

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE MISSION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM 2017/18

Community Engagement & Social Responsibility Advisor: Caroline Clarke

2017 was a challenging year for many in our communities as we saw the impacts of a rising number of people falling into Debt leading to a rise in Homelessness and the use of our Foodbanks and other community initiatives. There was the start of a growing national realisation that there are victims of Modern Slavery living in our communities, and we saw a rise in the number of people coping with Addictions and issues around Loneliness and Social Isolation. There is an urgency to our calling to love our neighbour so they experience the love of God in Word and Action, and increasingly there is also the need for church members and volunteers engaging with our communities to have a more specialised understanding of the needs, and this is where Partnership working continues to be key.

- As well as developing our relationship with our existing Partnerships, work has been done to bring new organisations into partnership with us to commit to sharing their skills, expertise and knowledge working alongside us as part of the solution. This includes the Clewer Initiative for Modern Slavery, Recovery2 for Addictions and CDAP for Domestic Violence.
- The Princess Project is another one of these: a Christian charity with a vision to love, support and encourage mothers, they provide a holistic package of support for mums in need of a helping hand, by addressing their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. They will be starting to work with mums in the Medway Towns, initially through their Mum2Mum befriending service, launching in March.
- A new Church to Church partnership was formed between St Francis Strood and St George's Weald to share and support each other in Mission and Ministry in their different communities, for the common good.
- There has been an increase in the number of our Foodbanks, Community Lunches, and projects such as Christmas Lunch on Jesus and Make Lunch, with more churches working together to enable this.
- St Mary's Greenhithe and St Mary's Stone launched 'Mary's Child', a joint project to support families in need, such as providing furniture, clothes and toys from the generosity of others.
- We campaigned with the Illegal Money Lending Team to Stop Loan Sharks and held several High Street awareness raising events: the Zero Tolerance to Loan Sharks Charter will be signed by Bishop James, Community representatives and our partner agencies on 27th Feb.
- A new Christians Against Poverty Debt Advice Centre was opened in Bromley, and work has started to open more CAP Job Clubs and CAP Life Skills groups to help people back into employment and teach how to live on a low income.
- A series of free-to-download short films called 'Stories That Need To Be Told' have been made to show how individual lives have been transformed through the work of church community engagements, to encourage and inform more people to do likewise, such as Christ Church Chislehurst's Dementia Café, and Living Well Bromley.

2018 has marked the start of our year-long campaign of HOPE called 'Setting the Captives Free: freedom from Addictions; freedom from Modern Slavery; freedom from Debt.' This involves Workshops with leaders and experts in their field to upskill and resource us as we work in the mission field with Jesus at the heart of all we do, loving our neighbour, meeting needs and inviting people to go further in their spiritual journey by sharing the Gospel in Word and Actions, and I feel blessed to continue to lead this work.

Dementia Specialist Project Officer: Julia Burton-Jones

Henry Smith funding to establish Anna Chaplaincy ran until April 2017, after which point the diocese has continued to fund the project while external grants are sought for continued development. The project officer, Julia Burton-Jones, works 21 hours a week to support parishes in identifying new ways of ministering with older people and especially those living with dementia.

The highlight of the year was the commissioning by Bishop James of the first diocesan Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends at Abbeyfield Kent's Watling Court in Gravesend on 11 April. A close relationship with BRF's The Gift of Years has informed each new phase of ministry, including successful piloting of a new module on Anna Chaplaincy within the licensed lay ministry training programme. The team is growing steadily; by the end of the year 10 Anna Chaplains and 18 Anna Friends had been appointed. They have continued to meet in four local hubs on a quarterly basis, to share ideas and reflect on their ministry. In late 2017 a memorandum of understanding between BRF and the dioceses of Rochester and Canterbury made provision for the project officer to work in Canterbury Diocese, exploring scope for Anna Chaplaincy in a number of contexts, including Heart of Kent Hospice in Maidstone. The project officer spoke about spiritual care for people with dementia at three national events: the annual conference of the Liturgical Commission; National Dementia Congress; Best Practice in Care Homes conference.

Objectives for 2018:

1. Build a new Anna Chaplaincy team in Bexley Borough, and continue supporting new Anna Chaplains and Anna Friends in discovering a calling to minister with older people and people living with dementia.
2. With BRF's The Gift of Years, establish Anna Chaplaincy in Canterbury Diocese, starting with Thanet deanery and a new partnership with Heart of Kent Hospice.
3. Provide a range of learning opportunities on ageing and dementia.
4. Work with parishes seeking to be dementia friendly.
5. Contribute to a new book on Accessible Worship for those Living with Dementia.

