

Spotlight

May/June 2019

Welcome Sarah

The next Bishop of Shrewsbury hit the ground running by spending a day getting to know people across Shropshire on the day her nomination was announced.

The Venerable Sarah Bullock, currently Archdeacon of York, will begin the role in July after the Queen approved her nomination in succession to the Rt Revd Mark Rylands.

Sarah will be the first woman to serve as a bishop in our Diocese, joining the Area Bishops of Wolverhampton and Stafford in an episcopal



team led by the Bishop of Lichfield. She will have pastoral oversight of churches, ministers and communities in the towns and villages of North Shropshire, including Shrewsbury, and the northern part of Telford.

She said: "I am honoured and delighted to have been invited to become the Bishop of Shrewsbury. I'm looking forward to really getting to know the communities of this area and those who live, work and worship here. I'm passionate about the Christian faith and journeying with people to discover and share the love, joy and hope that Jesus offers to everyone. I look forward to supporting the churches, schools, colleges and communities of this area as we share the good news of God's love, which brings transformation, hope and renewal."

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New Bishop of Shrewsbury

<- continued from p1 On announcement day, Sarah got to know parishioners at a community café in St Michael's Church, Llanyblodwel, on



In 2013 Sarah became Archdeacon of York, covering a largely rural area which includes market towns, the deep rural communities of the Vale of York and the edges of the Yorkshire Wolds as well as the City of York. She has worked creatively with

the Welsh borders in the farthest west corner of the Diocese. She then visited the



colleagues to develop new approaches to mission and ministry in rural communities.

At St Chad's Shrewsbury, the other anglican bishop in Shropshire, Rt Revd Alistair Magowan (Bishop of Ludlow in Hereford Diocese) and Rural Dean of Shrewsbury, Revd Phil Cansdale were waiting for Sarah. A former teacher, she was delighted to meet a school party who arrived to look around the church as part of a PSHE lesson.



Sarah is married to Peter, a physicist, and they have one son, Joseph, who is currently studying for a PhD at the University of Durham.



At the Brookside Community Project in Telford, Sarah learned about the Community Fridge initiative and other aspects of the centre - as well as being interviewed for TV news.



Bishop Michael said: "I know that in Sarah we will be welcoming a caring and prayerful pastor, with an imaginative and energetic commitment to mission, a proven readiness to work with ecumenical and community partners in building up community, and a fine mind and warm heart firmly grounded in a deep Christian faith. I look forward to working closely with her as a colleague and sister bishop, and I know that she will be received warmly by people in churches and communities in the Shrewsbury Episcopal Area and across the Diocese."

More pictures from the day are on our flickr feed: <https://flic.kr/s/aHsmy39M1Q>

Sarah will be consecrated as bishop by the Archbishop of Canterbury at St Paul's Cathedral on 3 July and will begin her role in Shrewsbury shortly afterwards.



The Archdeacon of Salop, the Venerable Paul Thomas, said: "It is a joy to welcome Sarah as the next Bishop of Shrewsbury and I look forward to working closely with her. I am sure that from her wealth of experience Sarah will bring many enriching gifts to us and will be received with enthusiasm and generous hospitality."

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, added: "Sarah is deeply committed to serving local communities, serving local people and will be sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with all whom she encounters."



civic church of St Chad's in Shrewsbury before going to Brookside Central Community Centre in Central Telford Parish where she saw a

(above) Abundant cake, media and people young and old greeted Sarah in remote Llanyblodwel. (below) Our Welsh Archdeacon of Salop, Ven Paul Thomas was delighted to introduce Sarah to the eastern edge the Diocese, along with the new Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, Anna Turner

community fridge, which people give and take food from, and other projects.

Sarah (55) trained for ministry

at Cranmer Hall, University of Durham, a theological college in the evangelical tradition. She was ordained 26 years ago after a short career in teaching and children's and youth work in Manchester Diocese. She served in a variety of parish roles in areas including Moss Side and Salford and was Bishop's Adviser for Women's Ministry and Borough Dean for Manchester.



Eco-friendly parishes

Churches throughout the diocese are taking up the challenge of becoming greener and tackling climate change.

