

The Way



The FREE newspaper of the Church in Cumbria – Spring 2022



**Busy GP takes on
new clergy role**

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**Town scheme helps
lift burden of debt**

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PRAY FOR PEACE

Christians reach out to Ukrainians caught up in the horror of the war

"THIS should simply not be happening. It is heartless to do this to innocent people. So many have died and so many are without food, without water, without medication. It must stop."

Nadiya Peel echoes the sentiments of so many as we continue to watch the terrible scenes which unfold in Ukraine following the Russian invasion.

In this edition of *The Way*, Nadiya - who moved to Cumbria from the Crimea, which was illegally annexed by Russia in 2014 - speaks of her sorrow as millions of people flee their homes.

And she reflects on the support she's received from her local church, calling on us all to continue to pray and reach out to those in need.

Lord Jesus you are the Prince of Peace,
look upon our divided world
to be with those who are victims of violence.

We pray for the people of Ukraine
and all who have been subjected to the
cruelty of others.

Help us to know the gift of your peace
in the power of your Spirit and
we ask you to soften the hearts
of those who can stop the fighting.

Creator God we ask for your aid as
your children of light

living in the darkness of our world. Amen

Escape: A man hugs his daughter and grand-daughter
after they crossed the border from Shehyni in Ukraine
to Medyka in Poland

PICTURE: DPA PICTURE ALLIANCE /
ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

INSIDE THIS EDITION



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The purpose of *The Way* is to reflect the Church in Cumbria to itself and to our communities more widely.

We do not seek to promote any particular theological viewpoint, but rather aim to stimulate debate by featuring writers from a variety of church traditions and from society more widely.

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The Way
Newspaper of
the Church
in Cumbria

CALM WILL COME...

We have faced uncertain and unsettling times over the last two years. And yet, as Covid restrictions were lifted, so the world was plunged into yet more turbulence with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. We have witnessed shocking scenes as millions of people have been forced to flee their homes and the terrible bloodshed as others defended their country against this 'act of evil'. As churches we continue to pray for all those affected, and that the aggression ends. As we give thanks for our risen Lord this Easter, so our ecumenical leaders reflect on the need for hope, peace, reconciliation and love at this time.

The Rt Rev James Newcome, Bishop of Carlisle



MANY years ago, before moving to Cumbria, I met (and very briefly worked with) one of the great practical theologians of the 20th century, Lesslie Newbigin. He belonged to the United Reformed Church, but served as a Bishop in what was then Madras, a diocese in the Church of South India with which Carlisle Diocese was closely linked.

He was right at the forefront of the ecumenical movement, and his passion for unity was reflected in his many books, including a wonderful commentary on the Fourth Gospel called *The Light has Come*.

For Newbigin, the unity he desired so deeply involved working together to build peace, not only in a divided church but also in a fractured world. Commenting on John 20: 19-20 (the risen Jesus

appearing to his frightened disciples with the words 'Peace be with you') he pointed out that 'Jesus made peace by the blood of his cross' (Col 1.20) - and our task as Christians is to take that 'shalom' into the life of the world. It will be costly, as it was for him ('he showed them his hands and side'), but that is part of what it means to share in his mission.

Against the backdrop of war in Ukraine, that must first commit us to frequent and fervent prayer for an end to the fighting. But 'peace-building' doesn't stop there. Everything we give (in money and goods); everything we do for Ukrainian refugees; every value we live out day to day in care for others is a practical expression of that prayer and a way of sharing God's gift of peace in and with his hurting world.

Rev Andrew Dodd, President, Churches Together In Cumbria



IN HOMES, offices and public spaces, our screens are scanned, eyes fixed. Have we become the 'eyes down' generation?

Interaction, when mediated through screens, avoids eye-to-eye and face-to-face contact, generating silence and distance. Expressions capable of communicating love, wonder, hurt or questioning are lost. Separation becomes our experience. Breakdown of communication and misunderstanding may ensue. We can become strangers, even enemies.

Jesus, speaking of his death and resurrection, said: 'and I when I am lifted up from the earth will draw all people to myself' (John 12.32).

Encountering the risen Christ brings the possibility of new encounter between people: 'peace to all who were far away or those who were near' (Ephesians 2.17). It is no longer 'foreigners and strangers', instead a new humanity emerges. At Easter we recall the cross and celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. We look UP to Him whose drawing power becomes 'Good News' for 'All'.

Look UP to Him, look UP with each other. Acknowledging the past, encountering God in Christ with each other in the present, orientated towards God's future we might hope and pray that 'All' share in the peace which Paul and the early church experienced.

Rev Dr James Tebbutt, Chair, Cumbria District of the Methodist Church



WITH dismay we witness the brutality of the war in Ukraine, reminding us also of the often-forgotten terrors of Syria, Yemen and elsewhere. We hear God's cry to humanity: "How often have I longed to gather your children, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings; but you would not let me!"

We fear to contemplate or feel the full anguish but are stirred by the courage and commitment to freedom, at the cost of home or country, life or loved one. We struggle "to turn the other cheek"; for even if that applies to us, surely not when it comes to defending and protecting the innocent and vulnerable? Confused, we struggle in anger, and cry out for forgiveness, and for a true change of hearts and minds.

How can I, you, play our part in embodying, living out, becoming God's peace? How can the grace poured out in Christ's crucifixion change all our hearts and minds, and bind up the broken? How can God's resurrection, vindicating Christ's way, bring hope, life, restoration? How can we let God guide and gather us, as a hen gathers her chicks, into that "peace such as the world cannot give"?