Assistant Missioner: Revd Alyson Davie

Leading your church into growth (LYCIG)

All of us take seriously the task to "search for God's children in the wilderness of this world's temptations and to guide them through its confusions, so that they may be saved through Christ for ever". (Common Worship Ordinal)

That is why in October 2017, the LYCIG team met with one set of deanery clergy and laity and a number of representatives from other parishes across the diocese, to look at ministry together as lay and clergy teams.

The Diocesan shared vision **Called Together** has as one of its themes, "Growing Disciples" and LYCIG helps each one of us to look afresh at how together we can share God's Good News and see more people find faith and help all of our people to be confident in speaking out about God's love, which is so important to each one of us and so vital to share with others.

LYCIG is a forum of people engaged in different kinds of ministry from across the church traditions who continue to be open to new avenues of sharing good practice and good ideas.

Most of all the LYCIG team seek to enable churches to recognise where our transforming God is at work and join in with Him, seeing people blossom and grow as they are captivated by his love.

Arts in Mission: Revd Mandy Carr

This year much of our work has been on making short films. These have been collated as part of the HOPE 2018 series: *Stories That Need To Be Told*. One on Weald Community Shop has been used for Diocesan Synod and one on Living Well Bromley based at Holy Trinity Beckenham, was used for the 'Called Together' launch. We also made a short film for Debt Sunday about stopping loan sharks and this was again used across the diocese and by the Illegal Money Lending Team who had initiated the project. Two recent additions to the HOPE 2018 series are short films about Christ Church Chislehurst's Dementia Café, and the Christmas Hamper project and church partnership between St. Francis Strood and St. George's Weald. The latter was not only to show community engagement, but to highlight parish links across different contexts and how being involved together in the process grows disciples. This fits in perfectly with the diocesan strategy. All of the films have been made with the partnership and oversight of Caroline Clarke, our Community Engagement Adviser and can be viewed on the AIM website, www.rochesteraim.com under the title '*Digital Storytelling and HOPE 2018*.'

We are very grateful for the coverage offered by Jenny Ross and Katerina Gerhardt in the Communications Department. Our Facebook posts are being shared on the diocesan pages and it is driving traffic to the website and the resources and blogs that are there. We are also pleased to have guest bloggers on the website covering a range of topics. This year our subjects have covered

- **Spotlight interviews:** on Tim Boniface, curate and Jazz musician; and Labyrinth Creators, Stephanie and Jonathan Tibber.
- **Liturgical Year Resources and Events:** Commemorating WW1 in Epiphany; a creative idea for Advent; a Passion Play in South Gillingham.
- **Art installations:** the response to a '*Ecce Homo*' on the steps of St. Paul's; and '*There But Not There*' an installation for Remembrance.
- **Art and community engagement:** Affirming Art with the homeless in Tunbridge Wells library; and Digital Storytelling for HOPE 2018.
- **The wider perspective:** a conference on *Spiritually Healthy Creativity* in London's St. Milletus College; and the All-Party Parliamentary Report on '*The Arts for Health and Wellbeing*.'

There are other blogs planned for the near future as well as possible partnerships around the diocese, particularly with St. Benedict's Centre, where there is a vision for a creative hub to offer support and inspiration across the diocese.

Another strand of this ministry is to use creativity as a basis for Quiet Days. This year I have been a speaker at a number of events in, and outside of, the diocese. On Advent Sunday weekend I was the speaker at the Lay Ministers Retreat. There have also been opportunities to feed into various diocesan planning groups and the Arts in Mission contribution to the Lent course, particularly the drama, both in script form and the film segments, was well received. The AIM works provides a vital thread running throughout the 'Called Together' Framework. It isn't an eccentric add-on but a way of embodying the Gospel. It draws people into the story of God and their place in it and it provides space for a mystical encounter with the Spirit where God works in the gaps and where we, with Him, can create something beautiful. It speaks a different language but it is one that is recognised by the world and the missionary imperative makes this fact all the more important.

Community Chaplain West Kent Area: Revd Miriam Barker

I have continued to work across three deaneries in West Kent, offering chaplaincy in several organisations, regularly with Kenward Trust (Drug and alcohol recovery), Scott's Project (For people with learning disabilities), West Kent YMCA (who have several projects working with young people in the areas of education and homelessness) and the Tunbridge Wells Winter Shelter for street homeless people, as well as serving on the diocesan MACE Team. I have also continued to build networks with other organisations and individuals, and maintained links with local churches and deaneries.

