

Concerts

Organ Recitals at St John's Church Boxmoor HP1 1JY:

A series of organ recitals celebrating successful completion of fundraising for the organ.

October 7.30pm
Linden Innes-Hopkins,
October 7.30pm
Nicholas King,
Sunday 14th October.
7.30pm

St Owen's Church, Bromham MK43

8.11
Cantamus sing 'Reflective Music for Remembrance', **Tuesday 13th November** at 7.45pm, featuring works by Parry, Schubert and others.
Adults £10, children under 16 £2. Tickets at the door: Reservations by phone 01234 825454 or (evenings) 826551

Open Days

Christian Blind Mission Sunday Sunday 14th October

A new addition to the church calendar, launched last year to tie in with World Sight Day. It is inspiring a growing number of churches to support overseas disability charity Christian Blind Mission to help restore sight to children living with preventable blindness in the world's poorest places.

Find out more about Christian Blind Mission and download a range of free resources at: www.cbmmk.org.uk/sunday/

Talks & Courses

'You, Your MP and God's Mission'

Sunday 28th October at St Michael and All Angels Church, Brook Road, Borehamwood, WD6 5EQ
A workshop on engaging with your MP to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth. Led by Jo Musker-Sherwood from USPG and Director of 'Hope for the Future'. Contact: Revd Louise Collins 020 8963 2362 lcollins59@hotmail.com

October- December's

Prayer Diary
Now live on October's E-Bundle:

www.stalbans.anglican.org/news/e-bundle/



St Albans Cathedral to be filled with poppies to commemorate World War One

A stunning projection of poppies will fill the Nave of St Albans Cathedral for two nights only, as part of a unique light and sound installation to commemorate the World War One Centenary later this year.

The Cathedral will open after dark to anyone wishing to contemplate and reflect on the history of World War One. Created by Peter Walker, Artistic Director at Lichfield Cathedral, the installation will feature projections including names of local soldiers who have served in the armed forces and falling rose petals projected over the Shrine of Alban, Britain's First Saint. Sound artwork composed by David Harper, accompanies the installation and includes four readings of WW1 poems by actor, Eddie Redmayne.

Poppy Field will be on display in St Albans Cathedral on **Friday 26th and Saturday 27th October** from 7.30pm until 11pm. Entry is free.

Public Memorialisation of the Dead in Thursday 25 October, 7.30-9.00pm

This talk charts the development of the tradition of public commemoration in St Albans from the Boer War through to 1925. Tutor: Jonathan Mein, Local Historian, SAHAAS. Book at www.stalbanscathedral.org/learning or 01727 890 290

Haunted by Christ Thursday 11 October, 7.30-9.00pm

Boardroom, Holywell Lodge. Price: £10
Bishop Richard Harries draws on his latest book which explores some of the great poets and novelists whose struggle with faith finds expression in their works. Book at www.stalbanscathedral.org/learning/ or 01727 890 290

Modern Warfare - More Trying to Win Peace Thursday 18 October, 7.30-9.00pm

Boardroom, Holywell Lodge. Price: £10
This talk from Dr Kevin Shaw will show how Christian ethics still underpin how the UK military engages in conflicts, bringing a more personal perspective from his service at Northwood Headquarters. Book at www.stalbanscathedral.org/learning/ or 01727 890 290

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Foodbank use rising: sign the "Fix Universal Credit" petition



The Church of England is one of several coalition partners of Church Action on Poverty's 'End Hunger UK' campaign. You can make a real contribution towards the goal of ensuring no one in the UK goes to bed hungry by **signing their petition** and getting others to sign it. The petition calls on the UK Government to 'Fix Universal Credit', and is the response to new figures from the Trussell Trust, which runs 420 Foodbanks, showing that in areas where Universal Credit has been rolled out foodbank use has risen 52%.

In St Albans Diocese, the use of Trussell Trust food banks has also increased during the last year, up 15%, meaning that 42751 three-day emergency food supplies were distributed. That's apart from the independent food banks in the diocese.

Bishop Alan has given his backing to the petition and he is **encouraging churches to arrange for the petition to be signed during 'End Hunger Week' which runs from 13 - 21 October. The End Hunger website endhungeruk.org has materials for download.**

The petition and accompanying campaign call for improvements to the design of Universal Credit and a long-term commitment to ensure the social security system provides people with an adequate income to afford good food on a regular basis. Without such action, we can expect to see more and more people turning to food banks and becoming trapped in poverty, as more people are moved on to Universal Credit.

