Learning for life

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There is a new area on the Diocesan website where parishes can list items which they no longer need and another parish could benefit from; everything from hymn books, altar frontals, chairs/pews, organs etc. To add any items wanted, for sale or free to a good home contact Caroline Rawlings on 01603 882351 or caroline.rawlings@dioceseofnorwich.org Please note: Faculty permission may be needed to remove or introduce items of furniture into a church.

www.dioceseofnorwich.org/classifieds
From the Editor

At one point when my “other half” embarked upon yet another higher education course – on top of a more than full-time job and a young family – I could be heard to exclaim “Will you never stop this eternal quest for knowledge?!” He is a reader by nature – always a couple of books on the go at once, always seeking new information.

I tend to be a “soaker-upper” through watching documentaries, having conversations with people and observing things around me. We all learn in different ways, but to keep that thirst going – especially when it comes to learning about and through our faith – ensures that we truly learn to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with our God.

Catherine Waddams, in this edition’s Comment piece (pg 4), sees lifelong learning as the interaction between our experience and our development, and Alan Winton states that the call to follow Jesus is to be a lifelong learner (pg 5). This life-long journey is explored in the main feature through the different ages and stages of life (pg 6).

One Day takes a look at a session of the Special Me Group – involving believers who may learn differently from most, and demonstrating a way of valuing and celebrating that (pg 10). “The joy of a library is that of adventure,” says Gudrun Warren as she explores a life of learning through books (pg 14). David Patey asks us to consider learning from inviting others into our homes as guests (pg 16) and Anna Walker invites us to think through what our spiritual learning style might be (pg12).

For the first time we’re featuring a short story with a nod to the season between Epiphany and Easter. Some learn through factual prose, others through fiction. The strong theme coming through this issue is that we all need to walk our own journey, embracing the many opportunities and experiences through which we can learn to develop and grow in our faith. I hope this edition of The Magazine will encourage you to do just that.

Blessings,

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The absolute deadline for the next issue is 18 January and the theme is health and well-being.

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Lifelong learning

By Catherine Waddams

Does lifelong learning conjure up images of boring classroom lessons, dull Bible classes and tedious sermons? Isn’t it just as much the realization of connections, the appreciation of nature, performing or listening to music, the challenge and stimulation of physical exercise, putting paint brush to paper, appreciating new aspects of and challenges to our faith?

Having studied economic regulation all my working life, I am applying it as a non-executive director of the water regulator – learning that it isn’t as simple in practice as in theory!

The leavers’ awards ceremonies at Parkside Complex Needs School, where I am a governor, emphasised the importance of continued learning after the children leave the classroom, and the nurture that each student receives to have confidence, ambition and determination to take advantage of the opportunities which they find, however different they may be from a ‘standard’ career pattern.

I recently returned to the other side of the classroom to train as a Reader/Lay Minister – and learned that the Old Testament wasn’t written to be only about Jesus, as I had unconsciously assumed. ‘Unlearning’ previous biases can be as important and enriching as identifying new perspectives. I had to use new conventions for writing assignments in theology, to include my own perspective in a way that isn’t appropriate in most social science.

As Educational Advisor at Bishops’ Advisory Councils, I assess evidence of the ‘quality of mind’ of potential ordinands, in particular their flexibility of mind and openness to learning. These are important criteria for all Christians, not just priests, whether in a formal learning context or in our openness to the world, and to others.

In this New Year, are we prepared to be surprised in our faith? To develop our own flexibility of mind and spiritual formation, taking advantage of our experience? How do our churches nurture such lifelong learning both within and beyond the church community?

I see lifelong learning as the interaction between our experience (good and bad) and our development. Often the most important (and surprising and uncomfortable) learning is about ourselves; to get the best from our learning, in developing our faith and more generally, we need to be prepared to see things from different perspectives.

Formal teaching, through physical or virtual classes, can provide a helpful structure for lifelong learning – including spiritual advice or retreats; and we can learn through what seems to us to be ‘bad’ teaching if it encourages us to challenge and find new insights.

We may not always appreciate the learning at the time – I wonder how the disciples would have rated Jesus’ teaching if they had completed the feedback forms which our students use to assess their teachers? I think they might have marked him down on clarity of objective and on providing challenges that were appropriate to their level of understanding.

While my own career has been based on formal teaching and research, now I work part-time at the University I have a chance to learn from non-academic activities.

Catherine Waddams is licensed to St George’s Colegate in Norwich, having recently trained as a Reader/Lay Minister and is Professor of Economic Regulation at the University of East Anglia.
Wisdom worth pondering

A rabbi by the name of Hillel, who lived around the time of Jesus, was once asked by a young man to teach him the whole law standing on one leg. The questioner wanted brevity, he wanted to know what was most important. It’s a scene very similar to the one in which a lawyer asks Jesus which is the greatest commandment of all. You’ll recall that with a characteristic twist, Jesus offers not one commandment but two. We are to love God wholeheartedly and to love our neighbours as ourselves.

The lawyer is sent away to ponder what was not quite the straightforward answer he was wanting, and many people have joined him in trying to work out the interplay between those two forms of duty – is one greater than the other?

Jesus was most commonly known as a teacher by those he encountered, and his followers were his pupils (disciples). I’ve always been intrigued by his teaching style. He rarely answered a question with a straight reply, indeed, he often posed a question back. And much of his teaching is in the form of creative stories that we call parables, or shorter pithy, proverbial sayings that have an air about them of drawing on the wisdom of the wise.

When Jesus was put on the spot about whether people should pay taxes to Rome, he could have answered yes, or simply no, but instead he offered a proverbial saying: “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s”. To this day, readers of the Gospels continue to ponder the implications of those words.

As a teacher, Jesus is always keen to put responsibility back on his pupils or those who questioned him. He doesn’t generally deliver straightforward instructions, but often invites us to think, to ponder his words, and to make our own choices about what they might mean to us and how we should respond.

Like every great teacher, he seems to believe in us, in our ability to grasp the implications of his words, and he trusts us to act upon them.

The call to follow Jesus is to be a lifelong learner, pondering his teachings, believing that his promised Holy Spirit will lead us into the truth. Faith is not a set of propositions delivered from on high, answering every question, solving every dilemma. Instead, it is much more an active engagement with a wise teacher who constantly draws us on, urging us to trust him, even when the answers to some of our questions remain beyond our reach.

It seems to me that if we ever come to think we’ve grasped completely the meaning of his call upon our lives, then that’s probably the time when we need to go back to the beginning and start again.

The Rt Revd Alan Winton, Bishop of Thetford
As a very recent first time grandmother, seeing my four-hour-old granddaughter was, to me, a profound and miraculous experience. It struck me that she was somehow born with a degree of knowing. She stared deeply into my son’s face for quite some time and she knew how to feed at the breast — she just did those things as if someone had taught her how. At five weeks old, she had perfected these skills, including a new one of looking around in a very curious and quizzical manner and beginning to smile. By the time she is two years old, she will have mastered more skills and made more rapid progress than she ever will again.
It seems that we humans never stop travelling the learning journey, right from the cradle to the grave. Our urge to learn comes from our need to satiate our thirst for curiosity and to search for meaning in our lives. Some of us look for and find faith in God to give us worth and meaning, comfort, hope and thankfulness. When we stop learning, we stop being curious, stop wondering how or why, stop believing.

**Children – thirsty learners**

One of the privileges of my job is to visit schools, to kindle that flame of learning and watch children become absorbed in their learning journeys. Our Church of England schools believe that every child's spiritual learning journey is just as valuable as their academic one. On each of our four recent Schools Days in Norwich Cathedral, we witnessed the learning experience of 300 children from 22 schools.

They were exploring the different aspects of Jesus: the baby, the teacher, the risen Lord, the Saviour, the promise, the friend, the pray-er, the son and the healer, and they were doing this by taking part in a number of creative and spiritual workshops. Each child had the opportunity to sing or dance, create a piece of art work, talk to God, reflect and be still, listen to a story, re-enact a story or create a piece of drama; all within this ancient, awe-inspiring Christian place of worship.

What did they learn? They learnt about the life of Jesus and his meaning for Christians today. How did they learn? By using their imaginations and expressing themselves through the creative arts. By being enabled to access their private thoughts, prayers and feelings, by being immersed in the experience of a traditional but child-friendly cathedral worship that was vibrant and joyful, celebratory and reflective.

**Academic angst for young people**

Life becomes more complicated and challenging when children begin their new journey in secondary school. It's difficult enough coming to terms with the physical and emotional changes of adolescence, let alone the pressures of academic targets, achievement and success. Many of us still recall those anxious feelings about impending exams, when we were expected to understand, digest and reproduce a multitude of facts for a number of subjects in order to achieve the grades which could ultimately shape our futures. Forty years ago, I passed my seven O-levels and rejoiced that I would never have to take a Maths exam again! My sons took their GCSEs over 25 years later and were expected to get good grades for 10 or 11 exams. That's a lot of pressure, probably necessary, but it does tend to take a lot of the joy out of learning.

Those who go onto study A-levels or similar exams are at least taking on subjects which they are hopefully interested in and good at, but the pressure piles on and competition to gain top grades at university places is immense. Alongside all the academic work, teenagers are finding out about themselves, making meaningful relationships, becoming increasingly independent, seeking worth and meaning in their lives. Some will not be high achievers, all will to some extent fall short of high expectations. We humans are fallible. We may fail, but we are not failures and certainly not worthless. We can all feel unsure and vulnerable at times and adolescents even more so.

Within our diocese we are fortunate to benefit from the care and support of committed Christians such as Mark Pimlott and Simon Fenn. They work with children and teenagers, enabling them to explore their spirituality, find hope and positivity and bring a different dimension to their lives.

