

TOGETHER

The FREE magazine from the Diocese of Rochester | Issue 14 | August-October 2022

GROW | ENRICH | RESOURCE

COVER STORY: ONGOING CARE FOR UKRAINE PAGE 8



KENT'S
FORGOTTEN
CHRISTIAN
WOMEN

BIG ISSUE:
IS ONLINE
CHURCH STILL
NEEDED?

ANNUAL
REPORT
ROUND UP

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Diocese of *Rochester*
called together



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Welcome to our first printed edition of Together since the start of the pandemic – it's great to be back in physical form!

If you've not come across us before, this is an ideal edition to get acquainted with some great round-up articles.

Check out our **Focus On** (pg 8) section, where we share the story of how we have worked together as a diocesan family through another tough year – don't miss our Year in Numbers centrespread too (pg 16).

Plus, from Pilates and language classes to a warm welcome in schools, we learn about some of the ways care and compassion are being shown by local Christians to Ukrainians refugees now settling in our communities.

In **Everyday Faith** (pg 26), we meet Chichi, Bursar at St Benedict's Centre, whose role of hospitality and welcome is very much an expression of her faith. Plus, in our **One to One** interview (pg 24), the Diocese's Property Director gives us an insight into his work and passions.

Finally, ever heard of Bertha, Isabella, or Charlotte? No? Then head to our **HeadSpace** section, where we share details of a fascinating new book shining a much-needed light on the role women have played in making the Church in Kent what it is today.

Enjoy!

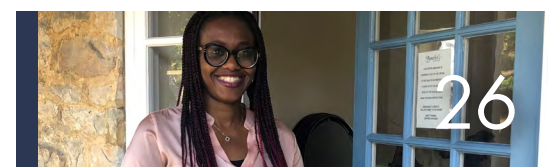
Jennifer Ross
Communications Manager

Editor: Jennifer Ross
jennifer.ross@rochester.anglican.org
In-house design:
Katerina Gerhardt
Design: CPO
Print: Yeomans

FIND US:

@CofERochester
 @SeeofRochester

Front cover from St Benedict's Centre
Deadline for next edition:
3 October 2022
Get in touch :
communications@rochester.anglican.org



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SCHOOL CELEBRATIONS MAKE JOYFUL RETURN

Just over 700 Year 6 and Year 5 pupils were welcomed back to Church School Celebration Days in Rochester Cathedral and at Bromley Parish Church in June - the first since before the pandemic.

The celebrations – which were organised by the Diocesan Education Team, and in Bromley, by local

parishes and schools - brought children together for a time of fellowship and fun, as they reflected on their years in primary school.

Workshops at both celebrations were extremely varied, including, dance, cookery, making sock puppets, drumming and singing.



IT'S A BUG'S LIFE

All Saints Church, Snodland had a wonderful afternoon discovering plants, grasses and insects in their churchyard as part of the national Churches Count for Nature. The national initiative is run by Caring for God's Acre, and is a great way to understand and benchmark the often wonderful biodiversity found in churchyards.



EVERYTHING'S COMING UP RADISHES

Everyone at the Holy Redeemer Church, Lamorbey is very proud of their church team, pre-school staff and children, for working together to create a fantastic new allotment out of an overgrown piece of wasteland behind the church. Now the children are growing potatoes, radishes, tomatoes, lettuce, cabbage and strawberries #CaringForGodsEarthInSidcup.



NINE HUNDRED YEARS YOUNG

What an anniversary! St Peter's Church, Ightham has celebrated its Nonacentury this year with a weekend of displays and activities, including some suitably historic dressing up. Congratulations to them for their 900 years of Christian witness in the area.



A SPLASHING-LY GOOD TIME

The 'Good Sport' award goes to Archdeacon Andy Wooding Jones, the Archdeacon of Rochester, who took a fair few wet sponges in the face at the St Mary, Greenhithe's Summer Fair. No-one said ministry was easy! Everyone certainly enjoyed themselves though.



HELP TACKLE POVERTY AROUND THE WORLD: donate to the Diocese's Poverty and Hope Appeal 2022

For four decades, the Diocese of Rochester's Poverty and Hope Appeal, has allowed us to play our part in tackling the causes and effects of poverty in different parts of the world.

Last year, over £20,000 was raised - thank you. This year we are invited us to offer our support again, and to be God's 'hands and feet', through our generosity.

Working in partnership with three major Christian charities - Christian Aid, USPG and CMS - the Appeal links with trusted and experienced local partners who best understand the needs of the communities in which they work.

This year the money raised will go to fund vital work around the world in support of left-behind minorities in Bangladesh, children's education in

rural Myanmar, and people living in the Favelas (slums) of Brazil, as well as sustainability projects in three of our companion dioceses, Kondoia and Mpwapwa in Tanzania, and Harare in Zimbabwe.

Launching this year's Poverty and Hope Appeal, Bishop Simon Burton-Jones, the Bishop of Tonbridge says, "Every gift you make will go to these initiatives, relieving poverty and the fear that stalks it. God in Christ loves to show his generosity. And he does this through us. We are his hands and his feet. And we are also his money."