Speaking on behalf of the charities behind the campaign, Nail Cooper, Director at Church Action on Poverty, said: "You might imagine that in modern day Britain we all have enough food to eat, or that hunger is only experienced by the few. Yet we see working parents missing meals so that their kids can eat, and vulnerable individuals turning to charities on a daily basis to get a meal. This is simply unacceptable. "That's why we're calling for an urgent, national conversation about what needs to be done, by the Government and others, to ensure that children get the food they need to give them the best start in life, and that nobody in the UK needs to go hungry."

Frontline organisations working in areas where Universal Credit has been rolled out detailed four main reasons why people applying for or receiving Universal Credit were being forced to turn to them for help. They are: excessive waiting times; delays in receiving payments; debt and loan repayments and benefit sanctions.

Among the suggestions for how Universal Credit might be modified are: reducing the mandatory waiting time for payments; improving the support offered through the process of applying for Universal Credit and making it easier for people with training in computer literacy; improving accessibility and offering alternative methods of applying, such as by phone.

End Hunger UK is supported by many national organisations, including: Baptists Together; Caritas Social Action Network; Child Poverty Action Group; Church Action on Poverty; the Church of England; FareShare; First Steps Nutrition; Food Bank As It Is; Food Ethics Council; The Food Foundation; the Independent Food Aid Network; Food Matters; Magic Breakfast; the Methodist Church; Nourish Scotland; Oxfam; Quaker Peace and Social Witness; Sustain; the alliance for better food and farming; The Trussell Trust; and the United Reformed Church.

Bishop's Letter

We plough the fields and scatter

The season of harvest is upon us and over the next few weeks schools and parishes across the diocese will be giving thanks to God for our food and farmers. The origins of our modern harvest festivals are to be found in the first books of the bible:

The Lord said: When you enter the land that I am giving you and you reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf of the first fruits of your harvest to the priest. He shall raise the sheaf before the Lord, that you may find acceptance; on the day after the sabbath the priest shall raise it (Leviticus 23: 9-11).

However, even at this early stage, it was stressed that a fundamental aspect of harvest thanksgiving was to have a special concern for those who had no food:

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and for the alien: I am the Lord your God (Leviticus 23.22).

We are fortunate to live in a part of the world where the soil, the climate and our excellent farmers are able to produce great food at relatively cheap prices. We are also able to import all sorts of exotic food throughout the year to provide us with a diet of which our ancestors would have been amazed. It is all the more ironic, therefore, that there are people in our country who struggle to buy enough food to feed themselves and their families.

It is depressing that in today's world we have at least eighteen foodbanks operating in different parts of the

"a fundamental aspect of harvest thanksgiving was to have a special concern for those who had

diocese, working out of 49 distribution centres. More than 17,000 three-day emergency food supplies were distributed to people in our diocese this past year. Many of you will be involved in this important work which offers a safety net when people find themselves in a crisis.

One of the concerns that is sometimes expressed is that food banks are creating and sustaining a group of people who will always be dependent on others. However, one of the encouraging stories that I heard recently was of someone who came to their local food bank to donate a large bag of provisions. They explained that they had received help in the previous year but now they were back on their own feet again, they wanted to make a contribution to help others who were in difficulty.

It is fitting that 'End Hunger UK' week runs from 13 - 20 October, (with its motto 'No one should have to go to bed hungry') during the Harvest season. Not only is it a good opportunity to support food banks but we can sign the petition to express our commitment to ensuring that all people in our nation have sufficient food.

<http://endhungeruk.org/>
 + Alan St Albans
 bishop@stalbans.anglican.org



The Rt. Revd Alan Smith
Bishop of St Albans

Sandridge blesses farmers

Farmers and their families will celebrate Harvest Festival at St Leonard's Church, Sandridge on Sunday October 7th. The church will host the special service for the Hertfordshire branch of the National Farmers' Union, during the St Leonard's community Flower Festival.

