

# SPOTLIGHT

The Diocese of Lichfield Magazine

Jan/Feb 2014

## Doing us Credit



Revd Preb  
Chris Thorpe

**“We were inspired by Archbishop Justin’s call to put Wonga and the other pay day loan companies out of business! When times are so tough, people need a way of saving and low cost borrowing to build their way out of debt”.**

The Oasis shop in Shifnal is now opening its doors to Fairshare credit union customers. Every Thursday afternoon, local people can come and take care of their personal finances through the Churches Together shop.

Credit unions are independent, not-for-profit organisations, owned and operated by their members. Based locally, they offer savers the opportunity to invest in their local community, and give borrowers the benefit of interest rates capped by law at no more than 26.8%. There are more than three hundred credit unions operating in the UK, and eight within our Diocese.

There is no doubt that church and credit unions are growing closer. Justin Welby said in October “Let’s begin to make a difference to how families can finance themselves in this coun-

try – join and support a credit union”. All four bishops in the Diocese are members of their local credit union. The Bishop of Stafford, Geoff Annas, opened a new town centre home for the Staffordshire Credit Union in November.

Kevin Waters, Chief Executive, says it’s making a difference. “The shop in Stafford has been a revelation: on average, signing up one person a day since opening. A man on his last £10 of benefits called into the shop on his way to a Pay Day Lender to borrow £135.00. Apparently this is a ritual every two weeks for this man, who pays them back with interest on that loan of £60 per fortnight.”

“I offered him the alternative of a £150 loan over 6 months with Staffordshire Credit Union at a total interest payment of £10.78. The man was so pleased that he took the offer, signed for membership and now pays his benefits into the credit union every fortnight.”

**The Bishop of Lichfield, Rt Revd Jonathan Gledhill, signing up to his local credit union with Peter Selwyn, president of Fusion, serving Lichfield/Cannock Chase.**



### Should every church have a credit union champion?

Debate on Twitter #creditunions hashtag and if you are interested in doing more, contact David Primrose, Director of Transforming Communities, on [david.primrose@lichfield.anglican.org](mailto:david.primrose@lichfield.anglican.org)

# Welcome to the new Spotlight



**Happy new year! It won't have escaped your notice that SPOTLIGHT HAS CHANGED.**

Joining the Diocese is a great privilege, and the communications role a huge challenge. I am enjoying working closely

with the Bishop's Chaplain & Communication Officer, Simon Jones. On any given day, we may be talking to TV, radio and print journalists, training and equipping people, connecting, advising, encouraging, keeping churches up-to-date through the email Bulletin, reaching out through the website and being present in the social media explosion.

The aim of it all is to share God's work in our lives –to encourage each other and inspire the nearly two million people beyond our church.

I have already met hundreds of new people, and out of listening and sharing ideas, Simon and I have built a communications strategy to equip people, use talents, build networks, listen radically, and speak boldly.

Spotlight is a big part of that strategy. People tell us they would like it to be more frequent, more current, and more flexible. That is hardly surprising – look how even the most successful newspapers are having to change to adapt to the digital age.

So please tell me what you think. What do you love about the new Spotlight? What don't you like? What would you like to see more of? What could you do without? Please send us your comments, and most importantly your stories.

**Neill Harvey-Smith,**  
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## Are you keen to improve communications in your parish?

Would you like to be more confident and skilled at expressing yourself through the media? Websites, magazines, noticeboards & social media.

We're here to help:

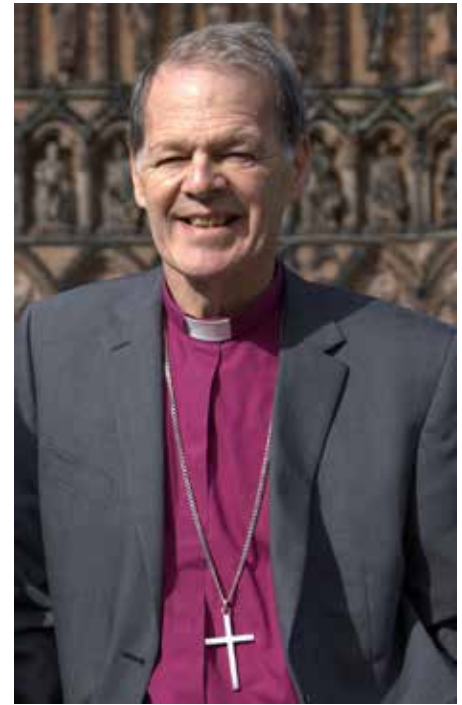
### Join the Communications Roadshow

from 7pm on the following days:  
Wednesday 26th March (Salop),  
Wednesday 2nd April (Stoke-on-Trent),  
Wednesday 9th April (Lichfield),  
Wednesday 16th April (Walsall)  
Locations to be confirmed.

