

Spotlight

Mar/Apr 2018

A blizzard of footsteps

The Bishop of Lichfield led a band of modern-day pilgrims through the wind and snow to walk from Shrewsbury to Lichfield.

Bishop Michael set off with a group of recently-ordained curates from across Lichfield Diocese for the 'Chad 2 Chad' pilgrimage which stretched almost 60 miles.

They traveled parts of established long-distance footpaths including the Severn, Monarch's, Staffordshire and Heart of England Ways. Working with local parishes, the pilgrims were involved in a variety of evangelistic events in areas including Shrewsbury, Wrockwardine, Telford, Shifnal, Tong, Brewood, Wheaton Aston, Penkridge, Chasetown, Gentleshaw and Lichfield.

The pilgrimage emerged following a challenge from the Archbishop of Canterbury for bishops to prioritise five days of their time in the year to engage in intentional evangelism alongside new clergy to help them develop their skills. The first leg took in the original St Chad's Church in Milk Street, Shrewsbury, along with the new St Chad's in Shrewsbury - where Bishop Mark preached - and Shrewsbury Roman Catholic Cathedral.

As snow fell across the Diocese, the pilgrims finished with a short service at Lichfield

Cathedral ahead of St Chad's Day. Bishop Michael: "We set off in brilliant sunshine and then we faced down the 'Beast From The East' with the cold, wind and snow but that has not held us back, as it would not have held back St Chad! We had a great time getting to know people along the way in our churches and village halls. It has been a profoundly encouraging spiritual experience."

Fellow-pilgrim Revd Jassica Castillo-Burley added: "It's been really good meeting people in villages who want to spread the good news of Jesus Christ. As pilgrims we're all on this journey and it was good to be able to encourage other pilgrims as we all walk together."

Crossing the River Severn at Cressage (above) and smiling pilgrims arrived at Lichfield Cathedral (below)



More info and videos at lichfield.anglican.org/chad-pilgrims-progress-through-elements/



DIOCESE OF
LICHFIELD



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

Historic healing and transformation in Matlosane

A visit by Bishop Michael and others to our link diocese in South Africa proved to be an historic occasion – marking the arrival of a new president and a new Church centre which was liberated from its Apartheid past.

A small delegation from Lichfield Diocese spent a week in Matlosane beginning on Ash Wednesday, taking part in various church services and visiting a drug rehabilitation centre and hospice.

One highlight was the unveiling of the new diocesan centre in Klerksdorp which was bought by the mostly-black diocese from the Dutch Reformed Church, which historically supported the former Apartheid regime.



Bishop Michael and others at the diocesan centre opening

Bishop Michael was joined by the Archbishop of Cape Town, Dr Thabo Cecil Makgoba, who oversees the Anglican Church of Southern Africa; the Bishop of Botswana Metlha Beleme and Bishop Stephen Molopi Diseko, who oversees Matlosane Diocese, for the event in the summer sun. Each bishop blessed a different area of the centre as the celebration began.

Archbishop Thabo, who had been at the state opening address by new South African president Cyril Ramaphosa the night before, said: "We have never in the history of the African church bought a Dutch Reformed church. So this is historic transformation. This is historic healing."

Lichfield Diocese contributed to purchasing the new building through a donation from the Bishop's Lent Appeal. A new altar at the centre was also provided thanks to a gift from St Bartholomew's Church in Penn, whose vicar, the Revd Preb Ben Whitmore, was thanked personally during the service.

Bishop Steve said: "His parish motivated us to embark on this process. Now we have a new altar it is a proper Anglican church!"

Bishop Michael told people at the service: "We enjoy and value enormously our companionship of prayer, friendship and shared mission through this diocesan link with Matlosane."

The Lichfield group also included Director of World Mission Philip Swan, Archdeacon Sue Weller, Bishop's Chaplain Rebecca Lloyd, Director of Communications Pete Bate and the Revd Cathy Mark. Three local Mothers Union

The group visiting the site of a notable meteor impact



(MU) representatives – Liz and Mike Binsley and Helen Palfrey – also came to build links with their Matlosane MU counterparts.



Ben Whitmore and Bishop Steve in front of the altar paid for by St Bart's Penn

Several members of the group presided or preached at local church services which featured a mixture of traditional Anglican liturgy and vibrant, spontaneous worship – often led from the congregation – with services lasting up to four hours. Some stayed with church families in local townships while Bishop Michael led a service at the Cathedral Church of the Resurrection – believed to be the only cathedral based in a township in South Africa.

Sue Weller and Matlosane's first female Archdeacon Nontozanele Mogami



and Archbishop Tutu's home, and the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg.