A new Diocesan Environmental Policy and Action Plan were unveiled at Diocesan Synod and a motion passed asking all deaneries to recommend to their parishes that they register for Eco Church.

Eco Church is an award scheme from national charity A Rocha UK which recognises and supports churches who are working to become more environmentally friendly. This could include taking steps like switching to a green energy company, installing LED lighting, using Fairtrade for tea and coffee supplies or reflecting themes of creation care in sermons and worship. Churches build up points by taking these steps, leading to awards at a bronze, silver and gold level and a plaque from A Rocha.

Several local churches have signed up already and are working towards, or have achieved, the bronze standard, including the Church At Perton in South Staffordshire.



St John the Baptist's Church in Mayfield, East Staffordshire, are working with their local

Beaver group to build bat houses and bird boxes. Church Warden Gill Brewer (pictured above) said they had applied for the bronze award already.

"We see this as a way of involving our community, especially local children," she said. "We are quite a small congregation but it's amazing how interested everyone is in this. We are already Fair Trade and mow

our graveyard in a way that encourages wild flowers. Our church is 900 years old, which actually means we have a low carbon footprint, and insulation in the church hall and vicarage qualifies towards the awards. Our mandate as Christians is to look after this world."

Bishop Clive, introducing the Synod motion, said: "So often the care of creation has seemed a marginal preoccupation within the life of the Church. I hope and pray that that is now changing, with our hearts and minds focussed by the looming environmental catastrophe which is yet within our power to avert."



"If everyone on the planet was to enjoy the same standard of living as we do, we would need two and a half planet earths to provide the resources necessary. And yet it is equally true that there is more than enough provision within God's creation for all to be fed and sheltered and for none to live in poverty, if only we were better stewards of God's good creation, and if only we could live as simply and thankfully as Jesus."

David Primrose, Diocesan Director of Transforming Communities, said churches could play a leading role in change.

"The everyday choices, habits, actions and decisions that we make as Christians, and as churches, have far-reaching impacts on others in our world. We want to celebrate the many ways in which churches and individual

Christians across the Diocese are already living out these principles – and encourage parishes to take part by registering for Eco Church.



"Our Diocesan vision includes a prayer that we become a church 'that partners with others in seeking the common good, working for justice as people of hope.' As we grow deeper in our love for Jesus, we learn to love our neighbour

– this applies to the whole of creation as much as our human neighbour."

The Revd Richard Clarkson has taken on the role of Diocesan Environmental Officer following the retirement of John Polhill. "As Christians our response to

climate change should come not from a sense of impending disaster, but a hopeful rediscovery of our role as stewards of God's good creation," said Richard. "Our new Diocesan Environmental Policy, and particularly the encouragement for parishes to sign up to Eco Church, gives us practical tools to help individuals, parishes, and the whole diocese to tread more lightly on the earth as we share the hope that we have in Jesus."

The Diocese as a whole is also working towards accreditation as an EcoDiocese under A Rocha UK. The new policy and action plan include practical ways the Diocese will become more environmentally sustainable as it aims to halve its carbon footprint by 2030.



25 years of female priests

The 25th anniversary of women being ordained as priests for the first time in the Diocese saw some of those affected reflect on the difference it has made to them and the Church.

A change in canon law in 1994 enabled women who at that time could only be deacons (and so could not preside at communion or give blessings and absolution) to be ordained as priests. Soon after, 51 female deacons were ordained as priests in Lichfield Cathedral in two services on 23 and 24 April.

To mark the dates, two sets of people came together to share their experiences and discuss how their ministry has impacted the whole Church of England. Firstly, Gayle Greenway, curate at St Matthew's Wolverhampton talked with Rose Hudson-Wilkin, who is Chaplain to the Queen and to the Speaker of the House of Commons. Rose was curate at St Matthew's between 1991 and 1995 and priested on 23 April 1994.

Rose said: "It was pretty special to be in the first batch in the Diocese. I have an amazing recollection of coming out of the cathedral and I can still see a number of older women who had been faithful in the life of the church but who were now in their 70s, or even 80s, and their dream of ordination would never be fulfilled. I recall my emotion that day – it was one of joy and one of sadness because of the moments of pain for these women. When you know that God calls you, there are obstacles, but you know that Christ will make a way."