To donate scan the QR code or visit:
www.rochester.anglican.org/everyday-faith/ourfaithinaction/poverty-and-hope-appeal/



RIBBONS OF REMEMBRANCE:

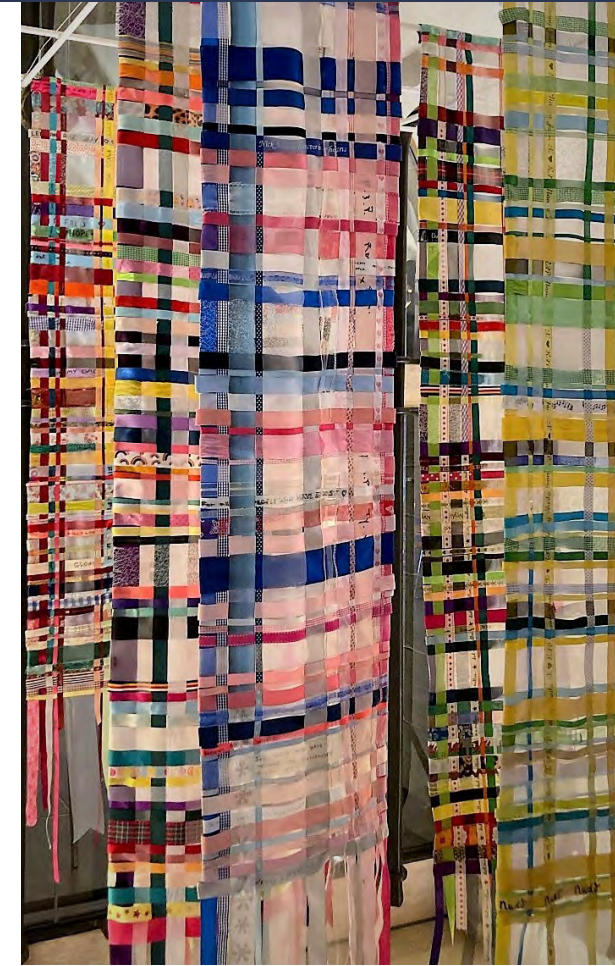
In March 2021, to mark the first anniversary of lockdown, Rochester Cathedral invited the public to tie ribbons on the railings around the Cathedral Catalpa tree.

These ribbons were tokens of love and affection for those who had died because of Covid 19. They were also signs of hope. The response was dramatic as a rainbow of ribbons spread quickly across the railings.

The Dean of the Cathedral commissioned local artists Wendy Daws and Päivi Seppälä to create a more permanent memorial from those ribbons. With community involvement, Wendy and Päivi, created a wonderful interlocking pattern of fabric, somewhat reminiscent of Tibetan prayer flags or banners.

This interconnected montage of coloured memories represents the thoughts and prayers of many and their hopes for the future.

Ribbons of Remembrance is currently on display in the Cathedral Crypt until 1 September.



FRUITFUL STUDIES Congratulations to the 14 people who have achieved their Bishop's Certificate. This qualification equips them to communicate the Christian faith engagingly in a variety of ways and contexts, and prepares them to be able to contribute to ministry in their parish here in the Diocese. Find out about how you can deepen and explore your relationship with God at: www.rochester.anglican.org/everyday-faith/





ONGOING CARE FOR UKRAINE

Since the war in Ukraine began in February, at least 12 million people have fled their homes according to the United Nations. Many local churches, schools and organisations across the area of the Diocese are now busy working together to support those Ukrainian families who are settling here in the UK, and to address their practical as well as emotional and spiritual needs.

CHRIST CHURCH BEXLEYHEATH HAS GIVEN PERMISSION FOR THE LOCAL UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY TO HOLD WORSHIP IN THE CHURCH ON A WEEKLY BASIS.

“Many of the children do not speak any English and are also highly traumatised, so it has been a challenge but also a huge joy and privilege to welcome them”, says Alison Saunders, Headteacher at St Lawrence CE Primary, a small village school in Seal Chart in Tonbridge Archdeaconry.

Despite being a small rural school of just eighty children, it has not stopped the school offering a big welcome to the five Ukrainian children who have moved to the area.

“At the start of the year, we were inspired as a community by the parable of the mustard seed; the idea that something so tiny could grow into something so large. It was a challenge to us and made us believe that the children and adults of our small community could have a big impact on the world and bring about positive change.”

With the arrival of Ukrainians into the community, it

soon became clear to them just where this challenge was taking them.

“To our surprise we have become a hub for Ukrainian refugee children and their families. I am so proud of all our children, parents and teachers, who have donated toys, clothes, money and all sorts of items, and just really embraced them into our community.”

A Crowdfunder quickly raised enough money to be able to pay for Oksana, a Ukrainian refugee and English teacher who had arrived in the area, to provide regular English language classes to the Ukrainian children in the school.

Alison says that Oksana has also become a real comfort and friend to the refugee children, “Thanks to her, school is now becoming their ‘safe space’. She is a real gift to us.”

Recognising the emotional and wellbeing needs of Ukrainians arriving into the community is at the

heart of support being offered by Amanda Jagger, a Pilates instructor in Chislehurst.

Supported by her local church, Christ Church, through the free use of one of their halls, Amanda is providing weekly Pilates classes for Ukrainian women who have arrived in the area since February.

“We’ve shared information - and a few tears - but mostly it is an uplifting experience, and a chance for them to take a moment for themselves during what is a very stressful period in their lives.”

Amanda says that many of the women are coping with leaving behind their loved ones, including husbands and older sons, fearing what is going on at home, as well as trying to settle themselves and their children into a different way of life.