Major David Taylor, Salvation Army Divisional Commander



THE current horrific landscape of senseless violence and destruction in Ukraine is painfully illustrative of the human evil, suffering and death that Jesus so willingly embraces, to open up for us the way into his kingdom of righteousness, justice and peace.

Approaching our celebration of the events of Easter, I am reminded of Isaiah's prophecy that 'the people walking in darkness have seen a great light...every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. For to us a child is born...and he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace' (Is.9:2,5,6).

As we continue daily to uphold in prayer those embroiled in the devastating consequences of human aggression, may our hearts be drawn ever more deeply into the vision and the actions of God's loving and peaceful purposes, for the people that God loves. I send warm and hope-filled Easter greetings!

BBC films GP as she takes on curate role

■ Documentary follows Sarah as she combines two vocations

By Dave Roberts

IT'S arguably never been tougher to work as a family doctor.

The Covid pandemic has ratcheted up the pressures under which everyone in our health-care system is working.

So, it may come as a surprise to meet a GP who has recently been ordained as a curate in answer to a further calling.

The Rev Dr Sarah Richardson will continue to care for patients three days a week at the Dalton-in-Furness practice where she is based but, for the rest of the time, the 35-year-old will help support, lead and minister to the congregation and wider community of St Paul's Barrow as their curate.

It's that mix of vocational calling which sparked the interest of a BBC documentary crew, who filmed with Sarah last year. The resultant programme – *The Real Vicars of Dibley* – aired on BBC1 in February and followed the experience of Sarah and another newly ordained curate.

Sarah, who was ordained last June as a non-stipendiary (un-salaried) minister, said: "Having met the producers and chatted things through, I decided to go for it, albeit with some nervousness."

"When I was exploring what it would mean to have an ordained ministry, a key word was 'representation'. So, part of stepping into that role was also to step into the programme and so help represent the church in the community."

The producer/director and a second camera operator spent three days filming with her before the edit. The crew filmed Sarah both at St Paul's – as she led services – and also at the GP practice with patients. The cameras also filmed as she met a parishioner, June – who had recently lost her husband – and as she met up with one of her closest friends, Debbie.

"The parts I found easiest were when they simply filmed me leading a service or treating patients," added Sarah. "Speaking directly to a camera was a little more challenging but communicating with people is an important part of both my role as a doctor and a church leader, so I felt equipped. I was slightly nervous that the answers I gave to questions would be clear enough for people outside of



Calling: Sarah at her ordination at Carlisle Cathedral last June

STUART WALKER

church; that they had an authentic insight into faith.

"I was pleased that, although the programme makers did not know what it meant to belong to church, they made something quite beautiful. I feel it was a celebration of what it means to be part of a church community and was really pleased that it showed Barrow in such a positive way. I also feel there were authentic examples of faith in the programme, both my story and Leah's story together."

The Rev Leah Thompson is the other curate featured in the programme, with the film-makers following her ministry in the parish of Idle in Bradford. The documentary has helped bring the two curates together.

Sarah says: "I went to a conference in Harrogate recently and as soon as I walked into the room, I spotted Leah. It was the first time we'd met. We went out for lunch and swapped notes on how we'd found the filming."

"I was thrilled to have been depicted alongside her. I'm so thankful that there were areas of her faith that she gave voice to and, equally, she was pleased I'd been able to talk about our Christian faith around death and

how the Church is a place of healing."

Sarah feels the programme has helped people who may not attend church or have a faith, better understand her journey and calling.

"A lady messaged me who sadly lost her daughter some time back and who had come to church for a while," Sarah adds. "Whilst she doesn't come along regularly, she said how pleased she was to have seen me on the programme and that she remembered the difference the church had made for her at that time in her life."

"For me, being part of this has reinforced the need for Christians to have courage to be visible in the public space. Taking part in the filming has allowed me to share with people from all stages of my life that I am a Christian leader, in a way that I couldn't have done on my own."

"If, as Christians, we choose not to step into that arena then we are potentially missing out. God is faithful and I went into the process prayerfully and feeling that it was a God-given opportunity."

■ The Real Vicars of Dibley forms part of the BBC's We Are England series and can be viewed on the BBC iPlayer.

Short film goes out on Facebook



Share: Eleanor Ledesma films her own message

AN EVANGELISTIC social media campaign will be asking 'Who is Jesus?' this Easter. Christians from around the county have filmed themselves saying a few words about who Jesus is to them.

These clips have been made into a short film to encourage people to think about Jesus this Easter. Promoted on Facebook, it aims to reach those who are not connected with church.

Eleanor Ledesma, God for All Digital Enabler, said: "Easter is the second biggest retail moment after Christmas, and more people are celebrating by decorating their homes, by getting together for a meal and by creating family traditions. There is an appetite for finding meaning. As Christians, Easter is the highlight of our year, so it's an opportune moment for us to talk about who Jesus is, and why he matters."

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Project aims to lift burden of debt as cost of living soars

■ Churches unite behind town's new help scheme

By Dave Roberts

"SO MANY people who are in debt can't sleep at night, they feel terrible shame and can't talk to their closest family and friends. So they become more and more isolated. They don't know there is hope or help available. But that help is there!"

Samantha Vyner-Brooks is talking about the people she is now able to help as the manager of the newly formed Kendal and District Debt Centre.

