THE CHURCH Diocese of Norwich

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From the Editor

can clearly remember walking into the Olympic Park on the first day of the 2012 games in London with my family. The atmosphere was electric: bubbling with positivity, excitement, expectation and a wonderful sense of welcome and togetherness. It didn't really matter what sporting activity we'd managed to get tickets for, it was about "being" there.

Sport and outdoor activity in general have an amazing capacity to create special moments like that. They can provide focus or a sense of community. You can lose yourself in the crowd or embrace being part of it. Or you can venture out alone and enjoy the physical sensation of pushing your body to its limits in the great outdoors – somehow always more stimulating than an indoor studio or gym.

For me the discovery of open water swimming all-year-round has been an exciting phenomenon. While I completely understand it's not for everyone (many of my friends and family think I'm mad!), I've found it's enabled me to connect with our Creator God in a whole new, sensoryladen way.

In this issue, you're invited to consider how sporting and outdoor spirituality activities can help you explore your Christian faith in different ways and how we can use them to share our faith with others.

Using sport or physical activity as a mission tool is a common theme in many of the articles in this issue. Ruth Anderson, founder of The Sports Factory,

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The next issue (deadline 3 April) focuses on sustainability and climate change.

explains the vision in the main feature (pg 6) and Matt Beckett talks about the practicalities of running active holiday clubs (pg 10). Jon Norman (pg 4) and Roy Roberts (pg 15) both share their personal experiences of faith development through pushing their bodies.

Pilgrim journeys of open-air spiritual exploration have been undertaken down the centuries and three experiences are shared in this edition, from Spain (pg 16) to Sweden (pg 22) and closer to home, the new Walsingham Way, (pg 14). Other ways helping young people encounter God outdoors are shared on pages 17 – 19 through wild church, sailing and active RE.

Whatever way you choose to explore Christianity, in this Olympic year, may we run our race of faith with our focus firmly on Christ.

Blessings,

Barbara Bryant - Editor



Adept Design www.adeptdesign.co.uk

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Cover photo: Legacy holiday club at STN, Norwich.

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Running the good race

n April last year Lewis Blois and I set out on a mission to run seven marathons in seven days to raise money for our new SOUL Church facility. It was the hardest and most gruelling seven days of our lives. We had trained for 12 months straight, racking up nearly 800 miles and wearing out four pairs of trainers in the process, but nothing could have prepared us for what was ahead.

Our physical, emotional and spiritual strength was put to the ultimate test. Each day as I ran, I felt God give me a lesson from the marathon to apply to my daily life.

Fear is part of our lives

I feared starting, the training, injuries, illness and even finishing. It was a continual journey of dealing with fear, I had to re-educate my mind. Fear was never going to go away, I just had to deal with it.

Fear will stop you from experiencing the life God created you to live, sometimes you've got to feel it and just keep running.

We all need a coach

I thought I could do it alone, but soon realised I needed help. In walked Neal Featherby from Sportlink Norwich, a professional running coach. He helped me focus on what was important.

In life, we all need a coach, someone who can keep us on the right path, help us make positive choices and focus on what's important.

Prayer keeps us strong

Before each day we had a routine, we stretched, ate porridge, took supplements but our whole team took time to pray with us. There were times I wanted to quit but our team came alongside and prayed. I could literally feel supernatural strength in those moments, which kept us going.

Pain is a part of life's journey

As I ran the pain increased each day, mile and step. But I decided to embrace it, not allow it to kill me. I had to raise my threshold for pain - it became my teacher. The battle was won in the mind not just the body, I was battered but not beaten!

Life's about relationships not accomplishments

7 in 7 could go down as one of my greatest accomplishments but it made me realise it's not. As I ran, I reflected deeper on just how important my relationships with God, my family and friends matter most. It's not what I have but who I have.

The dream is free, but the journey isn't

The easiest part of 7 in 7 was coming up with the idea. The hardest part was actually doing it! I wonder how many dreams never get off the ground? I realised that most dreams come in puzzle form and every day we must decide to put a piece in the big picture.

Quitting isn't an option

I made my mind up before I started, I wasn't going to quit, whatever it took I was going to cross the line. Sometimes in life we must decide not to quit before we have the option to.



Jon Norman is married to Chantel and has two children, Justice-Murray aged 5 and Miracle-Joy aged 8. Jon is a Canon of Norwich Cathedral, Norwich City first team chaplain and Senior Pastor of SOUL Church UK.

The end game

e have all heard the expression 'sport is like a religion' and to some people it is. Sports, physical exercise and recreational activities as part of a team or undertaking activities alone, like a long-distance runner, all contribute to our development as both a human being and a spiritual being.

The apostle St Paul used sporting metaphors to explain the virtues of Christian disciples. In 1 Corinthians he wrote "do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such as way as to get the prize... They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever".

There is no way I could call myself a sportsman of any kind. Yet sport brings to young and old alike, the ability to work together for a common goal. To befriend and love each member of the team; like the ethos and background to our Christian faith.

Paul notes that he is not perfect but encourages Christians to mimic his singular focus on pursuing Jesus Christ. Sportsmen and women have a singular focus on gaining their goal.

Paul's teaching was to not look back but to focus on what we can do today and, in the days ahead, to live for Christ until we meet with him. Sports people too, look forward to what can be achieved to better the goal already set.

One often sees a sports person throwing their head to the heavens when they win and thanking God or



kneeling before a game, head bowed, asking for support through their prayer. It is interesting to note the number of sports teams within the Diocese who have a chaplain. They can see the strength that a chaplain brings to the sport in question.

The mission opportunities presented via sport are vast. Many parishes use sport and other outdoor activities to engage with people of all ages. You will read of different examples in this edition of *The Magazine*.

The Cormorants sailing week, the Sports Factory, where our youth ministers are working with schools, and parish holiday clubs, youth clubs and more enable us to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to young people where they are located and undertaking something they enjoy. The simple act of starting the sessions with prayer allows the thinking to begin.

Writing to the Philippians, Paul looks forward to the ultimate reward for his faithful service. His prize is to be with Christ, though there is some uncertainty about what he specifically meant. I believe Paul has a clear goal: being in heaven with the Lord.

The Bible compares the Christian life to a race, and while there are different types of races, the Christian life is compared to a marathon. This is a daily challenge which requires focus and effort and the perseverance to overcome the obstacles that are in our way. May we all set our focus on the Lord.

14 There is no way I could call myself a sportsman of any kind. Yet sport brings to young and old alike, the ability to work together for a common goal. To befriend and love each member of the team; like the ethos and background to our Christian faith. **77**



Richard Butler Diocesan Secretary



Game-changing: sports ministry





As the 2020 Olympics in Japan looms, **Ruth Anderson** urges us to consider the mission opportunities offered through sport and fitness.





remember it so well. We had two carloads of people and we didn't really have a clue what we were doing. As we drove along, early in the morning, we saw more and more policemen and streams of refugees walking along the roadside.

We had just crossed the English Channel and had arrived in Calais on the outskirts of 'The Jungle' refugee camp. Our aim was to drive into the centre of the camp and start a football match and then tell people about Jesus – that he loved them and cared for them.

The problem was that several policemen were blocking the entrance to the camp and they obviously were not too keen on us going in. We drove a little further down the road and started to pray. We asked that God distract the policemen or shut their eyes, so they didn't see us. We turned the cars around and decided

to put our prayers into practice. Miraculously, we drove right through the blockade. We were in.



We drove on and on and got to a space where we stopped and got out of the car. We felt like strangers and aliens in a foreign land. We quickly got out the football and started kicking around between us. Gradually a group gathered together. Some of them spoke some broken English. We didn't know what to say and so we started naming English football teams; "Manchester United, Chelsea..." they responded by naming other teams "Liverpool, Arsenal". We added "Norwich City" and then put our thumbs up. We had made friends! Sport has the power to change the world, it has the power to inspire, ... It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. **??**

We found out there was a grass area about a 10-minute walk away. We left the cars and took our stuff and followed an ever-growing group of people to a massive sports area outside the camp. We started playing a match - 10-a-side, 15-a-side, 20-a-side. It was growing every few minutes. After about 20 minutes, we stopped, made a huddle, and via a translator, we told them about Jesus and offered to pray for anything they wanted prayer for. We learnt some of their stories and were amazed at the journeys these people had been on and what kind people they were. We all left the camp that afternoon changed.

"Sport has the power to change the world, it has the power to inspire," Nelson Mandela once said, "It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers."

Sport isn't the answer to people's problems, but Jesus is. Sport is a vehicle by which we can share life and the gospel with people. I love the verse in



1 Thessalonians 2:8 that says, "We loved you so much that we were delighted to share not only the gospel of God but our lives as well." Sport provides that opportunity and it is also lots of fun.

