Near Neighbours’ 1000th grant to help transform communities goes to ….

Luton!

All Saints Church, in Bury Park, Luton, is the site of Near Neighbours’ 1000th project and hosted the celebration to mark this achievement in October. Present, along with more than 70 people from the immediate local community, were Bishop Richard; Elizabeth Carnelly, Near Neighbours Director; Harriet Acknuson from the Department for Communities and Local Government which funds Near Neighbours; representatives of Luton Council of Faiths and others local leaders.

Near Neighbours brings people in diverse communities together to build relationships of trust and help them transform their neighbourhoods. The 1000th project is for a Peace Garden and Community Allotment.

The Revd David Kesterton, (pictured) Vicar of All Saints, explained how the densely built-up area in which All Saints sits has next to no shared community space within it; yet, the church had two small strips of land, which might become such spaces. The project to turn these into an allotment and a Peace Garden, which the community could share as a space of contemplation, grew out of some of the hopes and wishes expressed by members of the local community themselves.

Husna Rasul, Project Leader for the local community (pictured with Revd David) commented, “We are so proud to be the 1000th grantee! This money means a lot to this community as we show our dedication to each other and to creating a positive environment for our families. But we are also aware that we are now a part of a wider movement of other projects and it’s a real privilege to be able to stand as representatives of all they have achieved.”

Liz Carnelly, Director of Near Neighbours described the project as emblematic of what Near Neighbours has achieved throughout the country.

Funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government, Near Neighbours is a partnership between the charity Church Urban Fund and the Archbishops Council, and has been running since 2011. Throughout that time Near Neighbours has been awarding grants to community-based projects across England. This landmark award means that Near Neighbours has now given over £3.4 million to local projects across England, through which more than 800,000 people have benefitted.

In Luton, 43 grants totalling more than £170,000 have been made. The Bishop of Bedford, who is also a national trustee for Near Neighbours, took time to reflect on what Near Neighbours has achieved, “These 1000 grants reflect a new and creative way of doing community in our country that is both inspiring and transformative. It shows what can be achieved when people of different faiths work together for the common good. We’re very proud that we can host such a celebration in Luton!”

Communities Secretary, Greg Clark MP added: “Near Neighbours has made a real difference to peoples’ lives. From parents getting on in life and gaining qualifications together, to young people sharing recipes and eating together in cooking groups – across the country people from every faith and background have come together to form a community.

This 1000th project launched today in Luton is a great landmark, and I hope that the peace garden created here will be a community hub for many years to come.”
Bishop’s Letter

Where divine and earthly justice meet

This month the High Sheriffs of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire will hold their services for the Judiciary in the Abbey and St Paul’s, Bedford respectively. The service, with its long history, traditionally marks the start of the judicial year and is a time for prayer for the Judges and all associated with the courts; an occasion to be accountable before the God of justice and righteousness, and to remember the vital importance of the judicial system to our common good.

Preaching the Assize Sermon, as it was then called, in 1758 in St Paul's Bedford, John Wesley spoke to the judges in these words: ‘Ye truly honorable men, whom God and the King have commissioned, in a lower degree, to administer justice; may not ye be compared to those ministering spirits who will attend the Judge coming in the clouds May you, like them, burn with love to God and man! May you love righteousness and hate iniquity! …. May ye remain the establishers of peace, the blessing and ornaments of your country, the protectors of a guilty land, the guardian angels of all that are round about you!’

It is that celebration of justice that echoes the divine justice; justice as one of the treasures of this country, not least from Magna Carta onwards. Although even then as the excellent film Suffragette illustrates not just in relation to women’s votes but also in terms of the rights for women to property, education, children and justice, we have had to develop the comprehensiveness of legal protection.

This year as the judiciary gather for those services there is however a cloud on the horizon; a growing concern from those who are judges and magistrates, as much as anyone, about increasing threats to the availability of justice, especially for the poor.

For instance proposals to close 91 courts or tribunals, including those in Bedford, Watford and St Albans have been criticised by the Law Society and Magistrates as making it harder for people to access justice; whilst there is growing concern about the increase in mandatory court fees with the possibility that people may plead guilty simply to avoid higher charges. There is evidence that it is also affecting the award of compensation by reducing the ability of offenders to pay this additional sum.