Register with [comms@lichfield.anglican.org](mailto:comms@lichfield.anglican.org)



**“These are the five themes which together will take our Diocese forward. Each theme we trust will help us prioritise and guide us as a diocese in our discipleship and faithfulness.”**



The five themes may be an expression of mission for the Lichfield Diocese, but it was a St Chad’s Volunteer from Ipoh, West Malaysia, who created these icons. Wai Theng, 26, did the artwork towards the end of her twelve-month stay in Shrewsbury.

updating your website, you can use the images to bring home the real and deeper purpose of your event.”



**DISCOVERING**  
THE HEART OF GOD



**GROWING**  
DISCIPLES



**REACHING**  
NEW GENERATIONS



**TRANSFORMING**  
COMMUNITIES



**PRACTISING**  
GENEROSITY

Neill Harvey-Smith, the new Diocesan Director of Communications, commissioned the designs. “Our great desires - to revive our worship and prayer life, to call all the baptized to be the church, to bring more young people to a living faith, to transform communities and be radically generous – they come alive when we can visualise them and see where they are happening around us.”

To find out more about the Diocesan mission and Five Theme Icons, and how to use and download them, watch the video at [www.lichfield.anglican.org](http://www.lichfield.anglican.org)

Unlike a closely controlled corporate logo, the Five Theme Icons are designed for anyone in any parish to use, and made freely available on the diocesan website. “I think they’re great” says Kieran McKnight, Youth & Children’s Worker at Christ Church, Stone. “If you are making a poster, an information sheet, even



**Wai Theng, a graphic designer by trade, gave up her job in Kuala Lumpur to join the St Chad’s Volunteer Programme for a year, based at Shrewsbury Abbey.**



# Love. Christmas.

**All across the Diocese, believers and churches went the extra mile to reach out with love at Christmas.**

St Mark's church in Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent, welcomed women seeking asylum and their families on Christmas day to enjoy turkey dinners donated by the Moat House hotel. "It's an extremely challenging time for people who are isolated and vulnerable" said Revd Sally Smith, vicar at St Mark's.



Christians from across Shrewsbury gathered to host 'Soul Purpose Christmas' for those who might otherwise find the day a struggle - whether through loneliness, bereavement, financial worries or homelessness.

"Hosts and guests alike shared a fantastic meal and lots of fun. We all enjoyed the family feel of the event - and experiencing together God's love and care." said Fiona Iddon, a worshipper at Holy Trinity Meole Brace and part of the steering group.



At Wade Street Church Hall in Lichfield, 72 people shared in a delicious festive lunch cooked by a team of volunteers from the Cathedral. Residents of Lichfield and District who would otherwise have spent the time alone instead enjoyed the special day in the company of others. "Room and table decorations, drivers bringing guests to the event were all volunteers, as were the hosts to make sure all the guests enjoyed themselves" said Mary Harris, the co-ordinator. "The day was sponsored by Churches Together in Lichfield, supported by Waitrose, the City Council, and Jigsaw community centre, which wrapped the presents for Father Christmas to distribute at the end of the afternoon."



# The Green Column

**Encouraging each of us in our care for God's creation, John Polhill has some practical advice on energy consumption in the home.**

## Trying to get Smart

A friend was telling me about a recent experience with her electricity supplier. She had discovered an error in her bill and eventually (she is a very persistent person!) got them to correct it. She told me with some delight that they had given her a Smart Meter by way of apology. I asked if she was finding the meter helpful. "Well," she said, "I know it goes red when I put the kettle on". I gather it's planned that everyone will have Smart Meters by 2020, so we'll all be able to watch the light go red.

Smart Meters are popular with the suppliers because it saves them having to send someone to read the meter and also gives them masses of data about individual patterns of energy use.

## Left to our own devices

Finding out how you might save electricity is rather more complicated, because the meter just tells you how much energy your whole home is using.

If you want to know how much it's costing you to run just the TV, you would have to turn everything else off – not terribly convenient. Fortunately you can get an Energy Saving Monitor (from £9.99) that goes into a 13 amp socket and you can plug any appliance into it. You press the button for kilowatt-hours (Kwh – that's units on your electricity bill) and take the reading after 24 hours to find out how many units you have used in a day.



You may find, as I did, that leaving the TV and DVD on stand-by is costing you £30 a year, and that leaving the broadband router on overnight is costing £15 a year. For some people, these kind of savings would wipe out the rise in energy prices that is causing such controversy at the moment. Sounds smart to me.

