

# archdeacons'

## visitation news

Spring 2020 - issue 15

## Welcome from your Archdeacons

Retail sector in crisis. The airline industry shrinking. TV advertising revenue down. These were the headlines on the day this piece for the Archdeacons' Visitation News was re-written. The whole economy is affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The church has had to change at an unprecedented pace. In a matter of days, buildings were closed and church services went online as we sought to connect during lockdown. We have learnt to do things differently and it will be interesting to see how much of what we did during the lockdown will reshape what we do in the future.

The way we have changed has been accelerated, but since 2015 we had already been committed to change and diversification. That is to say, for every inherited church, we are hoping to have a new form of church that engages with a different group of people. As a Diocese, we now have about 230 new ways of reaching people with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Some of these are new congregations, others are new ways of engaging with different generations.

Our parishes are experimenting with new ways of being church. Some are in the church building, others are meeting in the local school, the village hall or the local coffee shop. But however good these new developments are, we also need to ensure we don't neglect the 'inherited way' of being church – Sunday mornings are still so important, but increasingly

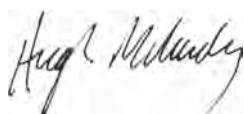
they are not the only place church takes place. We know that, as churchwardens, you are actively involved in supporting and encouraging both forms of church.

We are five years into our Diocesan Strategy, Ely 2025, with much having been achieved but with still a long way to go. We are growing both in numbers and spiritual depth and that is very good news. Before the pandemic, our finances were challenging but we were seeing signs of giving going up. There is much to celebrate.

As we emerge from lockdown, we are learning to work within new social distancing rules. We need to rebuild our finances and ask what we can take into the new way of being a church that serves its community, drawing on the best from the past and from what we have learnt from lockdown.


Our hope is that this edition will help you reflect on all these things so that we can continue to change. Or to use more familiar language – as we seek to proclaim afresh to each generation the grace and truth of Christ.

Thank you again for all you do and happy reading.



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## Churchwardens' Training Day 2020

### Delayed and perhaps changed, but not cancelled.

This would normally be the place where we provide details for the Churchwardens' Training Day. This is normally a day we hope is of interest to all churchwardens, whether newly elected or in post for some time.

However, at the time of writing we are still in a world of social distancing and so fixed plans are hard to set. We want to reassure you though that we are exploring how we could offer a day of training, what shape it might take and how we can effectively deliver it.

If you know of someone within your parish who might be thinking about serving as a churchwarden in the future, do please help keep them posted as our training day plan evolves, as it is often a good overview of what to expect when in office.

Please look out for direct communications from the Archdeacons' Office once we have further plans to share.

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# What is a 'Fresh Expression of church'?

Revd Mark Rodel, Development Officer for Fresh Expressions and Pioneer Ministry

Since the term 'Fresh Expression of church' was introduced into the Church of England within the 'Mission-shaped Church' report, there has been confusion about what it means.



Mark Rodel, Development Officer for Fresh Expressions and Pioneer Ministry

It's not just a term for anything new in the life of churches. Complementing the churches we have, Fresh Expressions are **new Christian communities**. Some examples that exist in our Diocese include Pathfinder church – a new congregation taking shape in Northstowe. In Cambridge, a group is exploring Christian faith around some of the work with homeless people. On the Barnwell estate, a 'missional community' is engaging with children and young people, forming a Christian community with them and their families. In Downham Market, 'Table', a group of people rediscovering their Christian faith, is forming a community around tabletop games. And in Huntingdon, young people participating in the *Thrive* project are creating an opportunity for them and their friends to explore Christian faith together.

Fresh Expressions involve a group of Christians stepping out from what they know to:

- engage with those outside the church and make their needs the priority;

- join with people outside the church in the midst of what they do;
- form new disciples – journeying with people to Jesus (and with those who are already Christians rediscovering their faith in a new way);
- establish new forms of Christian community that make sense culturally to the new people they're connecting with.

Essentially, we recognise Fresh Expressions of church as those that are **missional, contextual, formational and ecclesial**. Here's the thing – you can't start one. They emerge only where the people we engage with, in new contexts, respond positively to our invitation to follow Christ.

That is good news. It means that whether our initiatives in mission lead to Fresh Expressions, growth in the churches we already have, or both, the outcome isn't up to us. When we try new approaches and they don't work out as we'd hoped, they're not failures if we learn from them.

As churchwardens, you play a vital and valued role in helping your incumbent, the PCC and the wider congregation discern opportunities for experiments in mission, authorising members of your congregation to have a go, gathering-up and sharing the learning.