The Sports Factory

In 2014, The Sports Factory was born out of St Thomas Church, Norwich (STN). The aim was to connect the church and the community through sport and to share the love of Jesus with the people we do life with.

Over the past six years, The Sports Factory has played sport or taken part in fitness activities with thousands of people across Norwich and has told them about Jesus' love for them. This has been done through schools work – PE and RE lessons, lunch clubs, assemblies and after school clubs, "Legacy" holiday club that takes place during each school holiday, adult sports and fitness sessions and other family events and activities.

Tim Henery currently heads up The Sports Factory for STN and has written a course called "Active RE" which happens in some of the local primary schools. It combines PE with RE and Tim has been amazed how much the children remember and retain each week. All the children are invited along to Legacy.

Legacy holiday club has over 50 children coming along each day. They play loads of sport, explore a Bible passage or parable and then enjoy a "team challenge" and a "slam dunk moment". Following Legacy, the church has a celebration service to show a video of the highlights of the week and it's brilliant to see lots of families being welcomed into church.

On a Wednesday morning, in one of the churches, there is live worship music and Pilates followed by a short thought for the day and prayer. Around 25 people attend each week, the majority of whom would not call themselves Christian. On a Thursday, a similar class is held for older people, called Fab and Fit.

During major sporting events, such as the Rugby World Cup, Football World Cup or Olympic Games, STN has opened its doors and put on opening ceremony community festivals that have drawn in hundreds of people from the local area, as well as doing some big-screen showings of some of the major matches and events.

Starting a conversation

Sport is an easy conversation starter; it doesn't matter what age you are, you can still enjoy watching a sporting event together. On a Saturday morning, The Sports Factory runners are found at the local park runs with yellow Sports Factory T-shirts saying "We Believe" on the back. They meet to pray and then join the run and see if God provides any opportunities to chat to people about Jesus. The thing I love about sports ministry is that it is simple, it's easy, it's really good for you and it works. The Sports Factory seeks to combine the power of sport with the power of God; the one who created it.

In 2019, the Diocese of Norwich employed four Sports Ministers to roll out The Sports Factory across Norfolk: Tom Woods, Vicky Allen, Susie Bratby and myself. The aim is the same as the story that has happened at STN: to love people so much that we are delighted to share not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. Across Norfolk, The Sports Factory team and volunteers will seek to get to know people through sport and then provide opportunities to share Jesus' love with them.

This will mean looking outside the four walls of the church and spending time at parks, multi-use games areas (MUGAs), in sports halls and gyms. You may think that you are too old to get involved in sports ministry. That's a myth!



Open to all ages and abilities

When I did sports ministry in Gloucestershire, my main volunteer was an 84-year-old man who turned up to a weekly basketball club to help pump up balls and get to know the children's names and eventually had opportunities to tell them about Jesus too.



He was an amazing grandfather figure to so many of the children. He wasn't particularly sporty, but he did have a passion to see children and young people come to know Jesus. One year the town voted him 'Sports Personality of The Year' because of all his contributions to sport. He told me that when, in his seventies, his wife died, he prayed and asked God to use him. God definitely did that!

Local partner churches needed

The Diocese of Norwich is looking to partner with local churches who are looking for growth and revitalisation, to think about how to engage with people in a language that they understand.

Sport is the biggest it has ever been. How do I know? Because sport is everywhere, and people seem to love it. For example, the top two most-googled topics in 2019 were sports related. 900 million people viewed the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in 2012. 44 per cent of 11-16-year-olds play football at least once a month.

These statistics really challenge me. I imagine what it would be like if 44 per cent of 11-16-year-olds have started attending my church at least once per month? It would be incredible! Sport and fitness are not the answer, but they do provide a whole lot of opportunities to tell people about Jesus.



I wonder if your average week involves any sporting or fitness activities? Could you start seeing this as a mission field? Could you start praying for the people you meet and looking for opportunities to tell them about Jesus or invite them to church or an event the church runs?

I wonder how fit your church is and whether you have ever thought about engaging with your local community through sport and fitness? In this Olympic year, it is a great time to get involved in sports ministry and to share the love of Jesus with the people you do life with.



Ruth Anderson is Head of Sports Ministry for the Diocese of Norwich. She is married to Rich and has one son. She loves sport and fitness and is passionate about sharing her faith in Jesus with others.

Further ideas...

on sports ministry and outdoor spirituality. See also the book reviews on page 13.



The Sports Factory

The Sports Factory is the Diocese of Norwich's sports ministry programme. "We are passionate about sharing sport with people. We want to see lives changed as a result of engagement with sport, faith and the church. We run holiday clubs, community events, sports coaching academies, social sport, detached sports outreach, activities with the football cage and work with disengaged young people."

www.sportsfactory.org.uk 07881 936978



Allchurches Trust

Allchurches Trust has given grants towards sports ministry in churches and through charities in urban and rural areas. Grants Officer, Paul Playford said: "There are many churches, perhaps particularly estates churches, who already know and benefit from football outreach as a way of ministering to, supporting, and signposting young people in their communities."

Take a look at some of their grant examples: www.allchurches.co.uk 01452 873189



The Horstead Centre

The Diocese of Norwich's residential activity centre offers groups and schools a wide variety of challenging, teambuilding exercises from a climbing tower and zip wire to kayaking and bushcraft. Situated in the beautiful Old Rectory it is the only Church of England children's residential centre in the county. With grounds reaching down to the River Bure the team enables young people to develop their spiritual, physical, intellectual and social capacities with a caring Christian community.

www.horsteadcentre.org.uk 01603 737215

Christians in Sport

"For us, sport is more than a game. It's about who God made us to be. We bring these two loves together in one mission: to reach the world of sport for Christ." See particularly their Sports Mission Pack with resources for a sports quiz, big screen events, sports tournaments and resources for churches and schools.

www.christiansinsport.co.uk 01869 255630

Scripture Union

Mission through sport – "Providing opportunities for the language and activity of sports and games to naturally collide with the language of faith." A wide variety of examples and resources to use in schools and church groups; from "Sweaty Church" and "Sticks for Stumps" to "Higher Games".

Holiday Clubs – Tap into the years of experience here. Download free holiday club resources or buy into the latest "Wonder Zone" exploration of science and faith. Still available: Guardians of Ancora, Backpackers, Teambuilders holiday club

packages.

www.scriptureunion.org.uk 01908 856000



Wild or Forest — Church resources



Forest Church: Earthed perspectives on the Gospel (Grove Booklet) - Cate Williams

Forest Church: A field guide to nature connection for groups and individuals - Bruce Stanley



Outdoors Church: 20 sessions to take church outside the building – Sally Welch

Outdoor Worship and Forest Church: Praising God from within creation - Siggy Parratt-Halbert, Kevin & Sue Pellatt

Quiet25 Leaders Guide: A

group journey into silence (Quiet Garden Movement)– Matt Freer & Tina Jefferies

A Facebook community group exists to share ideas and encouragement: facebook.com/groups/forestchurch





Holiday clubs – building By Matt Beckett

was eight years old when I had my first taste of a "holiday club". It was the Easter holidays and I was at my grandparents' house. The Rainbow Club was filled with games, prizes and a daily Bible story, and on the final day a make-yourown-clay-egg competition. The fried egg I cheekily made still resides in my parents' house! Egg jokes aside, I lapped up every second, not knowing that one day I would be running clubs exactly like this one.

For the past 10 years I have worked for the Fountain of Life Church and Kidz Klub Mid Norfolk, in Ashill and have been involved in running our annual

Whether on the floor with the children, in the kitchen cooking, bringing a specific talent to entertain the kids, all would be welcome to join in, because to reach a family we, as the church, need to act as a family.



summertime holiday club. In fact, even before I was employed by the church, I had been volunteering at holiday clubs since the age of 17.

For five consecutive days in the summer holiday we host children, from the schools we visit, for two hours of fun, games and laughter, as well as a thought or story from the Bible. We aim to make our mornings fast-paced and fun. Often the alternative for them is kids'TV, so we try to emulate that wacky and messy style and bring a live action fun that, simultaneously, entertains and engages.

Whilst the morning is filled with fun, games and craft we also make quieter times to help the children explore a



biblical story or theme. Whilst even the wacky parts of the morning may point to our theme, we use these quiet times to help the children see how the Bible both applies to and affects their life today. In these more faith-focused parts of the morning, children can participate to a level that they are comfortable with. As we model worship and prayer, we often find children taking their first steps in their own faith journey.

You may have participated in something akin to the five-morning formula, with fun, games and a biblical heart. But



maybe my morning doesn't quite match your personality or strengths. Maybe adjectives like wacky and messy don't fill you with as much excitement as it might for me!

