

# Chester Diocesan News



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
Diocese of Chester

#EverydayFaith across the Diocese of Chester | **October 2020**

## Bishop Mark's ministry begins



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# More parties, fewer meetings

The Bishop of Chester, Mark Tanner, wants to be part of a church that has more parties and fewer meetings - when coronavirus restrictions allow, that is! Why? Because at parties you meet people, and at meetings you meet problems. Here he offers a reflection to mark the beginning of his ministry in the Diocese of Chester.

**'But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore, I say to you: do not worry.'**

// **T**his is what Jesus says to us through the scriptures, and yet at the same time the newspapers are full of stories about Brexit confusion; around climate change; around isolation and poverty. Even in the Church newspapers, we are told of declining numbers and parishes closing their doors. Which way should we look? 'Do not worry' says our Lord; 'the world is chaotic and uncertain' says the media.

'Do not worry'. How can he say that? Is it mere fantastic es-

capism? Well no it isn't. When you look at what he says, it is deep realism.

Christ knows how uncertain the world is. He knows the pain we face. And he challenges us to find peace and purpose in Him in the middle of the storm, not to avoid it. The challenge is to keep looking in two directions, at Christ and at the lost: looking to Him in faithful trust and looking outward in generous service: shaped in worship and shaped for witness. This is the call of Christ on us today.

And as we face this challenge, we will find that He will shape and form us; that we continue to be his beautiful bride, ever fit for purpose however the world might change around us. As we partner with people and agencies of peace and seek to serve,

particularly those who are most vulnerable, those who are abandoned and abused, overlooked and oppressed, we will find, that, as we serve them, we serve Christ, and that we are always shaped for relevant mission in this world.

We look at Christ and we look at the lost because that is what Christ himself did: 'I did not come for those who are well, I came for the sick'.

I ride a motorcycle and one of the golden rules of biking is to look where you're going. That might sound obvious, but I remember being taught as a teenager when I was learning to ride, that the most dangerous thing I could do when I got scared in a corner was to look down at the bike and grip the handlebars tightly. The bike follows the eyes, so I would end up in the mud!

It's the same with following Christ: look where he is pointing. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and allow him to lead you and lead us beyond our comfort zone and you will find that he provides all that we need and far more besides. The one who sends us to the least and the lowest and the lost, did not call us merely to survive, but to have life and have it in all its fullness. And that's why I want to be a part of a church that has more parties and fewer meetings, because at parties you meet people, whereas at meetings you meet problems.

The Gospel is full of joy and abundance, but let me draw you back to this central paradox, that that joy and that abundance begins as we take up our cross and follow the one who leads us to the places of brokenness.

So, I tell you: do not worry about

tomorrow, for tomorrow has enough worries of its own. Strive first, strive now, strive here, strive with all you are for the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. And God will bless not only you but us in this diocese, he will bless through us more than we can ask or imagine.

**+Mark**



*Bishop of Chester: Mark Tanner*

**Bishop Mark Tanner began his public ministry as the Bishop of Chester on Sunday 20 September.**

The service of welcome for the new bishop had to be altered to conform with the coronavirus restrictions. This meant just 30 people were able to attend and witness the beginning of Bishop Mark's ministry.

# Bishop Mark's ministry begins

*Bishop Mark stands on the threshold of the West Door and prays a blessing over the city, county, and diocese.*



Christina Westwell  
"Welcome Bishop Mark from all at St Mary's Great Budworth and St Marks Antrobus."



Susan Heath  
"Welcome to Chester Bishop Mark and Lindsay. Greetings from St. Anne with St. Francis Sale."



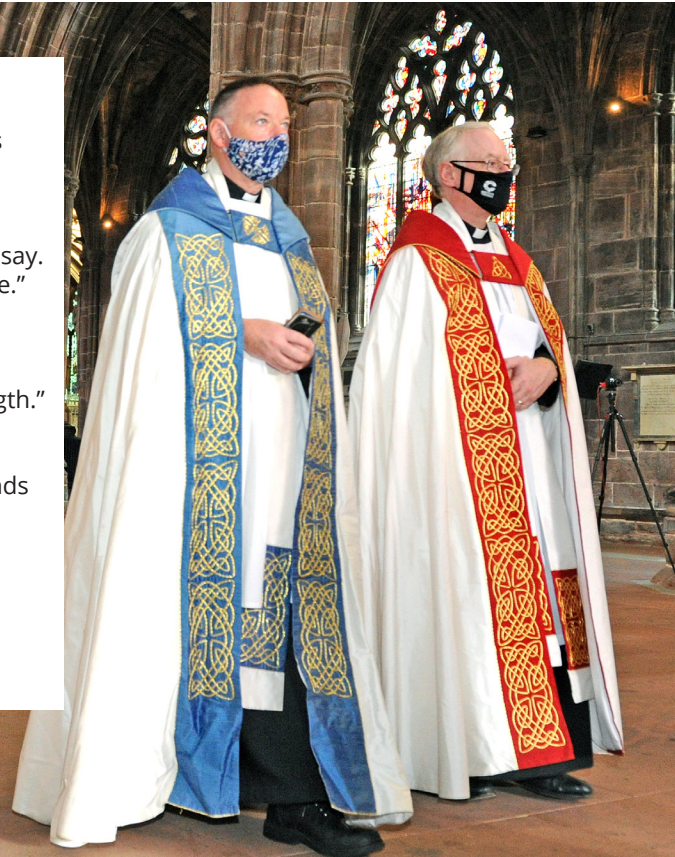
Christ Church Willaston  
"Welcome from Christ Church Willaston, praying you know God's blessing and strength."