“Some do not speak English either which adds to their stress. They are all coping very well but my

concern, and reason behind offering the classes, is that often it’s the mums that hold everything together and bear the strain.”

She hopes she has been able to offer a moment of rest and recuperation for the women who attend.

The space being provided by St Benedict’s Centre at Malling Abbey also hopes to allow the women who come to learn English there, time to form a community together, and to find peace.

As the Rev Canon Jane Winter, who helps oversee the Centre explains, it’s important, as otherwise they would be isolated across the local villages:

“We provide a space for them to learn, and for their children to play. In coming together, they are becoming stronger.”

It’s clear the mothers and children love the venue, finding it a peaceful and healing space:



ST GABRIEL'S KINGS HILL HOST A SOCIAL GATHERING FOR UKRAINIAN FAMILIES DISPLACED BY THE WAR, WHO HAVE MOVED INTO THE LOCAL AREA.

"We love seeing our children happy and playing together in this beautiful place'.

Another says, "I love coming here to feel the peace and calm surrounding us'.

In Strood, a real community and multi-agency effort is providing much needed practical and emotional support to new arrivals too.

Working alongside Medway Help for Ukrainians, St Francis Church, Strood is providing space for the Sunflower Café, a community hub offering a clothing bank, toy area, craft activities and light refreshments provided by the local Morrisons, for Ukrainians to access practical support, as well as a space to meet others.

Giovanni Parrales, Estates Pioneer, says some have begun to attend other church-run activities, such as Messy Church.

"With the help of the diocesan Community Engagement Team, we have been able to share materials from the Bookmark Reading Charity, which include a tablet loaded with Ukrainian and English storybooks for children, physical books, starting-school stationery sets, and sensory games."

The church has also been able to provide Bibles translated into Ukrainian or Russian for those who require them.

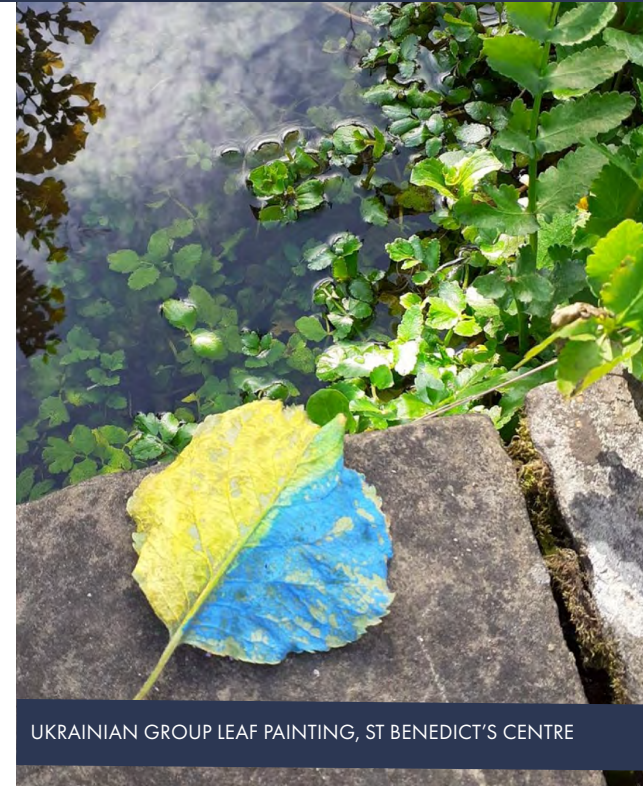
With the war showing no sign of abating, Magali van der Merwe, Lead Community Engagement and

Social Action Adviser for the Diocese says that the compassion and creativity being show by churches, groups and individuals, offers light in this dark time:

"The projects underway are great examples of putting faith into action and of being the hands and feet of Jesus for people who have suffered so much, providing them with a safe oasis where they can start putting pieces of their lives back together.

"At a time when so many are still exhausted from the pandemic and are facing their own uncertainties, given the current economic climate, the ongoing compassion being shown to refugees is a sign of hope and of the grace of God at work.

She adds:"The generosity from other organisations such as the Bookmark Reading Charity and The Bible Society, has also been invaluable to help us in our mission and it is thanks to them that we were able to pass on gifts to Ukrainian refugees to help them rebuild their lives."



UKRAINIAN GROUP LEAF PAINTING, ST BENEDICT'S CENTRE



PILATES CLASSES AT CHRIST CHURCH, CHISLEHURST



WORKING THROUGH ANOTHER TOUGH YEAR, TOGETHER

Despite the continued worry and uncertainty of the last year, local churches, those on the front line of ministry, and the Diocesan Staff team, have continued to step up to their respective callings without flinching, as the recently published Annual Report and Accounts (2021) for the Diocese make clear.

Gathered around the Diocese’s five Called Together priorities, the Report shares the story of the Diocese over the past year by highlighting the work, and projects underway at parish and diocesan level.

It also identifies areas that need further work, and the Diocese’s current financial picture.

Here we outline a snapshot of the report. It can be found in full on the diocesan website at: www.rochester.anglican.org/about-us/annual-report-and-accounts.

ENABLING EACH CHURCH TO BE MISSION-MINDED

Despite the backdrop of the pandemic, we have continued to seek to support each church to be mission minded and to understand their community.

An example of this is the Missional Property Fund. Run with generous support from the Marshalls Charity, the fund supports projects which allow parishes to open up church buildings for mission.