John and Christine Polhill run the Reflection Gardens, by Beaudesert Park, which illustrate the connection between care for the environment and the Christian spiritual journey

## Standby for sage advice?

Being good stewards of energy is all part of looking after Creation. Has your church got any good tips for caring for creation and conserving energy at home or in your church buildings?

Tweet us at @Lichfield\_CofE using the hashtag #SpotlightGreen

# Living Faith

**There is clearly something stirring at St Bart's. Over thirty people are taking the 'Living Faith' course at the church in Penn, near Wolverhampton.**

Living Faith is the new Bishop's Certificate course - and while the content is for anyone, the commitment is not for the faint-hearted: a group meets over a full liturgical year, considering the implications of how we live out Christian life.

"Some do it because it's an opportunity. Some see it as one step on their progression to where God is calling them" says Alison Storer, reader, member of St Bart's congregation and local GP, who is leading the course. "It was never part of some great master plan. I never predicted the number of conversations about the call God was putting on people's lives. I put up a list with 15 slots and it took off."



**"We have to be prepared to try new things."**

The course has attracted the faithful from across the Anglican spectrum, from recent Roman Catholics to evangelicals, from recent converts to those reappraising what it means to be a Christian after twenty years' church.

"What happens next? Some will say 'thank you, I've been challenged, enjoyed the fellowship, think differently' – that's fine. But some will want to learn God's plan and continue perhaps through Pathways" says Alison. "I think we need to continue nurturing and growing, and be challenged in our faith journeys. In the end, this is about thirty people being led closer to Jesus Christ."

Revd Ben Whitmore, vicar of St Bart's, agrees. "We have to be prepared to try new things. A couple of years ago, we started a Saturday service at 5.30, and people love it. It's Common Worship, hymns and a sermon, and 80% of those who come have never been to other services – often we're still sat around at 7 chatting."

Lindsey Hall, Director of Lay Development for the Diocese, says "It's great to see so many responding to God's call. A great strength of the Living Faith course is that it works well with groups as small as three or four people. If you're sitting at home thinking 'why aren't there any groups near me', just start one up!"



## Growing Disciples means nurturing a living faith

Every parish and every Christian needs a regular and varied spiritual diet to keep alive. There is information about resources the diocese can offer to parishes on the website - follow the links through Departments and Ministry to Local Lay Ministry for details of the Following On programme where the diocese can deliver courses for parishes or deaneries



# Share each others' burdens



Julie Jones, Diocesan CEO

**"In such difficult economic times, the parishes have once again managed to deliver in the region of £11m in Parish Share receipts in 2013"**

"Parishes delivered 95.38% of Share requested by 31

December 2013. This is 0.75% up on this time last year. It's a fabulous effort."

Julie was inspired by a Participatory Budgeting event last year. "We ran out of money because we'd given everything that there was to give. And yet there were people there wanting other people to benefit too. And so we saw the poorest of parishes giving back a tenth of what they'd been allocated to enable others to have their projects take off too. The incredible generosity was heart-warming."

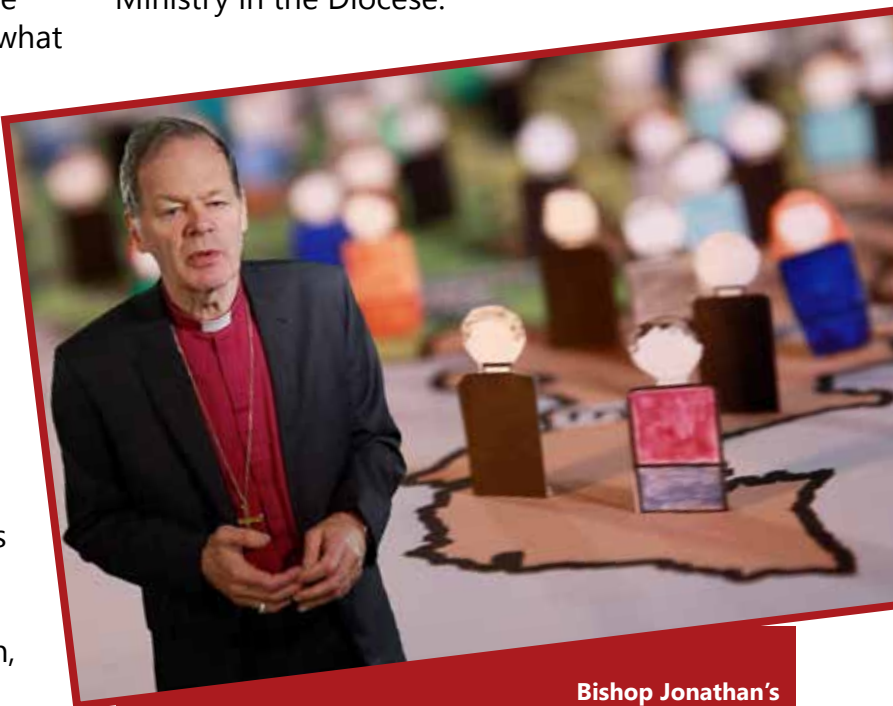
In his Epiphany video message, the Bishop of Lichfield, Rt Revd Jonathan Gledhill, spoke about the impact of generosity in our churches.

