Archbishop’s Visit Takes Shape

Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd Justin Welby’s visit to St Albans Diocese in June will take place from Thursday 18th to Saturday 20th. It is one of a series of pastoral visits that serving Archbishops make to dioceses in their Provinces during their ministry. With 42 dioceses in the Church of England, there is unlikely to be a second Archiepiscopal visit for some years, so take advantage of the opportunity to hear him.

Archbishop Justin has generously expressed his wish that the visit should support and further the ministry of the diocese its vision.

So it will come as no surprise that one of the strong flavours of the visit is making new disciples.

The visit will start in Luton and touch Watford, Bedford and Stevenage among other places, before ending up in St Albans, for the Alban Pilgrimage.

This will be a very remarkable occasion as it will also mark the 900th anniversary of the present abbey building’s foundation in 1115, when Ralph D’Escures sat on the throne of St Augustine. Archbishop D’Esquires was trained at the Abbey in Bec, Normandy and was translated from the See of Rochester. The French connection was strong. Paul de Caen was Abbot of St Albans when work on the new building started and Geoffrey Brito, the Archbishop of Rouen, one of the churchmen who had been involved in the Norman Conquest, came to the consecration of the building along with Ralph d’Esquires, on Holy Innocents Day, 28 December, 1115.

The Alban Pilgrimage’s distinguished guests this year on 20th June will be Archbishop Justin and Mgr Jean-Charles Descubes, the present Archbishop of Rouen, recreating the occasion 900 years previously.

More details of the Archbishop’s programme and the Alban Pilgrimage will appear nearer the time of the visit.
Two significant events will take place this year.
There will be a General Election on Thursday 7th May. Every five years there is an opportunity for us to decide who we want to represent us in Parliament. We need to get to know what each candidate stands for and prayerfully use our vote for the common good.

Later in the year there will be celebrations to mark the 800th anniversary of the sealing of Magna Carta. Those of us who live in St Albans have already had one celebration since the first meeting about the ‘Great Charter’ took place here in 1213, so we have already marked one of the main anniversaries. As usual, the rest of country is now catching up with us!

It is interesting is that in so many of the discussions about Magna Carta, the central role of the church and in particular that of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Stephen Langton, is almost completely missing. Indeed, it is significant that the first clause of Magna Carta is states ‘we grant … that the English Church is to be free and to have all its rights fully and its liberties entirely’. The Bishops had an important role in the difficult and complex process whereby King John was forced to make a number of concessions and commitments.

Last July the General Synod of Church of England held a debate about Magna Carta. The motion encouraged churches to get involved in the celebrations in 2015 and to continue to engage in social action. However, it did not seem to me to do enough. I therefore proposed an amendment – which was passed after a debate – to ‘encourage churches to seek to increase the number of people voting in elections, for example, by hosting hustings and supporting National Voter Registration Day (5 February). This day is part of a UK-wide week of national action (2nd – 8th February) to inspire young people to register to vote. You can find out more information at: http://bitetheballot.co.uk/

We can all encourage any young people we know to take an interest in politics and for those who are old enough, to register and to vote. I know there will be many cynics who feel there is little point because it does not make any difference. However, you have only to look at the civil war in Syria or the killing being committed by IS to realise how fragile democracy can be. It was Winston Churchill who said in a speech in the House of Commons in November 1947 “Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.”

Let’s use both the General Election and the celebrations for Magna Carta not only to encourage people to vote. Let’s also use it to vote for a society which is motivated by the great Christian insight which have made this country great.
The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have proposed a programme of reform and renewal for the Church of England, which will be considered by the General Synod at its February meeting.

The basis for the proposals is the series of reports from Five task groups established by Archbishop Justin soon after his appointment, on discipleship, the discernment and nurture of those called to posts of wide responsibility, on resourcing ministerial education, on the future deployment of resources more generally and on simplification (the need to remove legislative and administrative hindrances to mission).

There is also an audio podcast which can be accessed via itunes: https://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/the-church-of-england/id264931305?mt=2 or this link: https://soundcloud.com/the-church-of-england/podcast-15th-jan-2015

Read more on the Church of England Communications tumblr pages: http://cofecomms.tumblr.com

“In Each Generation”: A programme for reform and renewal

1. In obedience to the commission that Jesus gave to his disciples the Church’s vocation is to proclaim the good news afresh in each generation. As disciples of our Risen Lord we are called to be loyal to the inheritance of faith which we have received and open to God’s Spirit so that we can be constantly renewed and reformed for the task entrusted to us.

