‘I am coming to join in God’s work of transformation’, says new Bishop of Hertford

The wait for the announcement of the next Bishop of Hertford ended on 5th March with the news of the Revd Canon Dr Michael Beasley’s nomination. He will be consecrated on 14th May in Westminster Abbey and welcomed to the Diocese in June.

Canon Beasley is currently Director of Mission in the Diocese of Oxford, leading a team of 28 in their combined Mission and Ministry Department. In that role, which he has held for the last five years, he has been instrumental in helping the diocese to develop a holistic vision for mission that “sees ministry in the service of mission, and evangelism and social action as two sides of one missional coin. Oxford is a large, populous diocese containing a wide range of contexts. It’s not amenable to initiatives or to approaches that are top down or one size fits all.”

Canon Beasley was welcomed to the Diocese in a press conference in Stevenage Council’s Chamber, in the presence of the Mayor, Cllr Sherma Batson.

He said: “I am delighted to be coming to St Albans to join in all that’s already taking place here to grow the Church in spiritual depth, outreach to the community and numbers. Sad though I am to leave Oxford Diocese I’m very much looking forward to getting to know the people of Hertfordshire.”

“I’d like to thank you, Madam Mayor, for your kind welcome to the Chamber of Stevenage Council. To be announced as the new bishop here speaks of our common venture as we seek the flourishing of our communities.”

The Mayor responded: “I feel honoured to be the first person in Hertfordshire to extend a welcome to the Bishop-designate. Here in Stevenage we are a town with scientific connections, with one of the newest churches in the county and with a strategic plan and ambition to grow, three things which I understand are close to your heart.”

Speaking about his move, he said: “As I come to Hertfordshire I hope that the experience I bring from Oxford will serve well the people of St Albans Diocese.”

“In Oxford, I’ve sought to join in with God’s work of transformation. I’ve appreciated enormously working there with a wide range of people and churches across the spectrum of the Christian tradition. I’ve done this in different settings, working alongside people to address issues from the care of young people to the provision of ministry, from outreach to local communities to action for social justice in areas such as foodbanks and debt.”

“I believe that in Christ, all things hold together. Before my present role in Oxford, I worked half time as Vice Principal of Westcott House, Cambridge, alongside another half-time post as Director of a research group in the Department of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at Imperial College. My experience was that each supported and informed the other; for example the pastoral skills of a priest were an invaluable aid to policy development with governments in a number of countries and skills gained in planning and strategy were of benefit to the identification of Westcott’s longer-term vision for training new priests for the Church of England.”

“As an extrovert I enjoy being with and working alongside others and have been able to do this in a very wide range of environments; from villages in the African countryside to churches in English cities, from rural deanery Synods to Ministries of Health. I’m strongly committed to working alongside others and sad though I am to leave Oxford Diocese I’m very much looking forward to coming to St Albans Diocese and getting to know the people there.”

Canon Beasley was introduced to the Diocese of St Albans in visits to St Nicholas School, Stevenage, Rothamsted Research, Harpenden and Holy Trinity Bushey’s Pioneer Ministry. Photographs can be seen here: http://bit.ly/1Exi9HY
At St Nicholas Cof E School, Stevenage

It was also World Book Day

some things need a new perspective
At Rothamsted Research, with The Revd Pippa Madgwick
courtesy of Rothamsted Research

At Holy Trinity Bushey’s Pioneer Ministry Project

With Holy Trinity Bushey’s Youth Team
New Hope’s work began in the 1980s when two self-styled ‘ordinary housewives’, Janet Hosier and Sheila Meaning, were inspired by Isaiah 58:6-8, to invite people they saw sleeping and begging on the streets of Watford into their own homes.