Rev Em Coley, Vicar of St Leonard's, will lead the farmers' service. She said: "We are delighted to be holding this service for the farming community in the county. Farmers and their families perform a vital role for society and are under great pressure. As well as giving thanks to God for the harvest, we also want to acknowledge the hard work all through the year in all weathers, that farmers undertake to help feed us all."

"We're grateful to St Leonard's Church for hosting this

Clergy Appointments

Shaun Atkins, Senior Chaplain of Bedford School, to retire.

Guy Edwards, Vicar of Paulton, High Littleton with Halaïrow and Farrington (Bath & Wells Diocese) to be Rector of Bushley.

Paul Hughes, Archdeacon of Bedford to retire.

Neil McCleery, Lay Successor at Christ Church Cathedral Oxford, Assistant Chaplain at Christ Church College and School Chaplain to Christ Church Cathedral School to be Chaplain of Bedford School.

Dave Poutney, Pioneer Minister and Associate Vicar & Assistant Rural Dean of Watford to be Team Rector of Bedworth All Saints and Saint Andrews (Coventry Diocese)

Reuben Preston, Rector of Sharnbrook, Felmersham with Knotting and Souldrop, to be Priest of St Margaret's, Renrew and St John's, Johnstone (Diocese of Glasgow & Galloway, Scottish Episcopal Church)

Michael Rodden, Team Rector of Hitchin and St Paul's Walden Team Ministry to be Canon Chancellor of Bristol Cathedral (Bristol Diocese)

Retirement of Administrator with "Servant Heart"

Helen Chilton has retired from her post as Administrator of St Paul's Church in St Albans after 13 years of dedicated service.

During her tenure there have been significant changes at St Paul's, most notably the planning and work on the church's major building development. Helen was involved not only in managing much of the project, but also coped with working in a cabin in the grounds during the 18 months of building work.

Canon Tony Hurle, Vicar of St Paul's Church says "Helen is renowned both for knowing everything but also for her servant heart - she covers for when others fail to do things, remembers what needs to be done, and has such grace.

Her heart for mission, evangelism and prayer ensured that anyone coming into the church has been welcomed and when it was appropriate, prayed with and helped in their journey with God. We are so grateful that though she is retiring she is remaining in the congregation!"



Helen's retirement day was celebrated with a tea party at the New Wine festival, and as a surprise tribute, all the guests turned up wearing masks of Helen's face!

Vacancies & Volunteering

2019 and be appointed for an initial term of 8 months which will be extendable.

For more information and an application form, search 'St Albans Young Vocations' or go to: www.stalbans.anglican.org/ministry/youngvocations/
 Closing date: 19th October.

Volunteer Chaplains Wanted

Treehouse Bedfordshire are looking for volunteer chaplains to work with students and university staff.

Visit facebook.com/BedsTreehouse or contact treehouse@beds.ac.uk for more information.

NEW COURT CHURCH TRUST

Charity number: 276576

The Trust was established in 1978 following the sale of New Court Church London N4.

We aim to support activities for the advancement of the Christian Religion.

We meet bi-annually to consider appeals from Churches and other Christian organisations.

Is your church in need of financial assistance for a small project? (£500 - £2000)

Applications should be made to the secretary: Geoffrey Sudlow: gsudlow@tscali.co.uk

Vicar amazed at “Generosity of God’s people,” as £2m hall scheme opens



Christ Church Bedford, a central Bedford church, has just opened an extensive new Church Halls development which saw the congregation raise £2m for the works. Bishop Alan cut the ribbon in September as members of the congregation and community gathered.

The parish first thought seriously about a redevelopment of their existing hall facility 7 years ago, when they realised they were turning people away who wanted to use the one-and-a-half halls. “How can we serve our community if we’ve run out of space?” Vicar, Canon Richard Hibbert, asked himself. He continued: “We talked to the church members, we talked to our existing hirers. We talked to our local councillors and we said “What is available? What is happening here?” and we whittled it down that if we were to do was to get seven different sized meeting spaces. That do was to get seven different sized meeting spaces. That was it. And we wanted a new kitchen and we really, really wanted to improve our toilets and we wanted to get our disability and accessibility access correct for everybody and for all ages.” The church’s oldest worshipping member is 90 years’ old and called Stanley. In conversation with

Canon Richard, he recently remarked: “You know Richard, I was involved as Church Warden in building the original two halls that we had. I wasn’t certain about whether we should knock them down.” But as the conversation developed and he saw what was going on he said, “Yes, I get it. We need to change.” Now he’s walked round, just having passed his 90th birthday and he said: “Richard this is wonderful! This is so good for our community, as much as for ourselves as the local church.”

