

SPOTLIGHT

The Diocese of Lichfield Magazine

Nov/Dec 2015

My hands will praise you

"I heard about the first ever Puppet Festival for Stone and wanted to find out more. I arranged to meet the organiser David Leech who is the person behind the world renowned 'Pelham Puppets' says Revd Paul Kingman, Vicar at Christ Church, Stone.

"It struck me that as a church we could be part of the weekend, in a small way, and David seemed pleased to hear from another enthusiastic voice.

"We planned the service with the theme 'Lost and Found'. We tackled the lost sheep, lost coin and lost son: the three parables in Luke 15.

"I invited the puppeteers who I met just before the weekend started to join us on the Sunday morning. It was a delight on the Sunday to welcome Professor Joe, the youngest puppeteer of the festival, with his mother, who told the others about what we did. They were very gracious!

"It didn't result in a vast increase in our reach, but it was a good link working with a unique town event and several people who helped get it off the ground. We hope the fun event will happen again and that we can support it and tell the good news through a very different method of communication."



Organiser David Leech with Revd Paul Kingman



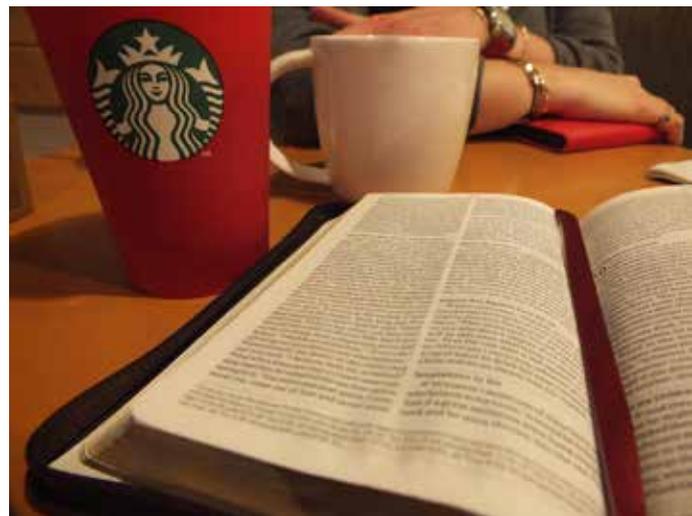
Vitalise signs: new life and g

Debs Walton, leader of Wolverhampton Pioneer Ministries (WPM) which meets as a group on Sunday evenings under the name Vitalise, describes a year of celebration and challenge.

“Earlier this month, we had a service of baptism, confirmation and admission into church membership for five of our young adults. It was a real landmark for us at Vitalise.

“We had been preparing them since January and I found it very moving to hear how they wanted to take their faith seriously as adults and actively join God’s church, this ‘thing’ that’s so much bigger than ourselves. The service was held at St John’s in the Square Church, Wolverhampton, and we followed it with a BBQ and entertainment. It was a great day.

“A couple of them had church backgrounds but three were from completely outside church; this was a very big deal for them with some rarely having had a major event celebrated in their lives.



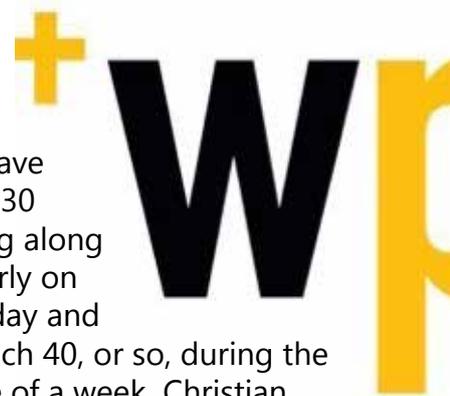
To me that just showed how much it meant to say ‘yes’ to God in baptism; those of us involved in Christian ministry over a period of years can forget that sometimes. We had also spent a long time preparing the liturgy for the service, and going through it very carefully with the candidates, but it was still quite difficult for some of them to deal with. The service was very long and wordy. Again, we can take things for granted or assume that people will be able to cope but that’s not necessarily the case.