"Money was one of Jesus' favourite topics even though I and many clergy are less comfortable asking for it. But how we use it is a measure of our commitment to Jesus and to his Church. Jesus encourages us all to invest in his work: "Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over will be put into your lap."

Julie believes direct debit is a great way to get more for our money. "Together, Direct Debit and Standing Order receipts have increased to just under 60% - that means over £6m being paid on a monthly regular basis through the year. This helps the Diocesan cash flow enormously - which in turn helps to keep share increases as low as possible in future years."

She also hopes the new Share apportionment system will help.

"Parishes can forecast future Share and using that, consider their future deployment patterns. With additional support coming from the Church Commissioners towards Mission Orientated projects, I hope these finance results will enable us to springboard into Growth and - what we all want - to further Mission and Ministry in the Diocese."



Bishop Jonathan's Epiphany Video is available via the Diocese website and YouTube channel

## Practising generosity in Lent

The end of the secular financial year falls in the middle of Lent, a time when many parishes and individuals continue to give sacrificially to the Bishop's Lent Appeal - more information in the next issue of Spotlight

# Christ in 2,000 Post-its



**“The night before there was nothing, just a blank space. I stayed up all night, working from six in the evening to eight in the morning, sticking them to the boards” says artist Frank McGregor, 55, a Church Army evangelist, and creative missionary.**

The likeness of Jesus was unveiled at St Mark's Church, Shelton, Stoke-on-Trent, at the commissioning of the Hanley Team Ministry.

“The last four hundred Post-its were done during the service. People were invited to come

forward, pray over the note, let it represent them and their lives and stick it to a board. Then we took the four boards away and put them up. The whole thing was covered, so people had no idea what their board was for. Then Bishop Geoff said 'let's unveil it'. There was an audible





The inspiration for McGregor's work was Luke's gospel, chapter 10, where Jesus sends dozens of disciples ahead to places he is about to go. "They are sent, with good news, for the glory of God - the ideas of mission, message and motivation. Those 3 m's made me think of the company, '3M'. I remembered the story of how they discovered the glue of Post-its, but couldn't find a use until a man called Art Fry wanted to find a way to keep a bookmark stuck in his hymn book."

"I couldn't find a Post-it Jesus done by anyone. I found a pixelated image, created by a German artist called Norbert Bayer. I contacted him, and he is now desperate to come and visit from Berlin to see the work. I had to send off to America for all the different colour Post-its."

"The whole thing cost about £150 for a major art installation. It is my little bit of Post-it modernism."

**"It is my little bit of Post-it modernism."**

intake of breath. Everyone got their phones out and started taking pictures."

"I pray it has inspired people to carry on doing good in this city, knowing they are not alone, they are part of something big together, and it is Jesus. Sometimes you are so close to your work, you don't see the bigger picture, who is motivating it. The picture reflects that. One board shows you nothing, but work together, stand back, and you see Jesus in his glory. I hope it encourages us to support one another."

Frank McGregor has lived in Stoke-on-Trent for twenty years, and acknowledges the portrait is an unusual project. "I've always used art, making things out of scrap and cardboard. Like a minister spends hours preparing a sermon, I spend hours on artwork, praying that God's spirit will speak to people through it, whatever I have made."



# In Focus: Malaysia

Five years ago, the Minister of Home Affairs of Malaysia granted a publication licence to "The Herald", the weekly newspaper of the Roman Catholic Church of Malaysia.

One of the conditions attached to this licence was that they were not permitted to use the word "Allah" to refer to God, something Christians have done in the region for generations.

A legal battle followed, and on October 14th, 2013, the Court of Appeal overturned a previous High Court decision, and instead upheld the right of the Minister to impose this condition. The Bar Council of Malaysia was reported as criticising the ruling, saying it denied a fundamental liberty.