Children running in Khuma township



Bishop Steve said: "It was great to have Bishop Michael come to us, and for him to participate in two different services in our Diocese. And of course his 'entourage' all went out into different directions and gained different experiences. No amount of words can explain our gratitude; we thank you very much for this friendship."

Philip added: "We began the visit on Ash Wednesday with the imposition of ashes and breaking bread together. A week later we ended our time together by once again breaking bread in companionship and by being prayed for by our hosts. The visit helped to underline our sense of being in this together; of being friends rather than participants or observers; of constantly discerning the 'new thing' that God wants to lead us into as we learn together. Only within this context of trust and mutuality can we identify ways in which we can share together; for instance in theological education, or through our links between parishes, schools and projects, or through the Mother's Union and the St Chad's Volunteer Programme."

Read more about the trip, including personal reflections from those who went, in a blog by Cathy Mark at www.facebook.com/LichfieldCofE/notes.

The Cathedral Church of the Resurrection in Ikageng township near Pochefstroom



Welcome to Oswestry

Volunteers at a church in Oswestry are the first to open a Place Of Welcome in Shropshire.

Places of Welcome is a network of small community organisations, including churches, who offer an unconditional welcome to local people for at least a few hours each week.

The initiative is spreading across the Midlands and other parts of the country with over 200 venues taking part. Places of Welcome are run by local groups who want to make sure that everyone in their area has a place to go for a friendly face, a cup of tea and a conversation.



People from St Oswald's Church in Oswestry have opened Shropshire's first Place of Welcome in the Parish Centre, next to the church, on Tuesdays from 10:30am to 12:30pm.

Volunteer Elaine Leek said: "We have been talking for some time about wanting to show love and generosity to our community, especially those who feel lonely or isolated, but we hadn't been able to decide yet what form



that might take. Then, in a chance meeting, someone from another church told us about Places of Welcome and we realised immediately that their concept and principles fitted exactly with what we wanted to do."



PoW Volunteers Carol Burke (left) and Val Hamer at the new Place of Welcome in Oswestry.

"We have had a really good response from people volunteering to help with refreshments and to offer a friendly welcome and a listening ear to those who come," added volunteer Lindsay Clarke. "We hope that as word spreads about the new Place of Welcome people from the town will come to know it as somewhere they can feel accepted and build new relationships."

Places of Welcome are sponsored and supported by Transforming Communities Together, a joint venture between the Church Urban Fund and the Diocese of Lichfield.

Transforming Communities Together Chair, the Rev Dr David Primrose, said: "We're delighted to have Places of Welcome at a growing number of places across Lichfield Diocese, now including Shropshire, and want to continue this growth. It's fantastic to have mosques, libraries and community centres, as well as churches involved, as we work towards our vision of every community having a Place of Welcome."

Places of Welcome is a grassroots movement that began in Birmingham. Its five values ensure that each venue is open at the same time and place for at least a few hours every week and is welcoming to anyone wanting to attend.

For more information visit www.placesofwelcome.org/

Churchyard Jubilee

As the Lichfield Diocese Churchyard Awards mark their 25th year, John Polhill, Diocese Environmental Officer, reports on current developments:

"The Churchyard Award scheme was conceived by David Aston in 1993. When he became ill in 2012, sisters Gwen Johnson and Ruth Williams agreed to take over. When I first met them in 2015, I was deeply impressed by their professionalism and commitment.

"They told me that one of the problems they experienced was that, although the scheme receives grant funding from the Diocese, it never had a home within its management structures, and they felt it was not as widely supported as it could be. David Primrose, Director of Transforming Communities, and I, set about putting that right, and the scheme now belongs within the Transforming Communities' family.

"Gwen and Ruth also told me that they were finding it increasingly difficult to continue running the scheme. It is therefore sad, but not surprising, that, having found a home for their "baby", they have decided to retire. We met with Bishop Michael to acknowledge the debt the Diocese owes to Gwen and Ruth for

enabling the scheme to thrive, and to welcome Alison Primrose who has agreed to take over its management.

"We asked Gwen and Ruth what it has been like being judges (for 22 years between them!) and they described pleasant outings with friends to visit some of the most beautiful graveyards and church gardens in the diocese. They also expressed their delight in seeing year-on-year improvements in the standard and presentation of the sites in the scheme. We also asked what the churches get out of taking part. Well, they all get an award to display - five levels and a separate certificate where wildlife care is present. The award recognises the dedication of people who care for the graveyard and the opportunity to encourage the local community to get involved."