At St Edmund, Dartford, an award of just over £4,000 from the Fund, helped with the purchase and installation of a set of blinds.

Being a large green and glass structure has, at times, not made the church as hospitable as the team would like, as the Rev Mandy Young, Priest-in-Charge explains:

“It can get unbelievably hot, even in the mornings, during summer. The blinds, which we simply couldn’t afford ourselves, have made the space feel gentler and less exposed to the sun and heat. That means it is cooler and more welcoming both for the congregation and other users.”

HELPING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND ADULTS LIVE OUT EVERYDAY FAITH IN JESUS

Our Formation and Ministry Team has continued to work tirelessly to support people as they explore their vocations, and to take them through the process to either ordained or lay ministry.

Thirty-two people embarked upon training for ordinand ministry: 16 men and 16 women. This is the highest number since 2019.

Thirteen were selected for training for Licensed Lay Ministry – a distinctive role in the Diocese as someone who is called to serve their Church and their community in a leadership role but not to be ordained.

Throughout the year, Bishop Simon has offered to preach, pray and anoint any person who is seeking God’s grace in their life by developing a dedicated liturgy, the purpose of which is to help affirm people in their everyday work - whether family based, paid or voluntary – as a valuable calling in the sight of God.

The Diocese’s Children and Young People’s Fund, generously supported by the Colyer Fergusson Charitable Trust, awarded 20 grants, totalling £40,232, to support a diverse range of activities.

Work funded was as varied as activity days, projects to build relationships with schools (such as providing each student with an Advent calendar), providing Covid-safe resources for toddler groups, family cooking sessions, and mental health first aid courses.

The Diocese’s Children and Young People’s Fund, awarded 20 grants, totalling £40,232, to support a diverse range of activities.



THE PLACES OF WELCOME AT BRIDGES, EDENBRIDGE

SUPPORTING LOVING SERVICE IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Places of Welcome community hub at the BRIDGES centre, Edenbridge, is one of 17 hubs and cafés supported by the Diocese’s Community Engagement and Social Action team.

Hubs like these make a huge difference to people’s lives, people like Helen:

“I have lots of health issues, which limit my energy. I put money by to keep my own car, as I need to use a stick and a rollator walker with a seat to help me walk around. I’ve realised how much I have to look after my mental health. One day the Parish Nurse put a note through my door telling me about the Place of Welcome.

“It’s in the town centre with parking close by so I came out to it and met people, and it’s lifted my mood. I come regularly now and try to join in with craft activities as far as my hands let me. I like to chat and listen to people, and I’ve quickly made new friends. It’s really helped my mental health. I think every place should have one!”

ENCOURAGING AND RESPONDING TO THE PROPHETIC VOICE OF JUSTICE AND PEACE

To speak up for justice, to speak up for peace, and to be open to hear the prophetic voice ourselves has always been important to us as Christians but, as a strategic priority, it is new.

As part of our commitment to ensuring that our churches and buildings are safe places for all, our Season of Safeguarding last year was an important step on our journey to changing the culture around safeguarding.

A collaboration between the Diocesan Safeguarding and Communications Teams, Rochester Cathedral, and the victim and survivor group, Survivors Voices, the Season signposted to useful information and organisations on a number of safeguarding-related matters.

A set of downloadable, bite-sized filmed reflections on the theme “What Safeguarding means to me” were also created to provide churches with a way to spark positive conversations about safeguarding.

Capacity within the Safeguarding Team was expanded during the year, with the team now comprising a Lead Safeguarding Adviser, two Safeguarding Advisers, a Safeguarding trainer, and an administrator.



ECO CHURCH

PROTECTING CREATION’S LIFE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

There are now 61 churches in the Diocese who are registered for the Eco Church award scheme, which encourages churches on their environmental journey. Thirteen have reached the bronze award level and two the silver award level.

Unfortunately, the impact of Covid-19 caused a delay in the diocesan effort, but this year has seen a return to the committed work and the development of an action plan and environmental policy.

This included the Diocese raising awareness and resources around the COP26 event and hosting a webinar exploring theological reasons and practical actions around the environment, with contributions from local churches, national partners and an international view.

STILL MUCH TO BE THANKFUL FOR

There is no doubt that 2021 was another tough and challenging year – it was a year of change, of learning, and adapting.

But there is still much to be thankful for, particularly the

people of the Diocese, their commitment and creativity, and the knowledge that the lives of many people across the communities of the Diocese have been enriched by that commitment.

“The words ‘thank you’ cannot be repeated enough to the people of the Diocese of Rochester,” says Bishop Simon Burton-Jones in his foreword to the Report.

“In 2021, you were not found wanting but giving. And in giving, the prayer is that you receive back all that God desires for you.”

To access the report in full visit: www.rochester.anglican.org/about-us/annual-report-and-accounts/

“The words ‘thank you’ cannot be repeated enough to the people of the Diocese of Rochester,” says Bishop Simon Burton-Jones

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS...