Paul Bayes@paulbayes  
Love and prayers for Mark and for our friends and neighbours in @ChesterDiocese as this new chapter begins.



Kate Wharton @KateWharton27  
Praying for you today @Northern\_Bishop and for the adventures ahead.



See more images on [Facebook](#)



Bishop of Chester: Mark Tanner

## Bishop Mark welcomes 'Safe Spaces'

**A** new service providing vital support for survivors of church-related abuse has become operational.

Safe Spaces, commissioned by the Anglican and Catholic Churches in England and Wales, will be run by Victim Support, a national charity with a track record of providing survivor support.

Safe Spaces is a free and independent support service, providing a confidential,

personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused through their relationship with either the Church of England, the Catholic Church of England and Wales or the Church in Wales.

Welcoming the service, the Bishop of Chester, Mark Tanner says: "Safe Spaces is for anyone who has experienced church-related abuse of any form in England or Wales. Too often, we have failed in our response to survivors of abuse in the past and it is right that we do all that we can to support

victims and survivors now and in the future. I wholeheartedly welcome this vital service."

The service comprises a team of trained support advocates, who have undergone specialist training in supporting survivors of sexual violence. They have received specific training in how the churches respond to abuse cases, the way in which faith and church-related settings have been used to carry out abuse, and the particular issues affecting people who have had or still have, a relationship with the church.

The service is for those who may have experienced any form of abuse, including sexual abuse, physical abuse, financial abuse, psychological abuse (including spiritual abuse), domestic abuse, coercive and controlling behaviour.

The Bishop of Southampton, Debbie Sellin, Deputy Lead Safeguarding Bishop for the Church of England, said: "I'm delighted that

this service will shortly be available to offer support and advice to survivors of abuse.

"I want to express my thanks to all those who have helped to bring the project together, particularly the survivors who have given of their time and energy.

"In Victim Support, we have an excellent operational lead, and we look forward to continuing a constructive partnership with them as well as the other denominations involved.

"I commend the service for use and hope colleagues will do all they can to promote it locally."

A dedicated Safe Spaces team are available through the helpline **0300 303 1056** and live chat service between Monday-Saturday 10am-6pm, apart from Thursdays when the service is open 12-8pm.

For more information, visit: [SafeSpacesEnglandandWales](https://www.safe-spaces.org.uk)



# Events



## Fundraising for church buildings / halls

08 October 2020 - Online

Ask fundraising questions to Emily Allen, Church Buildings Missioner, and share ideas and learn from other parishes joining the online meeting. [More...](#)



## Making the most of 'A Church Near You'

12 October 2020 - Online

The Church of England Digital Team will take you through the key steps for making the most of your ACNY page, which every C of E church can have for free [More...](#)



## 24 Hours with Paul led by Robert Evans

05 November 2020 3:30pm - Online

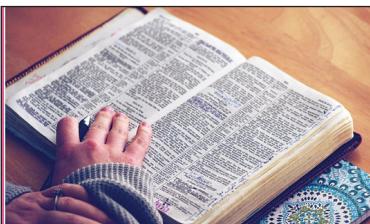
Robert Evans teaches New Testament Theology at the University of Chester, and has a passion for the theology of St Paul, our first Christian theologian. [More...](#)



## Receiving online donations

05 November 2020 - Online

Organised by the national church, this will cover setting up and receiving online donations, as well as providing an opportunity to ask questions. [More...](#)



## New Approaches to Bible reading

18 November 2020 - Online

This day will introduce you to some ways of reading the Bible that bring our lives and the histories of others into dialogue, allowing us to see our world anew. [More...](#)

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