Entries for 2018 need to be in by 31 March, but there is an opportunity for churches and potential judges to learn more and join the scheme on 7 April at the Love Your Churchyard event at St Mary & St Luke, Shareshill. Visit lichfield.anglican.org/churchyard_awards to find a list of the 2017 awards (ideal for planning summer outings), scheme application forms, the methods of scoring used and more details about 7 April. Churchyards are our shop window - let's use them!



Gwen & Ruth Williams, John Polhill, Bishop Michael and Alison Primrose

Be Encourage-d

Tickets are now on sale for the second Encourage Festival which seeks to build on last year's event with an attractive line-up.

The one-day music and arts festival at Shallowford House, near Stone, on Saturday 7 July is designed to celebrate God's call to all people.

Already confirmed are actress and comedian Sally Phillips (Miranda, Bridget Jones and Smack The Pony) plus music from Goat Roper Rodeo Band and latest addition Anglo-American Duo Rue Royale.

Director of Vocations Lindsey Hall said: "Feedback from last year's festival was so positive. People seemed to connect with the idea of celebrating vocation – of gathering those who are passionate about what they do and are committed to music, art, food or whatever it is that is their 'thing'. When you see people doing something you realise they were born for it's really inspiring."

"This year's line-up is unfolding, but we were so excited to get Sally Phillips. As well as being a fantastic comedian and actor, the documentary she did two years ago about a world without Downs Syndrome was very moving and challenging. We think she will bring a real mix of fun and serious input to Encourage."



"The Goat Roper Rodeo Band were so energetic when they performed last year. They write all their own music and are great musicians. We invited them back so even more people can hear them. It's also great to welcome Rue Royale for the first time who have played at Greenbelt and other festivals throughout Europe and are about to release a new album."

"We're also going to be talking about some environmental issues, particularly around food waste and thinking about how our use of gifts like food, fuel and the environment is all part of our response to vocation – being the people God has called us to be."

Tickets are on sale now with discounts until Easter at www.encouragefestival.co.uk



Rue Royale (above). Wildfire Folk (below) are also returning this summer



Camera boost for Bradwell

A vandal-hit church near Stoke-on-Trent has been given a new lease of life thanks to a grant for CCTV. Their priest, Father Chris Routledge, explains more:

"St Barnabas' Church, Bradwell, is in every sense a church at the heart of the community. Built in the 1950s the church is situated opposite a row of shops, and near to the local school. Many people walk past it each day, and a conservative estimate is that there are 23,000 individual visits to St Barnabas' each year, for events other than services."

"This is because, like many churches, St Barnabas' opens up the doors during the week for community activities. Some of these activities are led by volunteers from the church, including the Tuesday morning Community Cafe, a favourite hang-out for some of the Mums after the school-run, as well as the monthly Messy Church."

"As well as the church-run activities, St Barnabas' uses its advantageous position to host many other community events. This includes things like dancing, Slimming World and toddler groups, and also others where the church is seeking to work in partnership to address social need. One such partnership is with Aspire Housing, who are based in the church every week, offering advice and support to local people in such areas as debt advice and employment."

"Sadly, 2017 saw the church suffer a string of vandalism and other anti-social behaviour, including nine broken windows. The congregation would much rather see their giving go towards events and activities which

benefit the local community, than to be spent on repairing broken windows. After discussions with Staffordshire Police and the Archdeacon, the PCC decided, reluctantly, to apply for a Faculty to install CCTV."



"Just as discussions were beginning, I received an unexpected email from Samantha Boden from Red Industries, enquiring whether St Barnabas' had any projects planned which might qualify for a grant from their Landfill Community Fund. A quick telephone conversation confirmed that the CCTV would be eligible, and, after all the processes had been followed, the church received a grant to cover the full cost of the project (about £3,300). This was a true God-send, and we are very grateful to Red Industries, for both the grant and the support in making the application. I would recommend any churches with community projects planned to explore whether they might be eligible to apply for Landfill Communities Funding from Red Industries or elsewhere."



From the Editor

Welcome to the latest Spotlight which highlights stories of hope and transformation across our Diocese

and as far afield as South Africa. For updates about Diocesan initiatives and events, subscribe to our fortnightly e-bulletin via the 'Keep in touch' form at www.lichfield.anglican.org

Pete Bate, Director of Communications



Defeating debt together

A new worker will help Black Country people battling debt to become more financially resilient.

The Revd Cassius Francis has joined Transforming Communities Together (TCT) - the joint venture between the Church Urban Fund and the Diocese - as its Just Finance Black Country Development Worker, working with churches and local community groups across the four boroughs.



In 2015 the support of Archbishop of Canterbury helped secure a cap on the cost of payday loans and raise awareness of community-based responsible financial providers like credit unions.

