It’s Bishop Anne!

The Rt Revd Anne Hollinghurst, Bishop of Aston as she now is, was consecrated at St Paul’s Cathedral on 29th September 2015, along with the Bishop of Taunton and the Bishop of Islington. Formerly Vicar of St Peter’s Church, St Albans, she is the first woman from this diocese to be appointed bishop.

The Bishop of Chelmsford preached at the service and his address can be read at: http://www.stephencottrell.org/news/article/bishop-stephen-cottrell-gives-sermon-address-at-the-consecration-of-bishops. In this encouraging address, he said: “If you are wondering why you are being made a bishop today; if people who knew you in the past have raised an eyebrow and expressed surprise at your appointment, then perhaps it is for this: God has given you and will go on giving you the grace to see life whole and an ability to speak effectively of it.” He spoke of bishops as angels: messengers carrying the gospel message for today, encapsulated, if forced, into a soundbite or two: “I would say that for our culture at this particular time, it is that in Christ you can become yourself. You can be set free from the snares and temptations of a world that tells you you aren’t good enough, good looking enough, thin enough, clever enough, young enough, and find a new identity and become completely yourself as you are meant to be in the communion with God that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ makes possible.”

Bishop Anne goes with the prayers of many from this diocese – with a large contingent present at the service. For further photos visit: https://goo.gl/photos/aRCXXBST2X6UhWCJ9
Refugees are real people

About fourteen years ago, the Churches Together where I served in Shropshire decided they wanted to do something to help people claiming asylum. We prayed and then decided to send a donation of baby clothes to the Midlands Refugee Centre in Birmingham. A collection was delivered by two of our church members. The ladies returned somewhat bemused. They said that while the centre had been grateful for the gift of the clothes, they weren’t too sure what they’d do with them, as most people that used the centre were single men in their early twenties. These lads had further added that if we really wanted to help, what they’d most appreciate would be to play us at football. So we arranged a coach for a refugee team and their supporters. We were soundly thrashed – the refugees’ former Croatian international did for us. After the game, the matriarchy of the Churches Together produced a veggie supper for all-comers served in the Methodist church hall. It was only at the meal that we discovered what the refugees really wanted. By the end, each of the young men was draped over one of our grey haired ladies. What they really wanted was a cuddle from someone who could have been their granny far away. This opened our eyes. We stopped seeing our visitors as a problem to be helped but as people like us.

My experience back in 2001 has parallels with our experience now. The sight of a dead boy on a beach has opened our eyes and melted our hearts. Aylan Kurdi could have been anyone’s child, grandson, neighbour. People across our country now want to help others facing a desperate plight. Generous offers have been made of welcome, accommodation and support. Wonderful though these are, I wonder how much these are meeting refugees’ real needs experienced now? The fact is that most of the people we’d like to help aren’t here and under our current policies won’t be coming either. They are either in camps around the near East or seeking asylum on the continent. So what can we do that can really help where people are? First we must pray. Unless God is part of the solution to the situation we face, our efforts will be in vain. Second we must call on our government to account for a number of things: the help we’re actually prepared to offer refugees here, the need to maintain the UK’s excellent response of providing aid to those in need in the near East and the urgency of working with everyone with an interest in the countries in conflict to find a lasting peace. Finally we must send practical help to where it’s needed - cash is wanted now. Agencies such as Tearfund and Christian Aid are helping people displaced around Syria. Donations can be sent to their websites (www.christianaid.org.uk, www.tearfund.org). Anglican chaplaincies in affected parts of Europe (such as Athens) are working with local partner churches to channel assistance to where it can be used immediately. The charity US (formerly USPG) is acting as a conduit for funds which can be sent through their website (www.weareus.org.uk)

The people we’re seeing on our television screens are real people just like us - parents, brothers, sisters, children, bus drivers, bank managers, nurses, builders. Their needs are real and now. Let us help them.

