



Diocese of Liverpool

archdeacons' visitation news

We encourage you to focus on four priorities to build the kingdom



We are extremely grateful for the hard work that our Churchwardens and church officers do throughout the year, and for those who have chosen to serve God and their communities by ensuring their churches run as efficiently and as effectively as possible.

Our Visitation theme this year calls us back to one fundamental question: What are we

here for? As Churchwardens, members of PCCs, church members and clergy, we all find ourselves busy with 101 different calls on our time. It's important that we stop every so often to re-focus on what we are here for. Then we can make wise decisions about where our priorities lie.

We are all called to play our part in building the Kingdom of God. Different people will have different roles, as the familiar image of the body in 1 Corinthians makes clear, but whatever our role we are all working together for the same thing. In the Diocese of Liverpool, we have summed this up in two key aspirations – more people knowing Jesus, and more justice in the world.

One way of thinking about what our churches are for is to imagine them as the site cabins on the building site of the Kingdom – places where we come together to meet with the rest of the team, to be reminded of the big picture of what it is that we are building together, and where we plan our current phase of work. As a church officer, you might think of yourself as a shift supervisor, helping those on your team to focus on the current priorities and not get distracted by all the other things they could be doing.

In our diocese, we have identified four major priorities to guide our work together in the coming years:

- **introducing people to Jesus**
- **deepening discipleship**
- **developing Christian leaders**
- **working for justice.**

This issue of *Visitation News* explores these priorities, with case studies of churches putting them into action.

We've also identified the barriers that get in the way of this work, and developed *Fit for Mission* to help us all address these. This is currently being piloted in several Deaneries and you can read more about it here.

As well as fully engaging with *Fit for Mission*, you can play your part in your church and on your PCC to keep these four priorities in everyone's mind. For example:

- shape your PCC agenda around these four priorities
- plan a sermon series or discussion group on them
- have an away day to come up with a plan of action on one of these areas
- encourage your PCC to engage with *Fit for Mission* when it's your Deanery's turn.

As we look to the year ahead together, may you be blessed to 'please God in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all power' (Colossians 1:10-11).



Archdeacons Pete and Simon, and Acting Archdeacon Miranda

Produced and printed by

 **ecclesiastical**

A message from Bishop John

I know we rarely reflect on the vocation of a Churchwarden.

You carry out a vicarious role in your communities. That you are elected by a meeting of the parishioners means that you are called to serve the wider community, not just the congregation.

As officers of the bishop, who is the sign of unity in the diocese, you also witness to and foster unity in your parish and so help the people of God move towards maturity in Christ.

You also enable mission by looking after the church, maintaining its order and keeping it as a place of worship and witness for the parish. By making sure that the PCC complies with its legal obligations and follows the best practices, you create a safe space for your parishioners to be drawn to Christ and to grow in Christ.



Thanks for responding to God's call to this ministry.

May God prosper you in His mission.

Our priority: working for justice

As mentioned in our opening letter, one of our diocese's priorities is that of working for justice. An example of this is the Lauda project. Before the pandemic, a previous Methodist venture in the Edge Hill area of Liverpool had identified that there were a lot of Romanian Roma families living locally, with multiple needs and very large families. That project had great success with detached youth work, but ended when funding ran out and personnel moved on.

So, in 2021, a new project developed – Lauda (Romanian for praise). Initially, we began by running an after-school club for primary-age children and their parents or carers, in St Dunstan's Church. We ended the school year with a regular attendance of 25–40 children and their mums each week. And out of this have grown an English class for the parents who want to learn and practise, followed by a Romanian literacy class for those who never had a chance to learn in school.

From March 2022, we were very blessed to have Micah Food Bank partnering with us at St Dunstan's, running a community market to better serve the needs of the surrounding community. Our English and literacy classes sandwich the community market time on a Wednesday, and we now end this time with a Eucharist.

One of our goals as a ministry is to be a bridge between our Roma friends and the wider community. To this end, we have been able to collaborate with different schools, groups and charities, and in April we partnered with friends at Granby Toxteth Development Trust to celebrate Roma International Day.

Our priority: developing Christian leaders



Ian and Ali Rimmer, lay leaders at St Andrew's Church, Denton's Green, tell us how they are helping to grow the vision to raise up and develop Christian leaders in their local area.

What is our role in Church St Helens?