“The greatest aspect has been learning of the love of Christ for me. Learning that he gave his life and knowing that nothing can separate me from his love. This knowledge of love was cemented after the birth of my daughter.”
Learning through relationship

Mark has worked with young people for over 25 years, most recently as Chaplain at Open Academy in Norwich. He describes his own learning journey: “The greatest aspect has been learning of the love of Christ for me. Learning that he gave his life and knowing that nothing can separate me from his love. This knowledge of love was cemented after the birth of my daughter. I would look at her as a new-born baby and be overwhelmed by the love I had for her. This love I was feeling was the ‘love of a father’. If I could love her this much, then how much more did Christ love me?

“In my role at the Academy I do my best to portray and teach the love of Jesus through the various things I do so that both staff and students can capture the joy of learning of Christ’s love for them. A love that knows no boundaries or limits, a love that can and does change their lives.”

While Mark supports young adults who are still in our compulsory education system, the majority of Simon’s work takes place outside of what we would recognise as “structured” learning.

Working as our Children, Youth and Family Missioner in North Norfolk, he explains: “A significant aspect of my role is focused on working with teenagers and encouraging them to explore their spirituality. The majority of the work I do is in informal sessions at a youth club, for example, or on a residential trip. It is often conversational, spontaneous and issue-based, and works through the exploration of life. In my experience, young people really value being listened to and in that place of listening we can offer them some guidance and advice to help them navigate their life journeys.

“Whether I am working with teenagers in an informal setting or at school, mentoring or leading an RE lesson, my key role is to facilitate their experiential learning by asking the right questions and helping them to be more reflective. In their busy lives young people often need the space and time to be still and think about the big questions in life. At Sheringham High School, I organise an annual event called ‘Soul Space’. It is a place for them to be reflective and explore their emotions, thoughts and feelings through creative prayer activities.

“Helping young people improve their emotional and spiritual intelligence is central to my role and supports their holistic development. Years of youth work and ministry experience and training can be distilled into one simple principle: “think people, not programmes”. Building encouraging and genuine relationships is vital; people remember more and are open to deeper learning when they feel valued and secure. Ultimately, I endeavour to accompany young people on their journeys of discovery and learning, and provide an authentic Christian role model, a listening ear and a positive influence.”

Learning on into the “third age”

As adults, many of us choose to make committed relationships with a partner and are blessed with the gift of children. We pass on our Christian beliefs and values, which guide and drive our own learning, in the hope that they too will find worth, meaning, comfort, hope and thankfulness in their lives. Yet we still explore, wonder, seek and yearn for meaning, even in the later phase of our lives, through middle age and old age too.

Adult education is more popular than it has ever been. There is a desire to learn a new skill, a craft, a language and some find their ‘calling’ later in life and train for ordination or to become Licensed Readers. Charles Read is the Leader Training Coordinator for the diocese. He writes about the learning experiences of his more mature students:
Students preparing for ordination on the Eastern Region Ministry Course and students preparing to be Licenced Lay Ministers (Readers) often have a lot of life experience which they bring to their studies but they may have little by way of formal paper qualifications. To be sure, we do have students with PhDs and some who have studied theology before, but equally we have people who left school at 16. Some of our students did not enjoy school (or university). Many start their studies, which are at university level, with trepidation.

“There is a real thirst to learn – a desire awakened in the initial stages of training. The Church History module is a case in point. Ably taught by Charles Parsons, a Reader at Cringleford, this module often gets students saying “Why didn’t anyone tell us about this before?” They are fascinated to discover a whole new world they never knew was there.

“And there is high motivation too because people are training for public ministry. They want to get the most out of their studies so they can minister effectively. It is amazing to see people who turn up at summer school to start their time with us looking dazed and confused (as anyone would in their shoes!) but then, a few weeks later, gaining in confidence and bringing their rich life experience to bear on the things they are learning.”

Many of the ministries in this diocese are strongly supported by those described as being in their “third age”. They are vital in our parishes as they give their time and experience to support a wide variety of activities from Godly Play, Open the Book or Messy Church, to guiding people around our beautiful Cathedral, editing parish magazines or visiting people in their communities. Most continue to attend training days and conferences and other ways of furthering their knowledge and stretching themselves: always learning as they serve others.

Lighting the way
So our lifelong learning journey begins with our first breath and ends with our last. Our passion for knowledge and quest for meaning ensures we never cease to grow. The flame of our lives on this earth burns within us until it is extinguished, and those of us who live in God’s love understand what Jesus meant when he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

In my role at the Academy I do my best to portray and teach the love of Jesus through the various things I do so that both staff and students can capture the joy of learning of Christ’s love for them. A love that knows no boundaries or limits, a love that can and does change their lives.

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“There is help on hand with essay writing and so on. But what students say time after time is how much they enjoy their studies. Some like it so much they go on to do more – at their own expense – and we have a good number of readers and clergy now in the diocese who have got a degree in theology through the course here.

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In a break from the usual format, Wayne Doman describes a session of the Special Me Group (SMG), a group for young people with special needs and their families who want to find out more about God. The group gives support to churches to help people with special needs to participate fully in church life.

Well, we have decided what the theme is going to be, we have split the work up amongst the leadership team, each of us has developed our delivery streams – host, craft, music and drama, we have set the venue up, we have sound, lighting, visual display and signing stations – we are ready to go!

But it is the first session of the month, so before it starts we have our Christian Signing Choir practice. As usual, SMG members arrive early, they come in and join in the worship, some signing, others just showing their love for God. What a start, and the session hasn't even started yet! As people arrive they ask to join in, “Can I have a part in the drama?” , “Can I come up and sign with you?” , “Can I do the Bible reading?” We are big on participation and the group is keen to share the load.

People are seated and ready, so we start. We have a standard shape to our sessions, so that people are familiar with what is going to happen, but the group has made it their own.

Welcome: the host starts by calling the leaders up to say together “Hello everyone, and welcome to the Special Me Group”. We look around and everyone has joined in the welcome. The host continues: “Why? Because we are all special to God!” We sing our welcome song, “We are here together” and share our good news – mind the rush of people! People love to share what they have been doing – it is a wonderful chance to share their excitement, and is rich with things to take through to our prayer wall.

The host explains the theme, bringing it into the context of our group, using their experiences to help them understand, leading to the Bible reading which helps them place the Bible teachings directly into their lives. We sing and sign to another song based on our session and then it’s into the individual activity streams, with all senses catered for.

It is so wonderful to see a group of people helping each other to learn, seeing someone with a learning disability helping someone with a physical disability cut out an item for craft, and then seeing the person with physical disability come and lead music by signing because the person that helped them also has partial hearing.

The host brings all of the teaching back to that important question: What does this mean to me and how can I make a difference? By using simple examples we show how this can be applied. We finish with prayer and share a time of fellowship.

We clear up, go home and sit down ready for a cup of coffee. With a contented smile on our faces we think – now what was that idea for the next session?!
Discipleship is important for all Christians and is certainly not just for those in recognised ministry. In Matthew’s gospel we read some of Jesus’s instructions about discipleship, telling his disciples to: “Proclaim the good news, the kingdom of heaven has come near. Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons” (Matthew 10:7-8). We are being asked to carry on the work that Jesus began.

As Jesus preaches in Matthew 25, as disciples we are being asked to bring in God’s kingdom by providing food for the hungry, welcoming strangers, caring for the sick, visiting those in prison and so on. We are being asked to serve the humble, the rejected and the unloved. These are the people at the margins of society in the places that it may be easier to avoid.

The path of discipleship is not going to be an easy one. When Jesus sends out his disciples (Matthew 10) he tells them to take no money with them, no bag for the journey, no spare clothes. To be a disciple is to travel light rather than be bowed down under the weight of earthly possessions.

Jesus said: “See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves, so be as wise as serpents and innocent as doves.” In the world we live in, organised religion is often seen as irrelevant and is side-lined. Jesus sends us out into the world. Outside the safety and insularity of our church buildings to the communities and people beyond.

I find Jesus’ great command reassuring but also scary. Jesus tells his disciples (and us too): “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19-20).

It is a huge and terrifying responsibility to go and make disciples of all nations. But however challenging our role as Jesus’ disciples, he will be with us in everything we do. We can take comfort from the 12 disciples: they spread the gospel but also made their fair share of mistakes!

Coryn Stanforth is a primary school teacher and Reader in the benefice of Hellesdon. She also helps to train Readers in the diocese. She enjoys cooking, travelling and walking.
I had never thought that we might all have a ‘spiritual style’ until it came up as a workshop topic at a training session. Many people may have heard the term ‘learning styles’ when discussing children in school. Modern education specialists have thought a lot about the different ways in which people absorb, reflect on and retain information, or ‘learn’. Teaching now involves a wide variety of teaching methods, different activities, different experiences for the children, and a range of technologies.
It seemed reasonable and natural to suggest that just as each person has a unique learning style, so too each person has their own spiritual style – a preference for the way in which they experience and connect with God.

The concept of ‘spiritual styles’ has been described in a variety of ways, but these all tend to contain the same elements. David Csinos, a Canadian Research Student in children’s spirituality, has written about four distinct styles of spirituality: Word-centred, Emotion-centred, Symbol-centred and Action-centred.

**Word-centred spirituality** focuses on the importance of spoken and written words. It often appeals to our powers of thinking and reasoning, and to our appreciation of literature. Spoken and written words are central to learning about God and developing a well-grounded faith. This spirituality relies on strong patterns of Bible-based instructional preaching, and on personal and analytical Bible study.

**Emotion-centred spirituality** focuses on freedom of expression. This spirituality involves deep emotional responses to spiritual encounters. We can experience strong emotions, and often feelings of deep care and concern for others: empathy, sorrow, joy and happiness. If we prefer emotion-centred spirituality we are often creative and sense God’s presence most keenly through art, music, dance and drama, for example.

**Symbol-centred spirituality** focuses on the mystic aspects of relating to God. We sense a connection with God through the awe and wonder in the natural world, or through images or abstract symbols. If we have this spiritual style, we often express our relationship with God through quiet meditation, personal reflection and thoughtful response to God’s love.

**Action-centred spirituality** focuses on justice and practical tasks. If we have this spiritual style, we express our love for God in daily life by meeting the needs of others and having a positive impact on our environment. We are purposeful in our mission and outlook and draw parallels with our faith through these actions.