+Michael

bishophertford@stalbans.anglican.org
Showing Christ’s love to refugees

Breaking news: As we finalise this edition of SeeRound Online, a public petition asking Herts County Council to welcome refugees in Hertfordshire has received the following response:

Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) will continue to play its full part alongside the District Council housing authorities and other local public services to support Syrian refugees choosing to settle locally. We anticipate that the primary support that HCC will provide for refugees will be the provision of places in education together with broader care support for children and their families if required.

HCC welcomes the Government’s promise to meet our additional costs from its Overseas Aid budget and both the District Councils and HCC are currently seeking clarification from government about how this will work.

We understand that most of Hertfordshire’s ten District Councils are likely to offer to accommodate ten individuals (preferably in family groups), suitable housing being the first key provision for settling refugees. This suggests that approximately 100 individual refugees may settle in Hertfordshire under the Home Office Syrian refugee assistance programme. We are confident that HCC is able to meet the consequential additional demands on its own services, albeit at a financial cost which we trust central government will meet.

HCC has considerable experience in managing the needs of an increasing number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) who are arriving in the county after travelling to the UK by lorry and other means. 42 new UASC have arrived in Hertfordshire between April and July 2015 – that is 37% of the total number that have arrived in the East of England region in that time period. The countries of origin for these children are Eritrea (20), Lebanon (6), Afghanistan (5), Iran (4), Iraq (3), Syria (3), Sudan (1).

Christian sacrifice and hospitality should be at the heart of our responses to the refugee crisis which has dominated news coverage over the last month and more.

Furthermore, in the Diocese of St Albans, we have the story of Alban, who gave himself up to Roman authorities in the place of a Christian priest, Amphibalus, as a source of inspiration.

So how should we respond? A set of new web pages: www.stalbans.anglican.org/faith/asylum-and-refugees offers us suggestions under these headings: prayer and reflection, giving, housing and encouragement.

Pray and reflect

There are prayers on www.churchofengland.org and www.christianaid.org.uk.

For reflection, the BBC Panorama documentary made by Jon Sweeney is available on YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MS5vwNKUb94

Give - money

To whom? - Tearfund, US (formerly USPG) and Doctors of the World are three suggested recipients for donations. Why money? Many churches want to send clothes or other items to Syria. Like other organisations we think it is generally best to donate money because it’s the fastest and most effective way to help those who are suffering most. Here’s why:

1. Sending aid from the UK is expensive & takes a long time to reach its destination.
2. We want to help people as quickly as possible
3. Bringing in too much aid can damage local economies
4. Items on offer may not be what Syrians need most

Encourage

Advocacy is always a help. If you are professional seeking to offer help and support to refugees please contact the Refugee Council: www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/ 020 7346 6700


House

Do you have a house to rent? – If you are a private landlord or own a home which could be made available to rent then you could be of great help. Housing shortages generally in the UK make this very difficult. Citizens UK are leading a campaign to house people and you could register here. http://www.citizensuk.org/help_find_homes_for_syrian_refugees

Rooms in your homes - Some people have expressed an interest in housing refugees in their own homes. This offer needs to be given some thought and planning, and followed through with a reputable agency, such as Positive Action in Housing www.paih.org/host-a-refugee/
Going Deeper: Living in Community 1

Among the many ways of Going Deeper into God, perhaps one of the most radical is creating new living arrangements to support or prompt such a journey. Historically, this might have meant joining a monastic order or a convent, but numbers in religious life are currently very small.

Enter Archbishop Justin. The first of his three priorities is to re-invigorate and re-imagine religious life and prayer among Anglicans. This is something he expressed early on in his archiepiscopacy: when asked what he was going to do with Lambeth Palace, he replied, “fill it with young people.”

True to that early utterance, he is inviting 16 people aged 20-35 to live at Lambeth Palace for a year, for a challenging and formative experience living in a praying community. One of those chosen is from St Albans Diocese: Josh Brocklesby.

Young Chorleywood worshipper joins St Anselm Community

Josh Brocklesby worships at Christ Church, Chorleywood and knew the minute he saw news of the St Anselm Community on Twitter that “God wanted him to apply.” He was drawn to the community because it was made up of people from lots of different denominations, countries and cultures who had experienced faith in different ways to him. He wanted to learn from them and the more he found out, the more excited he became about the possibility of joining St Anselm’s.

