

The Way



The FREE newspaper of the Church in Cumbria – Summer 2022



Lucy is first Eco Church officer

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Ukrainian family find refuge in Cumbria

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WELCOME HOME!

AS THE Rt Rev Rob Saner-Haigh is consecrated the new Bishop of Penrith - marking a return to the county in which he has served nearly all of his ministry - we offer up this Cumbria Ecumenical Spirituality Group prayer for him and his family:

Creator God of new beginnings
we ask you to bless Rob in his new ministry
as Bishop of Penrith.
Jesus our Redeemer be with Rob and
Emma,
their family and friends
in the celebration of his consecration
to dedicate him as your faithful disciple.
Sustaining Spirit breathe through the future
plans
for the ecumenical county
and help us to support Rob, to share
in our common mission to make Your love
known throughout our communities.
We ask this in Your Holy Name,
as Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer
this day and forever. Amen

Celebration: The Rt Rev Rob Saner-Haigh at his consecration at York Minster

PICTURE: DIOCESE OF CARLISLE / DUNCAN LOMAX

■ For more on the consecration, including pictures, turn to pages 6 and 7.

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Cathedral tower captain

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The Way is the newspaper of the Church in Cumbria. It is produced in partnership between the Church of England Diocese of Carlisle, the Methodist District of Cumbria, the United Reformed Church in Cumbria and Churches Together in Cumbria. Through Churches Together in Cumbria, we ensure coverage of and distribution to the Roman Catholic, Salvation Army, Quakers and independent churches. The editorial team is made up of representatives from across the denominations.

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



Flashback: The Queen attending the Lowther Horse Trials in 1999

FRED WILSON

CALLED TO SERVE

Over four glorious days in June, we celebrated Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Millions of us enjoyed street parties, took part in church and community events and cheered on the Queen in recognition of her 70 years of selfless and unstinting service, all undergirded by her strong Christian faith. As we continue to give thanks for Her Majesty's life and faithfulness, here our ecumenical leaders explore the theme of a 'Servant Heart'.

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



Theirs is an offering of humble respect, a reaching out in gracious care, that affirms and lifts us into a place of goodness, where kindness, compassion and hope are released.

Whatever the challenges of the time and context, whatever the burdens that we or others carry, the offering of respect and affirmation, of kindness and compassion, shared through selfless generosity and non-demanding service, lifts us, and inspires and contributes to a better world.

Can we in turn offer this selfless, heartfelt service to others? Let's thank God for the opportunities and callings to serve each other, and above all to stand with those in the greatest need.

Rev Andrew Dodd,
President, Churches
Together In Cumbria



THE Roman Empire promoted massive separation between the powerful and wealthy, and those who served it. To pray or fight for one's daily bread was a reality for the mass of people who were in servitude to the few and the status quo.

We can hear 'servant' used by Jesus and Paul and be numb to its shocking revolutionary demand in that world or, with our more modern attitude to servitude, balk at it.

Perhaps Christians are caught in a dilemma? How does 'servant' translate for today? What 'heart' accompanied by action might turn our world upside down?

For good 'service' payment may be requested and willingly offered. Mutuality between people and organisations is recognised and grows. Reliance upon the interests, skills and gifts of others engenders good relationships, trust and good reputation.

In our 'enlightened' world servitude still exists, illustrated by the recently released story of Sir Mo Farrah trafficked at nine. Churches Together in Cumbria, through its social responsibility forum (along with statutory authorities), works to eradicate modern slavery - a prophetic action, revealing a heart of 'service', following 'The Way' of Jesus who came to serve and not to be served.

RICHARD Gillard's hymn recognises the humility and mutuality of service: "Brother, sister let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you; pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too."

A servant heart is one of the greatest gifts and graces. We witness and celebrate it in her Majesty, but also in others, whose encounter with us may only be fleeting, but the memories and impact endure.

Rt Rev James Newcome,
Bishop of Carlisle



IN THE Church of England 'servant-hood' and 'servant heart' have usually been associated in particular with the Diaconate - which is indeed about service, not least in and to the wider community.

But I hope it now goes almost without saying that all Cumbrian Ministers (which is all Christians) are 'called to serve': which is why we gave that title to our former lay training programme.

Jesus himself said that he had come "not to be served but to serve", and, on another occasion, told his disciples he was among them "as one who

serves". Washing his disciples' feet in the Upper Room was an acted parable which provided an example for everyone - ordained and lay - to follow. And, of course, the ultimate example of our saviour's own 'servant heart' was his death on the cross for our sake, and the salvation of the world.

This is all about an attitude to other people which is quite counter-cultural today. But we know it - and admire it - when we see it.

During my own time at Sandhurst I was deeply influenced by the motto there, which is 'Serve to Lead'; and, like so many others, I have been hugely impressed by Her Majesty the Queen's 70 years of devoted service to God and to all her subjects. That is what true leadership, and ministry of every kind, is all about.