2. The spiritual challenge of reform and renewal is both personal and institutional. A year ago we encouraged the creation of a number of task groups to discern what has been happening in parishes and dioceses, to ponder the implications of the From Anecdote to Evidence findings and to reflect on the experience dioceses have had in developing their mission and ministry. The groups were asked to explore specific aspects of the institutional life
of the Church of England, where on the face of it, there appeared to be scope for significant change.

3. The work of these four groups - on the discernment and nurture of those called to posts of wide responsibility, on resourcing ministerial education, on the future deployment of our resources more generally and on simplification - is now being published. It will be the main focus for the February meeting of the General Synod.

4. We are grateful for this opportunity to put on record our thanks to Lord Green, the Bishop of Sheffield, John Spence and the Bishop of Willesden for chairing each of the four groups. We are also grateful to the chief officers of the Archbishops’ Council, Church Commissioners and Pensions Board for their review of the work of the National Church Institutions, a copy of which is also being circulated for information.

5. Renewing and reforming aspects of our institutional life is a necessary but far from sufficient response to the challenges facing the Church of England. The recommendations of these four groups have to be seen in a much wider context, as a means not an end. They will be considered at the Synod in the light of a paper that explores what it means for all Christians, lay and ordained, to be a community of missionary disciples.

6. They also need to be approached against the background of the wider range of ongoing work to promote numerical and spiritual growth, contribute to the common good and reimagine ministry. We are continually encouraged in our visits to parishes and dioceses by the many signs of life and growth in the numbers of people coming to faith and growing in faith. General Synod welcomed in November 2013 the creation of an Archbishops’ Task Group on Intentional Evangelism. This group will be producing its first report in the next on the discernment and nurture of those called to posts of wide responsibility, on resourcing ministerial education, on the future deployment of our resources more generally and on simplification few months.

7. Meanwhile the Church of England continues to have a significant impact in all kinds of positive ways in the life of the nation. There is a remarkable breadth and quality of service and commitment offered through community ventures, food banks, credit unions and many other initiatives through cathedrals, parish churches, and fresh expressions of church. There are sure grounds for hope both in the grace of God and in the dedication of God's people.

8. The urgency of the challenge facing us is not in doubt. Attendance at Church of England services has declined at an average of 1% per annum over recent decades and, in addition, the age profile of our membership has become significantly older than that of the population. Finances have been relatively stable, thanks to increased individual giving. This situation cannot, however, be expected to continue unless the decline in membership is reversed.

9. The age profile of our clergy has also been increasing. Around 40% of parish clergy are due to retire over the next decade or so. And while ordination rates have held up well over recent years they continue to be well below what would be needed to maintain current clergy numbers and meet diocesan ambitions.

10. The burden of church buildings weighs heavily and reorganisation at parish level is complicated by current procedures. The Sheffield formula allocation of priests is no longer generally observed, while the distribution of funds under the Darlow Formula has no emphasis on growth, has no relationship to deprivation and involves no mutual accountability. There is no central investment in reaching out into the digital and social media world. If the Church of England is to return to growth, there is a compelling need to realign resources and work carefully to ensure that scarce funds are used to best effect.

11. The four task groups whose reports are now being published each identifies changes which are designed to enable the Church of England to be better equipped for meeting the challenges that it faces.

12. The report on the discernment and nurture of those whom the church identifies as called to posts of wide responsibility has a number of aims. It seeks to ensure proper care for those involved, a genuine diversity in those available for appointment, excellent theological and spiritual preparation and a familiarity with the key elements necessary for day to day working.

13. The Resourcing Ministerial Education report explains why we must also be more prayerful and proactive in our approach to promoting vocations to full time ministry - lay and ordained. That includes seeking a significant and sustained increase in the numbers of those coming forward for full time ordained ministry.

14. The report sets out proposals for continuing to grow the number and quality of candidates, for improving their formation - both pre- and post-ordination - and for sustaining them in the ministry to which God has called them. We need to make it easier to enable a proper diversity of candidates to be identified and called. New investment in lay ministry and leadership is essential. To support parish and diocesan efforts, we must consider national initiatives for lay development.