Further work has led to the creation of a new national charity, the Just Finance Foundation, to increase the supply of fair and affordable

credit, build financial capability and develop fair financial systems in local communities. The Black Country is now the fourth area in the country to benefit from a dedicated development worker.

Cassius will work with partners across the region, including the Diocese of Worcester, Sandwell Churches Link, whg Housing Association in Walsall and Wolverhampton City Credit Union, supported by local and national charities.

David Primrose, TCT Chair, said: "We are delighted to welcome Cassius to our team. We know that churches and groups across the Black Country are doing some great work to support people in their community to become more financially resilient, but changes such as Universal Credit and the already high debt levels locally mean that extra capacity is needed."

Cassius will offer churches a range of options to help them support people, including UCSavvy, Cash Smart Credit Savvy, the Debt Course and Money Talks.

Cassius has run his own business and previously worked as a youth and community worker in north London. He has been a trustee for Church Urban Fund's Thrive Together Birmingham focused on engaging churches in reducing poverty.

He said: "I didn't think I was poor growing up, but I do remember Mom and Dad telling me that we were having a party by candlelight when the electricity had run out! As an adult I have seen the crippling effects of debt on families and I have personally experienced the feelings of financial exclusion particularly during periods of unemployment. I am excited to be part of something that can engage churches in making a real and lasting difference to people's lives."

For more information visit www.cuf.org.uk/justfinancebc

Thy Kingdom Come

The Archbishops' prayer and evangelism initiative Thy Kingdom Come is taking place again this year from Ascension Day to Pentecost, and both simple prayer events and larger gatherings are being planned by churches and other groups all over the Diocese.



Thursday 17 May, all day

Health and Wellbeing pilgrimage visiting hospitals and hospices around Shrewsbury

Pentecost Sunday 20 May, 2.30

People from around the Black Country will be meeting at a shared event at Priory Ruins, Dudley with Bishop Graham Usher from Worcester Diocese

Sunday 20 May, 6.30pm

A less formal gathering at Stoke Minster organised by Andrew Wickens (Rector of Stoke Minster), Adrian Stone and James Gandon, with Lloyd Cooke from Saltbox as preacher.

Thursday 10 May, 7.30pm

Lichfield Cathedral is hosting a launch event, a Eucharist for Ascension Day which will culminate in anointing and commissioning as attendees are sent out to engage in these days of prayer.

Friday 11 May, 6.30pm

Prayer walk up the Wrekin

Sunday 13 May, 6.30pm

An ecumenical event at Longton Central Hall, Stoke-on-Trent will be led by Bishop Geoff, Bishop David McGough (Auxiliary Bishop in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham), Revd Peter Barber (Chair of the Chester and Stoke-on-Trent District of the Methodist Church) and Revd Steve Faber (Moderator of the West Midlands Synod of the United Reformed Church). The service will be recorded for broadcast on BBC Radio Stoke.

The old tradition of Beating the Bounds is getting a prayerful makeover with groups praying around the edges of the counties with Salopians gathering at Clun (south), Weston Rhyn (north) and Mucklestone (east). At the last of those, they may find themselves facing good people marking the extremities of Staffordshire. The other compass points are marked by Flash (north), Stapenhill (east) and Kinver (south).

Once again, groups of churches are planning on praying together continuously over the ten days, including 24hrs a day among churches in Shrewsbury and the 'Telford 50' which will complete a 50-mile walk over ten days.



An ecumenical team in Shropshire is providing a series of workshops to equip churches and schools in the run-up to Thy Kingdom Come with the aid of a bus provided by Market Drayton Methodists.

Beginning on 19 March, the bus will visit schools and churches around Shropshire including Holy Trinity Academy in Telford, the villages of Clive, Wrockwardine and Bayston Hill near Shrewsbury.

More details and links to other events around the Diocese are being updated at lichfield.anglican.org/tkc2018/. You can also add your events and find resources for churches, schools, families and others at the worldwide website www.thykingdomcome.global

Ticket to serve

Chaplaincy is changing. Until recently most chaplains would have been ordained and stipendiary. There's still an important place for that, but new forms of chaplaincy are emerging too.

Black Country Urban Industrial Mission exemplifies the change. Created 40 years ago, BCUIM originally co-ordinated ordained ministers from a federation of church denominations and dioceses. Those ministers were seconded part-time from their churches to BCUIM. The model provided a strong link between the church and the world of work. Whilst the link remains, that model has largely shifted. Today

BCUIM trains, supports and supervises a team of mainly lay people offering chaplaincy in different work setting.