The project came about after a phone call in 2019 from the Bradford head office of Christians Against Poverty (CAP) to the Rev Jonny Gios, who leads the town's Gateway Church and connects communities across the district.

"The previous debt centre in Kendal was run by Parr Street Church and they had done an amazing job in getting 78 families debt-free," Jonny explains.

"We held a meeting with churches and the consensus was that it should not be led by one particular church, so we decided to set up a charity. Then March 2020 hit and with that Covid. Despite lockdowns, things trundled along but began to pick up momentum in November 2020. Then, last year, we really went for it, gathering a core team, submitting our charitable application and getting partner churches on board."

Seven churches are now actively and financially involved with the scheme, which launched officially in January. Three partner churches are represented as trustees on the charity's board with further church input on an advisory group. The charity is keen that each church also has a debt centre 'champion' to promote its work.

Jonny adds: "There are a number of different stories which have resonated with me about the need for this centre: people who've had bailiffs at their door, people who have turned up at the local MP's office for help.

"Covid has exacerbated the problem and in months to come there'll be a further need to help

'I'M ALIVE BECAUSE I'VE HAD CAP ON MY SIDE'



On a new path: John Train with Samantha Vyner-Brooks

JONNY GIOS

JOHN Train's life was plunged into crisis 15 years ago due to a mental health illness and debt. Things became so bad that he tried to take his own life.

Thanks to CAP though, John's is a life which has seen a remarkable turn-around. Now 76, he is debt-free, lives in his own home and has come to faith.

"I came to the Kendal area to help care for my parents but within 18 months both had died," he explains. "I didn't have a job and so

turned my focus to the charity sector. I was employed to support young offenders, ex-offenders and people with drug and alcohol problems. I loved my job, but it became too much. I was drinking a lot and eventually had a breakdown.

"As a result, I got myself into considerable debt. Eventually it got to the point where the bailiffs came to the door. My siblings knew nothing of this, and I was not going to tell them. Things were so bad that I tried to kill myself.

"A lady who I used to work with told me about Christians Against Poverty and gave me their number.

"I rang them and a few days later I was visited by a charming lady from CAP who asked if I wanted to pray. I did and felt so much better."

John got all the paperwork together and, over the next five years, CAP sorted everything out through debt management.

"When I was being helped by CAP I decided to take part in a Christianity Explored course," he

continues. "I remember walking home from the course one night. Suddenly the moon shone really brightly and I heard a voice say 'You're on the right road now, John'. I joined the Salvation Army in Kendal which I love.

"Every month I meet up with the befriender who first saw me all those years ago. It's lovely to be able to buy someone else a coffee.

"I'm alive because I've had Christians Against Poverty on my side."

people manage their money as the energy price rise hits.

"People need to have the confidence to ring the CAP number to ask for help, but we fully understand the shame which sits alongside this. We're not here to judge; we're here to help. It's a relief to know there's support for people out there, but also one with a Christian focus through which we can bring the Gospel to people both in deed and in word."

Samantha, who has a background in law and the charitable and voluntary sector, was appointed in January after undertaking CAP training and now works 16 hours a week in her role.

She and volunteer befrienders draw alongside people who have

made the call to a CAP freephone number for help. The support is open to everyone – to people of all faiths or none.

"My job is to meet clients in their own home and build up a relationship so they feel able to work with us," Samantha says. "On my second visit I'll collect all the paperwork which details the debt and this is put through to CAP in Bradford who put together a tailored budget to help take them out of debt. We look at assets, income, expenditure and the level of debt and work out the best approach for clients. It could be a debt-relief order, insolvency or a debt plan.

"CAP take on all the negotiations with creditors so the burden

of having to deal with debt is taken off people's shoulders. I've seen the relief that is felt as a result of that; that people know there's someone here to help."

Samantha continues to build contacts across Kendal with organisations that people in debt may engage with, such as the Job Centre, local housing associations and charities. Since the January launch, four people have already been referred to her for help.

Each client is also offered the opportunity of prayer.

"When we go into people's homes they already know we are Christians," Samantha explains.

"I think they'd be surprised if we didn't make reference to that and to share our faith. So we offer

to pray with people and if they say 'no' then that's absolutely fine. We can still pray for these people.

"We introduce ourselves by saying, 'We do what we do because we believe God loves you and has a plan for your life and we're here to help'. Why would we not want to share that? The strapline for CAP is 'There is always hope' and there is!

"One client chose not to pray when we first met, but I later had to phone them and again offered to pray. They agreed and afterwards they said how much they had needed it and could see the difference it had made."

■ Contact CAP via freephone number 0800 328 0006 or visit www.kendaldebtcnre.org.

Maggie serves the ones who serve everyone else

■ Tourism Chaplain says pandemic has placed extra strain on workforce

By Dave Roberts

“WHEN things opened up after the first lockdown, I visited one place to check up on people. I waited in line as the receptionist dealt with people; she was all smiles, welcoming people, as was her job. When I got to her, I just said, ‘And how are you?’ and she nearly dissolved into tears, saying ‘You’re the first person to ask me that.’ She was doing this amazing job.”

Deacon Maggie Patchett is talking about her role as Tourism Chaplain in the South Lakes, in particular the strains the Covid pandemic has created for those working in the hospitality sector.

For nearly five years Maggie, who lives in Windermere, has visited hotels, B&Bs and tourist attractions across the southern Lakes, offering a listening ear and support. This is in addition to her pastoral responsibility for Ambleside, Hawkshead, Grasmere and Windermere Methodist churches.

