

Inspiring people, churches and schools across our diocese.



Life after debt

"I dived under the table to hide from someone at the door, worried that he'd see me. I hardly ever went out because I was scared someone was waiting on the driveway."

Jenneke Bryant lives in a lovely village in a beautiful part of the diocese. Her chocolate box cottage and garden are a delight but, five years ago, her seemingly perfect surroundings were a fortress; she and her husband were living under siege from doorstep collectors.

The descent into debt all happened rather quickly when Jenneke lost her job and her husband's wages just didn't cover all the bills.

It got progressively worse, overwhelming them in the space of four or five months.

Jenneke is tearful and emotional as she remembers a desperate time when unopened mail terrified her, withdrawing from family and friends in case anyone should notice,

"The emotional burden was massive and we couldn't get out of it on our own."

"It was quite crippling at the time. We had to go out and pretend that everything was fine and not revealing that we were petrified."

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A town praying together

Looking ahead to:

Christmas 2018

Plus...

How taking a pew has a different meaning for a church

Archbishop to visit diocese



Bishop Richard

Inspiring each generation. . .

If you read nothing else this month, please read Jenneke's story. It is inspiring, courageous and challenging.

And there's much else here that demonstrates the church in action, "proclaiming Christ; growing disciples".

There's much preparation going on for Christmas, and of course that preparation can only be done because Christmas has already come.

"God became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood."

That's the wonder of Christmas, and the pages that follow indicate ways in which God is still here.

I'm reminded of words of Teresa of Avila

"Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on the world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes. You are his body."



It was after she hid under the table from the caller that she realised they needed help, professional help to deal with their situation.

One of the most alarming aspects is that the couple are by no means poor; Jenneke had always, until that point worked, and her husband, Colin, has always supported them as a family.

Jenneke, who is now a churchwarden, looked for debt help online and came across Christians Against Poverty or CAP.

"A lovely lady answered and her compassion reduced me to tears."

"A couple, Steve and Donna, volunteers with CAP, then came to our house and prayed with us."

"They said we will deal with it together; we will draw up a budget and get agreement from your creditors."

Christians Against Poverty, which works only through local churches, supports people in desperate need. It also runs courses teaching people about money management, living on a low budget and running a home.

"They told us it was okay to be scared and not to know what to do. We were both in tears."

St Peter's Church in Bromyard is launching the CAP Life Skills course in November and volunteers are already visiting local schools to teach children about financial responsibility. Helen Combes is a volunteer with CAP in Bromyard:

"Our son was killed in an accident. Three years on when we had got over the shock, we thought we should be giving to others."

"We heard a CAP interview and we thought we shouldn't keep grieving but help people."

"6,000 people have become Christians through CAP"

"God knows who is going to respond, but he also knows that we should care for the poor, the widows and the orphans, even if they don't become Christians, and that's what it's all about."

To find out more about CAP, volunteering, raising money, or to ask for help visit:
<https://capuk.org/>

christians
against
poverty

CAP



#FollowTheStar

#FollowTheStar is the Church of England's 2018 Christmas campaign. This builds on all the work from last year's #GodWithUs. The main aim of #FollowTheStar is to encourage people to a local church service or event to share in the joy of Jesus' birth. Here are five ways in which your church can get involved:

Share Christmas videos and social media posts

Posts available will include an interactive family Advent and Christmas calendar and videos to encourage people into local churches. The #FollowTheStar campaign is part of the Church of England's Renewal and Reform programme, helping us become a growing Church for all people and for all places.

Consider being a 'star church' by displaying stars prominently

The bigger and more visible the better. If possible, illuminate at night and share on social media on Friday 21st December to be part of the 'night of the stars'. More details will follow on this in the weeks ahead on social media.

#FollowTheStar: A Journey Through the 12 Days of Christmas

Featuring a welcome from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the booklets are available individually and in bulk-savings packs for your church to use. View a sample copy and buy copies from Church House Publishing. From late November 2018, users can sign up to receive the daily reflections by e-mail and through an Android or iOS app.

Download and buy materials

There are a range of resources that can be bought on the Church Print Hub website. Free digital resources can also be found on the CofE website.

Update your church page on A Church Near You

The site receives more than 10 million page views each year and 50% more services and events were listed last year than the year before on the website. Make sure you tag your services with 'FollowTheStar' as well as 'Christmas', 'mince pies', 'mulled wine', 'Advent' and 'Christmas carols' as appropriate.



Something to give

Including a Nativity story for families and a game to play. Just 10p per copy.

