

Chester Diocesan News

#EverydayFaith across the Diocese of Chester | August 2020



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Chester

Mark is now Bishop of Chester Pg 4

Archdeacon of Chester Pg 2

Back to Better Pg 6



BACK to
BETTER

A changing Church
in a changed world

In the Company of Jesus

The Archdeacon of Chester, the Venerable Mike Gilbertson looks at the importance of rest and letting-go of fear and anxiety.

“**H**ow’s it going for you? What a few months it has been. None of us will have seen it coming this time last year. Yet we have lived through four extraordinary months, and life will continue to be extraordinary for some time yet. You might have been adjusting to working from home, or on furlough. You might have been suddenly thrown into the challenge of home-schooling. You might be a local church leader who has rapidly up-skilled to become adept at online ministry. It might have been a time of real struggle and loss, perhaps looking ahead to an uncertain future.

However it has been for you, one thing I am hearing lots of people say is that they are really tired. All this adjustment and disorientation has taken its toll. And somehow, from somewhere, we need a rest. I’d really encourage you to get a break this summer, whatever form that takes.

Yet there is another dimension to rest. Jesus said, ‘Come

to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.’ The kind of rest Jesus means here is not like putting the towel down on the beach – assuming we could get there! It’s a different, deeper quality of rest and refreshment which we all need. It’s about the sense of peace, contentment and fulfilment of living in the love of Jesus. Out of that loving relationship, knowing the forgiveness and acceptance of God, comes refreshment and assurance, and a letting-go of fear and anxiety.

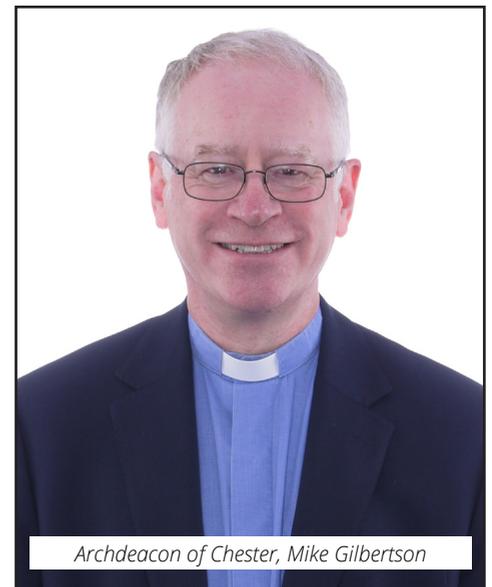
A story Christians often remember when thinking about rest is that lovely account in Luke 10 of when Jesus visited the home of his friends, the sisters Martha and Mary. Martha is very busy around the house and complains that Mary is just sitting listening to Jesus. Jesus responds gently to Martha but commends Mary for choosing to spend time quietly in his company.

We might or might not get away for a holiday this summer. As I write, foreign travel has sud-

And Jesus said:

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”

denly become more difficult again. But Jesus still offers us the rest and refreshment that comes from being closer to him. I certainly feel called to find out more of what that means for me just at the moment, and maybe God is calling you to do the same. Drawing breath this summer could mean spending some time in prayer and quietness in the company of the Jesus who offers us rest. And the rightness and reassurance of being in his company brings renewal and refreshment. You might quite rightly still be wanting a holiday as well! But this summer, why not look as well for the company of Jesus and the rest he offers your soul?



Archdeacon of Chester, Mike Gilbertson



It's official, Mark is now the Bishop of Chester

In May, Downing Street announced that Mark Tanner had been nominated as the person to be the next Bishop of Chester. On Wednesday 15 July, he legally became the Bishop of Chester in a ceremony broadcast entirely online.

The service was a mix of ancient legality adapted for the internet, and songs of praise.

The Revd Isaac Lawrence, a Pakistani-born British vicar in the Diocese of Carlisle who was curate when Mark was a parish priest, gave the Gospel reading and said of Bishop Mark: "He's my teacher and will always be my teacher because he taught me how to find my way through church life. It's a great delight to see him taking this role as bishop."

Bishop Mark and the Dean of Chester, Tim Stratford, also gave thanks for Bishop Keith Sinclair, who has led the di-

cese during the vacancy.

Bishop Keith said: "To know that Mark's coming and to know that God has got all of the future in hand, as well as the past, is a wonderful thing."

Bishop Mark will move to the diocese over the summer and take up his public duties in September.