“As a chaplain, I’m there to draw alongside people who may be struggling and to show that we care for them,” Maggie explains.

“I am there for everybody, whether they have faith or not. What I try to do is bring God’s love into that place and show that God cares for them and loves them. It’s not about explicitly talking about faith; the conversation is always led by the other person.”

“The pandemic has made things so difficult; there are so many places which are under-staffed and so many people who are stressed. We need to hold these people in prayer.”

It’s a ministry which has seen strong personal bonds develop, such as the friendship which grew with a couple who worked at an Ambleside B&B and who asked Maggie to marry them.

“It was an amazing day but very sadly, only three months later, the man was diagnosed with terminal cancer,” Maggie adds. “I supported the couple all the way through and conducted the funeral which was at the start of the lockdown so a doubly difficult time.”

“I’ve continued to support his wife and I saw her only the other day. She has journeyed through the grief process and is now working for the NHS, caring for people.



Maggie Patchett: ‘I’m there to draw alongside people who may be struggling’

DAVE ROBERTS



Supportive: Maggie with Windermere Lake Cruises’ skipper Rob Beal

WINDERMERE LAKE CRUISES

She is an amazing lady and it’s been a privilege to walk alongside her and help her see where the hope was for the future and understand that God is with her.”

Maggie’s is a ministry which is valued by those in the hospitality sector, including the staff at Windermere Lake Cruises.

Sales and Marketing Director Jennifer Cormack says: “We are always delighted to welcome Deacon Maggie on board. The support she offers to people is so important in normal times and especially now after all the disruption to lives caused by the pandemic.”

“She is a regular and welcome visitor to Bowness and Ambleside and speaks to staff regularly. We display her contact details around

our premises so that people know they can get in touch.”

This summer, as Maggie moves on to a new Methodist post, the tourism chaplaincy role – which was funded centrally and locally for five years – will come to an end. However, ways to continue the work are being investigated and the chaplaincy’s dedicated phone number and email will still be available for those who need someone to talk to.

Maggie has also developed a new fellowship group for those working in hospitality.

She explains: “On a Sunday morning these people are serving breakfasts to customers so they can’t get to church. As a fellowship group we meet about once a month in the evening at a café or in one of the B&Bs.”

“It’s a small group through which we can pray for one another and ask each other what particular concerns we may have. During the lockdowns this continued on Zoom and people also support each other through a WhatsApp group.”

“I have a simple way of explaining my role as a tourism chaplain: I’m here to look after the people who look after everybody else.”

A film about Maggie’s chaplaincy ministry can be viewed on the God for All YouTube channel.

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The Bible as page-turner

■ 'Book club' initiative gives readers fresh perspective

By Dave Roberts

WHEN it comes to distributing copies of the Bible, Keith Danby knows a thing or two.

The 69-year-old is the former global chief executive of Biblica, the International Bible Society, a worldwide ministry which has helped people engage with God's Word for more than 200 years.

Before that, he was group chief executive of Send The Light – which became the UK's largest Christian book distributor – and oversaw its relocation to Carlisle in the 1990s.

It's that pedigree which he is now bringing to bear in his position as Ministry Development Director for Premier, a Christian communications charity, to promote a new Bible-reading experience in partnership with the Institute for Bible Reading and Tyndale House Publishers.

Immerse: The Reading Bible has been created to encourage 'big reading', with the removal of chapters and verses, and the Bible rearranged into chronological order, meaning that when you read, you read in the correct order and in historical context. Rather than detailed, verse-by-verse study, the emphasis is on getting immersed in the big narrative.

Keith, who lives with his wife Carol on the outskirts of Carlisle, said: "The whole idea of Immerse is to strip away all the chapters, verses and footnotes which have been added to the Bible over the years. We also wanted to create a book club feel rather than a Bible study group.

"It's a time when people can come together to chat through what they've read; an opportunity for shared learning in a relaxed way. I've run a number of such book clubs in recent months – involving people who go to church and those who don't – and the level of questioning and conversation has been hugely uplifting.

"We've had some wonderful feedback. People have told me it's as if they've forgotten they're reading the Bible; that it's 'such a good read'. It's brought people together wonderfully well to read and explore God's Word in new ways."

Groups are encouraged to begin with *Messiah* (The New Testament). A further five volumes covers the rest of Scripture using the New Living Translation of the Bible. It is suggested members read two books a year so that, within three years, they will have journeyed through the Bible together. They are asked to complete daily readings over five days before coming together once a week to chat through what they've read. Four regular questions – including 'How might this change the way we live?' – help encourage conversation.



'Highlight': David Kemp with other members of the Immerse reading group

PICTURES: DAVE ROBERTS

MEMBERS ABLE TO BE 'OPEN AND FRANK'

David Kemp, 80, has attended Immerse book clubs in the Eden Wild Goose Mission Community. He is a retired headteacher of St Aidan's School, Carlisle, and has attended St Paul's Holme Eden for 45 years, serving as PCC lay chair and churchwarden.

"FIRSTLY, the books look great. They're attractive and look like they'll be a good read. Then you realise this is the Bible, but it's not broken up into

verses and chapters; it reads like a regular book.

"If you think of a traditional Bible, they're often leather-bound and may be a little off-putting. But the Immerse books are the kind of thing you could leave on your coffee table and people would pick up.

"I've always read the Bible but frequently out of a sense of duty – something I should be doing. Whereas with the Immerse books, I've found them to

be 'un-putdownable'. They pull you into the story and make you want to keep reading.

