



Diocese of Hereford

archdeacons' visitation news

A Year of Prayer

We hope you enjoy reading this issue of Visitation News and give thanks for all that you continue to do to sustain our churches and communities.

The annual Visitations programme, like so many other activities in the church, are part of the patterns and seasons that mark each year – we look forward to them. It's an opportunity to give thanks and formally celebrate your commitment and service as the Churchwardens of our diocese.

The last 12 months have genuinely seen a return to what can best be described as 'normal' where many of our church activities have resumed and we have seen churches use this time to take stock. As we seek to grow the Church in this diocese, we want to reinforce the central message that this activity is not about institutional survival but faithfulness. Numbers are not everything, but each number represents a person, and in that respect, they are significant.

We are delighted that Bishop Richard will mark this year's Visitations as episcopal, Bishop-led occasions. We hope you enjoy meeting him and are affirmed in your role as he shares his vision for our life together.

We cannot let this opportunity pass without acknowledging the challenges you face too. Finance continues to be very difficult, particularly managing our many ancient buildings and funding is limited. Our commitment to become Carbon Neutral by 2030 presents additional challenge, but this year, 2023, is marked as a Year of Prayer, called by our Bishop.

The scriptures are full of stories of God's people, full of fear, getting down on their knees to pray. It is this relationship that results in extraordinary things happening. So, we encourage each of you to consider joining events on the programme, or starting your own. There are central resources available to support you – please do visit our website for details.

We pray that this year will set the tone for our journey ahead and continue to build on the local foundations in our diocese, proclaiming Christ and growing new disciples.

Derek and Fiona



The Ven Derek Chedzey
Archdeacon of Hereford



The Ven Fiona Gibson
Archdeacon of Ludlow

Year of Prayer 2023

Key diary dates

All welcome – to book a place on any of our Year of Prayer events, please visit our website or contact our main office on **01432 373300**.

- High Places Holy Communion for Ledbury Deanery, Herefordshire Beacon on the Malverns
Thursday 22 June
- High Places Holy Communion for Bromyard Deanery, Bromyard Downs
Thursday 22 June
- Exploring Prayer Day: Tupsley
Saturday 24 June – 9:30am
- Exploring Prayer Day: Much Wenlock
Saturday 30 September – 9:30am
- Bishop's Study Day 2: Deepening our Prayer Life
Thursday 19 October – 9:30am
- Celebrating our Year of Prayer Hereford Cathedral
Tuesday 12 December

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The future of intergenerational church

The first five years of strategic investment in the Intergenerational Mission Project ended in December 2022, but it remains a key priority in the refreshed Diocesan Strategy. It is hoped it will support the Church to grow younger and become more diverse over the next decade.



The original project, which began in 2018, set ambitious objectives around the number of people attending church and aimed to support the deepening of faith in existing congregations. Ambitious targets included the number of new disciples of every age placed six 'Intergenerational

Missioners (IMs)' in parishes around the diocese. These were a mix of market towns and more rural locations.

The project reinforces the imperative of culture change in order to achieve growth. David Morris, Diocesan Programme Manager who supported the five-year Intergenerational Mission Project, observes a very obvious pattern about growth and change: "When I joined, the project in spring 2018, the IMs had already started. It quickly struck me during many conversations and in preparing progress reports, how success was always rooted in the prayer culture. This corresponds with the growth cycle and five marks of mission. In other words, deepening the faith of the existing Church through courses like Alpha comes before any evidence of growth in numbers or achieving any critical capacity to sustain new initiatives that were started by the Intergenerational Missioner.

The model and key learnings of the project are firmly rooted in the New Testament teachings and ministry of Jesus. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus begins to gather his disciples and call them to service. He teaches them about God the Father; he teaches them about what is to come and encourages them to step out boldly in faith. Overly simplifying this can be interpreted as engaging the existing Church and encouraging people to share their gifts and talents first makes it easier to go out and meet those who may be unchurched.

Lizzie Hackney, Lead Intergenerational Missioner, adds: "We have seen significant progress in reaching those who are unchurched with the Gospel. We now have an active and engaged community of over 40 intergenerational champions and have built solid foundations on which to continue growth.



"In terms of new disciples, the numbers have been significantly below the 75 new disciples expected in each location but it is very clear that the journey to faith is one that can take a while and that disruptions like COVID impact change."

