

## Renewed commitment to Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy

**Watford is a destination for commerce and entertainment: Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy is making it a destination for volunteering and service**

The fifteen parishes of Watford Deanery have chosen Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy (WTCC) as one of its mission focuses. During 2018, Watford was one of five deaneries bringing such Deanery mission plans to the attention of the diocese's Mission and Pastoral Committee. WTCC is supported and 25% funded by St Mary's, Watford, with the bulk of its support coming from other churches of all denominations in the area who share the vision for Town Centre Chaplaincy.

Frances Novillo, Lead Chaplain, describes this vision: "The presence of chaplains explains the symbols of the church."

Chaplaincy is most easily understood as the church going out to people rather than bringing people into church. The religious think-tank THEOS describes it as "a very modern ministry," in their report of the same name, suited to the changing circumstances in which Christianity operates in Britain as much as to the changing landscapes of towns such as Watford. The recent redevelopment of its major town centre site has introduced a cinema back into the middle of the town, accompanied by a bowling alley and a range of restaurants. These facilities have taken the place of the street market, which has been relocated nearby. The development has introduced a younger teenage element into the town centre's night-life, on the streets between 9pm and 1am. This extends the time during which there is a demand for street chaplains.

### RENEWED FOCUS

Sitting alongside the plentiful provision of churches of all denominations and affiliations as well as other chaplaincies, Police, Hospital, Waterways, Railway and Sport in Watford, WTCC is also undergoing a renaissance - partly in response to the changing town centre on which WTCC now focuses its activities. This was one of the outcomes of a recent trustees' review, which asked whether the need for the chaplaincy is still the same as when it was set up and whether a centrally co-ordinated chaplaincy is the best way of delivering it. Both questions were answered "Yes." Another outcome has been the appointment of a new Lead Chaplain ( below).

### Frances Novillo - Lead Chaplain WTCC

Frances came to WTCC from chaplaincy for Hertfordshire Police and at Luton & Dunstable Hospital. Her early career was leading music and worship ("helping people to sing their praises,") in churches, cathedrals, schools, and at conferences, working ecumenically, based in Roman Catholic churches.

After taking an MA in the Psychology of Religion at Heythrop College, she began to see that chaplaincy was a wider version of what she had been doing.

She recognises the challenges and the opportunities for WTCC and would like to grow from 9 to 25 chaplains in the retail sector. The new night-time demands call for more than double the Street Angels (from 19 to 42).



### WIDE SUPPORT

Not only is there greater support, but within the community, WTCC has earned a trusted place and is one of the partnerships within the Watford Business Improvement District that earns Watford a coveted purple flag, signifying that it has a 'safe and thriving night-time economy.'



## Enabling parishes: 2018 in focus

**The Diocese of St Albans' 330-plus parishes minister to their communities, enabled by parishioners' generous gifts of time, talents and money and through the support of diocesan staff and structures.**

New ways of supporting parishes, alongside existing ones, emerged in 2018. They are helping to bring into being new forms of church, new structures and new opportunities to inspire people to grow as disciples of Christ in our parishes, schools and chaplaincies, supporting the growth which is integral to our vision: 'Living God's Love.'



Among ways in which the Board of Mission and Ministry supports churches to grow under 'Living God's Love' are 'Reaching New People' and 'Flourishing Churches'

Reaching New People's focus is to make new disciples through developing, sustaining and growing to maturity fresh expressions of church and by equipping lay leaders. Key areas of work include:

- VISION DAYS - explore and discover how to reach new people
- TRAINING - short courses open to all, focus on how fresh expressions can integrate into the life of churches and engage with people so that they can take steps towards discipleship
- LEARNING COMMUNITIES - bring together groups to grow in understanding by sharing interests and experiences
- CONSULTANCY - Development Officers' work with individual parishes
- INDICATOR PACKS - helping to understand and track progress
- GRANTS - providing seed funding
- COACHING - helping people learn how conversations lead to real change

The Flourishing Churches team offers parishes support with their overall plan for mission and how to resource it, after listening to their requests and concerns.

- Creating learning communities
- Working with parishes individually - identifying needs through the Mission Planning process
- Establishing meaningful relationships lasting 12-14 months has been shown to be more effective than one-off interventions and brings challenge and accountability
- Training - running events and workshops which engage and support

In 2018, workshops on Leading Your Church into Growth, Growing Medium Sized Churches and Growing Generous Giving attracted 157 participants and garnered wholly positive feedback.

### Churches don't grow by accident!

Growth is about more than just numbers: it's about how we grow in generosity, joy imagination and courage, for example. It's about how we grow in faith. But numbers are important, after all, part of our vision to Live God's Love is to make new disciples.

Growth happens not usually by accident, but more likely through intentionally praying about today's world, intentionally inviting people to come to church, intentionally going on a journey of faith with them. It's about quality of relationship.

In these pages I hope you will see the many intentional steps we have taken in 2018 to help this process of growth, to the glory of God.

+ Alan St Albans.



### Nourishing structures and strategies for the Church's mission and growth

Bishop's Council supported, approved or promoted a number of changes and initiatives which help create the conditions for churches to grow in depth and numerically.

- The new Board of Mission and Ministry brings a single focus of oversight to these areas of activity
- A positive and encouraging Safeguarding Audit, carried out in every diocese, was received and its recommendations acted upon
- A presentation on celebrating and including BAME

people in our diocese led to Bishop's Council making the following suggestions: that BAME people in church were invited to perform roles of added value in church, to make them welcome in rural communities, that there was a need for role models in church and that experiences needed to be personalised to change people's perceptions

- The Council approved a new 'Ministry after 70' policy
- Curates' Training was in the process of being revised to include: improving worship; (ii) working with young people; and Fresh Expressions. One participant described a training day for Curates on baptism as "the most inspiring (training) session ever"