A while ago, we were asked to become part of the team looking at growth in *Fit for*

Mission. We felt really privileged to be asked. Our role is to come alongside, enable, encourage and to mentor individuals who have a passion to set up missional worshipping communities. As a couple whose entire careers were in local primary education, we enjoy, and are skilled in, releasing the potential in others. It excites us to come alongside other Christians, helping to release the passion and gifts within so that they can share the Gospel across this special town of ours. We both have a real heart for the borough of St Helens, whose motto is 'Ex Terra Lucem' – 'out of the ground, light'. We believe the time and the ground are right now to sow and cultivate, bringing light into the darkness to see new growth. It's time for the body of Christ to be released and as a priesthood of all believers we are equipped and ready to fulfil the mission call of the church to a town which lacks hope and desperately needs to receive the love Jesus offers.

How are you finding it?

We are really enjoying the respective journeys with our mentees. It's a privilege to pray for them and challenge them in supportive ways to step out in new directions in order to realise the exciting visions which God has placed within them.

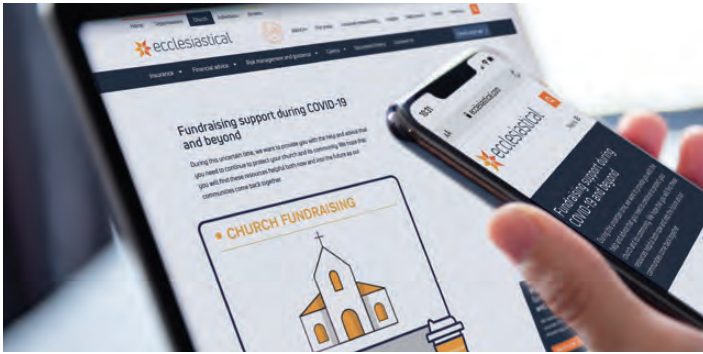
Why did you choose to get involved?

As our church, St Andrew's, is part of the *Fit for Mission* initiative, we chose to attend the Cultivate course and saw it as a great opportunity to join together with other fellow believers to share the Gospel across our unique town, which is built on strong Christian foundations.

What difference can Church St Helens make in this town over the coming years?

Church St Helens provides us with the exciting mandate for different churches and diverse worshipping communities across the Borough to collaborate and co-operate with another.

Together we are stronger. Together we can share the gospel across this town more effectively. Together we can be the light and illuminate this town with the light of Christ in these challenging times. The Borough Council has ambitious plans for the regeneration of the town and Cultivate within Church St Helens fits in well with this as it seeks to transform people's lives with the Gospel message.



Fundraising hub to support your church

Fundraising has always been vital for churches, from the traditional, well-loved flower festivals and cake sales to the world of digital fundraising opportunities that the internet has opened up. But it can be daunting to know where to start, so Ecclesiastical's easy-to-use online fundraising hub is here to help with great ideas and simple advice.

Drawing on the advice of experts and our own 135 years' experience in working with churches, we've pulled together a range of top tips to help you boost existing income streams and develop new ones. There's help with researching sources of funding and writing professional grant applications that can make all the difference to the answer you receive. There are great video webinars with fundraising specialists offering their insights into key fundraising issues.

Other guidance includes fundraising in less affluent areas, fundraising in rural parishes, how to build a fundraising team and more to keep your congregation and the wider community informed and engaged.

There are plenty of useful resources and handy templates for all types of churches on our Church Fundraising Hub at www.ecclesiastical.com/churchfundraising

Nominate your church for a chance to win



The Movement for Good giving programme is back with awards of £1,000 to give to charities helping those in need. Ecclesiastical is proudly part of the Benefact Group, and together they are giving away over **£1 million** to charities in the 2023 Movement for Good Awards.

£1,000 draws are now open for nominations

- You can nominate your favourite charity or church at any time for the £1,000 draw.
- It's one nomination per charity, per person, so if you have more than one favourite, get them in the running today!
- There are three £1,000 draws this year giving away between £120,000 and £150,000 in each.
- Once you've nominated, share your nomination and get your network to support too.

Get nominating and find out more at www.movementforgood.com/ecclesiastical

Did you know?

In 2022, 15 churches each won a £1,000 grant.

There were thousands of nominations for these churches. The more nominations received, the greater their chance of winning.



Contains promotional material

Rebuilding the historic Church of the Ascension in Salford

In February 2017, a fire broke out at the Grade-II listed Church of the Ascension in Lower Broughton, Salford, Greater Manchester. Six crews from Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service battled for hours to contain the blaze, which ultimately devastated the building.



