

Chester Diocesan News

#EverydayFaith across the Diocese of Chester | July 2020



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Chester



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A sickness in society

The Archdeacon of Macclesfield, the Venerable Ian Bishop looks at what COVID has laid bare among us.

It has been the strangest of starts to summer and somehow in all that is happening I hope you get some refreshment between now and September. A new season approaches, a new bishop approaches (do watch the Crozier service on the 20 September) maybe even a new society approaches. We are all changed by Covid19 and we will all have had those conversations about the things that will be different when we 'go back'. I hope you've made a list, new resolutions about leading a better life, a better way. The sickness of coronavirus has perhaps laid bare just how ill we have been.

I think we all knew there was sickness in society long before Covid19 came into our worldview. It took many forms. You could see it in the lack of effective response to the environmental crisis that grips our world and destroys the planet we should love; the unhealthy work patterns and commuting that left a few vastly overpaid, many underpaid and even

more exhausted; the tribalism that makes strangers of God's children and makes enemies of migrants; the racism and unconscious bias that infects us all and means black lives matter less; the refusal to see the barriers that leave too many in poverty and crushes ambition; the underfunding of essential services that left society under prepared and under resourced when crisis hit. The list goes on and on.

There is the really interesting question that prompts the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10, where the religious scholar turns to Jesus and asks what he thinks is a clever question: 'and who is my neighbour?' It is a haunting question to which Jesus answers by telling the parable. During the Black Lives Matter protests the Metro newspaper captured this powerful image of Patrick Hutchison effectively re-telling the story for our time. Which of these was a neighbour to the far-right protestor left vulnerable on the floor? 'The one who treated him kindly' the religious scholar would reply. Evoking The Hollies' powerful song,



'He ain't heavy.... He's my brother' the Metro captured the pain and the hope perfectly in one image and headline. I hope the ignorance and sickness that took that far right supporter on to the streets in the first place was challenged by the kindness shown to him from those he would have least expected.

Scale that question up and apply it to any situation where people feel beaten up by the world and left without hope and you see the sickness in society is the failure to see who is my neighbour and the inability to see the problems and the unwillingness to respond if it requires personal sacrifice or risk. But who is my neighbour is the question to which the answer is always, 'the one who had mercy, who treated him kindly – regardless of personal sacrifice'... 'And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and walk humbly with your God.' (Micah 6:8)



The religious think tank 'Theos' recently released a really positive and challenging document called '[Bridging the Gap](#)'.

It's a report into the challenges of inequality and the ways that Church can make a difference. In the introduction Bishop Philip North writes: 'If we love the Jesus we meet in the Eucharist, then we are obliged to make a stand for the perfect dignity of every human person made in the likeness of God. If our worship is to be authentic, we must play our part in the struggle for equality.'

July and August is usually holiday time. I guess many of us are staycations this year. If you get time, make your list and pray. Who is my neighbour in need and what do I have to do to make things better? And then as the new start comes, be the difference and with prayers joined together maybe we can help to heal the sickness."



Revd Canon Lameck Mutete

“For so long the oppressed voice has been crying, ‘I can’t breathe, take your knee off my neck.’”

Who is your neighbour?

On 25 May, George Floyd was killed in the US during an arrest for allegedly using a counterfeit bank note.

His death sparked a wave of protests around the world calling for race equality and justice including in Chester where a peaceful demonstration was held outside the Cathedral to show solidarity with black and minority ethnic communities.

The strength of feeling and the emotion demonstrations has been clear for all to see and has prompted organisations and institutions, as well as individuals, to reflect on the issues at hand.

The Church of England’s Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC) released a statement expressing outrage at the killing of George Floyd and calling on the Church to fight for equality, inclusion and justice.

In the statement it said: “As a national Church we have a responsibility to create a community of faith that celebrates equality, inclusion and justice for all people. This is a gospel imperative and we dare not pretend otherwise. We hope that the current challenge is seen as a defining moment when we can act to transform the life of the Church of England by actively working to end racist behaviour and actions in the institution.”

The Revd Canon Lameck Mutete, Vicar of Tattenhall, Cheshire and Chair of CMEAC in the Diocese of Chester recorded his own impassioned message reflecting on the death of George Floyd in the US.

In it the video, which has been viewed hundreds of times, he said: “As Christians, we are committed to playing our part in seeing racism eradicated and the restoration of justice for all. For so long the oppressed voice has been crying, ‘I can’t breathe, take your knee off my neck.’”

“But the perpetrators of injustice have been silent.

“Finally, God spoke through George and the words went into flames of unquenchable fire. His final utterings have shaken the world and transformed it forever.”

You are invited to come and join the conversation on 07 July at 2pm and together we might begin to listen to different experiences and begin to think about how the Church can play its part in shaping a better future for all.

Who is your neighbour?

A series of conversations about experiences of race and equality with members of the black and ethnic minority communities.

07 July 2020



Join us online for the [Who is your neighbour?](#) event

BACK to BETTER



Revd Tina Dickson with her Granddaughter

As part of its response and support for parishes, the Diocese of Chester, led by officers based at Church House, will offer a series of webinars to support lay and ordained church leaders to reflect and prepare for this new chapter in church ministry in our diocese.

As we open our church buildings and learn more about the new context in which we find ourselves, the webinars will offer resources and ideas to help you to respond.

The webinars will cover a range of topics including ministry online and in church, and how we can live out our faith in our everyday lives. The first two webinars will focus on wellbeing and trauma and will help us to think about the impact the pandemic has had on the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of ourselves and others.

Why are we running these webinars?

On 04 July, church buildings can open for public worship once again. However, it won't be a case of throwing open the doors and welcoming everyone in the same way we might have done before the pandemic. Some parishes will require a period of adjustment to ensure they are confident they can open to the public safely.

The logistics and the careful way in which our church leaders are ensuring worship is conducted safely is sometimes carried out to a backdrop

of personal and collective difficulties, weariness, and anxiety. The Back to Better series of webinars aims to provide support and resources to help us all meet the challenge we face in the weeks ahead.

09 July, 2pm

Wellbeing

15 July, 2pm

Responding to trauma

21 July, 2pm

Ministry in church

23 July, 2pm

Ministry online

30 July, 2pm

Everyday faith

Stay up-to-date with [Back to Better on our website.](#)

Events

For more events visit our website: www.chester.anglican.org/events



Who is your neighbour?

07 July 2020 - Online

A series of conversations about experiences of race and equality with members of the black and ethnic minority communities. www.chester.anglican.org/events



Poetry Break

09 July 2020 - Online

A meeting for poetry lovers to gather online and hear and share poetry from across the diocese. To join us, visit our events page at www.chester.anglican.org/events



Receiving online donations

13 July 2020 - Online

A live webinar organised by the Church of England explaining how to set up online donations. There will be an opportunity to ask questions. <https://tinyurl.com/yce2nhuu>



Keeping a church connected

16 July 2020 - Online

In this webinar the Church of England Digital Team, we'll cover: Facebook group settings; moderator tools; safeguarding and more. <https://tinyurl.com/ydb4pevu>



Make the most of A Church Near You

29 July 2020 - Online

In this webinar, the Church of England Digital Team, will take you through 8 steps for making the most of your page in 2020. <https://tinyurl.com/yap39kp4>