15. There can be no single strategy for the Church of England’s mission and ministry. The proposals have been developed in the light of what bishops and dioceses said when consulted. There will continue to be 42 diocesan strategies, each of which are entitled to national support. In developing and supporting leaders, we must ensure they are equipped and can call on the expertise they need. We want to consider how funds might be made available which dioceses can use to further their plans to achieve numerical and spiritual growth.

16. As the Resourcing the Future report explains, church funds distributed from the nationally managed endowment are a small part of total church resources. But they still need to be used for critical impact. The report proposes
the replacement of the Darlow Formula with allocations based on population, income and deprivation levels, and the creation of a new funding stream available for growth initiatives. In short, such funds will have a bias to the poor and a commitment to spiritual and numerical growth.

17. The fostering of mutual support and mutual accountability is at the heart of the proposals. The release of funds is linked to clear plans for their use and clear eyed review of their impact, as judged and monitored by peer groups. The report notes that, while the Sheffield Formula no longer works, there will continue to be a need for arrangements to ensure an equitable distribution of stipendiary curates.

18. The Simplification report identifies specific legislative changes which are needed to remove hindrances to mission in relation to pastoral reorganisation and clergy deployment, to streamline processes and to tackle redundant paperwork. The recommendations take account of a widespread consultation process.

19. If all the above has to be done within the confines of current funding there will be a long period before its impact can be real, not least given the need to support dioceses through the transition from the present way in which national funds are distributed. We are, therefore, grateful to the Church Commissioners for being willing to produce a report that opens up the issues around whether, for a period, they might be prepared to modify the way in which they currently seek to ensure inter-generational equity when determining what level of funding to make available from their permanent endowment.

20. These four Task Group reports, the report on discipleship and the document from the Commissioners cover a wide range of issues, some of them complex. We are grateful to the Business Committee for being willing to make significant time available in February for engagement with them. It is particularly welcome that as well as debates there will be the opportunity for questions and discussion in groups.

21. The decision making processes and timescales vary as between each of the reports and this is reflected in the texts of the motions before the Synod. They have been prepared in the light of the supportive discussions at the Archbishops’ Council, the House of Bishops and the Board of Governors of the Church Commissioners.

22. At this stage the motions focus primarily on vision, principles and next steps. Further development is still needed on some of the proposals and consultation required on many of the detailed outworkings before the relevant bodies, which on matters involving legislation includes the Synod itself, can reach conclusions. We hope, therefore, that Synod members might be prepared to resist the temptation to overload the motions with a large number of amendments on points of detail.

23. In a few months’ time the life of this General Synod will come to an end and fresh elections will take place in readiness for the first meeting of the new Synod in November. This is, therefore, a good moment for taking stock of the challenges and opportunities facing us. We believe that these reports, to be discussed in February, provide a basis for developing and delivering a major programme of renewal and reform within the Church of England as a matter of urgency. “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or conceive, by the power which is at work among us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations for ever and ever. Amen.”

Justin Cantuar Sentamu Eboracensis January 2015
Parish’s fundraising for school computers - in Guyana

Duke Edwards School, a church school in a Caribbean link diocese has benefitted from more than £1300 worth of computers donated by parishioners in Maulden.

The Rector, Canon Lynda Klimas, says the idea of benefiting the school and building a stronger parish link with one of our link dioceses came to her when she visited the school during a trip to Guyana with others from the diocese in February 2014.

As the Diocese of Guyana’s first church school, opened on a shoestring, the lack of equipment was painfully apparent.

Wanting to find a Lent project for her parish to adopt and seeing the need of the school, Lynda came up with the idea. The personal and diocesan connection would make it easy to tell the story in the parish and energise their fundraising and afterwards, see what had been done with the money raised.

Through Lent lunches, a special collection at the Deanery Palm Sunday service to which Bishop Alan came, and the end of term service collection from Malden Lower School (not a church school, but one with which the parish has a good relationship) £1363 was raised.

Canon John Kiddle was able to bring pictures back of the computers bought with the money when he visited the Diocese of Guyana recently in connection with other projects there.

Lynda said: “People really value seeing how their money has been spent.

For more information about the school why not visit: www.thedioceseofguyana.org/duke-edwards-anglican-school/

Now, not just the people of Maulden, but the whole diocese can see what the fundraising has done and how some of the school's needs have been met through the generosity of the people of Maulden. They can also see the children’s (or maybe the teacher’s) understanding of computers and Christian faith in one of the photographs.
Ambulance Chaplain’s Chief Officer’s Commendation

Lynda Logan, Lead Chaplain to the East of England Ambulance Service and working in this diocese, received the Chief Officer of the Service’s commendation at the end of last year.

