

OUTLOOK



*Celebrating **faith** and **life** in Kent*

YOUR DIGITAL MAGAZINE



ISSUE 44 WINTER 2020 *Detectives of Divinity | Awakening the child within | Events*

WE'VE GOT TO LIVE IT

A word from Bishop Rose



My sisters and brothers, a year or two ago, you and I might not have been asking the question, “What is God saying to us?” We would be busily, merrily, happily making our own decisions without even wondering or thinking, “but what does God want?”

It excites me that today you and I are

working with each other and that right at the heart of that life together we are asking the question “What does God want? What is God saying?” And if we are asking those questions, then it means that we are open to hearing and listening to what God has to say. This excites me, that I am part of a diocese, part of a Church, where we are open to listening to what The Spirit is saying. My heartfelt thanks to all those who have shared with us what God has been saying to you over this season.

This has been an unprecedented year, like no other. Just imagine how we began the year – perhaps with a sense of expectation and hope – and then three months in, that hope gets dashed by the Coronavirus pandemic. But we’re not alone. Think of the journey of Mary and Joseph. A year that began for them with all kinds of hopes and expectations, but that ended with a journey, a journey on a donkey, heavily pregnant, not knowing how and where they would end up. It’s been a bit like that for us.

When will this be over? When will we arrive back at that place where we can share fellowship with one another, where we can sing, where we can hug and hold each other? Mary and Joseph survived those challenges that they faced. We, too, will survive the challenges that COVID-19 has presented to us. We will be stronger for it, I believe. And so, I want to encourage you - encourage you to keep strong in the Lord, to draw your strength from Mary and Joseph

and what they endured, and somehow still managed to produce this amazing child, the Son of God. We too, in spite of the challenges, will produce great things. There is still much work to be done, there is still much birthing to happen. So, let’s take a leaf from Mary and Joseph’s book. Let’s not wait until we get back to that perfect place - because they didn’t. They ended up in a stable, but a stable could not prevent them from producing and birthing the best ever gift.

“ I want to say to us, in this year full of challenges, the best is yet to come!...”

”

So, I want to say to us, in this year full of challenges, the best is yet to come! Let me encourage you to be a people of hope, to spread the word of comfort and joy. And remember, if we’re going to spread comfort and joy, we’ve first got to live it. God’s comfort and joy must be evident in our lives – and our light must shine because we have been with the Christ child, we know the Christ child – and so we share that light with others. May God bless you. You will continue to be in my prayers as we draw to the close of this year, facing what is to come, as we celebrate Christmas, and celebrate with a sense that this is God’s timing, God’s perfect timing.

May God bless you and fill you with comfort and joy,

+Rose Dover

The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin

Bishop of Dover

Read more reflections on the listening and discerning process, and share what you’ve been hearing, online at:

canterburydiocese.org/listening

EDITORIAL

Issue 44

Back in the summer, already weary of the pandemic and its restrictions and misery, I found myself constantly asking, 'Are we nearly there yet?' The answer, of course, a resounding 'No'. It's funny how time seems to expand and contract according to the nature of the experiences contained within it. In many ways, 2020 has seemed to last for decades. The drag of time in lockdown, the counting of days and weeks before loved ones can be seen and embraced once again without fear... The longing of our nation - of our world - to relax, to party and celebrate a hopeful future is tangible. How do we live in this longing? How might we find life here, not just survival?

The beginning of John's Gospel reminds us that the light of Christ came – not to a well-lit room – but to the darkness of this world. At Christmas we remember that a darkness that might feel overwhelming or hopeless can be shattered by the light of Christ, dwelling with and in us. This edition of our magazine highlights some of the pinpricks of light that we have witnessed shining in our diocese during this year – as well as some of the things that we have been hearing from each other and from God as he has spoken into that darkness.

My seven-year-old son (a chip off the old block) keeps asking 'Are we nearly there yet?' – not about the end of the pandemic, but about Christmas. He knows and trusts that good things are coming our way. My prayer for us all is that we keep on asking, hoping, dreaming and reaching for that new future, trusting that God's light is dawning on us, trusting in his love and faithfulness.

May you and those you love be blessed with health, peace and comfort this Christmas,



Anna Drew | Outlook Editor

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Feedback

We hope you enjoy Outlook magazine and the editor would welcome your comments: adrew@diocant.org