Major David Taylor,
Salvation Army
Divisional Commander



IN ONE of the most astonishing statements in scripture, Jesus tells his disciples that "even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

For any person raised in a world where self-preoccupation and self-importance are so common and expected, it is jaw-dropping to learn that God enters into our world as a human

being, to serve us and not to be served.

The example that Jesus demonstrates to us helps us to understand the fundamental difference between the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of the world.

How fortunate we have been for 70 years to have a Monarch who understands service. She is a rare gift to our nation.

But how much more thrilling to know that the Creator of heaven and earth is a God who seeks to love and serve us as his sons and daughters, and to offer us life to the fullest.

As Psalm 23 reminds us, "The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing".

Curate champions climate action in northern churches

■ Lucy helps congregations care for the environment in this newly created eco role

A CUMBRIAN curate has been appointed the first ever Eco Church officer for the north of England.

The Rev Lucy Foster, who was Priested at the beginning of July, has taken up the role with the Christian conservation charity, A Rocha UK.

Before ordination, Lucy spent 14 years working for English Nature (now Natural England), the Government's advisory body on nature conservation and landscape.

Her new role will see her help boost nature and climate action in churches across multiple northern counties, working to create greater engagement between congregations and community groups.

Lucy said: "I am delighted to join the Eco Church team at A Rocha UK. There has never been a more important time to find, stretch and support those very special people who have the will to build a better world through Eco Church.

"I know that I will be able to support, advise and learn from my team and I'm excited about being part of the next phase of the Eco Church journey. I'm especially looking forward to learning about the creative ways churches across the north are nurturing God's creation and worshipping with diverse Christian communities.

"I see my job as part of my ordained ministry – the sentinel part of priesthood that the Church of England ordination service speaks of: keeping watch and warning the community."

Over the next five years, A Rocha UK aims to transform local churches and denominations in the UK into a significant force in environmental care and restoration.

Lucy's new post will play a key role in assisting in the delivery of their strategic goal to see 15 per cent of churches in the UK committed to caring for creation by 2025.

To gain an Eco Church award – bronze, silver or gold – churches must complete an Eco Survey which draws on five areas: worship and teaching, management of church buildings, management of church

By Dave Roberts

land, community and global engagement and lifestyle.

Lucy will work in her Eco Church role for four days a week, while devoting two days a week to the Helm Mission Community near Kendal which she is serving as a self-supporting minister. She sees Eco Church as a powerful channel through which to engage with younger people.

"Eco Church is looking to address the climate crisis and the biodiversity crisis," Lucy explained. "These are the things which really matter to young people. It's important for us to be able to say to them 'Of course God cares about the things which are on your heart'.

"There will be churches which don't have any young people in the congregation, but this is a great mission opportunity for them to go out and ask younger people in their local communities what should be done to achieve Eco Church status."

Lucy says her work also ties in well with one of the four key themes of the county's ecumenical God for All vision: Tread Gently.

"It fits absolutely perfectly," Lucy said. "Tread Gently is not an add-on; it's an integral part of our vision and without it we are not whole. Eco Church sits right alongside that and can really support churches as they look towards attaining net zero carbon status."

Since coming to post with A Rocha, Lucy has worked alongside colleagues from Churches Together in Cumbria and the Diocese of Carlisle to help deliver four Eco Church ecumenical workshops across Cumbria.

Lucy's appointment has been welcomed by other leading Eco Church supporters in the county. Pam Martin steered Levens Church to the first Gold Award Eco Church in Cumbria and has been heavily involved with the charity for a number of years.

She said: "It's wonderful to have Lucy in post. For many years I felt that I was somewhat



Lucy Foster: 'There has never been a more important time to find those who have the will to build a better world through Eco Church' DAVE ROBERTS

of a lone voice in championing the cause of Eco Church but we're now building a team which is brilliant.

"Lucy's past professional experience with Natural England will also bring so much to the role. I'm excited about the future and what this new role will mean for Eco Church in the county."

Lucy's newly created regional role is thanks to a three-year grant from the Benefact Trust, formerly All Churches Trust.

Helen Stephens, Church Relations Manager at A Rocha UK, said: "We are delighted to welcome Lucy to A Rocha UK to expand and deepen the work of Eco Church in the north of England when there has never been a more urgent time for the Church to play its role – along with other sectors of society – in caring for this precious planet.

"She brings insight and wisdom from her years of conservation work and lay ministry experience as well as a lovely mix of enthusiasm and passion for the natural world and care of people."

For more about Eco Church visit ecochurch.arocha.org.

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New audience contributing thanks to contactless trial

■ Visitors are major source of donations

By Dave Roberts

“WHAT’S really nice is that this is not about asking the same people to give more, which is a concern I hear when I visit churches. Instead, contactless giving is about reaching new audiences and different types of people who can contribute to something they value and want to support.”

Sophie Hodge, the Stewardship Enabler for the Diocese of Carlisle, is talking about the financial benefits that churches have seen across the county through a national online and contactless giving pilot.