"Meeting as a book club is one of the highlights of the week for me. You chat through the things you've read and it's surprising to hear other people's angles on the same text. We've had some wonderful and riveting discussions.

"I'd say starting with *Messiah* is important; it's the easiest book to come to terms with and

with which people are most familiar.

"Meeting as a book club allows open discussion; a Bible study tends, perhaps, to be more serious and people may not like to ask awkward questions. The 'feel' of the book club allows everyone to be open and frank. It is without doubt one of the best things I've been involved with for many years. It's enhanced my pleasure, understanding and spirituality."



Keith Danby: 'The idea is to strip away all the chapters and verses'

Three such book clubs have already been held in the Eden Wild Goose Mission Community – to the east of Carlisle. Community leader, the Rev Graeme Skinner, is also set to lead one with members of a community book club.

He said: "I was asked to talk to an existing book club about the Immerse project. These are people who would normally get together regularly to review and chat through books they're reading.

"I explained to them the concept of

Immerse and they were all keen to explore this further. I'm excited to see where this will take us as, together, we look to explore St Luke's gospel."

Having just completed an Immerse book club pilot with churches in Northern Ireland – where one church ordered 300 copies of *Messiah* – Keith and his team are keen to roll out across England, Scotland and Wales.

Churches who run an Immerse book club are being offered up to ten free copies of *Messiah* as part of the pilot programme in the hope it will be widely adopted from September onwards. The eight-week course is ideal to run from September through to Christmas and then January through to Easter.

Keith added: "My prayer is that this will give many people an opportunity to read and explore the Bible together in new and energising ways."

■ For details, email richard.mcchesney@premier.org.uk or visit <https://www.premier.org.uk/immerse-bible-reading-experience/>

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■ Communities unite to help those affected by war in Ukraine

‘Where there is horror, good can come from it’

By Dave Roberts

“THERE are people who have lost everything – their homes, their lives,” Nadiya Peel explains. “It’s awful to watch the scenes on the television.”

It is now 18 years since Nadiya left her native Crimea to move to Ulverston and marry her husband, Tony, after the couple had first met as Christian pen pals.

In 2014 she watched in tears as the Crimea was illegally annexed by Russia. Now she is further horrified to see the invasion of Ukraine.

Born and raised in the city of Simferopol, Nadiya worked for 27 years as a nurse, reaching the position of Chief Medical Nurse. To see hospitals targeted has been especially difficult for her.

“It’s awful to see that hospitals have been bombed, children’s hospitals too,” Nadiya says. “I’ve seen pictures of elderly people who are too tired to move and who have nowhere to go. It’s terrible.”

But the couple – who were pastoral visitors at Ulverston Parish Church before multiple strokes affected Tony’s mobility – have been supported in their hour of need.

The Rev Canon Alan Bing, the Rector of Ulverston, initially reached out to Nadiya, visiting her and Tony, and offering prayers.

Nadiya adds: “I think the support offered to us and to so many people has been great. I also understand that people want to do more. That support has always been there for me ever since I arrived in 2004. People have made sure that we’ve been involved in church life.

“It’s helped to be able to pray about the situation. It’s as if a stone was lifted from my heart and I felt a sense of relief when Alan prayed with us.”

It is just one act of kindness among the many dozens which churches and community groups have been involved with since the war broke out. Across the county, churches have acted as collection hubs for vital supplies – clothing, sleeping bags, medicine – and congregations have actively fundraised for various appeals. Congregations and mission community members are also being encouraged to consider becoming sponsors via the Government’s Homes for Ukraine scheme.



Nadiya Peel:
Moved to Cumbria from her native Crimea in 2014

DAVE ROBERTS



Support: Left, Archbishop Stephen and Bishop James with supporters of the West Cumbria Ukrainian Appeal at the van blessing; and, right, the Rev Canon Alan Bing



Churches have drawn alongside community projects such as the West Cumbria Ukrainian Appeal, which has seen van loads of supplies sent out to Poland. The Archbishop of York, the Most Rev Stephen Cottrell, and the Bishop of Carlisle, the Rt Rev James Newcome, were able to bless two van loads which were bound for a refugee camp.

Archbishop Stephen said: “There’s nothing good about this war in Ukraine: it’s barbaric, it’s evil and I pray that it will soon stop. But what I see time and again

is that where there is horror and evil, good can come from it.

“That’s been shown by this community who have come together and said, ‘The people in Ukraine are our sisters and brothers’. Those vans will be a lifeline to some refugee families.”

Appeal team organisers Nina Albertelli and Nikki Wyatt were thrilled the vans had been blessed.

Nina said: “It was emotional to watch the vans drive off and to see people clapping and cheering. The donations continue to come through and people have been so

generous. When the vans were blessed Nikki and I looked at one another and there were tears. The words spoken by the Archbishop and Bishop meant so much.”

Meanwhile, a team of three from Gateway Church and St Thomas Kendal will fly to Romania in April to work with a Christian charity supporting refugees. They plan to travel to the border with Ukraine to deliver aid and then to transport refugees back to safety. Rather than taking supplies with them, the team plans to buy goods in Romania to support those

people who’ve been displaced, while also supporting the Romanian economy.

The Rev Jonny Gios, who leads Kendal’s Gateway Church, said: “We’ll be working with a Christian charity which I’ve already supported, so we have that connection. We’ll be looking to feed people, to make them feel safe and to then help with their onward journeys, getting them to where they want to be. We’d ask that if people aren’t able to give financially then they continue to hold this work in their prayers.”