Many people have one or two preferred styles that give shape to the way they relate to God and the world. Our preferred styles also tend to be linked to our personality and interests. I now recognise my spiritual style to be both emotion-centred and action-centred. I am creative, I enjoy relating to others, and I love to engage in sensory and practical tasks. I now understand that these activities and self-expressions are as much part of my worship as the word-centred style that is often the dominant style used in churches. Yet for me, and no doubt for others, it’s a less ‘natural fit’.

Like us, our style may change and adapt over time as our personal journey of faith develops. If we can identify our personal spiritual style at different stages of life, we shall better understand how we can encounter God. And it will also help us to relate to other people. With insight and gentleness, perhaps we can even help to nurture their dominant style and challenge ourselves to explore other styles.

1 Corinthians 12 talks about recognising and valuing the different parts that make up the church: “The human body has many parts … if each part of the body were the same part, there would be no body. But God put all the parts, each one of them, in the body as he wanted them. Together you are the body of Christ and each one of you is part of that body” (vv. 14-27).

This is true of the worldwide church, but it is also true within the local church. If a church emphasises one particular style, it may successfully attract members with this preference, but may sadly exclude those with different spiritual styles by not meeting their spiritual needs. How then can many parts work together as a whole?

It may not always be easy, but if a church can embrace a diverse congregation with a wide range of spiritual styles, it will grow in unity and strength. If a church family can encourage different individuals to contribute their unique gifts and talents to its life, the church as a whole body can be nurtured and helped to grow.

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Life long learning: a life with books

By Gudrun Warren

Lifelong learning reflects our lives as Christians: as the word “lifelong” suggests, learning is a linear process that continues throughout our lives. We encounter new experiences, new books, new ideas, and incorporate them into our understanding, or perhaps they effect in us a sea-change, a transformation of our perspective. But learning can also be cyclical: we return to familiar ideas and remember what they mean to us; or we see them in a new way, in the light of other experiences.

Either way, books are fundamental to our lifelong learning: it’s why we collect them at home and in libraries. Accessing books through libraries opens a door to a wealth of learning far beyond that which we can accumulate personally. A library represents not just one person’s lifelong learning, but that of hundreds, perhaps even thousands of people. There is the learning expressed in the writing; but there is also the shared experience of walking some part of your own journey of lifelong learning alongside someone else’s.

No two people will take the same learning path through life: we all have different cultural and personal histories. Two people may read the same book, but there will be differences in how each receives it, understands it, incorporates it into their psyche.

The joy of a library is that of adventure, of setting forth into the unknown. You may start with a book you have purposely selected, or to which you have been guided by a friend, director or tutor. But that is simply the first step on the glorious labyrinth of learning, which may take you to places of which you would not initially have dreamed.

Like walking a labyrinth, your learning may apparently bring you back to the place where you started; or, as T.S. Eliot says, “in my end is my beginning” (Four Quartets). But you will not be the same person the second time round, because if you have truly learned you will be influenced and affected by what you have encountered.

Like walking a labyrinth, sometimes your learning will be alongside others: in church, on a course, in a reading group. But your paths will diverge: you may follow up one idea, whilst others in the group follow different strands; or the course ends and you physically go your separate ways; you find the reading group book stimulating and refreshing whilst for another person it is unhelpful.

Lifelong learning is like your life’s journey with God: it is good to begin with a purpose, a basic idea of where you are going, but the more you are open to the unexpected and the unplanned, the more you trust in the voices of the sources with which you engage, the more will be revealed to you of the glory in the world, and the closer you will come to God.

Gudrun Warren is Librarian and Curator at Norwich Cathedral. Norwich Cathedral Library is open Tuesdays–Thursdays, 9.30am–4.30pm, and some Saturdays, 12.30–2.30pm. The Norwich Centre for Christian Learning offers a range of courses on theological subjects, ecumenical and open to all; for further information www.cathedral.org.uk
Can you really learn to follow Jesus on-line?

By Peter Nicholls

Stop a hundred people and ask them what ‘eLearning’ is, and eighty won’t have a clue. Others will give answers that vary from distance learning by email to a program that feeds you facts and then tests you on them. Hopefully some would talk about a “virtual learning environment” (VLE) and being in a community of learners, with forums that allow you to discuss things.

As part of diocesan lay development, we’ve been offering eLearning courses on a range of topics for five years now. Course titles like Knowing the Father and Come, Holy Spirit have helped people to learn more about God – the sort of theological understanding that would build on confirmation. “Being Christian Beyond Church” is just finishing; that title should explain itself! Usually 10 to 20 people sign up and a course lasts eight weeks. You join a learning journey with a bunch of fellow travellers who graze on magazine-style web pages; ideas, information and questions are fed a week at a time via the VLE, and you are invited to respond via tools that help you learn and share.

How do our learners get on? Well, there are about 150 of them now, many of whom have done several courses (repeat business is always a good recommendation). And the rigorous evaluation we do at the end gives very few black marks. I say to people, “If you can email and use the internet, you have all the skills you need,” and so it proves – “easy” is the rating most people give for using the system. What is more encouraging is that when asked how much they learnt, most people answer “at least as much as I would have learned in a physical group”; and they choose “very helpful” or “profound” when asked what this course has meant to their Christian walk.

The great thing is that you can learn and interact when it’s convenient. Monday afternoon? No problem. 3am Friday? Ditto. And you can take as long as you like writing that 75-word forum post; no more being under pressure in a discussion group. There’s always a course tutor (often me) who accompanies the group, reading contributions, sometimes making comments ‘tuned’ to the individual or keeping an eye on who’s falling behind. And as well as inputs and forums, we use videos and presentations and reflect on images; there are teaching quizzes, questionnaires about views or experience and opportunities to worship. We even pray together using ‘chat’. God really can be present in cyberspace!

Time commitment? Three or four hours a week is ideal, in morsels so you can read others’ posts and sometimes comment – learning from and sharing with each other is what we do. What’s great is that friendships happen, online as people get to know one another, and occasionally face-to-face – depends where you are in the diocese, of course.

In January I’m running Knowing Jesus www.dioceseofnorwich.org/event?id=8167, Paul Overend (Lay Development Officer) is offering Understanding Christian Worship www.dioceseofnorwich.org/event?id=8166 and Steve Clark’s course on Christian Healing, Good News Invades Earth, will be available via Crowhurst (www.crowhursthealing.co.uk). Look out for other titles in September!

“I have found it extremely interesting and a wonderful learning tool. Being a busy person, it was fantastic to be able to do the course as and when I had the time.”
“When did we see you a stranger and invite you in?”

I had planned to write this piece for The Magazine about HOST UK one Saturday in November. However that morning the news was dominated by the events of the evening before in Paris. Over 120 are dead and more injured, and eight young people have killed themselves as well as others in pursuit of their cause.

So instead of starting by just describing what HOST hosts do in welcoming students from abroad into their home, I want to tell you why I am thankful that they do it, and what a great work I think we are engaged in.

Students who undertake a HOST visit stay for a weekend or over Christmas with a host. The purpose of the scheme is to give both host and student an enjoyable experience of meeting someone from a different country and culture. For the student it may be the only experience they have of getting off campus and meeting a person who is not in some way linked to their course and college.

Christmas visits are three nights (Christmas Eve to the day after Boxing Day). Weekend visits are two nights, from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon. There is no expectation that host and student will stay in touch after the short visit, but it happens sometimes and we are always delighted to hear when it does.

Inviting a HOST student to stay is an opportunity to become, in a small way, an ambassador for the UK, as the happy memories of a stay with a British family will be taken back to the student’s home country and shared with family and friends. Many of these students go on to become the movers and shakers of the next generation, so lasting impressions and huge steps towards international friendship can be made.

And, as many hosts will know, it is not only the student who benefits. You also benefit from meeting lively and interesting people whose life experience and outlook can be very different from your own.

Changing the way things are is not only the business of ‘them’; we can all do it, little by little, in small ways. And for me, what we do through HOST is one of those little ways that makes a big difference.

“**We can all do it, little by little, in small ways. And for me, what we do through HOST is one of those little ways that makes a big difference.**”

Here is the experience of one Norfolk host from Christmas 2014:

“It was a thoroughly enjoyable weekend for us all. The girls were a delight and so beautifully mannered. They saw Sandringham but couldn’t enter as the Queen was in residence (but saw Holkham Hall instead). For Kejun it was a first time to see the sea and they did two long beach walks. They had a traditional Christmas dinner but their favourite food was mince pies! They came to church (at their request) for the first time and had a blessing from the Bishop. And finally we saw Nutcracker live from the Bolshoi by satellite which delighted them. Best of all they were so happy with us and wish to come again.”