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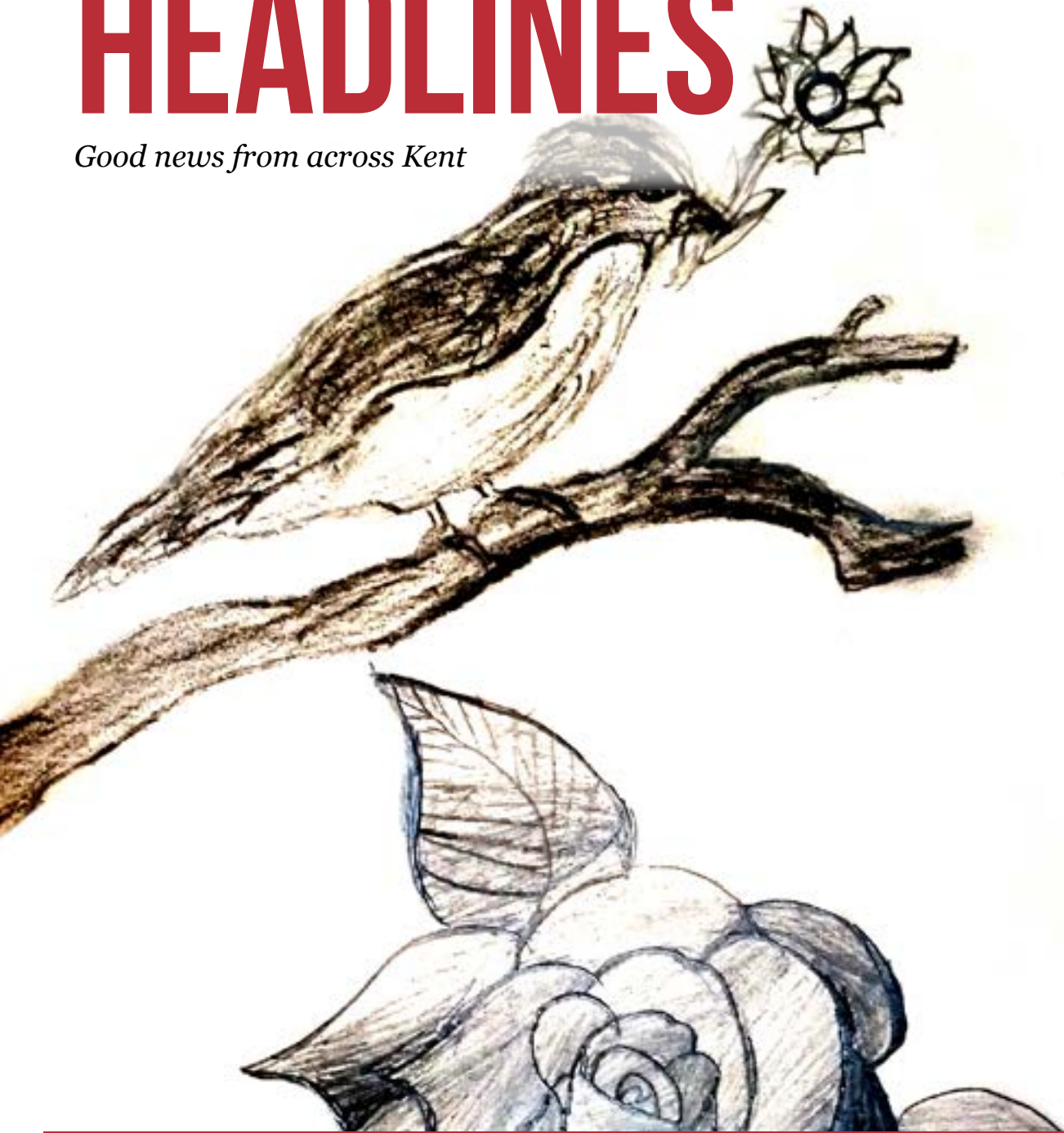
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HEADLINES

Good news from across Kent



ART WITH HEART

Peace Together is a new project to bring people closer through art.

It aims to offer a safe space for refugees and the local community to connect through online workshops with artist Anna Ray and Refugee Officer Domenica Pecoraro, who designed and delivered scheme.

The pilot project is in partnership with Canterbury Welcomes Refugees and Canterbury City Council and is funded by Counterpoints Arts.

For more information please contact our Refugee Officer, Domenica Pecoraro: dpecoraro@diocant.org

You can share your own drawings with the Peace Together Project using the link:

<https://annarayart.wufoo.com/forms/m1gr8cvdowf4cvu>

JULIAN HILLS TO RETIRE

After 18 years with the Diocese, 13 as Diocesan Secretary Julian Hills, who led with care and compassion, has announced his retirement.

You can read the messages of thanks from Archbishop Justin and Bishop Rose on our website and a special article in our next edition.

BRONZE ECO DIOCESE AWARD



We have been awarded a Bronze Eco Diocese award.

Canterbury has been awarded a Bronze Eco Diocese award. Eco Diocese is an initiative to encourage diocesan-level engagement with Eco Church, and promote local participation in the scheme. At least 10% of our local churches must be registered and 5% of our churches awarded. It also requires a clear environmental policy and direction of travel that everyone is signed up to.

Diocesan Environment Officer Teresa Redfern said: “This is just terrific news and is the culmination of a great deal of hard work from a great number of people.

“Our churches have registered for the Eco Church scheme and parishes that are reaching out across the dioceses and across borders to make change. The outdoor worship at St. Margaret’s Church, Wychling, was given special mention.

“This is a great achievement and I feel we’ve reached a milestone that we’ve been working towards for some time.”

BISHOP’S JUSTICE APPEAL

Almost £25,000 has been raised in the first year of the Bishop’s Justice Appeal.

Donations have meant that the work of the Diocesan Refugee Officer has been able to continue to help and support families across the county and across The Channel.

Director of Communities and Partnerships Revd Jonathan Arnold said: “We’re thrilled by the generosity of many which has allowed us to give help and hope where is needed most.

“We rely on that kindness and it is greatly appreciated, and we call upon you once more to support us as we seek to do all that can.”

