



Diocese of Hereford

archdeacons' visitation news

Proclaiming Christ and growing disciples

Welcome to this year's Archdeacons' Visitation News. In this magazine, you will read about some of the progress we are making towards our vision for 2030. Here in the Diocese of Hereford, we are shaped by our three core behaviours: we are people who are rooted in **prayer**, we seek to be more **Christ-like** and are active in our **engagement** with others. Together, we seek to **proclaim Christ and grow disciples**.

These behaviours are underpinned by our **five** strategic aims, which are focused around:

- Confidently proclaiming Christ and welcoming new disciples so that we can all grow deeper in faith.
- Growing leaders and building teams: Expanding the number of both clergy and lay leaders as well as supporting and equipping them to do the work for which they are called to.
- Growing a younger congregational profile by focusing on Youth and Intergenerational Mission.
- Achieving sustainable finance through generous giving and asset management.
- Developing a clear future for every church building in our diocese so that we can meet the challenge of net zero.

We hope that by 2030 we achieve our aims and we will measure this through our **seven** bold outcomes.

By 2030, we hope to see at least 3% of our population (10,000 people) regularly attending worship in our churches, this is about increasing the number of people of all ages. We expect to see many (at least 50) benefices with a congregation of at least 50 people or more (100 people in our market towns).

By focusing on and investing in projects that support young people, we hope to more than double the number of young people choosing to attend worship regularly in our diocese, from 429 to 1,000. We are already on track with starting this work, jointly investing in two pilot projects to develop youth hubs in our diocese. You can read more about this project on page 2.

We are also committed to developing leaders, this too is underway. We hope to have at least 200 self-supporting or lay leaders trained and commissioned. At the start of 2024, we already have over 120 people commissioned in lay roles. We continue to give thanks and affirm their ministry. We provide training and seek to encourage others to join us.

Investing in our people is important along with growing younger as a Church. We expect to have 25 skilled, trained, paid youth church leaders who can support our 50 new worshipping communities (25 for children and young people, including FLOURISH¹ worshipping communities) by 2030. This is an ambitious goal but we are confident that prayer will be answered and people will grow in this area of ministry.

Our ambition is that we will equip whole-life disciples so that together, we continue to proclaim Christ and grow disciples for future generations, transforming lives.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition of Archdeacons' Visitation News.

¹A FLOURISH worshipping community is about partnership with Church of England Schools – recognising God's call to see children and young people, communities and churches transformed through growing faith.

Produced and printed by

Welcome

This newsletter introduces ideas for change, to inspire, challenge and equip you for your ministry. We pray that you will consider and begin by making just one change during our Year of Faith.

We see, week-in, week-out, how you honour and preserve the ordinary, everyday patterns of worship and service which have sustained our churches for generations. We appreciate your continued commitment to service.

Our churches and communities are holy places; worship and service may not be especially shiny or new, but is faithful. Your actions are heartfelt acts in the name of Christ, which can offer people a glimpse of the future glory of heaven. Thank you for your love, service and care.

We hope that our shared worship at the Visitation services will offer support and encouragement as we continue to build God's Kingdom here in our diocese.

The Ven Fiona Gibson
Archdeacon of Ludlow


The Ven Derek Chedzey
Archdeacon of Hereford



Year of Faith 2024 – Key diary dates

- Growing confidence in our Christian faith – St Michael and All Angels Ledbury (This is a Bishop's Teaching event)
Saturday 13 July 9.30am – 1pm
- Growing confidence in our Christian faith – venue TBC (Bridgnorth Deanery) (This is a Bishop's Teaching event)
Saturday 5 October 9.30am – 1pm
- Bishop's Study Day 2 – St Peter's Church, Hereford
Thursday 24 October 9.30am – 3pm

All welcome – to book a place on any of our Year of Faith events, please visit our website or contact our main office on:

 **01432 373300**

Growing younger: a focus on youth



The Church of England's vision for the 2020s prioritises growing younger and becoming more diverse, so that we better reflect the communities we serve, creating a sustainable church for future generations.

The Diocese of Hereford faces a critical challenge in engagement with young people aged 11–18. Only

0.66% (429) of the current population of children and young people aged 0–17 in the diocese attend an Anglican place of worship. We face the challenge of a scattered population spread across large rural areas, with many small parishes and tiny congregations, rural poverty and lack of transport, making it particularly difficult to mentor and engage young populations. This requires a fresh approach to rural mission and evangelism with children and young people, to see a turnaround.