Following the early achievements of the IM Project, Bishops' Council approved the launch of a diocesan development fund, the Total Return Fund (TRF). The assets of the Fund, which include the proceeds from the sale of land and property owned by Hereford Diocesan Board of Finance (HDBF) is aimed at encouraging parishes, benefices and deaneries to embark on missional projects in their area. David adds: "For any church wishing to make an application, the key learnings from the IM Project must be incorporated into the bid. There is a strong desire to support projects which are innovative and collaborative and help to grow the Church."

For further details about funding a mission project, contact David Morris. To learn more about the key learnings from the Intergenerational Mission Project, visit our website or email Lizzie Hackney.

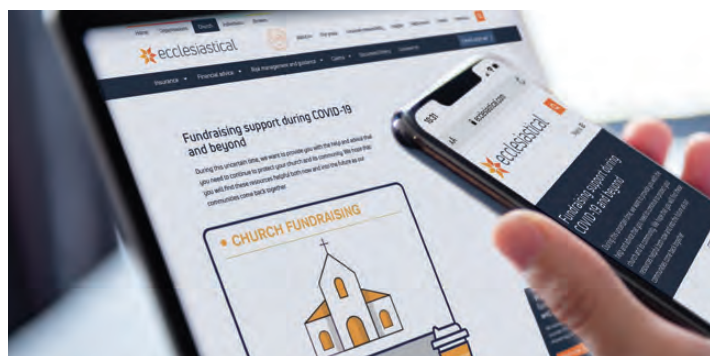
The checklist...



Can you answer these questions?

The following short checklist aims to help a parish/benefice (or deanery) prepare for total return funding:

1. How has the church been effectively prepared for mission and the need for an outward community-facing understanding of church?
2. Is the church ready for the change in culture and disruption that any missional project may cause?
3. Does the parish/benefice have the relevant skills required to deliver the proposed project including those relating to line management, managing culture change and monitoring/reporting the progress of the project – training may be required?
4. Is there a clear understanding and ownership of what will change if the project is successful and how the anticipated change will be measured (the project targets)?
5. How has the parish/benefice considered what type of new resource they need and how this resource will fit into local ministry teams and the impact on key relationships?
6. Has the parish/benefice considered what they will need to set up to employ any new resources and do they have the HR and payroll skills to do so?
7. Confirm what plans are in place to ensure regular prayer for the project (and especially the people delivering it).
8. Is the parish/benefice ready to review the leadership culture in church as the project may include extending the role of lay leaders?



Fundraising hub to support your church

Fundraising has always been vital for churches, from the traditional, well-loved flower festivals and cake sales to the world of digital fundraising opportunities that the internet has opened up. But it can be daunting to know where to start, so Ecclesiastical's easy-to-use online fundraising hub is here to help with great ideas and simple advice.

Drawing on the advice of experts and our own 135 years' experience in working with churches, we've pulled together a range of top tips to help you boost existing income streams and develop new ones. There's help with researching sources of funding and writing professional grant applications that can make all the difference to the answer you receive. There are great video webinars with fundraising specialists offering their insights into key fundraising issues.

Other guidance includes fundraising in less affluent areas, fundraising in rural parishes, how to build a fundraising team and more to keep your congregation and the wider community informed and engaged.

There are plenty of useful resources and handy templates for all types of churches on our Church Fundraising Hub at www.ecclesiastical.com/churchfundraising

Nominate your church for a chance to win



The Movement for Good giving programme is back with awards of £1,000 to give to charities helping those in need. Ecclesiastical is proudly part of the Benefact Group, and together they are giving away over **£1 million** to charities in the 2023 Movement for Good Awards.

£1,000 draws are now open for nominations

- You can nominate your favourite charity or church at any time for the £1,000 draw.
- It's one nomination per charity, per person, so if you have more than one favourite, get them in the running today!
- There are three £1,000 draws this year giving away between £120,000 and £150,000 in each.
- Once you've nominated, share your nomination and get your network to support too.

Get nominating and find out more at www.movementforgood.com/ecclesiastical

Did you know?

In 2022, 15 churches each won a £1,000 grant.

There were thousands of nominations for these churches. The more nominations received, the greater their chance of winning.



Contains promotional material

Rebuilding the historic Church of the Ascension in Salford

In February 2017, a fire broke out at the Grade-II listed Church of the Ascension in Lower Broughton, Salford, Greater Manchester. Six crews from Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service battled for hours to contain the blaze, which ultimately devastated the building.