To find out more about the Bishop’s Justice Appeal and details of how to donate, please go to canterburydiocese.org/bishops-justice-appeal

BISHOP'S SCHOOL VISIT DONATIONS WANTED

Deal Parochial CEP school treated Bishop Rose to a special service that was beamed out to each classroom.

The pupil worship team worked hard and prepared a service that focused on the themes of justice and compassion towards refugees. They chose Bible readings, wrote prayers and designed activities as well as offering thoughts for reflection.

Everyone took part in the collective worship that was streamed through to all classrooms. Bishop Rose was invited to stand and give her reflections and prayers as part of the service.

All the children had the opportunity to talk with The Bishop and they asked her about racism, making interfaith connections and about how to empower young people to find their voice.

A partnership project between churches and charities is being developed in response to asylum seekers being housed at Napier Barracks in Folkestone.

Refugee officer Domenica Pecoraro said: "We've had a good deal of support from our local networks to help those people who have found themselves living in the barracks.

"Our hope is to set up an additional collection point, away from one already established in Folkestone, elsewhere in the diocese as there is much that needs to be donated.

"This is an ongoing situation and we will continue to open our hearts with love and compassion."

If you would like to donate or are able to set up a collection point, please email Domenica at dpecoraro@diocant.org



The poster features a background of stylized, colorful mountain peaks in shades of blue, yellow, and red. In the top left corner, there is a logo for the Diocese of Canterbury with the motto 'CHANGES COME - O-DIMINUIS UNUS'. The main text on the right side of the poster reads 'Safeguarding Conference 23 Jan 2021'. At the bottom right, a blue rectangular box contains the text: 'go to canterburydiocese.org/calendar and search for 23 January 2021 to book'.

KEEP PRAYING

Throughout the challenges of 2020 Bishop Rose has encouraged us to ‘keep praying’, and it’s been encouraging to see all kinds of prayer happening around the diocese.

The Changing Lives Prayer Network Team have been thinking about how we might ‘keep praying’ with and for one another throughout the uncertainties of 2021.

- ‘Keep Praying’ is a thread of prayer that will run throughout 2021, simple and flexible enough to weave through all we do in our churches and local communities and to connect us in prayer across the diocese.
- ‘Keep Praying’ will have a different theme for


liturgical seasons of the year, and through our calendars, prayer cards and webpage we’ll offer three simple resources to help you pray:

- A picture on the theme, accompanied by a Scripture verse
- A short prayer, putting the theme into prayerful words
- A prayer practice – a simple, active way to pray the theme

We hope you’ll find each of these helpful in your personal prayer, in your gathered worship and in your prayerful connections with people in your local community.

We begin the year with the season of Epiphany and the theme of ‘God, light in our darkness’.

Please go to canterburydiocese.org/prayer-resources to find out more.

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REFLECTION GARDEN FOR STELLING MINNIS



One of the priorities set by the team at Stelling Minnis Church of England Primary School in 2019 was to create a Reflection Garden for the school community – and, in November this year, that dream became a reality.

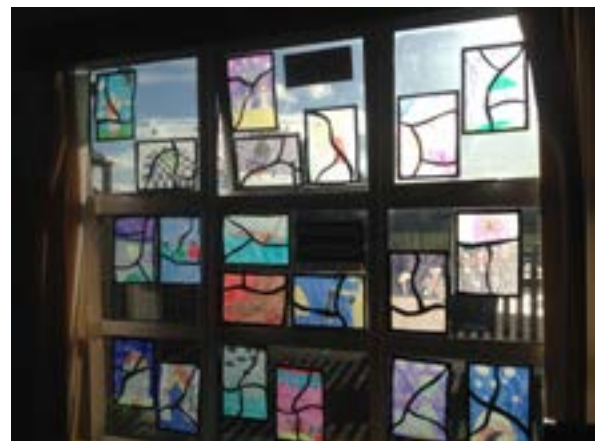
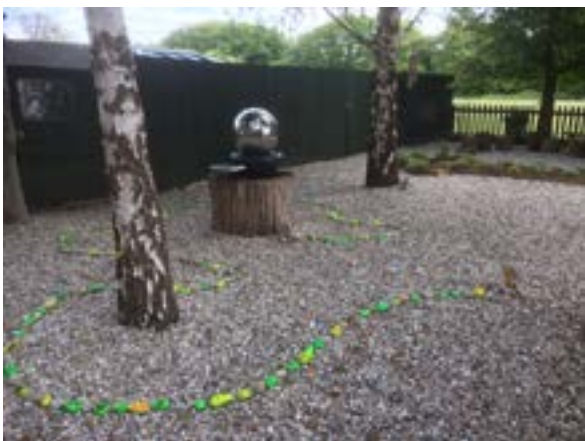
Children, governors, parents, local residents and staff were all involved in planning and creating the garden.

The children worked on the original designs and painted brightly coloured stones with reflections on them for the garden. It was all set to be opened by Bishop Rose when the second national Coronavirus lockdown was announced.

It was therefore a delight when the school's Year

5 and 6 children were able to use the Reflection Garden for their Cathedral Schools' Day (in a Covid safe way). For the first time ever, this year's Cathedral Schools' Days had to take place online because of COVID-19 restrictions (see pages 12-13).