As *The Way* was published, the Disasters Emergency Appeal for Ukraine had passed £200 million after just two weeks of fundraising. Both the United Reformed Church and the Church of England are signposting donations to www.dec.org.uk.

People can also donate through the Methodist Church Relief and Development Fund, All We Can, at www.allwecan.org.uk.

The Salvation Army has teams working in Ukraine, Russia, Poland, Romania, Moldova and other European countries, and has been offering practical assistance since the violence escalated. For more visit www.salvationarmy.org.uk.

‘Capture the negative thought and replace it with God’s truth’

■ GP leads growing team dedicated to healing ministry

By Dave Roberts

“I THINK of Healing Ministry as an interweaving of body, soul and spirit,” Dr Alison Fleetwood, the Diocese of Carlisle’s Healing Adviser, explains. “We can seek physical healing through prayer ministry, medicine and surgery, and often a combination of both.

“And to heal our soul and spirit? Well, something I and others have found helpful, is to capture the thought patterns that we recognise as not being part of God’s ways or what Jesus says about the world and then replace it with a promise or piece of scripture which is in line with God’s will and what God says about you as a person. Being transformed by the renewing of your mind. In fact, simply coming to Christ is healing.

“In the world of medicine, we see great benefit from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Prayer and healing ministry, especially inner healing, can seem a little like Christian CBT: capture the negative thought and replace it with God’s truth. Plus, we have God’s soothing oil to bring to a particular memory and heal it. I believe it is even more powerful because we have the Holy Spirit helping to heal us.”

Alison, who spent 20 years as a GP in Kirkby Lonsdale and who now tutors medical students at Lancaster Medical School, has a passion for healing ministry which has grown over the years from the prayer ministry which she first led.

Hers is a vocation which grew from tragedy. When she was eight years old, her mum was diagnosed with a brain tumour. She died when Alison was only nine.

“I think that was what gave me an interest in healing,” Alison explains. “I wanted to be a part of caring for others in a medical or healing way. I wasn’t brought up in a Christian home so at that point my only concept of healing was through the medical world.”

Accepted to study medicine at Newcastle University, that is where Alison came to faith. After meeting



Alison Fleetwood: Spent 20 years as a GP in Kirkby Lonsdale and now tutors medical students

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her husband, John, and moving to the Lakes – where she also completed her GP training – the couple joined St Thomas’s Kendal, where Alison completed her prayer ministry training.

“I became more heavily involved in the mid-week, deep inner healing prayer ministry and I found it also took me to a place of inner healing, from the wounds of my childhood trauma. It was, I felt, complementary to what we do in the medical world.

“Whilst I felt and still feel called by God to be a doctor – which is a huge privilege – nothing is complete without Christ, so being involved with prayer and healing ministry is great. Plus, you can talk about God and get to spend lots of time with people!”

Alison was invited to take on the role of Diocesan Healing Adviser in 2015. Since then, she has drawn alongside countless colleagues – both lay and ordained – to offer training, support and advice and is also part of the Diocesan Deliverance Team.

“For me, healing ministry is much broader than simply prayer ministry,” Alison adds. “It’s about mission and outreach through the launch of such things as Renew Wellbeing cafés and Healthy Healing Hubs. That feels even more important as we move out of the pandemic.”

Last spring, *The Way* featured a piece on Renew Wellbeing cafés which are now being piloted across the county to support people’s mental and emotional health.

Churches provide safe spaces – often café-style – in which people

come together to share hobbies and activities, and to chat. Each group also has a quiet room or prayer space and would look to build links with mental health professionals locally.

Similarly, the Guild of Health and St Raphael provides training for Healthy Healing Hubs, helping churches to equip them to be places of healing for the whole community. Again, there is often a focus on mental health with churches encouraged to consider their current healing ministry and links with local healthcare provision.

Under Alison’s watch, the healing ministry team is set to expand, with individuals championing areas such as mental health, suicide prevention, bereavement support and training opportunities. Alison hosts a clergy prayer Zoom each Monday, and she has made connections with other initiatives such as the Anna Chaplaincy movement which offers spiritual support to older people. She and the team are also responding to requests from churches who have asked for prayer ministry, and pastoral and bereavement support refreshers as we emerge from the pandemic.

“The aim is to create a healing ministry network across the county,” Alison says. “We have always had a need for this, but things have been accentuated due to the pandemic, so we also need to connect more with council services and the NHS. My prayer is that churches can reach out further to their communities, providing spaces of love, healing, and hope.”

■ For more information, email healing.adviser@carlisle-diocese.org.uk



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Best feet forward: Pictures show Bishop James, from left, setting out with supporters from Penrith on day one; with the Rev George Briggs on Scout Scar near Kendal; with the Rev Graeme Skinner at Wetheral Church; and at Haile Church, with June Jenkinson and Andrew Holland

Personal touch returns

■ Bishop completes his first Lent Walk around the county since before the pandemic

THE Bishop of Carlisle has completed a 21-day Lent Walk which saw him criss-cross the county to meet up with clergy and laity.

The Rt Rev James Newcome set off from the Diocese of Carlisle's Church House office on Thursday March 3, finishing his travels at Carlisle Cathedral on March 30.

During his journey he was also joined by the Archbishop of York – the Most Rev Stephen Cottrell – for a day's meeting and greeting in the Crosslacon Team (Cleator Moor, Cleator, Arlecdon and Frizington) and in Ennerdale.