Zoe Heming chaired a roundtable discussion with Pippa Thorneycroft, who was priested at the cathedral on 24 April 1994; past and current Bishops' Advisers for Women's Ministry Maureen Hobbs and Sarah Schofield, and John Allan who moved to the Diocese almost 30 years ago from the American Lutheran Church where women were first ordained as priests in 1970.



Sarah pointed to the importance of "male encouragers" in the journey. "Twenty-five years is fantastic but we have a long way to go on a whole range of other issues," she added.

John said: "One of the most joyful things I've experienced is that some people who were ardently theologically against the ordination of women have been completely won over by the integrity of the women who served."

In 1994, Spotlight gave a bigger headline to provision of 'flying bishops' for those opposed to female priests than the ordinations themselves:

Read more and watch the videos: https://www.lichfield.anglican.org/25yrs-women_priests/



Gongs struck

Bishop Michael recognised the inspirational work of people from throughout the region during the inaugural awarding of the St Chad's Medal at Lichfield Cathedral.

The medal is given to lay people who have made a particularly valuable contribution to Christian life in the Diocese. It is named after the first Bishop of Lichfield, St Chad, who charged his followers to have lives characterised by 'watching, prayer and good works'.

Bishop Michael presented the first medals, in what will become an annual award to, six people – Marjorie Boothby, Debbie Parkes, Peter Phillips, Michael Revell, Di Saxby and Michael Youens – at Lichfield Cathedral, the ancient seat of St Chad. A seventh recipient, Eileen Reynolds, received her medal at a later date.

The medal winners have served in a wide variety of roles in places including Lichfield, Pleck, Market Drayton, Tipton, Stafford and Shrewsbury. Their contributions include voluntary work with prisoners and former prisoners, with



young people and people affected by poverty, in education and fundraising, along with tireless hours spent serving local churches.

Bishop Michael said: "The thousands of hours of unpaid service these seven people faithfully – and often quietly - offer as a practical outworking of their Christian faith is

truly inspirational. They represent many more lay people who are the backbone of their communities, both inside and outside of church, across Lichfield Diocese. I look forward to the St Chad's Medal becoming established as an annual award that encourages others to follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad as they live everyday lives of discipleship, vocation and evangelism."

The awarding of St Chad's Medals will happen each year on a date near to St Chad's Day, 2 March. You can nominate someone by emailing bishop.michael@lichfield.anglican.org



Midlanders to the ends of the earth

Curates from across the Midlands experienced very different church cultures when they travelled to our link dioceses in South Africa and Canada.

Cath Brumfitt, Liz Mills, Richard Hume and Alison Hudson, accompanied by Lesley and John



Bentley, signalled a new chapter in our diocesan partnerships with a trip to Matlosane. All four curates had never visited Africa before.

They were given opportunities to preach in the sweltering heat in church services which could last over three hours, visited the diocesan offices in Klerksdrop – opened last year during a visit by Bishop Michael – and spent time in townships with great poverty caused by unemployment. The curates also served home communions and went to the Cathedral Church of the Resurrection, believed to be the only township-based cathedral in South Africa. They also had an emotional visit to the Apartheid Museum in Johannesburg and the rural Church of Christ the King in Matlwang which had been re-built, assisted by people from Lichfield Diocese, after the area was cleared under Apartheid.

Cath, Curate of the Watershed Benefice in South Staffordshire, said: "A chance conversation in a shopping centre shows just how far the country has come. We talked to three people who work together, who would previously have been categorised as white, coloured and black and would have been segregated. They see each other as equal and pointed out that when they put their hands together it's difficult to see much difference in their skin colour. In the past it would have been the defining factor in their lives."

Meanwhile, Jassica Castillo-Burley, Drew Walker and Malcolm Mycock, together with Bishop's Director for Ordinands Romita Shrisunder and Director of World Mission Philip Swan, headed to Qu'Appelle Diocese in Canada.

The curates experienced ministry in the capital city of Regina and travelled further afield in the vast diocese to places including Moose Jaw and Maple Creek. In Regina they helped with the cathedral lunch programme serving the homeless population, the majority of them First Nation people, who had survived extreme winter temperatures of up to -50°C. They also learnt about the Truth and



Reconciliation Process which has sought healing following the history of cultural genocide among First Nation people, and the work the Church is doing in this area.