The year-long project concluded at the end of May, with nearly £85,000 raised via the 110 contactless units which were provided, free of charge, by the Church of England to Anglican churches across Cumbria.

Analysis has shown visitors were a major source of contactless donations, despite Covid restrictions having been in effect during the pilot project, resulting in a significant drop-off in international tourists.

Sophie explains: “One of the main users of the contactless giving has been tourists. Obviously, we have a very high footfall of tourists, not just in the Lake District but right across the county.

“Many visit our churches and we’ve seen high levels of success in contactless giving as a result. Those churches with strong heritage links have also seen high levels of giving via the contactless units.”

One of the biggest beneficiaries of the contactless giving scheme was Lanercost Priory, near Brampton, which saw more than £4,600 collected.

Dr Chris Angus, treasurer and churchwarden at the Priory, said: “Our machine has been used a little by people attending services but by and large it’s our visitors who have offered donations.

“More and more, people are not carrying cash so we’ve also found that people have been able to use



‘High levels of success’: The Rev Canon David Sargent with Sophie Hodge at St Andrew’s Penrith, where one of the contactless units was placed

DAVE ROBERTS

our contactless unit to pay for gifts that they want to purchase.”

Three different models of contactless device were offered to churches. Six with high visitor numbers were provided with a larger, bespoke GWD device, while the majority chose a CollecTin More model. Both units can be left unattended and are able to run different fundraising campaigns with transactions processed via WiFi or sim card connectivity.

A few churches chose a Pay-A-Charity device, but it could not be left unattended and transactions had to be downloaded later.

All churches taking part were offered training and one-to-one support. Dr Grace Emmett, National Digital Giving Manager for the Church of England, and David Stout, Regional Giving Advisor for the North, toured churches and offered drop-in advice sessions.

Grace said: “The end of the pilot scheme is a huge milestone for the national Church’s plans to roll out digital giving across the country. It is fantastic to see the impact that digital giving has made to Cumbrian churches over the last year, particularly when many have been working hard to fully re-open following the impact of Covid and social restrictions.

“I am so grateful to every church that has taken part in the

project, as well as to all those who have generously donated.”

Notable landmarks during the pilot project saw more than £9,000 raised in May – the largest monthly total for contactless donations – while March saw the highest number of associated online donations, and the highest weekly level of donations occurred in April.

“We had maybe two or three churches which had engaged with contactless before this pilot started. Now we have a large proportion that can offer contactless giving as an option to donate. It represents a huge culture change,” Sophie says.

“Whilst this has been a great success, it’s also important to note that this won’t ever be the main income earner for a church. It’s the generous giving of worshipping communities which remains the lifeblood.

“By the same token there’s no doubt that offering contactless donation options in what is becoming a cashless society has real benefits.”

Free pop-up banners and signage are to be offered to participating churches this summer.

To find out more, visit: <https://www.carlisle-diocese.org.uk/stewardship-and-planned-giving/contactless/>

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'My hope and prayer is that the war will stop'

■ Church group help Ukrainian family find a haven in a Cumbrian village

By Dave Roberts

OKSANA Pereyma clearly remembers the moment when she learned war had broken out in her native Ukraine.

She and husband Andrii were busy preparing their three boys for school at their home in Zboriw – a town in the west of Ukraine about 100 kilometres from the city of Lviv – when she took a phone call from her mother-in-law to say lessons would not be happening; Russian troops had invaded.

"I'd got up to start to prepare breakfast and get the boys ready," Oksana recalls. "It was just like a normal day. We didn't have the television on as we were busy getting things ready.

"Then Andrii's mother rang. Her voice sounded different, and she asked what we were doing. She explained that the invasion had begun and that we need not bother prepare for school. Despite all the talk of war that had gone before, we still couldn't believe it."

That was February 24. Over the following days she and her husband watched television as the war escalated. Their house was on a refugee route, and they witnessed thousands of people from the east fleeing towards Poland. With unidentified military jets constantly flying overhead, the family regularly had to seek shelter.

Eventually, about six weeks into the war, Oksana felt compelled to leave for the safety of her three boys. Andrii, a gas engineer and welder, decided to stay in Ukraine and has since helped renovate houses for those fleeing from the eastern battlefields.

Oksana arranged passports for her children and then a day later discovered that a visa scheme had been opened up for Ukrainian refugees in the UK.

The 32-year-old, who is a digital graphic designer and keen artist in her spare time, had previously struck up a friendship with people from Carlisle for whom she acted as a translator 15 years earlier. They helped but struggled to find a host for the family.

That's where the Eden Wild Goose Mission Community's Ukraine Sanctuary group helped, connecting Oksana and her three children with a host who has since provided accommodation in a village to the east of Carlisle.