Find out more at [www.hostuk.org](http://www.hostuk.org) or contact David Patey, Regional Organiser for Norfolk, on 01508 483838.
What’s on
Highlights of events across the Diocese

For more head to www.dioceseofnorwich.org/events or follow us @DioceseNorwich

JANUARY

Come and Sing Messiah
Wed 30 Dec
6pm
Address: St Mary and St Thomas of Canterbury, Becketswell Road, Wymondham NR18 9PH
Fabulous music performed by the ‘Messiah Choir’ with string ensemble, chamber organ and trumpet. A wonderful opportunity to sing or hear Handel’s well-loved work in the setting of Wymondham Abbey.
Admission: £10 for singers, £5 for audience
Contact: Patrick Faircliffe, patrickfaircliffe@btinternet.com

Christmas Bazaar
Monday 28 Dec
10am
Address: St Edmunds Church Centre NR33 7SJ
Something for all the family; gifts, raffle, tombola, games, refreshments and lots more.
Admission: Free.
Contact: Pat Briggs, 01502 740478, j.briggs1@btconnect.com

Meet and Mardle
Friday 1 Jan
12 midday
Address: St Margaret, Church Hill, Starston, Norwich IP20 9PF
Come & join us for refreshments, a mardle (chat) and greet the New Year together. You can also try your hand at bell ringing!
Admission: Free.
Contact: J & H Websdell, 01379 853967

Online Learning: Face to Face Introduction to this term’s Online Courses
Tuesday 12 Jan
2pm - 4pm
Address: Diocesan House NR9 5ES
This face to face meeting provides an introduction to the courses running this term. It provides an opportunity to meet the tutors and learn about using online learning.
Admission: Free.
Contact: Liz Dawes, 01603 882335, liz.dawes@dioceseofnorwich.org

Online Learning Course: Understanding Christian Worship
Tuesday 12 Jan
Course runs for 10 weeks in your own time
Address: Initial Face to Face induction at Diocesan House NR9 5ES
This online course of study and reflection on Christian Worship considers the nature and purpose of worship, its relationship to church and to mission.
Admission: £10.00 (Serving AWAs and current Ordinands free)
Contact: Liz Dawes, 01603 882335, liz.dawes@dioceseofnorwich.org

Online Learning Course: Knowing Jesus
Tuesday 12 Jan
Course runs from 12 Jan until 19 March
Address: Optional Initial Meeting in Diocesan House NR9 5ES
The four parts of the course – Who is Jesus?, What did Jesus teach?, Why did Jesus die?, The difference Jesus makes – help you to understand more about your faith and how it ‘works’ in practice.
Admission: £10.00
Contact: Liz Dawes, 01603 882335, liz.dawes@dioceseofnorwich.org

Fursey Lecture
Saturday 16 Jan
2.30pm
Address: St Matthew, Telegraph Lane West, Thorpe Hamlet, Norwich NR1 4JJ
The subject of the Fursey Lecture 2016 is ‘Fursey and his brothers: their contribution to the Irish legacy on the continent’, and will be given by Professor Ian Wood (University of Leeds).
Admission: £10 (lecture only), £18.50 (lecture with lunch before).
Contact: Gudrun Warren, 01953 455146, info@furseypilgrims.co.uk

Gospel of the Poor: Exploring 50 Years of the Theology of Liberation
Saturday 16 Jan
10am to 12.30pm
Address: Norwich Cathedral, The Close, Norwich, NR1 4DD
Dr Paul Overend introduces us to the theology of liberation
Admission: £10.
Contact: NCCL Admin Team, 01603 218327, NCCL@cathedral.org.uk

Taize Prayer
Sunday 17 Jan
Service 6.30pm. Song Practice 5.45pm
Address: St Michael and All Angels, Church Street, Reepham, NR10 4JW
This service offers a time to celebrate the Season of Epiphany.
Contact: Susan Page, 01603 870886, susan@backstreet.fsworld.co.uk

LEARNING AND TRAINING EVENTS

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

January – February 2016

For more head to www.dioceseofnorwich.org/events or follow us @DioceseNorwich
To publicise your event across the diocese, add it to our website at: www.dioceseofnorwich.org/news/events

A Play for Cedlemas – Midwinter Dreaming
Sunday 24 Jan - Sat 6 Feb
6.30pm
Saturday 30 Jan
6.30pm
Saturday 6 Feb
6.30pm
Address: St Peter and St Paul, Off Church Road, Bergh Apton, NR15 1BX
New play Premiere written produced, acted and sung by Bramerton Group villages celebrating the Coming of the Light.
Admission: £10.00
Contact: Pat: 01508 480696

Fakenham Choral Society’s Come & Sing Day
Saturday 20 Feb
All day workshops starting with registration at 10am followed by 6pm performance
Address: Fakenham Community Centre, Oak Street NR21 9DY
A Come & Sing Day for singers of all ages and abilities to come together for a day of fun.
Admission: £12 for singers (£6 for students)
Contact: Rosemary Dear, 01328 851776, dear_brian@hotmail.com

ASWA (Anglican Society for Welfare of Animals) - Regional Meeting
Wednesday 3 Feb
7.30pm
Address: St Luke, 61 Aylsham Road, New Catton, Norwich NR3 2HF
The next ‘prayer & share’ meeting of ASWA (Anglican Society for Welfare of Animals)

FEBRUARY

Creation & Creationism, Science & Faith
Saturday 27 Feb
10am - 12.30pm
Address: Norwich Cathedral, The Close, Norwich, NR1 4DD
In this seminar we will look at the Genesis creation account both on its own terms and against the background of other ancient Near Eastern creation stories.
Admission: £10.
Contact: NCCL Admin Team, 01603 218327, NCCL@cathedral.org.uk

Morality play
Sunday 6 Mar
10.15am
Address: St James, Priory Road, Castle Acre, PE32 2AE
“Everyman” examines the question of salvation and what man must do to attain it. The play is the allegorical accounting of the life of Everyman, who represents all mankind.
Admission: Free.
Contact: H.van Hoeven, 01760755983, huibvanhoeven@uwclub.net

“Have this letter read in the Church”: An Introduction to the New Testament Canon
Saturday 12 Mar
10am - 12.30pm
Address: Norwich Cathedral, The Close, Norwich, NR1 4DD
This session will focus on the way in which the early Church both shaped and was shaped by the collection of books we call the New Testament.
Admission: £10.
Contact: NCCL Admin Team, 01603 218327, NCCL@cathedral.org.uk

A look at literary form in the Bible part two: John, Revelation and the Resurrection accounts
Saturday 13 Feb
10am - 12.30pm
Address: Norwich Cathedral, The Close, Norwich, NR1 4DD
Continuing from an earlier session, but all welcome to attend whether or not you came to the previous session.
Admission: £10
Contact: NCCL Admin Team, 01603 218327, NCCL@cathedral.org.uk

To publicise your event across the diocese, add it to our website at: www.dioceseofnorwich.org/news/events
January 2016

** Naming of Jesus **

**THREXTON**
Clergy: Geraldine Foster, Deborah Hamilton-Grey.
All PCC Secretaries and Parish Administrators.

**Sun 3**
Second Sunday of Christmas
BISHOPS GRAHAM (NORWICH), ALAN (THEFTORD) AND JONATHAN (LYNN)

**Mon 4**
WAYN AND GROUP-Breckles, Caston, Great Heckingham, Grinsted, Merton, Stow Bedon, Shuston, Thompson, Tonging, Cleggy, Bob Nichols.

**Wed 6**
BURNHAM MARKET:

**Thu 7**
COXFORD GROUP:
Rudham & West Raynham CofE Primary Schools.
Diocesan Chancellor: Ruth Arlow. Deputy Chancellor: John Morgans.
Diocese of Abuja: Archbishop Nicholas Okoh.

**Fri 8**
FAKENHAM
Diocesan Registrar: Stuart Jones. Registry Clerk: Louise Farrow.

**Tue 26**
TAS VALLEY TEAM MINISTRY: Newton Flotman, Saxlingham, Mitford, Tharston, Newton Flotman, Preston (Tharston) and Saxlingham Nethergate CofE Primary School.
Please pray for those involved in the Diocesan mission strategy consultation.

**Sat 2**
WATTON
Clergy: Geraldine Foster, Deborah Hamilton-Grey. Readers: Shirley Blake, Margaret Enger, Elaine Rodgers.
Archdeacons’ PAs: Coralie Nichols, Alison Saunders, Graham Cossey.

**Mon 4**
WAYN AND GROUP-Breckles, Caston, Great Heckingham, Grinsted, Merton, Stow Bedon, Shuston, Thompson, Tonging, Cleggy, Bob Nichols.

**Wed 6**
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THE SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM

Diocese of Ahoada (Nigeria): Bishop Solomon Abia;

Diocese of Akoko (Ondo, Nigeria): Bishop Gabriel Akinbiyi;


Diocese of Akot (Sudan): Bishop Isaac Dhieu Ater;

Diocese of Akure (Ondo, Nigeria): Bishop Simeon Borokini;

Diocese of Alabama (The Episcopal Church of USA): Bishop John Sloan and Denny.

Diocese of Alaska - (The Episcopal Church of USA): Bishop Mark Lattime;


Diocese of Alabama (The Episcopal Church of USA): Bishop John Sloan and Denny.

Diocese of Agra (North India): Bishop Prem Prakash Habil.

Diocese of Aguata (Niger, Nigeria): Archbishop Christian Efobi;

Diocese of Ahoada (Nigeria): Bishop Solomon Abia;

Diocese of Aipo Rongo (PNG): Bishops Nathan Ingen & Denys Ririka.

Diocese of Ajayi Crowther (Ibadan, Nigeria): Bishop Olugbenga Oduntan.


Diocese of Adcock.   St Mary's CofE Junior Academy (Long Stratton).

Diocese of Akoko (Ondo, Nigeria): Bishop Gabriel Akinbiyi;

Diocese of Akoto (Sudan): Bishop Isaac Dhieu Ater.

The residential meeting of the Rural Deans, which begins today. The Diocesan

Bishops Christopher McLeod and Tim Harris.

The ministry of the Bishop's Deliverance Team.


The Salvation Army: their new Divisional Commanders. Simon Stokes to be

Heather Wilcox, John Madinda. Reader: Margaret Thorburn. Carleton Rode CofE

VA Primary School.

The Church of Bangladesh: Archbishop Paul Shishir Sarker (Moderator, Church

of Epiphany Bishop of Dhaka).

The Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil: Archbishop Francisco De Assis Da Silva

Director of Operations: David Broom. PA: Karen Hall.

Diocese of Ahoada (Nigeria): Bishop Solomon Abia;

Diocese of Akoko (Ondo, Nigeria): Bishop Gabriel Akinbiyi;


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Diocese of Alabama (The Episcopal Church of USA): Bishop John Sloan and Denny.

Diocese of Alaska - (The Episcopal Church of USA): Bishop Mark Lattime;


February 2016

Mon 1
GRESSENHALL
Diocese of Anguilla (Southern Africa): Bishop Andrew Soares.

Tue 2
HONINGHAM
The Churchwardens and PCC during the interregnum. Clergy: Mark McCaghrey, Sally Wells. Readers: Margaret Dixon, Joyce Turner, Cynthia Wake, Jacke Clay, Sally Dunning, and PA, Larur Grady.
Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust – Finance Team, David Hicks.
Diocese of Antananarivo (Indian Ocean): Bishops Samoela Ranarivelo & Todd Mcgregor.