Work remains varied, 'being' in the places God calls me to; working with individuals within each organisation, from staff to residents or students and carers and with groups of people, meeting to pray or study the Bible, do an Alpha course... whatever seems to be needed in each different context. I've led services, helped 'upcycle furniture (good activity for conversations to happen alongside the painting or sanding), taken memorial services, played the Holy Spirit in a nativity play which had four Marys; three of them male (!), wept with those who mourn for their friends and laughed till I cried at the antics of teenagers in a hostel. I've done a lot of listening and praying. All of it is a huge privilege, joining with God's work amongst individuals and organisations.

In February I am organising a conference with Bishop James to help organisations think about what it means to have a Christian ethos and to think about how they might express such a thing in their own contexts.

Interfaith Concerns - Bishop's Advisor: Revd Richard Martin

I took over this role from Ven Paul Wright in September 2016, on a one day per week basis. In 2017 the following activities were undertaken

- 1) I received the Post Graduate Certificate in Interfaith Engagement from Queen's Foundation, Birmingham, following my study there in 2016.
- 2) In conjunction with Rev Jane Winter I designed a course option for Yr 3 LLM students entitled "Inter-faith engagement". If enough students are interested it will be taught in the Autumn of 2018.
- 3) I organised and hosted an inter-Faith pancake party on Shrove Tuesday at St Aidan's Gravesend, attended by Christians and Muslims.
- 4) In May I attended and spoke at an Inter-Faith solidarity event at Gravesend mosque, following the Manchester bombings.
- 5) Continuing to develop the link between the Diocese and the Dialogue Society, one of whose SE area offices is in Chatham, I arranged with Rev Joel Love for their Iftar meal to be held at St Peter and Paul church, Rochester, and attended this in June.
- 6) I researched the visit of St Francis to the Sultan, in 1229, and ran a study group in my parish about this early model of inter-faith engagement. I am shortly meeting with a small group of clergy with a view to making this a major diocesan theme in 2019.
- 7) I encouraged and enabled the West Kent Franciscan group to take this on as a major focus.
- 8) I also researched the life and work of Max Muller, a significant and early pioneer of engagement with Hindus – he is mentioned in a memorial at St Margaret's ifield. There is a significant anniversary for him in 2223.
- 9) A small group continued to meet for Scriptural Reasoning with Sikhs in Gravesend (main contact Raj Bains of Gravesend Gurdwara) every 2 months. We met alternately at the

Gurdwara and at Holy Family church hall, Gravesend. Also, I attended an event in London on this theme, run by Rev Dr John Parry.

- 10) I attended the monthly meetings of the North Kent inter-Faith council for Inter-Faith Relations, working with its members on events to mark Jo Cox MP Memorial day (a food give-away in Gravesend Market), and Interfaith week (an event about different religions' attitudes to war and peace, for GCSE students). Also, we ran a morning about Mental health issues relating to religious belief/observance.
- 11) In November I attended a scoping meeting at Maidstone concerning a possible Kent-wide Inter faith group
- 12) I met with Rev Ann Norman to learn about her work with an inter-faith womens' group in Erith, and facilitated publicity in the Diocesan newsletter about the award they were presented with in London.
- 13) Also, I kept in touch with The Very Rev Phil Hesketh and Revs Trevor Wyatt, Jim Stewart and Steve Varney about the progress of interfaith initiatives in Medway, Bexleyheath, Tunbridge Wells and Bexley respectively, and with Lynne Martin re such work on Medway University campus, visiting their re-ordered chapel.

Plans for 2018 include:-

- 1) Rolling out the LLM Inter-faith engagement course and thereby building a network of lay people interested in this ministry.
- 2) Via Jenny Ross, using the inter-Faith page of the Diocesan website to showcase examples of inter-faith work in the Diocese, and then before Inter-faith week using the email newsletter to point people to these, encouraging them to try something in their area in that week.
- 3) Via Phil Hesketh, using the Cathedral nave for an Iftar meal in Ramadan, and firming up plans for a diocesan event to mark the 800th anniversary of St Francis' visit to the Sultan in July 2019.
- 4) With Ven Julie Conalty, finding out about inter-faith engagement in the Sevenoaks archdeaconry and planning how to increase this.
- 5) Encouraging existing initiatives.
- 6) Seeking invitations from Deanery Synods to speak about this work
- 7) Clarifying who my line manager is within the Diocesan structure, setting up regular meetings, and securing a budget.
- 8) Attending the DIFA's conference in May and learning good practice from other dioceses.
- 9) Continuing and developing inter-faith work in Gravesend.