



Churches sustain numbers growth

The latest statistics from the Church of England show that churches in the Diocese have consolidated the growth experienced in 2009.

Although the figures for 2010 show no change from 2009, that builds on 11% growth in the previous year.

“What this shows is that the growth that so encouraged us in 2009 is real growth,” said Bishop Mike. “It’s not an anomaly!”

The average weekly attendance in Diocese of Bristol churches is 17,700, 20% of whom are children and young people.

Patterns of attendance suggest that means 31,000 people attend church on a regular basis.

These statistics are the most accurate yet: 94% of churches returned their figures and all fresh expressions have been recorded.

At the same time, over 100 new services have been started in the Diocese over 2009 and 2010, according to the responses to this year’s Articles of Enquiry.

A range of services, from weekly mid-week Holy Communion to termly Messy Church have been started and are growing.

“I am so humbled by the prayerful commitment I see across churches in this Diocese as they take risks and start something new as they seek to serve God in their communities.”



The Diocese of Bristol - "a hopeful place indeed"

Six months into her new role as an Archdeacon, Christine Froude reflects on what she has seen so far around the Diocese.

From the top of the tower at Aust to the crypt at Christ Church Clifton...

From the simple beauty of a Lammas Day service in a barn at Cold Ashton to the solemnity of a 9/11 commemoration in Malmesbury Abbey...

I think I can say with certainty after six months that the lot of an Archdeacon is proving to be nothing if not varied!

Looking back through the diary since April, I have now preached at different churches each Sunday and visited over 80 parishes to meet with clergy or parish representatives on a range of matters relating to the physical and spiritual lives of their churches.

Through this time of transition and discovery, I have now seen confirmed something which I knew already – namely, that as a diocese, and the collective body of Christ in this corner of the world, we draw more strength from the breadth and variety of the expressions of our faith than we do division.

I have been inspired and blessed by many, many examples of the work being done to build communities of wholeness with Christ at their centres,

which have been prayerfully and sensitively designed to meet the needs of the particular contexts in which they are being implemented.

Most recently, at St Peter’s Penhill in Swindon deanery, I saw a church facing persistent vandalism and anti social behaviour but nonetheless continuing to reach out into its community in love. Lunch clubs and games afternoons, young people’s activities and coffee mornings are all challenging people’s perceptions of what the church can – and should – be in this area.

In rural South Gloucestershire, church members at Doynton are using their ancient building to serve a new and growing worshipping community that enjoys the informal style of café church. 40 people now attend this monthly service and the rear of the church has been sensitively re-ordered to accommodate them.

Finally, in Bristol, an enthusiastic and proactive leadership team at Holy Trinity Horfield is working hard to foster personal commitment and growth, including a recent stewardship campaign which has raised the profile and practice of regular giving.

I remain convinced that the local church is the hope of the world, and from where I stand, the Diocese of Bristol is looking like a very hopeful place indeed!





Hard “graft” leads to partnership in mission

Two churches from across north Bristol have partnered together in an exciting church “graft” to release the energy of the Church in St Andrews and Bishopston.

St Bart’s Church, which sits on the corner of the popular St Andrews Park, has invited a group of Christians from Christ Church Clifton, but who live locally to the parish of Bishopston and St Andrews, to join them in mission.

St Bart’s is one of three churches in the parish which spreads out either side of the lower end of the Gloucester Road and has a population of over 17,000 people.

Under the leadership of Revd James Stevenson, the parish’s PCC and the DCC of St Bart’s have been through a process which has led to this invitation.

With Paul Langham’s leadership, Christ Church Clifton has continued its response to Bishop Mike’s challenge several years ago to resource the wider Church in the city by sending out a group of about 40 people as well as one of their two Associate Vicars, Revd Wayne Massey, who has been offered the post of Team Vicar at St Bart’s starting next year.

This partnership is called a church “graft”, the aim being to increase the mission potential of a church in its community.

“We are so grateful for the spirit of partnership that has been behind this project,” says James.

“We have had the support of both parishes, both Deanery Leadership Teams and diocesan leadership in this process. Paul Langham at Christ Church and Mat Ineson as Area Dean here in City have been critical to making it happen.”

The initial stages of the project are also receiving funding from three of the ecclesiastical trusts in Bristol.

“It’s a real privilege to be invited to lead the next chapter in the life of St Bart’s,” continues Wayne.

“We have already had some wonderful opportunities to get to know each other – those who are already serving God through this great church and those who will be joining it.”

St Bart’s is not the only church in the parish stepping out in new ways. In January, all three churches will be changing their service patterns to provide nine weekly services across the parish to help different parts of the community hear the Gospel in ways appropriate to them and become part of a living Church.

Read more about the graft and watch a video here: <http://bit.ly/s13rMY>

Prisons Week

Prisons Week is from 20th to 26th November and, as Christians, we are challenged to look again at an issue that many of us find easier to ignore or pass by - prisoners.



Rowan Williams says, “One of the most serious aspects of being in prison can be the sense of isolation and even abandonment; and one of the most effective witnesses that can be given to prisoners is the assurance that they are not forgotten.”

With increasing numbers of women and over 60s in prison, a large proportion of offenders with learning difficulties and a poor record for reducing reoffending, there are multiple issues to address.

So what can you do?

First, you can find out more. The Prisons Week website has lots of resources for the Church or you could attend the Faith in Prison Day on 19 Nov in Olveston.

Second, you can support ex-prisoners through the “Basic Caring Communities” initiative which involves ISR.

This provides genuine support to prisoners trying to settle back into the community in the Bristol area.

Watch a video and find out more Prisons Week: <http://bit.ly/sdezJD>

Advent and Christmas

Increase your visibility online this Christmas www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=6763

Bishop Mike’s Advent letter: Come again? www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=6632

Nativity Crib Festival, Chipping Sodbury www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=6768

Advent Quiet Evening, Bristol Cathedral www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=6776

Advent & Christmas resource from CMS www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=6789

Offer a home for Christmas www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=3380

New and Events

Archdeacon’s Visitations - save the dates www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=6740

Environmental updates www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=6772

Church Schools celebrate 200 years www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=6636

Get smart and sign up! Reduce lead theft www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=6629

Next Generation enthused for mission www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?p=6568

All November and future events www.bristol.anglican.org/wordpress/?cat=41