



# St Chad's Volunteer Programme

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Dear Friends,

## FESTIVE GREETINGS FROM ST CHAD'S VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

### REPORTING ON 2017: A BUSY YEAR OF DEVELOPMENT

After the various changes last year, 2017 has been a year of growth and development. One statistic aptly illustrates this:

***On 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017 we had no volunteers in situ, neither in Lichfield nor overseas; by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018, God willing, we will have seven.***

This, together with changes and updating of some of our procedures, has meant that we have been busy!

Most of the activity, although not all, has been with our partners in West Malaysia where they have been busy too. They appointed a new SCVP coordinator, Ching Li Yit, who was herself a St Chad's volunteer in the Peel parishes in Lichfield in 2014/15. I was pleased to meet Ching Li in October at St Paul's church Petaling Jaya together with three prospective volunteers. In this world of electronic communication we must continue to value and thank God for real face to face encounters.

Our Bishop agrees! He made it very clear, soon after his installation in September 2016, how much he valued Lichfield's links with its Companion Dioceses and he pledged to visit all four within the first eighteen months. He has completed 75% of this target and is due to travel to Matlosane, South Africa in February.



Ching Li Yit

### Now, let me give you a little detail about our busy year:

**JANUARY:** Andrew Soon, from St Paul's church, Penang, finished his placement at the pioneer ministries in Telford. He preached at his final service and there was not a dry eye in the house.

This was a challenging situation and Andrew made a valuable contribution with music, youth and young adults, including university students.

**FEBRUARY:** Abigail Liew, from Emmanuel Harvest Centre in Penang, started her placement at Trinity Churches, Meole Brace in Shrewsbury. She arrived on St Valentine's Day and everyone soon fell in love with

her! This happens to be my own church so I have seen at close quarters the impact that she has made. She has worked with children, youth life groups, served in the community café and helped in so many ways around the church and parish. As her placement draws to a close she is looking to join theological college in the UK but her vicar at Trinity simply says "I'm not letting her leave!"

**MARCH:** Abby was commissioned in Lichfield Cathedral as Bishop Michael, fresh from his visit to Nordkirche, welcomed his first St Chad's volunteer in person. I visited various residential centres to explore the potential of using them as part of a future placement.

**APRIL:** We were all excited to receive confirmation from Qu'Appelle diocese, Canada, that their first St Chad's Volunteer would be arriving in July. Matthew Gobbett was still finishing high school in April but had

requested some active, outdoor element to his work. So we agreed a placement with Holy Trinity Oswestry to include involvement with Quinta, a Christian conference centre on the Welsh border.

**MAY:** The big event in Lichfield was "**Next Steps**" ~ an invitation by Bishop Michael to join together as he shared his vision: *Come follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad*. He launched four mission projects, one of which was to develop youth work in the rural parishes of the Salop Episcopal Area. We started to plan how St Chad's volunteers could become involved in this. Meanwhile, Abby Liew helped at *Inspire*, an event in the Cathedral for school children.

**JUNE:** Using the fresh SCVP promotional leaflet we made another attempt to encourage our English young people to make "the gift of a year" and take up a placement abroad. This remains our biggest challenge and we need to do more to stimulate interest in 2018. A group from Lichfield did make a short working visit to South Africa in support of the "*Hands at Work*" project which is located close to Matlosane..

**JULY:** Matt Gobbett arrived from Qu'Appelle and was commissioned during a mid-day Eucharist in Lichfield Cathedral. He spent much of the summer helping at Christian camps at Quinta before settling into parish routine at Holy Trinity, Oswestry. Abby was busy on location too, attending residential projects in Stafford: *Naturally Supernatural* and *Soul Survivor*. I think both of them got wet a few times as they experienced our British summer under canvas!



Abby with Philip, Phil Cansdale (Vicar of Trinity Churches) and Matt Guilder (Youth Minister).



Bishop Michael & Abby

**AUGUST:** Philip Swan flew to Kuching for the installation of Bishop Donald and to discuss the idea of young ordinands spending time as St Chad's volunteers as part of their preparation for ministry. Otherwise August was all about Canada. Bishop Michael visited Qu'Appelle diocese,



*Peter Boote, Michael Carding, Catherine Crawley & Matthew Gobbett*

Catherine Crawley from St Matthew's Walsall started a placement at the Cathedral in Regina and before they both left there was a special rendezvous in rural Staffordshire. Archdeacon Peter Boote was able to meet with Catherine and Matthew Gobbett whilst he was here on a visit to Lichfield. Once again it was a wonderful opportunity for people to meet face to face, share experiences and learn from one another.

**SEPTEMBER:** Both Matt and Abby came with me to Dovedale House, the residential youth centre for Lichfield Diocese. My role was to lead a walk for diocesan staff as part of their "away day". The two St Chad's volunteers were a big help with a large mixed-ability group in challenging countryside and it was a good opportunity for diocesan staff to see and meet our volunteers. Later in the month we welcomed Peter Ooi from St Paul's Church, Penang who has started his placement at Christ Church, Bayston Hill near Shrewsbury. Both Peter and Matthew are scheduled to be involved in the 4 Rural Youth projects in their neighbouring rural deaneries.



*Peter Ooi with his 'Initial Welcome' family (left) and his Host family (right)*

**OCTOBER:** Peter was commissioned in Lichfield cathedral just before Philip Swan, Bishop Michael and myself, together with five others from Lichfield diocese, set off for a partnership visit to S.E. Asia. This included the Mission Round Table conference in Singapore, mission visits to Indonesia and Laos, an extensive tour of church communities in West Malaysia and visits to Kuching and Sabah. On several occasions we had amazing meetings with former St Chad's volunteers and at St Paul's Petaling Jaya we were joined by Archbishop Moon Hing and Bishop Michael, both of whom gave generously of their time and words to show support for the SCVP programme. Bishop Michael gave his presidential greeting to the Lichfield Diocesan Synod by Skype from Penang airport and also squeezed in a trip to Auckland for the consecration of their new cathedral.



*Archbishop Moon Hing, Bishop Michael and Wai Teng*

**NOVEMBER:** Abby preached for the first time, Matt made his debut at Messy Church and Peter wowed the congregations at Bayston Hill and Wrockwardine with his guitar led worship. Bishop Michael attended the St Chad's Trust meeting to find out more about how it supports SCVP and to say thanks to Paul Williams who has moved to Cambridge and has had to resign as a trustee.

He was influential at the start of the programme at the millennium and has been a wonderful critical friend to SCVP ever since.

**DECEMBER:** I am writing this at the end of a very wintry weekend: there is snow 30cm deep on my back lawn! The Anticipating Advent group returned from Nordkirche before the snow arrived and a visiting group from Kuching got out before the airports closed. We are busy making arrangements for three more volunteers arriving in January. Naomi Abbarow

from St Paul's Petaling Jaya is going to St Bartholomew's, Penn and Kenneth Bau Y Wen from Our Saviour Church, Kuala Lumpur will be at St Matthew's Walsall. From Kuching we welcome the first ordinand, Stanley Kiew, who will live and work at the Stoke Minster, Stoke-on-Trent. They all arrive on 19<sup>th</sup> January and will be commissioned in Lichfield Cathedral a week later.



*Stephanie (2014), Naomi (2018), JJ (2018), Kenneth (2018) & Gill Carding*

So that's our busy year in a nutshell. We are blessed in having such a strong community of volunteers, past, present and future together with all those who help in any way to make the programme such a success. The St Chad's Trust is in good shape and in recruiting new trustees we hope that one might be the Bishop's Director of Ordinands. John and Diana Edlin from Walsall have made an initial visit to Batam, supported by the Diocese of Singapore, and John is preparing to make the first of many working visits to Anglican schools there. This will pave the way for St Chad's volunteers to *follow in his footsteps*.



*Lydia Abraham (2018) & Marie Ingram (2001) at the Church of the Holy Spirit Ipoh*

Our thanks go to you all for your support and encouragement. We wish you God's Blessing this Christmas and His encouragement as we enter the New Year in this seemingly troubled world with Love, Faith and Hope in our hearts.

And the Greatest of these .....?

*'Arise shine for your light has come, And the glory of the Lord rises upon you'. Isaiah 60 v1*

***In the Love of Christ***

Michael (Coordinator)