As part of these activities, the pupils at Stelling Minnis created more reflection stones, and prayer stations were set up in the Reflection Garden. One of the pupils taking part, Leah, commented that she was worried about Covid, but by letting go of her worries in the prayer station, God really helped her. "It was lovely to see the Reflection Garden being used in this way," reflected Headteacher John Gray, "The children said that it was a fun and peaceful day."



EVEN UNTO BETHLEHEM

A lockdown pilgrimage

From the team that brought you 540 Miles in Lent, 40 Blankets in 40 Days and Cycle to Jerusalem, comes...Even Unto Bethlehem.

The Stour Downs Parish is leading a pilgrimage in lockdown, with people invited to walk and explore locally and then submit their weekly total mileage. They hope to reach Bethlehem for Christmas and make the return journey home by Easter.

The team has grown to 55 walkers and they have already clocked up 4,140 miles (last week stopping off at the Archaeological Museum at Ephesus). They are keen to welcome more to join in.

One of the organisers, Di Dawson, explains the idea behind the project is to help us to look after their well-being by getting out and about, to think more about the world in which we live and to notice others, the stranger on the road. She said: “This challenge is open to everyone, not just ‘church’ people, but we’re all disciples on this pilgrimage.

“It helps not just physical well-being by getting out and walking but is so much more than that. As people walk the intention is that they also talk to people, wave, smile and make that connection that may not have been made before.

“It’s things like noticing the sparrows splashing in a puddle and sharing that with the next person you see. They may just smile but they may stop and talk and you’ve shared something. Who knows how that might help?

“It also helps us all to think about the environment. Thinking about our carbon footprint when we walk rather than drive to the shop. It all helps save the planet and clock up the miles!”

Pilgrims who want to join in can contact Di at cirrus.five@yahoo.co.uk and you’ll receive a weekly update about where the team is on the journey.



VIRTUAL CATHEDRAL SCHOOLS' DAYS

Around the cathedral...

Hundreds of our year six pupils took part in Virtual Cathedral Schools' Day 2020 which saw the annual event move entirely online.

Pupils were able to take a virtual tour and then stop to take part in classroom activities that reflected what they had learned.

Once completed, pupils were able to join worship with a host of familiar faces from across the diocese including Bishop Rose and Archbishop Justin Welby.

“ As one, both diocese and Cathedral teams grabbed the change in circumstance and turned it into an opportunity...

”

Deputy Director of Education Niki Paterson said: “As one, both diocese and Cathedral teams grabbed the change in circumstance and turned it into an opportunity.

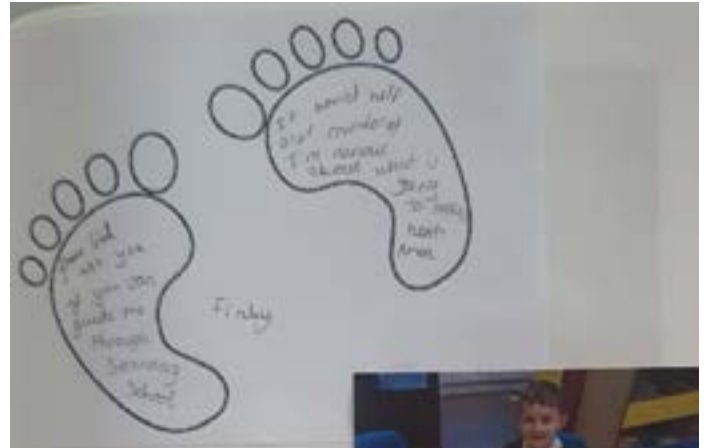
“Consequently, this year we could show parts of Canterbury Cathedral that we wouldn't normally be able to. We travelled all around the Cathedral from up on the safety deck, to the workings of the stained-glass studio, and we were able to do it in a way that enabled all schools the chance to take part.”



High Halden



Herne Junior



Cranbrook Primary



Herne Junior



Cranbrook Primary



Cranbrook Primary

MEET OUR NEW...

...Reverends

The ordination of our priests and deacons was held at Canterbury Cathedral with ten new Deacons welcomed in the special service.

It was led by The Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Revd and Rt Hon Justin Welby.

Archbishop Justin said: “To be ordained is not only to show and share your commitment to a life dedicated to love and service. It is also a new chapter in the life of each ordinand as they say, ‘Yes!’ to God’s calling on their lives, whatever that may bring.

“It is a strange time to begin such a new chapter, but no less a cause for rejoicing – the ordination of these wonderful people offers

fresh hope to our Church and our communities. While it is a deeply personal occasion, it is also one in which our whole community celebrates.”

Our ten new Deacons:

- Alice Bates (St Peter-in-Thanet)
- Ylva Blid-Mackenzie (Benenden and Sandhurst)
- Charlotte Coles (The Len Valley Benefice)
- Ben Forbes (Deal, St George)
- Lucy Henderson (Canterbury, All Saints)
- Paula Jardine-Rose (Tunstall with Bredgar)
- Charmaine Muir (Canterbury, St Mary Bredin)
- Cathrine Ngangira (Bearsted, Holy Cross, North Downs Benefice)

- Angie Stuppel (Dover Town)
- Jennifer Walters (Broadstairs, Holy Trinity).