Wed 3
MATTISHALL & TUDD VALLEY
The Clergy: Mark McCaghrey, Sally Thurgill. Readers: Margaret Dixon, Joyce Turner, Cynthia Wake, Jacke Clay, Sally Dunning, and PA, Larur Grady.
Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust – Finance Team, David Hicks.
Diocese of Antananarivo (Indian Ocean): Bishops Samoela Ranarivelo & Todd Mcgregor.

Thu 4
SHIPDHAM:
The Clergy: Gill Wells, Sally Theakston. Reader: Helen Jeckells.
Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust – Finance Team, David Hicks.
Diocese of Antananarivo (Indian Ocean): Bishops Samoela Ranarivelo & Todd Mcgregor.

Fri 5
UPPER NAR GROUP:
Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust – Finance Team, David Hicks.
Diocese of Antananarivo (Indian Ocean): Bishops Samoela Ranarivelo & Todd Mcgregor.

Sat 6
DEANERY OF GREAT YARMOUTH
Rural Dean: Chris Terry. Lay Chair: David Pearson.
Diocese of Aotearoa (South America): Bishop Greg Gravenes.
Events

Six Sessions
Jan–Mar
St Luke’s Church,
61 Aylsham Road,
Norwich
NR3 2HF; 7-9pm
Creative, thought provoking and interactive training course designed to inspire and refresh children’s workers at all levels of expertise and experience.
11 Jan Child Development
25 Jan Working as a team
8 Feb Programme Planning
22 Feb Children and Community
7 Mar Pastoral Awareness
21 Mar The Bible and Prayer
Cost: £20 for full course or £5 per session.

Journeying Together Away Day – Life’s Big Questions
Wednesday 20 Jan
The Horstead Centre, Rectory Road,
Horstead NR12 7EP; 9.30am-3.30pm
A special day for all those who work or volunteer with children, youth and families in the church. Meet and network with others, pause and reflect on your own answers to life’s big questions and consider how to engage with young people asking their own challenging questions with sessions led by Rev Ian Jones, Chaplain at Wymondham College. Clergy and workers from all denominations welcome.
Cost: £16, includes hot lunch.

Godly Play Circle
Tuesday 23 Feb
Wymondham Abbey, Church Street, Wymondham NR18 0PH; 7-9pm
A friendly, informal event, open to everyone. Hear a story, wonder, explore resources and discuss with others to develop your own Godly Play practice.

Hand-in-Hand national conference 2016
5-7 Feb
Devonshire Park Complex,
Carlisle Road, Eastbourne,
BN21 4BP
Inspiration, resourcing, networking and personal refreshment for anyone working in the areas of children’s and family ministry in church, whether a professional or volunteer. It aims to provide biblical insight, basic training, deeper insight into new thinking and practical ideas for the ministry as well as times for prayer, worship and personal refreshment. Over 50 organisations, ministries and denominations come together to offer sessions and exhibit their resources.
Cost: £89 for the full weekend. 30 free places are available to churches that would struggle to pay the delegate fees. These would usually be in inner city or remote rural areas. This conference must be booked directly at: www.handinhandconference.com 01323 506402

Intents 2016
Week A 27-30 May
Week B 1-4 June
Brandon House Farm, Brandon Parva,
Norfolk NR9 4DJ
Join a multitude of other young people for “a little piece of heaven”, camping at a three day Christian youth festival with its usual eclectic mix of seminars, worship, games, crafts, and relaxation.
Intents is aimed at Year 6 and high school age kids.
Cost: £36 until 1 Feb, £41 after. Fully catered. Day passes are also available. For more info and booking: www.intents.org.uk or email info@intents.org.uk

Contact anna.walker@dioceseofnorwich.org.uk or 01603 882374 for more information on any of these events.
To book online: www.dioceseofnorwich.org/churches/children/events-and-training – unless stated otherwise. @DioceseNorCYF
Half the world away

In July, Sheringham High School’s drama studio was transformed into a Soul Space; a place of prayer and reflection in which students explored the concepts of forgiveness, thankfulness and community.

One of the activities focused on the plight of refugees drowning in the Mediterranean Sea, a topic that was dominating the daily news headlines at the time. Students were able to sit in an inflatable boat and think about how they would feel if they had to flee their home and face an uncomfortable and perilous journey.

Then they were encouraged to support Amnesty International’s ‘Don’t Let Them Drown’ petition by writing messages of support on luggage labels and placing them into a small suitcase. These were then given to North Norfolk MP Norman Lamb, who was asked to raise the issue in parliament.

Since the Soul Space, student Jerry Shepherd-Moore speaks about how the students have really adopted this ongoing sense of community: “The students have taken part in a series of activities for their own enrichment and the enrichment of the wider community. This included a ‘Great British Bake Off’ inspired coffee morning in aid Macmillan Cancer Support, for which students donned their aprons and dusted off their rolling pins to make and donate droves of cakes for sale, the like of which Mary Berry could only dream of making!”

In September, moved by the need to help others and considering it the best way to reach issues not only relevant within but also outside the UK, a group of students from the Sixth Form independently started an Amnesty group and have also worked to support Amnesty’s #refugeeswelcome campaign, petitioning against human rights injustices highlighted by Amnesty International.

The group of 10 students usually meets once a week to discuss actions and has managed to encourage and galvanise support from the rest of the student body to actively contribute and achieve great things for the ongoing causes the group selects to support. Most recently they collectively helped to raise over £200 to fund 34 shoeboxes for the Samaritans Shoebox Appeal, which will be distributed to impoverished children abroad and ensure that many young people know that they are cared for and loved.

Emily Paffett from the Sixth Form’s Amnesty group says: “We hope that our work raises awareness in our own community of those less fortunate than ourselves, and motivates others to take action, whether by joining us or in their own ways.”

For all the students at Sheringham High School and Sixth Form, these experiences have given them the opportunity to learn about and consider issues that affect many people worldwide. They are all making a worthwhile contribution now and are learning lifelong skills, translating compassion into positive action and recognising that their voice matters because in pulling together as one community they can make a significant impact.
Cormorants is a week-long sailing holiday run by the Diocese of Norwich during October half term, and involves exploring the Norfolk Broads on a fleet of traditional wooden yachts, each sailing with a Skipper, Mate and three to five young people as crew members.

Toby Percival completed his eighth and final voyage last October: “Cormorants has been a fantastic opportunity! Each day, breakfast is prepared on board and we start with an hour exploring an aspect of the Christian faith – this year the Lord’s Prayer. The day is spent sailing; you can be as involved as you want to be. I love being at the helm and once had the privilege of rowing the Bishop of Norwich across a broad in a dinghy!

“We moor up nightly at different locations and either ‘buddy boat’ with another yacht for an evening Bible study or make use of facilities at a nearby hall: enjoy a meal prepared by a local congregation, play games and create our own entertainment with sketches and music.

“Aside from the enjoyment of being able to learn how to sail a 36ft yacht rather than my usual 7ft dinghy, I have made some great friends and really enjoyed learning from the skippers and helpers. I am forever grateful that I set sail with Cormorants.”

Like Toby, many participants return year after year and for the first time in 2105 there was an 18-plus boat for selected individuals to help develop leadership skills. Joe Reeve, one of this year’s ‘skippers in training’ tells his story:

“The moment I joined the Cormorants family, aged 11, I felt at home. Everyone was so friendly, which was a change from the years of bullying previously.

“Cormorants was probably one of the main anchor points for my faith. It wasn’t like church, where I would come home afterwards and continue as I had before, but instead allowed me to exercise different parts of my faith as my confidence grew. The first time I really spoke to God and noticed an answer was there. I had lost my wallet and searched everywhere. Then I remembered one of the Skippers had said to me earlier in the day, ‘Just ask, and he will hear you’. So I said ‘God, where is my wallet?’ I didn’t hear or see anything so, a little disappointed, I slumped back into my seat where my hand landed on my wallet!

“Having leaders who act as role models as well as friends is so helpful. The leaders tend to ask really thought-provoking questions throughout the week, which is a great way to make God feel part of everything we do, not just during the Bible studies.

“Cormorants made such a huge difference in my life, boosting my confidence and developing my social skills. I have also made great friendships over the last eight years and am still making new ones every year.

“I am really excited about the potential for continuing my journey. I hope to become a Skipper, and have the privilege to be the same blessing to other young people that I received as a young person myself!

Cormorants runs from 22-29 October 2016. For information please visit www.dioceseofnorwich.org/churches/children/resources/cormorants-sailing-holiday
Local reviews

In a slight change to our usual format of following the issue theme, we’ve chosen a selection of books by local authors reviewed by Steve Foyster.

100 Norfolk Churches of Village and Countryside

Andrew Swift

Velox Books (2015)  
£20.00 (Hardback)

To what extent can psychological insights lead us into self-understanding and self-fulfilment, promote enriching relationships and encourage praiseworthy aspirations? What positive changes should result from personal faith in Jesus Christ brought about by the Holy Spirit through Scripture? How does God’s rain revive our roots? With the Bible in one hand and the writings of psychologists and therapists in the other, Derek Osborne explores a creative conversation between the two. He has a warm, evangelical and joyous tone that culminates in his closing chapter, bringing all things together in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Rain to My Roots: A Pastor Among Psychologists

Derek Osborne

White Tree Publishing (2015)  
£8.95

An Apprentice in the Lord’s Workshop: The Establishment of Letton Hall as a Christian Centre

Peter Carroll

Alderway Publishing (2014)  
£9.99

The story of the establishment of Letton Hall and its life as a Christian Centre in Norfolk. “It is also the personal story of a life given to serving the Lord. But most of all, this is the Lord’s story and may it be to His glory. Letton Hall is a workshop, a place where people can come and stay for a day, a week or longer, and experience God at work in practical and tangible ways. In the twenty-five years I spent living and working there, from being deeply involved in establishing it until the time I retired from active involvement, I have felt very much like an apprentice to the Lord in His workshop” (Peter Carroll).