Alison Ball, curate in the Chet Valley Benefice, has organised holiday clubs for over 12 years. Her clubs are similar in style to ours: one week in the summer holiday, advertised through schools and other ministries in the church, but that does not mean the content is the same. Included are activities like cooking and storytelling, playing to the strength of her team. Like myself, Alison believes that "Holiday club is a non-threatening way of introducing the Bible and its themes to those that attend." The backbones and structure of our clubs look similar, but they differ due to the skill set of her team.

Another style of holiday club is borne out of the location a church finds itself in. Norfolk has a beautiful coastline and many churches using this natural resource for a special type of holiday club: a beach mission!

Simon Fenn, Head of Mission at Cromer Church, has run "typical" holiday clubs, but 2020 sees his team excited for "recapturing the classical beach mission **66** Barriers between the church and its local community can be torn down with fun and laughter. **77**

approach!" Simon's simple missional approach is "as people get to know us; they get to know God because Jesus lives in us."

To that end, Simon desires to make this year's beach mission as fun and frivolous as possible, not just for attendees, but for the team as well. Barriers, between the church and its local community, can be torn down with fun and laughter.

Across the Diocese of Norwich, there are great examples of churches supporting their communities, through effective missional activities, during school holidays. Anna Heydon is part of the team at St. Magdalene Church in Gorleston. During the summer holidays they run Families at Mary Mags (FAM). She explains: "FAM provides a hot meal and activities for children, including sports and crafts." Similar initiatives across Norfolk are providing food and

5 TOP TIPS:

1. Be prepared – plan early! Invite team and guests in plenty of time.

2. Build relationships – holiday clubs can be building blocks for a family's faith.

3. Play to your strengths – use the skills your team has to provide a quality club.

4. Serve your surroundings – are there specific community needs you can meet?

5. Have fun – if your team enjoys what they do so will your guests!

community for many in need families. Anna and the team have built many positive relationships in the community, by providing respite at a time that many families may struggle with the added financial pressure the holidays bring.

With so much variety for your church to explore, as summer approaches, let your location, skill set, and community give you insight into the right club to run. Remember there's plenty of resources here to help you.

Scripture Union still produces wonderful holiday club materials that guide you in running a "traditional" holiday club. TLG's Make Lunch programme can help you feed families in need and places like The Sports Factory could help inspire activities in your community. See page 9 of this issue for more ideas.

And don't forget, every school holiday you will find that Norwich Cathedral's doors are open. They create places where families have fun together, based on an informal Christian background, while building relationships with the Cathedral team.

So what role are you going to play? With such a variety of holiday club styles being implemented so successfully across the Diocese I would encourage you to ask yourself that question. Skill set, age, gender, there is no disqualifier from involvement in any form of holiday club. Whether on the floor with the children, in the kitchen cooking, bringing a specific talent to entertain the kids, all would be welcome to join in, because to reach a family we, as the church, need to act as a family. Holiday clubs were a building block in the journey that brought me to faith. You can help cement those blocks in the hearts of children this summer too.

Rose battles every day to collect enough water for her family.

You can help a community build a water dam. Your church can get involved this Christian Aid Week.





Organise a street or church collection Put on a Big Brekkie event Campaign for climate justice Pray for those in power to make a difference

For support to make this happen, contact Julian Bryant jbryant@christian-aid.org, 01603 903012 or visit **caweek.org**

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A selection of books on the theme of sport and outdoor spirituality, reviewed by Steve Foyster.

Creative Ideas for Wild Church: Taking all-age worship and learning outdoors

Mary Jackson and Juno Hollyhock

Canterbury Press (2016) £19.99 Revelation price £17.00

This is an innovative and imaginative resource, offering learning and worship activities as



well as whole service outlines, to help church members engage with the outside world and keep connected with their local communities whether rural or urban. We are being encouraged to reconnect with nature; schools are building outdoor classrooms, while Forest Church, the Ecocongregation and the rewilding spirituality movements reflect this trend in churches.

This resource is definitely not just for the energetic outdoor types, the authors creatively blending the Christian year with the natural seasons; such as an all-age Advent outdoor adventure, creating an Easter garden outside, kite flying at Ascension, building a life-size David and Goliath, going on a prayer pilgrimage, collecting autumn leaves and using tree ribbons for remembrance.

Practical advice on making the most of the outside space available, inclusiveness, health & safety and safeguarding included.

The Way Under Our Feet: A Spirituality of Walking

Graham Usher

SPCK (Pub date 16/04/2020, can be pre-ordered) £12.99 Revelation price £10.00

Walking is one of the simplest things we do as humans. It's a basic way by which most of us

experience life. Walking gives us innumerable benefits to mind, body and spirit when we take time to stroll at three miles an hour. We think better; we observe more deeply; we tune into the rhythm of the soul.

In his new book 'The Way Under Our Feet', Bishop Graham Usher vividly conveys how exhilarating it is to walk into the depths of our humanity. We can become more ready to recognize the needs as well as the joys of others; we might seek to heal our battered world, even as we glory in the beauty of nature; we may experience Jesus walking alongside us, listening, teaching, challenging, loving us into the people he wants us to be.

Soulful Nature: A spiritual field guide

Brian Draper

Canterbury Press (Pub 30/01/20) £14.99 Revelation price £12.00

Soulful Mature

In our busy and often pressured world, the natural world can be a powerful

counterbalance, offering wisdom for the challenges, pain and dislocations of life, as well as for the beauty, wonder and healing. Brian Draper and Howard Green encourage the reader to get outside to make deeper connections with creation and its Creator.

Over the course of a year they chart walking journeys through both rural landscapes and town streets, showing how the natural cycle of the changing seasons can awaken us to the rhythms of our own lives. Each chapter explores a different landscape, focusing in on the small details of the natural world as well as panning out to the wide-screen beauties of time and space. Simple and practical exercises are provided throughout.

Hebrews: Race to Glory

James Reapsome

IVP revised edition 2018 £4.99 Revelation price £4.00





and sometimes feel that we are getting nowhere. Indeed, that's exactly how the original readers of the letter to the Hebrews felt! Yet the author of the letter encourages the readers to stay on track and never quit, to reach the finish line by the power of Jesus Christ. Through this revised Lifebuilder Study in Hebrews, readers will also hopefully find the encouragement needed to stay in the right lane.

It features questions for starting group discussions and for meeting God in personal reflection, as well as the "Now or Later" section within each study.





Find more books on Revelation's website: www.revelation-norwich.co.uk or call 01603 619731

Walsingham Way pilgrimage path

Previous articles for The Magazine on the Norwich to Walsingham route of the Walsingham Way have presented it as an aspiration, a project for which there was much local interest and support but still no wherewithal to make it a physical reality. As of the second half of 2019 that situation has changed,

and 2020 will see the Way as a signposted path on the ground. Canon Librarian at Norwich Cathedral, **Peter Doll**, gives an update.

ast August, the European Union's LEADER programme awarded the Cathedral a grant of £31,000 to cover design costs and to waymark the rural portion of the route (from Ringland to Walsingham) with wooden signposts; for the moment, the Cathedral will cover the cost of marking the 'urban' portion of the route (primarily along the Marriott's Way) with stickers attached to signposts. The marking will be finished this summer.

The grant award was made in recognition of the potential of pilgrimage to make a significant contribution to rural economic development in the region through sustainable, environmentally friendly tourism.

As Christians we want to be supporting the life of our communities, but we do of course have another agenda, a mission of our own. We believe that through a close encounter with God's creation and with the story of his blessing of our communities through the life of the church, pilgrims can be brought to a recognition of the nearness of God's Kingdom and of his love and care for each of them.

We have been working closely with Norfolk County Council to finalise the route, but even with the grant, this has proved far from straightforward. Despite the intensely rural character of much of Norfolk, public footpaths in this section are few and far between.

As the route must follow quiet country lanes, the county rightly demands a high standard of safety, and certain road crossings will require additional funds to make them safe for groups of walkers. Happily, the Leader of the County Council, Andrew Proctor, has put his support behind the project and the Highways Department is working with us to source funding for these elements.

We are conscious that a path is only a beginning. We have plans to make an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund to support workshops in communities on the route to help them consider ways to use the presence of pilgrims to support economic development through offering hospitality, to interpret local heritage through pilgrimage history, and to use church buildings and halls as places to offer hospitality to pilgrims on the way.

In addition, other groups are already working with the Cathedral and the Walsingham Shrines to develop routes from other directions; these include an ecumenical group in King's Lynn



and another looking at a route from Canterbury to Walsingham via Tilbury.