In addition, last year’s Deacons were ordained as Priests by The Bishop of Dover, The Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin. They are:

- Michael Darkins (The Wantsum Group)
- Jacky Darling (The Romney Marsh Benefice)
- Lesley Hardy (Barham Downs with Adisham)
- John Huffman (Margate, Holy Trinity)
- Simeon Nevell (The Six)
- Stephen O’Connor (Walmer and Cornilo)
- Bruce Watson (Ashford Town).



Photo credit: Jim Drew

...Readers

The Admission and Licensing of Readers service took place in September – and this year it was all done online...

The annual celebration welcomed those called to ministry and who will serve in the name of Christ and His Church.

The Bishop of Dover, the Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin, presided over the service that saw the admission and licensing of seven new Readers and the re-licensing of two more.



Peter Roberts
North Downs Deanery



Ann Harrison
North Downs Deanery



Anne Loat
Romney & Tenterden Deanery



Graham Snellin
Dover Deanery



Margaret Bowers
Dover Deanery



Isobel Legg
Reculver Deanery



Sharon Paine
Elham Deanery

“ It’s always great to see our new Readers embark on the next stage of their journey...

”

June Noakes, from Romney and Tenterden Deanery and Nicholas Tomaszewski, from Sandwich deanery, were welcomed and re-licensed.

Warden of Readers, Nigel Collins, said: “This is always a very special service as we join together to celebrate with those called to ministry. It’s always great to see our new Readers embark on the next stage of their journey. They all have a real passion for ministry and I know each of them will bring so much to each of their deaneries.”

ADVENT JUSTICE APPEAL

Partnering with Christian Aid

Churches across our diocese join with people across the world this Advent in facing the common threat of coronavirus as it devastates livelihoods and claims lives.

As we approach Christmas we are reminded of Jesus who turned the world upside down for good, whose life in a time of oppression and fear introduced a hope that transformed the world.

Looking to Jesus, Emmanuel, we are met with the truth that God walks with us through deeply difficult times and works through us to show love to this world in all circumstances. A love that unites and

builds hope.

Christian Aid supporters walk alongside those for whom coronavirus is yet another threat on top of existing ones. For some people in rural Ethiopia the climate crisis leaves them struggling to access water to sustain and protect their families and this year locust swarms also destroyed precious crops.

This Christmas, churches are invited to join in a moment of solidarity by using the carol 'When out of poverty is born' and taking a collection for Christian Aid. To find out more about the hymn, and how to help build resilience in the face of disease and drought for our global neighbours, visit www.caid.org.uk/hope

Love comes down.

Kawite (right) and her daughter fetch water from the pond built by their community in Ethiopia.

Hope builds up.

This Christmas, we are standing in solidarity with our sisters and brothers facing the climate crisis.

Together we can help communities like Kawite's to build a life-giving pond for themselves and their families.

Build hope this Christmas at caid.org.uk/hope

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**christian
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DETECTIVES OF DIVINITY

Learning to listen to God - and each other

Throughout the Autumn of 2020, as a diocesan family, we've been spending time listening to God and each other – a process that we've called 'Listening and Discerning on the Way'. We've been asking three questions:

1. What are we noticing... of God's movement at this difficult time?
2. What are we learning... as we reflect on how God seems to be moving?
3. What might we let go of or allow to die... so that we may enter a new future with God?

People across our diocese responded with enthusiasm – meeting in small groups in person or online and mulling over the quotations for themselves. Thank you so much for all the responses that you've shared – read on for some reflections on what we've been hearing about how God is at work in our diocese.



Steve Coneys, Mission and Growth Advisor, chaired the reading group, who pored over the responses to pull out the 'golden threads' of what God might be saying to us at this time...

As I chatted with my neighbour, we began to share how we've seen God working in these

difficult days. It was delightful, and at the end we agreed that we could be 'God detectives' in our street, smiled at each other, and I went off for my bike ride.

Noticing the movement and presence of God – putting it into words – checking it out with each

other. That's what happened there – and this is what our recent diocesan conversations have all been about.

If, as they say, mission is all about 'seeing what God is doing and joining in,' it would seem hugely important that we are able to notice what God is up to and start from there. This is what *Listening and Discerning on the Way* is all about. It's not been a 'consultation' in the usual sense – instead, it's about all of us listening to God locally, putting what we hear into words, and sharing it together.

What are we noticing (about the movement of God)?

What are we learning from this?

What might we let go of, and allow to die – so that we can enter God's promised future?

These simple - but challenging - questions seem to help us slow down enough for God to get our attention. They focus our attention on God rather than what we are doing, which so often seems to be the centre of our view (What are *we* doing? What *could* we do? What *should* we....?).

From this process have arisen a number of 'golden threads' – themes that have bubbled up the surface time and time again throughout a variety of responses. Take a look. Do these 'land' for you? Is there more to be heard? (Of course, the answer to that is always likely to be "Yes" – God never stops communicating with this people.)

People: God is showing us that we encounter Him through people and relationships

We have noticed that, as we attend to people, we have a sense of God's presence or movement. It sounds simple. But when we reflect on God as Trinity (that God 'is' relationship) there is something profound here.

Simplicity: God is helping us to notice Him more (and others)

Lots of us are hearing God say, 'Slow down! Or you'll

never notice what I'm doing.'

Creation: God is catching our attention through His Creation – and showing us our need to care for it

It is intriguing that our 'noticing' of God in Creation seems to have helped us notice God elsewhere too, and to start to put that into words.