For Bishop James, the Lent Walk was an important way to reach out to people after two years in which the Covid pandemic had heightened feelings of isolation.

He said: "The Lent Walk went brilliantly. I've had some marvellous conversations – more talking than walking if I'm honest – but it's been great fun to be out and about meeting lots of old friends. It was particularly lovely to meet people face to face for chats after the pandemic curtailed so much of that personal interaction for two years. It was a lovely opportunity to be able to say to people, 'Thank you for all you've done to serve your communities during Covid'.

"It was also a pleasure to have Archbishop Stephen with us so that he could experience something of the amazing generosity of spirit which is such a Cumbrian trait. I know he was thrilled to see how



A well-earned rest: At the end of the walk, Bishop James rests at Carlisle Cathedral with the Canon Warden, the Rev Canon Dr Benjamin Carter. Deckchairs are going to be set out as part of the cathedral's 900th anniversary celebrations to allow visitors to sit back and look at the starry ceiling
DAVE ROBERTS

church and community are working together in many different ways."

While in Crosslacon, the two were able to meet Gary McKee, a Cleator Moor man who is currently running a marathon every day to raise funds and awareness for two charities – West Cumbria Hospice and Macmillan Cancer Support.

They also met organisers of the West Cumbria Ukrainian Appeal,

bleasing two van loads of supplies which were about to be sent to a refugee camp in Poland.

Archbishop Stephen said: "We've all struggled with Zoom over the last two years. In fact I became Archbishop of York during a lockdown and spent the first year meeting people virtually not in person. So, it was lovely to be with Bishop James. This idea of his – to

spend time with people and to walk around the diocese, to chat with them and to be alongside the clergy he serves – has been humbling and inspiring to be a part of.

"I've been particularly impressed by how the church is so embedded and woven into the community, making things happen but in partnership with others. I think that's the future."

It's estimated Bishop James was able to meet 80 per cent of Anglican clergy in the diocese and he intends to hold further meetings with those he couldn't walk with.

He added: "I'd like personally to thank my chaplain, Canon Cameron Butland, who drew up the 21-day schedule and ensured I was in the right place at the right time, with the right people!"

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Hectic itinerary:
On day 11, Bishop James and Archbishop Stephen, left, met fundraiser Gary McKee; and, on day 16, he was at Holme St Cuthbert School's Mothers' Day assembly



Meet the Dean who oversaw a period of massive change

■ Preparing to retire later this year, the Dean of Carlisle, the Very Rev Mark Boyling, features in our regular Focus on Faith segment

Q Please tell us a little bit about yourself.

A I was born into a clergy family in Sheffield, so church has always been a part of my life. I joined the local choir as soon as I could, and I suppose over the years a question for me became, 'Why shouldn't I be a priest like my father?' Even so, it wasn't until I was in my third year at university that I decided to see if that was what the church wanted. I was selected for training and moved to theological college rather seamlessly.

When the time came, I served as a curate in the big council estate parish of Kirkby on the edge of Liverpool, joining a big team of 10 clergy. It was a rare privilege to join that kind of group right from the start. I stayed for eight years, serving five as Team Vicar. People there were amazingly generous to someone who still had lots to learn.

I was then asked to work with Bishop David Sheppard in Liverpool as his chaplain. It was just as Faith in the City was launched. That report was a bold attempt to challenge the church – and the nation – to understand better the issues faced in an urban context. It was hotly debated.