The vision for how the space will be used, apart from hiring it out, is to help the church in its concern to help the poor and the disadvantaged. Richard Hibbert sees the existing foodbank expanding. They want to look at debt management for people, “because we just see this as a huge issue for people in our society.” Caring deeply for those who experience loneliness, they want to reach out to those who just want friendship, and also to serve children, young families and young people in the community and within the church family alike. It sounds like a recipe for success. www.ccbedford.org

Why you should #FollowTheStar this Christmas - and encourage others to do the same!

This year, #FollowTheStar takes us through twelve days of Christmas - from Christmas Day to Epiphany



“Come as you are” is the Archbishops’ invitation to the nation this Christmas. The invitation is to go on a journey through the twelve days of Christmas online, in print and in Church.

The hashtag #FollowTheStar will allow people to find content online and in social media helping them on the journey. Resources such as a twelve-day book of bible verses and short reflections will help guide us on the way and some churches will be displaying stars outside and inside their buildings, just in the manner of the ancient star that guided the Magi to where Jesus lay.

The Archbishops continue: “Just like the unexpected assortment of people invited to meet the baby Jesus, #Follow the Star doesn’t ask you to be perfect. It says: come just as you are to take the life-changing Christmas Journey.”

The invitation can be repeated by anyone to anyone else: friend, neighbour, colleague, or even stranger, to come and take part in the re-telling of the Greatest Story Ever Told.

Just as the story took Mary and Joseph by surprise and unfolded in a way that appears outwardly chaotic, we are not always ready for Christmas, but we can come as we are, whether we are still mired in to-do lists, not living up to the image in our heads of the perfect Christmas or if Christmas is for us a sad and lonely time.



“Wherever you are this Christmas, the Archbishops say, “you are invited to be with Jesus. You are welcome. You are deeply known and truly loved.”

The Archbishops booklet: #FollowTheStar: A Journey Through 12 Days of Christmas, is available from Church House Publishing, www.chpublishing.co.uk/features/follow-the-star individually or in packs.

Bookmarks, greetings cards and posters for churches through the Church Print Hub: www.churchprinthub.org

Night of the Stars

In keeping with star coming to rest over where Jesus lay, churches are being encouraged to display stars prominently, the bigger and more visible the better. It is hoped that many churches will be able to illuminate their stars and share pictures and stories of this on Friday 21st December, on social media

Online Resources include:

Downloadable resources at www.churchofengland.org/christmas

An app, #FollowTheStar available in late November. An online advent calendar and an animated prayer for families on churchofengland.org Short videos encouraging people to come to a church service during December 2018



Christingle is 50 this year!

2018 marks 50 years since The Children's Society brought Christingle to this country. For 50 years, the money raised from Christingle collections have helped The Children's Society to support more than a million children and young people. A further million are living with a range of serious issues in their lives, including violence, abuse, neglect and poverty. Many feel alone and have no one to turn to this Christmas. Can we mark the anniversary and help the Children's Society support these vulnerable young people and work to ensure that they have their first Christmas full of hope and free from fear?

There is a range of resources available at:
www.christingle.org/shop
 or call 0300 300 7000.

Celebrate Christingle with a brand new song, commissioned for the 50th anniversary: Light a Candle. Composed exclusively for The Children's Society by Louise Drewett, a young composer currently studying at the Royal Academy of Music, with words specially written by up-and-coming poet Clare Shaw, the song is



the perfect way for a school choir, amateur singing group, professional, cathedral or church choir, to raise their voices in celebration of Christingle's anniversary. Download the score and piano accompaniment from our website and be part of The Children's Society's special 50th Christingle celebration.

Funding Syrian needs on two wheels or in four-part harmony

Herts Welcomes Syrian Families

The Revd David Murchin's cycle ride to Rome, featured in last month's SeeRound Online, has ended successfully. This unusual mode of long-distance travel has not only taken him to the place where he will spend his sabbatical, but is also raising funds for Herts' Welcomes Syrian Families.