Faith: God has been helping us to grow as people and disciples

Those who read all the responses in detail felt that God has been making us bigger – in the sense of deeper (in our faith and encounter with God), taller (in terms of our confidence and identity in Christ) and wider (more aware of our communities).

Church and buildings: God is reshaping our priorities

One respondent said, "How will church be different when this pandemic is over?" And we realised, we are different already."

“ I think God is breaking the church as we have known it but in the same way Jesus breaks bread – so everyone gets some. It might be an uncomfortable process, but it will be well worth it... ”

Change: God has been changing us (and stretching our capacity for change)

Throughout this year, flexibility and adaptability have been seen as surprising plus. Part of this is a strong sense that church structures, at national and diocesan level, need attention.

Children and young people: Whose voices is God asking us to hear?

It is delightful to hear one child say, "God's world is getting better". But there were very few responses from children. Clearly it is hard to be in touch with children and young people presently. But it can be done! Check out the link below for material for use by families and carers together with children. We need their voices and their gift – and those of other 'unheard' groups too.

Back to my neighbour. The thing is, she is not a churchgoer at all. Yet she was able to notice God's movement around her and within her, and to put it into words with a sense of wonder. There's a thing.

Are we, who know ourselves as God's people, able to do the same?

What we've been hearing

Our archdeacons reflect on what they have heard through this process...

Archdeacon Andrew Sewell, Archdeacon of Maidstone:



"What we are noticing and learning is remarkable. The fact that we are learning together may be more remarkable still, because it shows we are open to growing as human beings, open to God's reshaping, open to being turned inside out. Who'd have thought that we could learn to do so much

online, and so quickly? The last year has proved, somewhat to its own surprise, that the Church of England can change, and change fast when it has to. It's also reminded us of age-old truths that relationships matter, that our buildings mean many things to many people, that creation deserves our care, that the voices of the powerless, the youngest and the quietest need to be heard. God is leading us, as people and as a diocese, into places we've never been before. None of us knows the way, so we need to keep listening, keep noticing, keep learning, keep discerning. It turns out we can change. Better still, we can be changed by the God who made us and loves us and sees what we could become. These responses prove it. Now we need to live it."

Jo Kelly-Moore, Archdeacon of Canterbury:



One of the clear golden threads for me in the process so far, which I'm sure is only going to grow and grow, is that this is about us all - the whole people of God - knowing ourselves as 24/7 disciples each taking up our vocations

where we are every day. Along with this, all in partnership in the church (lay and ordained) equipping leadership, serving together. God is working to set His people free for His mission to the

world. Changed lives, changing lives!

“ God is leading us, as a people and as a diocese, into places we’ve never been before... ”

Darren Miller, Archdeacon of Ashford




It’s been exciting reading what people have submitted in terms of what they’ve been noticing, what they’ve been learning, what they feel that God may be prompting us to give up at this time. It’s been really interesting to see those common threads but I’m aware that not everyone has had a


chance to take part, and so not everyone will have been able to have had their voice heard. Discerning and listening is not something that stops at the end of two conversation loops in November, but continues indefinitely. So, if there are things that

you are noticing, things that you’re learning, things that you feel that God is prompting to be given up at this time, let us know so that we can get a broad a picture at this time of where God may be leading us as a whole church.


To ponder more on what we have been hearing – and to share what you continue to hear from God and one another – visit canterburydiocese.org/listening


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AWAKENING THE CHILD WITHIN

Ronni Lamont reflects on the blessing of children's spirituality



Fifteen years ago, I was at the beginning of a three-month study leave from my post of Vicar at St. John's in Bexley. Our youngest had gone to university, and I was going to start the 'Rest of My Life' by writing a book, loosely based around my MA dissertation for which I'd done research in our local primary school looking at how children hear the story of the lost sheep through puppets, or Godly Play, and comparing the results.

That book, published late 2007, was called 'Understanding Children Understanding God' (SPCK). It was very successful, as it spoke into a relatively unexplored area, and I'd targeted those amazing people who minister with children in churches, who often have very little theoretical background.

Ten years later, I was looking for a publisher for Book #2, as in the intervening years I had discovered all sorts of things that needed to be added to what was still a popular area of interest. Thus 'Faith in Children' came about - a new title for a new

publisher. I had some enforced time off from my regular freelance ministry following surgery to write, and the book was born in April 2020 - in the middle of the first Coronavirus lockdown.

New areas to explore included the importance of play, spiritual styles, the national Growing Faith adventure that we're on together and intergenerational worship. My emphasis is still on children's spirituality and how important it is; something that is increasingly recognised within the Church, and especially within our amazing family of Church Schools.

Spirituality is an elusive concept - we each have our own understanding of what the word means, and we rarely check it out with others, so we may each understand our spirituality in very different ways. For my understanding of 'spirituality', I mean 'what comes from the place between my heart and my head - that understanding that the world is more than I can see, hear, touch or taste.' Others may like the notion of 'relational consciousness' (Rebecca Nye, 'The Spirit of a Child'). So religious faith is not usually essential to the definition; it's more to do with understanding the holistic nature of a human being - the God given ability to create, to love, to imagine, to be full of awe as the sun rises or you wonder at Mars in the evening sky.

