

 Diocese of Gloucester

archdeacons' visitation news

Dear Churchwardens

Welcome to this edition of Visitation News. We hope that you will find ideas and information here to inspire, challenge and equip you for the ministry you exercise in the heart of your communities. What we want to convey most of all however, is our gratitude for all that you are and all that you do. Thank you for your love, service and care. We are looking forward to being with you at the Visitation Services which will be held across the diocese. Last year, we were delighted to lead these together, and we will be repeating that this year, albeit across five services rather than four.

The vision we share as a diocesan family is 'LIFE Together' and it feels as if there has been a significant coming together in this past year. Deaneries have continued to meet to think about what the present and future look like as we seek to be faithful and to share God's love. The conversations that have taken place have been courageous, creative and challenging, and, with these conversations gradually crystallising into firm yet flexible plans, trust and collaboration have deepened. As plans are owned, honed and implemented, there is a growing understanding of our 'life together', and the invitation to work across boundaries, sharing the resources we have. One family – whether we spend most of our time in a particular worshipping community, or in one of the teams working in College Green.

This is the model that Jesus gives us and we see it time and again in the accounts of his ministry, and the life of the early church. People working together, sharing what they have in common, coming together to worship, pray and serve their communities.

This profound model of 'LIFE Together' is movingly inaugurated at Jesus's crucifixion. In that moment of profound love for all God's creation and all God's people, Jesus draws together his mother and his friend. *'Here is your son. Here is your mother'*. Here are the seeds of the community and mutual care that will be the hallmark of the post resurrection church. It is this 'life together' that we are called to embrace, treasuring all that is good in our existing ministry, yet always ready to 'do a new thing'.

We hope that the stories and articles that follow, and our shared worship at the Visitation services, will offer support and encouragement as we continue to build our life together.



The Ven Phil Andrew
Archdeacon of Cheltenham

The Ven Hilary Dawson
Archdeacon of Gloucester

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Churches and schools

There are many wonderful examples of churches and schools working in partnership, supporting and living out each school's Christian vision to help all to flourish within their communities. Jo Hunter, Interim Diocesan Director of Education, picks out just a small sample below:

The links with our parish church are as close as ever with The Revd Fiona playing an influential role in school life including coming in to lead Godly Play with different year groups and working each month with our Worship Council. The curate The Revd Catherine is running the 'Open the Book' team and we have Experience Easter planned for later this term. In addition, a parishioner is helping the children plan worship using the iSingPOP box. We are also using the 'Language of Spirituality' books from Jumping Fish which have proved helpful. (Cam Hopton CoE Primary School)



Our 'Coffee and Chat' sessions, run in conjunction with the church, are now more popular than ever and have been extended to pre-school parents as well. The church now employs a Children and Families Worker, Rachel, who has close involvement in school, not least with the Worship Club. Her work supporting individual children or families, both in school

and at home, during weekends and holidays, is very beneficial. School is also contributing to the local food collections, which are available in church for people in the community to benefit from, wherever necessary. (Hempsted CoE Primary School)

We have strong links with our local church. The Kaleidoscope Crew (KC) meet with Aileen Powell, Parish Church Reader, to plan and lead Sunday worship several times a year. The number of children attending these services has grown from 4 or 5 to 25! The school meets in the church for festival celebrations, children helping to lead the worship, and we plan to enable children to worship there on a weekly basis. We have met with the Vicar, The Revd David Gardiner, to revisit the school's vision, its Biblical roots and the Bible stories linked to the school's values. We held a staff meeting recently on the vision, values and Biblical roots and will be revisiting them with the children in the coming months. The school's vision and values are clearly visible in the environment, in the hall, classrooms and corridors, and the interactive areas for reflection, based on the term's current value of Compassion, are well used. The KC introduce the new termly prayer spaces to the whole school. (Primrose Hill CoE Primary School)

Growing Faith – what is it all about?



Many times, throughout church history, people in different ministries knew that their role was simply to do exactly what the people before them had done. There have also been times of reformation of being re-formed as Lucy Moore head of the Growing Faith Foundation says;

'We are living out our varied ministries in different times, a season when we constantly question, strive, seek, lament, reimagine, pioneer with no guarantee of success and step out into the unknown every day.'

For many the lament is 'we have no children and families in our congregations'.

Re-forming opens opportunity to stop asking 'Why don't families and children come to church on Sunday?' and ask, 'Where can we go to share God's love with children and families?'

This changes our focus and is where Growing Faith invites us to look at places of connection and relationships where we can have a continuity of presence. Three natural places are Home, Church, and School but there are others, local environmental groups, uniformed organisations, community toddler groups for example, which are full of opportunity and possibility!



So imagine...

A men's group based on Lego building, where men feel able to discuss life and faith as they build together. This exists in Cheltenham and has grown from an afternoon Lego club for children and families.

Running out of posies on Mothering Sunday because your Warm Space /

community coffee has enabled conversation across generations and people have felt encouraged to join seasonal worship.

Enabling whole families to participate in Bible stories and having conversations which show how parents and children connect with the stories. This has happened through an after-school club using Godly Play and one parent now wants to train as a Godly Play storyteller.

Now imagine... what this could look like where you are?

Re-forming can sound daunting, but Growing Faith is there to enable and encourage, please contact:

Jo Wetherall, Growing Faith and Spirituality Officer
jwetherall@glosdioc.co.uk or **Barrie Voyce**, Senior Youth Connector
bvoyce@glosdioc.org.uk

Sign up to Children Youth and Households monthly mailing
<https://anglican.us10.list-manage.com/subscribe/post?u=13dbff5c7cab1bb6345d5f3b2&id=69ea2ab3ba>

Jo Wetherall Growing Faith and Spirituality Officer



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

I wonder if you've heard of Interim Ministry?