“I was assisting with the service, and one of the candidates just clung to the edge of the baptism pool and sat in the water shaking. I told them they’d have to let go at some stage, I didn’t want to force people under the water!

“We now have about 30 coming along regularly on a Sunday and we reach 40, or so, during the course of a week. Christian people at Vitalise are being disciplined for mission and we offer them opportunities to engage in our mission,

offering something to the inherited church that it wouldn’t normally be doing. Several of our young people also took part in the Growing Young Leaders course this year; we celebrated the end of the course with food at Bishop Clive’s



rowing pains

house and then went bowling.

“Interestingly, at one of my first Vitalise meetings, we had 60 or 70 people attend but amongst them were church groups and their youth leaders. That’s not quite what Vitalise is all about! We were set up to reach the marginalised, the NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training). We need to keep on fulfilling that remit and retain the distinctiveness of our work - otherwise it would become like an extended church youth group.

“One of the results of intentionally returning to our original mission is that we have lost quite a few of the young adults from inherited church backgrounds. This is because of the type of young adult that we are now attracting to Vitalise. The demands on those who come for discipleship are quite high; this isn’t a Christian ‘club’ any more.

“We have been praying that God would send us a couple of older Christian couples, over 40s who would be like uncles and aunts within our community; people who will, for example, model Christian marriage - because that’s the gap we’ve got. Bearing that in mind, my husband, son and I now just go to Vitalise rather than anywhere else; these



The inside view of Vitalise & WPM:

Kate – “Morning Prayer is encouraging and offers the opportunity to pray, share and listen to each other.”

Joe – “Vitalise is a community where even the marginalized are welcomed and encouraged.”

Imogen – “a fun and friendly place that allowed me room to be myself with others and with God.”

Sarah – “the talks are always relevant to my life. Going to Vitalise has increased my confidence by allowing me to really be part of a church by leading worship and being more involved.”

Helen – “it offers a relaxed, creative and interactive approach to worship and teaching which is challenging and inspirational.”

Deborah – “Our aim is to retell the Christian message in a way that young adults will engage with rather than dismiss.”

Bev – “Vitalise offers a place where you will be listened to, where you can share your worries, achievements and problems.”

young people need to see that sometimes we shout at each other but still love each other!

“One of our men took a couple of our lads fishing recently; that was a big deal because generally the adults who interact with these lads are doing so in a workplace paid capacity.

“We also recently had an amazing phone call from social services in Wolverhampton. They’d got a young person in her mid-teens who had started reading the Bible and wanted to go to church; they didn’t know what to do with her but said Vitalise sounded

continued on p11

Photos: Fresh Expressions, Matthew Dobie and Laura Macmillan

Newsome Hands at Work

The Revd Preb David and Revd Jane Newsome will join the charity Hands at Work at the start of next year, and have left their respective posts as Diocesan Director of Ordinands and Managing Chaplain at Swinfen Hall Prison and Young Offenders Institution.

David and Jane spoke to Spotlight about their move to Africa and what the future holds.

"When in the Birmingham diocese, we were linked with the Anglican Church in Malawi, at the time of the country's transition to democracy. I became very involved and I went several times – you could say Africa got under my skin. Moving to Lichfield in 2000, I wanted to keep a connection with Africa. We went in 2006 to South Africa for a month with the charity that grew to become Hands at Work, and so enjoyed our involvement with it that we went back the following year, and have taken teams ever since.

"In those days, the focus was on those who were dying of AIDS. We helped with youth work, and the following year, got involved in football coaching. As the impact of anti-retrovirals (medication for HIV) reduced the death rate considerably, so the focus then became caring for orphans and vulnerable children left by the AIDS pandemic. There are more orphans in sub-Saharan Africa than there are children in the UK. Hands at Work goes to the communities where no other agency goes. Their commitment is to the poorest of the poor.