As our society becomes ever more conscious of the impact of our fossilfuelled travelling habits on this fragile planet, our awareness of the need to journey more lightly and in harmony with creation can only grow. Our pilgrimage paths will be there to welcome and guide pilgrims to an encounter with the living God who is our eternal destination.



A new-found faith and community

Roy Roberts shares his love of the organised free, weekly, 5km timed running phenomenon that is parkrun.

e all have a journey that brings both fond and difficult memories, this is what helps shape the kind of person that we become. Finding my faith was the beginning of seeing myself how God does, and I knew that I had a long way to go to keep discovering the kind of person I could become.

I had been going to church for about 10 years before I decided that I needed to take better care of my body. God gives us the gift of life and we have the responsibility to take care of the bodies that he has given us, which we tend to neglect.

Since I was young, I had been unable to kick bad habits of eating, but I was inspired by my father-in-law to do something about it. I decided that alongside a diet change, I would begin running at parkrun.

I have been amazed at the level of community spirit at this event every week and it has helped me progress in my abilities far beyond what I thought





possible. I bring my faith with me every week and it is always such a delight seeing many other Christians doing the same, helping to build this community.

I make sure that I pray before every event for all of those who are involved as well as those I know that cannot make it that week. I encourage others to pray for parkrun and to openly display that we pray for this event. It is important that as Christians that we are not just involved but also a strong positive presence at these places, bringing God's love and peace with us.

Parkrun is a great way of getting together with lots of other likeminded people who want to run, but who are all there for their own reason. I have since joined a running club, which makes parkrun a bit more fun as I can connect with more people on a Saturday morning.

This has helped shape the kind of person I am over the last year and I am better for it. My wife and I also volunteer at junior parkrun on a Sunday morning, which is even more fun as we get to encourage the next generation into being healthy and fit individuals with a great sense



of self-esteem, they can carry into adulthood.

I believe that parkrun is ordained by God, as there are few things in life that bring people together as well as this and running in general does. I would encourage anyone thinking about exercise in any way to get along to their nearest parkrun and get involved, whether it be for running, walking or volunteering, it is a great place to be.

I think that what makes this event so special is that there is no discrimination of any kind, anyone can turn up and do the route at their pace. This is such a great demonstration of God's love for us, that anyone can turn to God no matter how they come they are all welcome in to the Kingdom.

To find out more, visit www.parkrun.org.uk



And I would walk 500 miles

By Amanda Maundrell

n 12 September 2019 I set out to walk the 500 miles of the ancient pilgrimage route of "El Camino Frances" across northern Spain, alone. Starting at St. Jean Pied de Port in the French Pyrenees, I planned to arrive around 30 days later in Santiago de Compostela. I had a oneway flight to Biarritz, and was carrying everything I needed in my rucksack, and would stay in the Pilgrim Hostels along the route.

I was walking in memory of my husband John, who sadly died in September 2018 after struggling for many years with a rare neurological disease called Multiple Systems Atrophy, and to raise money for the new Priscilla Bacon Hospice in Norwich where John had been so wonderfully cared for. But I was also walking for myself, to hopefully bring some sort of punctuation to many years of suffering, and grief.

My first night was at the Orisson Hostel halfway up the pass over the beautiful Pyrenees Atlantiques, which was a gentle, and very friendly introduction to hostel and dorm life. I am very fit and found that my natural pace meant that I gradually overtook pretty much all the other pilgrims. I felt rather like Forest Gump. This also meant, as was my intention, that I always walked alone.

The first part of the trail took me through vast mountain vistas and then the gentler, but wonderful scenery and vineyards of La Rioja.

I met lots of people from all over the world in the evenings in the dorms but continued to walk alone. The feeling of beginning to cover a vast distance, using only the way markers for guidance and just seeing what each day brought was totally liberating. All I had to think about was walk, eat, sleep.

After La Rioja came the Meseta, the vast, bleak, high plain that covers much of central and northern Spain. Life got tougher, not least because finding somewhere to stay each night in the emptiness became a daily challenge.

Life became tougher still on the first anniversary of John's death, but after a tearful morning, a long, solitary 25 km trudge gave me time to process a lot of thoughts. Somehow after that I felt lighter, and a few days later I realised that I was beginning to walk with others.

annan mannan



The feeling of lightness increased after a very wet morning climbing "The Mountain of Forgiveness". At the top is "El Cruz Ferro" where the laying down of a stone brought from home, on the vast cairn beneath the cross symbolises the laying down of one's burden. Everyone had a burden to lay down.

I finished the walk largely in the company of others. Everyone had a story, and even the most cynical "pilgrims" felt some sort of transformation in their outlook happen along the way.

I arrived in Santiago alone again, 24 days after setting off, but feeling much more at peace with the world and much more eager to engage with it again.



Worship On the wild side

Charlie Houlder-Moat, Trainee Reader, describes how her passion for the outdoors has combined with facilitating families to worship outdoors.

ince a young age I have always been drawn to nature and most of my jobs have represented this passion: outdoor activities instructor to a forest ranger. I am now combining my love of the outdoors with my ministry at RAF Marham Chaplaincy to deliver what we call "Worship in the Woods". However, it comes under many other names such as Wild Church, Forest Church and even Mossy Church!

Although a contemporary movement, it has its roots in the tradition of Christian spirituality and is about inviting God to speak through the exploration of the natural world.

One of the families that regularly attend has appreciated the activity: "Having a five-year-old son who never sits still in church, he loves it as he gets to go around 'helping'. On a personal level, I find the spiritual headspace offered more relaxing than a service indoors."

Another family enjoyed getting away from screens, in addition to cooking over the fire! "In a world where it is tempting to let kids sit in front of their electronic devices, it is great to be able to worship in the outdoors.

"You can see their wonder reawakening as they disappear off to explore the woods and look for signs of God's providence. An interesting bug under some bark on the ground, the colour and texture of a leaf, the chance to build with bits of wood, and even the variations in the weather – all of these speak richly about our Creator. Our children also love anything with fire, and in a risk-averse culture it is brilliant to see them toasting marshmallows or enjoying hot dogs."

I use nature connection activities to engage families and individuals with their faith: "It has allowed us as a family to explore and appreciate our faith in a different light, engaging our three-yearold, whilst enjoying the brisk fresh air of Norfolk."

Licensed Reader, Fiona Tibbitt has just launched Forest Church at Aylsham. I asked her what she appreciates about it: "I've always loved being outside as it has been easy to see the wonders of God's creation. Not just the mountain vistas or dramatic sunsets but the cobweb filled with frost, and the robin sharing the garden.

"I can feel God's Holy Spirit fill me when I'm out in the fresh air and that is something I would like to share with others. I am really excited to be able to bring a new perspective to people's lives,



help them to feel grounded in nature and see God's grace in the world around them."

I asked Fiona how she got involved: "I attended a few Forest Church sessions and found them to be an engaging way to bring in all of the family. I have spent time reading and researching while training to be a Reader so I was delighted when our curate, the Revd Jack Branford, offered me the opportunity to lead four sessions at Blickling Church."

If your imagination has been sparked then all you need is a group of people and some nature! Your style of Wild Church can be unique. There isn't a prescribed model. Go wild!

Contact Charlie at: **houlder-moatc** @methodistchurch.org.uk and find resources on pages 9 and 13.

Encountering God on the Broads

By the Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs

magine for a moment that you're a teenager. Hopefully thinking about those years of your life hasn't made you run off, screaming for the hills. Our teenage years are the most formative and sometimes difficult years of our lives.

Not only was your brain totally re-wiring itself but your body was changing, in exciting or perhaps frightening ways. Your mind was being expanded; your horizons were broadened as we started to take steps towards adult life. There were so many pressures for us, and I for one was pulled in many different directions. It's no wonder that many young people lose their faith during these formative years.

Then there's what might be happening at home. Relationships with parents or carers might be difficult, perhaps academic results have been disappointing. Perhaps the pressure put on our young people is too much for some, and they are struggling with mental health problems because of it.

Back in the mid-noughties I was 14. My parents had split up, and I was feeling raw. I didn't have much of a faith at all, and I was questioning whether God was for me. I went on Cormorants and for the first time I wasn't patronised, I was listened to, I had a place in a crew, in a team.

The priest who ran it, the Revd Charles Hall, was a kind man who had an approachability and pastoral nature I'd never come across in adults before. He listened, intently, as if I mattered.

I think I owe being ordained to that first experience on Cormorants, I remember it vividly. The Bible study that year was the story of Joseph. I remember Charles saying; "Who thinks that God is interested in them?" Some people in that hot and cramped cruiser cabin put their hands up, I didn't. Then he asked us, "why?" I replied, "Because I'm just ordinary, there's nothing special about me." He said, "God is interested in you, God made you and loves you. He loves you so much he gave you life."