Many members of the local community gathered outside the church building to survey the damage, some reduced to tears. Much used and loved by young and old, the building plays an important role in both spiritual and social terms as an inclusive community space accessible to all. The church had recently undergone a £250,000 restoration project which people in the community had helped to fund.

Immediately following the fire, Ecclesiastical carefully assembled the right team of experts to attend the site as soon as the fire service authorised it.

Repair work began in October 2018 with teams of carefully selected experts appointed to complete the works. Phase one included reinstatement of the structural elements of the building,



such as columns, roof structures and slate coverings; stone and brick repairs; stained glass window and window guard replacements; and ceiling finishes.

Phase two began in September 2021, focusing on preserving the historical features of the church. As part of the restoration, Ecclesiastical worked with customers to build in modernisations to enable them to make the space better serve the requirements of today's use.

Restoration of the building was completed by the end of September 2022.

In November 2022, the church and community came together to mark the completion of the £5m restoration project with a rededication ceremony.

Read the story in full and see more pictures at www.ecclesiastical.com/church-of-the-ascension

// It has been a long five and a half years since the fire... we can now look forward to the future with a beautifully restored church which is fit for the 21st century. //

Shirley Kehoe, PCC Secretary at the Church of the Ascension



Take our advice – for a brighter future

Ecclesiastical is well-known as a leading insurer of churches and other heritage buildings. But many people aren't aware that we also have a stand-alone financial advice arm here to help you make the most of your money.

Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Services (EFAS) provides fully independent advice on pensions, investments, life assurance and mortgages for the clergy, church community and PCCs.



You don't have to be an insurance customer to use the service – we're happy to help anyone – but we obviously have specialist knowledge of the church sector, as IFA Kieran Harper explains.

'I've been in the industry for seventeen years and with Ecclesiastical for all but two of those,' said Kieran, who's based in our Gloucester office. 'When it comes to

providing regulated financial advice to the clergy and the wider church community, that experience helps.

'Many of our customers are clergy – we understand their pension scheme, we know about the issues with living in tied accommodation such as vicarages – so when it comes to retirement planning, we're already ahead of the game. We also have a deep understanding of ethical and sustainable investing – as you would expect of a company with such strong links to the church – and this area is getting ever more popular with a lot of our customers.'

Please get in touch to find out how Kieran and his colleagues could help you.



0800 107 0190



getadvice@ecclesiastical.com



www.ecclesiastical.com/financial-advice

Have you signed up for Ecclesiastical's monthly e-news?



This monthly email is full of tips and information for all Ecclesiastical's church customers and anyone in your church community. Signing up is easy and, if at any time you decide you no longer want to receive it, you can click the 'unsubscribe' button at the

bottom of the email. Feel free to pass the sign-up link to anyone you think would like it.

Sign up at www.ecclesiastical.com/signup

Support for your 2024 sabbatical

Are you planning on taking a sabbatical in 2024?

Did you know that there may be support available for you through Ministry Bursary Awards? Ecclesiastical's Ministry Bursary Awards provide financial support for members of the clergy taking extended study leave, and we are now accepting applications for sabbaticals taking place in 2024.

The experience of a sabbatical can be life-changing and have a long-lasting impact on your church and community.

Established in 1987, the Ecclesiastical Ministry Bursary Awards have supported over 1,400 members of the clergy to finance a wide range of extended leave projects and plans. The application window runs between April and September. Judging will take place in November 2023, with the awards made in December 2023.

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

www.ecclesiastical.com/mba



Have you visited the Ecclesiastical website recently?

It's full of information to help you run your church, such as the **Made Simple Guides**, which cover these key topics:

- Church insurance made simple
- Administering your church insurance
- Building works
- Church events
- Church property
- Community outreach
- Legal expenses
- People on church premises

You will also find information about church, home, commercial and legal insurance and how to make a claim. **Explore the website at www.ecclesiastical.com/church**

Protect your home and support your church with £130 donation



As part of a financial services group that exists to give its available profits to good causes, one of the ways in which Ecclesiastical do this is through the Trust130 Home Insurance offer. For every new direct home insurance policy taken out, Ecclesiastical offer to donate £130 to an Anglican church or cathedral of the policyholder's choice.¹

Originally launched in 2017 to celebrate the 130th anniversary, Ecclesiastical has since donated more than £460,000, helping to support over 2,500 churches. A donation of £130 may not sound like much, but churches and congregations have used the donations in many creative ways to fund all sorts of things.

In the **Parish of Harpenden**, the donation will be used to support Cornelia's Coffee Shop, which is a community resource that enables them to engage with local people, offering fellowship and raising funds for charity.