Safe now: Oksana, pictured with her youngest son Lukian and the Rev Graeme Skinner, says she feels deep sorrow at having had to leave her home in western Ukraine

DAVE ROBERTS

They were the first family to have been helped by the group and finally left Ukraine on May 10 but Oksana says she daily feels deep sorrow about having to flee her home and worry and distress for all those who remain in Ukraine.

She explains: "I was scared about the thought of travelling alone with my three boys. I didn't know how the journey would work. It was so difficult for me to leave. My soul is in my house, the property is a part of me. But I had to walk away from it.

"I didn't know what to take and what to leave; all our possessions have such meaning. But we only had one bag each to pack. I managed to pack my Ukrainian watercolours.

"When we got to London, we met up with the people from Cumbria who had travelled down to collect us. We are just so grateful to them."

The Ukraine Sanctuary group – created by mission community

leader, the Rev Graeme Skinner – gathered more than 90 people who offer to support Ukrainian refugees: providing connections to accommodation providers, English lessons and friendship groups.

Graeme says: "There was a group of us in the area who had been involved with providing prescription deliveries and support during the Covid pandemic. So, when the war started, we had the energy, the contacts and knowledge of the area to build up a group of people who would be willing to welcome guests. This wasn't just about people opening their homes but looking at other ways to support too.

"We put it out on social media, held a Zoom meeting and about 100 people came forward. Oksana was the first to arrive and we're expecting two or three others in the near future. We meet occasionally so that everyone is aware of what may be needed in the future, and those who have already helped

are providing support to others who may act as hosts.

"There are a lot of good people around who want things to be better and have said 'What can I do to help?'. Essentially, it's really been about helping to co-ordinate things at a local level."

Oksana says she remains thankful to all those 'good people' who offer support: her original friends from 15 years ago, her host family, friends and neighbours in her village, the staff, parents and children of local schools, football coaches, her language tutor, Cumbria County Council employees and the Sanctuary group.

She is also a member of an arts group run through the mission community and is looking at joining a community choir. At a recent open-air church service she led the Lord's Prayer in Ukrainian.

Now studying English at Carlisle College, Oksana is still unsure what the long-term future will hold for her and her family.

Andrii speaks with his family every day and may eventually travel to the UK.

"It's so important that my children have safe and happy lives," Oksana explains. "It's hard for us all to think that we may never see our house again but at the moment it's so difficult to know what will happen.

"It's also important to remember that as a nation we are not fighting because we hate anybody. We have been forced to fight to protect our families, our homes, our lives. My hope and prayer is that the war will stop. We just want to be able to live and to be happy.

"It has been so difficult to leave but we have met such wonderful people. It's also such a comfort to see Ukrainian flags flying around the area. That has been so encouraging for us."

Meanwhile, a second Ukrainian family has arrived in north Cumbria and will be helped by the Sanctuary Group and local community.



The big day: From left, the wooden cross made from Cumbrian oak that was presented to Rob; the bishop-to-be at the rehearsals; Rob's family at the service; Bishop James shares a joke with a colleague; the Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell presides over the service; the Bishop's crozier gifted to Rob

New bishop speaks of hope ahead

■ Hundreds attend York Minster consecration service as former Cumbrian vicar prepares to take on key role in county



Together: Bishop Rob with friends and family outside the Minster



In the minster: Left, senior clergy file in; above, leaving the service; and, right, Rob's wife Emma gives a reading from the Book of Proverbs



“WE HAVE a message of hope and that’s what we need to tell people about: the love of God and the hope this represents for our communities and parishes. Today has been all about that joy and hope.”

So said the new Bishop of Penrith, the Rt Rev Rob Saner-Haigh, following his consecration at York Minster on Friday July 15.

Ecumenical leaders from the county joined hundreds of people for the service which sees Bishop Rob return to the county in which he has served nearly all his ministry since ordination, including 10 years as vicar at Kendal Parish Church (KPC). Since 2020 he has been the Residency Canon Director of Mission and Ministry for the Diocese of Newcastle.

The two-hour service was presided over by the Archbishop of York, the Most Rev and Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell, and saw the Rt Rev Arun Arora also consecrated as Bishop of Kirkstall in the Diocese of Leeds.

Bishop Rob said: “Today has been both equally exciting and meaningful. It’s also been very moving. I truly believe that there is a message of hope for the churches across our diocese. So often we talk about the Church going through difficult times, but we are a Church of hope.”

Cumbria’s heritage was reflected strongly. Bishop Rob now wears a silver Bishop’s ring, which includes a tiny gold cross of St Cuthbert – a famed northern saint – and is engraved with ‘Robert, a servant of Jesus Christ’. Members of the congregation of KPC gifted him a wooden pectoral cross made from Cumbrian oak by Staveley-based furniture company Peter Hall and Son. And the Diocese of Newcastle gifted him a Bishop’s crozier (a staff) with a handle fashioned from the horn of a Herdwick sheep.

Rob will take up his role on September 1 and will once again live in Kendal. He will have particular responsibility for continuing to develop the county’s ecumenical God

By Dave Roberts

For All vision and strategy, based around its four key themes: Follow Daily, Speak Boldly, Care Deeply and Tread Gently.