"They have been asking for years: 'When are you going to come and join us?' It's really about becoming part of an intentional community,

living in community, and being prepared to be used as needed. There's a sense of stepping out in faith.

"The charity says something about the future nature of the Church: a community of committed people supporting each other to be able to serve the poor. As Bonhoeffer said, 'The church is the church only when it exists for others' – so for me it's about an opportunity to experience what the future shape of the Church could be.



Jane says she loves the opportunities Hands at Work gives to young people. "I see too many youngsters in prison who have never had a chance. Hands at Work believes in young people, gives them a leg up, and we've seen the results ourselves. Youngsters we met when we first went are now themselves youth workers. One time out there, a young policeman stood over me, staring at me, and said "I know you" – it was a young man who, as an orphan child had been part of our work, and now had pride, a uniform, a job in an area of 60% unemployment at that time."

"We'll be spending six months in Africa and six in the UK. When here we will be advocating for the charity, supporting returning volunteers, and helping train teams who are going out. A number of parishes in the Diocese now have links with Hands at Work, so we hope we will be able to keep in touch with Lichfield too.

"Nobody who works for the charity is paid, so if people do want to support it via the website www.handsatwork.org, every penny does go the children being supported."

Stars asleeping

The Revd Raphael Duckett and friends are sleeping in a stable at St Martin's, Bradley as part of the Advent Sleepout Challenge.

"The aim is to give up a night of comfort, and raise help money to help the Church Urban Fund in their amazing work with homeless people.

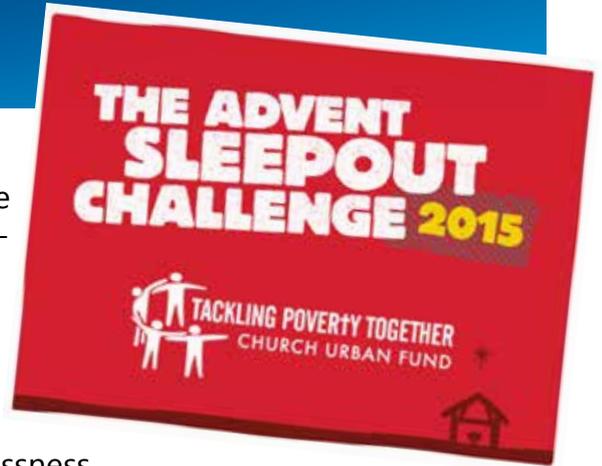
"There are 15 of us sleeping here overnight, of all ages and backgrounds, everyone from me and some of our local churchgoers to the Bishop of Wolverhampton.

"As it's Advent we've run a Nativity-themed fancy dress competition, played games, sung songs, and seen no Christmas penguins but certainly a shepherd or two! We've had fun being together but it's no joke being homeless. Sleeping out here at the Church Centre gives

us a small experience of discomfort, but none of the loneliness and fear of homelessness.

"It's important that the vital work of the Church Urban Fund continues. Bradley is not a rich place, and we benefit from their work here. I know people who have to sofa surf because there's no home for them, and families living in cramped and unsuitable accommodation.

"I see the huge difference the work of CUF does living out the Christian life, helping others in need."



For more on the Sleepout Challenge and the lives God has transformed through the work of the Church Urban Fund, visit www.sleepoutchallenge.org.uk

And there is still time to make a donation on the Revd Raphael's page at <https://adventsleepout.everydayhero.com/uk/raphael>



The Goodness of God continues

Almost 700 people attended a special farewell service at the Cathedral on Saturday 26 September, where they watched the 98th Bishop of Lichfield hand over his Pastoral Staff for safekeeping until it is presented to his successor once an appointment is made.



As Bishop Jonathan laid down his pastoral staff, he decided that the collections from the Goodness of God and his farewell cathedral Evensong should go to help local churches' work supporting refugees. If you want to make a contribution, please do so direct to Bishop Jonathan's Appeal Fund, sort code 30-95-04, account number 01559211, or send a cheque payable to the LDBF but clearly marked 'Appeal Fund'.