Children 'do' this far more than adults - for most, it's part of their everyday consciousness, and that's something that makes them particularly special, as Jesus realised. Becoming like a child, for me, often means tapping into the 'child within', and allowing myself to stop and stare, to wonder at nature, or just watch the birds in my garden and thank God for sparrows. We Christian folk are in the business of giving structure to that elusive quality through our understanding of God through Jesus.

Faith in Children isn't a 'how to' manual. It's a

book to open up your thinking, with chapters on development - faith, social, cognitive and psychological. There's another that illustrates how children think about God - who God is and what God is like - that may make you smile as well as wonder. There's a chapter about children receiving communion prior to confirmation. Each chapter begins with a quotation of what a child has said - one of the most challenging can be found at the start of the chapter on Communion: "I'm not part of the body 'cos I don't get any bread" - James, aged 4, noticing the words of the prayer said at Holy Communion: "We break this bread to share in the body of Christ..."

That's the comment that spurred me to include children in communion in my own parishes as a priest.

Although the book contains some academic theory, I tried to write it in a user friendly 'voice', as I find academic tomes quite a struggle to read, and I know others do too. So, it's a book to pick up and read, to share, and if you do it as a team, there are discussion starters at the end of each chapter.

Let me close with a quotation from one of our diocesan schools. The class were working with

seashells, and a boy held it up to his ear.

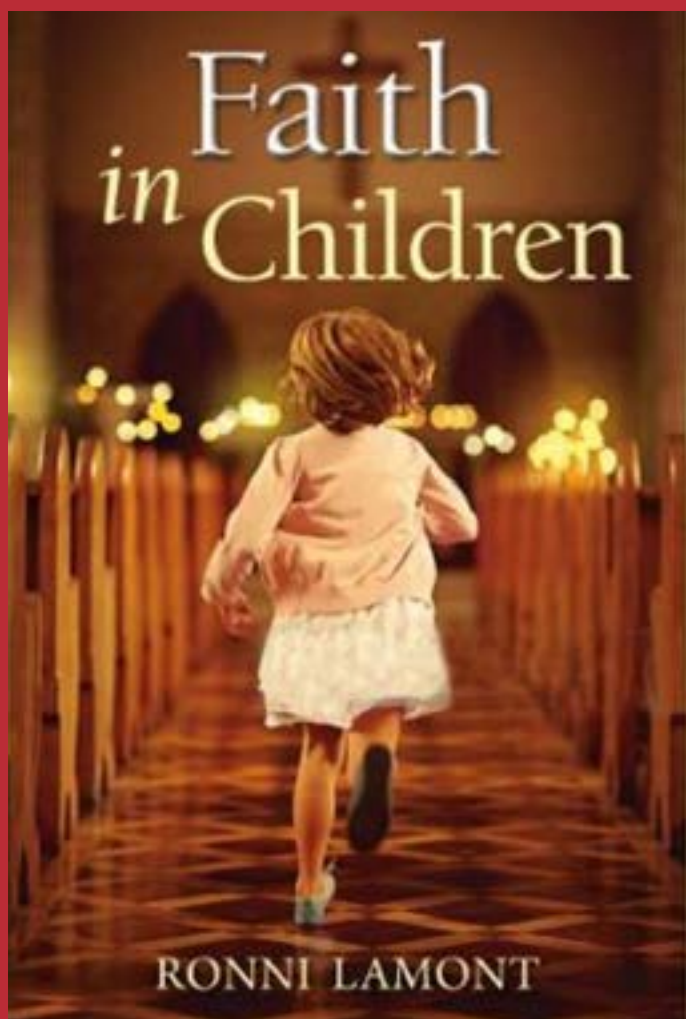
"Miss, I can hear God whispering to me..."

“ Becoming like a child, for me, often means tapping into the ‘child within’, and allowing myself to stop and stare, to wonder at nature... ”

Children's spirituality is a blessing to us all, if we are prepared to let the child take us by the hand and lead us towards the Kingdom of God.

Faith in Children by Ronni Lamont, is published by Monarch, 2020

Ronni is Faith and Nurture Adviser for Canterbury Diocese until the end of 2020.



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A PEOPLE OF HOPE

Lyndall Bywater reflects



Hope is a powerful thing. That was my first thought as I listened to a Radio 4 presenter joyfully announcing the news of an effective Covid vaccine, her voice almost breaking with emotion. It's only when you face

something which seems to have no cure or solution that you truly realise the meaning of hope. It's hope that tells us things can change for the better, hope that reassures us we will find a way through after all.

There's a kind of naïve optimism which is absolutely confident that things will turn out alright, and it sometimes borrows the name 'hope', but it's not reality for most of us. The further through life we go, the more we become aware of our own helplessness in the face of things which are simply too big, too bad or too complex for us to resolve on our own. Optimism gets us so far, but ultimately it can't screen out the pains and injustices of the world we live in.

Optimism is an attitude; hope is a gift.

'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.' (Romans 15:13, NIV)

Hope is the natural overflow of what happens in us when God fills us with joy and peace, by the power of the Spirit. There is an action on God's part: filling us; and an action on our part: trusting God. Perhaps that's why hope is intrinsically linked to prayer. It's in prayer that we make ourselves available for that in-filling, and in prayer that we reaffirm our trust in the God of hope.