In partnership with the national Church, this July we will commence a three-year project, 'Hub and Spoke model' pilot, to understand and evaluate a fresh approach to mission and evangelism with young people in a rural context. We will research how to grow young disciples in our dispersed rural population, with the support of our research partners. We hope this will help us achieve our bold ambition by 2030 of growing younger, developing youth leaders and growing new youth worshipping communities.

The pilot will consist of two Youth Hubs, one in Leominster and the other in Bishops Castle which will prioritise the development of a new youth-focused worshipping community as an extension of existing local church communities. The pilot will test a discipleship pathway that connects with young people through community and schools-based activities testing how faith, discipleship and leadership are developed. The Hub will be the centre for training in youth ministry. Hubs will have local PCC ownership with accountability and oversight through a Local Partnership Group drawn from local and diocesan representation. Each Hub will employ a Youth Pioneer and a Youth and Community Worker who will inspire, develop and support local volunteer leadership teams and a Hub Coordinator will oversee the two Youth Hubs. We know that supporting the surrounding rural areas (the 'Spoke') is important, ensuring that people are connecting to village churches and inspiring, training and developing support for smaller-scale but well-connected youth engagement.

We hope this project will create excitement and inspire leaders in other areas of our diocese to learn and try new things. This approach will support our bold outcomes of doubling the number of young people in our congregations and creating a growing, lively and relevant worshipping community within reach of every young person in the diocese while enabling national learning for rural youth work.

Enhance your church's fundraising efforts

Whether you're raising funds for new facilities, building repairs, youth worker recruitment, or daily running costs, the Ecclesiastical Fundraising Hub provides resources to aid your church's growth in fundraising. This practical hub is organised into user-friendly steps, each offering information, guidance and tools, regardless of your fundraising experience.

Explore a wealth of articles, blogs and supporting documents on various topics such as digital fundraising, capital projects, understanding the grants process and forming fundraising teams. Access a free searchable list of church funders providing grants, along with tailored fundraising support for small rural churches.

Also, to support time-constrained churches and volunteers, looking for quick information on the diverse fundraising landscape, the hub offers concise, insightful bitesize videos addressing key fundraising issues. Additionally, sign up for live, free webinars conducted in collaboration with Philanthropy Company across 2024. For additional help, call the fundraising helpline below.

📞 **0345 601 9959**
🌐 www.ecclesiastical.com/churchfundraising



An update from grant-making charity, Benefact Trust



BENEFACT TRUST

Every day, Benefact Trust, the charitable owner of Benefact Group, witnesses the crucial role churches and charities play in our communities. Since the Trust was established in 1972, it has awarded over £256m in funding to support these organisations to thrive and make a positive

impact in society. Benefact Trust's grants support a range of causes and there are many heart-warming stories to be found on the website.

🌐 www.benefacttrust.co.uk/news



Nominate your church for a chance to win



The Movement for Good Awards programme is back again with grants of £1,000 and more to give to churches and charities. Ecclesiastical is proudly part of the Benefact Group, who are giving away over £1 million to churches and charities in the 2024 Movement for Good Awards.

£1,000 draws are now open for nominations

- You can nominate your church or favourite charity for the £1,000 draw.
- You can nominate as many charities as you like; it's one nomination per charity per person.

There are six £1,000 draws this year giving away between £50,000 and £120,000 in each. Once you've nominated, share your nomination, and get your friends and family to support too.

Did you know?

The Movement for Good Awards has gifted over £5.75 million to more than 2,500 charities since the initiative started in 2019.

Last year, A Rocha UK was awarded £5,000 in the Environment and Climate special draw. A Rocha UK is a Christian charity working to protect and restore the natural world and is committed to equipping Christians and churches in the UK to care for the environment.

Also, in 2023, £11,000 was awarded to 10 church-related charities through the £1,000 Movement for Good Awards; Kilkenny Christian Centre in ROI actually won twice! So please get nominating; next time it could be your church! You can find out more at:

🌐 www.movementforgood.com/ecclesiastical

Contains promotional material

Would you like to sign up for e-news?

The monthly e-news is full of useful information to support you in areas such as fundraising, church security and environmental impact. Signing up is easy and you can unsubscribe whenever you choose. Many of Ecclesiastical's customers have chosen to receive this and we hope you would like to join them.

 www.ecclesiastical.com/signup



Financial support for your 2025 sabbatical

Established in 1987, the Ecclesiastical Ministry Bursary Awards (MBAs) have assisted over 1,400 clergy members in funding a variety of extended leave projects.