We're here to help you with those endeavours, so if you'd like to discuss this more, please drop me an email at [mark.rodel@elydiocese.org](mailto:mark.rodel@elydiocese.org)

## Investing together in the Old and the New

Revd Phil Marsh, Development Officer for Mission and Ministry

Fresh from parish ministry myself, I know the difference that supportive and passionate churchwardens make to the mission and ministry of a parish. So thank you! Churchwardens are foremost in representing the laity and in supporting the incumbent in the leadership and development of ministry and mission. In getting to know the Diocese I have met a variety of church leaders and all manner of volunteers – and in doing so I have witnessed first-hand, leadership, labour and love.

In every place I have visited, churches are exploring new avenues of mission while also seeking to maintain and value that which already is. There are few off-the-peg solutions and the work of developing a church's mission and ministry is highly localised.

To support your leadership, we are very willing to facilitate spaces for your



Phil Marsh, Development Officer for Mission and Ministry

leadership teams, congregations and PCCs – so we can learn together from the things you are doing. We want to listen and learn from the community around you. We want to help discern what God might be asking of us in the places you live and worship. I am

more than willing to visit you in your parish to explore together what might work well in your local context.

One other such way we can support you is by inviting your church to become involved in a process named Partnership for Missional Church (PMC), which provides a framework over a period of time, within which we can accompany and support you and your congregation so that we might invest together in bringing out of God's storehouse, treasures both old and new.

**Partnership for Missional Church** is a formational process for congregations looking to develop their missional engagement with their local communities. Investing in both church leaders and the congregations, PMC enables the churches involved to explore together a renewal of both their missional thinking and practice. Through a series of spiritual practices, leadership development, training and support, congregations are resourced to help them discover a sense of purpose, discern the call of God, and engage in joyful, hopeful mission in their local communities.

If you would like to discuss what we might be able to help support further, please don't hesitate in dropping me an email at [phil.marsh@elydiocese.org](mailto:phil.marsh@elydiocese.org)

# Faith in Maintenance

Holly Isted, Historic Church Buildings Support Officer



Annette clearing the drains at Little Paxton during a Faith in Maintenance workshop

'Love your Gutters' was the message on National Gutters Day last November. Don't worry if you missed it, as there will be a whole week to marvel at maintenance later this year when The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) relaunches National Maintenance Week, finishing with glorious gutters!

Joking aside, the campaign does have a serious point – maintenance and minor repairs are vital in the care of buildings. A 2019 survey by Historic England identified that quinquennial repairs can cost parishes up to 20% more, if significantly delayed. Of course, maintenance and repairs are not unique to historic buildings – all buildings need maintenance and there is some thought that soon we will find that modern buildings require more attention than those built to last.

In a world where competition for grants is increasing, with parishes, museums and national organisations all seeking support from the same places, it makes more sense to invest in regular maintenance and minor repairs than to delay and face a major repair bill. In fact, many funders now expect to see an up-to-date maintenance plan as part of an application. We realise that the recent restrictions have made maintenance even

more challenging, but there are grants, resources and ideas to help, including:

- The National Churches Trust Foundation Grant, which now has a quicker, rolling deadline: [www.nationalchurchestrust.org/foundationgrants](http://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/foundationgrants)
- Small grants of £500 – £5,000 from various organisations;
- 'Maintenance days' can be popular at churches to help with lower-level work. They can also raise the profile of a church and teach people about the value of maintenance;
- SPAB have a range of online resources about volunteer regional groups who are on the lookout for small heritage skills projects: [www.spab.org.uk/](http://www.spab.org.uk/)
- Organisations are monitoring the impact of COVID-19 and looking for ways to support church buildings.

Buildings, like people, need regular 't/c' and should not be viewed as a burden. Whilst it is people that really matter, we must remember that buildings help bring us together. Buildings really matter to people – they meant a lot to our ancestors who built and cared for them. They remain an asset and a resource passed from generation to generation.

You can find out more about the care of your church building by visiting the diocesan website here – [www.elydiocese.org/departments/church-buildings/](http://www.elydiocese.org/departments/church-buildings/)

## Growing Faith

Natasha Clark, Diocesan Development Officer: Young People

Growing Faith, as you will read more about on the next page, is the name given to invoke a national commitment to nurture discipleship in children, young people and different types of families. Two exciting initiatives that support this that I wanted to share with you that are already underway in our diocese is **Higher Cambs** and **Thrive Youth Work**.

