

Chester

Diocesan News

April 2019

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Growing stronger parishes

What is meant by the promise of resurrection?



'We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come'. This conclusion to the earliest and most fundamental of our Creeds sums up our Easter hope.

Yet many Christians today appear unsure of what is meant by the promise of resurrection. Why is this? Why has doubt and uncertainty come to damage this central aspect of our faith?

The error that I believe has come to afflict the Christian tradition is a belief that life after death is essentially a new and different life from the life we live here and now. Then, subtly, the significance of life here and now is reduced to a test which we need to pass, in order to be permitted to enjoy life after death. All the jokes about St.

Peter and the pearly gates illustrate this.

The tests tend to be seen either as 'do we have faith', or 'have we merited salvation by the lives we have led' – or perhaps a combination. This has easily led to a view of religious belief as rather threatening, with God as a cosmic policeman, essentially concerned to put us to the test. It is little wonder that religious belief and practice then become seen as more life denying than life enhancing.

It is better to regard our lives now as a preparation, anticipation, and foretaste for the new heaven and new earth which we are promised. As we all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, we will 'receive good or evil, according to what we have done in the body' (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Our challenge is to live by faith in God our Creator and Redeemer, and thereby to live the new life which the risen Jesus Christ gives to us. This is 'life in all its fullness', in which we rejoice in a provisional way here and now, as we journey to its full and final revelation.

The promise is that God will 'make all things new', and reveal the inner truth of our lives, as illuminated by the eternal light of Jesus Christ who is the Light of the world. That is what we mean by the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

+Peter

No bed of roses for our young people



The Diocese of Chester hosted a Valentine's day training course to help young people to navigate the complexity of relationships in the modern age.

Aimed at those who minister with children and young people in our churches, the day helped them to explore and better understand how to support young people to make and maintain healthy relationships.

Specialist training was delivered by ACET UK who champion healthy relationships and sexual well-being and support young people in making wise and healthy choices. Over 40 people had travelled from across the Diocese to attend the day at Holy Trinity Church, Hurdfield.

Youth, Children and Families' Missioner in the Diocese of Chester, Jonathan Masters, says: "Our leaders of children and young people are reporting an increasing number of people struggling with their relationships. When there are multiple young people

sharing these experiences in your church or youth group, you can quickly feel overwhelmed and unsure as to how to respond and react. This training day has given our leaders the necessary support, learning and knowledge to leave feeling encouraged and inspired in their work."

Statistics from a Mental Health Foundation report published in 2018 show that young people are struggling to cope. The report states that:

- 10% of 5 – 16-year olds have a clinically diagnosable mental health problem
- 70% of children and young people experiencing mental health problems have not had interventions early enough
- 50% of mental health problems are established by the age of 14, 75% by the age of 24

Jenny Heathcote, a sexual health doctor who travels to schools teaching sex education said the day had been a great help: "The day has proved to be very useful to me. Some of my time is spent providing sex education to children in church schools and today has helped me to better understand sex in a Christian context."

Rebekah Davies is a Children and Youth Ministry Trainee at St. Mary's, Cheadle, and has been affected by poor mental health in the past. She says: "There's a lot of pressure on young people to be accepted by their friends. Too often it's made worse through social media and the way people present their 'perfect lives'. For me, God has shown what it is to be loved and to be a part of a wider church family. I can be so confident

when I walk out of the door that I have a father in heaven who loves me, who created me to be me and has a purpose for me. I can be encouraged by that and it's this hope that I want to share with others in my ministry with children and young people in Cheadle."

If you work with children and young people in the Diocese of Chester and have not yet joined the network of leaders of young generations, get in touch. The Diocese of Chester supports leaders of young generations (children and family and youth workers, whether paid or voluntary) through its network which meets at least once a term to worship and offer one another support. Everyone who works with children and young people is welcome to join.



Light and Hope



Bishop Keith Sinclair, church and civic leaders, congregations and residents of Northwich gathered in the town centre on Saturday 2 February to pray for the town and those who live and work there.