Having already exceeded his original target of £2500, by almost 50%, David is keen to see if it can be doubled. You can donate here: <https://mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/revdavidmurchin> and can read more about Herts Welcomes Syrian Families here: <http://www.hwsf.org.uk>.

Singing for Syrians

If over four month's daily cycle commuting in one go is not your cup of tea, there is another way to raise money for Syrian families this autumn. Singing for Syrians is raising money for people suffering in the war-torn area of Idlib in Syria.



Set up by four friends with personal experience of Syria, 'to whom Syria means the noise, colour and scent of spice souks, the birthplace of modern civilisation and the definition of hospitality'. United by a sense of sadness at the conflict, they want to remind Syrians that they have not been forgotten. Singing for Syrians takes great pains to know exactly where the money goes in Syria.

More at: www.handsupfoundation.org

Have you heard of the miracle of the blankets?

Recent BBC research into the British public's belief in miracles found:

- 62% of the population believe some form of miracle is possible today, but almost half of adults say they don't believe Jesus performed any miracles
- Only 37% of people who attend church at least every month say they believe the miracles of Jesus happened as described in the Bible.
- People aged 18 to 24 believe are more likely to believe some form of miracle is possible, although they don't think it's because of God.

but most strikingly:

- 43% have prayed for a miracle and half of churchgoers say they have prayed for a miracle and their prayer was answered in the way they'd hoped.



Speaking on Three Counties Radio, The Revd Rob O'Neil from Caddington and Farley Hill, and Katja his wife spoke about miracles they have seen in connection with their lives and ministry.

Rob O'Neil believes the Risen Christ helps miracles happen today, especially when Christians pray to help others in need. He has seen healings during his life but understands that people can sometimes find it difficult to accept the stories of miracles in the Bible. One of the best ways of learning to accept miracles, he says, is to experience minor miracles oneself - such as seeing a small prayer answered for something that wouldn't have happened if people hadn't prayed!

Miracles of Provision - the miracle of the blankets

Rob continued: "Sometimes God operates at a practical level and miracles can be seen in his provision." Some years ago, a few people from Rob's churches went to the jungle in Calais to take provisions. They asked the people in the warehouse what they needed most, it was cold, and the answer was 'blankets'. As they drove back they



The Revd Rob and Katja O'Neill

decided to return in three weeks time with 1000 blankets. They put out an appeal but after a week, had just one donation: a swimming costume.

Slowly, donations and money came in and they bought just over 1000 blankets, taking them to Calais in a minibus, lent free of charge! When they arrived and were asked what they had brought they said: "1000 blankets."

Amazingly, the warehouse had just had a call from the Dunkerque depot asking for blankets and in Calais the warehouse staff had been saying, "wouldn't it be wonderful if we had a van and blankets to take to Dunkerque."

So Rob and his team drove to Dunkerque, and were even somehow were allowed through a Police cordon at the camp which was turning back other vans and trucks. They were able to help keep people in great need warm. That was the 'Miracle of the Blankets'.

Rob's wife Katja also spoke about how God loves to provide in answer to prayer. About five years ago, Katja went to a conference and heard Rachel Warwick speaking about holiday hunger, also a problem in Caddington where there was 41% child poverty. Inspired, she knew they didn't really have the means or equipment to help. Rachel said to her: "Do what you can with what you've got and God will give you the rest." Katja now describes this as their motto. The next holiday was a half term and ten children came to the holiday club, they had set up, including a new kitchen donated by Luton Airport. Now 45 children come regularly to the holiday club.

Christmas Services of Lessons and Carols at St Albans Cathedral

The 2018 Lessons and Carols services will be held at the Cathedral on Friday 21 December at 7.30pm and Sunday 23 December at 6.30pm. Entry to these services is by ticket only. Tickets are first offered to the Cathedral's own congregations and then the rest are distributed by public ballot. Please send applications to Public Ballot, Services of Lessons and Carols, St Albans Cathedral, Sumpter Yard, St Albans, AL1 1BY to arrive by Friday 23 November. Please enclose an SAE stating which night you are applying for and how many tickets you would like (up to a maximum of four). Tickets will be posted out from Friday 7 December onwards. Other opportunities to attend carol services include Carols on the Hour on Saturday 22 December with Cathedral and local choirs singing from 11am to 4pm - no tickets required.