Many members of the local community gathered outside the church building to survey the damage, some reduced to tears. Much used and loved by young and old, the building plays an important role in both spiritual and social terms as an inclusive community space accessible to all. The church had recently undergone a £250,000 restoration project which people in the community had helped to fund.

Immediately following the fire, Ecclesiastical carefully assembled the right team of experts to attend the site as soon as the fire service authorised it.

Repair work began in October 2018 with teams of carefully selected experts appointed to complete the works. Phase one included reinstatement of the structural elements of the building,



such as columns, roof structures and slate coverings; stone and brick repairs; stained glass window and window guard replacements; and ceiling finishes.

Phase two began in September 2021, focusing on preserving the historical features of the church. As part of the restoration, Ecclesiastical worked with customers to build in modernisations to enable them to make the space better serve the requirements of today's use.

Restoration of the building was completed by the end of September 2022.

In November 2022, the church and community came together to mark the completion of the £5m restoration project with a rededication ceremony.

Read the story in full and see more pictures at
www.ecclesiastical.com/church-of-the-ascension

// It has been a long five and a half years since the fire... we can now look forward to the future with a beautifully restored church which is fit for the 21st century. //

Shirley Kehoe, PCC Secretary at the Church of the Ascension



Take our advice – for a brighter future

Ecclesiastical is well-known as a leading insurer of churches and other heritage buildings. But many people aren't aware that we also have a stand-alone financial advice arm here to help you make the most of your money.

Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Services (EFAS) provides fully independent advice on pensions, investments, life assurance and mortgages for the clergy, church community and PCCs.



You don't have to be an insurance customer to use the service – we're happy to help anyone – but we obviously have specialist knowledge of the church sector, as IFA Kieran Harper explains.

'I've been in the industry for seventeen years and with Ecclesiastical for all but two of those,' said Kieran, who's based in our Gloucester office. 'When it comes to

providing regulated financial advice to the clergy and the wider church community, that experience helps.

'Many of our customers are clergy – we understand their pension scheme, we know about the issues with living in tied accommodation such as vicarages – so when it comes to retirement planning, we're already ahead of the game. We also have a deep understanding of ethical and sustainable investing – as you would expect of a company with such strong links to the church – and this area is getting ever more popular with a lot of our customers.'

Please get in touch to find out how Kieran and his colleagues could help you.



0800 107 0190



getadvice@ecclesiastical.com



www.ecclesiastical.com/financial-advice

Have you signed up for Ecclesiastical's monthly e-news?



This monthly email is full of tips and information for all Ecclesiastical's church customers and anyone in your church community. Signing up is easy and, if at any time you decide you no longer want to receive it, you can click the 'unsubscribe' button at the

bottom of the email. Feel free to pass the sign-up link to anyone you think would like it.

Sign up at www.ecclesiastical.com/signup

Support for your 2024 sabbatical

Are you planning on taking a sabbatical in 2024?

Did you know that there may be support available for you through Ministry Bursary Awards? Ecclesiastical's Ministry Bursary Awards provide financial support for members of the clergy taking extended study leave, and we are now accepting applications for sabbaticals taking place in 2024.

The experience of a sabbatical can be life-changing and have a long-lasting impact on your church and community.

Established in 1987, the Ecclesiastical Ministry Bursary Awards have supported over 1,400 members of the clergy to finance a wide range of extended leave projects and plans. The application window runs between April and September. Judging will take place in November 2023, with the awards made in December 2023.

If you would like to find out more about the Awards, including eligibility criteria and application details, please visit www.ecclesiastical.com/mba



Have you visited the Ecclesiastical website recently?

It's full of information to help you run your church, such as the **Made Simple Guides**, which cover these key topics:

- Church insurance made simple
- Administering your church insurance
- Building works
- Church events
- Church property
- Community outreach
- Legal expenses
- People on church premises

You will also find information about church, home, commercial and legal insurance and how to make a claim. **Explore the website at www.ecclesiastical.com/church**

Protect your home and support your church with £130 donation



As part of a financial services group that exists to give its available profits to good causes, one of the ways in which Ecclesiastical do this is through the Trust130 Home Insurance offer. For every new direct home insurance policy taken out, Ecclesiastical offer to donate £130 to an Anglican church or cathedral of the policyholder's choice.¹

Originally launched in 2017 to celebrate the 130th anniversary, Ecclesiastical has since donated more than £460,000, helping to support over 2,500 churches. A donation of £130 may not sound like much, but churches and congregations have used the donations in many creative ways to fund all sorts of things.