Archbishop Stephen said: “Rob’s love of the communities of Cumbria and his significant experience of mission in Newcastle Diocese will equip him well as he joins Bishop James in encouraging the people and the parishes of Cumbria in sharing the good news of the gospel. He has my prayers as he prepares to take up this new role.”

Bishop Rob served his curacy in Appleby Deanery before serving in the parishes of Dalston with Cumdick, Raughtonhead and Wreay. He was Bishop’s Chaplain for three years and Director of Ordinands for two. From 2010, he was the Vicar of Holy Trinity Kendal and was also assistant Rural Dean for seven years.

He is a member of the Penrith-based Northern Mission Centre Steering Group, a collaboration between God for All and Church Mission Society to support creative mission. He is married to Emma and has three children – Ollie, 20, Jemima, 18, and Hal, 16.

Speaking after the consecration, Bishop James said: “My prayer for Rob in his new ministry will be for joy – which I’m sure there will be a lot of – but also for perseverance, energy and stamina.”

Bishop Rob will be officially installed as the Suffragan Bishop of Penrith at a Service of Welcome and Installation at Carlisle Cathedral at 3pm on Sunday September 11.



Celebration: The congregation welcome Rob, right, and the Rt Rev Arun Arora as new bishops

Course shows there's more than one way to explore your calling

By Dave Roberts

"I HAD a friend who was passionate about running but who was told by her church that she shouldn't get involved with events because they all took place on Sundays," the Rev Nicky Smith recalls.

"They said it was her duty as a Christian to be in church instead, but she felt a real dissatisfaction. For her, running was a form of worship.

"So, I worked with her on a course I was leading and she realised that her desire was God-given and she could use that to build the Kingdom.

"From that she pioneered and planned a running group which is loosely faith-based but revolves around themes of health and well-being. That's grown tremendously.

"From discovering her own identity, she has developed this wonderful new form of ministry. That's exactly the kind of thing I want to see happen through our new course."

Nicky, who is Director of Ministry Development for the Diocese of Carlisle, is talking about the Discipleship Project, a new initiative which is set to help encourage those people who want to explore what ministry they may be being called to, in or outside of a church context.

The ecumenical course will begin in September, with six core sessions to be run over a year from the Diocese of Carlisle's Church House offices in Penrith and other supplementary modules to be run across the county.

Nicky explains: "What we're offering is something that's really exciting; it's the chance for churches, parishes and mission



Nicky Smith: 'We're all called to be disciples of Jesus and this will look different for everyone'

DAVE ROBERTS

communities to draw alongside the course to help people explore their calling.

"This is about blessing those people who take part in the course so that, in turn, they can then bless the churches and communities they serve in new ways."

The course sits within the county's ecumenical God for All vision and strategy which has four main themes: Follow Daily, Speak Boldly, Care Deeply and Tread Gently. As part of the vision, 34 mission communities have been created across the county. These are groupings of mutually supportive and mission-minded churches aiming to grow God's Kingdom in Cumbria.

Participants will be encouraged to gain confidence in their

personal ministry giftings, grow as disciples, explore new ways of being church and open up new ministry possibilities.

Nicky adds: "The course has been very much developed around the sense of vocation, regardless of what context people may find themselves in. Perhaps you work full-time or part-time, perhaps you are retired or supporting your young family. This course offers something for everyone.

"It will be an opportunity for people to journey together and consider missional coaching: how you are mentored and how can you mentor others. We'll consider how we can all live out our faith in an increasingly secular world, looking at how to pray and read the Bible in community.

"The premise of the course is that we're all called to be disciples of Jesus and this will look different for everyone. I'm excited that this will open up new forms of ministry and witness."

As well as the core module – which costs £15 per person plus ticket fee – those taking part will have the chance to sign up for optional modules including theology, chaplaincy, mental health first aid and pioneer ministry. Again, these modules will cost from £15 plus ticket fee.

The course is not certificated but the hope is that those who complete the modules may then consider exploring ordination, Reader ministry (lay people, called by God, trained and licensed by the Church to preach, teach, lead

worship and assist in pastoral, evangelistic and liturgical work) or new models of ministry.

The Discipleship Project will also see the creation of a network of mentors within local church settings who will offer support to those people who sign up.

"We have intentionally developed this course in such a way that anyone can be actively involved in developing God's church," Nicky adds.

"As Christians we are learning and growing all the time. That's very much the ethos of the course and our prayer is that as many people as possible feel called to explore this further."

For details and to book the course, visit <https://godforall.org.uk/the-discipleship-project/>

Guiding hand leads the way

SPIRITUAL Direction is the practice of being with people in their search to deepen their relationship with God.

This often takes place informally in the life of a church, but training can be of immense value.

About every three years, the Cumbria Ecumenical Spirituality Group (CESG) runs a course which involves a day a month for 10 months.