The experience of a sabbatical can be life-changing and have a positive and long-lasting impact on your church and community. One of the 2023 recipients, the Rev'd. Heston Groenewald, vicar of All Hallows Church in Leeds, received a bursary to support his local interfaith ministry.

He visited India and Pakistan to experience and learn more about the diverse cultures and customs that make up the fabric of the local community. On his trip, Heston experienced the Holi festival in India and celebrated Easter with Christians and Muslims in Lahore.

“ The MBA grant enabled an amazing adventure around India and Pakistan and so has been a valuable, wonderful investment in my wellbeing and in my local interfaith ministry. ” **Rev'd. Heston Groenewald**

The application window for the 2025 MBA programme is now open and closes in September 2024. In 2025, we are particularly keen to see more sabbaticals which aim to support the drive for net zero carbon.

If you would like to find out more about the Awards, including eligibility criteria and application details, please visit:

 www.ecclesiastical.com/mba



Invest in making a difference

Worries about social matters, our planet and the environment are factors most of us think about daily. To do more to help address these concerns, there is increasing interest from people looking to invest ethically in accordance with their principles.

What is ethical investing?

Richard Wood, Director of Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Services (pictured below), explains, “Put simply, ethical investments allow people to invest without sacrificing their environmental, social, moral or religious principles while at the same time aiming to make a profitable return.”



Ethical investment funds can be screened using negative or positive criteria. For negatively screened funds, the fund manager will, for example, be screening investments to avoid a range of activities considered harmful – such as companies involved in manufacturing tobacco.

When using positive screening, fund managers actively identify companies that make a positive

social impact or who invest sustainably and/or responsibly. They will have, for example, good corporate governance and employment practices as well as being active in making a positive impact on the environment.

To find out more about ethical investing, contact Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Services today.



0800 107 0190



getadvice@ecclesiastical.com



www.ecclesiastical.com/financial-advice

Please note: The value of investments can go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount you invested. Your capital is at risk.

Looking for help to go green?

Give your parishioners a warm welcome!

We all want our church buildings to be welcoming spaces for both prayer and for wider community activities, but particularly in the chilly months, keeping buildings warm is a challenge and can be costly and harmful to the environment.

Wherever you are in your journey to reduce your church's carbon emissions, Ecclesiastical would like to help. For example, they would like to spread the word about some interesting innovations that they've come across recently.

Warming chandeliers

St Matthew's has been trialling innovative radiant heating chandeliers in their church in Bristol. These chandeliers use a very gentle wavelength of heat, like that of the winter sun, and they warm just the space needed, not the whole church. They have proved much cheaper to run than a central heating system and can help to lower your carbon footprint.



Through the Movement for Good awards, Ecclesiastical awarded a £35,000 grant to St Matthew's in 2023, which will allow them to make the trial installation permanent. If you would like to consider applying for a similar grant, further information can be found on page 3. Also, if you wish to install this type of heating, please let the Ecclesiastical Underwriters

know, so that they can advise on any potential insurance implications and ensure the system itself is covered.

Heated cushions

Another innovation, helping church communities take steps to reduce their carbon emissions by warming people not spaces, is a heated seat cushion! These are powered by lithium-ion batteries which are widely used as a power source in portable electrical products. However,



if you do choose this option, it is important to select seat cushions and fabrics that have an appropriate fire performance and to follow the guidance on charging the cushions. Cushions should comply with British Standards and have the CE mark. If you think that this is an option for you, you will find guidance about the cushions here:

🌐 www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/church-heated-cushions

Ecclesiastical has also developed a new Made Simple guide, which can support you on your journey to make your church buildings more environmentally friendly. It includes information about other alternative heating systems like heat pumps, information about LED lighting and much more.

🌐 www.ecclesiastical.com/madesimple

If you have any tips that have helped your church in its environmental journey, why not drop Ecclesiastical an email and they can share your ideas in their monthly digital newsletter.

✉ weboffice@ecclesiastical.com



Insurance made simple!

As church insurance experts, Ecclesiastical is well placed to help you navigate many of the complicated insurance responsibilities of your church. They have created a series of 'Made Simple' guides which highlight potential risks and insurance implications of the day-to-day running of churches.



The guides also offer help with activities and projects that PCCs often become involved in, which include:

- Climate change and your church
- Administering insurance
- Building works
- Church events
- Church property
- Church valuation
- Community outreach
- Digital technology
- Legal expenses
- People on church premises
- Unoccupied buildings

You can find lots more information at:

🌐 www.ecclesiastical.com/madesimple



Funeral planning

As you know, funerals can be costly, but Ecclesiastical can help you make provisions to reduce the financial worry for your family when the time comes and ensure your wishes are provided for.¹

¹ Terms and conditions apply – see website for details.