Workplace chaplaincy in the Black Country often engages with larger employers such as councils, colleges and emergency services. In a forthcoming Mission Project video, John Welsby, a Chaplain at Wolverhampton Bus Garage, says: "When I retired, I wanted to stay in touch with the world of work. This was ideal for me in offering some kind of Christian service in a workplace."

As a licensed Reader, John (pictured below) is active both in church and beyond the boundaries.

Other forms of volunteer chaplaincy exist too. In Telford, local churches have recently been asked to consider who in their congregation might be able to provide ecumenical volunteer chaplaincy



to Holy Trinity Academy. The Academy is a joint RC and CE secondary school. Volunteer chaplains will be recruited to provide pastoral care and be a Christian presence in the school.

Lindsey Hall, Diocesan Vocations Director, says: 'Chaplaincy is such an exciting calling. I hope every church can think about how volunteer chaplaincy may help develop the discipleship of some in their congregations'.

Chaplaincies at BCUIM and Holy Trinity Academy are both part of the Mission Projects launched by Bishop Michael last year.

Could you be involved in chaplaincy? Search for more on our website and kfollow our social media channels for videos on the Mission Projects.

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The power of words

The theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day commemoration was 'The Power of Words'. We were encouraged to reflect on words as a channel for perpetrating evil, as a means of articulating protest and as a way of recording testimony.

Part of the enduring reason for the shadow that the Nazi Holocaust continues to cast over our world is the amount of written documentation that we have from that time. The countless examples of German propaganda depicting the Jews and other minorities as sub human, and the chilling edicts ordering their persecution. The luminous courage that shines from the writings of such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, incarcerated for conscientiously objecting to evil. The incomparable power of the personal testimony, as in the Diary of Anne Frank. Even when the last person with direct experience of the Second World War has passed away, the power of words will ensure that the truth of what happened in the Holocaust is never forgotten.

But what happens if words are suppressed or their power is in other ways undermined? The recent film 'The Post' tells the story of the attempts by the New York Times and the Washington Post to reveal the truth about successive US administrations' attempts to cover up what was really happening in the conflict in Vietnam. The film dramatizes the conflict between press and president, between the right of the newspapers to publish and the right of the State to suppress. The events described took place nearly 50 years ago and one of the striking differences between then and now is the authority of the newspaper. In that era, the written word that rolled off the

presses conveyed huge authority. Newspapers had massive circulations. No wonder the president would want to do everything in his power to stop publication.

We live in a very different world. Words are flung at us from all directions. More and more, people's views are formed via online and social media platforms and as we are becoming all too aware, the danger is that authoritative news and fake news become indistinguishable. I recently clicked on a FaceBook link which purported to carry a news story about the death of a famous celebrity. In fact the link was a portal through which someone tried to hack my computer.

The journey that Christians follow through Lent leaves us in no doubt as to the power of words, for good and evil. On Palm Sunday we are reminded of the crowd, baying for blood, like modern day social media trolls; 'Crucify Him, Crucify Him'. On Good Friday we recall Jesus' words which have set countless people free from hatred and bitterness, 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do'.

More than ever, in an age where words are becoming cheap, expendable and untrustworthy, there is hunger for a Word which is authoritative, dependable and life-giving. As Christians, we are the bearers of the Word. We carry ultimate responsibility for the power that the Word conveys. During Lent we often focus on hearing and reading instructive words, to help us deepen our spirituality and nurture our faith. It might be an equally important discipline to monitor our social media accounts for the words that we are actually speaking, in a variety of forms. Are they words that could come back to haunt us, as words suspended in timeless limbo on the web always have the power to do? Or are our words ones that could stand forever, as testimony to the faith we hold and the Word we live to share? *+Clive Wulfrun*

+Clive Wulfrun
March 2018



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

DIARY

Setting People Free from Slavery

Transforming Communities
Together and the Clewer Initiative
session providing tools to
identify modern slavery in local
communities.

Tuesday 20 March 1000-1200 St
James Hill Top, West Bromwich
B70 0PU. Contact bill.mash@lichfield.anglican.org to attend.

Diocesan Book Group

Discussing 'Being Disciples' by
Rowan Williams.

Tuesday 17 April 12.30-14.00. St
Peter's, Kinver DY7 6HX - please
bring your own lunch.

Social Media Training Led by the Church of England's National Digital Team.

Wednesday 18 April 0930-16.00.
To see if places are still
available, contact
tamar.willoughby@lichfield.anglican.org

Chrism Eucharist

The Community of St Chad is
inviting anyone to join a short
pilgrimage of prayer leading to
the Chrism Eucharist.

Maundy Thursday 29 March
0900 Chad's Well (St Chad's
Church)/1030 Lichfield Cathedral