helpful because they've chatted and got to know different people – it builds links between young and old.

"The figures come back to our Christmas Eve crib service or to our family communion on Christmas morning. From there the King's set off on their travels in another story bag containing a story book about the magi, box of gold coins and jars of frankincense and myrrh. They return either to a service or an 'Epiphany Party'."

For more Christmas ideas go to <https://churchsupporthub.org/christmas/>



TGI Monday Show winner

The innovative weekly online chat show from the Diocese of Lichfield has won a national digital award. TGI Monday came first in the 'Most Creative Use of Social Media' at the Premier Digital Awards event in London.



Simon, who produces the show, said: "The world of social media is changing so quickly that everything is experimental as the Church tries to work out how best to use social media to support our discipleship and mission. It's an honour to receive this national award."

"We're very thankful for the ongoing support and resourcing from the diocese," added Dan, curate in Childs Ercall and panellist on the show.

TGI Monday was nominated in the same category as the national Church of England's ChurchLive project which has involved many parish churches including St Johns in Stafford and Holy Trinity Meole Brace.



Diocesan Secretary Julie Jones said: "I'm glad that something so innovative, coming out of the Online Pastor's role, has been so well received – both across the diocese and now on a national stage. It's a fantastic example of Diocesan staff and parish clergy working together in a creative way."

The weekly show, which airs a new episode every Monday morning, has reached thousands of people, discussing a range of topics prompted by its online community such as angels, heaven and hell, death and sexuality.



At its inception less than a year ago, the TGI Monday team had a vision for an online video programme answering viewers questions about the Christian faith and church life and shining a little light on some of the mysteries of the Church of England. It has garnered the attention of local, national and religious press and been praised at General Synod.



The project is collaboration between Hywel Snook, Zoe Heming and Dan Stork Banks (clergy in Hodnet Deanery who had an interest in social media and vlogging) and Ros Clarke (the Diocese's Online Pastor) and Simon Jones (Diocesan Communications Officer).

Ros said: "TGI Monday has had a real impact on local churches and community, particularly around Market Drayton where we film and the majority of the team are based. We're pushing forward to spread this influence further and maintain a cutting edge with this project."



forward to spread this influence further and maintain a cutting edge with this project."

And all the people said ...

What did you do at school today, Ben?

'Nothing-much-did-building-bricks-Mrs-Lillystone-told-a-story-had-lunch-play-time-games-circle-time-came-home-that-was-it. AMEN'

To my four-year-old son, it seemed entirely natural that a speech as long and informative as that should end with a resonant 'Amen'.

'Amen' is indeed a word so rich in meaning and in force that it has come down to us untranslated from Hebrew; and 'Amin' in Arabic means much the same. 'Amen' signifies our assent to prayer, to praise, and to the promises of God. It is one of the most joyful words in the Christian vocabulary, as it expresses our full-hearted commitment to what God is doing in our lives.



Why is it then that in church we so often mumble it, mutter it, or simply use the opportunity to cough? I long to hear full-voiced, emphatic 'Amens', preferably on a rising intonation which speaks of expectation and confidence.

Like potato and tomato, it can be either ah-men or ay-men, but that really does not matter, because this is not a matter of speech training. It is a matter which goes to the heart of how we express faith in our everyday lives, as the story of Advent and Christmas shows. Blessed Mary's 'Let it be to me according to your Word' was one great, lived Amen. No mere passive acceptance this: Mary's assent put her own commitment firmly into the story: not just, 'That's a nice idea', but 'I want to be part of the answer'. And so through her the great Amen himself, Jesus our Lord, was able to come to fulfil God's promises to our needy world.

I long to hear full-voiced, emphatic 'Amens'

It is up to each of us today to commit to being part of God's answer in Jesus as with full voice and joyful heart we acclaim 'Amen'. I look forward to hearing from you all!

Rt Revd Dr Michael Igrave, Bishop of Lichfield



From the Editor



I hope you've enjoyed reading the latest Spotlight which is my first as the Diocese's new Director of Communications. Since I started, I've been amazed at the variety of activities taking place across parishes. We'd love to hear more about

what's going on in your area so please get in touch using the details below. Have a fantastic Advent season and don't forget to add your services to A Christmas Near You (p8) now!

Pete Bate, Director of Communications

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

Matthew - A Gospel with Attitude

With Fr-Nick King

A day for preachers & housegroup leaders

Thurs 26 November, 10am-3pm: St Thomas Doxey.

Contact: jodie.galley@lichfield.anglican.org

DIARY

A Christmas Near You
Advent to Christmas Day

See page 8 for details of how to add your parish events to this helpful anthology of Christmas worship and events.



Please send details of your events to
comms@lichfield.anglican.org

**Developing Sustainable Youth, Children's & Families
Ministry: An RNG Lab**

- 17 January 10am-4pm: St Giles Shrewsbury
- 18 January 10am-4pm: St Andrew's Westlands (Stoke)
- 19 January 6-9pm: St Martins Bradley (Wolverhampton)

Explore issues including building a thriving ministry, avoiding burn-out for leaders, recruiting volunteers.

£35 but FREE for members of churches in Lichfield Diocese. Details and booking at www.lichfield.anglican.org/labs-and-other-training/