It is a concern well summed up by the Law Society President Jonathan Smithers:

‘A majority of these proposed court closures will make it more difficult for a significant number people to get to court, and the closures will more adversely affect people living in rural areas, those with disabilities and lower income families. Combined with the further planned increases in court fees and reductions in eligibility for legal aid, many of the proposed closures will serve to deepen the inequalities in the justice system between those who can and cannot afford to pay.’

Let us pray this month for the Judiciary and justice. May it be justice for all and not just those who can afford it.

The Rt Revd Richard Atkinson, Bishop of Bedford

+Richard Bedford

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Cathedral’s nave statues blessed by Bishop of London

Bishop Richard of London was present 900 years ago at the dedication of the new Norman building for St Albans Cathedral.

Bishop Richard Chartres, the present one, was present at the Dedication 900 service which marked that moment and saw seven new statues of Christian martyrs installed in niches in the nave screen at the cathedral.

The seven martyrs start with Alban, Britain’s first saint and end with a late 20th century martyr, Archbishop Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador.

The other five martyrs celebrated are Amphibalus, Alban Roe, George Tankerfield, Elisabeth Romanova and Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Here, See Round tells the story of these seven towering figures of our faith. From the left:

**Archbishop Oscar Romero** was a South American priest who became Archbishop of San Salvador in 1979 and who was shot while celebrating Mass in 1980. He had strongly opposed the treatment of the poor by the Government of El Salvador and the Junta which took over from the elected Government following a coup in 1979. He had foreseen the danger of assassination and had spoken of it often, declaring his willingness to accept martyrdom if his blood might contribute to the solution of the nation’s problems.

“As a Christian,” he remarked on one such occasion, “I do not believe in death without resurrection. If they kill me, I shall rise again in the Salvadoran people.”

**St Amphibalus** was the priest sheltered from the Roman Authorities by Alban in third century Verulamium, for preaching Christianity.

**St Alban** not only sheltered Amphibalus, but gave himself in his place, and faced execution for his act.

**George Tankerfield** was a Protestant who was burned to death outside the west front of St Albans Abbey because of his refusal to accept the restoration of Roman Catholicism under Mary Tudor.

**Sister Elisabeth Romanova** was a member of the Russian Royal Family, granddaughter to Queen Victoria and convert to Russian Orthodox Christianity. In widowhood she became a nun and abbess and was murdered by the Bolsheviks in 1918.

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer** was a Lutheran Pastor and theologian who was imprisoned in a concentration camp for his opposition to the Nazis. He was tried without witnesses or defence and sentenced to death by hanging in April 1945, within days of the end of the Second World War. Among many memorable things he said, the truth of which lives on today was: “Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.”

**St Alban Roe** was a Roman Catholic, imprisoned for a time in St Albans Abbey Gatehouse. He was hanged in London in 1642 for being a Roman Catholic priest.
Bishop Michael grilled in community school

Bishop Michael recently made his first visit to a community school as part of spending time in a parish. After a Sunday with St Luke’s, St Albans, he visited Samuel Ryder Academy, an all-through school, taking children from age 4, right through to age 18.

As well as receiving a warm welcome from Academy Head, Matt Gauthier, Bishop Michael visited primary and secondary RE classes and received a polite grilling from year 8. Bishop Michael saw how keenly pupils at all stages engaged with the material in the RE lessons, which is an important part of pupils’ academic and personal development as well as a very popular subject at GCSE.

The Samuel Ryder Academy values RE as part of its Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) education and a big part of this involves teaching the students about mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. This helps students to be well prepared for life in a tolerant, multi-faith modern Britain and is taught alongside the other British values of democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty.

The primary lesson examined homelessness and what it was right to do to help homeless people. In the secondary lesson, Bishop Michael observed while STEP co-ordinator Tim took students through an exercise where they addressed ultimate questions, including: “Is God real? “and “Did God create the world?” before his grilling.