The next course runs from October, and they are taking applications now, with spaces limited to 20.

A course member said: "The most impactful part of the course for me was sharing with each of the course members; receiving and learning about God from personal conversations, learning more about myself and my relationship with God.

"I believe it is in community that we discover most clearly who we are in Christ."

For more information on the course or the work of the CESG, please contact CESG Admin, Jo Maybury, 55 Howdenbank, Hawick, TD9 7JY. Alternatively, telephone 07997 7565097 or email assistantCESG@gmail.com.



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Second staycation site is champing at the bit

Church prepares to welcome its first guests

By Dave Roberts

A SECOND Cumbrian place of worship has launched as a 'Champing' church, offering people the chance to camp overnight in their historic building.

St Luke's Clifton in west Cumbria joins St Mary's Longsleddale as part of the Champing scheme which is run by the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT).

The Parochial Church Council chose to explore Champing after identifying that the Covid pandemic had impacted finances.

Charlotte Bampton, PCC secretary, explained: "We're a very small village church and we'd started to look at ways to improve our fundraising. Prior to Covid, we'd run quite a large number of community outreach events which were really successful and had helped financially."

"Since the pandemic those kinds of events have not yet returned to the same level, so as a PCC we had begun to have serious conversations about our finances. That prompted us to look at different options. I spotted Champing on a TV programme and I mentioned this at a PCC meeting and people said we should explore it."

That prompted Sue Shaw, the PCC's treasurer, churchwarden and reader, to make contact with the CCT in March, with the church



Excited: St Luke's PCC treasurer Sue Shaw, left, and secretary Charlotte Bampton say they're keen to forge links with St Mary's Longsleddale too
DAVE ROBERTS

going live on the Champing website in June to make the most of the summer season. Already three bookings have been received.

Sue added: "This is about us being able to use our church building more and also bring in a little bit of extra income. We were all very excited when the first bookings came through!"

The Victorian church, which dates from 1901, provides Champing space for up to four people. There's a kitchenette area with crockery, cutlery, a microwave and kettle. There is no running water in

the building but a tap outside provides drinking water and there's a portable toilet in an outdoor shed. The Champing team plans to meet and greet visitors and will provide breakfast hampers if asked.

As part of their research, Charlotte and Sue liaised with St Mary's Longsleddale to discuss best practice. There are hopes that links could be forged between the two.

Charlotte added: "This is probably something for further down the line, but we've talked about the possibility of creating a pilgrimage link between our two churches."

There's a desire to work together; we're not in competition."

There are differences between the two churches, though. St Mary's is a Festival Church, meaning it is not used for weekly services; it opens only at Easter, Christmas and Harvest as well as for baptisms, funerals and weddings. St Luke's opens for fortnightly services, meaning bookings have been blocked out for those Saturdays when there will be worship on the Sunday.

Sue added: "If other things crop up such as weddings, then we can

easily blank out dates as we need to. We get weekly notifications of bookings that have been made so can keep across things."

Champing could provide a helpful income stream. The 2021 champing season saw more than £3,000 raised at St Mary's, with the money shared between the church and the local community. In total, the church was booked out for 44 nights with 52 adults and 20 children staying there this year. It was also boosted after award-winning journalist Simon Reeve chose to camp there during his three-part BBC programme *The Lakes*.

Sue added: "We've kept costs down to a minimum as we see how things go. We don't expect to make thousands of pounds from this but as we are a very small church; anything that comes as a result of Champing will help us. It's also great that the church is being used in another way!"

Fiona Silk, CCT's Champing Business Development Officer, said: "We're very pleased to welcome and support St Luke's in offering exclusive overnight Champing stays. We think it's going to be a popular choice for couples and families exploring the Lakes, and perhaps stopping off at our other Champing church too – St Mary's in Longsleddale."

"We've actually just had a booking through doing just that, staying over at both Longsleddale and Clifton from a couple of regular 'Champers' who enjoy learning about the church history and local area, with their visit to Clifton being their sixth Champing church."

The Champing season runs from April to the end of October. Adult rates cost from £49 to £59, and children's rates start at £25 (though special offers are available), with special group discounts for eight or more. For more information, visit www.champing.co.uk.

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Strengthening the bonds

Local group visits Norwegian partner diocese

By Dave Roberts

“WHEN the church was first born, and Paul had come to faith he chose not to stay in Jerusalem but instead to travel,” the Rev Andy Smith explains. “He wanted to take the message of Jesus right across the world.

“That speaks of the very identity of the Church. This is not about a collection of people who share a language, interest, purpose or nationhood. It’s about a collection of people who share the person of Jesus. It’s always meant to be cross-cultural, cross-nation and cross-language; it’s a message for the whole world.

“When you hang out with Christians in different parts of the world you notice that they feel different to you. The way that they think and behave is different to you. But you also begin to notice that you’re family, that the Jesus that knows and love you intimately also knows and loves them.”