Order from:

www.hopetogether.org.uk

Organising and planning a wedding can seem like a massive task and a huge financial burden for couples, with plenty of magazines and online articles encouraging people to have the perfect day but at a price.



Welcoming wedding couples

St Martin's in South Wye recently held their latest wedding fair, aimed at helping couples to cut their costs and to share the unique aspects of a church wedding.

Jo Child, Intergenerational Missioner for South Wye, Hereford said: *We are guests in Christ's church and we're extending the welcome to wedding couples so that they too can be guests and hopefully it will be the beginning of a journey for them and maybe they will bring their children for baptism, or maybe think about us for funerals when their loved ones die.*

"We don't think weddings should cost the earth. We think the wedding is really about the marriage and that's very important to us."

Visitors had the opportunity to look around the church, the neighbouring hall and the grounds, giving people who may never have been inside a church building, the opportunity to see inside.

The event also included the chance to buy pre-loved wedding items to help people keep their costs down.

Amongst the bargains on offer were wedding dresses priced at only £10 and a table full of shoes and hats. Jo continues:

"We wanted to show that the Church is interested in them, interested in their life event and loves them like Jesus loves us and lives with them."

For more ideas like this for supporting couples, visit the church support hub at:

churchsupporthub.org





"They thought it was really nice and it suited both of my girls as it didn't feel as formal as having it in a church service on a Sunday as ours was so relaxed."



A very Messy baptism

There were over a thousand Christenings or child baptisms in the diocese in 2017. These life event services are one of the main ways new people get in contact with their local church.

Ordinarily babies and children are welcomed into the church family during an individual service or as part of the main Sunday service, but there is also a third option, a Messy Baptism.

Earlier this year, Leominster Priory Messy Church welcomed thirteen-year-old Freya and sister Olivia aged nine, using a paddling pool outside in the priory's grounds. They were baptised after Freya asked at another family member's Christening if she could also do the same. Their mum, Kate Ingram-Woolf, described why they went for the very different experience:

"It wasn't an official option but when I mentioned about booking a baptism, Kathy [Leominster Priory Messy Church leader], suggested having a Messy Church one." "We had it as part of the Messy Church and it worked really well."



"The girls were dunked in the pool, and we had a hymn, and then they got changed into smart white dresses."

The story of Jesus' baptism was retold as part of the Messy Church and there were many activities on the theme of baptism and the beginning of an amazing journey in a relationship with God. Crafts on offer included water footprint pattern making, footprint biscuits to decorate and eat, and, during the baptism ceremony, those gathered said the Lord's Prayer with actions.

Kathy Bland, Messy Church leader at Leominster Priory and Intergenerational Church Enabler at Hereford Diocese said:



"We have had several baptisms from our Messy Church congregation but generally people have wanted a more traditional service, not a Messy Church one, so this was our first in Messy Church."

"We hope that other people will decide to have a Messy baptism and it works particularly well for older children who can participate and make some choices around what happens."



Easy ways to share your faith

Did you come to one of our Generation Next events held at venues throughout our diocese in the autumn? One of the main themes discussed was how we as Christians can grow in confidence to share our faith with others. Those gathered at the events talked of many positive experiences of when they have opened up about their belief and invited someone to join them at a church service or event.



"As a painter and a decorator I meet people on a daily basis. As a Christian, I pray for them and look to God to help sort out my work!"

"In my job as a bin man I've shared my faith and also on occasion prayed for people for healing and God healed the people who asked for prayer."

"I work in banking and when I have had to make people redundant I imagine Jesus next to me."

"As a supply teacher I am sometimes asked: 'are you a Christian?' 'Are you a big one?'"

"As an audiologist I have the opportunity to talk about church with people struggling with their hearing."

"In retirement I am free to be me. After church I can have honest conversations in the pub with people."





"By wearing a cross as a sign of my faith, it provides the opportunity for people to approach and talk to me."

"I'm involved in keeping the church open and it gives the opportunity for people to come in and sit quietly or speak with the stewards – we find that often people will ask for prayer."

"We made coffee for our new neighbours and the uncommitted husband ended up joining a house group and ultimately committing his life to Christ."

"I'm a piano teacher and I spend some time praying for my pupils. Being a Christian means that I also have an integrity around the preparation and assessment of pupils."



How do you share your faith with those you meet?

We'd love to hear your experiences.

Email: stories@hereford.anglican.org





This Time Tomorrow

In church

If reading the testimonies overleaf has inspired you then there are plenty of ways to encourage people in your church to do the same.

During a normal service, you could ask a church member to speak for two minutes about how they spend their week and whether the church community can support them in some way.