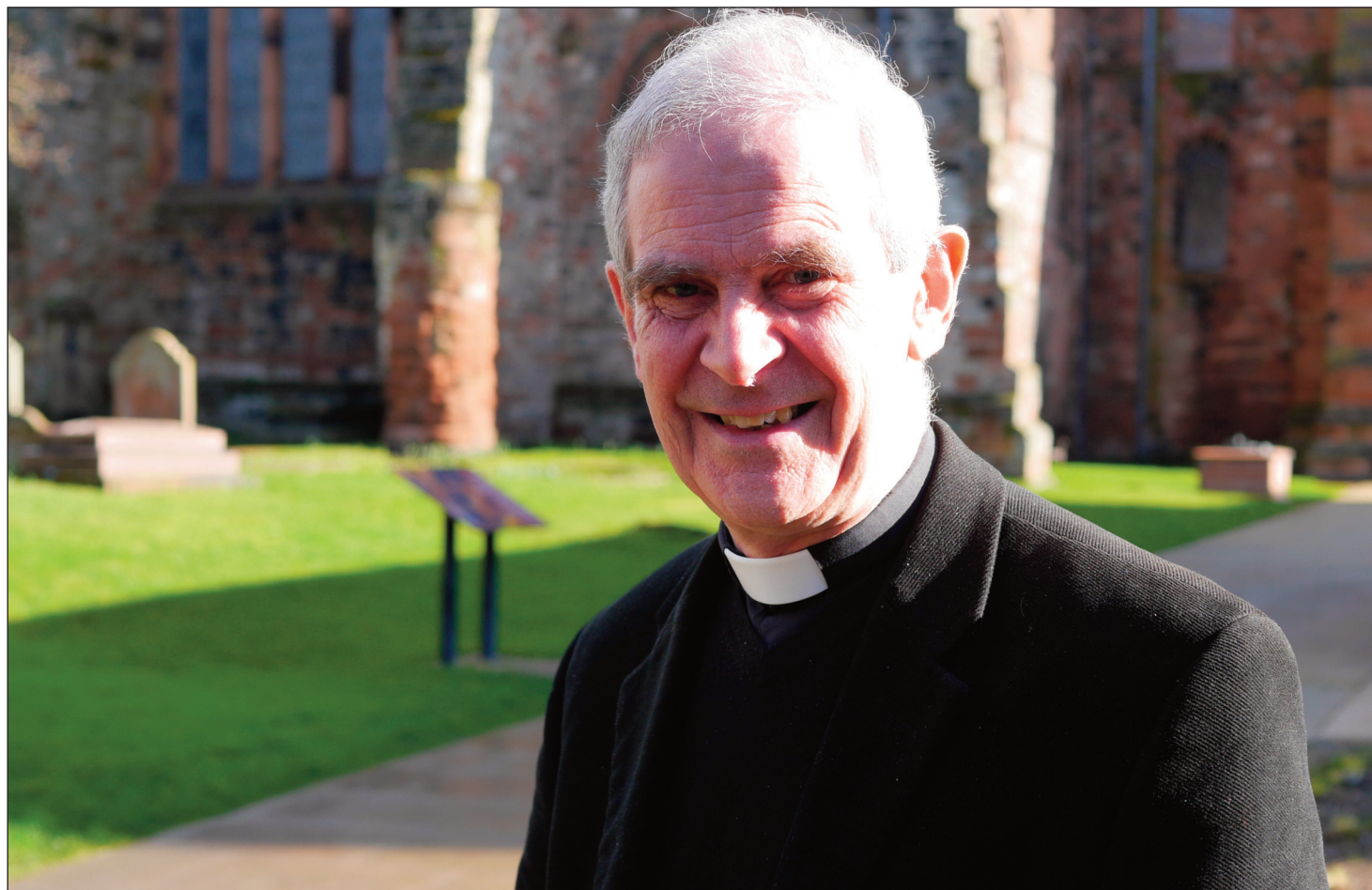
The four years I spent as chaplain offered a fascinating window onto the church, in particular seeing how Bishop David and Archbishop Derek Worlock, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, worked ecumenically. They became best friends.

I then moved to the parish of Formby – near Southport – which could not have been more different. I was there for five years and that's where I met and married my wife, Helen. Out of the blue I had a request to join Liverpool Cathedral as Canon Residentiary and be responsible for the worshipping life of the cathedral. It was an amazing thing, during my 10 years there, to try to use creatively the biggest cathedral building in the country.

Then, in 2004, a letter arrived from the Prime Minister asking if I was willing for my name to be put forward to the Queen as the next Dean of Carlisle. And so it was that Helen and I, and our two adopted children Julio and Francisca, came to Cumbria.

Q How has your time as Dean been?

A As one of my colleagues, who left the Chapter last year, said: 'In your time, almost everything has changed – completely!' We've been on a demanding, transformational journey. People can see that in the physical state of the cathedral – especially with the



Mark Boyling: 'There will be new ideas, no doubt, and my hope is that some of the things we've put in place will be a good foundation for what comes next'

DAVE ROBERTS

new building which links to the Fraternity. We've also created a valuable cloister area which can be used in different ways.

But the transformation is more about how we see ourselves and the part we can play in the city and county; how we can welcome visitors and how we engage with more people in new ways. This has been a time to reimagine ourselves. There have been new roles to create such as the Head of Heritage Learning and, as I look back, one of the most important steps was to embrace an outward-facing priority when the chance came to appoint a new member of the clergy team. Michael Manley, as the Canon Missioner, has championed this so well. I've been blessed with a wonderful team of clergy and lay people on the Chapter, of cathedral employees and volunteers. They have given so much of their time, gifts and skills to contribute to the life of the cathedral.

Q Why is the cathedral such an important place in terms of prayer, reflection and heritage?

A If people ask me, 'What's the Cathedral here for?', I'll always say, first

of all, it is here to pray. I make no apology for that and if ever we lose sight of that something has gone badly wrong. It's our duty and our joy. It is explicit and public. It's a unique selling point and underlies the building's character.

It is also an important physical focus of unity for the diocese. That can be hard to achieve in such a geographically large diocese, but we are the seat of the Bishop.

An exciting part of our 900th anniversary year programme is that we are committed to engage as widely as we can across the diocese; we have said that it's not simply a case of 'come and see' but that we'll 'go and tell'. We will do that through projects such as God's Tent, which will literally allow us to take the cathedral and its stories under canvas to different parts of the county.

Q What do you consider to have been a particular successes during your time as Dean?

A The Fraternity Project has embodied our vision to be outward facing. While the presenting issue has always been how we could bring the

Fraternity to life and turn it from being a liability into being an asset, the fundamental issue has been why did we want to do that. It would be to misjudge the project to think this was merely a building project. It was really about the fundamentals of how we can engage best with the people we are here to serve.

Thanks to our wonderfully creative architects, the new building attached to the mediaeval Fraternity is very beautiful. I believe it will stand the test of time. I also believe that it has opened people's eyes to the part that the cathedral can play in the life of our city and county.

Q What would be your prayer for the cathedral as you prepare for retirement in September?

A My prayer is that we will keep attentive to what God is saying to us and asking us to try to do.

That takes time – and I'm clear the transformation doesn't stop here.

There will be new ideas, no doubt, and my hope is that some of the things we've put in place will be a good foundation for what comes next. God hasn't finished with Carlisle Cathedral yet!