

Spotlight

Sept/Oct 2019

Climate Action

People across the diocese are urged to get involved in a climate action day on Friday 20 September.

Parliament has declared a climate change emergency and a series of climate strikes have taken place across the UK and elsewhere, led by young people. From 20-27 September there will be a global week of action to coincide with the UN Climate Summit on 23 September.

The diocese is committed to taking climate change seriously through a new Diocesan Environmental Policy and Action Plan. Parishes across the diocese are registering for Eco Church – a national award that recognises and supports churches who are working to become more environmentally friendly.

Our four bishops are encouraging churches, clergy and diocesan staff to show solidarity with young people to demand an end to the age of fossil fuels and climate justice for everyone.

Bishop Clive, diocesan lead on the Environment, said: "As we seek to partner with others in seeking the common good, we are called to work for justice as people of hope. Our love for our neighbour applies to the whole of creation and by making small changes to our lifestyles and campaigning for the Government to make big changes we can be part of halting the progress of climate change."



Diocesan offices in Lichfield will close on 20 September to enable diocesan staff to participate in action. There will also be a gathering at Lichfield Cathedral and the bishops have asked clergy to set aside their usual duties to participate in worship, events and advocacy on the theme of climate action on that day.

Churches are encouraged to share their efforts on social media with the hashtags #climatechange and #chadclimateaction. Special resources will also be available for Church schools.



For ideas and resources go to www.lichfield.anglican.org/climateactionday | Let us know your plans at comms@lichfield.anglican.org | Bishop Michael talks more about ecological mobilisation on p 11.



The Church of England around Staffordshire, northern Shropshire and the Black Country

A ton of welcoming places across the diocese

An initiative that offers a warm welcome in local communities is now open in 100 places across our diocese. The 100th Place of Welcome opened its doors at one of the most unique venues yet – Hammerwich Hall Care Home, near Burntwood.

Places of Welcome is a network of small community organisations who provide an unconditional welcome to local people for at least a few hours each week. The initiative is spreading across the country with over 350 venues taking part. Places of Welcome are run by local groups who want to make sure that everyone in their area has a place to go for a friendly face, a cup of tea and a conversation.

The 100 Places of Welcome across the diocese – in Staffordshire, the Black Country and Shropshire – are in venues including many churches and other community buildings, including all three libraries in Tamworth! They are all open to the public at a set time on a weekly basis.



Bishop Michael at St Matthew's Tipton (photo: Express & Star).

Bishop Michael said: "It is a fantastic achievement that there are now 100 Places of Welcome across our diocese – each one offering people a haven of companionship and friendship. Places of Welcome really do combat isolation and loneliness and are a practical outworking of how churches and other



The 100th Place of Welcome in the diocese at Hammerwich Hall Care Home near Burntwood (above). The Place of Welcome at St Oswald's Oswestry (below).

organisations can know and love their communities."

Hammerwich Hall, owned and run by Advinia Health

Care, became the 51st Place of Welcome to open in Staffordshire and hosts its weekly Place of Welcome every Thursday between 2pm and 4pm in the Home's Vintage Tea Room.

Emily Hocking, Customer Relations Manager, commented: "Advinia Health Care are delighted to join the Places of Welcome network and we look forward to welcoming people to our wonderful home and gardens. We pride ourselves on the warm welcome we offer and look forward to making new friends by offering this opportunity for people to pop in for a cup of tea or coffee and a chat on Thursday afternoons."

Places of Welcome are sponsored and supported by Transforming Communities Together, a joint venture between the Church Urban Fund and the diocese.



Transforming Communities Together Chair, the Rev Dr David Primrose, said: "We're delighted to have Places of Welcome now at a growing number of places and want to continue this growth. It's fantastic to have a variety of different organisations involved, as we work towards our vision of every community having a Place of Welcome."

Places of Welcome is a grassroots movement that began in Birmingham. It has five values ensure that each venue is open at the same time and place for at least a few hours every



Place of Welcome team at St John's Community Church, Chase Terrace (above); volunteers in Lichfield District (above right) and at Tamworth Library (right).

week and is welcoming to anyone wanting to attend:

- Place: An accessible and hospitable building, open at the same time every week.
- People: Open to everyone regardless of their circumstances or situation, and staffed by volunteers.
- Presence: A place where people actively listen to one another.
- Provision: Offering free refreshments and basic local information.
- Participation: Recognises that every person coming to a Place of Welcome will bring talents, experiences and skills that they might be willing to share locally.