### Higher Cambs



502 young people attending the Higher Cambs gig at St Mary's Eaton Socon, October 2018

In 2018, Higher Cambs saw over 13,000 young people hear about Christianity in their secondary schools. In that year, nearly 2,000 young people attended an evangelistic music event and 784 took home a response pack, including a Bible. This would not have been possible without the support of local churches and communities. Higher Cambs is returning in October 2020 and we would love for you to get involved! Search for 'Higher Cambs' on the diocesan website to find out more.

### Thrive Youth Work

Thrive Youth Work ('Thrive') is a Christian youth project, currently working in Huntingdon and Wisbech, supported by the Diocese. Thrive works with churches, schools and communities to provide programmes that offer emotional, social and spiritual growth for young people. This work includes mental health mentoring, motorcycle riding, youth cafes and new Fresh Expressions launched for young people and their families.



Young people attending Thrive Huntingdon Residential, July 2019

As Growing Faith continues to develop, we would love to work with more parishes to explore what partnership with schools might look like and how you can engage with children, young people and their families. What might Growing Faith look like in your parish? We'd love to support you as you explore what this might look like for you!

Please get in touch with me for more information at [natasha.clark@elydiocese.org](mailto:natasha.clark@elydiocese.org) or sign up to the Children and Youth mailing lists via the diocesan website – [www.elydiocese.org/about/news-jobs-and-events/signup-to-our-newsletters/](http://www.elydiocese.org/about/news-jobs-and-events/signup-to-our-newsletters/)

# #EverydayFaith and Growing Faith

Revd Canon Linda Church, Head of Development:  
Mission and Ministry

The Church of England's Renewal & Reform programme is aimed at helping us become a growing church for all people and for all places. Two areas we are focussing on in our Diocese to support this effort are called #EverydayFaith and Growing Faith, more on each of these areas of work and what it means for you as a churchwarden is included below.



## #EverydayFaith

The church is one with Christ as it shares in God's mission in every part of society, it is also one with Christ in its joyful gathering to celebrate his resurrection. Christ is not divided and these two aspects of the life of the church cannot be separated from one another.

Those who journey with Christ and share in the peace of Christ are sent in that same peace to the many varied places in which they live out their calling to share in God's work. We, as church, are called to bless the relationships we have outside of the church, at work and with our friends, by sharing the good news of our faith.

As part of the Ely2025 Diocesan Strategy, Everyday Faith seeks to help nurture a confident people of God, through supporting people in their everyday faith and life.



Our challenge, therefore, is to support people in the parts of their lives which are spent being active Christians in a wide range of contexts – at work, in education, in the family, or in the community. The Department of Development offers a range of resources, available for small group work and for individual study, with worship materials to help in being more confident in sharing our faith. These resources can be found in the 'Growing in Faith' area of the diocesan website at [www.elydiocese.org](http://www.elydiocese.org). An additional resource is The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity, you can find out more about this at [www.licc.org.uk/](http://www.licc.org.uk/)

## Growing Faith

Growing Faith is the name given to the vision of the House of Bishops to invoke a national commitment to nurture discipleship in children, young people and different types of families. Meaningful relationships between schools and churches are crucial in realising this vision, not least by developing together practical



resources to support family groups to grow in faith together.

The 2018 Statistics for Mission show that the Diocese of Ely has the fifth largest proportion of children and young people (0-17 years) in its worshipping communities. However, they also show that the overall attendance of children, young people and their families is falling when considered through the measurement of 'Average Sunday Attendance'. It is therefore our intention to use the Growing Faith initiative to prioritise children, young people and their families in our prayers and our decision-making.



What this means for parishes is that we will have a part-time dedicated Growing Faith Development Officer who will develop and provide resources for church schools, community schools and secondary schools. They will also support churches with training and resources to help them effectively partner with their local schools.

You will hear more about this as we move through 2020, but I encourage you to visit the diocesan website in the meantime to look at what's available or to contact a member of the team to ask about what support there is for your parish.

[www.elydiocese.org](http://www.elydiocese.org)

Your support in sharing these resources within our church communities is invaluable and as ever, greatly appreciated, so thank you.

Whilst Ecclesiastical has used reasonable endeavours to ensure that the information in this newsletter is correct at the time of publication, please note: (a) the information is not intended to constitute a definitive or complete statement of the law on any subject, (b) the information may over the course of time become incorrect or out of date; and (c) neither Ecclesiastical Insurance Office plc, nor its subsidiaries can accept any responsibility or liability for action taken or losses suffered as a result of reliance placed on the information provided in this newsletter.



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