A full report and video of the event is available at www.lichfield.anglican.org/ournews/farewell-bishop-jonathan/

The Crown Nominations Committee is expected to shortlist and make their nomination in December and January. An announcement will be made once the appointment is confirmed by the Queen through the Prime Minister's office. It will then take some months for the new bishop to move to the diocese and take up the role.



"We received a substantial donation for Sanctus from a church in Stafford." says Revd Sally Smith



Farewell service photos © Lichfield Cathedral Photographers

...ues...

We asked people to complete the phrase:

I am celebrating God's goodness because... and they said:

...He's still with me after all these crazy years!
Ian Goodson

...God's goodness gives grace galore, grants generously, guides gloriously, grows giftedness, and genuinely generates GRATITUDE!
Rev'd John Allan

...He is so patient and understanding with me and his love never fails.
Sue Webster

'Your love is better than life'!
(Psalm 63 v 3)
Ruth Bell

...through singing his praises I have found a special connection with the music and God.
Lydia Kendrick

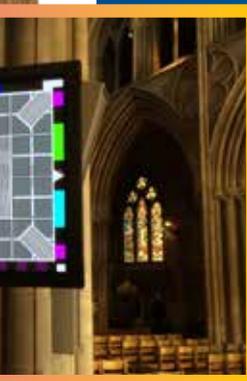
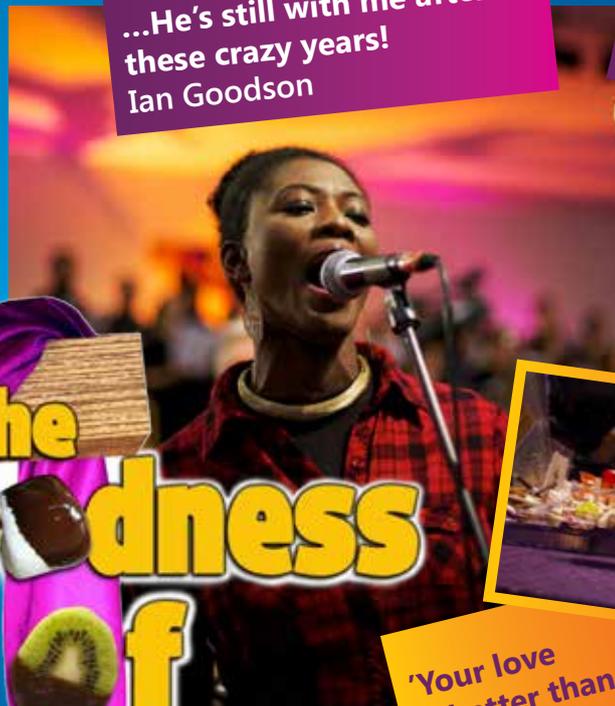
and the winner of the £100 prize is Parveen Kumari, of St Bartholomew's, Wolverhampton who said...

...God's grace, mercy and love has no boundaries, borders or restrictions. It's boundless, immeasurable love.

Remember The Goodness of God

A pair of DVDs containing the entire Goodness of God celebration and Bishop Jonathan's Farewell service, will be available by early December. In response to demand, we are offering the DVDs for the special price of £9.00. To order, please email simon.jones@lichfield.anglican.org with 'Goodness of God DVD' in the subject line. Please include a postal address. Payment can be made by cheque payable to LDBF, or electronically by BACS (309504 00030004). In both cases please use GoGdvd-yoursurname as a reference.

The Goodness of God



Photos: Geoff Ward

Green Foot Forward

Diana Hill and Peter Phillips are both joining the 'Pilgrimage2Paris', a 236-mile pilgrimage from London to Paris aimed at encouraging world leaders to agree a fair, ambitious and binding deal at the United Nations Climate Change Conference.