It is that understanding which Andy is bringing to his new role as convenor for the link between the dioceses of Carlisle and Stavanger in Norway. Forged more than 50 years ago, it continues to grow, bolstered in 1992 by the creation of the Porvoo Communion which saw Anglican and Lutheran church ties developed in Europe. That was strengthened in 2013 when both dioceses signed an agreement, focussing on the development of youth links, exploration of joint pilgrimages and support of parish work.

Andy is both passionate about and committed to continuing to build relationships between the two countries so that Christians can learn and grow together. He has recently returned from a four-day trip to Stavanger with six colleagues from Cumbria.

Their trip saw them meet Bishop Anne Lise Ådnøy, cathedral staff in Stavanger and the leadership of the Norwegian Mission Society, which has close ties with the Diocese of Carlisle, partly funding Andy’s other diocesan role as a Growing Younger Enabler and the Network Youth Church. The group also went on a pilgrimage walk.

Andy adds: “There is an important emphasis on spirituality through the link which we will look to continue to develop. The pilgrimage walk offered an opportunity for shared spiritual practice that drew out different conversations.

“Post-covid I’d hope to see more regular exchange trips coming to life again. It’s interesting to note that as I take over the link here, there’s also a new link in Stavanger, Bjarte Oen, who is responsible for their work in youth and mission. That means we’re both coming at it from



Andy Smith: ‘Post Covid I’d hope to see more regular exchange trips coming to life again’

DAVE ROBERTS



Breaking bread: The Cumbrian delegation, including Andy Smith, right, Cameron Butland, second right, and Simon Bickersteth, left, sit down to a meal in Norway



Conversations: The pilgrimage walk offered ‘an opportunity for shared spiritual practice’

a younger agenda, which is really good timing. We’d love to see the link reflect the diversity of ages in both dioceses.”

It is a link which is also borne from long-established Christian ties between the two countries, including some dating from the 10th century.

The Rev Canon Cameron Butland, who recently stood down as the diocesan link, explains: “The first Christians in Stavanger almost certainly came from the west coast of Cumbria. There’s also a palpable link between the Gosforth high cross and five other crosses which are in Stavanger.

“And there is another link through Stavanger Cathedral which is dedicated

to St Swithin, because the first bishop was an Englishman.”

A Stavanger delegation plans to visit the UK next year and there are hopes that more parish links can be developed.

St James Church in Carlisle is the first to have partnered with a Stavanger congregation. They and Sola Church signed a partnership agreement in 2019, committing them to stand together in mission and service, include each other in prayer, and arrange for exchange visits. Three specific areas of focus are around youth ministry, community engagement and fresh expressions.

Simon Bickersteth, vicar of St James and one of those who visited Stavanger recently, said: “As part of this trip I visited Sola Church, where I was able to give an update on the work and ministry of St James Church, and the Two Rivers Mission Community.

“We hope to arrange further exchange visits next year, to further develop the relationship between our two churches, and explore how we can support and learn from one another.”

Churches interested in creating a parish link with a church in Stavanger Diocese should contact Andy Smith at andy.smith@carlisle-diocese.org.uk



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Making the most of summer: The rain stopped just in time for everyone to enjoy a wide range of activities at the Eden Network Youth Church event

Setting records Ablaze!



Soft play: A girl in a sumo wrestling suit prepares for a bouncy battle



'So much fun': The slip and slide proved to be the most popular attraction

■ Annual outdoor event enjoyed by nearly 300 people

By Dave Roberts

RECORD numbers of children and young people attended this year's Ablaze for an afternoon and evening of outdoors fun organised by Eden Network Youth Church.

Organisers say 270 people were at the event held next to Brough Castle. It's the sixth year that it has been staged.

Luckily the rain stopped 20 minutes before things kicked off on in mid-July, with the sun then drying out all the equipment.

Rachel Milburn, Network Youth Church Pioneer Minister for the Eden area, said: "We can control numbers, activities and plan for a wonderful evening, but I don't possess the power to control the weather. However, I do have a good relationship with the guy who does and although it rained sporadically all day, threatening to ruin our event, he held true to his word and the sun came out."

Numbers were up 67 on last year. With bookings having closed the previous Saturday, a further 60 people were too late to order tickets.

The evening was split into two sessions. The 'minis' (aged 5 to 11) enjoyed a two-hour session from 4pm, after which the seniors (11-17) had fun from 7 until 10pm.

Activities included the slip and slide, a rodeo bull, laser maze, bungee trampolines, karaoke tent and music, tattoo parlour, sumo wrestling suits, football, archery and tug of war. A prayer tent was run by the Rev Andrew Sterling, and Canon Warden Benjamin Carter from Carlisle Cathedral brought the God's tent installation and prayer labyrinth. Volunteers ensured all went well.

Rachel added: "Everyone had a wonderful time. The parents and children were in awe of all that was on offer and are keen for us to make it happen every year. I asked a few of the youngsters what had been the highlights for them. Most said the slip and slide – it's safe, well managed and so much fun.