☎ 0800 055 6503
✉ info@epsfunerals.com
🌐 www.funeralplans.co.uk

Car insurance

Ecclesiastical's Clergy Motor Insurance has been tailored specifically for the clergy and includes benefits such as business use, unlimited windscreen cover and up to £500 cover for church goods in the car.¹ To find out more about the benefits of this policy, get in touch with Ecclesiastical.

☎ 0345 450 9396
🌐 www.ecclesiastical.com/church/car-insurance
¹ Subject to terms and conditions



Month by month support



So you can better look after your church and parishioners, Ecclesiastical has again produced their easy-to-view calendar to help you plan maintenance activities throughout the year.

🌐 www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-calendar

Insure your home with Ecclesiastical and they will donate £130 to a church of your choice

Trust130 is just one of the ways in which Ecclesiastical gives back to the community; for every new direct home insurance policy taken out, Ecclesiastical offers to donate £130 to an Anglican church or cathedral of the policyholder's choice.¹

Since 2017, Ecclesiastical has donated over £500,000 to more than 2,500 churches in the UK.

A £130 donation really helped **St Peter's Church in Parwich**. Church Treasurer **Stuart Chambers** told Ecclesiastical:

“ If you're short of numbers, it's a big job keeping everything ship-shape. I have a ride-on mower, but you can't get to the actual graves on that so inevitably they can look a bit unkempt, which is a real shame. ”

With the £130 donation, St Peter's was able to keep its graveyard looking neat and tidy by paying for a man with a strimmer.

Award-winning home insurance

As well as supporting your church, when you take out a home insurance policy with Ecclesiastical you are joining one of the most trusted home insurance providers with the happiest customers.²



Ecclesiastical continued to top the Fairer Finance league table in Spring 2024 for home insurance for a record 19th consecutive time, retaining the gold ribbon status. Their buildings and contents cover is also a Which? Best Buy and it was voted the best home insurance in the Times Money Mentor Awards in 2023.³



Get a home insurance quote

Ecclesiastical is a specialist insurer who understands the needs of those working in the church and for the church. Their policy helps to protect your home and takes into account the extra duties you carry out for the church.

☎ 0345 777 3322 and quote **CHOPS24**
🌐 www.ecclesiastical.com/homeinsurance

¹ Terms and conditions apply. Visit www.ecclesiastical.com/trust130-terms ² www.fairerfinance.com/ratings/customer-experience-ratings/home-insurance ³ www.ecclesiastical.com/homeinsurance

Financial sustainability – tools to make the admin more efficient

Local church finances can be a challenge to manage. One of the many responsibilities of our Churchwardens is to work with the vicar and PCC to ensure there is adequate oversight of administration of the parish, including its finances.



Our Finance Director for the Diocese of Hereford, Stephen Herbert, offers some advice to parishes on how to use tools to support this work.

How straightforward is it to manage your PCC's finances, especially if there are multiple sources of income, perhaps for different purposes?

Every year, the PCC should review and approve an annual budget, and then review progress against this budget at least once a quarter. The Charity Commission reminds trustees that they should know the financial position of their charity 'at all times'. It's the responsibility of all trustees – not just the Treasurer – to make sure that the charity's money is safe, properly used and accounted for.

It may be time for your church to consider a software package designed for charity fund accounting to make the job easier. Twenty churches in our diocese have taken advantage of a discounted £5 per month offer available through the Diocesan Office for Data Developments' **MyFundAccounting.Online** solution. Endorsed by Parish Buying, this product allows a Treasurer to produce accounts quickly, with the ability to import bank statements and run reports at any point in time. The software will generate the year-end financial statements and the annual Return of Parish Finance without re-work. Online software facilitates access anywhere, can lessen the load on one individual by allowing other PCC members to view or input data, can speed up your Independent Examiner's review, and may make it easier to attract a new Treasurer in future. Please contact the diocesan Finance Team to find out more.

Does your PCC hold donor financial records in a secure, Data Protection Act compliant environment? Is your PCC missing out on Gift Aid and Small Donations Scheme ('GASDS') claims?

MyGiving.Online could be the answer, helping your PCC understand how your congregation and visitors choose to give. It can save your Gift Aid Officer valuable processing time by importing Parish Giving Scheme statements, claiming Gift Aid and GASDS directly from HMRC, and produce thank you letters. When volunteer time is at a premium, investing in good tools to get the work done makes sense. If you need further advice or support with any of the financial responsibilities for your church, parish or benefice, do please get in touch with our Finance Team.