Anna Hinderer: Pioneer Missionary

Ann Meakin

Connaught Books (2015)  
£8.50

When Ann Meakin chanced upon Anna Hinderer’s moving story, she felt that it deserved to be retold in the 21st century. Having undertaken extensive research, the author discovered that Anna and her husband were famous in the 19th century for their pioneering missionary work in West Africa. So how was it that they came to Martham, where Anna found great joy and peace, being finally laid to rest in the parish churchyard? What led Anna and David to the mission field in the first place? All is revealed as the Hinderers’ brave and incredible story comes to life in Ann’s book, which has just been published.

Find more books on Revelation website:  
www.revelation-norwich.co.uk  
or call 01603 619731
Can you imagine having to leave your home in the dead of night, fearing for your life? Seven-year-old Petros and his family had to do just that. They lived in the Netherlands at a time of great danger. Their Spanish king was Catholic and wanted to rid his country of “heretics”. Petros and his family were Protestant, so King Philip didn’t want them living in his land. In 1567 they fled to the safety of Norfolk, in England. Pursued by the brutal Duke of Alva and his army, Petros comes up against thieves, pirates on the North Sea and other perils on his journey to safety. This is a story of persecution and adventure, and also of family and the unexpected kindness of strangers.

The Bishop of Thetford, the Rt Revd Dr Alan Winton, conducted a special service in November to mark the completion of a major project at Wymondham Abbey. The Abbey Experience is the biggest change to the church since Henry VIII’s Dissolution of the Monasteries. The £2.75 million project, supported by a £1.75 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, grants from charitable trusts and local fundraising, has greatly improved public access in the building and aims to strengthen links with the local community.

Over 18 months two extensions were added to the east end of the church featuring much needed new facilities, including an activity area for school visits, meeting rooms, space to display items from the Abbey’s archive, colourful interpretation about the Abbey’s story, toilets and a servery.

The great West Doors, closed for 50 years, have been re-opened to enable the processional route to be used on special occasions and the South Aisle, once hidden by a large partition, has been restored.

Speaking to the packed congregation, the Bishop of Thetford said: “This is a moment to celebrate together the completion of The Abbey Development project, the first major change to the building for 500 years. This is a restoration of something that was lost at the Reformation; the restoration of the fabric of the former priory, so that Benedictine hospitality and welcome can be foremost. This building is for all who will visit. This is a gift not just for you (the congregation) to enjoy, but a vehicle for others to encounter the love of God that inspired this building to be built and its restoration.”

Wymondham Abbey, NR18 0PH, is open daily 10am to 4pm 01953 607062 www.wymondhamabbey.com
Although I was brought up in a Christian home where Sunday School and church featured regularly, as a 19-year-old student living away from home I found myself actually questioning who Jesus was. I remember going home to church in North Walsham and thinking that there must be something more – something that I was missing.

I had known Tim, my husband-to-be, for some time when he lent me *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis. I was blown away by Lewis’s careful examination of faith and his ability to make it all clear, and I began my first steps towards a living faith. It was as if the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle suddenly fitted together.

After living in London for four years, we moved back to Norfolk with our baby son. Being part of the Bramerton Group of churches in the 1970s was a particularly exciting time. The different gifts of the four clergy who led the group were profound, and through them and, later, through an involvement with Celtic Christianity and mysticism at St Augustine’s in Norwich, I learned just how deep and how wide Christianity is. This does not mean that I am without doubts – even when I am most sure of God’s love, the temptation is always there to think it is all imagined.

What makes me happiest? Nearly all my life I have worked with children. As a teacher and later a head teacher I was completely engrossed in their lives. Whenever something bad happened in my life I found being in the classroom so all-encompassing that even my deepest hurt was temporarily healed. Young children have the capacity to live in the present – something we are encouraged to do as Christians.

For the past 20 years I have been involved in teaching Philosophy for Children. This is a liberating technique that gives even very young children the ability to think beyond the obvious. It is about exploring ideas and thoughts that may never have been thought before. The wonderful point is that there is no right or wrong answer – everyone is encouraged to take part.

This enables all children, of whatever ability, to deepen their thinking, to be exposed to others’ ideas, to gain confidence and become independent learners and, most of all, learn to respect different opinions. This is particularly relevant to religious education, where children are now encouraged to ask and think about the big questions, such as *Why do we exist?* and (one boy’s query) *Does God get old and die?*

Since retirement I have been involved with many schools as a diocesan support officer, and it has been a real privilege to encourage the excellent head teachers in church schools across the county to be proud of their Christian foundation and demonstrate their Christian values, in particular through worship. I have always found the quality of primary education in these schools to be very high, but the pressure on head teachers is unrelenting. They need our prayers.

*Philosophy4Children* is a small company that trains teachers in a different approach to thinking skills for children. It’s nationally approved and backed by academic studies, and delivered by Dot Lenton and Barbara Vidion. [www.philosophy4children.co.uk](http://www.philosophy4children.co.uk)
On holiday in Norfolk this year, I was struck by the variety of enterprises, from the craziness of the Wash Monsters of Hunstanton to the peace and friendliness of the Julian centre in Norwich.

It is especially appropriate for those not sure whether starting a business is for them. And for those not called to start a business, the programme offers practical life skills that apply to setting up almost any project.

The response from the pilot programmes has been enthusiastic. “This course really helped me think logically through the step-by-step of setting up a business for the first time,” said one participant. “The structure of the course is excellent – succinct and easy to understand and implement,” said another.

The idea is that this can be run in the same way as a church might run, say, a marriage course. Someone – it doesn’t need an expert – takes a look at the material and decides to facilitate the course, normally once a week for six weeks. They might gather round the kitchen table with two or three others and work through the exercises in the workbook; or set up something bigger in a church or village hall. There is no licence fee when it’s delivered by a not-for-profit organisation, but facilitators are free to charge for venue, materials and refreshments.

As well as the course, we are also preparing a range of materials to support informal mentoring groups for aspiring entrepreneurs. Go to www.germinate.net/go/enterprise to register an expression of interest and download the materials. Printed workbooks are also now available to purchase at £5 each.

Fulfilling work and a thriving local economy are keys to human flourishing. This programme is a way for local churches to reach out to and bless their communities, creating something of lasting value.

Jerry Marshall is a serial entrepreneur and CEO of The Arthur Rank Centre, which provides resources and training for rural churches and communities. See www.germinate.net 02476 853060
“God saw what he had made, and indeed, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31)

By Mark Bredin

The Bible is about Creation ordered by God so that all flourishes. The essence of that order is limitless love: if we don’t love each part of Creation as God’s beloved, we screw up the order and we live lawlessly. I’ve long experienced this as being true; if I live generously I feel blessed; if I don’t, I’m cursed.

The worst parts of the Bible

The blood and gore scenes in the Old Testament and in Matthew and Revelation teach us that lawlessness has painful and tragic consequences. This is what many scientists are telling us today. Warnings of judgment are tools to make us see sense and bring about change. They are pro-Creation; in other words, Creation is made to reject what destroys it (see work of Terrence Fretheim). Christians who get fed up with Christians warning about “end-day” scenarios should consider how respectable folk rejected Amos, Jeremiah, and the whole merry band. I believe these judgement and condemnation scenes need heeding today.

When God had finished creating, he didn’t say: “It’s a bad job”.

If I had to re-write the first two chapters of the Bible on the basis of watching how Christian nations act, I’d be compelled to write: “And when God saw what he had made he said: ‘It’s a bad job. Adam, Eve, see if you can do better!’” Our technocrats stumble over each other to improve God’s bad job. They tamper with population control; they improve soil fertility with chemicals; they modify genetics to increase food production; they claim they are trying to feed the world. Their actions suggest they see Creation as a godless accident.

Alas though, God didn’t say “It’s a bad job”. It was a very good job. In fact, it was so good that God told human beings to serve and preserve the earth and not consume it and treat it like there’s no tomorrow.

You may get tired of Christians bleating on about the planet and bored by scientists predicting ecological disasters caused by human greed. I’m one of those who bleat; I go around switching lights off, recycling water, and moaning at those who drive 4x4 vehicles while overtaking them on my bike. You may have seen me overtaking you on the taxi run! Bearded with mad eyes looking like he needs a good square meal! I bleat not because I’m Victor Meldrew from “One Foot in the Grave”. It’s because of the Bible and its message that the goodness of Creation has been rejected.
**Blessed are those who serve the earth**

If Jesus had taught: “blessed are those who serve the earth” we’d make it say: “Blessed are those who exploit the earth.” But Jesus teaches: “Blessed are the peacemakers (shalom makers)”.

Walter Brueggemann, a scholar who knows what he is talking about, observes that creation is shalom (a state of wholeness, joy, and abundance). God made creation from chaos and the opposite of chaos is shalom. He formed creation so all are joyful. And that is why Genesis 2:15 states God willed human beings to serve and preserve creation (my translation). The human task is to live in accordance with the limits God placed on us. He doesn’t mean us to act selfishly and lawlessly.

Jesus did say: “Blessed are the merciful” meaning that you will be joyful when you bring joy to others. I translate “merciful”, assuming the Hebrew word hesed, “limitless love”. Jesus meant that to bring joy to others was to care in such a way that enabled them to flourish. The Greek word for “blessed” is makarios and it suggests “abundant”. God ordered creation to be abundant when humans did not look to their own interests but the interests of others. Joy and abundance go together.

**I serve, therefore, I am**

Evidence convinces me that to live by greed is to assume Creation is an inferior job. It’s a place of scarcity; its inhabitants are forced into combat. “Greed is harmful. It can seriously damage your life.” Greed makes people combative, anxious, disliked and generally unhappy. But we are Christians and we don’t believe this so let’s act as if Creation was made by a loving Creator God.