Our world badly needs hope at this time. Even with effective vaccines in the making, much has been destroyed by the pandemic, not to mention the other struggles of 2020. Our world doesn't need the naïve optimism which turns a blind eye to the reality of pain; it needs the gritty, courageous hope which acknowledges all that is, yet keeps praying... keeps turning in trust towards the God of hope.

It's worth noting that, according to Paul, the God of hope doesn't fill us with answers and explanations, just joy and peace. So often we measure hope in results - we feel hopeful when we can see a solution to the problem - but the promise of Scripture is simply that God will feed our souls with that precious soul-food which nourishes us even when resolution feels a million miles away.

“ It's in prayer that we make ourselves available for that in-filling, and in prayer that we reaffirm our trust in the God of hope... ”

As our world navigates its way through grief, disruption and uncertainty, we give thanks for scientists who develop vaccines and for people of influence who solve problems, but we also give thanks for the privilege of being the church of Jesus Christ, a people nourished with peace and joy and overflowing with hope.

Lyndall is the Changing Lives Prayer Network Co-Ordinator.

CHANGED LIVES ⇨ CHANGING LIVES

WHAT'S ON THIS WINTER?

Winter events



1. VISIT CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

The Cathedral is holding special services throughout Christmas and daily online worship will continue. For more information please visit www.canterbury-cathedral.org

2. GO DEEPER

Deepening discipleship is a setting in which many have heard afresh an affirmation of God's leading in their lives.

Contact: mhambrook@diocant.org for more details.

January to March 2021.

3. ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING CONFERENCE

Our annual Safeguarding Conference will take place on Zoom, from 9am to 12:30pm on 23 January 2021. Bishop Rose will give the opening address and topics covered will include mistakes in safeguarding decision-making and the 'online challenge'. You can book your place now here: <http://ow.ly/YLBU5oCN1ci>

22 January 2021, 9am-midday.

4. LENT 2021

#LiveLent: God's Story, Our Story resources can be found here: www.churchofengland.org/resources/livelent-2021-church-resources-gods-story-our-story

17 February to 3 April 2021.



5. FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT

For two weeks each year, thousands of individuals, companies and groups across the UK come together to share the stories of the people who grow our food and drinks and who grow the cotton in our clothes, people who are often exploited and underpaid..

Monday 22 February to Sunday 7 March 2021.

6. FUNERAL AND BEREAVEMENT COURSE

Open to ALM Pastoral Assistants, ALM Worship Leaders and to Readers and Licensed Lay Ministers. Training consists of an induction evening with training ministers, six two-hour sessions and a period of in-parish experience. The course requires a commitment from the incumbent to oversee and evaluate the student's progress and readiness for participation in funeral ministry, as well as supporting the student through the course. Find out more and apply: <http://ow.ly/IDtm5oCP3L4>

March to June 2021.

7. ECO CHURCH ONLINE

A joint event with Rochester Diocese. More details to come.

8 May 2021, 10am.



8. A WEEK OF ACCOMPANIED PRAYER FOR LENT

An opportunity to do a retreat at home, setting aside time each day

to pray, with input from Chris Chapman, of the Diocesan 'Pathways to Prayer', and taking time each day to reflect with a prayer guide who will make contact with you on phone or computer.

For more information, and to book a place, please contact Janet McDonald 07530 251318 / 01227 860837 / janet.mcdonald@btinternet.com

Closing date 12 February. Limited spaces available.

Zoom or phone.



9. CELEBRATING LOVE AND LIFE: WEDDINGS AND CHRISTENINGS IN 2021

Weddings have happened, and weddings have been postponed. Christenings may simply have been put out of mind for now, yet family life goes on with its joys and its difficulties. Life's big events are still important and give us a moment when we can help many people experience the good news of God's love.

This webinar will help us think about the opportunities and challenges around this ministry for 2021 - and even into 2022.

Presenter: Sandra Millar, Head of Life Events and Welcome.

Register here: <http://ow.ly/IyXk5oCMZNc>

Tuesday 2nd February 2021, 10-11 am.



10. THE LIVING WELL

The Living Well is our diocese's centre for healing and wholeness. You can view their programme here: <http://ow.ly/yoy55oCN2I2>

Throughout 2021.

11. LISTENING IN THE DEEP SILENCE OF GOD

Information to follow.

25 January 2021.

12. HOW THE BIBLE CAN HELP US UNDERSTAND

In this series of conversations, the authors reflect on what the Bible means to them and how it can help them understand the themes discussed in the guides. Join us on Wednesday evenings in January and reflect with us, the meaning behind 'God's love letter' to us. Find out more: <http://ow.ly/fscI5oCPah5>

Throughout January 2021.

Want your event listed on our website? Submit it at www.canterburydiocese.org/submit

For a full list of events, visit www.canterburydiocese.org/events

PRAYER

**O God of Advent Love,
with gratitude and praise
we give thanks for your mighty
promises of love –
proclaimed by John the Baptist and
revealed to us in Jesus.
Gift us with the discernment to see
you in unexpected places,
to recognise your love in unexpected
people,
and to rejoice that no one is ever too
old, or too young
to share the unimaginable good news
of your love –
your priceless, freely offered gift,
given to us and all your children.
Thank you.
Amen**



*More prayer resources:
canterburydiocese.org/prayer*

Image: The Visitation, Primrose Northrop 2020