During the pandemic, a number of clergy have turned to poetry to record their thoughts and reflections.

Speaking in May as part of a short interview thinking about poetry and the pandemic, the Revd Alec Brown, Rural Dean of Great Budworth and poet, said poetry is able to capture and communicate a sense of what people are experiencing because of its immediacy and accessibility.

Here he reflects on the current situation and the anticipation of better times to come in a sonnet titled, "Nearly there!"

Nearly there!

Slowly but surely, and carefully, we're getting there,
though I know that for some it's taking too long
while over the road at the Pub
they're worried the punters might break into song;
and for us with no singing or choir it won't be the same,
but once through the door you'll be glad you came,
after carefully cleansing your hands and following the directions and signs
you're back in the place where you've spent so much time,
which for so many people means so very much
and where for almost a thousand years
prayer has been offered in good times and bad,
in happiness and sorrow, in laughter and tears;
and yes, it will be different
but God remains constant and will banish our fears.

© The Revd Alec Brown, Great Budworth Church, 12 July, 2020.

The Diocese of Chester has launched its own podcast. Called Chester Box. It is currently available on Spotify, Google podcasts, Radio public, and will be made available on other platforms soon.

You can hear occasional reflections and interviews with a range of people from across the diocese.

If you are a Spotify user, simply search Chester Box, and "follow" the podcast. New episodes will appear there as they're published.



BACK to BETTER

As the country emerges from a national lockdown, and churches begin to open their doors for public worship, there is a realisation that what we are returning to is not the same as it was before the pandemic began.

Worship is different, work is different, we are different.

Over the past few months, we have all experienced the pandemic differently. For some it has been an enjoyable time; for others its been nothing short of torrid.

Since 04 July, church buildings have been able to open for public worship once again. But rather than simply throw open the doors and welcome everyone in, many parishes have required a period of adjustment to ensure they are confident they can open to the public safely.

As Bishop Keith and the Archdeacons said in a letter to the diocese in

July: "We hope you have all understood that the invitation to re-open is, at least for now, permissive and not prescriptive. Take your time, do it carefully and properly, following all the guidelines..."

If you need to refer to any of the Church guidance, it can be found on the [diocesan website](#) along with pastoral notes from senior clergy.

As part of its response and support for parishes, throughout July the Diocese of Chester, led by officers based at Church House, offered a series of webinars. They are available to watch on the diocesan website and offer resources and ideas to help church leaders in our diocese to reflect and respond to the new context in which we find ourselves.

The 'Back to Better' webinars covered a range of topics, which you can watch again by following the links below.



[Watch again](#)

Wellbeing

This webinar helps people consider the impact the current situation is having on us all as individuals in the diocese and to provide some suggestions to aid our mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing.



[Watch again](#)

Trauma

This webinar is a discussion exploring the nature of the Covid-19 pandemic as trauma, the impact it may be having on us and on our communities, and strategies for healing and building resilience.



[Watch again](#)

Blended economy

This webinar brings together pastors and people with technical tools, for a discussion about mission and ministry and how we can make use of technology to fit our priorities and improve our connections with others.



[Watch again](#)

Ministry online

This webinar works from the premise that the quality of our online material can be crucial to missional engagement. It includes recent and effective online missional material produced by parishes in our diocese.



[Watch again](#)

Everyday faith in a pandemic

This webinar explores the ways in which people have responded in faith to the pandemic through their everyday lives and how they have become the Body of Christ in the world at a time of trauma and change.

Events

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



The need to make a change

06 August 2020 - Online

This 'Let's talk about' event is facilitated by Peter Mackriell, our Head of Counselling Services and is for those who want to explore options as lockdown eases. [More...](#)



How to become an accessible Church

06 August 2020 - Online

Focusing on disability, this surgery focuses on how to enable people with disabilities to participate as much as possible in church life. [More...](#)



Poetry Break

13 August 2020 - Online

This will be an opportunity to hear poetry from others across the diocese. Those who come will be able to share a poem or simply listen and join the conversation. [More...](#)



Enjoying the lockdown world

20 August 2020 - Online

This 'Let's talk about' event is facilitated by Peter Mackriell, our Head of Counselling Services and is about finding joy and growth during lockdown. [More...](#)



Planning work to your church building

03 September 2020 - Online

This online meeting will offer general advice on DAC and its processes, faculty jurisdiction rules, quinquennial inspections and provide answers to specific enquiries. [More...](#)