Tagore (1861-1941) understood God when he wrote:

> I slept and dreamt that life is joy
> I woke and I saw that life was service
> I acted and behold, service was joy

Joy is service. I am struck that Jesus’ “Blessed” corresponds to Tagore’s “joy”. “Blessed” can also mean “joyful”. God intended humans to be joyful. For there to be joy, human beings must serve and preserve the needs of all Creation.

Therefore, I experiment with “I serve, therefore, I am” as a way to be joyful (blessed), a way that is in harmony with the Bible’s teaching about Creation, and a way that Jesus taught.

**What do we do?**

The United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris in 2015 set out to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on climate change, from all the nations of the world. As Christians we might consider paying more attention to goals and policies reached in the Paris summit and urge decision-makers to act to preserve God’s abundant creation by cultivating cultures of shalom where service means life and joy.

“Do I serve and preserve creation?” My wife and I have found trying to serve and preserve creation joyful, hard, certainly thought-provoking, but essentially in harmony with God’s intentions for creation. We meet others and some tell us we can do more. We try, we succeed and we fail. But we can all make a start by exploring ways of living more carefully and lightly so the soil we live off now may also succour future generations. As my good friend Ed Echlin suggests: “Let’s lift a few slabs and let the sun reach the soil.”

Dr Mark Bredin is a theological writer and teacher who cares for a large vegetable garden with his wife. He also works regularly as a Prison Chaplain. He says: “This article is dedicated to Brian Baxter and Daphne Sampson for their love of God’s creation.”
Norwich Cathedral: Science Festival “Evolution – Faith in a Changing World”
6–21 March

By Jane Hedges

“I am against religion because it teaches us to be satisfied with not understanding the world”. These are words from Richard Dawkins, Evolutionary Biologist and author of the well-known book “The God Delusion” written in 2006. Dawkins believes that science delivers knowledge and truth, while faith is “one of the world’s great evils”.

Atheists like Dawkins set up a conflict between science and faith, but it is not only atheists who do this. People of faith can be just as dismissive of science, seeing it as a threat to their beliefs rather than something which enhances our understanding and experience of life. However, many scientists are people of faith and many people who believe in God see that there is no need for this conflict.

We have the most remarkable scientific resources within our Diocese: Norwich is the home of a Research Park embracing the UEA, the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital, and the Science Park containing the Institute for Food Research, the John Innes Centre, the Sainsbury Laboratory and the Genome Analysis Centre. During our science weeks at the Cathedral we want to give people the opportunity to hear more about the work of the Research Park, to engage in debates about the application of scientific discovery to solving the world’s problems, and simply to enjoy what science has to teach us.

Professor David Richardson, Vice-Chancellor of UEA, says: “I am very excited by the prospect of the Science Fortnight taking place in Norwich Cathedral. At UEA we firmly believe that many of the solutions to the world’s major global challenges around climate change, food security, energy security and healthy ageing can best be found by people from different disciplines and all social, political and religious persuasions working together. That is why these kinds of events are so important; they give a great opportunity for people from all around our region to engage with the science that underpins, and offers solutions, to these important issues.”

We hope that this festival at the Cathedral will give us all the opportunity through the world of science to enhance and deepen our faith as we make our lifelong journey of learning.

Festival Programme

From Sun 6 March
The Hostry

Sun 6
3.30pm  Evensong Preacher: the Dean of Chester, The Very Revd Professor Gordon McPhate
Science and Faith: A Meeting of Minds?
followed by tea & discussion

Tue 8
7.00pm  Evolution & Adam – Reality, Myth & Symbolism
Science lecture: Dr Denis Alexander

Sat 12
From 10.30am  Fun day for adults & children of all ages (Free)
Cathedral & Cathedral Close
See a volcano erupt, watch the Bishop walk on Custard, meet a Dalek, launch a space rocket & much more!
3.30pm  Service to Celebrate Science
Cathedral Nave
Suitable for all the family

Mon 14
7.00pm  Food, Glorious Food!
Cathedral Nave
A panel discussion followed by questions
Chaired by Prof David Richardson, Vice Chancellor of UEA

Tues 15
Bread Church (See Sep/Oct edition of The Magazine)
1.30pm  Please apply for a free ticket as we need numbers for catering
Booking required

Thurs 17
1.30pm  Visit to the Science Park
Brochures with full programme details are available at the Cathedral or downloadable from www.cathedral.org.uk
The Revd Laura Montgomery appointed Rector, Easton Benefice (Bawburgh, Colton, Easton, Marlingford).

The Revd David Roper appointed Rector, Poppyland Benefice (Antingham, Northrepps, Overstrand, Sidestrand, Southrepps, Thorpe Market, Trimingham)

The Revd Dr Paul Overend temporarily seconded to the Eastern Region Ministry Course (ERMC) as Director of Studies (part time), remaining Lay Development Officer in the Diocese of Norwich (part time).

Mr Graham Hayes appointed to IT Training and Development working for the Diocese two days per week.

The Revd Marilyn Zipfel retired 30/10/2015 as Lead Chaplain, James Paget Healthcare NHS Trust, remaining Associate Priest OLM (Ordained Local Minister) in the Oulton Broad Benefice.

The Revd Canon Christopher Davies retired as Rural Dean of Humbleyard Deanery, remaining Vicar of Wymondham.

The Revd Fergus Capie retiring 12/01/2016 as Priest in Charge, Bure Valley (Benefice).

The Revd Canon Simon Stokes appointed Rural Dean, Norwich North.

The following ministers and readers have had their Permission to Officiate granted or renewed:


We are saddened to announce the deaths of:

The Revd Peter Rutherford on 06/09/2015
The Revd Mary Kerslake on 16/09/2015
Amidst some controversy with the refusal of the country’s leading cinemas to show a 60 second advert promoting prayer, the Church of England launched a new prayer website that aims to create a place for prayer with advice on what prayer is and how to pray.

The website [www.JustPray.uk](http://www.JustPray.uk) also provides a “live prayer” feed of prayers being prayed across the globe via Twitter, Instagram and Vine with the hashtag #justpray.

On taking office in March 2013, the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby announced three priority areas for his ministry. The renewal of prayer was his first: “If we want to see things changed, it starts with prayer. It starts with a new spirit of prayer, using all the traditions, ancient and modern. When it comes, it will be linked to what has gone before, but it will look different – because it is a new renewal for new times.”

As well as being a place to pray, the website offers visitors prayer resources such as apps, other websites, podcasts and videos.

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**Eco church launch**

Eco Church is A Rocha UK’s new award scheme for churches in England and Wales that want to demonstrate that the gospel is good news for God’s earth. Launched in January, it is running in partnership with Tearfund, Christian Aid, the Church of England and the Methodist Church, and supported by many other organisations and denominations. Eco Church is about changing the culture of the Church so that it becomes as natural to engage in caring for God’s earth as it already is to engage in evangelism and social action.

The scheme is built around an online survey for a church to complete, which takes you through the five key areas: your worship and teaching; your buildings; your land; your community and global engagement; and the personal lifestyles of your members. You undertake specific actions and accumulate points as you do so until you have gained enough to qualify for a Bronze, Silver or Gold award. Accompanying the survey is a wide range of supporting resources to help your church with its practical actions. Register your interest at [www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk](http://www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk)

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**Nominate your church for The Most Welcoming Churches Awards 2016**

Over 80 per cent of the population visit a church during the course of a year – which makes you think … how welcoming are our churches?

The Tourism and Open Churches Mission Action Team in the Diocese of Norwich are looking for churches that are the most welcoming church for parishioners, casual visitors and tourists that stop by to explore your church. The idea of the award is to promote and encourage good practice which can be shared across the Diocese.

If you think your church is the most welcoming – nominate it! Simply contact: caroline.rawlings@dioceseofnorwich.org with your church’s name and location, and include your contact details (your name, email and telephone) to nominate your church. Full details of criteria and process can be found on the Diocesan website. The closing date is 31 March 2016.

Churches will be visited between Easter and the end of July and judges will not be announcing when their visit will be. Winners and commendations will be announced at an event at Open Churches Week 2016.
Queen’s 90th birthday – what will your church do?

With the approval and agreement of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Church Buildings Council is encouraging every parish church in England to organise a festival on the weekend of 10-12 June 2016 to celebrate the Queen’s 90th birthday and her role as head of the Church of England. This will coincide with official celebrations taking place in London.

The variety of potential forms for the celebrations is huge, from flower festivals to organ, bell-ringing or choir festivals, food or even beer festivals – and it is hoped that, wherever possible, every church will take part.

In addition, to coincide with the Queen's birthday it is hoped that every church will be able to organise an exhibition of the life of its parish over the previous 90 years. Such exhibitions should, by charting the changes in the lives of our communities since 1926, highlight the ways in which parish churches have been and remain the focus of those communities, and be a celebration both of our churches and of the people that they serve. Parishes could use photographs, artworks and oral history connected with their church and the local area.

Though the onus is on parishes to arrange their events, the Church Buildings Council will act as a hub for ideas and as a central co-ordination point. www.ChurchCare.co.uk

Your Church Wedding website re-designed

The Church of England has launched a brand new re-design of their popular website www.yourchurchwedding.org with essential information for couples planning their wedding within the Church of England. The current website, which received over 990,000 visits in 2014, enables couples to explore the possibility of a church wedding, and to make choices about their service. Interactive tools available include the ability to listen to the most popular wedding hymns, ideas for wedding readings and a new step by step guide which walks you through the entire wedding service. A total of 77,500 weddings have been drafted on the website with the Ceremony Planner tool since its launch. The Revd Canon Dr Sandra Millar, Head of Projects and Developments for the Archbishops’ Council, said: “We hope this website will help couples realise that in choosing a church wedding they will be sure to have a really special wedding day, with all the support and help that the church can offer not just for the day but for all the years that lie ahead.”

Mission strategy to be launched at Central Visitations 2016

Each year churchwardens are sworn in to their role by their Archdeacon, but in addition to this the Central Visitations will include the launch of the Diocesan Mission Strategy. Clergy and churchwardens are expected to attend but the invitation is extended to Readers, PCC Secretaries and Treasurers – and indeed anyone who is interested!