It is for people in all sorts of occupations and none. This is about ordinary people, in ordinary places, doing ordinary things with an aim to help church communities to know one another better.

It might help to do the testimony as a question and answer session. You could ask:

- Where will you be this time tomorrow?**
- What do you do there?**
- What are your challenges, joys and opportunities?**
- How can we pray for you?**

At home

Nationally there has been a large piece of researched compiled called Talking Jesus. It led to the development of five simple things that any Christian can do:

- **Pray for people.** Which five people will you pray for regularly by name to come to know more about Jesus and come to faith? Consider praying for yourself and opportunities to share God's love.
- **Talk to people.** Our family, friends and people we meet are often interested in hearing more. Look for opportunities to talk about what God means in your life.
- **Give something.** A present of a bible or a smaller item could make all the difference. Think about what you might be able to give people after services, such as at Christmas.
- **Invite people.** Attending a service is a big step on someone's journey. When could you suggest a friend or neighbour might like to join you?
- **Getting to know new people.** 45% of young people say they don't know a Christian or they wouldn't know how to know if someone believes. Who could you share your faith with?



Copies of the Talking Jesus course can be purchased at a discount through Diocesan Mission Support – email grow.hereford.anglican.org or call 01584 871086. You can also watch a short introduction into the accompanying Talking Jesus course online: <http://talkingjesus.org/>



Plenty of us have prayed for one another, our local area and leaders as part of intercessions on a Sunday but how many of us pray for our neighbours at any other time of the week?



Praying for the parish

In Ledbury people from all of the Christian churches are getting together once a week to pray for one another and their wider community.

7-12-7, so called because of the times during the day when people get together to pray came out of a 24/7 prayer vigil on Maundy Thursday.

Reader at St Michael's in Ledbury, Mary Anne Keyes describes it as: *"a real move of the spirit in the town about four years ago."*

Leaders of the Church of England church, the Baptist church, the Methodist church and the Elim church committed to meet and also said they would encourage people to get involved.

7-12-7 prayer is just one of the ecumenical aspects of the churches in Ledbury – they also have Open the Book and the Messy Church at the Baptist church has volunteers from other churches. Mary Anne continues:

"When you don't have a huge number of children in any one church, to get them together for things is terrific, and they learn ecumenicalism from

the beginning, which is very important, and they learn about Jesus first and then they start to learn about the flavours of church and doctrine much later."

"The church prayer sessions have even led to greater inter-denominational involvement in a Roman Catholic family camp, Noah's Camp."

It is through the connections made at 7-12-7 that Mary Anne came to know the organisers. Through this, she was invited to lead the children's ministry at the camp near Ledbury, which last summer focused on the Lord's Prayer.

She oversaw and planned the provision for 25 children aged 4-11 during the three-day long event, which saw about 300 people visit.



"People felt enormously moved by the 24/7 prayer vigil and this led us to say this shouldn't be something that we do only once a year."





A pilgrimage of faith



A priest from Herefordshire has become one of the first Anglican chaplains to serve the Diocese in Europe's Camino Chaplaincy, in Santiago de Compostela, the destination of the

pilgrimage route that was recently highlighted in the BBC TV programme, *Pilgrimage: The Road to Santiago*.

Over 300,000 people walk all or part of the different Caminos (ways) each year. Father Bob Bates is one of a team of Chaplains, both female and male, offering pastoral care and worship to pilgrims as they arrive in the city and it is hoped to extend this care in due course to pilgrims prior to arrival, and as they walk their chosen route.

The Roman Catholic Cathedral offers a Mass in English, among other languages, each weekday and Saturday, but the Camino Chaplaincy can now offer services using Church of England liturgy, close to the city centre, to Anglicans and others who might wish to come.

The chaplains will probably stay for perhaps two or three weeks at a time and must be ordained, must have walked 100Km of the Camino (or cycled 200Km), and must have appropriate approvals from the Diocese in Europe. Lay people may have a supporting role to play.

Speaking before he left on his first trip out, Bob described the idea behind the chaplaincy service:

"There are many non-Roman Catholic pilgrims on the Camino who do not have the opportunity to celebrate their journey's end with Holy Communion, or to share their experience in a prayerful way, but there are insufficient qualifying residents in the city to establish a traditional Chaplaincy, so with a congregation that is passing through, we are looking to do something new."

"It is certainly a fascinating place for me and certainly a place where God has done some good things for me and I like to think I have done some good things for Him there."

"The initial idea is that we will be able to offer Holy Communion on Sundays, and in the week, to anyone who wants to come, and also a listening ear for English-speaking people who want to share their experience at a weekday Open-House held at Egeria House."