Alongside questions like, why do Bishops wear purple, Bishop Michael was asked “Can you prove God exists?” He responded: “I spent a lot of my working life as a scientist and I am fascinated by how we know things. A lot of things you can prove by scientific method. But some things you can’t prove like that. I don’t think God is amenable to being proved using a scientific method. God has to be known in other ways. I know God by my experience, by how people who claim to follow God behave in the world and from history.”

Speaking about the visit Bishop Michael said: “The great relationship between parish and school is really evident here and I have been warmly received by all. I’d like to encourage parishes and schools to get to know one another and deepen their contact. Churches and schools have a lot in common: they are community organisations focussed on building peaceful communities in which all people flourish, especially children and young people. As an educator, with 135 schools in the Diocese of St Albans, the Church also has much to learn from and much to offer schools in our communities.”

Samuel Ryder Academy Headteacher, Matt Gauthier, said: “We are very pleased that the Bishop was able to visit us today. The Samuel Ryder Academy is a school at the very heart of its community and our links with the Church and other local organisations enable us to provide our pupils with a very rich learning experience. It is experiences like this one and the many others that we provide throughout the year that help our young people to grow into well rounded young men and women who are ready to make a positive contribution to their communities and are well prepared for life in an ever changing world.”
Spreading the Good News!

A few weeks ago, the Diocesan Synod approved the budget for the diocese for 2016. Here are the headlines. Our biggest cost is the stipend paid to our clergy and (as recommended by the Archbishops Council) this will increase by 1.50% as from 1 April 2016. It is imperative that we endeavour to maintain the value of the stipend so that clergy have sufficient to feed and clothe themselves and their families. Over the last 10 years the value of the stipend has fallen behind inflation and we need to increase it every year so that it does fall further behind.

We will also be investing for the future. Because about 40% of our clergy will be retiring over the next 10 years or so we have been working harder to foster vocations, particularly from younger people, so that we can replace those retiring. Next summer it is likely that 18 men and women will be ordained deacon which is about fifty percent more than the number about 5 years ago. That is so exciting. But it means that we will be supporting more curates next year than we do this year and we will recruit a part time assistant for our hard pressed Director of Ordinands to help with the work of nurturing encouraging and guiding the additional many more potential candidates for ordination.

Our IT and website functions are not working as well as we would all want. The demands of a thriving diocese, its Bishops, priests and people, require more resource to ensure that the diocesan website is fully functional and our communications, including social media, are fully up to speed. Consequently we will be looking for another pair of hands to help in these areas.

Then there are two ways we directly want to help parishes. First we will be giving more resource to Rural and Area Deans so that they can better assist parishes in all that they do. They will be able to spend time encouraging and advising parishes how they can better spread the good news of the gospel. Then we will be introducing a Parish Giving scheme for parishes who request it that will enable gift aid claims to be made more efficiently and provide a mechanism for a regular review of donations.

After taking account of savings that we have identified, the increase in the parish share in 2016 will be 2.88%. That is the average but parishes will see a larger or smaller increase depending on their particular circumstances. This budget will allow us not just to continue to provide active ministry to all our communities throughout the diocese but it seeks to ensure that parochial ministry will continue to flourish for our children and for our grandchildren.

David Nye

Further information about next year’s budget can be found here:


And information about the Parish Giving Scheme also referred to in David’s article can be found here:

http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/ministry/parish-giving-scheme/
Archdeacons abound!

**Canon John Kiddle**, is about to take up his new post as Archdeacon of Wandsworth, in early November.

He has been Director of Mission since 2008 but his life in the diocese goes back to 1991, when he became Vicar of St Luke’s Watford. Through his work implementing Living God’s Love and helping parishes to get to grips with Mission Action Planning, he has become known to and loved by a great many people in the diocese. He has also been known for his keen eye for design and the brilliant artwork that has resulted for Living God’s Love, Lent and Advent Challenges and a range of other things that the Mission Department has produced.

John was born and brought up in Africa and remains interested in matters related to it, he enjoys walking and is a keen supporter of Watford Football Club. Commenting on his appointment John Kiddle says: ‘It is a real privilege to be appointed Archdeacon of Wandsworth. A priority for me will be to listen and learn, my aim will be to use my role to support and develop local ministry and mission with creativity and prayer. I will be very sad to leave friends and colleagues in the Diocese of St Albans but thrilled to be joining the Diocese of Southwark at an exciting point in its journey.’