1
NEW
DIOCESAN
WEBSITE



9
DIOCESAN
ADVISORY
COUNCIL
MEETINGS



11
NEW
LICENSED
LAY
MINISTERS



20
PROJECTS
FUNDED BY
THE CHILDREN
AND YOUNG
PEOPLE'S FUND



32 PEOPLE IN TRAINING FOR
ORDINATION
(16 MEN AND 16 WOMEN)



65
PERMISSIONS
OR 'FACULTIES'
GIVEN FOR
WORKS IN
CHURCHES



1724
PROPERTY
MAINTENANCE
REQUESTS
PROCESSED



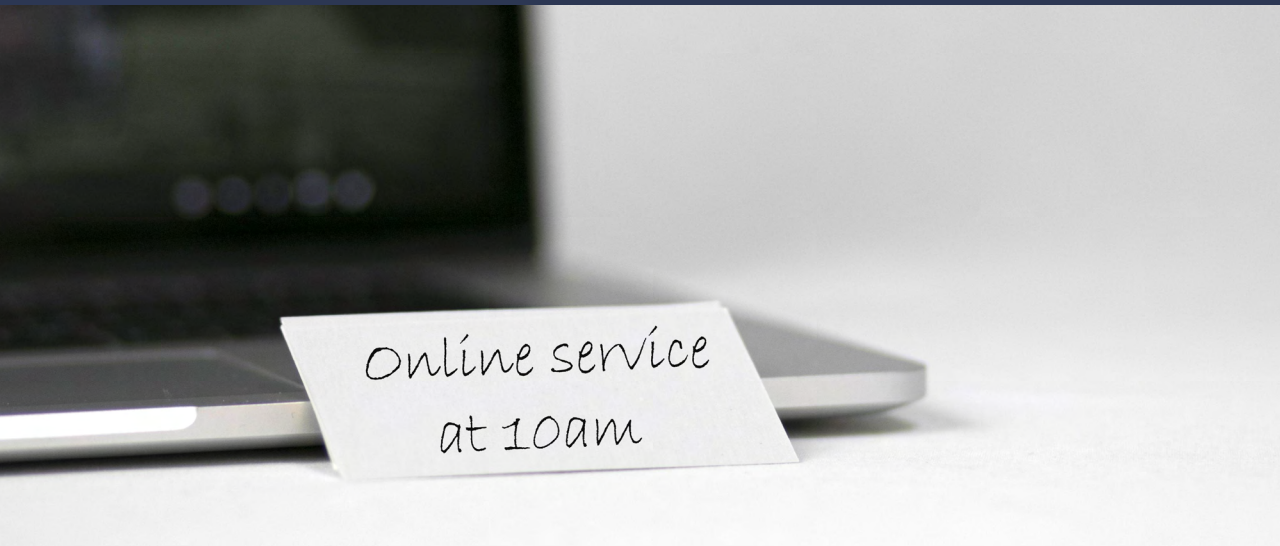
2471
PEOPLE
TRAINED
IN BASIC,
FOUNDATION
AND
LEADERSHIP
SAFEGUARDING
TRAINING



£20,410
RAISED FOR THE DIOCESAN
POVERTY AND HOPE APPEAL



£116,500
ALLOCATED
FROM THE
MISSIONAL
PROPERTY
FUND FOR
CHURCH
PROJECTS



Online service
at 10am

"HAVE YOU TRIED TURNING IT OFF AND ON AGAIN?"

Does online church still have a place?

When church buildings closed during the first lockdowns in 2020, many churches went online in a variety of creative ways. Now, as we begin to live with Covid, the Rev David Green, Vicar of St Mary the Virgin, West Malling with St Michael & All Angels, Offham, asks whether we need to continue to embrace a variety of approaches to worship, to enable a broader and more diverse range of people to find Christian faith and enjoy community.

For church congregations over the last two years a familiar refrain has been, "I can't wait until everything gets back to normal". There's a large part of me that would like the same.

But with Covid-19 restrictions now eased and the chance to return to "normal" upon us, there is another part of me that is pushing against such a return. It's the part of me that has seen the Spirit of God open up

new opportunities and avenues. I feel called instead to try and work out what that over-used phrase, a "new normal", might look like.

During my recent Sabbatical, I took time to interview clergy and their parishes from all over England and representing a variety of Anglican traditions to find out what they did online during the lockdowns, why they did it that way and whether they gained or lost people.

When it comes to online worship, it is very hard for churches to gain a precise sense of their reach or audience from the statistics that sites like Facebook or YouTube provide.

So, instead, in my interviews with clergy, I asked them to think of identifiable people - faces and names who had first joined them online but were now growing in their faith and as part of their churches.

From those conversations it is clear is that there were

some particular groups of people who seemed to be attracted by online worship and who had not been part of a church community before the pandemic.

The ability to 'try before you buy' really did help some people. For the new explorer, there was the benefit of anonymity. If someone didn't want to, they could say nothing and 'lurk' without anyone knowing they were there. They also didn't have to handle the intimidating threshold of the church front door, not knowing who or what they may find.

All the clergy I interviewed said that new people arriving, even committed Christians who had perhaps moved home and were looking for a new church to attend, all watched services for a few weeks online first, before they ever darkened the door of the building. Their online worship was their new shop window.

Meanwhile the ability to worship at a more convenient time was transformative for some people's ability to participate too. This was especially true for those who worked shifts in some way like NHS workers, shop assistants, the Police or the Fire Service and HGV drivers. It was also true of people whose workplaces were stressful and tiring and who, by Sunday morning, just needed to rest or reorganise for the coming week.

To our great shame, those with disabilities - whether physically disabled or neurodiverse in some way - have often been badly neglected by the wider Church. But online there are no concerns about wheelchair access or navigating to a disabled toilet (if there even is a toilet in their local church!).