The couple, who worship at Lichfield Cathedral, will start in central London on November 13 and reach the Paris on November 27, as negotiators from more than 190 nations gather for the start of the talks. Diana and Peter will be among the pilgrims handing in campaign petitions to Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) on November 28 before joining an interfaith gathering and a mass mobilisation in the French capital.

The Church of England has invited people to participate by walking some or all of the route, cheer on pilgrims as they pass by schools or other local centres, or by holding 'mini-pilgrimages' in local communities and prayer vigils for the success of the talks. The Bishop of Wolverhampton, the Rt Revd Clive Gregory, will walk with the pilgrims on their first day.

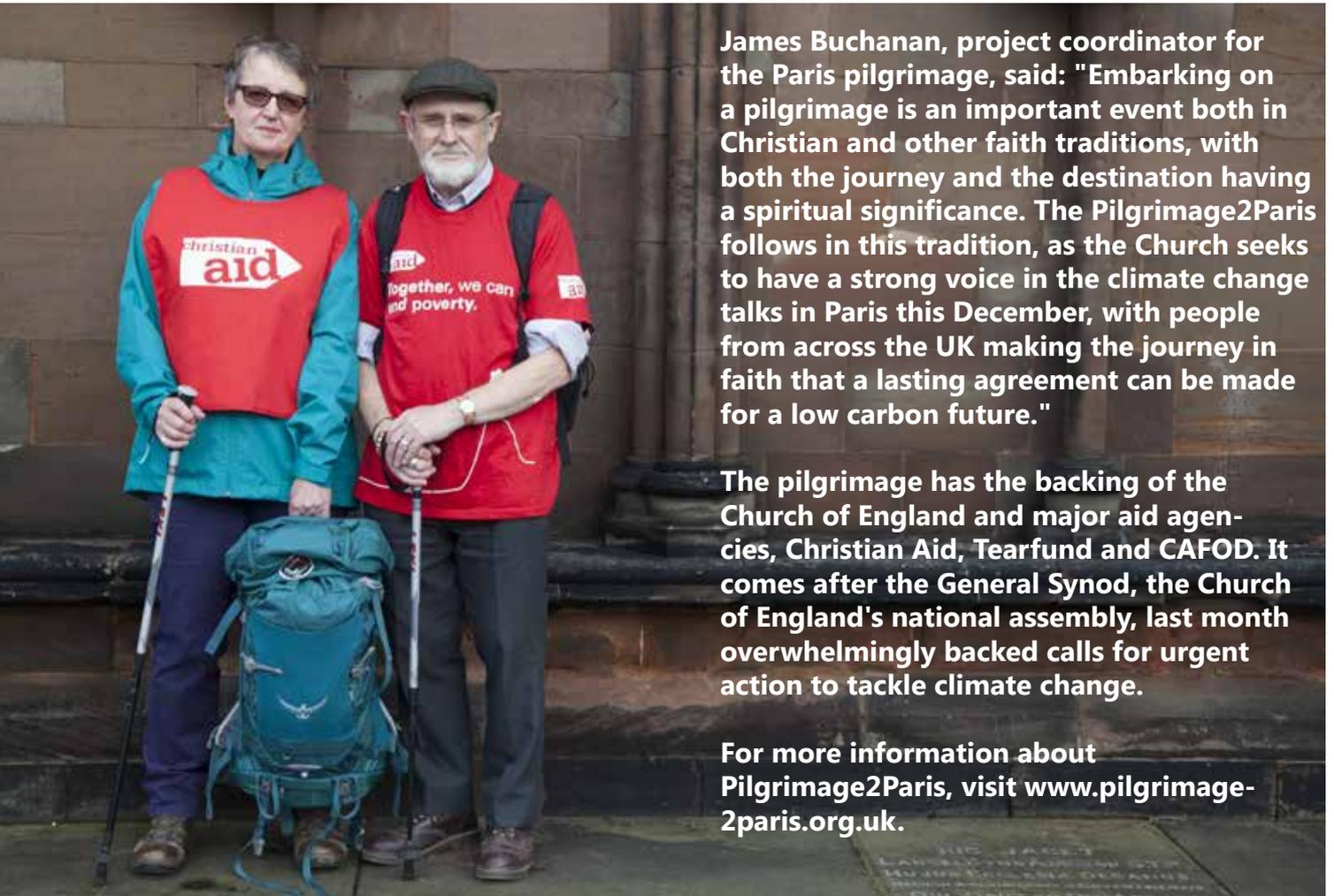


On their return Diana and Peter, who are both Licenced Readers, would be willing to visit any church in the Diocese to preach or talk about the Pilgrimage. Their contact details are demhill@orangehome.co.uk and aplhillips@orangehome.co.uk

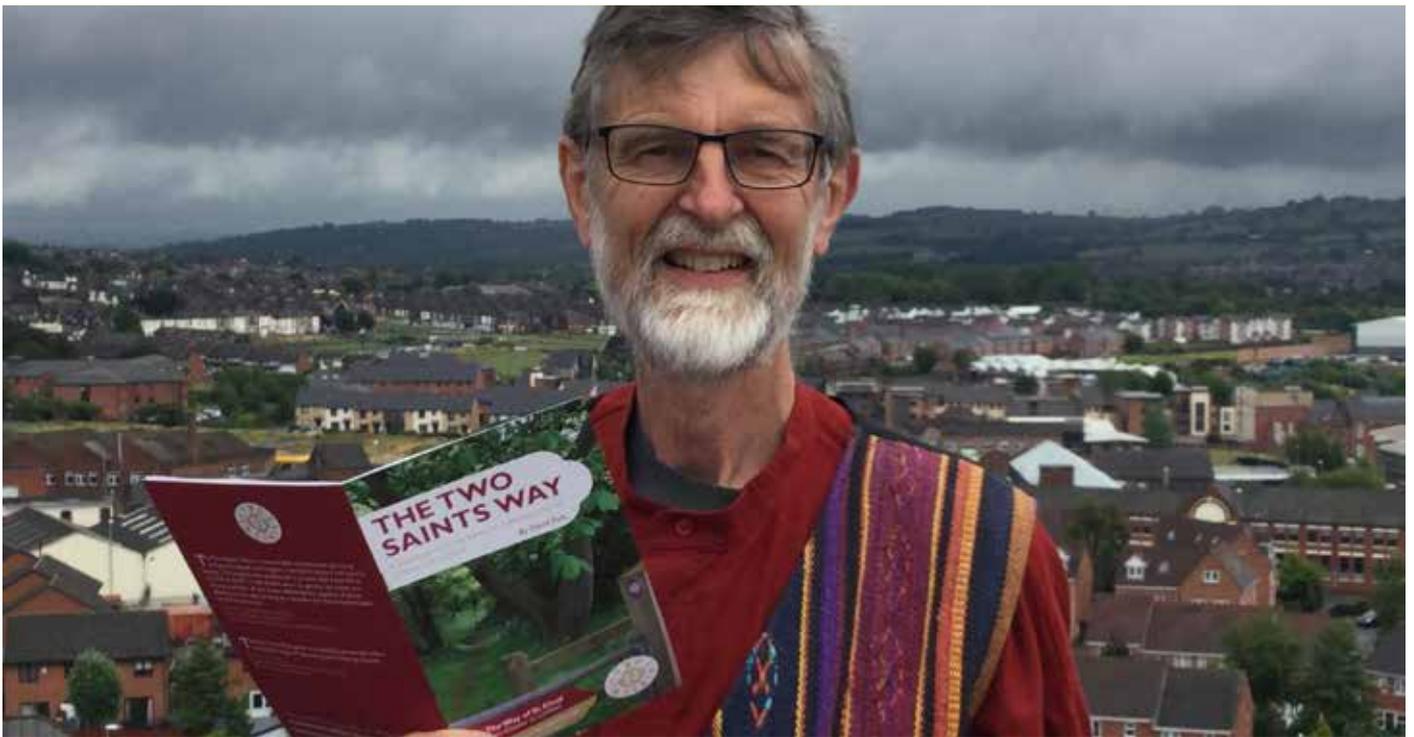
James Buchanan, project coordinator for the Paris pilgrimage, said: "Embarking on a pilgrimage is an important event both in Christian and other faith traditions, with both the journey and the destination having a spiritual significance. The Pilgrimage2Paris follows in this tradition, as the Church seeks to have a strong voice in the climate change talks in Paris this December, with people from across the UK making the journey in faith that a lasting agreement can be made for a low carbon future."