✉ finance@hereford.anglican.org

Just one thing – making your church more missional



I wonder how many of you listen to a very popular Radio 4 programme, 'Just One Thing'? It's an appealing title for a show because making just one small change seems achievable for us all.

Change is always challenging, whether that be for our church or for us personally, but small changes can make it possible. There are a good number of churches up and down the diocese that are now taking small steps to making change happen and in doing so are welcoming new members.

St Mary's Tenbury have been trying to develop children and families work, building on a successful Messy Church project. They have a new opportunity for local families to come to church at a time of day that really suits them and their children, with age-appropriate worship, teaching and prayer. It is still early days and the team are seeing about five regular families involved, but the hope is for growth over the coming months.

St Mary's Alevly made a small change at Christmas and put on a Christmas Tree festival. The Revd Aldwinckle writes, 'We decided back in September to hold a Christmas Tree Festival over a weekend in December. We invited businesses, local community groups and our village school to enter a tree that advertised them.'

'We had 23 trees which brought these groups together both in terms of setting up and visiting over the weekend. People found out about groups they didn't know existed. It was lovely to see so many people in our church and to be able to chat with them. A great way to bring the community together with the church at the heart of it. The community Facebook group had lots of great photographs and comments about the event. We used it as an opportunity to invite people to Christmas events and services – also well attended.'

St George's Pontesbury committed itself during the five weeks immediately before Christmas to offer Children's Church each week, alongside the principal Sunday service. It attracted two families, four parents and four children, who are worshipping regularly. In addition, this has encouraged three other families to join the intergenerational monthly service in the local Care Home.

These are just a small sample of churches from around the diocese that have tried 'Just One Thing' and through each of them new people have found their way to church and the churches have felt healthier for it.

So how about your church? Would you try 'Just One Thing' during this Year of Faith? If you'd like to know more or want to explore options, get in touch with me, Mark Melliush, Mission Enabler.

✉ mark.melliush@hereford.anglican.org

Generosity



This year, we are all encouraged to look at our faith, to discover, possibly anew, what the Bible tells us, and to explore through prayer how Christ is calling us to respond.

Is it surprising that there are more Bible verses on money, wealth and possessions than on any other subject, other

than love. There are four times more references than on prayer or faith and well over half the parables Jesus tells centre on money and wealth. We see that living a generous life is a fundamental calling of Christian discipleship.

What is your favourite story or verse that speaks of God's generosity? Perhaps the feeding of the five thousand, where we see how God takes a humble small offering and turns it into an abundant feast; or the wedding at Cana where the abundance is of quality as well as quantity of wine, and the generosity of Mary's faith and Jesus' humility looms large. Maybe the poor widow, who gladly gives all that she has left – her two copper coins – to God.

It is often easier to be fearful of scarcity or build a sense of resentment or blame others for what we or our churches feel we lack. Jesus teaches us of God's generosity, Paul tells us that God loves a cheerful giver, and we are called as Christians to speak and act from our hearts. Not a sense of what we should do, but rather what God would have us do. Rather than blame others and allow ourselves to be imprisoned by our fear, we can step out in faith, knowing that God has given us the resources we need.

Only by following God's example of generosity, and by remembering that nothing is ours alone but that we are caretakers of the world and the resources which God has given us, can we live as an example to others and ensure that God's Kingdom is built here on earth.

If you would like us to talk about generosity to your PCC, congregation, benefice or deanery, please contact Mark and Rosa, our Parish Giving Advisers, who work with parishes to help build a culture of abundant generosity.

✉ pga@hereford.anglican.org
 🌐 www.hereford.anglican.org/generous-giving

Checklist – can you answer these questions?

Not everyone who visits our churches knows something about what we believe, what we do, or what we value. We need to invite those who step into our churches to witness our values and join in.

Here are some key things to consider.

1. Have we told people what's important to us and why?
2. How are we inviting people to join in with what God, in this place, is calling us to do, such as visiting the sick, reaching out to our young people and combatting loneliness?
3. What are we giving to the congregation and community we serve, and what opportunities are we giving them to become part of God's mission, such as praying for people, offering hospitality and addressing local needs?
4. Can people see what we need as a church community and why, and have we invited them to join in?
5. Have we thanked those who contribute to the life and work of the church?



For more information

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

Facebook: Ecclesiastical **X:** @churchmatters

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