The commendation was given “In appreciation of supporting the Trust’s community work in Bedfordshire.”

Lynda said: “The award came as a huge surprise. It is a rare honour to be accorded to a work-based chaplain – but much appreciated because chaplaincy work is important but often unseen. I feel my award is also a tribute to all my emergency services chaplain colleagues in the diocese who work with professional front line organisations, serving those who look after the safety and protection of all members of our communities.”

“Those who work for the emergency services see and deal with traumatic incidents every day of their working lives - things which most people would not see in a lifetime. They are life-savers.”

The Award was presented by Dr Anthony Marsh, CEO of the East of England Ambulance Service Trust as part of the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust Excellence Awards evening. It was compered by TV presenter, Sasha Williams.

In Lynda’s citation, she spoke about the role of a chaplain; the pastoral and spiritual nature of the work and involvement in emergency call outs. She mentioned the involvement of the Gideons and the production of Pocket New Testaments in green leather cover bearing the ambulance service crest.

More light-heartedly, Sasha had done her research and discovered that Lynda had turned out around 5.30 a.m. on Christmas morning and helped cook breakfast for ambulance crew-members in 2013. This was greeted with a cheer and the question from Essex paramedics whether Lynda would travel!

Lynda says: “This at least got us talking about possible future chaplaincy in Essex.” Discussions about this have begun, but are quite complex as there are different dioceses involved.

Lynda’s work as an ambulance chaplain, and that of her colleagues, involves regularly spending time with management, ambulance crews and paramedics as they carry out their duties and offering them pastoral care and guidance as required – and requested.

Lynda became a Workplace Matters chaplain to the East of England Ambulance Service in January 2012 and took over as Senior Chaplain to the Service last year.

Workplace Matters has over 50 years experience providing consultancy and chaplaincy to a wide range of companies and organisations within the private, not-for-profit and public sectors.
Are you Charlie? Who is Charlie?

‘Je suis Charlie’ has become the familiar slogan of the aftermath of the Paris slaughter of the Charlie Hebdo cartoonists in a terrorist attack.

There have been many responses, some declaring, I am Charlie, some declaring I am not Charlie. Among the responses there have been many sermons preached and much traffic on social media.

The Diocesan Interfaith Adviser, the Revd Bonnie Evans-Hills, published a sermon picking up on others worthy of recognition in an ‘I am’ slogan at this time and pointing finally to the ‘I am’ sayings of Jesus as providing the definitive answer to the question ‘who am I’ and the definitive statement of ‘who I am’ in the midst of such darkness and confusion.

There are no justifications offered anywhere for the atrocity, but there are many questions about how the freedom of the press and freedom to offend can co-exist with the claim to an article of faith at odds with that freedom. When both are regarded as fundamental it is a certainty that robust debate will follow: what was unexpected was that an extremist view of this clash would result in such barbarous actions, condemned by all people of good will.

Bonnie’s Blog

Je Suis? What is ‘Je Suis’? What does it mean to say ‘I am’? I am what?

Those of you who follow social media will have noted the myriad posts saying ‘#JeSuisCharlie’, people identifying with the victims of the terrible violence in Paris this past week. Even our archbishop posted a Tweet, ‘#JeSuisCharlie the response to such demonic violence is love for those who suffer and virtuous action against evil.’

This was followed by people wanting to identify instead with the Muslim police officer who gave his life trying to protect the magazine offices, Ahmed. #JeSuisAhmed became the call.
There have been numerous statements by politicians and religious leaders alike, articles and commentaries written, and myriad interviews. In the midst of this my own very modest role with our diocese has left me rather cautious. And I will share why.

Last Tuesday, before the attacks in Paris, I sat in a session in the House of Commons with the author Arun Kundnani, who has written a set of recommendations for the government on ending radicalisation. One of the more heated subjects touched on was that of free speech, how free are we to say what we believe or feel? And should government be monitoring university students, hospital patients and even nursery schools – in search of possible radicals. It was pointed out that most university students, most people, go through a period of being ‘radical’ as they develop their personalities and find their place in the world. If there is no space for those ideas to be explored in a rigorous and open manner, if people are afraid to express their views, express their fears, express their anger and not have those views challenged – they get bottled up, never addressed, and develop into something even more dangerous.