There are no charges for joining Places of Welcome, and anyone can start one in their community. Places of Welcome can be in any location including churches, mosques, temples, community centres or housing associations.

Find out more at: www.placesofwelcome.org.uk



Reaching rural youth

The four Mission Projects launched by Bishop Michael in 2017 each cover one areas of Christian community: Parishes, Schools, Chaplaincies and Fresh Expressions.

The Fresh Expressions project focusses on young people in Shropshire, and in particular how to gather, encourage, teach and disciple those aged 11-18 in widely dispersed rural homes, hamlets and villages.

Titled '4 Rural Youth' it has one strand trying to support young people from villages where they gather during the day - through school chaplaincy - and three strands testing different ways of supporting young people's faith in rural communities through local projects in the deaneries themselves. Oswestry Rural Youth Church is the last to get going, but progress is certainly being made. Unlike the other deanery-based projects in Wrockwardine and Hodnet, ORYC's leaders wanted to employ a full-time youth worker to be able to network more quickly and build relationships with both youth and the 18 churches of the deanery.

"There has been good work with Messy Churches within the deanery but nothing connecting with those of secondary school age [outside of Oswestry town centre] - some of those young people that had gone for confirmation in the last two or three years who we've lost contact with" says 4 Rural Youth coordinator, Diane Woolridge.



Tudor Humphreys has been a youth worker for 30 years and had been concerned about the lack of Christian work with young people in the villages. "While out walking the dog one day I had a picture of a spired church, like that at Rhyd-y-Croesau and it made me think about what was happening in those villages for young people with their faith. Somebody handed me a letter at church talking about a meeting pulling together some of the youth work leaders around Oswestry. I was really keen to be part of that. Two of the local vicars had been trying to get something off the ground." Tudor quickly became part of the ORYC steering group.

They began to make progress, and using fundraising skills in the group managed to match a grant from the diocese enabling them to appoint a pioneer youth minister in September 2018.

"There are lots of things churches can be doing to support Matt in this role," says Diane. "There's a need to be patient and realise that when you're pioneering something, often there are lots of things that you can't see happening that are still vital foundations to be put in place."

One of the obvious things happening was the 'Unseen' wide game organised by Matt with Cat Davies (children & youth worker at Hope Church in Oswestry) at nearby Quinta one sunny Sunday afternoon earlier this summer.

We have a short video about ORYC at lichfield.anglican.org/oryc and ORYC's own website is at oryc.org.uk

Bishop Geoff to bid farewell

The Bishop of Stafford Geoff Annas has announced that he is to retire at the end of November.

Bishop Geoff and his wife Ann came to the Diocese of Lichfield in 2010 to join the episcopal team led by the Bishop of Lichfield. As Area Bishop of Stafford, he has overseen a region that includes Stoke-on-Trent, Stafford, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Burton-on-Trent and many rural communities across North Staffordshire. He will leave shortly before his 66th birthday and he and Ann will return to live in Southampton, where he previously served, close to their family.

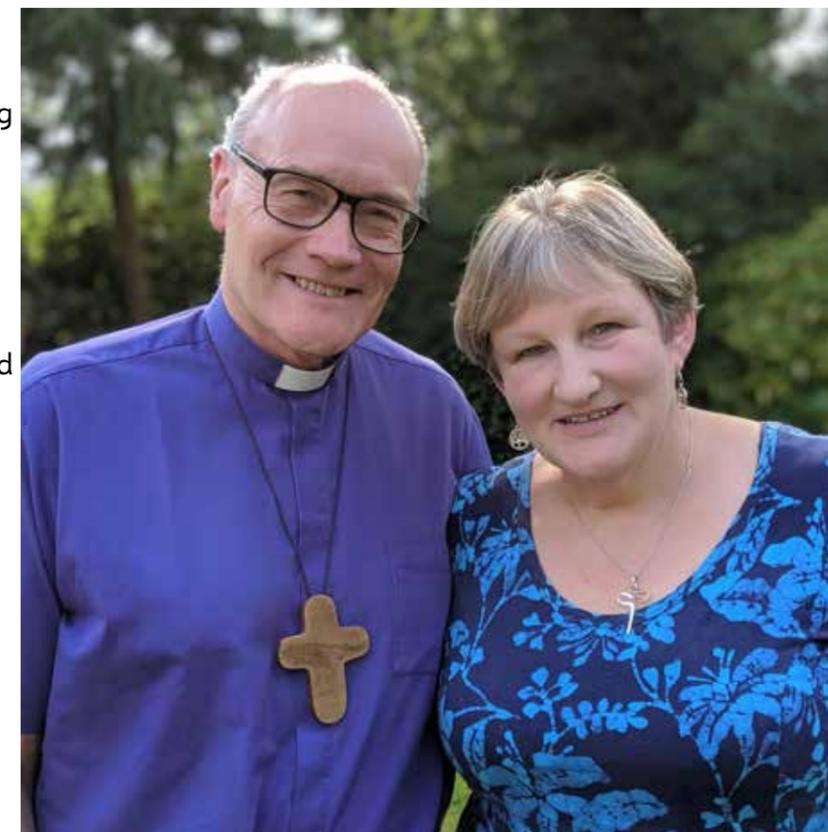
Bishop Geoff said: "We will be leaving many friends but taking with us happy memories of this special part of Britain that was previously unknown to us. The creativity and warmth of the people of North Staffordshire and the glorious and beautiful countryside make it a most attractive place to live and we are only sorry that bishops are expected to move away from the area and diocese they have served!