Josh will be a resident member of the community for a year, having left a job in advertising to go there.

Follow Josh on Twitter: @JoshBrocklesby and follow The Community of St Anselm: @YearInGodsTime

Applications are invited for 2016 intake. See www.stanselm.org
A Rector’s daughter writes about her experience of life in Lee Abbey

Living in community is not unlike being a student; the kitchen never tidy, your belongings in a small room with bed, sink and desk; and people everywhere.

Lee Abbey is a Christian retreat centre with staff of 21 nationalities, representing every continent, split into 10 teams to tackle everything from marketing to toilets.

We pray together mornings and afternoons, serve guests lunch and dinner and spend time with them in talks or workshops. We have community corpus and spiritual formation groups and go to Sunday worship with our guests.

Responsive to Jesus and accountable to each other, we follow a rule of life, living in openness and honesty, cherishing God's creation and building community, trusting in the holy spirit.

As a teenager I thought about living in community: big house, extended family, each person contributing skills and gifts. Lee Abbey sounded like that dream and, after 6 weeks, it still is. Past failings and feelings of worthlessness dissolved. I felt immediately at home, welcomed and cherished before anyone had even said hello, loved as a child of God.

Journeying in this thing called community, we encounter God at every turn: someone's grace in allowing you privacy; a guest's thank-you hug when they leave; a new friend sharing how hard they find things.

But it’s intense. Living, working and relaxing with the same people means there’s nowhere to hide. You can’t maintain a false persona; and this openness means you can be hurt. But serving God and acting always out of God’s love takes you away from yourself, makes you pour out everything; even pulls out things you didn’t know were there.

What you find is You.

The real God-centred, arms open, filled-up you running on fuel not available at any petrol station.

The you who begins to see, through God’s eyes, the beauty in every person, every blade of grass; whose heart breaks over each injustice and desecration of the Earth.

The you who’s ok with not being brilliant at everything, because your brother or sister can do that; and just as they hold you up, you hold them up, so that together you can achieve anything. We see every day what could not have been accomplished without everyone who has come and gone; every guest, every friend of Lee Abbey an actively working part of the body of Christ.

Geraldine Shearer
Sheriffs Bike ‘n’ Hike to the Border

Once, sheriffs meeting at a border might have ridden horses, carried guns and have met to settle scores. This picture, on the other hand, is of the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire, Isabelle, Countess of Erroll, and the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire, Jonathan Trower, meeting at the Beds-Herts border for the Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust’s annual Bike ‘n’ Hike, which raises significant sums to contribute towards the upkeep of our historic church buildings.

Having both chosen the Historic Churches Trust as their nominated charity for their term of office, the two High Sheriffs were sponsored for their journey to the border.

Last year, the Bike ‘n’ Hike raised more than £110,000. Half of the money raised goes back to churches nominated by participants and half goes to the trust to give out during the year in the form of grants.

Keep an eye on www.bedshertshct.org.uk for news of the total raised this year and for information about next year’s event. You never know who you might meet.

Dean’s honorary degree

During the recent University of Hertfordshire award ceremonies at St Albans Cathedral, the Dean received the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Letters. In his acceptance speech, the Dean, already “proud to be a member of the University Court,” described this as an unexpected and very real privilege.

He continued: “The abbey is the oldest place of learning in Hertfordshire, having had a library, scriptorium and school since the time of King Offa who built the first Benedictine Abbey in 795. In the Middle Ages St Albans became the premier Abbey in England. It exchanged scholars and writings with the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Paris and Bologna, and also with the great centres of Islamic philosophy and science in Al Andaluz and Sicily. It is wonderfully appropriate that the University of Hertfordshire confers its degrees in this building which promoted so much intercultural academic exchange through those centuries. Of course the University today is and must be secular, and no University should ever be captive to the dogma of one religion; but in fact, within the best traditions of all faiths, that has always been recognised. True and healthy religion has never been afraid of reason, debate and the open exchange of ideas, because a healthy faith will recognise that God is the source of all knowledge and truth, and in the end, the sincere seeker of truth is seeking God. The closed mind of fundamentalism is not only the enemy of humanity and intellectual advancement, it is the enemy of true religion too.