In reality there is no such thing as true freedom of speech. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. It is against the law to incite others to hatred of others or incite to commit a crime, for example. This being said, the greater part of the Muslims present at this session on Tuesday felt they were not able to speak freely. If they were to complain about the use of drones for example – would they then be considered radicalised and therefore a possible threat to the security of the nation?

And the next day we had the attack in Paris.

Unlike the aftermath of the publication of the Danish cartoons, journalists have been swift to share the cartoons published by Charlie Hebdo. Over a million copies of the magazine have now been printed – an unprecedented number for this publication. Now I have seen the Danish cartoons and the Charlie cartoons are infinitely more inflammatory and offensive. Charlie has been an equal opportunity offender, and have published cartoons deeply offensive to Christian, Jew and Muslim alike. When 200 girls were kidnapped by Boko Haram in Nigeria, Charlie Hebdo published an extremely racist cartoon implying the girls were benefit scroungers. How that could possibly be comparable is beyond most. This was not clever satire.

In terms of a school playground, the behaviour of Charlie Hebdo could be considered to be that of the school bully – picking on the outcast. Any rhetoric in a nation that prides itself on having a sophisticated culture which then derides or humiliates the minorities living amongst them, must be condemned rather than celebrated. But that is not then cause for the horrendous actions of these murderers. God is big enough to withstand the scribblings of a few cartoonists – as is Jesus, Muhammad and the Pope. But the minorities among us are not.

What I find of more concern is the dissonance between the defence of the right to offend, and the lack of freedom to dress in accordance with beliefs. Between April 2011 and February 2014, French law enforcement fined 594 women for wearing the niqab, or face veil.

On Friday, this same week, Raif Badawi, a young writer whose blog, Free Saudi Liberals, fell foul of the censors in Saudi Arabia, was subject to the first of a series of floggings. Prosecuted and found guilty of criticising Saudi officials, he was sentenced to 10 years in prison and 1,000 lashes – enduring 50 at a time, once a week, every Friday, until the 1,000 are complete. Now if I can Tweet #JeSuisCharlie, in solidarity with those who have been killed in such an attack, I can also certainly help to campaign for the freedom of this young father of three, for his freedom to call for not only freedom of speech within his own country, but also freedom to live with other rights so many of us enjoy but which are absent in Saudi Arabia. And so there are those of us also Tweeting #JeSuisRaif.

More stories are emerging of heroism, of the Muslim worker, Lassana, who escorted customers at the Kosher supermarket into a basement freezer, giving them a safe place to hide while he faced the hostage takers.

For the first time since WWII the synagogue in Paris was closed on the Shabbat, and Jewish shops, museums and centres were advised to close. I was glad to see on the news that a wonderful kosher, vegetarian falafel restaurant in Paris, that is a favourite of my family, decided to stay open in defiance. The owner, Madame Martine, refused to be afraid. For people such as her and for the synagogue, people are Tweeting #JeSuisJuif.

Throughout the Gospels Jesus makes radical statements of identity: I am the bread, I am the Light, I am the Good Shepherd, I am the Way, I am the Truth, I am the Life, I am the True Vine – each of these holding theological and spiritual depth of meaning which at the time were considered heretical. Jesus pushed the boundaries of the acceptable and in the end gave his life for the words he spoke.

As we celebrate the Baptism of Christ, the day Jesus ministry to the world was made public; and with a blessing and baptism through water from yet another
who lost his life for the words he spoke, John, the
voice of one crying in the wilderness. This event is
not one of a private spiritual experience for Jesus and
John alone. It is a Christological statement, a strong
statement identifying Jesus as the Christ, Emmanuel,
God among us. This is no gentle descent of a dove, no
easy birth – the heavens are torn asunder, suggesting
it was witnessed by a much wider audience. God
identifies Jesus as his Son, his voice, his hands, his
presence, his Love among us. It is God who makes the
statement 'I am,' 'Je Suis.' When we are baptised into
the life of Christ, when we partake of the communion
bread and wine, we become part of this great 'I am.'
A wonderfully warm Muslim friend of mine allowed
fear to get the better of her the other day. She posted
this on Facebook: 'I think as Muslims in Europe we
should get ready for a total surveillance and for life
to get even worse than it already is – there is worse to
come. I am not feeling positive at all.'
Now the next day, she realised how destructive this
fear was and decided to post only positive stories in
defiance. But I am also grateful to her for sharing her
fears. It gave the opportunity for me, and for many
others, to share our support for her and for our Muslim
friends and colleagues. What these people with guns,
and sadly also some people with pens, are trying to
do is to divide us, one from another; to try to make
us live in fear. The greatest thing we can do in the face
of this is exactly what so many have done – to make
the statement 'I am' – #JeSuisCharlie #JeSuisAhmed
#JeSuisRaif #JeSuisJuif. We are the girls kidnapped and
trafficked into slavery. We are the poor of this nation
forced to go to food banks to feed their families. We
are one people. We stand together. Amen.
After 29 years at Abbey Gate House, covering three bishops, Mary Handford is retiring.