"When we came to the diocese, it was making plans until 2020. Now, we are starting a new Direction of Travel which looks way beyond

then and, as I shall be 66 at the end of November it seems a really good time to move and allow a new bishop to work with Bishops Michael, Clive and Sarah in guiding the diocese in its exciting journey.

"I do not regard myself as 'retiring' but simply joining that magnificent band of clergy and lay ministers who work their socks off but for no financial payment and without whom the Church of England as we know it would collapse!"

Bishop Michael said: "Bishop Geoff has served the communities and churches of North Staffordshire faithfully for almost a decade –



making him one of the longest serving Bishops of Stafford. I will be very sad to see Ann and Geoff leave but I am pleased that they will now be closer to family and have more time to spend with them."

By way of farewell to Bishop Geoff and Ann, Bishop Michael will lead a service of celebration of the good things happening

in Church of England churches and the communities they serve across North Staffordshire in Stoke Minster on Sunday 24 November at 4pm. All are welcome.

Computers to Kenya

Children at a Church school in Lichfield have been keying into the benefits of blessing others after recycling their used computers overseas.

St Chad's Primary has been developing close links with Shekinah School in Kenya for the past 12 months. Earlier this year the school welcomed a Shekina parent to St Chad's where he taught pupils Kenyan songs, prayers and traditions.

When St Chad's IT was due for replacement, they looked into whether they could send their computers, monitors and hard-drives to Kenya.

Deputy Head Natalie Johnson explained: "Our children have been writing letters, sending gifts and learning all about our friends at Shekinah School. As a school, we have made the decision to replace our old computers with new technology so we thought it would be a kind to send the computers to them.

"As the cost of shipping was high, we approached UPS who we have worked with previously to improve the road safety of our pupils, who agreed to fund the shipping of our computers to Kenya. We are so pleased that as a school we are working with our local community, local business as well as supporting those worldwide who are less fortunate than us.

Photo: Lichfield Mercury



As a Church school, this is something we believe is so important to teach to our children."

UPS Operations Manager Ron Walsh added: "We have a long-established working relationship with St Chad's. This opportunity gave us the ability to support in their wider school strategy and their partnership with a school in Kenya.

"By shipping the computers to Kenya, we have made the recycling of them stress-free and costless

with the added impact of having a positive impact on the learning of the children in Kenya and supporting the wider global community."

There are over 200 Church schools and academies in our diocese. The diocese's Board of Education works in partnership with humanitarian organisation Feed the Hungry to support young people to develop their understanding of global issues.

"Our partnership has enabled students to acquire the skills and understanding to become courageous advocates for change. This is a key piece of work within the Church of England's Vision for Education," said Director of Education Claire Shaw.

Find out more at <http://www.ldbe.co.uk/>

Loving Hurting Dreaming



A new roving art exhibition has premiered in the diocese at the start of a year-long tour of north Shropshire, Staffordshire and the Black Country.

'Loving Hurting Dreaming' is a new three-part artwork by Birmingham-based artist Jake Lever developed in collaboration with Shifnal-based author and vicar, Preb Chris Thorpe and Lichfield Diocese's Spirituality Adviser, Revd Charles Ruxton. It has been designed to move easily and set up in churches, schools and community venues and includes many resources to enable children and adults to engage with the art and the themes behind it.