It should be said that online worship with and by the disabled has been a feature of the digital space for more than 20 years and there is much expertise within that community that was sadly ignored in March 2020 by, let's face it, able bodied novices.

The Clergy I interviewed were able to talk about growth amongst these groups; new names and faces who had started online and were now growing in faith. Some had gone on to do Alpha Courses. In some cases, as in my own parish, we have conducted a number of adult baptisms and we hope for some confirmations later this year.

Alongside the gains, however, there had been losses too. The lockdowns gave a number of people a sudden chance to re-evaluate their lives and that has

led to what HR professionals have called "The Great Resignation". For many clergy, they said they had seen a number of individuals and families assess where they work and where they live and, in some cases, move to new parishes perhaps by the sea or out in the countryside.

The dream home for retirement had become accessible now because they no longer needed to be near a train line to London. One parish's loss was another parish's gain.

This 'great re-set' of life may also be a factor as people re-evaluate their free time and their attendance at church services as part of that. The clergy I spoke to all said that they felt everyone was still coming, but they weren't there so often and volunteers had become harder to recruit.

So, where do we go from here?

Perhaps these present days offer the Church a chance to re-envisage its idea of community in a way that has already been taking place in the wider world for some thirty or forty years: the notion of the networked community. I certainly think online worship is here to stay. If we don't offer it, all those groups of people - shift workers, emergency services, carers, the disabled, the neurodiverse, and busy parents, will be suddenly excluded again.

Of course, for clergy and ministry teams, time and resources are a challenge. Online worship is yet another thing to do. And so I find myself wondering about digital church plants, led by separate people called to that environment and task.

Could a Team Ministry of parishes offer one provision between them, while other clergy colleagues handle the offline demands of church life? Could a Cathedral provide a local-ish base for a designated pioneer minister to lead a specific online congregation to reach out to those who can't attend church offline?

Those who know me will know I have always thought that the online environment mattered. But I believe it is now the Church of England's biggest shop window. If it mattered before, it matters even more now.

The Rev David Green has a background in New Media. The full essay concerning his research and interviews is available by emailing David at vicar@stmaryswestmalling.org.uk.

BERTHA'S DAUGHTERS – A HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN KENT

In a new book written by the Rev Lindsay Llewellyn, we are invited to meet some of the women who have made the Church in Kent what it is today. From scholars, politicians, mediators, reformers, patrons and missionaries, drawn across 16 centuries, Lindsay says it is a history that has been overlooked and underrated for too long.

The origins of the book lie some years ago when Lindsay, in her role as Bishop's Chaplain, was looking for a person to whom the chapel at the Bishop of Rochester's residence (Bishopscourt) could be dedicated.

"It was suggested that I find some worthy local saint.

At this distance, I can't remember whose idea it was to narrow the field further and look for a woman."

As she began to look for a holy Kentish woman to be an encouragement for devotion in the chapel, she drew a blank.

There the matter may have rested, had she not had a conversation with a colleague. "She sketched out for me the connection of Isabella Gilmore - an English churchwoman who oversaw the revival of the Deaconess Order in the Anglican Communion - with the Diocese of Rochester, and her significance in the story of the ordination of women.

"Listening I was struck by how rich it was with threads of encouragement: for vocations in later life, for vocations among women, for reimagining ministry, for vocations among those with dependents and so on."

A wealth of material was unlocked once Lindsay stopped using 'saint' as the principal search term.

Indeed, she is not arguing that all the women in her book should be described as saints. They are nevertheless, women for whom the gospel has had a significant effect on their decisions, and they are all, in one way or another, exemplary:

"Between them, they give a much more rounded picture of what it means to be both Christian and female and what is possible under the description. They are all intended to be encouraging."

Lindsay is also clear that this is about making women's lives visible and placing 'a feather on the balance' of how we traditionally view history across many spheres - through the eyes, stories and achievements of men.

"This is not 'women's history'" she says, but simply a history of the Church in Kent as contributed to by women, who, just like men, have "been scholars, politicians, mediators, rebels, reformers, patrons and missionaries: people who have enriched and altered the church's life, and thus the lives of the people around them."

Bertha's Daughters – A History of the Church in Kent, is available on Amazon for £7.99

THREE WOMEN OF KENT WE SHOULD KNOW MORE ABOUT AND WHY

Isabella Gilmore: 1842 - 1923



Isabella is one of the principal figures in the movement to ordain women — and we make nothing of her in the Diocese that sponsored her! Commissioned by the Bishop of Rochester, she transformed the early deaconess movement from an organisation parallel to the religious orders, to one parallel to ordained ministry.

Charlotte Boyd: 1837 - 3 April 1906



A rich woman, Charlotte spent every penny she had on caring for orphans and on restoring monastic properties to the Church — it was Charlotte who bought Malling Abbey for the Diocese of Rochester — yet she was buried in an unmarked grave. If we want to start being grateful to people for their generosity, we should begin with Charlotte.

Elizabeth Barton: 1506 - 20 April 1534



Elizabeth was the last of the mediaeval prophetesses. Bold and fiery, the whole country hung on her visions, including our own Bishop John Fisher, but she clashed with Henry VIII, and he destroyed her and all of her writings. A maid of Kent, she encourages us to be confident speaking truth to power, whatever the cost.