She has worked for John Taylor, who was bishop for 10 years, Christopher Herbert for 14 years and so far for Alan Smith for 5 years, but as Mary says, he's staying on.

As well as three bishops, she's worked with four Bishop’s Chaplains, Nick Moir, Steve Walton, Derwyn Williams and currently with Andy Crooks who joined the staff there in 2001.

In her first four years, there were two or three assistant secretaries but in 1991 she was joined by Lynn Bridger and they worked together until her retirement in 2009. Mary says:

“Since then Claire and Ros have worked in the office with me. Other than the odd occasion, there is always somebody available in the office at Abbey Gate House to answer the telephone and the door Monday – Friday 9.00 am – 5.00 pm.”

Since Criminal Records Bureau checks became part of her work, she says she's met many more clergy when they visit Abbey Gate House, which she describes as “very valuable.”

One of the biggest changes Mary has been conscious of is the Ordination of Women. Mary says somewhat ruefully: “And now I am leaving, we have Women Bishops being appointed.”

There have been other changes too. “In Bishop Christopher’s time we were afforded a lovely new spacious office and in Bishop Alan’s time the garden at Abbey Gate House has been transformed and many visitors have appreciated sitting in it – I know there will be a lot more to come and I am sure it will be a place for quiet contemplation for such things as clergy quiet days in the future.”

Her personal highlights have been:

- The visit of Archbishop Desmond Tutu when he and his staff took over our office here for three days
- Attending the Royal Maundy Service in Westminster Abbey
- A behind the scenes tour of the House of Lords
- The re-dedication of the Shrine of Alban in the presence of The Queen Mother
- Attending Consecrations of Bishops of St Albans, Hertford and Bedford
- The Confirmation of Election Service for Bishop Alan

The last word belongs to Mary:

“One final point, when I attended my interview with Bishop John he asked me if I knew how to address an Archdeacon. I had to say that I didn't but I was sure that I would soon learn. In 2014 I sent 45,000 emails – I feel we've come a long way in the last 29 years.”

“I have felt enormously privileged to have worked in the Bishop of St Albans Office all this time and to have met so many lovely people. I hope that in some small way I have been able to help people when they have needed it and been able to stand back when necessary.”

“I send you all my very best wishes.”
Bonnie Evans-Hills has become Priest-in-Charge in the benefice of Kimpton w Ayot St Lawrence (half post) and is continuing as Diocesan Interfaith Adviser.

Robert Evans, presently Rector and Rural Dean of the Sharnbrook Deanery, is to become Rector of the benefice of Ashwell with Hinxworth and Newnham

Karen Gardiner presently Team Vicar in the Elstree & Borehamwood Team Ministry with special responsibility for St Nicholas, Elstree is to take up a house-for-duty post as Priest-in-Charge in Rural South York benefice.

Jonathan Jasper, Rector in the benefice of Barkway, Reed & Buckland w Barley left with effect from 1st December 2014.

Adrian Manning, previously Chaplain at St George’s School Harpenden has become Vicar of the benefice Ivinghoe w Pitstone, Slapton and Marsworth, in Oxford Diocese.

Simon Mansfield presently Vicar in the benefice of St Gregory the Great, Wednesfield, in the diocese of Lichfield is to become Vicar in the benefice of Hockerill.

Adam Prior, previously Assistant Curate at St Peter’s Church, Watford has become Ordained Pioneer Youth Minister for Stevenage.

Area Dean of Hemel Hempstead
The Revd Lizzie Hood has taken on the role of Area Dean of Hemel Hempstead for 5 years and the Revd Mike Macey will be taking in the role of Assistant Area Dean. The commissioning service will take place on 27th January.


Christine Barron, Reader with PtO in St Albans, died at the end of November 2014.