The pilgrimage has the backing of the Church of England and major aid agencies, Christian Aid, Tearfund and CAFOD. It comes after the General Synod, the Church of England's national assembly, last month overwhelmingly backed calls for urgent action to tackle climate change.

For more information about Pilgrimage2Paris, visit www.pilgrimage-2paris.org.uk.



Finding the Two Saints Way



A full colour guidebook to the revived Two Saints Way has been launched in seven venues along the ancient pilgrimage route between the cathedral cities of Chester and Lichfield.

The author, David Pott, who re-opened the 92-mile Two Saints Way in 2012, walked the route in a special pilgrimage to mark the launch.

"I don't know if a book has been launched by pilgrimage before but it seemed a good way of doing it. It gave me an opportunity to check how things are along the route, and to sell a few copies as I went!

"It's exciting that The Two Saints Way is part of a significant pilgrimage revival these days. Spiritual or faith based tourism is one of the fastest growing segments in the travel industry and here is a major trail right on our doorstep. The Two Saints Way will bring economic benefits to the region and this new guidebook is a big step on the journey."

David also delivered copies of the guide to schools along the route, funded through the Staffordshire Community Foundation. As High Sheriff of Staffordshire, Ann Fisher journeyed with others along The Two Saints Way last year to raise funds and she is enthusiastic about the guidebook and the Two Saints Way.

"There is a wealth of information in this new guide. On our pilgrimage, I learnt a great deal about areas which have been familiar to me for many years, but I had no idea of their rich history. Our group had a real sense of walking in the footsteps of St Chad and I would highly recommend both The Two Saints Way and the guidebook."

'The Two Saints Way' costs £12.99 and is available through The Northumbria Community online shop <http://www.northumbriacommunity.org/shop/> or by calling 01670 787645.

To find out more about the Two Saints Way, visit the website: www.twosaintsaway.org.uk

The Divestment Debate

Should the Church stop investing in fossil fuel companies?



YES: Are you good at delaying and finding excuses for inaction? And when it comes to climate change this applies even more? Join the club. But at long last some of the big boys are making a move. First we had Obama, Merkel, Cameron and co.

saying at the G7 that we need to cut out all fossil fuel use by 2100, which is important but snail-paced. Then there was Pope Francis' recent paper on creation which provides a magnificent over-arching view for Christians everywhere.

Significantly the money is starting to move too. In the light of well-prepared campaigns the Rockefellers, the huge Norwegian Sovereign Wealth Fund, and institutions such as Oxford University are all voting for divestment - which simply means taking your money out of one place and putting it elsewhere. So they take their money out of activities that pollute the planet and invest in something positive instead.

Oil and coal companies spend staggering amounts on looking for new reserves. But we now know that digging it all up will almost certainly release more carbon gases into the atmosphere than Mother Earth can manage, and our children and grand-children will have to bear the brunt. This is a good time to make a stand on their behalf... if not now, when will we draw the line?

Spending billions of dollars looking for new oil fields and coal seams is pointless (and also a financial bad risk) if society agrees to cut out fossil fuels. Instead we should invest in more positive ways such as supporting firms that

are developing new technologies or building better flood defences. The campaign will only work if it sends a message in Lord Stern's phrase that "business as usual is no longer an option". People must unite for the common good, so it is good news to see so many organisations joining in, including the Church of England and Methodists.