In the **Parish of Harpenden**, the donation will be used to support Cornelia's Coffee Shop, which is a community resource that enables them to engage with local people, offering fellowship and raising funds for charity.

It needs some new equipment – not least, a new freezer – and the donation will help in this general regard. It does great work to benefit the community and other great causes. One of our recent events at Cornelia's was to help our local Ukrainian arrivals.

Kevin Featherstone, Parish Warden

St Mary's Church, Wythall, used their donations to offer a weekly hot meal to families struggling with the increase in the cost of living.

This happens directly after school and includes activities for children and a Bible story or video. £130 will pay for meals for about 20 families, funding the food for about two weeks, which is a great boost financially, but also to the step of faith which this venture is.

Pam Miller, Treasurer

Award-winning home insurance



As well as supporting your church, when you take out a home insurance policy with Ecclesiastical you are joining the most trusted home insurance provider with the happiest customers.

Ecclesiastical continued to top the Fairer Finance league table in spring 2023 for home insurance for a record 17th consecutive time, retaining the gold ribbon status.² Ecclesiastical was also voted the best home insurance provider in the Times Money Mentor Awards in 2022.³

For more information about Trust130 and Home Insurance, visit www.ecclesiastical.com/trust130

Call us for a home insurance quote on **0345 777 3322** and mention code **TRUSTPA**.

¹ Terms and conditions apply. ² www.fairerfinance.com/ratings/customer-experience-ratings/home-insurance ³ www.thetimes.co.uk/money-mentor/article/times-money-mentor-awards-2022-winners



Car insurance

Our Clergy Motor Insurance is tailored specifically for the clergy and includes benefits such as business use, no admin charges and up to £500 cover for church goods in the car.¹



0345 450 9396



www.ecclesiastical.com/church/car-insurance

¹ Subject to terms and conditions.



Funeral planning

Ecclesiastical can help you make financial provision for your funeral, reducing the worry for your family and ensuring your wishes are provided for. Terms and conditions apply.



0800 055 6503



info@epsfunerals.com



www.funeralplans.co.uk

The value of embracing others



We recently caught up with Wendy Coombey, Ukraine Project Manager for the Diocese's Homes for Ukraine Scheme, and Project Officer Lesley Grady to hear about their work. We asked them to share with us how the project is making a difference to people's lives.

Why did people respond to the crises in Ukraine?

Wendy: "I think for many people it was something quite simple. For me, it is listening to that instruction in the Gospel of Matthew from Jesus, to care for the stranger in our midst. This project goes beyond that. It is actually saying, if you can get here, we'll care for you. I am grateful to the amazing network of people who responded willingly."

Lesley: "I remember sitting and watching the TV, thinking I must do something. If the shoe was on the other foot, I would want someone to look after my family. Initially, I started collecting items that could be sent out to Ukraine. This quickly evolved to a hub coordinator in Leominster, helping match people with hosts, providing English lessons as well as supporting social events for hosts and guests. It was a privilege being appointed to the role of project officer at the diocese and knowing I've been a small part of a bigger picture."

What does your role involve?

Wendy: "The most important thing for us is making sure that the Ukrainian guests arriving in Herefordshire and South Shropshire feel welcome."

Lesley: "The importance of the matching process is critical. Making sure the hosts and guests are compatible with each other and that they understand that this is a rural area."

What next for this project?

Lesley: "We're now over a year since the invasion and I really hoped we wouldn't be in this position but we need to ask for more hosts. There are more people coming over the borders and they're getting to a safe place in surrounding countries but it's not a settled place. We're continuing to support those who are already here and who are starting to make the next steps towards independence."

Become a host

In the Diocese of Hereford, we have already been able to offer accommodation to 260 families fleeing the war in Ukraine, including over 100 children, but more help is needed.

The UK Government scheme requires all potential hosts to know of someone in Ukraine who wants to come to the UK. The project in Hereford is about supporting this matching process. By partnering with Citizens UK, the Diocese of Hereford has been able to offer a more 'active' matching process. The team help to identify hosts across the Diocese and work with colleagues in Citizens UK to connect hosts with refugees seeking a sponsor.