> I'd not heard that before. God is interested in me? It made me think. I wanted to be like Charles.

> > Fast-forward ten years and now I find myself walking in Charles' shoes as Chaplain on Cormorants.

We've tried to foster an atmosphere where teenagers can explore their faith. It's not about ramming a theology or Jesus down the kids' throat but giving them the space to explore the questions they have. Listening to them. Showing them that you can have fun and be a Christian! Helping them know the love of God for themselves in a gentle and kind way, just like Charles modelled.

Fundamentally it all comes out of God's love, His overflowing love that I discovered for myself on Cormorants. His overflowing love for them as individuals.

Pray for all of us, as we try to give them a glimpse of this.



Cormorants sailing holiday for young people aged 11–17

Saturday 24 – Saturday 31 October 2020

Contact Liz Dawes: 01603 882335 liz.dawes@dioceseofnorwich.org or visit www.DofN.org/cormorants

Active learning: Bible, sports, action!

Headteacher Helen Watson describes how Lyng Church of England Primary School has been engaging in Active RE.

ur school heard about Active RE through one of our sports coaches, Tim Henery. Tim had previously taught pupils at our school as a member of the Community Sports Foundation (CSF).

He joined The Sports Factory and told us about their new programme, Active RE. This innovative programme aims to involve children in learning about Christian Bible stories and values, whilst being active. The children play games using typical equipment such as hoops and bean bags – so no specialist or expensive purchases are necessary!

Tim ran the programme during the Autumn Term with a mixed class of Year 1 and Year 2 children. The session combines story-telling interspersed with active games. For example, in the story of Moses and the Israelites escaping Egypt, the children play a game where they must cross from one side of "the sea" to the other side without getting caught by the "Egyptians". In the story of the lost Sheep, one of the games is "hide and seek".

A session will start with the opening of the story, and then there will be a game in which the children will take on roles from the story, and the activity will reflect what has happened in the story. The children then listen to the next part of the story, followed with a different game.

Our school asked Tim to focus on the Old Testament because it linked with our RE theme. This has enabled the children in the class to "connect their learning" as we are able to refer to the story and ideas from Tim's lesson in our RE teaching.





The children really enjoy the sessions. Oliver commented, "It's fun and educational at the same time", while George said, "We're learning about the Bible and having fun, I like to have the two things mixed. When we do Active RE, we find out about Moses, Jesus, Adam and Eve, God."

Kitty felt it was "better than just listening to the story because it helps you remember" and Edward agreed "because you remember the games and then you remember the stories." Additionally, important messages are woven into the learning, for example in the story of the prodigal son, teams collect "treasure". The children then have to talk about how they would spend it wisely, as well as be reminded that Jesus tells us that even though we get things wrong, God still loves us and wants us to follow him.

This combination of story and physical activity has had a positive impact on the children's engagement with the stories and the Bible. In the library, the children will enthusiastically report they have "found a Bible" and look through it to find familiar stories and pictures. They relate the story and characters to a game they have played and this supports their retrieval of the Bible stories. The children really enjoy the games, which encourage activity, teamwork, collaboration and an element of fun.

For more information about Active RE contact Tim Henery on tim.henery@sportsfactory.org.uk



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> Read more about the range at www.realeasteregg.co.uk

Learning from GoodGym

An article in The Big Issue headed 'Changemakers' caught Susanna Gunner's eye. It described a venture called GoodGym which, inspiringly, links exercise with social action. It doesn't have a specifically Christian foundation, yet it resonates in powerful ways with gospel language, Kingdom concepts. She was intrigued and wanted to know more.

he first GoodGym was piloted in London in 2008 out of frustration with normal gyms... Suppose the lone treadmill-runner, isolated by earphones, pounding away for hours, pounded the streets instead and suppose they ran to somewhere, to someone, for a very particular purpose? What if all the energy generated in gyms could instead be channelled into society's many neglected tasks and individuals? GoodGym's aim is to get people off treadmills and into their communities.

Steven Hitcham, the man at the helm of GoodGym Norwich, summed it up for me, "We are a community of runners who get fit by doing good", he said, "and we do this in three ways." First, he described the Group Runs he organises each Monday night. Meeting at The Forum in Norwich, around 40 people run en bloc to help a local organisation with some pressing task.

The night before I met Steven, it had been Baby Bank Norfolk, whose donated items for needy families had desperately needed sorting and rationalising. Another night might, for instance, see the group running to organise a games event in a care home or tackle a community gardening





project. Churches with specific one-off projects have also been supported.

Then there are the "Missions". After a referral from an organisation such as Age UK, a couple of runners run to help with one-off practical tasks that older people can no longer manage themselves. Once they've changed Mr H's lightbulb or moved Mrs M's table back into place, they each run home again, having helped someone out and maybe experienced a different running route too.

Lastly, Steven told me about "Coach Runs", GoodGym's very specific response to the prevalence of loneliness in our society. A runner is linked up with someone who's feeling isolated and simply runs to visit them each week to chat over a cuppa. You might expect that the 'coach' in question would be the younger, fitter person making the visit but that isn't the way GoodGym sees it at all. It is the lonely person who is the coach, the strong bonds between the two becoming the motivating force behind the weekly run.

GoodGym Norwich has over 300 members from across our region. Walking groups are in the pipeline too but even for those who neither walk nor run, there is perhaps wider potential here. Participation is based on frequent low-impact activities that are integrated usefully into runners' lives.

What might that teach our churches about working with volunteers? And are there other ways we might imitate the GoodGym concept? How, for instance, when tempted to plod away on the safe treadmill of faith lives as we've always known them, might we be inspired by GoodGym's wonderfully outwardlooking attitude to find new and imaginative ways of engaging with the wider community? What are we called to be if not change-makers?

www.goodgym.org/norwich

Pilgrimage in Lapland

Last August, as part of the "sharing of experiences", six people were invited to join in a pilgrimage along the Dag Hammarskjold Way which lies 250 km within the Arctic Circle, further cementing the link between the Diocese of Norwich and the Diocese of Luleå in the far north of Sweden. Steve Williamson shares their journey.



ormer Secretary General of the United Nations, Dag had left behind a book of Markings. It reflects its author's efforts to live his creed, his belief that "all men are equally the children of God and that faith and love require of him a life of selfless service to others." Some of his spiritual mediations have been carved onto boulders that mark the 70 miles or so route between Abisko and Nikkaluokta, roughly the distance from King's Lynn to Great Yarmouth, and climbing to a height 1,150 metres. (slightly higher than Snowdon).

This is prime hiking country, with big skies, shimmering lakes and acres of protected wilderness (greater than the size of Norfolk) with basic mountain huts every 10–20km, where you get a bed and a stove, but there's no electricity or running water, no wi-fi or mobile signal – and very, very basic sanitation. Anything and everything we needed we had to carry – including all the food.



Six people from across Norfolk took up the challenge: Alan Baker, Jenny Ferns, Peter Howard, Damon Rogers, Geoff Young and me. We were joined by Moa Beak with husband David, Mattias Bostrom, Bo Glas, Helen Lundberg, Anna Pittja and Tina Viklund all from Sweden – and all with perfect English. All of us serve our churches where we live.

"Den längsta resan är resan inåt: the longest journey is the journey inward," says Dag Hammarskjöld. Well our journey started travelling from Norfolk to London Heathrow. Almost immediately we were in prayer as Alan's car blew a gasket and black smoke billowed from the back. Somehow or other the car got us to the airport in time and we flew to Stockholm. Then it was a 23-hours-journey by sleeper train and bus.

We eventually joined up with our Swedish hosts at the tourist station in Abisko and enjoyed an evening together over a





three-course meal of arctic char, braised moose with celeriac, and cloudberries with ice cream. We presented our hosts with a small gift that expressed our hopes for the trip. It was a slate carved with this from Julian of Norwich, "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."

Our hike started the next day in great good spirits and morning prayer and, at the commencement of any walk, the prayer of St Birgitta, "Show us, O Lord, your way and give us the will to walk it."

The countryside was amazing. Unchanged over millennia and silent. Each day we stopped for a small outdoor eucharist in the round that was extraordinarily moving, and Moa talked about the "markings" on that day's stone, giving us questions to ponder which we discussed each evening after prayer.

We reached our first hut. We had been prepared so it wasn't too much of a shock but we small band of brothers and sisters soon realised that any reserves had to be surrendered as we all had to share in everything, cooking, cleaning and rooms. We adapted to a simpler life and Swedish ways crispbreads and saunas.

This was the pattern of our six days hiking. The weather throughout was perfect for walking. Not too hot and not too cold with some snow showing on the higher points. Our only short spell of rain was blessed with a rainbow.