On a not unrelated theme, the Vice Chancellor has been kind enough to mention some of my own theological wrestling with the issue of being gay, especially as a priest within the Church. So can I also take the opportunity to say to those of you here who are also gay and also religious – and there will be many of you - please don’t give up, either on your religion or on being true to yourself. God made us who we are, and we have to bear witness to God’s love within the faith that has shaped us.

I know how hard and dangerous that can be, especially within some faith traditions which are extremely hostile. But even religions change and develop – however much they like to pretend they don’t – and we have a special calling to help our own faiths become more humane, accepting and inclusive. All of us here have been given many gifts. This is something we have to give back.”
Clergy

Dr Glyn Ackerley, presently Vicar in the benefice of Shorne, Kent and Diocesan Director of Ordinands in Rochester Diocese, is to become Vicar in the benefice of Bushmead, Luton.

David Brown, presently Priest-in-charge in the benefice of St Nicholas & Graveley, Stevenage is to become Rector of the same.

Lucy Dallas, Assistant Curate in the Welwyn Team Ministry is to become Team Vicar (half-time) with special responsibility for St Nicholas, Elstree.

Nicholas Grew, presently Vicar in the benefice of Knaphill with Brockwood in Guildford Diocese, is to become Vicar in the benefice of St Francis, Luton.

Anne Hindle, presently Rector in the benefice of Clifton and Southill is to become Vicar (part-time) of the benefice of Warmington, Tansor and Fotheringay and Southwick, in Peterborough diocese.

Nick Parkinson, Associate Minister (SSM) in the benefice of Woburn Sands has retired.

Ann Pollington presently Vicar of the benefice of St Ippolyts w. Great & Little Wymondley and Rural Dean of Hitchin Deanery, is to become Vicar of the benefice of Cranbrook in Canterbury Diocese.

Canon David Ridgeway, presently Vicar of St Stephen’s Church, St Albans is to become Rector of the benefice of Castor w Upton & Stibbington & Water Newton, Marholm & Sutton in Peterborough diocese.

Philip Waller, Vicar of St John’s Church, Long Eaton and Assistant Diocesan Director of Ordinands in Derby diocese, is to become Team Vicar (designate) in the benefice of Codicote and Associate Diocesan Director of Ordinands (both half-time posts)

Obituary

Kathleen Partington, Reader Emeritus in Sandy, Bedfordshire, died in August.

Borehamwood’s new Team Vicar

Monday, September 28th was a special day in the life of St. Michael and All Angels Church, Brook Road, Borehamwood as they welcomed Revd. Louise Collins as their new team vicar. The Bishop of Hertford, the Right Reverend Dr. Michael Beasley licensed her and she was installed by the Archdeacon of Hertford, the Venerable Dr. Trevor Jones.

Members of the Community, the Mayor of Hertsmere, Martin Worster, Mayor of Elstree and Borehamwood, Richard Butler, (both pictured above) and clergy were invited to join the St Michael’s community in welcoming Louise, in a service which including prayer and hymns. Louise was then welcomed by both Mayors, The Deanery Lay Co-Chairperson Richard Osborn, Fr. Dominic on behalf of the Elstree and Borehamwood Christian Council, and Judith Elders from the local foodbank.

Members from Louise’s previous church St. Cuthberts, Fir Vale, Sheffield, members of Louise’s family and friends also attended the service which was followed by fellowship in the church hall.