Jassica, Curate in West Felton, Shropshire, wrote: "Sitting in a land and being surrounded by so much tension I am reminded how sometimes our lives resemble the barrenness of the land. Even in what seems to be the most beautiful is filled with despair. We are invited to see Creator God's hand at work taking what is apparent and making or remaking it – fit for purpose."



Revd Ana Lawrence, with her husband Kevin, travelled to the Dioceses of Kuching and Sabah in early 2019. Ana is curate in the Benefice of Albrighton, Donington and Boningale. She writes:

What does the Church in England think of us? This question, put to us by a group of young adult Anglicans in Borneo recently, pulled us up short.

We were spending three wonderful weeks as guests of the dioceses of Sabah and Kuching, Malaysia, as part of Ana's curacy training; fulfilling a long held desire to travel to Malaysia, first prompted when a team from Sabah came to our church 25 years ago.

If we were honest, we were not immediately sure how to answer that question from the young adults on behalf of you all!



The Anglican churches in Borneo contain an incredible diversity of language, culture and tradition. There may be Sunday services and cell groups in up to five different languages in a single parish in any one week. And it was all on an eye opening scale! Worshipping in St Patrick's Church, Tawau, alongside 1,200 others on Chinese New Year was a profound and exciting time, whilst being invited to preach in a 'smaller' church outside Kuching meant speaking to 700, including an overflow of 300 in a neighbouring hall. The churches clearly placed a strong emphasis on discipleship,



with highlights of our trip including sharing with mid-week cell groups and a Confirmation service, when the candidates alone nearly filled the church building.

Wherever we went, we were given an extravagant and heartfelt welcome, with the sharing of delicious local food, an essential part of any visit.

Of course, the churches in Borneo are facing their own issues. Malaysia is a majority Muslim country and the Christian church faces restrictions and pressures from government. Both dioceses have a chronic shortage of ordained ministers and we were quizzed about finding good discipleship material for church members, particularly those recently confirmed.

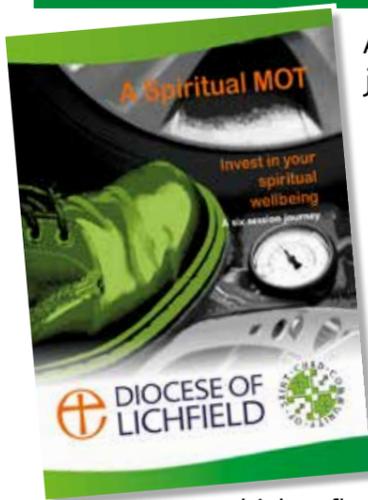
English missionaries founded the church in Borneo some 150 years ago and their legacy is remembered with gratitude and with a strong desire to build on that history. Both dioceses were keen to continue to develop and continue informal, parish based links so please speak to me or contact Philp Swan, the Director of World Mission, if that is something you would be interested in pursuing. There is also a particular need for teachers for a church-run international school and we can provide more details.

So back to that tricky question with which this article began. We would like to warmly encourage others to go to visit the churches in Malaysia and answer it for yourselves: warm sunshine and great food are just added bonuses!

Learn more about their trips at www.facebook.com/LichfieldCofE/



Get your soul in gear



A new six-session journey provides an accessible way of refocussing our direction of travel, both individually and as a community. It offers an opportunity to reflect afresh on our core values as followers of Christ and to work out patterns of living which reflect those underlying values.

A Spiritual MOT has been designed to be used alongside the Community of Saint Chad booklets and there is an opportunity to

continue the journey longer term by joining with others to form a small spiritual companion group. It draws on the five 'rhythms of grace' that are core parts of the Community's daily prayer. These rhythms are not meant to be a set of rules to dictate how we behave or something to make us feel guilty if we don't live up to them each day. Instead they describe a series of aspirational statements that we seek, with God's help, to commit to.

The limited-edition resource is available for free from the Diocesan office - contact karen.baker@lichfield.anglican.org or phone 01543 306030.