Along the way we saw Saami villages, waterfalls, glaciers, reindeer, grouse, mountain flowers; we drank from the streams and crossed rivers; we collected blueberries and cloudberries; we ate smoked moose, reindeer, arctic char, trout and herring, salted liquorice and plopp (don't worry – it's the name of a chocolate bar); we enjoyed two boat crossings across lakes to shorten the journey and met up with other travellers from Sweden, the UK, France, Hungary and the USA.

We had a fantastic and happy time with a lot of fun. Our thanks go to the Church of Sweden for being so generous inviting us to visit and especially to Moa and Mattias – Tusen Tack. Anyone who organises any church activity knows the responsibility that falls upon you and the hopes enshrined.

44 Throughout our journey we felt that God was close by watching over us. Our trip may have ended but the inner journey continues. **77**



Christingle is a candle-lit celebration that's perfect for bringing communities together. Will you be a part of it?

Let us know if we can count you in for 2020 at christingle.org







Hong Kong dispatches

A Norwich diocesan ordinand from the parish of Hellesdon, Coryn Stanforth is currently training at Westcott House, Cambridge. She shares her experience of her placement in Hong Kong during the time of the protests.

hen discussing placement options early in 2019 I mentioned my interest in going abroad to another part of the Anglican Communion. From this a placement in Hong Kong, based at Ming Hua Theological College was planned. At that time, it was expected my visit would be no different to any other foreign placement. However, in the following months the political situation in Hong Kong changed beyond recognition.

My placement had several different elements. One part was based within the theological college living and studying together with their postulants. I also worshipped in a range of local Anglican churches.

On arrival in Hong Kong I was told to stay inside for weekend afternoons and evenings but that it was fine to go out and explore on weekdays. This was initially true but during the last week, daily protests made local travel challenging with blocked roads and public transport difficulties causing lengthy journeys to work and schools being closed.

Incidents could happen suddenly; for example, I found out that tear gas had been used nearby whilst I was in church one morning. However, protests tended to be concentrated in particular areas and elsewhere life continued, and you could forget the city's difficulties for a while.

As I talked to people, both within the college and in local churches I quickly became aware of a diverse range of opinions about the situation. This was most evident as to whether people talk about "protesters" or "rioters".

Many, particularly in the early weeks of my placement, talked about the importance of maintaining Hong Kong's freedoms and blamed violence on police



brutality. However, others spoke of some churches supporting violent protest and their difficulty reconciling this with Christian faith. It is a society which is becoming increasingly polarised, as neighbours, friends and families hold opposing views. Feelings of anger and anxiety are shared by many.

I also spent some time working for "Mission to Migrant Workers". There are large numbers of migrant workers in Hong Kong, primarily Filipino women who are employed as domestic helpers. Many are not well treated by their employers and some are abused physically, emotionally and financially. It was a privilege helping some of these Democracie and Justice NOW

women write statements in English about their mistreatment and seeing the practical help and care given to them.

It was an amazing opportunity to experience a placement in Hong Kong, meeting people and learning about their lives during such a challenging time for the city.

FOCUS Offering welcome, Image: Weight of the second sec

Barnham Broom and Upper Yare Group

ome would say that one PCC AGM a year is enough for anyone, but when you are faced with 13, you begin to understand the reality of managing the Barnham Broom and Upper Yare Group. Stretching from Dereham to Wymondham and covering an area of over 80 square miles with a population around 4,000, its challenges are many but probably reflect those of many rural parishes.

Our benefice has some 17 villages or hamlets. We regularly worship in our 15 churches (three without electricity) and occasionally in the sixteenth, which is run by a national charity. Our local Methodist chapel is very much part of the family too and we are privileged to have people of several denominations worshipping regularly with us. We have three brilliant schools, two pubs and one shop and since we straddle two district council areas across such a wide area, we are an expression of unity, something we are keen to emphasise in our preaching.

In order to sustain our services and although we only have one full-time priest, we are fortunate in having a retired Archdeacon as Associate Priest, a Curate, a Reader, an ordained person of another



denomination and a group of highly respected Authorised Worship Assistants. As a group of 'worship leaders' we meet and study together several times a year and through the Diocesan structures are regularly assessed and re-accredited.

Having lay persons as leaders in this way has many benefits including bringing a constant 'refreshing' of Christian life as our diverse group make their way around the churches. As one of our colleagues put it: "a high percentage of our regular worshipping community are directly involved in many diverse aspects of sustaining the work and meaning of the church across such a dispersed population. We either get involved or risk losing our church life." Shared Morning Prayer is a regular practice in different locations across the benefice on weekday mornings. Our choir is expertly led by a local teacher.

Perhaps paradoxically, because we are such a dispersed community, we have a strong sense of 'church' as being something much bigger than (our beautiful) buildings. In this way relationships across the area are nurtured through such diverse ways as regular community meals, home-based communion services, teams of Open-the-Book volunteers going into our schools, group-wide services, and a whole-benefice community magazine, together with social events and an outward-looking vision which sees us collecting for local charities as well as the usual fund raising activities for parish share and church fabric. We have several summer fetes which are always well supported by many visitors. Likewise, the Christmas Rural Market held every two years has become a huge success and is an opportunity for each parish to contribute collectively to a single benefice-wide event.

Pastorally, many of the church-going community have lived in the area





A regular feature focusing on a benefice or parish in the Diocese of Norwich, written by someone from that community.

for decades, and as a result they are the expression of loving concern for neighbour, community and environment.

Our Group Council, with members drawn from all the parishes and worship leaders, meets four times a year and enables us to take decisions on many issues collectively. It is a visible expression of how we value each parish for its own expression of the Faith whilst being equally committed to our unity as the Christian church in this geographical area.

Our monthly Group Services cycle around the churches and are strongly supported by the majority. No one congregation need ever feel 'small' or 'forgotten' when a larger congregation periodically descends on your church.

Yet for all the activity, you need a single ethos which says something about why the church needs to be here, why you are here and why the Church of England needs to value rural ministry.

This has to do with a generous welcome in Christ's name, a welcome that sees us host many couples each year for their weddings especially those from outside the area. One of our recent couples remarked on the welcome and friendliness: "We would recommend our experience with this collection of parishes to anyone and have been left with a long-lasting feeling of community."

We would recommend our experience with this collection of parishes to anyone and have been left with a long-lasting feeling of community. **77**

It's a welcome that encourages contributions of all sorts from residents irrespective of what their beliefs might be and a welcome that emphasises participation in community and community-making. Practically this means activities as diverse as offering our churchyards as places where school children come for classes, to inviting a local Youth for Christ team to come in and lead a highly successful youth group, to welcoming participation in re-purposing our churches as community spaces or as training-spaces for the next generation of bell-ringers in one of our three bell-towers. As a result, rural ministry is a place where people come to be quite literally 're-formed' as they value time spent over effort expended and the slow process of developing relationships, sometimes in conflict, sometimes in pain, sometimes in joy, but always intentionally in Christ's love, over years.

Perhaps the last word should go to someone who arrived amongst us recently, our Curate:

"Before coming to this benefice, and with no prior experience of rural ministry, I was worried I might be moving into a context with little scope or opportunity for learning and training as a curate.

"I could not have been more wrong. Not only have I had an excellent training experience, but I have found in this benefice a warm and welcoming family of parishioners across our many churches who are a vital part of building community where they live, and I have found myself challenged by their example to constantly rethink what it means to go about the work of building the Kingdom right where we are."

Find out more on the website: www.groupof15.org.uk





New science and faith grant

A new £3.4 million grant has been announced for Equipping Christian Leadership in An Age of Science, the project that promotes greater understanding between science and faith. It is a partnership between the Church of England and the Universities of Durham and York.

There will be an expansion of the Scientists in Congregations scheme, awarding grants for local science and faith projects in churches and cathedrals including science festivals. The scheme will include a new emphasis on working with cathedrals and larger parish churches to pioneer projects that can be replicated by other churches.

"I am delighted to hear of this project helping priests in training to engage with the latest science," said the Revd Dr Patrick Richmond, Chair of Science and Faith in Norfolk and vicar of Christ Church, Eaton. "Science and Faith in Norfolk has been honoured to have the leaders of the project, Professors Tom McLeish and David Wilkinson, to speak in Norwich Cathedral and we know their vision can help people appreciate the positive interaction of science with Christian faith and overcome the myth of inevitable conflict."



Norwich Cathedral is preparing to host a prehistoric guest in summer 2020 when the Natural History Museum's iconic dinosaur cast Dippy pays a four-month visit from July 11 until October 31.

The Dean of Norwich, the Very Revd Jane Hedges, said: "We are incredibly excited to be welcoming Dippy to Norwich Cathedral this summer. Dippy is such an iconic figure, and his stay in Norwich will give many thousands of people the chance to enjoy seeing him up close here in East Anglia.