There are many different Camino routes. The most popular of these, the Camino Francés, stretches over 500 miles, from St Jean Pied de Port in France to the Cathedral in Santiago.

Bob continues: *"It is possible that as well as spending time in the city, Chaplains might get out onto the Camino to join some of the pilgrims, greeting them and helping them to share what God is doing for them on the final stage of their walk."*

"Unlike a more regular chaplaincy with a fixed place, the chaplains, are ministering to people who are on the move, who may want to share things as they go."

"Santiago is one of those places that people talk about – where heaven is very close, and this idea is stretched along the Camino as the pilgrim senses the spirits of those millions who have walked the same journey over the past centuries."

"I would ask people to pray for us and I hope that people who have done the Camino will come to know that people are doing something to minister to the pilgrims who like them have walked the walk."

The Camino Chaplaincy is entirely self-financing and kept alive by the hard work of volunteers and the donations of former and current pilgrims. For more information and up to date info see:

<http://egeria.house/chaplaincy/>



How often have you been invited to “take a pew” as a way of sitting down? At one church in Abbeydore Deanery you can now do just that in a space which was once full of pews. Take a Pew is the name of the Thursday afternoon tea and cake meet up at St Michael and All Angels Church in Kingstone. It takes place in their new kitchen and flexible seating area.

Church community members hope it will show people in the wider village that the church is welcoming, open to all and not just a place of worship.

Until the recent reordering, the church was a typical medieval building with old Victorian pews and no modern facilities such as running water or sewerage. Now there is a modern kitchenette, space for more recreational seating and a toilet. The church is now also accessible by ramp to wheelchair users and children in pushchairs.

Cliff Rose, PCC Treasurer at the church describes the thinking behind the project: *“Like most congregations, ours had dwindled and so we wanted to invite more people in who didn’t see a place for them in church.”*

The multi-use space is also a very welcome addition for tea and coffee after church services, as, previously, water had to be brought in for both making the drinks and washing up afterwards.

The kitchenette has been sympathetically crafted from former pews by woodwork students at the local college, saving the church money

“Some people have indeed started to come to church as a result and we have also had other members of the community who haven’t been engaged with the church before making cakes and other things.”

and increasing the involvement of the wider community. There are also glass tiles with religious symbolism, including St Michael, on the walls – ensuring the servery maintains the feel of a church.

Kingstone is a large village and the village hall is in demand by community organisations, so having a second space, which people can use for meetings and events, is a great way for the church to be active in community life.

But it doesn’t stop there, as Cliff explains:

“One of the next phases will be to have a board on the B4348 because it’s just down the road and of course all the tourists travelling between Ross and Hay could well be thirsty by the time they get here.”

“Even from day one, we were surprised at how quickly many people became regulars. It provides a chance for people to sit down and talk to friends. I’m not sure how often they would see each other the rest of the time.”



Archbishop to visit diocese in 2019

We are excited to announce that the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, is to visit the diocese in October 2019.

It is envisaged that he will visit churches, schools and community projects in both Hereford and Ludlow archdeaconries, and that there will be at least one large evening function.

The Archbishop's Diocesan Mission will take place from the 14-16 October 2019, starting in Hereford.

Speaking about the visit, the Bishop of Hereford, the Rt Revd Richard Frith, said: *"I'm thrilled to be welcoming Archbishop Justin to the diocese for a three day visit."*

"We are keen for him to meet as many people as possible and are planning a number of events and opportunities for this to happen."

"I am very much looking forward to sharing with him how we are living out the Christian faith in our very rural setting through our diocesan shared priorities, and for his encouragement in how we can do this even more widely."



Lent 2019

LentPilgrim and EasterPilgrim are the Church of England's 2019 Lent and Easter campaigns. These resources are designed to help your church mark these important seasons in the Church calendar.

What will be available for you to use?

- LentPilgrim 40 daily reflections based on the Beatitudes – to run from Ash Wednesday until Palm Sunday.
- Full-colour booklet published by Church House Publishing
- App for Android and iOS, based on the award-winning 2018 #LiveLent app
- E-mail sign-up for daily content
- Social media campaign
- Daily audio content for smart speakers, in the app and on the Church of England website
- Enhanced interactive content for uses in pilot dioceses preparing for baptism/confirmation
- Explainer graphics throughout Holy Week to share the key elements in the journey to Easter Day: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Day
- A bridge to EasterPilgrim – with weekly content shared from Church of England from Easter Day until Ascension based on the Lord's Prayer, making it a great way to prepare for Thy Kingdom Come.
- The reflections have been written by Bishop Steven Croft, co-author of the Pilgrim Course.



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