Christmas Services of Lessons and Carols St Albans Cathedral

The 2015 Festivals of Lessons and Carols will be held at the Cathedral on **Sunday, 20 December and Monday 21 December** – both starting at 7pm. 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, Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban, Sumpter Yard, St Albans, AL1 1BY to arrive by **Friday 27 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 4 December onwards. Other opportunities to attend carol services include Carols on the Hour on Saturday 19 December with cathedral and local choirs singing from 11am to 4pm – no tickets required.
EVENT LISTINGS for October 2015

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

Concerts & Drama

St Andrew's Church, Bedford. Tenth Anniversary Celebratory Weekend concerts: Urban Folk Quartet on Friday 9th October at 7.30pm. Bring and Sing Handel's Messiah on Saturday 10th at 7.30pm. Recital by Carolyn Sampson (soprano) and Joseph Middleton (piano) at 2.30pm Sunday 11th October followed by Afternoon Tea at 4.30pm and then Thanksgiving Service at 6pm. Visit www.standrewsbedford.org.

St John's Church, St John's Road, Harpenden. Coffee Concerts on Saturday mornings at 10.30. 10th October - Roger Carter (organ). 7th November - Helen Charlston (mezzo-soprano) & Edward Picton-Turbervill (piano). 12th December - Roger Carter (organ). Admission free, retiring collection. Directions at www.stjohnsharpenden.org.uk

Open Days & Festivals

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, Marshalsea, St Albans. Christmas Fair on Saturday 21st November 10.30am-2pm. Lots of stalls including cakes, gifts, face painting and much more. Refreshments, lunches and a visit by Santa! Entrance 50p, accompanied children free. Details: Lucy 07949 933167 or Kathryn 07742 594668.

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 Ippolyts Church. Nativity Crb Festival Saturday 5th - Sunday 6th December 11am-5pm. Beautiful, medieval church filled with over a hundred nativity crb sets big and small, including stunning family heirlooms to children’s toys and hand made sets. Enjoy a cuppa and a slice of delicious cake and have a go at winning your very own crb set. For further details contact Barbara 01462 421647 Barbara.thomas@live.co.uk.

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.

Stopsley Parish Church, 585a Hitchin Road, Stopsley, Luton, LU2 7UL. Christmas Tree Festival to be held on Saturday 5th & Sunday 6th December. There will be 26 decorated trees with fun competitions, santa’s grotto, refreshments and have-a-go crafts and Christmas gift stalls too. For further details please call the Parish Office on 01582 729194.

Special Services

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.

Courses/Conferences

St Albans Diocese Penal Affairs Group in association with The School of Law, University of Hertfordshire Annual Lecture: From Last Minute Peace Treaty to ‘Memory of the World’ - bewitched by Magna Carta for 800 years Monday 9th November Registration & Reception from 6.15pm Lecture 6.45pm at The Weston Auditorium De Havilland Campus University of Hertfordshire Hatfield AL10 9EU Admission is free and open to public. Please register in advance: www.go.herts.ac.uk/events-booking events@herts.ac.uk 01707 284121 See full details in the Ebundle.

NEIGHBOURS IN FAITH

Discussion series with Bedford Muslims and Christians together at the Gateway Building, Bedford Campus, Polhill Avenue MK41 9EA. Runs 8pm-9.30pm.

See full details in the Ebundle.

14th October - 'The Journey'
21st October - 'Spirituality'
28th October - 'Struggle for Justice'
4th November - 'Economy'

Contact BELIEF on 01234 330314 or belief@standrewsbedford.org

Equipping God’s People Courses

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

Leading the Intercessions

Tuesday evenings 20th and 27th October in Buntingford deanery. Venue: The Poppy Room Benington Village Hall at 8pm.

This course is designed to help anyone who is asked to lead the prayers of intercession. Whether you have been doing it for some time, are new to it or are thinking about it, it offers an opportunity for you to consider this key aspect of worship.

Contact: Gabby Parikh 01727 818141 pdadmin@stalbans.anglican.org for more details

Dementia Friends Training

Wednesday 21st October, 7.30pm - 8.30pm. Venue: Church of Resurrection, Grovehill, Hemel Hempstead, HP2 6BJ.

Short friendly and interactive session on recognising the signs and tips on how to support people with dementia.

Book: No need to book. Cost: Free

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