Valerie Phillips, Reader Emeritus in Kimpton, died in December 2014.
**EVENT LISTINGS**

**January/February 2015**

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

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**Concerts & Drama**

**St Mary’s, Eaton Bray**, Saturday 10th January 2.00pm - Music at St Mary's presents a New Year Concert, featuring Aylesbury Concert Band. Come and enjoy some classic New Year favourites including: Trish Trush Polka, The Blue Danube and the Radetzky March. Tickets: £7.50, (accompanied children – FREE). Refreshments available. **ALSO Highland Fling**. **Sunday 8 February**, 6pm to 9pm in Eaton Bray Village Hall, LU6 2DP. Have a great time dancing the evening away with friends. Excellent and experienced callers. The evening includes food and tea/coffee. Bring your own alcohol. Family ticket £30, Individuals: £10, Children: £7. Tickets for both events from the Box office – 01525 22283.

**St Peter’s Church St Albans**, Lunchtime Recitals on Wednesdays at 1pm. **14th January** - The Windsor Box and Fir Co; “Godfathers and Sons”; exploring the music of CPE Bach & GP Telemann. **21st January** - Anna Le Hair (piano). **28th January** - The Purcell School Musicians. **4th February** - St Albans School Musicians. **11th February** - Beaumont School Vocal Ensemble. **18th February** - Isabel Beyer and Harvey Dagul (piano). **25th February** - St Margaret’s School, Bushey. **St Owen Bromham MK43 8LL**. Fusion Youth Choir In concert on **Saturday 7th February** 3 – 5pm. Adults £5 Child u12 £1 Refreshments from £1. Tel: 01234 825454 mornings, 01234 826551 evenings.

**St Peters Church, Benington** Snowdrop Recitals - A series of concerts on **Feb 8th**, **15th**, and **Mar 1st**. from 2.30 to 3.15pm. Free admission with retiring collection in aid of church. Lunches & Teas served in Parish Hall and Lordship Gardens open. Further details www.beningtonlordship.co.uk/events/snowdrops.


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**Talks & Courses**

**The Hitchin Christian Centre, Bedford Rd, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1HF**. **The Very Revd Jeffrey John** is coming to BELIEF to speak on:

**“The Book of Revelation”**

Saturday 21st February 10am-1pm at St Andrews Church Kimbolton Road, Bedford MK40 2PF.

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

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**Equipping God’s People Courses**

www.stalbans.anglican.org/ministry/find-a-course

**Encouraging and Equipping Parents**

A Total Training Session — training and equipping evenings run by the267project. Suitable for volunteers involved in youth and children’s work. **Tuesday 27th January** - Children’s work focus and **Tuesday 24th March** - Youth work focus. 7.45-9.30pm. Venue is Forest Town Church, Lyon Way, ST ALBANS, AL4 0LB.

Cost: £4. Please book via course contact Mike Palin 07789 815516 mike@the267project.com

**Pastoral Ministry - Principles and Practicalities**

Saturdays 7th February (9.30am - 4.00pm) & 21st February (9.30am - 1.00pm) at Christ Church, Goldington Road, BEDFORD, MK40 3EP. Led by the Rev’d Jeanette Gosney, this course is for anyone interested or involved in Christian pastoral ministry. It aims to support and equip anyone who is seeking to share Christ’s love & compassion. Cost:FREE. Book in advance via course contact Gabby 01727 818141 pdadmin@stalbans.anglican.org.

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**Open Days & Festivals**

**Blunham Parish Church, Bedfordshire MK44 3NQ**. Book Sale will be held on Saturday 21st February 2015 10am to 3pm in Blunham Parish Church. (A selection of second hand and nearly new books, home made cakes, teas and coffees, home made soup & bread and a raffle. All proceeds to Blunham Church Fabric Fund.

**Hitchin Deanery Pilgrimage to Assisi**

Led by Revd Terrance Bell & Revd Nevsky Everett on 30th September - 5th October 2015. Includes visits to San Damiano, Basilica of St Francis and Monte Subasio. Cost £699 per person in flights, taxes, accommodation, breakfast, dinner, touring and transfers. Brochures, booking forms & information from Terrance on 01462 768123 kwol@btinternet.com

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**Other dates**

**Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

18th-25th January.

www.ctbi.org.uk/682/

**Holocaust Memorial Day**

27th January

www.hmd.org.uk