"One young person said to me, 'This is the best night of my year so far' and another said, 'It's just awesome. I love coming so much and look forward to it all year'. Thanks go to the Diocese, Brough Parish Council and the Methodist Church for helping us financially. God is Good!"

'Bells are a wonderful way to call people to worship'

■ Carlisle Cathedral's Tower Captain Ron East, who has just received a Queen's birthday honour for services to bell ringing, appears in our Focus on Faith feature

Q Please tell us a little bit about yourself.

A I moved to Carlisle in 1986 when I was appointed Head of Science at William Howard School. I retired 20 years later. When my daughter, Sally, was nine she wanted to learn to ring bells which brought us to the Cathedral. My wife, Anne, and I were left waiting in the car for an hour and a half, so we decided we would start ringing too.

We were all taught by Les Boumphrey in the early 1990s and then my son Ben also decided he would learn to ring too. My daughter married a bell ringer who is the Tower Captain at St Andrew's Penrith. My son has three stepchildren; two of them boys who are now bell ringing with him in Doncaster. We are a bell ringing family through and through.

My wife is a much better bell ringer than I am and people like my daughter – who learned at the perfect age – and my son-in-law are fabulous ringers. Anne and I are members of the Cathedral congregation but, also, we like to meet as a bell ringing team for a coffee on a Sunday, to help keep the band together. It's very much a team activity.

We have to ensure we have people to train otherwise there would not be that band in place to ring. We've trained up three people since lockdown ended and we have five more on the books ready to teach. It's going to be a busy time. They are generally local to the Carlisle area and commit to come to the tower once a week for a lesson. While there's a big social side to it, people need to give a commitment to ring for services and civic events. As Tower Captain at the Cathedral, I'm the lead for bell ringing and am responsible to the Dean and Chapter for the ringing of bells at services and civic events such as Remembrance Day and the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

I've been Tower Captain for 10 years and plan to step down next year.

Q How difficult is it to learn how to bell ring?

A It's a big investment for us in terms of time. We need a second bell ringer to act as a chaperone or who could take over if there was an accident. It may take weeks and weeks of teaching until we feel someone is safe enough to be allowed on their own at the end of a rope. Bells can be dangerous things.

Then they have to learn how to put their bell in among the others. You've got to get it right within a tenth of a second, otherwise the bells start clattering with each other. So, it's a long business to teach people to ring. On average you are looking at 16 hours of teaching in order that they can handle the bell safely and



'Fabulous': Ron learned bell ringing in the early 1990s

DAVE ROBERTS

then they begin to learn the process of ringing as part of a band.

Then new bell ringers also have to work out how to deal with call changes (a change in order of bell ringing) and method ringing.

Q You are also the Diocesan Bell Advisor. What does that entail?

A I've been in post for 23 years and can be called on to advise on any one of the 921 bells that there are in churches here in Cumbria. A church will generally get in touch with the Diocesan Advisory Committee if they need help and then I'm called in.

Some years ago I assembled a team of volunteers and we complete work for churches. We'll go to a church, conduct a survey, write a report for the DAC and if it's in our capability to complete the work then we'll do it at no cost to the church.

We've just finished restoring the bells for ringing at St Michael's Arlecdon near Cleator Moor. That's a ring of eight bells cast in 1904; they have a beautiful sound. Our team of four put in 1,260 hours of volunteer time to restore them. We had to clear the tower and order new steel beams which we cut and drilled ourselves before sending away for galvanising. It's fabulous when you are able to ring the bells for the first time after such a restoration.



Dangerous: Safety is an important consideration when new ringers are being trained

We have secured a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore bells at St Michael's Brough. We will employ a bell hanger to work with us on the project.

Bells have been around to call people to worship since the earliest days of the Christian church. It's a wonderful way in which to call people to worship.

Q What is the future for bell ringing in Cumbria?

A It's difficult currently as Covid has badly affected the volunteer base. I'm hoping that as people get their lives back together then more will be looking for something richer in their lives. That has certainly been the case for the three people we've just trained up.

Q You've just been awarded the British Empire Medal for your services to bell ringing. What was your reaction?

A I couldn't believe it. I got a letter with a crest on it and which was from the Cabinet Office. I thought 'Oh my word, I'm going to spend the rest of my life in the Tower!'. When I opened it, it was an invitation to accept a British Empire Medal, which is very gratifying. It will be presented to me by the Lord Lieutenant.

Q What would be your prayer for bell ringing across the county in years to come?

A Before we ring, we always gather and say prayers. The prayer I particularly love is: 'Dear Lord, thank you for the craftsmen who during the centuries have cast and hung bells in this tower and for the ringers who in times, past and present, have rung these bells. We pray that the message of the bells may bring happiness, forgiveness and encouragement to all and peace in this world. [Together] Bless the ringing that we do in your name. Amen'