* Icon of Elizabeth Barton reproduced with kind permission of the rector of St Augustine's Church, Painters Forstall



MURAL OF COUNTESS GODA, ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL

UPCOMING EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES



COMPANION OVERSEAS LINKS CELEBRATION SERVICE

at St Michael and All Angels, Wilmington
14 AUGUST at 6pm

The Annual service celebrating our Diocesan overseas partnerships, takes place at the church of St Michael's, Wilmington. The preacher will be the Rt Rev Given Gaula, Bishop of Kondoa in Tanzania, and the service will be led by Bishop Simon Burton-Jones. All are welcome. For more details email: overseas.links@rochester.anglican.org



THE HEAVENS DECLARE

at St Benedict's Centre, West Malling
8 SEPTEMBER 2022, 9.30 for 10am – 3pm

A Wisdom day with the Rev Cathy Knight-Scott, who will share her passion for physics and God, inviting us to engage with the debate about science and faith. Cost £20 To book please email: bookings@stbenedictscentre.org



RIDE & STRIDE

across Kent
10 SEPTEMBER 2022

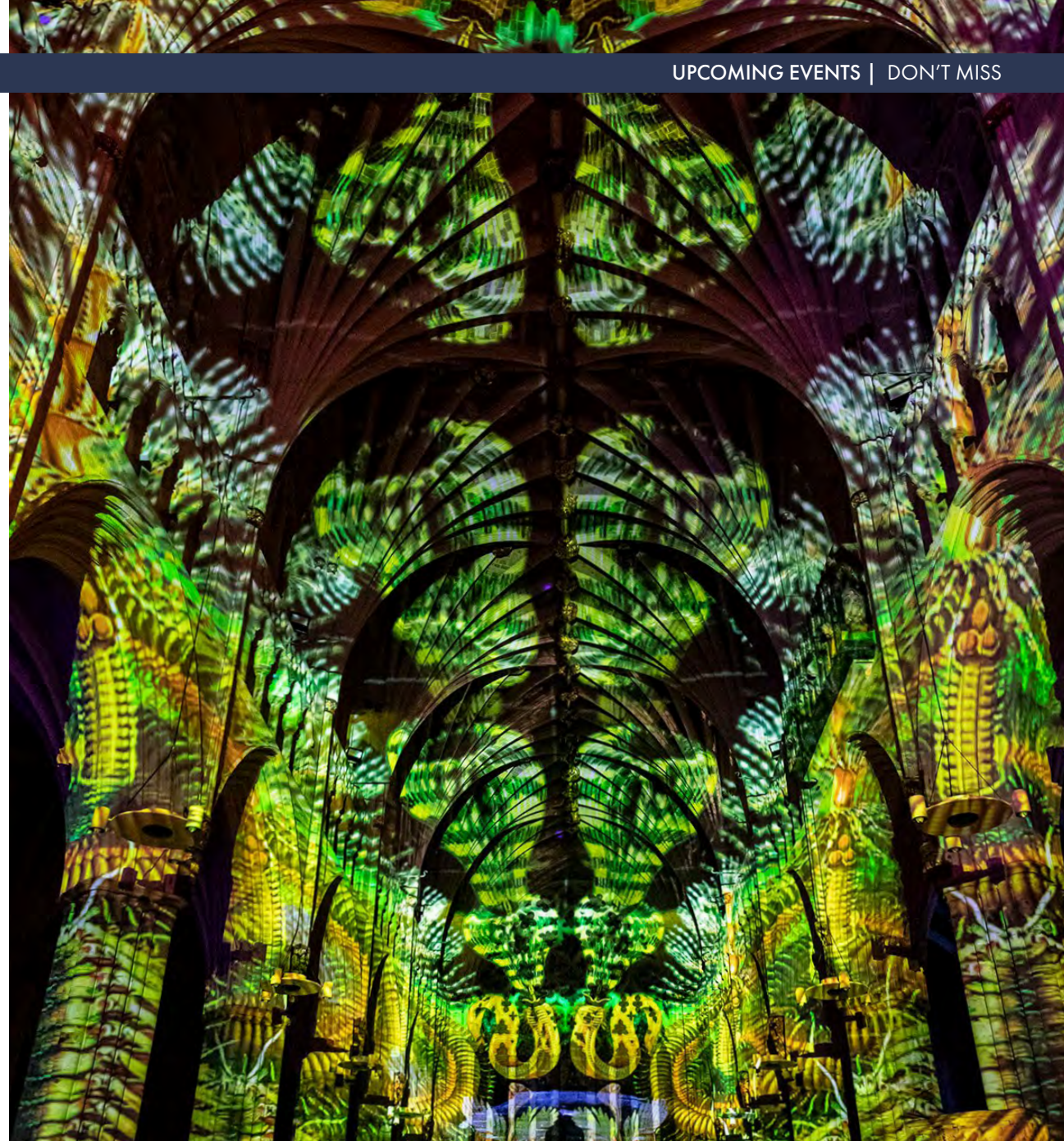
The annual Kent Ride & Stridefundraiser is a chance to visit many unique historic church buildings, see some beautiful countryside, take some exercise and have fun with your family and friends. To register as a participant, for further information, or to request a sponsorship form please email: kentridestride@outlook.com



IT'S YOUR CALLING

at St John's Centre, Meopham
8 OCTOBER 2022, 9:15am - 3:45 pm

It's Your Calling is aimed at those exploring where God may be calling them and the gifts that God has given us, as well as the Biblical understanding of vocation. The day gives an opportunity to meet others on a similar quest and to take time to think about where God could be calling. For more details email: vocations@rochester.anglican.org



LIFE

at Rochester Cathedral
4-8 OCTOBER 2022

Journey through earth, sea and sky from sunrise to sunset with a spectacular world themed son-et-lumiere

For more information and ticket options, please visit Rochester Cathedral's website at www.rochestercathedral.org

Rochester
CATHEDRAL



NOT JUST BRICKS AND MORTAR

As a qualified Chartered Surveyor with over 20 years' experience in the property sector, Stephen Hoad was the perfect person to step into the new post of Property Director for the Diocese. Now 18 months into his role, we caught up with him to find out more about what he does, as well as how well he might cope on a desert island!