Let your soles persevere

On Saturday 8 June 2019, Midlands church leaders (including the Bishops of Lichfield, Repton and RC Bishop of Nottingham), priests, pastors and people will walk together in prayer and fellowship over the 19 miles between Repton and Lichfield. The St Chad Pilgrimage will take around nine hours to complete, including pauses for prayer and refreshments en route.

which has had a church for over 1,000 years; St Chad's church, Lichfield where St Chad established a house of prayer in 669AD; and ending at Lichfield Cathedral - for many centuries the resting place of St Chad, founded on Christmas Day in 700AD.

Organiser Robert Mountford (right), Bishop Michael and others entering The Close at Lichfield Cathedral as they completed the 2017 pilgrimage from St Chads RC Cathedral in Birmingham



The route includes footpaths and pavements and paced at a purposeful rate. As significant numbers are expected, registration is required in advance - by 24 May at the latest - by emailing st.chad.pilgrimage@gmail.com. Full details are available at the website: www.staffordshirechurches.org



Along the route, pilgrims will gather at five points with significant historic Christian roots to pray together.

Those points are St Wystan's church at Repton, the base of the first four bishops in Mercia: St Modwen's, Burton on Trent - a 7th century place of prayer established by Irish nun St Modwen; All Saints Alrewas

See the power

What do you expect when you pray? Do we expect it to be a way of persuading God to give us what we want? Or is prayer an activity in which we engage with God, to achieve what he wants?

To be able to engage with God, we need faith, trust in God, in every part of life. Prayer helps us to grow in trust (Proverbs 3:5-6). But faith filled prayer is not a device to ensure an easy life - see Hebrews 11:32-39 to see what trust in God achieves in real people's lives. Prayer is the way we have been given to see God's power at work in every situation, to help us cope, to overcome evil, to witness change.

Thy Kingdom Come, is an opportunity, between Ascension Day and Pentecost (30th May-9th June), for all of us, 'to deepen our friendship with Jesus, bring others to know Jesus or know him better and to come to know that every aspect of your life is the stuff of prayer'.



More at www.thykingdomcome.global/

As we have recently celebrated at Easter, and do so every day, Jesus Christ is RISEN, He is ALIVE. When we pray we pray to God our Father, through our living Lord and Saviour, in the power of the Holy Spirit.



In times of great pain and suffering, in times of joy and celebration, we pray with the focus that Jesus himself taught us in the Lord's Prayer. 'Thy Kingdom Come', is followed by the words 'Thy will be done'.

We pray for the coming of God's kingdom in our lives, the lives of those around us, the life of our churches, communities and beyond. We do so based on God's agenda, not ours; we do so expecting God to work. 'Your will be done'.

So let's all pray. If you don't know what to say, start with the words Jesus taught us - the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9-14). Pause between each line, be ready to be challenged, encouraged and comforted. Listen, watch and see God at work. And GIVE THANKS.

The Ven Sue Weller
Archdeacon of Walsall

From the Editor



It's hard to believe that Spotlight has been produced in this format for over five years now. We'd like to hear your thoughts on the variety of articles (we're always keen to hear new or encouraging stories from

parishes, schools, fresh expressions and chaplaincies), the design and the format.

We've drafted a short survey online at www.lichfield.anglican.org/spotlight-review or you can download a version to fill in with a pen at the same link - or in case of difficulty please phone 01543 306030 and ask for the Spotlight Survey to be posted to you.



Come follow Christ
in the footsteps of St Chad

DIARY

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

Celebration of Ministry
An evening to say farewell to Revd
George (retiring Director of Mission
for the diocese) and Revd Joan Fisher.
Thursday 20 June, 7.30pm
St Matthew's Church Walsall

**Thy Kingdom Come -
30 May-9 June**
Events around the world -
see www.thykingdomcome.org
global.



For links to events in the
Diocese see also
lichfield.anglican.org/TKC2019

Healing, Wholeness and Hope
A quiet day at Croxden Church
nr Uttoxeter led by Liz & Terry
Jones. Wander around the
ancient Abbey, prayer stations
and worship.

Saturday 1 June, 10am-4pm.
More info via www.rdch.org.uk

Eco Church workshop
Information for parishes who
might want to participate in the
scheme.
Lichfield, 23 May 1-3pm.
Contact emma.smith@lichfield.anglican.org
or 01543 622951
for more info