"Historically Naves in churches and cathedrals have been used for a wide

variety of activities and we hope Dippy's visit will bring great joy to children and adults alike while also encouraging people to be inspired by nature and to think about important issues such as climate change and food production.

"Dippy's visit will also encourage debate about the relationship between faith and science and we look forward to the cathedral playing a part in many thought-provoking conversations."

More details about the opening times for Dippy and associated special events will be available nearer the time at **www.cathedral.org.uk**

The Archdeacon's Charge 2020

The Archdeacon's Charge family day and fun run which has been held for the past 10 years will not be returning in 2020 and beyond.

The event was founded in 2010 by the Ven John Ashe (who was Archdeacon of Lynn and Warden of Readers) following a serious car accident in 2009 when his wife's life was saved by the East Anglian Air Ambulance airlifting her from the crash scene. Since its inception the event has raised over £123,000, half of which has been donated to the air ambulance and half to local churches, youth groups, schools and charities.



Following a review of the event and its costs – and given the number of participants and visitors has dropped year-on-year recently – it was felt that now is the time for the event to gracefully finish. Many churches run summer fates, fayres and community days and these have understandably been one of the reasons why several churches chose not to take part.

The Bishop's Day – all are called

"Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" asks Mary Oliver in her poem "The Summer Day".

e often think of calling in terms of a vocation or role, but it is as much about a way of being as a way of doing. For each of us it will look different, using talents and strengths of character that only develop as we journey with God; allowing the world around us to experience the effect of our life that God has created us to have.

Paul describes the way to live out our calling: "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love" (Eph. 4:1,2).

To be called by Jesus Christ is to have your horizons broadened, and your capacities enlarged. Jesus Christ calls us to be more than we think we can be, to serve more deeply than we can imagine and to offer our lives more completely to God than we can do simply by our own efforts.

Bishop Graham is inviting everyone to explore God's calling on each of our lives

at a special day at Norwich Cathedral on Saturday 16 May.

"It will be a diverse day of celebration, discovery, reflection and enrichment and I would love you to join us and for us to seek out together what it means to be called by God," he said. "We'll be offering a great variety of sensory ways to consider how we live out our Christian faith every day."

A relaxed start over coffee and doughnuts with jazz music accompaniment will lead into a short act of worship, setting out the themes for the day.

Andrew Sinclair will then be interviewing with Bishop Graham on the topic of calling. There will be opportunities to explore and dip into a wide range of interactive areas and reflective spaces around the Cathedral, giving space to reflect on what it means to live out God's plan for each one of us.

Drop in areas open all day will include a human library, a chance to "grill a Bishop", a trust trail, a labyrinth, outside games and more.

Workshops, Bible studies, breadmaking, drama, music and choirs are just some of the variety of activities on offer, and a special creative act of worship at 2pm will be unmissable!

A taster of some of the workshops that are planned:

- Caring for creation
- Choral music
- A Children's choir
- Mental health: Recovery Church
- Loving for Life: marriage preparation with Mothers' Union
- Faith & Science
- Developing a Dementia-Friendly Church
- Being a parent
- Prayer in the everyday
- Life in the Front-Line

The day will run from 10am – 3.30pm and you are encouraged to come for the whole day. Parking is available at the Cathedral and Browne's Meadow. Book your place at www.DofN.org/2020

Children are welcome and throughout the day activities will be available for all ages to join in, including a family craft area and a toddler zone near the café, run by the PlayVan. Resources

General and seasonal resources and ideas to inform, inspire and enable.



Local guided retreats

At the centre of Christ's message to the world is, "love me, love those around you and love yourself." (Matthew 22:37-40) The Revd Deborah Hamilton-Grey thinks that the third part of this message is often overlooked. "Jesus commands us to care for ourselves because we are precious, wonderfully and fearfully made in Gods sight. We are the gift of love to those around us, we first need to find space to draw near to God."

A new collaboration with Letton Hall, west of Norwich, is now offering a space just to "be", in the form of a guided residential retreat.

"We're offering reflection, prayer, quiet, laughter, stillness, food and fellowship," explains Deborah. "Spiritual nourishment for the soul; this is retreat. Join us, all are welcome."

For a full list of retreats, booking info and a sample programme in 2020, contact Deborah at **retreats@lettonhall.org** or visit **www.lettonhall.org** for more information.



'Building Understanding'

"Inviting visitors to engage with our faith through church furnishings and festivals." In response to the Diocesan Mission Strategy 2021, the Listen stream has commissioned this resource pack for parishes across this Diocese to use as a tool for welcome and outreach.

The pack holds a set of explanatory notices designed to help weekday visitors see your church, not merely as an interesting historical building, but as the home of a worshipping community of Christians.

The intention is that, as visitors read them, they feel as if members of your church community are showing them around, helping them to understand why the contents of the building hold such deep meaning and to imagine them in use during worship.

Brief explanations are offered about significant pieces of furniture, other features of church buildings, and certain



times and seasons in the Christian year. And, if you'd like to, it's possible to replace the generic photos in the pack with photos of your own church building(s) and those who worship there – templates for each of the notices are downloadable from the Diocese of Norwich website: www.dofn.org/furniture

What's your church's carbon footprint?

The Church of England's Research and Statistics team have been working on creating a tool that will inform churches of their carbon footprint based on their energy usage. This tool will be made available to all Church of England churches using the Online Parish Returns System.

"We are aiming to streamline information from our own data sources to prepopulate the majority of the tool, so that churches will only be asked for additional information if it is not available to us elsewhere."

Each church will receive the amount of carbon produced by their church annually.

There will then be two efficiency scores, one for energy efficiency based on building size and one for attendance. There will also be some helpful tips to reduce carbon emissions. In the future there will be opportunity to see how churches progress over time as well as the ability to compare with other churches within their diocese and other similarsized churches nationally.

To find out more, please email: sam.nunney@churchofengland.org or download the Energy Footprint tool here: www.DofN.org/energyfootprinttool





Music for mission and ministry

Two three-day courses (Wales in April and Lancashire in September) are on offer to leaders of worship and musicians by the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM). Led by the Revd Helen Bent, the RSCM's Head of Ministerial Training, Music for Mission and Ministry is a training course designed to "help you make informed choices for music in worship, to help

with practical management and best practice in delivery". No musical expertise is required.

The RSCM offers several face-to-face, distance education and training programmes, published resources, courses and activities. Find out more at **www.rscm.org.uk** or call **01722 424848**

The Sacred Podcast

Have a listen to this podcast from Theos – the Christian think tank. It explores how we can have better public conversations



about the things we value, despite our differences. "Each episode features an in-depth interview with writers, thinkers, activists, comedians, community leaders and others, in which we discuss the things we hold dear, and to examine the things that hold us together – not just as individuals, but as a society." Simply search for The Sacred Podcast on the podcast app of your choice.



A Peter's Cat collection is available as an eBook from Amazon. Cartoon resources for Sunday schools can be found at www.deadseacomics.co.uk

Out & About happenings across the Diocese

A round-up of some of the parish activities over the past few months. Do send in your photos to news@dioceseofnorwich.org or tag @@dioceseofnorwich 🗹 @DioceseNorwich 🖸 @dioceseofnorwich

Lowestoft Breakfast Café milestone

Volunteers at St Andrew's provide a good value breakfast for people in the Roman Hill community, many of whom survive on very low incomes. They recently celebrated the third anniversary of providing hundreds of bacon butties and bowls of cereal served with Christian hospitality and friendship. "A real sense of community is growing."





A new community

The Cringleford Assembly launched this year. Meeting on the third Sunday of each month at the local school, Pioneer Missioner the Revd Tim Yau says, "We're gathering as a community to form deeper relationships, exploring the big questions in life and what it means to 'live well' and to celebrate being pro-active neighbours."

Mayflower 400 festival launches in Harleston church

A flotilla of 400 origami boats set sail to launch a year of Mayflower 400 celebrations in St John's Harleston. Rector the Revd Canon Nigel Tuffnell explains: "Onboard was Dr Samuel Fuller and Edward Fuller, both from Redenhall parish. The church is open during the day for anyone to come and appreciate the spectacle!"



Planting silver in the Bishop's Garden

Pupils from the Eco Council of St Michael's VA Junior School in Bowthorpe, Norwich were in their element as they helped to plant a grove of Himalayan silver birch trees in the Bishop's Garden. Head Gardener Sam Garland guided their efforts and they were rewarded with hot chocolate and cookies!





Week of prayer for Christian unity in Aylsham

"It was a real joy to worship with our friends from the other churches in our town during this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: Community, Methodist, Catholic, Quaker, Anglican and Salvation Army churches joined together to pray."