Bishop Alan said: ‘Canon John Kiddle has been a single-minded Director of Mission. His priority has been to innovate, encourage, support lead and nurture many people and many activities across the Diocese, all focused on Jesus Christ and the hope he offers to us and the whole world. As an Archdeacon, I am certain that John will bring the same passion and single mindedness to bear, to great effect. I and many others will miss him.’

Among a few small tokens presented to John by colleagues was a toy London Taxi, as used by the Archdeacon in the TV series ‘Rev’. John’s own preferred method of personal transport in his new job will be a bicycle!

**Canon Sue Groom** is to be the new Archdeacon of Wilts in the Diocese of Salisbury.

Currently completing a DThM (Doctor of Theology and Ministry) with Durham University, she will leave her two posts, as a parish priest in Henlow and Langford and as Diocesan Director of Ordinands in the diocese early next year.

Canon Sue said: “I am excited to be taking up this post with its emphasis on developing parish ministry. I look forward to getting to know the people and the churches of the Archdeaconry and supporting them in their desire to be flourishing communities of prayer, service and growth.”

Canon Sue has ministered in St Albans Diocese since 2009 and she was made an Honorary Canon in 2014. Her passion is to develop people and help them use their gifts in the service of the church. It was this aspect of the Archdeacon of Wilts’ role that particularly drew her to apply for the post.

The Bishop of Bedford greeted news of her appointment: “Canon Sue has contributed significantly to the life of the diocese in her time here and what she has given has been of the highest quality. She has brought great energy and skill to the growth of our work identifying vocations to ministry and training more curates at the same time as building up the life of two parishes. She will be missed, but goes with our prayers.”

With a degree in linguistics; an MPhil in Computer Speech and Language Processing; a Postgraduate Certificate in Adult Education; a DipHE in Christian Life and Ministry; an MA in Aspects of Biblical Interpretation; and an MPhil for ‘Sources for the Investigation of Meaning in the Hebrew Bible’ she holds many qualifications which will support her new role.

Married to Phil, Sue swims five times a week and she and her husband spend a large proportion of what spare time they have on their narrowboat, for which they hope to find a mooring on the Kennet and Avon Canal.
Clergy Appointments

Peter Bevan, presently Vicar in the benefice of Potters Bar is to become Vicar in the united benefice of Great Torrington, Little Torrington, Frithelstock & Taddiport, in the Diocese of Exeter.

Alasdair Coles, previously Chaplain at All Saints Academy in Dunstable, has become the Rector of All Saints Church, St Andrews, in the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Jeremy Crocker, previously Team Rector in Elstow Team Ministry, became Dean of St Paul’s Cathedral, Nicosia in the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf in May this year.

Canon Sue Groom, presently Priest-in-Charge in the benefice of Henlow and Langford and Diocesan Director of Ordinands, has been appointed Archdeacon of Wiltshire in Salisbury Diocese.

Canon John Kiddle, previously Director of Mission and Canon Residentiary is to become Archdeacon of Wandsworth, in the Diocese of Southwark.

Dr Mike Rajkovic, presently Vicar in the benefice of Bricket Wood, St Albans, is to become Team Rector of Maltby and Priest-in-Charge of St Simon and St Jude Thurcroft, in the Diocese of Sheffield.

Giles Tulk presently Team Rector in the Ash & Quin Team Ministry is to become incumbent in the benefice of Minsterley, Habberley, Hope w. Shelve (known as the Stiperstones Group) in Hereford Diocese.

Lauretta Wilson presently Team Vicar (with special responsibility for St Benedict’s, Bennetts End) in the Langelei Team Ministry, is to become Team Rector of the benefice of Kegworth and Hathern, in the Diocese of Leicester.

Dr Berkeley Zych, presently Curate in the benefice of Grimshoe in the Diocese of Ely, is to become Minor Canon (Precentor) in the Cathedral & Abbey.

Obituary

William Trafford Allen, Reader Emeritus from Berkhamsted died in October.

New Director of Education Appointed

It has been announced that David Morton will take up the post of Diocesan Director of Education, starting this month. He had been Deputy Director of Education since July 2013 and acting Director since the departure of John Reynolds earlier this year.