"This project is aimed to be something that can get spiritual conversation going. Sometimes it's hard to raise the subject and a piece of art like this just evokes responses naturally. People - both in and out of churches - are able it seems with something like this to talk about their hopes and fears and dreams. It can be used for things like quiet days or just as an art exhibition. There's the opportunity to respond to the



art - there are art materials, lesson outlines and presentations to be used by hosts and participants and a fourth panel so that people's responses can go up and make display to add to the exhibition."

Jake is best known for his 'Soul Boats' installation in Birmingham Cathedral in 2016 in which 2,000 visitors of all and no faith added their personal thoughts and prayers which were then hung in the cathedral. Aspects of that have made their way into at least one of Jake's paintings and the activities that can help children and adults to engage.



The large canvases - each 6ft square and completed with silver leaf and gouache - drew awe and reflection from visitors to St Andrew's Church Shifnal where the tour began at the start of July. A video including Jake working with pupils of nearby St Andrew's Primary School and reactions from the headteacher and vicar can be found at the link below.

The resource has a triptych of creators: along with Jake's artwork is a set of carved wooden communion vessels by John Morse-Brown, suitable for a Eucharist service or Agape meal and creatively written liturgies by Chris Thorpe, to be published later this year.

The entire exhibition and resource packs for transport in a medium-sized hatchback. There is more information about hosting the exhibition, the current schedule of venues and video from Shifnal at lichfield.anglican.org/lhd. Or contact Charles Ruxton (charles.ruxton@trinitychurches.org / 01743 891507)

Walsall's new Archdeacon

The Revd Julian Francis will be returning to familiar territory when he becomes the fifth Archdeacon of Walsall.

Julian moved to the West Midlands when he was Associate Minister at St Andrew's, West Bromwich, and Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns Officer for Lichfield Diocese, from 1999-2002, and has served in the region ever since.

Currently Vicar of St George's Edgbaston in Birmingham Diocese, he is eagerly anticipating his new role in which he will have responsibility for churches across a large part of South Staffordshire and the Black Country including Walsall, Wolverhampton and West Bromwich.



Julian said: "I am delighted to be returning to Lichfield Diocese, renewing old acquaintances and meeting colleagues and partners in the Black Country. Our churches are wonderfully placed to be a warm, generous and open presence throughout the area. I look forward greatly to working with parishes, chaplains, schools and fresh expressions to share the good news of the love of God we know through Christ and to be part of the joyful transformation of our varied and vibrant communities."

Julian was ordained in 1991 in Southwark Diocese and served as curate in Wimbledon before becoming vicar in Cottingley, Bradford. After his time in Lichfield Diocese, he became Team Rector in Coventry before he was National

Training Co-ordinator for Minority Ethnic Anglicans from 2008-2011. Julian has spent the last eight years as vicar in Edgbaston, an area with great ethnic, socio-economic and religious diversity where his focus has been on using the church as a "community catalyst". He also served recently as Interim Archdeacon of Birmingham.

Julian takes over from the Ven Sue Weller who was recently named the new Archdeacon Missioner in the Diocese of Lichfield. Both will work within the Wolverhampton Area Senior Staff team, led by the Bishop of Wolverhampton,

the Right Revd Clive Gregory, who said: "I am delighted to be welcoming a priest colleague with Julian's huge breadth of gifts and experience. I am sure he will quickly endear himself to the diverse churches and communities of the Archdeaconry, not least because he already has an understanding of and heart for the people of the Black Country."

The Diocesan Bishop of Lichfield, the Right Revd Dr Michael Ipgrave, added: "I am sure that churches across South Staffordshire and the Black Country will benefit from Julian's enthusiasm and experience."

Julian's installation and licensing service will be at Lichfield Cathedral on 8 November. A welcome service for the new Wolverhampton Episcopal Area team will take place at St Peter's Church, Wolverhampton, on 17 November.

New DVE department

Diocesan teams have been restructured and aligned more closely to ensure churches get even more focused support.

A new department shaped round the three diocesan priorities: developing discipleship, encouraging vocation and inspiring evangelism goes live this month. It is a visionary way for a diocese to organise its central staff based on providing greater strategic coherence under the diocesan priorities.

The Discipleship, Vocation and Evangelism (DVE) Department will work with our 'frontlines' – parishes, fresh expressions, chaplaincies and schools – to enable them to embody our shared vision statement in their contexts:

"As we follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad, we pray that the two million people in our diocese encounter a church that is confident in the gospel, knows and loves its communities, and is excited to find God already at work in the world. We pray for a church that reflects the richness and variety of those communities. We pray for a church that partners with others in seeking the common good, working for justice as a people of hope."