As a church we will be able to thank and praise God for the beauty of the earth with greater integrity once we are actually valuing his gift and not singing with our fingers crossed. Joining the campaign will help free the church from the defeated "we are all compromised so let's not make an issue of it" mindset; agreeing on action will release energy – the right sort of energy.

George Reiss lives in Tettenhall and is a supporter of Operation Noah, the Christian campaign on Climate Change

NO: I am fully convinced that the world needs to stop burning fossil fuels if we are to avoid serious climatic consequences and I work hard to reduce my own carbon footprint and to help others do likewise. However I don't agree that the Church Commissioners be required to divest from "fossil fuel companies".

The role of the managers of a trust fund is to achieve the best outcome for their beneficiaries, not to pre-judge the ethical/moral concerns of those beneficiaries. I would suggest that an analogy might be that Synod rule against churches using Heritage Lottery grants on the grounds that the funds are the product of gambling.

Almost two thirds of the funds held by the Commissioners are to provide pensions for

Vitalise

continued
from p3



like it would be a good place to come. This is a really exciting opportunity for us.

"We'll keep on trusting God as we disciple and serve those He has brought to us.



"We have also got Christmas in mind and are planning a live retelling of the Nativity we're calling 'Wolves Sat Nav' on Saturday 19 December in St Peter's Church Gardens. During the afternoon there will be a Nativity trail when people can visit various characters and animals, including a live camel. As the time approaches 5pm, the characters and livestock will walk through the city centre for the play. It's ambitious but we wouldn't be Vitalise if it wasn't!

Deborah Walton. www.wpm-vitalise.org.uk

With special thanks to Lauren Macmillan

church employees. An appropriate action for the Trust would be to offer the potential pension beneficiaries a choice of two or more investment regimes, including one labelled "fossil free". I believe it should be the right of beneficiaries to exercise this choice – as is the case for many employer pension schemes.

I doubt that the task of drawing up a list of "fossil fuel companies" is simple, or fair. Would BT be included in that list as supplier of communications equipment to oil companies? Would the development work being done by some petrochemical companies to develop sustainable energy technologies be disregarded? What percentage of a diversified company's activity would need to be in fossil fuel extraction for it to be included in the list? If we want to be "ethical" we need to be fair; and if we want to be above criticism, we will be left with very restricted choice, as we know from the Wonga episode.

Companies are more likely to take notice of an existing investor than an absent one. Some of the arguments in favour of divestment are on the grounds that "fossil free" can be more profitable and that fossil fuel companies are a potentially a risky investment as alternative energy sources become available. The Church Commissioners describe themselves as "active investors", meaning that they are in dialogue with companies in which they invest, or might invest. The company I used to work for certainly listened very attentively to its institutional shareholders, and I think this is a powerful and appropriate way for the Church to engage in the fossil fuel debate.

John Polhill is the Diocesan Environmental Officer



A longer version of this article originally appeared on the

fresh expressions



Fresh Expressions website (www.freshexpressions.org.uk/stories/vitalise/sep15).



GOING FOR GROWTH



Please send details of your events to Spotlight on comms@lichfield.anglican.org

DIARY

Advent Quiet Day
"The Meaning of Waiting"
led by Philip & Charlotte Swan

Thursday 3
December

Shallowford
House



Telling the Story, Living the Life
The Annual event bringing together churches from both Lichfield and Hereford dioceses in the county of Shropshire. This year's keynote speaker is Rt Revd Stephen Cottrell.

Saturday 21 November 9.30-3.30
Holy Trinity Meole Brace

Asylum Seekers & The Church

A training day to help understand the asylum system, reflect on the theology of the stranger, listen to stories of people seeking asylum and to take part in workshops to better equip you and your church offer welcome and support.

Saturday 21 November

'The Church at Broad Street', Wolverhampton

Christmas Time in the City

A special service for local businesses - one of many Christmas events taking place at Lichfield Cathedral (and everywhere!)

Tuesday 8 December

Full Cathedral programme at www.lichfield-cathedral.org/

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