Lesley explains: "A generous grant from Herefordshire Council, Awards for All and Citizens UK means the team can offer more support to local communities who responded so generously to the crisis in March 2022. A year on from the invasion, we know there are more people who want to come to the UK from Ukraine. It is our ambition to make that happen."

"We continue to gather clusters of helpers and volunteers into areas, linking people up to support one another. A collective approach to coordinating efforts strengthens us all."

"Our offer is open to all existing groups and individuals who wish to offer accommodation, whether they attend church or not."

For those interested in becoming a host or anyone simply wishing to learn more about how to offer help, please email the team.

There are some simple steps to help, which you can also follow:

1. Consider hosting a family or person from Ukraine, or if you are unable to host yourself, please help us to identify potential accommodation or hosts.
2. Provide a warm welcome and ongoing support, working with the hubs and local people to support the Ukrainians when they arrive here.
3. Donate generously to local hubs, enabling them to support Ukrainians with clothing, furniture, toys or other household equipment.

Visit the Homes for Ukraine Scheme website:

www.hereford.anglican.org/our-faith/support-for-ukraine

Email the Homes for Ukraine Scheme in the central diocese: hosts-for-ukraine@hereford.anglican.org



Prayerful generosity



The ministry and mission of the Church of England is largely funded through the incredible generosity of those who give to it. Generosity is at the heart of our faith; we believe in a generous God and our own generosity is a testament and hallmark of our faith in action.

Technology is just one of the areas that the Church has focussed efforts to improve

over the last few years, but there's a bigger movement afoot, showing how the impact of giving makes a difference to people's lives and wellbeing.

Croft and Yarpole Parish in Herefordshire includes two parish churches with different styles of giving from visitors, they offer an insight into generosity.

St Michael's Church, Croft, is situated within the grounds of a National Trust site. A survey showed that visitors assumed the church was part of the site and therefore was cared for by the Trust. Installing a contactless device and better signage helped visitors understand the independent status of the church. "It has had a positive impact on visitor generosity. Last year saw cash and contactless donations from visitors yield nearly £7,000 income. Despite the financial pressures on households, we anticipate matching or exceeding this for 2023," explains PCC Treasurer Sue Smith.

St Leonard's, Yarpole, has a shop and café situated within the church. "We have installed a contactless device with better information, and we hope to increase donations from visitors." Adds Sue.

However, despite these examples there's so much more to living generously than simply giving money on an occasional or regular basis. The generosity of the church allows communities to grow and fosters meaningful relationships between individuals that leads people to life-changing decisions. Understanding how to grow a culture is critically important. Generosity must start with more than initiatives to encourage giving, it's about exploring and challenging our way of living. It requires all the fruits of the Spirit, plus patience, commitment and determination and above all prayer.

Revd Chris Moore, Vicar of Fownhope Benefice in South Herefordshire, explains that giving at its heart is about imitating God's generosity for us. He doesn't shy away from teaching on money and views it as an important way in which he can help his congregation to reflect the generosity of God. He explains:

"It can feel embarrassing to preach about money. Open up the subject, and the congregation assume you are after their cash. Wallets are pushed down in the pocket and the handbag is pulled closer. People inspect their shoes. Yet giving is not simply supporting good causes but is a spiritual act. It demonstrates our reliance upon God, and not upon wealth. It reinforces the idea that God provides for us and so we need not worry. It blesses other members of the body of Christ, and when we give, we share in God's generosity to us. Simply put, giving helps us focus again upon a God who was willing to give even his Son for us."

Our Parish Giving Advisors are working with parishes to help build an abundant culture of generosity. To find out more, contact Mark Simmons or Rosa Speyer or visit our website for information:

www.hereford.anglican.org/generous-giving

Card readers



Contactless giving enables more people to give in a way that they feel comfortable using. It is ideal for casual visitors who do not have regular giving set up but would like to give by tapping a contactless payment device with their debit or credit card.

Parishes can purchase card readers and contactless donation units at a discount through the Parish Buying service. Please visit the Parish Buying website to learn more.

Website: www.parishbuying.org.uk

Email: finance@hereford.anglican.org

For more information

Call: 0345 777 3322 **Email:** churches@ecclesiastical.com

Facebook: Ecclesiastical **Twitter:** @churchmatters

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