The department is made up of three newly-shaped core teams:

discipleship vocation evangelism

- Mission - will serve parishes, fresh expressions and chaplaincies with strengthened links to school outreach and Lichfield Cathedral.
- Transforming Church & Community - incorporating Transforming Communities Together, the Diocese's joint venture with Church Urban Fund.
- Vocations & Training - bringing the vocations, training and ministry development teams together to offer a clear pathway to those exploring their vocation and ongoing support to clergy and other leaders.

The teams are based under one roof at Three Spires House in Lichfield, working closely with the Board of Education Team, and the diocese's Central Administration Support Teams who are a short distance away at St Mary's House.



Bishop Michael blessing the new Three Spires House offices last September

As part of strengthening the service parishes already receive from the diocese, each deanery will also have a named member of central staff as a link point for diocesan support and assistance.

Lindsey Hall, who will head up the new DVE Department, said: "This is a really exciting development which will focus the way we support a changing church in a

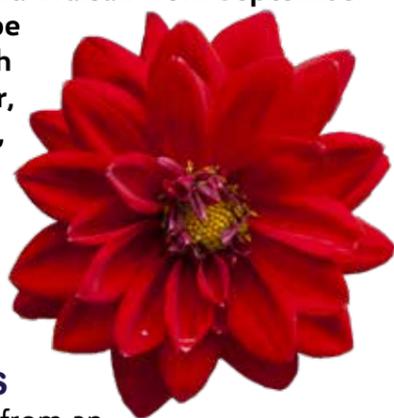
changing world. The new DVE Department will seek to be creative, collaborative, resilient and

supportive - in response to what people and groups across the diocese have told us they need."

Diocesan CEO Julie Jones added: "These changes, which are cost neutral, are about shaping the way we do things better to provide the best possible support to the 420 parishes, over 200 schools, multiple fresh expressions, chaplaincies and the cathedral in our large and diverse diocese. This is an innovative way of doing things which will develop over the coming months as we identify further opportunities for collaboration and support."

Propagating Church

Ahead of the Greenhouse project piloting in Stoke/Newcastle and Walsall from September (see back page to be part of it), our Fresh Expressions Enabler, Revd David Cundill, summarises four ways that Christian communities form and grow.



Fertilising

Teams who have started or established a fresh expression sometimes need encouragement to be sustainable for the long-term. Examples:

- afternoon tea event needing a spiritual aspect
- Messy Church needing to develop new leaders
- help to move beyond forming community to sharing Jesus or developing disciples
- an informal worship event wanting to draw the gifts and context of non-churched attendees.

Grafting

We have a deep-rooted faith but not everyone is attracted to the same flowers. So sometimes new churches can grow through gathering people of similar outlook or interest rather than place or church tradition:

- at the pub or the the gym, around sports, arts and crafts, social groups, music, or for dog owners, DIY enthusiasts
- through sharing an allotment, community initiatives, things to meet people's needs
- exploring Christian spirituality and tradition in new and creative ways like forest church, new monastic communities or meditation.

Read more at lichfield.anglican.org/greenhouse



survey. This will be used to help shape the way we create and distribute the magazine in the coming months. Meanwhile, let us know what you're planning for the Climate Action Day on 20 September!

Planting seeds

Plant a known seed from an established variety for new people to enjoy:

- a Messy Church, Breakfast Church or themed congregation,
- an engaging presence on an established estate or new housing development or similar,
- an existing group with a deliberate intent to add a spiritual dimension through a change or additional gathering.

Or you may not even have a team yet - just an inkling of a need to reach those who might be square pegs in a round congregation: young people, the elderly, workplace, black & minority ethnic, shoppers, commuters, students, specific needs, etc.

Taking Cuttings

Teams who have an established Fresh Expression, Messy Church or similar may want to start another:

- the same - in a different location,
- quite similar - for a different community,
- potting-on - for the same congregation as they grow in age or discipleship.