David trained at Christ Church College Canterbury and after class teaching became headteacher of a VA school in Peterborough. From January 2005 to December 2007 he was headteacher at our own St Swithun’s VC Lower School in Sandy. From there he left to be Director of the Stapleford Centre in Nottingham, a centre promoting Christian principles in education.

Trinity College students Brian Peyton, Therese Tebbutt, Kate Smith and Dawn Jenkins were presented with their certificates in Biblical Studies and Theology by Dr David Ball on Saturday 24th October at St Mary’s Welwyn.

The students successfully completed 12 units of the Trinity College (Bristol) Open Learning courses and are run through out the diocese. Details are available for courses starting in January from Amanda Furlong, email amandafurlong@me.com
St Mary's Church, Watford, Christmas Tree Festival Friday 11th - Sunday 13th December, with a live nativity on Saturday 12th December. Entry is free but please bring plenty of coins to donate to local charities who have decorated the trees. Includes Festival Cafe, musical interludes and concert by the Amici Choir.

Courses/Conferences

Equipping God’s People
Courses

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

PCC Tonight?
Thursday 12th November, 7.45pm – 9.45pm
Venue: Christ Church, Ware.
An evening for PCC members run by John Lawrence from CPAS to clarify the purpose and place of PCCs, explore 12 common dysfunctions and introduce material PCCs can use to help make their meetings more focused, fun and fruitful!
Cost: £8 for first four, £2 for more!
Booking: Essential via www.cpas.org.uk/PCCTonight.

Capital Fundraising Workshop
Saturday 21st November 10am–4pm
Venue: Holywell Lodge, 41 Holywell Hill, St Albans, AL1 1HE.
A one day workshop to help secure funds for major projects led by Eleanor Gill, National Legacy and Fundraising Officer. Book in advance online or via the course contact.
Cost: £15 including lunch. Contact: Gabby Parikh 01727 818141 pdadmin@stalbans.anglican.org.

St Mary’s Church, Apsley End, Christmas Bazaar on Saturday 21st November 10am – 1pm. Gifts, Tombola, Cakes, Refreshments etc and also Father Christmas. Admission 50p.

St Mary’s Church, Carlton, Christmas Bazaar in the Village Hall on Saturday 21st November 10-1pm Grand Draw at 12.30pm. Entrance Adult £1 Children free.

St Mary’s Church, Ashwell. Ashwell Christmas Fair will take place on Saturday 5th December, from 9.30am – 1.00pm. There will be many stalls with Arts and Crafts, Cakes and Cards, Presents and Prizes. The Choir will be singing Carols and Refreshments will be available. Entry is free. Proceeds to the Church Restoration Appeal.

St Ippolyts Church Nativity Crib Festival Saturday 5th - Sunday 6th December 11am-5pm. Beautiful, medieval church filled with 100+ nativity crib sets big and small, including stunning family heirlooms to children’s toys and hand made sets. Enjoy a cuppa and a slice of cake and maybe win your very own crib set. For details contact Barbara 01462 421647 Barbara.thomas@live.co.uk.

St John's Church, St John's Road, Harpenden. Fayrfax Consort, director David Ireson, performing at 3pm Sunday 22nd November. A variety of Crib Scenes from many sources being displayed. Craft and gift stalls, Refreshments, Displays, Musical performances, Free entry, free parking on Henry Wells Square or Stevenage Links. For details Revd Austin on 01442 270585 or revaustin@sky.com.

St Nicholas Church, Barton-Le-Clay, Bedfordshire. Our 14th annual Christmas tree festival takes place on Saturday 5th & Sunday 6th December, 11.30am–6pm Saturday & 11.30am-5pm Sunday. Come and view our delightfully decorated trees in our beautiful church. Refreshments available. For information call Duncan on 01582 882279.

St Albans Cathedral. Annual Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving on Sunday 22nd November from 2.30pm with dove release followed by service from 3pm-4.30pm, with the Abbey Girls Choir and service led by Canon Richard Watson, Sub Dean.

Open Days & Festivals

SeeRound Online Events November 2015/12 p8