The Bishop of Lichfield, Rt Revd Jonathan Gledhill, raised the matter in a Parliamentary Question:

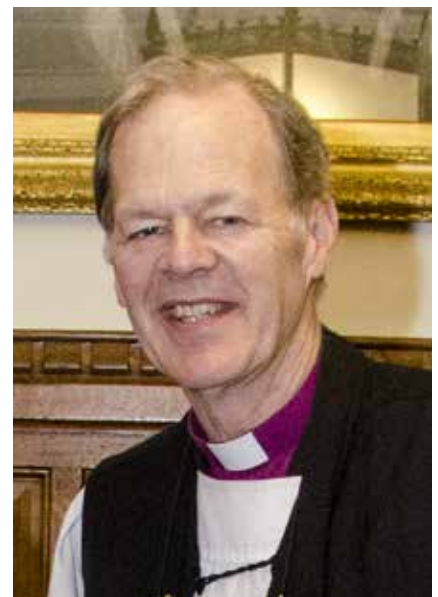
*"To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have made representations to the government of Malaysia to help ensure that Christians in that country can continue to worship following the recent Malaysian Court of Appeal ruling that only Muslims may call God "Allah"; given that Malaysian Christians call God "Allah" in their worship and bible translations."*



In a lengthy reply, the Minister of State, Baroness Warsi, said "The Malaysian government has made clear that the Appeal Court judgement relates to use of the word Allah by the Catholic Herald newspaper and does not prevent its use by Bahasa speakers in church services or in bibles."

But that assurance appears not to be supported by recent events on the ground.

On January 2nd, the Bible Society of Malaysia in Selangor was raided by the authorities, and its Chairman and General Secretary taken to a police station. "At the door, they said they wanted to come in as there were Bibles containing the word 'Allah'", it was reported in the Malaysian Insider.



Bishop Jonathan remains troubled. "In light of recent events, I am greatly concerned about freedom of worship in Malaysia. I pray for our partner Diocese in West Malaysia and Kuching, and all Christians now living in uncertainty and fear. I will certainly continue to raise the matter in Parliament."

# Bishop's Letter



Like learning to swim with my big toe on the bottom bouncing me along, I am only a tentative tweeter. But I'm becoming a more avid watcher and listener. And I have noticed a few things:

but listen to others, respond to their ideas and engage naturally. Called to an incarnational mission, we must understand the context we inhabit, learn the language and dialects, listen and engage with people where they are.

## 5. Twitter is good for sharing information about community services and events that then get retweeted around various networks.

Here in Shropshire, one vicar with one tweet managed to reach over 900 people within two hours concerning latest details about the local Food Bank and a Christingle for the Children's Society. Called to create community in often remote rural areas, here is a way for the Church to be good news and bring folk together.

So here I am like a stranger in a foreign land. So much to learn – geography, customs and language. Feeling less like bold St Paul and more like the Mark who wanted to leave and go home, I wonder if there are some Barnabas-like friends to encourage me on this journey?

Mark Rylands  
Bishop of Shrewsbury

1. **Twitter is the first for news now.** News Corporations follow Twitter to catch what is going on around the world. For Christians, called to be part of growing God's Kingdom on earth, here is a vehicle for connecting directly with God's world.

2. **It's a great place to learn stuff.** There are links from people's tweets to articles, photographs and blogs. Following the right people on Twitter means we can pick up distilled wisdom. Followers of Jesus are called 'disciples' and Twitter looks to be a hub where we can enhance our learning as pilgrims in God's world.

3. **There are a lot of people out there in 'Twitterland', engaging with one another,** making connections and creating networks. Christians are called to be missionaries and here is an entire new mission field. How is the love of Christ best revealed, shared and embodied?

4. **Twitter is ideally a conversation not a broadcast.** The most effective tweeters don't just megaphone their message to everyone

The Twitter profile of Bishop Mark:  
<https://twitter.com/shrewsbishop>







**DIOCESE OF  
LICHFIELD**

GOING FOR GROWTH

# DIARY



Reaching New Generations celebration with Bishop Geoff Annas, February 25 at 6.00, Trentham Parish Church.

Christian Vision for Men Conference, February 8, Rising Brook Church, Stafford.

Spirituality on the Borders with Jeff Leonardi, February 4 at 9.30, Lichfield Cathedral. Booking essential with jeff.leonardi@btinternet.com

Nelson Mandela memorial event with Bishop Steve Diseko, January 22 at 7.30, Lichfield Cathedral.

Reaching New Generations celebration with Bishop Mark Rylands, January 25 at 4.00, Christ Church Bayston Hill.

Reaching New Generations celebration with Bishop Clive Gregory, February 8 at 4.00, St Martin's Walsall.

Please send details of your events to Spotlight on [comms@lichfield.anglican.org](mailto:comms@lichfield.anglican.org)

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