Evensong will commence on each occasion at 7pm with registration beforehand as follows:

- **Monday 16 May** Lynn Archdeaconry, King's Lynn Minster
- **Monday 6 June** Lynn Archdeaconry, Aylsham Parish Church
- **Monday 13 June** Norfolk Archdeaconry, Great Yarmouth Minster
- **Monday 20 June** Norfolk Archdeaconry, Diss Parish Church
- **Monday 27 June** Norwich Archdeaconry, Norwich Cathedral
Castaway Bishop Graham

Bishop Graham was interviewed by BBC Look East presenter Stewart White about his choice of music that he would take to a desert island. The £1,080 raised went towards a major appeal to construct a new Ringing Teaching and Heritage Centre in the tower at St Peter Mancroft, Norwich. www.mancroftappeal300.co.uk

Norwich Cathedral Big Sleep Out

The Dean and Bishops Alan and Jonathan along with many others slept out in the Cloister at the start of Advent to raise awareness of those who regularly have to sleep rough, who lack proper housing and are trapped by poverty & raise funds for Church Urban Fund.

Drumming up support

The Happy Day Gospel Choir and Dumisani Drumming Group returned to Norwich to raise over £1,000 for the Christian Aid Christmas Malaria Appeal. Dasu Yakubu, guest of honour from the social care arm of the Anglican Church in Nigeria said ‘Thank you for these wonderful gifts which will fund our work.’

Archdeacon’s Charge raises thousands!

John Ashe presented this year’s cheque of £5,563.69 to Patrick Peal and Chris Donaldson of the East Anglian Air Ambulance from money raised at the Archdeacon’s Charge & Picnic 2015. The total sum was £10,869.35 with the remainder split between 68 parishes, a youth group and radio station ‘Pop, Corn and Grace’.
50 Christmas Trees in a Church

The Benefice of Dickleburgh and The Pulhams staged the 12th annual festival in early December. The theme was ‘Christmas Hope’ and the trees were contributed by local businesses, schools and community groups, raising money for EACH, the N&N Oncology department and the benefice. Jessica from Dickleburgh Primary School is pictured decorating the school’s ‘Tree of Hope.’

North Lopham Crib Festival

The wonder of the Nativity story, in scenes large & small, in widely different media, and including craft-made scenes from the community and friends: St Nicholas’ Church, North Lopham wanted the world to know that Crib is for Christmas! Visitors came from as far as Cambridge, Bucks, and Essex.

Community by candlelight

“The Church looks to do more than just raise money, as a community comes together to enjoy Brundall’s Candlelit Christmas Market,” says Paula-Marie Leech. This annual event is held in the churchyard of St Laurence’s, lit by many candles with various craft and other stalls.

Find out what else is going on across the Diocese on our website: www.dioceseofnorwich.org/news/events

Stibbard School wins national library award

All Saints’ CoE Primary School, Stibbard won the School Library Association Inspiration Award 2015. This national award is made to the school library that shows inspiration, innovation, creativity and resourcefulness in its design and use. Staff from the school were thrilled to be presented with the award at the Royal Society of Arts in London.
Publicise your events and news through our Communications team

We love to hear what is happening near you and we want to help you promote the good work your community is doing. Unfortunately we cannot fit all the wonderful news we get into eNews and The Magazine. However here are some tips on how to make your story more likely to feature.

Events

Every day over 500 people visit our website, and the events section is one of the most visited pages. To get an event listed please add it to the website here: www.dioceseofnorwich.org/news/addevent and please note that we cannot accept event listings by email or post. Once you have added it to the website it will then be considered for inclusion within the What’s On section of The Magazine, in the month’s issue in which the event is taking place.

TIP

Make sure you add your event early to meet The Magazine publishing deadlines. You can see The Magazine publishing deadlines here: www.dioceseofnorwich.org/churches/comms/publications/magazine

In the last two months we have had 113 events listed on the Diocese of Norwich events page, so do not be disheartened if your event does not appear in The Magazine. It is not always possible to include all events but we do our best to give a broad selection. However adding your event to the site will also enable us to promote it through our social media streams such as Twitter and Facebook.

TIP

If you have a specific role within the Diocese you can add your own events to the webpage and include posters and images. To do this you simply click the pink Log-in button in the top right hand corner of the Diocese of Norwich webpage and use your log-in details. Once logged in, click on ‘My Account’ on the far left hand corner and then click ‘My Events’. This will then give you the option to ‘Add an event’. If you cannot remember your log-in please contact news@dioceseofnorwich.org

News, articles, photos and letters

We welcome contributions to The Magazine and eNews. Please contact us as far ahead as possible if it’s something you know will be coming up, or immediately after with a photo. Send it to news@dioceseofnorwich.org or give us a call on 01603 882355. We are happy to help you with preparing press releases to send out to other local media too.

For use in The Magazine photos need to be of a higher resolution (at least over 1MB in size), so ones taken on an iPad for instance are often not useable.

Take a look at the forthcoming themes for The Magazine and let us know if you or your church community is involved with something that complements that theme. If you want to respond to something you’ve read in The Magazine, please do so as soon as possible so it can make the next issue and send it to: barbara.bryant@dioceseofnorwich.org

Please remember to check publishing deadlines on our website.
Scott, the curate, stood eating muesli at his kitchen window. Outside the cold was fierce. The blackened stump of a vine in his garden made him wonder whether it would bud this year. The soil in the fields beyond was a scraped and colourless shade. Shrinking figures walking down the road wore dark coats in a funeral style. Scott wondered how he was going to preach joy and hope in a cold church this morning.

He tipped a soggy residue in the bin and abandoned the bowl on the draining board. He put on a coat in the hall and picked up his Bible and prayer book as he passed his study. He checked his hair and dog-collar in the mirror by the front door; and then paused, seeing in his own face the reflection of winter. There were some services, he thought, that no one wanted to attend, neither the priest nor the people. This was one such seasonless Sunday, lost between the lantern-light of Epiphany and the purposefulness of Lent. It didn’t help that the Rector had gone to see some acquaintances in Colombo for a couple of weeks. ‘Colombo?’ Scott had asked. ‘Yes, it’s lovely at this time of year,’ the Rector had replied. Scott had not doubted him.

After a short, hard-bitten walk down the road, Scott arrived at the church. Although it was cold inside, it was also still, a relief from the wind scouring the Norfolk landscape. Scott was the first to arrive, and his first priority was a circuit of the church to turn on the heaters. As he went, he also picked up fallen hymn books and pew sheets and tidied the felt-tips and woolly animals in the children’s corner. Some jobs he was not going to do, however, and so the Christmas tree stand – a cast-iron Victorian affair with tarnished brass screws – remained where it rested and would rest for a few months to come.

The congregation began to arrive. There were not many, as Scott had predicted. None looked very well. They were coughing, or hobbling, or wincing, or wheezing, or being assisted. Not for the first time, Scott felt the sharp contrast between his life here and the theological life he had left behind in Cambridge six months ago. He stood patiently in his cassock and surplice, not feeling at all patient.

Then Wendy, who was always last to arrive, clanked the door shut and shuffled up the aisle. She stood before Scott and beamed through her wrinkles. ‘Morning, Scott,’ she said. ‘We’re ready.’ And she sat down, folding her hands in her lap, her head raised in expectation.

Scott looked around the congregation, and saw something similar in each of them. Maybe he had been wrong. They had faced the weather for something. This handful of people – this was the handful that really did want to be here. Scott felt himself thaw as he began. ‘O Lord, open our lips...’
Lent Appeal 2016: build a better future for Orobada

This year’s Lent Appeal is for Christ the King School in Orobada, Papua New Guinea. This squatter settlement lies eight miles outside the capital of Port Moresby, on a patch of unusually dry and dusty ground. The neighbourhood of 7,000 Anglicans from different tribes with many languages are miles away from their traditional homes and communities.

It is a new community made up of individuals from the Orokaiva people, traditionally the largest group of Anglican Christians across the country. Their informal town is known as the Orobada Settlement and it is unrecognised and unsupported by the Government.

Like many other people in Papua New Guinea, they came to the capital to find new opportunities. As always, the reality is different and so they gathered amongst the people they knew on this arid hillside to establish a new home and community.

Access to water is difficult and resources are scarce, but for their children, this is the only home they know and the community is determined to create a vibrant and sustainable society.

The Diocese of Port Moresby has helped establish both a church and school for the community.

Education for children is critical and each year the school of 350 pupils continues to grow, fast outpacing the classrooms and facilities they have. Some existing classrooms are made from shipping containers and books and teaching resources are few.

Most of the teachers are volunteers, or are paid significantly lower than the average salary in other schools. The parents know education is vital for their children’s development and they struggle to find money for the annual school fee of 150kina (£37.50) and a school uniform.

The money you raise will:

• Build and equip a block of two classrooms
• Provide educational materials
• Set up a bursary scheme allowing more children to attend school
• Contribute to fairer conditions for the teachers

Find out more and access a full range of resources at: www.dioceseofnorwich.org/lent

TOP 3 FUNDRAISING IDEAS

1. No technology day / week / month
   Orobara is a remote part of Papua New Guinea. Although there is access to the internet it is limited and slow. Give up technology for however long you think you can cope and get sponsored for it.

2. Friday Fish & Chips evening
   Traditionally during Lent Christians did not eat meat on Fridays. So start a Fish & Chips evening and invite a speaker.

3. Papua New Guinea evening
   Be adventurous and serve traditional PNG food. If your church has some great musicians ask them to play during the evening. You could also invite a speaker to come and share their experiences.

WAYS TO GIVE

1. Online – via our Just Giving page – find this at www.dioceseofnorwich.org/lent

2. By Text – Text LENT01 £10 to 70070 to donate £10; or text LENT01 £5 to donate £5

3. By Cheque – Cheques made payable to NDBF Ltd., marked clearly on the back of the cheque “Lent Appeal”. Please send with a completed Gift Aid declaration (if applicable) to: Lent Appeal, Miss S Bunting, Diocesan House, 109 Dereham Road, Easton NR9 5ES