I was struck recently by the changes we've seen over the last year or so, ironically enough it happened on a rare occasion when I used cash to make a purchase, the change was highlighted in the 'change' I received in my hand, the coins all had the head of the late Queen on them. While I'm not old enough to have used pre-decimal currency, I am old enough to remember when 'florins' and 'bob' bits were common place in our change, albeit masquerading as 10p and 5p pieces. Back then you could trace each era of the late-queen's reign by the changing face on coins in your hand. From those pre-1971 'old money' coins detailing her changing face from 1952 through to the 1960s and into the 'New Pence' era as she entered middle age and then to the changes this century as newly sized coins brought in a portrait of an older monarch. The new 50 pence pieces with the head of King Charles III on them are now in circulation, quietly marking a significant change in the life of our nation.



Photo: A H Mephram CC BY-SA 3.0

When we look at our Church services and traditions it's easy to fall into the trap of thinking they've never changed, that the way we do Church goes back to the beginning of the Christian Faith in England. Yet, the truth is, like all of life, change in the Church has been constant and ongoing. Not just in terms of the liturgy we use, but the traditions, the clothes, the format of services, the way we use our buildings and, yes, even our theological understanding is constantly evolving and changing.

Change is a natural part of life and it is a natural part of Church life too. We mark the changes of the year through our liturgical calendar, but we often don't mark the everyday changes in the same way.

Interim Ministry, sometimes called 'Transitional Ministry', is a fairly new thing for the Church of England, though it's been around a lot longer in other denominations. Interim Ministry, despite its name, isn't about filling the gaps during a clergy vacancy, it's about rethinking and reimagining how the ministry of the Church can be most effective in reaching our communities. Interim Ministry is about exploring and embracing change.

At its heart, Interim Ministry is about seeking God for the unique challenges we face in our parishes, and thinking about that scary

word 'change'. What are the changes we need to make in our Church life to best reach the people of our parishes, the people God has called us to serve?

Transitional Ministry in the Diocese of Gloucester takes several forms. From long-term projects with a licensed Interim Minister in post for an initial three years, giving benefices an opportunity to journey together in discerning the future, to shorter posts with a particular aim or change in mind. In some cases we're able to offer a short period of transitional ministry more as a consultancy to begin asking the 'big' questions, as a benefice thinks about the appointment of a new incumbent or a new challenge.



Photo: Robert Powell CC BY-SA 3.0

In Westbury on Severn Benefice, a period of Interim Ministry has encouraged the parishes to explore an exciting way of re-engaging with the agricultural communities that they serve. Together, the churches have a vision cast for a new and exciting rural ministry. It's been a rewarding and sometimes painful journey for the church community, and as we seek to make the vision a reality, it will continue to bring change and challenge. But it's only been possible because of the openness of the Churches in the benefice to really think about who God is calling them to serve.

In other parishes, licensed Interim Ministers are quietly serving local communities and supporting them through periods of change and transition, helping parishes think about the big questions of what it means to be Church in the 21st Century. To think about the ever-changing communities we, the Church of Christ, are called to serve.

At its heart, Interim and Transitional Ministry is about mission, sharing the love of Jesus with our ever-changing communities and reaching people with the Gospel.

The Revd Ali Mephram
Senior Interim Minister



Sportily

Sportily is one of the 'tools in the box' as the Deanery Strategic Review process explores new ways of being Church.

Established by Bishops' Council during the pandemic, Sportily is creating a network of fun-loving sport and activity groups where everyone can try different sports, make new friends and explore what life is all about – life in all its fullness. Proto-churches (or, to use the jargon, New Worshipping Communities) emerging all over the place where 'we hang out, we chat, we eat and we have a laugh while doing it. We believe that being more active, like the Christian faith, can change lives for the good.' According to Sport and Faith Coach, Lydia.

Active in 12 main locations across the Diocese, Sportily has a focus on engaging with the 95% who don't currently engage with the Church, delivering over 1,200 sessions, with over 24,000 participations, all aged under 20, in 2022.

The 2022 annual survey revealed that, of Sportily participants, 6 out of 10 reported that Sportily helps them enjoy life more, over half said that Sportily helps them make friends and a third said they want to talk about God more.

A young lad came along whose mum said, "I am a bit worried as he is not very good at basketball". He got stuck in and made a couple of really good shots before looking over to his mum so excited that he had scored.

In Hunts Grove, Tim Fletcher, supported by Diocesan New Ministries Funding, working alongside St Nicholas Church, hosted the first ever act of worship in the new housing estate, a Carol Service led by Archdeacon Hilary. From this a regular active Messy Church is now running. Children and young people also

enjoy multi-sport after-school clubs, holiday sports camps, youth hangout sessions and ActiveRE and a play leaders' scheme in the school.

"It has been wonderful to see Tim Fletcher's humble, joyful, dedicated and resourceful pioneering work begin to bear fruit... the progress has been remarkable. I hope and pray that the effectiveness of this model of pioneer ministry might lead to an expansion of Sportily's work in other parishes." Writes The Revd Richard Martin.

In Cirencester, recently appointed Luke Campbell has launched a new outreach at the skate park with skating, spike ball, smoothies and conversations about faith. Through the County Council HAF project, we are also offering holiday sports camps with a free hot meal to those who would receive free school meals during term time.

One child who attended a Sportily holiday camp exclaimed: *"This was the best morning ever! I want to do it all again".*

It is our hope that as this work grows, a new worshipping community will mature, with sports ministry at its core.

Tim Hastie Smith
Diocesan Missioner



For more information

Call: 0345 777 3322 **Email:** churches@ecclesiastical.com
Facebook: Ecclesiastical **Twitter:** @churchmatters

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