The church-led event was organised as a show of solidarity with the people of Northwich and as a way of trying to tackle the negative press the town has received in recent times.

Bishop Keith Sinclair, who led prayers, says: "Northwich is a place with a great industrial and social history and an even more promising economic and community focussed future. The local Christian community already plays a vital role in improving the lives of residents through social and spiritual support and practical projects. This gathering highlights our belief in a hope-filled-future for the town and will



help tell a different story to some of the negative reports we've seen in recent years."

Northwich resident, and Director of Social Responsibility in the Diocese of Chester, Debbie Dalby, hopes the event will be a turning point and will generate a sense of hope for the future of the town.

"Northwich is a great town filled with dynamic, creative and tenacious people.

This gathering will send a message of hope to the people of Northwich, that runs counter to the negative views and reports about the town in recent years. We want to tell a different story – one of growth, strong community and new beginnings."

The gathering is part of a much bigger partnership approach which is developing between the Church, civic leaders, business and residents.

100-year-old parishioner reads lesson



A church-goer marked her 100th birthday in January this year and to celebrate provided the Bible reading for her church. By the wonders of modern technology, Mary Beck read and recorded the lesson from her care home in Poynton, which was then projected on to a screen for the congregation of St Philip and St James Church, Alderley Edge, to see.

Although Mary couldn't be there in person, present at the memorable church service were Mary's daughter Catherine and son in law Peter, together with Mary's two grandsons and their wives, and three great-grandchildren.

Mary celebrating her 100th birthday at her care home in Poynton.

Mary was born in 1919, just after the end of the First World War, and grew up in Berkshire. She moved to Wilmslow, Cheshire, in 1963 with her husband and daughter.

Mary had an active involvement with church life in the parish of St Philip and St James. She organised the church Bible reading rota and would train readers in their expression and voice projection. She also enjoyed giving the Bible reading herself as well as leading prayers during church services. She and her husband George were sidesmen and sometimes acted as vergers too. Mary also led the Sunday School at the old St James's Church from 1965 to 1985, a "tin tabernacle" at the bottom of Heyes Lane, Alderley Edge.

Mary worshipped at St Philip and St James until 2018 when she suffered a broken hip and could no longer make the journey to church. However, local priest the Revd Canon Prof Loveday Alexander takes Holy Communion to Mary in her care home once a month, something which Mary looks forward to.

After the family settled in Wilmslow, Mary joined the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) progressing

from office jobs to taking round the meals on wheels as an assistant and then as the driver and finally being put in charge of the maintenance of the various WRVS vehicles. She was given a service medal in 1991 marking over 27 years of service. Through the WRVS she got to know people who were lonely and in need of a visit and very often on a Sunday afternoon she would visit an elderly person and take them out for a drive. She continued doing this well into her 80s.

As well as her voluntary work, Mary's interests were her garden, and music and opera. She taught herself German from the Linguaphone course that was very popular in the late 1960s.

The Revd Robin Pye, Vicar of St Philip and St James said: "It is a real privilege for members of our church to be able to get to know Mary and converse with somebody who has played such an important role in our church for decades."



Outdoor adventure day

An outdoor activity day which will include; canoeing, kayaking, orienteering and outdoor games.

13 April 2019



LOYG Network: Growing resilient disciples

An event for everyone who ministers with children and young people in churches.

27 April 2019



Facilitating new approaches to Bible reading

A day for anyone with an interest in reading the Bible afresh.

02 May 2019



Church buildings maintenance plan

A day exploring how to spot the main maintenance issues with church buildings.

02 May 2019



Explorers of church building projects: Oakhanger

A learning opportunity for parishes interested in developing and caring for church buildings and halls.

23 May 2019



Understanding spiritual abuse

A training day for those who want to better understand spiritual abuse and how we might create healthy Christian cultures.

23 May 2019



To book your place on these events and to view all of our events, please visit :
www.chester.anglican.org/events