It needs some new equipment – not least, a new freezer – and the donation will help in this general regard. It does great work to benefit the community and other great causes. One of our recent events at Cornelia's was to help our local Ukrainian arrivals.

Kevin Featherstone, Parish Warden

St Mary's Church, Wythall, used their donations to offer a weekly hot meal to families struggling with the increase in the cost of living.

This happens directly after school and includes activities for children and a Bible story or video. £130 will pay for meals for about 20 families, funding the food for about two weeks, which is a great boost financially, but also to the step of faith which this venture is.

Pam Miller, Treasurer

Award-winning home insurance



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

Ecclesiastical continued to top the Fairer Finance league table in spring 2023 for home insurance for a record 17th consecutive time, retaining the gold ribbon status.² Ecclesiastical was also voted the best home insurance provider in the Times Money Mentor Awards in 2022.³

For more information about Trust130 and Home Insurance, visit www.ecclesiastical.com/trust130

Call us for a home insurance quote on **0345 777 3322** and mention code **TRUSTPA**.

¹ Terms and conditions apply. ² www.fairerfinance.com/ratings/customer-experience-ratings/home-insurance ³ www.thetimes.co.uk/money-mentor/article/times-money-mentor-awards-2022-winners



Car insurance

Our Clergy Motor Insurance is tailored specifically for the clergy and includes benefits such as business use, no admin charges and up to £500 cover for church goods in the car.¹

0345 450 9396
www.ecclesiastical.com/church/car-insurance

¹ Subject to terms and conditions.



Funeral planning

Ecclesiastical can help you make financial provision for your funeral, reducing the worry for your family and ensuring your wishes are provided for. Terms and conditions apply.

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

Our priority: introducing people to Jesus

Anthony Clowes of the Joshua Centre encourages us to make new disciples of Jesus and shares his tips on starting up new congregations.

JOSHUA CENTRE

MULTIPLYING CONGREGATIONS

How can we keep 'the main thing' the main thing? And what should the 'main thing' be?

As a church leader, I often begin a new year with these questions. Necessary questions I feel, since in church life it can be too easy to become overstretched, being busy with so many good and worthy activities, that we become distracted from the things that are actually most important of all. My conclusion has always been that 'the main thing' is introducing people to Jesus, and then encouraging and supporting each other to follow Him.

In 1989, I was introduced to Jesus. It was Dave who told me about him. He was a youth leader, and I was a teenager looking for something worth living for. Dave's introduction started with friendship: he was kind to me and was genuinely interested in me. In time, our friendship led to an invitation. He invited me to something new: a youth fellowship. At this weekly gathering, the leaders introduced me to Jesus, told me what he had done for me and challenged me to respond. In this place my faith was born, and my journey of Christian discipleship set sail. Dave's personal approach was key. There's no way I would have accepted a cold invitation to a religious meeting if I hadn't made this connection. Then there was the youth group – fresh, relevant, fun; nothing at all like my image of church at the time.

In recent years, I've seen the friendship and invitation approach lead to numerous new congregations all over our diocese. Three years ago, at St Paul's Church in Penketh, a group of mainly retired members started to ask themselves what they should be doing for Jesus. Their answer was to provide something for the people in their community who are not currently part of a church family, and so, with the support of the Joshua Centre, a new weekday gathering was launched. A place of invitation for parents and children, a place of friendship over coffee, and a place where people might hear about Jesus in a way that was relatable. The Lifetime community was born. Three years on (and despite all the COVID lockdown challenges), Lifetime is a weekly gathering of 100 people of all ages, and last year they took the step of opening their doors to local schools with an 'ARK experience', and welcomed hundreds of children and staff. Wow! At a time when we hear so much about the decline of the church, let's not forget to celebrate all the new and exciting ministries that continue to emerge.

Lifetime is just one example of several that I could have chosen to mention. Last year, Lifetime launched 'Sunday Lunch', a new worship experience for the people they have met in recent years.

So, what's happening in Penketh? Christians are forming genuine friendships and relationships with people in their local community; they are introducing them to Jesus and then encouraging and supporting them to follow him.

My 3 top tips for starting a new congregation:

1. Start where you are. The type of community that you might build must reflect your context. Who are you? What is your community like? What resources do you have? What are you already good at doing that has the potential to expand and grow?
2. Start small. You really don't need lots of people or grand plans to begin something new; small can be beautiful! Start with the people you have and trust that in time God will grow His people.
3. Start something. The Joshua centre helped to launch 45 new communities. Today, 29 of them continue. Did 16 communities fail? I'd rather not think of it like that. If some things don't work out the way we hoped for, that's OK, we can learn from our experiences, reassess then go again.