The Revd John Woodger (vicar of St Mary’s from 1984 to 2002) writes the following about this era:

‘Church members were, on the whole, cut off from homelessness, but there were some who saw the need and wanted to help. It all began after some of our congregation had been to Spring Harvest and had been challenged on some of the social issues in our country. Out of that some of our members and friends started the Thursday evening supper club in the church porch. Around the same time Janet Hosier and Sheila Meaning started to invite some of the homeless people into their homes – having been warned by me to take care! The combination of those two events formed the beginning of Watford New Hope Trust.’ (Now renamed as ‘New Hope’. Ed)

Janet and Sheila soon found the problem was too big for their original approach, however, and in 1990, Janet, Sheila and Tim Robson, a GP working with people with problems with addiction, founded New Hope at ‘the coaches’, two old coaches converted into soup kitchens.

From these humble beginnings, New Hope has expanded to meet an increasing need. Thanks to God’s blessing, the charity is now one of the largest homelessness service providers in the Home Counties and its holistic approach makes it Watford Borough Council’s ‘preferred provider’. New Hope has grown but it is still the same at heart – a local charity dependent on the local community and God’s amazing provision.

Bishop Alan visited New Hope in late January to see first hand the work currently going on there. He came away with one abiding impression: “In ‘New Hope,’ I see what can result from the actions of two people, well established in faith, part of a worshipping community, who see a need, respond to it with prayer and commitment and who reap a harvest for the Kingdom of God beyond all imagination.”

To mark its 25th birthday, New Hope is holding a 25th birthday celebration service at St Mary’s Church, Watford on Monday 23rd March from 7.30pm – 9.30pm. Following the charity’s theme of 2015, ‘Together, we are New Hope’, the service will celebrate the different groups of people that make New Hope what it is, looking back over the past 25 years to see what God has done and also looking to the future. The night will include: worship, prayer, stories, films and updates from across different services, as well as an address from Bishop Alan.

After the service, there will be an opportunity to buy the new edition of Entertaining Angels, written by the late Janet Hosier. The book tells the amazing story of New Hope, of how Janet and Sheila opened their hearts to and changed the lives of countless people, and this edition features an updated cover and a new introduction by Janet’s son, Craig Borlase. The title of the book is taken from Hebrews 13:2: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”

All are welcome on Monday 23rd March at St Mary’s.
Messy Church in Toddington and Chalgrave was a response four years ago, to many insights including that a whole generation of un-churched young parents were bringing babies for christening but feeling church to be a very alien place. The Revd Anne Crawford, T & C’s Vicar was invited to Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee to tell their story as a case study. Anne says:

“There were no children in church. Sunday school was dying, The generations were not worshipping together and in fact we had two generations of people missing in church – people in their 30s, 40s, and 50s not worshipping at all.”

“Messy Church seemed the ideal format to encourage these missing generations to come along and try church in a new, less formal, way. Sundays are also an issue – young parents very often work on a Sunday, and children have sports commitments on a Sunday morning, or they have been at a sleep over on Sat night, or there’s a party on a Sunday etc. So we meet on the last Fri of the month (but we are flexible to fit in with Easter and school holidays and PTA events etc).”

“First the mums, grannies and grandpas come and get started with crafts, then the dads in time for worship and tea.”

“The most astonishing thing we’ve learned is that children tend to teach the adults – they have an uncluttered spirituality, they are welcoming and generous to newcomers, they are eager and open to learning, and their ability to be still and pray earnestly and with great devotion is inspiring. And children bring their friends along – if our Sunday congregations were as good as messy at introducing friends to church, we’d be in great shape!”

“As far as making new disciples – we have had several adults baptised and confirmed, lots of babies and children baptised, one mum who first came to church through Messy is now our pcc secretary, we have a messy fundraising team, a messy worship team, a messy tea & toast coffee morning team, and a growing number of older children who are beginning to be young leaders and taking responsibility for crafts and helping the little ones. support the Church & community”

The parish defines Messy Church as an all age congregation who:

• explore together
• learn together
• worship & pray together
• eat together
• have fun together
• support one another
• support the Church & community

But not:

• Just for children
• Separate from the rest of the church family
• For the faint-hearted!
• Dumbed down & simple

Anne concludes: “Its not perfect, its unpredictable as far as attendance is concerned – anything from 20 adults and 15 children on a quiet day, to 50+ adults and 50+ children on a busy day.”