Bishop's Deanery visits round-up

Bishop Graham has had a busy few months touring the Diocese of Norwich deaneries. Here is a small selection of snapshots from those visits.

Chaplains and senior staff shared a time of prayer with the Bishop in the Sacred Space at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, King's Lynn.



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"I'm in awe of what you do!" said Bishop Graham when invited to take a turn driving the Caister lifeboat out to the sandbanks.



The Bishop tried his hand at turning over the grain at Crisp Maltings, Great Ryburgh, working with local farmers to produce malt for brewers worldwide.

"Why do you believe in God?" Some forthright questions to the Bishop from a small group of Year 5 pupils at Fairhaven Primary School.



A resident of the Manor Care Home in Aylsham chats with Bishop Graham.

WHAT'S ON

Highlights of events and learning opportunities across the Diocese March 2020 – May 2020

For more head to www.DofN.org/events

MARCH

Silence in Norwich Cathedral

Mon 2 Mar | 7pm - 8pm

Address: Norwich Cathedral, The Close, NR1 4DD

Lent: the season of prayerful self-examination. Join us for a brief, silent haven from the concerns of daily life.

Admission: Free. Contact: Gudrun Warren; 01603 218443, gwarren@cathedral.org.uk



Our Climate Challenge

Thur 5, 12, 19 Mar | 7.30pm each day Address: St Margaret's, The Street, Hempnall, NR15 2LR Join us for a series of three evenings during Lent concerning Climate Change. Admission: Free.

Contact: The Revd Liz Billett; 01508 482366, lizzie.billett@gmail.com

Godly Play Taster Session

Sat 7 March | 9.30-11.30am

Address: Wymondham Abbey, Wymondham, NR18 0PH

At this session hear how Godly Play is used in different contexts, from schools, churches and care homes. Enjoy the awe of being welcomed into the Godly Play storytelling experience, hear and story for yourself and wonder together.

Admission: Free. Contact: Liz Dawes; 01603 882335, liz.dawes@dioceseofnorwich.org

Dementia Inclusive Church: Journeying with Hope

Sat 7 Mar | 9.45am - 3.30pm

Address: Norwich Cathedral, The Close, NR1 4DD

This workshop will explore a faith-based, relationship-centred, hope-filled response to the challenge of dementia. Please book in advance.

Admission: Free. Contact: Lesley Lofts; 01603 882338, lesley.lofts@dioceseofnorwich.org



An evening of Flanders and Swann

Sat 7 Mar | 7.30pm

Address: St Mary Magdalene's, Silver Road, Norwich, NR3 4TF

Both well-known favourites and completely unusual songs by Michael Flanders & Donald Swann, presented by the baritone Leon Berger who was for many years Donald Swann's librarian and musical secretary.

Admission: £8. Contact: Revd Selwyn Tillett; 01603 699957, selwyn@tillett.org.uk

Afternoon Concert with the Norwich Cathedral Choir

Sun 15 Mar | 4pm

Address: St Peter's, Newmarket Road, Cringleford, NR4 6UE Come and join us for a wonderful afternoon of Choral Music at St. Peter's Church in Cringleford. The recital includes favourite choral music such as works by Rutter, Stanford, Britten, Brahms and Lauridsen. Please book in advance.

Admission: £6. Contact: Juliet Godier; 01603 259138, church.cringleford@tiscali.co.uk

APRIL

Escape from the Vicarage

Fri 3 Apr | 9am - 1pm

Address: Letton Hall, Shipdham, IP25 7SA Life at the vicarage can have its ups and downs for young people who have a parent in Christian ministry. Why not come and meet others who understand the pressures? A morning of fun and go-karting for young people in school years 7-13 who have a parent working in the church or public Christian ministry. Please book in advance.

Admission: Free. Contact: Liz Dawes; 01603 882335, liz.dawes@dioceseofnorwich.org

Music for Springtime with Afternoon Tea

Sat 4 Apr | 3pm

Address: All Saints, Lime Kiln Lane, Upper Sheringham, NR26 8AE Angela Dugdale and friends (piano, clarinet and flute) will enchant us with a springtime concert while we enjoy delicious afternoon tea. Funds raised for the bell appeal. Please book in advance. Admission: £10. Contact: Sue Morton; 01263 826078, suejmorton@gmail.com



Ecumenical Palm Sunday service

Sun 5 Apr | 6.15pm

Address: Norwich Salvation Army Citadel, NR2 1LL

This annual Ecumenical service is organised by the Church Leaders of Norfolk and Waveney Churches Together (NWCT).

Admission: Free. Contact: Catherine Howe; catherine.howe@dioceseofnorwich.org



The Passion of Sophia - A short play for Easter

Sun 5 Apr | 7.30pm

Address: St Cuthbert's, Wroxham Road, Sprowston, NR7 8TZ

"The Passion of Sophia" takes to the dance floor, where the moon has been sold for a glitter ball. Enter Sophia; she is wisdom from an earlier age, and she's searching for her greatest treasure.

Admission: Free. Contact: Dean Akrill; 01603 482360, dean@sprowston.org.uk

Easter Sunday Sunrise Service

Sun 12 Apr | 6am

Address: Beach Road Car Park, Beech Road, Happisburgh, NR12 0PP

Begin Easter Day by watching the sun rise as we celebrate communion on the cliff top at Happisburgh.

Admission: Free. Contact: Revd Catherine Dobson; 01692 650359, revcdobson@live.com



Art Exhibition

Sat 25 – Sun 26 Apr | 10am - 5pm each day Address: Trimingham Hall, Stone Field, Trimingham, NR11 8HY Local art exhibition to raise funds for Trimingham Church. Refreshments, including light lunches, will be served on both days. Free parking.

Admission: Free. Contact: Dot Bradley; 01263833249 (after 6pm)

Cultivating Hearts

Sat 25 Apr | 10am - 4pm

Address: Fountain of Life, The Well Christian Centre, Swaffham Road, Ashill, IP25 7BT A day to encourage, equip and empower all those that engage with children, youth and families in church ministry, facilitated through a varied programme of worship, topical keynotes, and seminars with practical ideas and discussion. Please book in advance. Admission: £10. Contact: Matthew Beckett; 01760 441902, chearts@folchurch.co.uk

MAY



Colkirk Arts Festival

Sat 9 - Sun 10 May | 10am - 5pm Sat, 10am -4pm Sun

Address: St Mary the Virgin, Church Road, Colkirk, NR21 7NP

An art and craft extravaganza! Our church will be bedecked with decorations on the theme 'Colours of the Rainbow'

Admission: Free. Contact: Vanda Richards; 01328 316514, vandarichards29@gmail.com

Julian Festival 2020

Sat 9 May | 10.30am - 4pm

Address: St Julian's, Rouen Road, Norwich, NR11QD

A celebration of the life, legacy and spiritual witness of the Lady Julian of Norwich, in the church where she lived and prayed.

Admission: Free.

Contact: Fr Richard Stanton; 01603 626104, richard_stanton@btinternet.com

Who Let the Dads Out? Nuts and Bolts with Tony Sharp

Thurs 14 May | 7pm - 9pm Address: All Saints, Church Plain, Mattishall, Dereham, NR20 3QF Tony Sharp from WLTDO? (Care for the Family) is leading this fun and informative session that focuses on the 'nuts and bolts' of setting up and the ongoing running of the Who Let the Dads Out? group. Please book in advance. Admission: Free. Contact: Liz Dawes; 01603

882335, liz.dawes@dioceseofnorwich.org

Spring Concerts at St Matthias Church

Mon 18 May | 7pm

Address: St Matthias, Church Road, Thorpe-next-Haddiscoe, NR14 6PT Enjoy a variety of musical performances - from folk to contemporary - in this wonderful round-towered church.

Admission: Free. Contact: Alison Shirreff; 01502 677525, low.farm@btinternet.com



Norfolk Churches Trust Stately Car Boot Sale

Sun 24 May | 10am - 3.30pm

Address: Sennowe Park, Guist, NR20 5PB A car boot with a difference to raise money for Norfolk's many churches. Expect plenty of pitches, food, competition, an auction and plenty more in a stately location. A fun day out.

Admission: £5 per adult. Contact: Patrick Lines; statelycarboot@gmail.com





The Bishop's Day: 'All are called'

Saturday 16 May 10am – 3.30pm at Norwich Cathedral

A day for all the family

Join together for worship, workshops, prayer

and activities

Come for the whole day

and bring a packed lunch







Workshops including:

- Caring for creation
- Parenting
- Prayer in the everyday
- Life on the frontline
- Bible study
- Dementia-Friendly Church
- Bread making
- Science and faith
- Caring for others
- · Choirs and singing

FREE - but please book your place at www.DofN.org/2020