As we as God's church continue to emerge and re-group following the global pandemic, I passionately believe that now is the season to have a go, be courageous and take a few risks for Jesus. What do we have to lose?! Introducing people to Jesus and developing communities where we encourage and support each other to follow him will always be 'the main thing', but God will be constantly leading us to explore new and diverse ways to communicate His love. Let's join Him on the adventure!



Cultivate inspires leader to start new worshiping community

Sonia attends the Mount church plant in Parr St Helens. She explains how taking part in the Cultivate programme has inspired her to look at planting an exciting new worship community where she lives.

At the moment, our congregation is praying about Messy Church Vintage. A key part of Cultivate is the very helpful and supportive mentoring that is involved, and which helps me to see all the Lord has planned in the community in which I live.

After the Cultivate course, the Lord enabled me to prepare and speak at one of our Sunday services. Since then I have come to believe that I'm called to minister God's love in the Fingerpost and Foundry Wharf community where I live.

There was lots to take in on Cultivate at first but by week 3 or 4 the Lord began to help me understand his vision. Cultivate is all about putting relationship-building first and I began to realise that the Lord had planted me where I live for a purpose – to bring the community together to help develop their relationship with God.

I have been hosting a church hangout group at my home for nearly 12 months, mainly with my neighbours. Relationships have been developed further by my organising day trips and running a craft/social afternoon with other members of Foundry Wharf every Saturday.

Once I started Activate (a missional discipleship programme), the Lord guided me and a neighbour to prayer walk the building and gardens. Five of us meet regularly to pray and have Communion, and we are currently planning to develop a new worship community.

To find out more about Cultivate and Activate, visit:

<https://liverpool.anglican.org/making-it-easier-parishes/fitformission/cultivate/>



Our priority: deepening discipleship

Revd Peter Whittington describes how Church Wigan are focusing on exploring and living out the theme of generosity this year.

Jesus offers us 'living water' that gives 'eternal life' (John 4:10-14) which flows with the power of the Holy Spirit in and through our lives (John 7:37-39). In Church Wigan we have been exploring how discipleship is the drinking of that 'living water', allowing it to refresh and revitalise every aspect of our lives so that the Holy Spirit overflows in and through us. Local Worshipping Communities are the 'wells' where we gather to receive together the 'living water' that Jesus offers, as discipleship is not simply something individual but which allows us to create, sustain and deepen our discipleship together. To enable this to happen at the local level in Church Wigan, we work together in discerning a focus for deepening our discipleship and then providing the resources to enable this within each Worshipping Community.

This year, our focus is 'Overflowing – A Year of Generosity', which connects with the 'Give' element of the Rule of Life. Having identified the theme of generosity the clergy team explored what theological issues it could cover and how to articulate them throughout the year. We began with an Epiphany sermon series called 'Our Generous God', exploring how God's generosity is particularly expressed in the coming of Jesus and who then catches us up in his generosity. Once an outline was developed, lay people helped to focus the content and contributed stories of how God's generosity has been experienced locally. 'Our Generous God in the Desert Places' is our Lent series. Clergy and laity from Church Wigan have been working with the Diocesan Resources Team to produce a range of resources to use across our Worshipping Communities: sermon series, prayer stations, activities for groups involving children/families and Bible studies. Later in the year we will be celebrating a 'Generous Harvest'. This will help people embed generosity in their discipleship, and explore how this overflows from Wigan as we support mission in God's world.

Making it Easier

MyFundAccountingOnline

MyFundAccountingOnline is an accounting package written for churches, and is especially helpful where volunteers have no accountancy experience. It is widely used across the Church of England and is the system promoted in our diocese for church accounts.

The package allows each church to print correctly formatted legal charity accounts directly from the application. It also allows the easy generation of monthly financial reports for the PCC, helping them to make informed decisions around the financial health of their worship communities.

MFAO also allows multiple people from the same church to access and enter information simultaneously. Rather than one person having to do everything, several people can share the workload, reducing the time needed by any one individual and making church accounts more manageable.

Full training, set-up and support are provided by our Resources Team at St James' House. Training sessions are repeated throughout the year; see the diocesan Bulletin or website calendar for details.

For further information, contact Gordon Fath.

gordon.fath@liverpool.anglican.org
0151 705 2146



For more information

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

Facebook: Ecclesiastical **Twitter:** @churchmatters

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