“Four years on, Messy Church is a continually changing, growing, searching congregation. It demands high levels of energy, enthusiasm and creativity from its leaders, but God is at work and faith is being deepened, new disciples are being made, and the community is slowly being transformed by people who have a new found confidence that God is in the messiness of life.”
Easter Monday Pilgrimage 2015

Theme: ‘Be Refreshed’

People, young and old, walk to the Abbey from across the diocese to meet and gather together in the cathedral every Easter Monday. Join them on 6th April from 2.00pm after, weather permitting, the customary picnics on the Abbey Orchard.

The service begins at 3.00pm. Track the pilgrims’ progress on Twitter #emp2015

Groups

If you are coming as part of a larger group then why not download and complete the St Albans Easter Monday Pilgrimage 2015 Registration Form? It speeds things up if this form is completed before you come and you can hand it in when you arrive, rather than filling it in on the spot! The form is on the diocesan webpage: www.stalbans.anglican.org/easter-monday-pilgrimage. Click on the link.

Alternatively, register your attendance on Eventbrite via the link on the same page.
Clergy

Lucy Davis previously Assistant Curate (SSM) at St Mary, Redbourn is to become Vicar (stipendiary) at St Peter and St Paul with St Andrew, Flitwick.

Anne Hindle presently Priest-in-Charge in the benefice of Clifton and Southill is to become Rector of the same.

Rural Dean of Sharnbrook

The Revd Stephen Liley will take on the role of Rural Dean of Sharnbrook with effect from 6th May and the Revd Christine Clark will be taking in the role of Assistant Rural Dean. The Revd Robert Evans has stood down as Rural Dean to move to the benefice of Ashwell w Hinxworth.

On Saturday 7th March the following were made Canons in St Albans Cathedral:

The Revd Vincent Oram
The Revd David Abbott
The Revd Peter Ackroyd

Lay Canon
Mrs Neslyn Pearson (Churchwarden, All Saints, Bedford)

Other Appointments

ON THE MOVE for March 2015

The Diocese of St Albans in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Luton & Barnet

Waterways Chaplaincy’s new helmsman

The Revd Mark Chester, newly appointed Senior Waterways Chaplain, took up his post on 2nd March.

He says: “In England and Wales we have over 2000 miles of canals and rivers. Whilst many of the public use these for leisure and sport, a growing number are choosing to make the canals and rivers their residential home. Depression and illness are just a few of the challenges that some of these folks face, especially when they experience unemployment and financial issues - Chaplains play a critical role in pastoral and sometimes practical support.”

“It is my hope and prayer to make a real difference in the lives of those living in the margins of society and to support Chaplains and those in the frontline of pastoral engagement.”

He will work across the network of canals in England and Wales but is based here in the diocese and his task will be to recruit, train and support a team of volunteers who visit the waterway/towpath on a regular basis, building relationships and trust, offering friendship and a listening ear to individuals and businesses that are part of the extensive waterways economy.

That will involve contact typically with boaters, cyclists, runners, walkers, anglers, canal side/river side businesses and their employees and of course workers and volunteers for The Canal & Rivers Trust.

Mark comes to this new post, described by John Scott, CEO of Workplace Matters as “significant and strategic role to take forward the fast growing Waterways Chaplaincy,” from St Paul’s Church, Camberley, Surrey in the Diocese of Guildford.

Mark serves as vicar in this vibrant church for 15 years, where he was involved in developing a range of ecumenical ‘outward facing’ ministries including Street Angels, Healing on the Streets, Debt Relief and Christian Listeners. He was also Chair of Churches Together in Camberley.

Before ordination, Mark spent 12 years as a Regular Army Officer (Royal Corps of Transport) and trained at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst. During this time he had various training and staff appointments including logistic support and UN peacekeeping. Since 1989 until the present day Mark has been a TA Chaplain and in 2011 was mobilized to serve as TA Chaplain in Afghanistan.