The role of Property Director is a new one in the Diocese, can you tell us a bit about what you do?

I am responsible for managing the Diocese's property portfolio. This means our clergy housing, investment property (including land) and redundant churches. As well as this, I have oversight of the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC). Together, we support parishes with the maintenance and development of their buildings in line with Church and Charity Law.

What has been on the top of your 'to do' list since you joined the Diocese?

Implementing a new strategy to provide a more transparent and clear process for looking at property development opportunities within the Diocese, as well as carrying out a data audit of our clergy housing, also known as parsonages. This is so we can better understand the nature of the vicarages we care for and their energy-efficiency. This is vital given the rising cost of energy and the importance of the environmental agenda.

Are there any building projects coming up in the Diocese that you are particularly excited about?

The project to provide a new place of worship for St Gabriel's on Kings Hill is really exciting. It will be the first new church built in the Diocese for 20 years. In a previous role, I was lucky enough to oversee the development of two new churches in London, so I know how much these developments can contribute to the community and offer a firm base for mission. They can also be extremely challenging! But as an active Christian and Chartered Surveyor, the opportunity to use my skills for developments like this is hugely worthwhile.

What do you most enjoy about the job?

I love getting out and about and meeting with churches. I really enjoy seeing church projects that have been completed, as well as working with churches on new projects. So many churches are

exploring how they can adapt their buildings to improve their welcome and hospitality, as well as their accessibility and environmental sustainability. It is great to be part of the diocesan team that can support and advise them on their vision.

What are you watching at the moment?

I am really interested in Second World War history along with the Stars Wars Franchise. I share this with my three young children who enjoy watching classic films such as Kelly's Heroes and Where Eagles Dare! There are several lightsaber's lying around the house ready for an impromptu battle and various books on tanks, planes, and boats in most rooms!

On a day off, what are we most likely to find you doing?

As a lifetime member of the National Trust, I often visit properties around the South-East such as Chartwell, Knowle and Igham Mote. I am also a big fan of Lego so you might also find me building one of the latest sets.

How well would you cope on a desert island?

Initially I might just sun-bathe and catch up with some much-needed sleep! I am quite practical and pragmatic though, so I like to think I would have a good go at setting up camp and working on the task at hand getting water and food. Having watched Bear Grylls and Castaway, I hope I could survive for some time...more than 24 hours anyway!

Do you have a signature dish?

I really enjoy cooking and will often try new recipes. My signature dish however is probably a beef goulash which has always been well received by my family and visitors. In recent years I have been working on my BBQ skills and have recently started smoking different foods, which has been good fun.



EXPRESSING MY FAITH THROUGH HOSPITALITY

Chichi Nwandu is the Bursar at St Benedict's Centre. Situated within the grounds of Malling Abbey, the Centre offers a Christian welcome to individuals and groups seeking a place to rest, retreat, study, create, meet, and work. She loves how her role helps her live out daily her Christian values of love of others.

I have the pleasure of working in a magnificent and serene environment which exudes peace and tranquillity, and as a guest said to me, "This is the best place to work on earth".

It truly is a blessing.

My role involves dealing with enquiries and bookings, maintaining information and reports and the financial administration of the Centre. But the best and most important part (in my opinion), has to be offering hospitality to all who come in contact with the Centre.

Jesus said to us in John 13:34-35, "A new commandment I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples if you love one another."

This guides my daily living and aligns with one of St Benedict's Rules, to welcome guests as Christ. I believe that love should guide our thoughts, our speech and actions and I pray daily, leaning on the Holy Spirit to be always guided by love.

In my role, I can express my faith by showing the love of Christ sincerely through hospitality, to all our guests, many of whom have no faith.

Born into a Christian family, I was introduced to faith in God from an early age, which was nurtured through family devotion, Sunday school, and Church.

I did struggle though for some time with knowing what my purpose on earth was. To help me I went back to the basics – seeking first the Kingdom of God. This led me to devoting time to studying God's word to understand Him, myself, and my reason for being.

This has helped me understand that we are called to worship God with all that we are. For me Everyday Faith means, I can simply and authentically be me, able to apply my experience and passion and serve God in my workplace.

For more information about St Benedict's Centre, its events and facilities please visit:

www.stbenedictscentre.org



Diocese of **Rochester**
called together

A prayer for hope

As the 15th Lambeth Conference takes place in Canterbury this summer bringing together Anglican bishops from across the globe, we pray for hope and for our worldwide Anglican family, the Anglican Communion.

Loving God, look with mercy on your world
and the many challenges we face -
through environmental crisis, poverty and hurt.
Make your church a sign of hope
that we may bring your peace
and justice to the world.
And bound together by your love,
may the churches of the Anglican Communion
show people Jesus.
We ask this in his name.

Amen.



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell