

### Concerts & Drama

**St Paul's Church, Bedford.** Singalong@StPauls. Songs and stories for 0-3yr olds and their adults on **Wednesday 14th February** and on every 2nd Wednesday of the month (term time) 10-10.30am. Details from 01234 340163.

**St Albans Cathedral, AL1 1BY** Classical Guitar Recital by Michael Buitten **Saturday 24th February;** Lituina Ensemble of Period Chamber Music performance - **Saturday 24th March.** All events, tickets and times can be found in detail on [www.stalbenscathedral.org/whatson/](http://www.stalbenscathedral.org/whatson/)

**St Peter's Church, Berkhamsted.** Bridgewater Sinfonia concert on **Saturday March 10th** at 7.30pm. Programme includes works by Aaron Copland, Edward Grieg and Ralph Vaughan Williams. Tickets from [www.bridgewater-sinfonia.org.uk](http://www.bridgewater-sinfonia.org.uk) or 01442 873205

**Christ Church & St John's, Radlett** are organising an event featuring Pam Rhodes in a version of Songs of Praise on **Thursday 15th March**, also supported by the Phoenix Concert Band and an A Cappella choir. Tickets £5, £3 under 16s. From Christ Church Office: 01923 859963 or Brian Davis: 01923 856611

**Biddenham Village Hall, Nodders Way, MK40 4BJ.** Concert by 'Heart & Music' on **Saturday 17th March** at 7.30pm. Light hearted music and songs from swing, film, folk and show tunes plus original songs and poetry. Admission £10 including drinks and light refreshments, in aid of BOLD - Beds Opportunities for Learning Disabilities. For tickets call 01234 353662/07767 824787 or 07989 837819.

### Open Days & Festivals

**St Paul's Church Bedford, MK40 1SQ.** Celebrate Candlemas with us at a Candlemas Flower Festival with over 60 decorations. **Friday 2nd February** 10am-4pm. **Saturday 3rd** 10am-4pm. **Sunday 4th** 2pm-4pm. Admission

## Reaching New People starts here!



People from every deanery, each Board and Committee, pioneer ministers, ecumenical partners, Mission Shaped Ministry students and more came to see "Reaching New People" (RNP) launched. There were people there from a variety of church traditions, sizes and locations, matching the intention of RNP that it should be for urban rural, traditional and new forms of church, small and large.

RNP is the project part-funded by the Church Commissioners Renewal and Reform grant of £1.75m, to make new disciples of Christ in St Albans Diocese. The launch event gathered the newly assembled staff team to present some of the ways they will support and promote spiritual and numerical growth. As Bishop Michael put it in his introduction, "We want to grow spiritually to go deeper into God and we want to grow numerically so that there are more of us to make a bigger impact for Christ in our communities."

RNP is embedded in Living God's Love: it is not something new. The heart of the programme is to help the church to flourish through putting in place dedicated, expert teams to help parishes achieve their MAP goals and to establish new forms of church from, Café Church to Messy mass, or from those incorporating Taizé worship to those incorporating a more sacramental approach. This is a very real investment of people and money in parishes to make new disciples of Christ, already eliciting the investment of

time, commitment and acts of will to seek church growth among many people in parishes in response. RNP will seek spiritual and numerical growth by working towards the flourishing of existing modes or types of church alongside new missional forms of church or fresh expressions - in a 'blended economy'.

The launch explained how support for parishes in each archdeaconry will come through new Fresh Expressions Development Officers to help parishes in all contexts and of all traditions to create sustainable Fresh Expressions. As well as Church Growth Officers to help parishes develop their MAPS. There is also a small support team. A significant amount of the Development Officers' time will be spent supporting 'foundation churches'. These churches, with a hub in each archdeaconry, are the first cohort to take part in the project. They will be pilot projects and centres of best practice, showing that new forms of church can be developed alongside existing forms of church. The hope is that this will encourage other churches to develop a 'can do, want to do' attitude towards this new way of reaching new people. All the foundation churches will be at different points on their journey to reach new people, reflecting the different points on the journey of growth on which they sit.

They are also a reminder that this journey can start at any point in the life of a church!

### Talks & Courses

#### BELIEF Bedford

The Very Reverend Dr Jeffrey John will be returning to BELIEF with a talk entitled: "Making Sense of Scripture". This event will be held on **Saturday 17th February 2018** at St Andrew's Church Centre, Kimbolton Road, Bedford, MK40 2PF. Between 10am and 1pm. £10 per person (including refreshments) payable on the day.

£2.50 (U16 free). Refreshments will be available. Festal Choral Evensong with carols by candlelight **Sunday 4th February** at 5.30pm. Further details: 01234 391962.

**Blunham Parish Church.** (St Edmunds or St James, Park Lane. Beds MK44 3NQ). Blunham Giant Book Sale - **Saturday 24th February** 10am to 3pm. A great selection of second hand/nearly new books, Homemade cakes, teas and coffees, homemade soup and a raffle. Proceeds to Church Fabric Fund.

## EASTER MONDAY PILGRIMAGE 2018 Monday 2nd April

Meet from 1pm - Bring food!  
Entry from 2.30pm - Service 3pm



# I don't want to be alone

Unlike the actress Greta Garbo who in the 1932 film 'The Grand Hotel' uttered her famous line 'I want to be alone', most of us don't want to be alone. Yet many of us are. The evidence collated by the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness suggests that over nine million adults are 'often or always lonely'. Among them 50% of disabled people will be lonely on any given day and 3.6 million people over 65 say that television is their main form of company. More surprisingly, perhaps, many young people despite the prevalence of social media report that they are lonely. The Beatles song 'Eleanor Rigby' echoes in my mind:

'All the lonely people  
Where do they all come from?  
All the lonely people  
Where do they all belong?'

Loneliness is not the same as being alone. You can be surrounded by people and yet feel alone (equally you can be alone and not lonely). Loneliness is a mismatch between the 'quantity and quality of social relationships that we have, and those that we want'. Of course, and very sadly, some people are not just lonely but alone. Longer lives in which we out-live our friends, weaker and more dispersed family ties, less neighbourhood interaction, and so much more diminishes the bonds between us.

This week, as I write, the Prime Minister appointed Tracey Crouch MP as the ministerial lead on loneliness whose task is to keep the challenge of tackling loneliness firmly on the agenda across Whitehall. There will also be a new fund to support local activities. However, important as these actions are, the response must lie in our hands. Ultimately loneliness is not a matter for government but rather about each of us being good neighbours.

In the last few days I visited the 'Seasonal Lunch' that is held once a quarter in Heath and Reach near Leighton Buzzard. Two years ago the two Churchwardens and others at St Leonard's Church got together to provide, four

times a year, a free of charge lunch and companionship for the elderly and people living alone. Fourteen people came to the first meal. Last week there were fifty. Supported by local organisations and businesses this simple action was making a wonderful difference to people's lives.

Last year I attended the 10th Anniversary celebrations of 'Friends for Life', the Befriending Service established by the churches in Bedford to provide volunteer visitors to those in Care Homes, especially those who normally receive no or few external visitors. Once again it is a positive response to social isolation.

Psalm 25:16

And I could go on, and on! Around our Diocese congregations, thankfully, are doing similar things to reach out to those who are lonely; responding to that loneliness expressed in the cry of the Psalmist: Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted (Psalm 25:16). Yet, as the statistics provided by the Jo Cox Commission remind us, there is, so much more to do!

+ Richard Bedford

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## Clergy Appointments

**Elliot James** has been appointed as Assistant Curate (SSM) at All Saints Church, Leavesden

**James Mustard**, presently Rector and Rural Dean of Barnet is to become Canon Precentor at Exeter Cathedral, Exeter Diocese.

## Diocesan Appointments

**Kate Peacock**, presently Rector & Rural Dean of Buntingford and Dean of Women's Ministry, has been appointed as Church Growth Officer for St Albans Archdeaconry.

**David Jones**, presently Assistant Curate at All Saints Croxley Green, and a Church Leader with Explore Church, has been appointed in addition, as part-time Reaching New People Project Co-ordinator.

## Farewell

After eleven years in post, Management Accountant and keen cyclist, **Philip Deane** has decided it is time to travel! Below, Philip is pictured with his new cycling glasses - a gift from colleagues at diocesan office - which he will be taking to Cambodia on his first adventure. We wish him well.



## Obituary

It is with sadness that we announce the death of **John Warren**, Reader Emeritus from Chorleywood.



## Honoured

**Ann Browning**, a stalwart volunteer and member of St Michael's and All Angels, Sunnyside, Berkhamsted in the Diocese of St Albans has been awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) in the Queen's New Year's Honours List 2018 for her outstanding charity work with The Children's Society.

Ann, 83, has worked as a dedicated volunteer for the charity for 23 years, raising vital funds through the local Berkhamsted Committee as well as co-ordinating Children's Society activities in her own parish.

Ann is a retired GP, has chaired the Berkhamsted Committee for 20 years. It has raised thousands of pounds for disadvantaged children each year through events such as Open Gardens at Ashridge House, needlecraft exhibitions, concerts by friends in the musical world, supermarket collections, coffee mornings and an annual dinner by candlelight including live music and a raffle. The biggest fundrais for The Children's Society is the annual Berkhamsted Walk, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary in May. Last year the event raised more than £8,500 and over almost five decades it has helped to raise more than £300,000 for vulnerable children. For more information on taking part in the Berkhamsted Walk on Sunday 13 May 2018 please go to <http://www.berkhamstedwalk.com/>

Ann Browning said: "I feel a great sense of achievement when our fundraising activities are a success, but I couldn't do it without the tremendous work of my committee members, so I count this award as a tribute to us all."

"This work has been such a help to me personally since my husband died five years ago, keeping me occupied and always planning the next event. So I thank The Children's Society for keeping my brain alive!"

**ASCEND Seeks Treasurer:** Do you have the skills to be ASCEND's next voluntary treasurer? It would involve about 4-6 hours a week and they could pay an honorarium. The treasurer also attends monthly management meetings.

Ascend at All Saints' Church, South Oxhey has been changing lives for over 21 years and is a lifeline for hundreds of people a year. It offers training, support and more, including adult literacy/numeracy, IT and computer skills, English for speakers of other languages, counselling, a weekly job club and careers advice. Ascend works with those with mental health issues and complex life issues, in one of the most deprived parishes in the diocese. If you would like to discuss the work please contact Canon Pam Wise on 020 8421 5949 or email [revpamwise@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:revpamwise@hotmail.co.uk)

### New roof blessed by Bishop



At New Year, St Nicholas, Great Hornead celebrated its new side aisle roof after numerous lead thefts since the 1950s and four since 2010.

Bishop Michael blessed the new roof from a cherry-picker, and was blessed with a cloudless winter sky for the task. Long may the new roof last! Surely that was part of Bishop Michael's blessing.

The Church Buildings Council and Historic England recognise the huge difficulties parishes face if lead or other high-value materials are stolen and their guidance suggests alternatives to enable parishes to keep the roof on their treasured historic churches. As with all building matters, churches exploring alternatives after a lead theft must contact their Archdeacon and the Diocesan Advisory Committee.

At present the DAC and the Beds & Herts Historic Churches Trust are encouraging parishes to make sure lead and copper are protected with Smartwater and roof alarms, which also means full insurance cover will be available. Grants towards the cost of a roof alarm can be obtained via BHCT. Details are on the Church Buildings pages of the diocesan website.

Bishop Michael said: "I have seen many parishes which

have experienced how utterly dispiriting it is to have lead stolen. I pay tribute to the determined people of Great Hornead who have shown great fortitude and now have a roof which cannot be stolen again."



### Burning brightly from Lent to Pentecost

The Church of England national Lent campaign has a familiar ring to many people in St Albans Diocese - it's written by (Archdeacon of Wandsworth) John Kiddle, former Director of Mission.

'#LiveLent - Let your light shine' is a Lent journey through the Gospel of John, offering a short daily reading, a pause for reflection and prayer and a challenge to act.

In simple and accessible language, it includes an introduction from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, who say: "These Lent reflections take you on a journey through the Gospel of John and give you an opportunity to explore what the gift of Jesus and the challenge of Jesus mean for you, in the context of your daily life."

"God offers us life for the sake of others. The light he gives us in Jesus Christ is not to be hidden but to shine - it's a gift to be lived and shared. Indeed, the more we share it and let it shine, the brighter it burns."

A weekly five-session Lent course that can be run in conjunction or separately to the daily 'Let your light shine' material will also be available as part a range of downloadable materials to support churches.

The aim in 2018 is to be as joined up as possible and encourage people to journey from Lent and Easter into Pentecost and Thy Kingdom Come.

The full range of #LiveLent resources and activities will include:

- Full-colour printed book #LiveLent: Let Your Light Shine from Church House Publishing, which can be



ordered here. They are available in bulk or as single copies

- Daily reflections - a daily discipleship journey through Lent from the Gospel of John, and a weekly Lent course based on these themes

- App for Android and iOS (available late January)

- Including all daily reflections material
- Social media graphics from the national Church of England accounts to share on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram

- E-mail and text signups - which proved very popular over Advent and Christmas for #GodWithUs

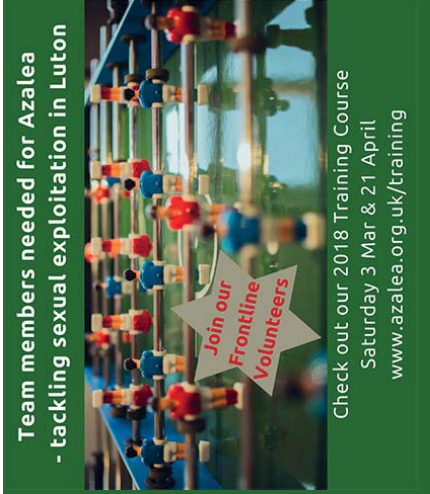
For more, see [www.churchofengland.org/lent](http://www.churchofengland.org/lent)

### Protecting the most vulnerable women in our communities

With sexual exploitation in the news almost daily, it is good to hear of work being done locally to combat it. Azalea is a Christian charity in Luton working to combat sexual exploitation among women, men and children. Set up by local churches, our volunteers have helped more than 200 women since launching in 2008.

Could you help people caught in sexual exploitation to turn their lives around? Do you have a heart for the poor and marginalised? Azalea is recruiting volunteers to join its teams working in Luton with either women or men. Check out our next Training Course on March 3 /April 21 (both dates must be attended).

Details are at [www.azalea.org.uk/training](http://www.azalea.org.uk/training). Look out for more about Azalea in a future edition of SeeRound online.



Team members needed for Azalea - tackling sexual exploitation in Luton

Join our Frontline Volunteers

Check out our 2018 Training Course  
Saturday 3 Mar & 21 April  
[www.azalea.org.uk/training](http://www.azalea.org.uk/training)

## Bethlehem Peace Light comes to Luton and then goes round Britain



For the last 20 years, Luton has been at the heart of UK participation in 'Peace Light,' a lit flame brought from Bethlehem and distributed all over the world by Scouts and Guides as an symbol of peace around Christmas. At All Saints Church, Luton, people of different faiths gathered for the service at which the light was received and from which the light was sent out. Bishop Alan was there too this year, the first time he has taken part. Every year the light is collected from Christ's Grotto in Bethlehem by an child from Upper Austria for transportation to millions of homes across the world. This gesture for international peace touches the lives of countless people. This year, a Firefighter Cadet, Thomas Flachner, from Hochburg-Ach, Upper Austria where the composer of the carol 'Silent Night' Fritz Gruber was born, lit this year's flame at Christ's Grotto in Bethlehem.

At All Saints, a congregation of over 120 Scouts and supporters from parishes around the town and surrounding area was gathered. The flame then went on its way to millions of homes and locations around the world as a symbol of hope at Christmas.

## Cheshunt to use 600th anniversary year to reach out to its local community



St Mary's Church, Cheshunt, is proclaiming its 600th year loudly from the top of its tower with a special flag. Terry Hoare, Churchwarden, said: "St Mary's started New Year with a bang. A special midnight service included a peal of bells, followed by fireworks, enjoyed by a congregation of 40."

The church building, which is grade-1 listed, was erected by the then Rector, Nicholas Dixon in 1418, although there is mention of an earlier building in the Domesday Book (1086). The church stands in a conservation area which was the centre of the original village of Cheshunt.

Terry continued: "Church members want to use this year as an opportunity to reach out to the local community," Celebrations will continue throughout 2018, and will include concerts and other special events.

Among the events planned are a Photographic Exhibition of images of the church and its surroundings (March), choral performances, one with Bella Cora, a choir of female voices (June), two orchestras and a professional Shakespearian production of Henry V.

There are ambitious plans to modernise the present church by installing facilities for light catering, building a dais at the front of the building and adding toilets at the back. This will open up the church for general community use as well as improving the experience worshippers. Over the centuries, the building has been much modified and added to.

St Mary's Mission Action Plan describes the church as: "An open, welcoming, lively church for all the people of Cheshunt, where God's grace is freely experienced and made known, forgiveness and new life in Christ are proclaimed and lived out, the sacraments are celebrated with joy, and God's Kingdom is revealed."

Their priorities include being "recognised and known by local people as loving, generous and approachable," which, by anyone's reckoning is a great way to start a year with the focus of reaching out to the local community. More from: simarycheshunt@tiscali.co.uk; 01992 635190 Churchwarden, Terry Hoare: terry\_hoare@btinternet.com 01707 875909.