Mark is married and has two sons, one of whom lives in Latvia. To ‘relax’ he enjoys horse-riding and took part recently as Chaplain to the WW1 commemorative ‘Warhorse Ride’. He also enjoys dog walking, swimming and caravan holidays with his wife.
St Andrews Church, Kimbolton Road
Bedford. "Lenten Meditation" a sequence of Sacred choral music for lent sung by Concord Singers on Sunday 22nd March at 3.30pm, admission free, retiring collection.

St Andrew’s Church, Cuffley. Organ Concert by the Revd Rachel Phillips plus other instruments played by The Wilson Ensemble. Part of the 50th Jubilee celebrations at Saturday 21st March 7.30pm. Also Brass Band concert by The Enfield Citadel Salvation Army Band on Saturday 18th April at 7.30pm. Tickets for each event £10 (inc light refreshments) from Jessica Hollings, tel: 01707 873821.

St Mary the Virgin, Rickmansworth, Herts WD3 1JB. Bring and sing or come and listen to Mozart’s Requiem on Passion Sunday 22nd March. Rehearsal 2pm, performance 6pm. Please let us know if you are coming to sing. 01923 721002. There will be a retiring collection for Michael Sobell Hospice and Water Aid.

The Adoramus Easter Concert celebrates the Easter season with great choral and orchestral music reflecting the sorrow, joy and hope of Easter: Dvořák’s New World Symphony, Franck’s Panis Angelicus, and excerpts from Bach's St Matthew Passion and requiems by Mozart and Brahms. Saturday 28th March, 7.30pm at the Alban Arena, St Albans. Tickets £22, £19, £16. from 07816 998308.

Holy Saviour Church, Radcliffe Road Hitchin SG1 1QG. ‘A Festal Flourish’ concert with Trevor & Gillian Hughes including music by Elgar, Parry, Bach and much more. Sunday 29th March at 3.30pm. Admission for each event inc refreshments £10 concs £8. 01462 646257 or clareflleck7@gmail.com.

All Saints Church, Houghton Conquest
Concert by “Shannon Express” (a male voice choir) on Saturday 11th April at 7.30pm. Tickets £8.00 adults and £4.00 children. Please contact Margaret Tyler 01234 740964.

St Mary’s Church, Luton LU1 3JF.
Luton Choral Society presents Haydn Theresa Mass and Mozart Requiem, conducted by Crispin Lewis. Saturday 25th April at 7.30pm. Tickets £12, £10 concs, £5 U18, from 01582 547474, online at www.lutonchoralsociety.org.uk or on door.

Open Days & Festivals
St Mary’s Church, Ashwell. The 14th Ashwell Flea Market will be held on Saturday, 21st March from 9.30 – 1.00pm. This is a very popular event, with many weird and wonderful items on sale at bargain prices. Tea and coffee available. Proceeds to the Church Restoration Appeal.

St Albans Cathedral, St Albans, Easter Monday Pilgrimage - gather in the Cathedral from 2pm on Monday 6th April. Service starts at 3pm.

St Paul’s Church, Bedford
Couture Fashion Show on Thursday 23rd April at 7pm. Wine and canapes on arrival, show starts 7.30pm. Raffle. Fashions by ZOKI Couture of London. Tickets £10.00, available from St Paul’s church office Tel: 01234 340163.

Andrew Bradstock National Secretary for Church & Society at the URC is coming to BELIEF to speak on:
“How should we as Christians approach a general election?”
Saturday 18th April 10am-1pm at Priory Methodist Church Newnham Ave. Bedford MK41 9QJ.

Cost is £10 per person, payable on the day.
To book please call 01234 330314 or email belief@standrewsbedford.org

St Paul’s Church, St Albans
‘Experiencing God & Healing’ with Ed Rocha, Pastor from Rio de Janer - series of four events: Thursday 23rd April 10-4pm ‘Growing a Healing Ministry’ Friday 24th 10-4pm ‘Increasing your anointing’. Friday 8-10pm Evening Meeting: Healing Service, Saturday 25th April 9.45am-1pm ‘Loving a Supernatural Life.’ Each event is stand alone and you are welcome to attend all. Visit www.stpauls-stalbans.org/ed-rocha for more info or to book your place.

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