From the Editor

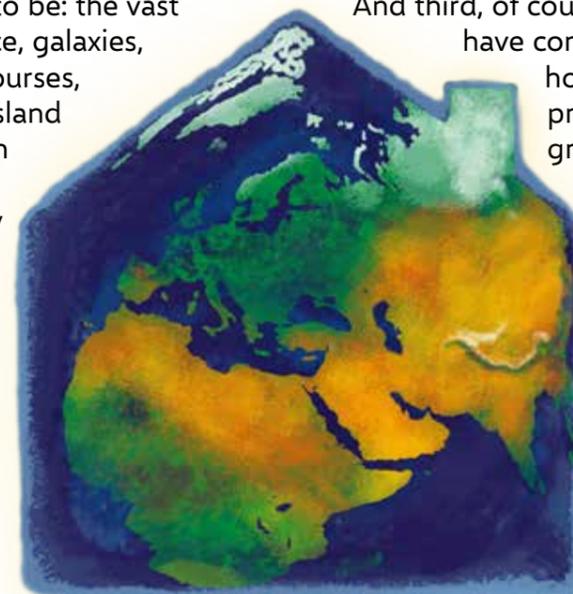
I hope you had a great summer. Many thanks to those of you who gave us feedback on Spotlight in our recent

Eco-residents

Three words to put our house in order

Where were you at 21.17 (British Summer Time) on 20 July 1969? Like almost everybody my age or even older, I was glued to a television set, watching very blurry images of Apollo 11's lunar module touch down on the moon – followed a few hours later by the first human moon walk.

And where was I at 21.17 on 20 July this year? I was in Lichfield Cathedral, for a celebration of the Eucharist beginning exactly 50 years to the day, hour and minute after that momentous event. We used Eucharistic Prayer C from the American Book of Common Prayer: At your command all things came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, suns, the planets in their courses, and this fragile earth, our island home. Those words, written ten years after the moon landing, express powerfully both the vastly enlarged horizons which space exploration has opened to us, and at the same time the focus it shines on our own small planet, 'our island home'. Viewed from beyond, our earth looks both very beautiful and very vulnerable.



The recognition that together we need to care for this home of ours is an ancient one, as we can see from three related 'eco' words, all of them from the Greek oikos, 'a house'. First is **eco-nomics**, literally the way in which a household is to be ordered. In Christian tradition, the 'Divine Economy' means in the first place the Incarnation, the coming among us of God as the man Jesus of Nazareth to recast and renew our relations with one another. In everyday terms, that momentous

event of economy means that we have to look for right dealings, fairness and justice among us, and a sustainable use of our resources.

Then there is the word **ecu-menical**. In its deepest sense, this is not just about relations between different denominations of the church; it refers to all who dwell within our own home – that is, all the citizens of earth. The future of our planet belongs to us all, and it can only be saved by all of us together: as members of a worldwide communion, we Christians should of all people know that being part of a wider belonging is the only way to bring change in our divided world.

And third, of course, there is **eco-logy**. We have come to see, as never before, how fragile our world is, how precarious its survival, how great the responsibility laid on us to care for this, the home God has given into our stewardship. On 20 September, led by young people around the world, there will be a great day of mobilisation of Christians, people of other faiths, and all of good will to raise awareness of the challenges facing us, and the urgency of collective

action to change our collective behaviour. Bishop Clive speaks on page 1 of this Spotlight about why we should join together on 20 September, and as we do that we need to hold to the big picture. Ecological mobilisation, ecumenical partnership and economic justice go together as we commit to the future of 'this fragile earth, our island home', which God loved so much that he gave his only Son for its life.

+Michael
Bishop of Lichfield



Come follow Christ
in the footsteps of St Chad

DIARY

Greenhouse Launch

Learn how it works and how to be involved.
With Bishop Michael, Michael Moynagh/
Heather Cracknell (from the national Fresh
Expressions team) and David Cundill

28 Sept, St Paul's Longton Hall
16 Nov, Aldridge Parish Centre:
10.00-16.00. Book via 01543
622592 or lichfield.anglican.org/greenhouse

Walk with Me

Weekend conference for anyone with BAME
heritage to explore lay or ordained ministry.
Yarnfield Conference Centre, Stone, 8-10
November. More info at
churchofengland.org/ministry-events

Life Events Diary

A day for administrators and
clergy to discover more about
this new, free online tool for
managing pastoral offices.
Includes training and free
resources. Led by members of
the national CoFE team

Thursday 3 October, 10am-
3pm. Beacon Centre, Stafford.
More at lichfield.anglican.org/LED

Diocesan Digest at 30!

The monthly audio magazine for
the blind and partially sighted has
run from the Cathedral Close since
1989 and will be celebrating thus
anniversary with a service of choral
evensong in the cathedral.

Sunday 22 Sept, 15.00

Everyday Faith

The biennial Shropshire Churches Conference
returns hosted once again by the Bishops of
Ludlow and Shrewsbury

Saturday 16 November, 10.00-15.15 - Holy
Trinity Meole Brace. Tickets (£8) from www.trinitychurches.org/everyday/

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