



From the Archdeacon of Cheltenham, Hedley Ringrose

Following the announcement of my retirement at the end of the year, several people have asked me what changes I have seen in the church during my years in ministry. On the whole I tend to be a person who likes to look forward rather than back, but one of the differences I note and regret is that the church now seems to be less in touch with large sections of the community than forty years ago. Indeed there is considerable statistical evidence which supports the view that we can no longer assume that most people will have had even limited experience of church at some stage during their life. We have become more and more the community of the faithful, and at one level there's a great deal which is positive about that, providing we are still the church of the people.



But, thankfully, there is still a great deal of good will towards the Church, together with an interest in matters of faith and spirituality, but in order to engage with this we must take the initiative by meeting people where they are and responding to their needs, as Jesus did in the Gospels. Most importantly, if we are to communicate effectively we must listen, take note and only then share our story.

As you may have read last month, members of our congregations are encouraged to invite a non-churchgoing friend or neighbour to come with them on 'Back to Church Sunday' Sunday September 27th. Accepting that whilst being interested, some people find it difficult to take the step alone into a community that they don't know, here is an opportunity for each of us to engage in that important simple ministry of encouragement. It's a small thing to ask when we are told that nationally over 2 million people would come to church if someone asked them and offered to go with them.

St. John tells us that Andrew invited his brother Simon Peter to come and see Jesus. What an effect that had on spreading the Gospel! Are you ready to follow Andrew's lead?

Training, resources and opportunities for all Learning with others

Do you want to learn more about the Christian faith? Do you want to think through what it means to be a disciple of Christ? Have you heard about the Diocese's Education for Discipleship programme? It has modules which will enable you to do just that.

If there's no group using Education for Discipleship in your area, this autumn there is an opportunity for individuals from all over the Diocese to join a course in Stroud run by Brian Parfitt from the Department of Ministry. The group will be tackling the module 'Introducing the New Testament', hopefully other modules will follow after Christmas! The group will meet on Wednesdays from October 14th at 7.30pm for 8 weeks.

For information or to book a place contact Jan Curtis on 01453 886781 or janmcurt@yahoo.co.uk.

Environmental network invitation

The Gloucestershire Churches Environmental Justice Network meets bi-monthly and all are welcome to its meetings. The September meeting is on Wednesday 23 September from 12 noon until 2pm when the speaker will be Dr Gordon McGlone of the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, at the trust's headquarters in Reservoir Road Gloucester.

The December meeting is at the University of Gloucestershire (Park Campus) on Wednesday 2 December from 12 noon until 2pm, with Professor Daniella Tilbury, Professor of Sustainability. For more information and to book a seat contact the Revd Kingsley Jones on 01452 523 906 or at arkj.kcj@care4free.net

GEAR wants you!

Gloucestershire Emergency Accommodation resource - or the Night Shelter are looking for members of the public to join their Board. They are particularly keen to recruit members of the community in Gloucestershire who have one or more of the following:

- Experience of work with people who are homeless.
- Work experience in the voluntary sector.
- Work experience in Health or Social Care.

Board meetings are held every quarter, usually on an evening between 6.00pm and 7.30pm. The Board is responsible for developing the strategy, policies and procedures, employment of staff and for the day-to-day operations of the organisation led by the Chief Executive and the staff team. To find out more about GEAR and joining the Board, please contact Tania Curtis. tania.curtis@yahoo.com Or on (01452)560864

Around our diocese....

One moment, one question, one aim: half a million people to be invited 'Back to Church'

Churchgoers across the Church of England are set to personally to invite up to half a million people to services on **Back to Church Sunday, 27 September 2009**, making the event one of the largest co-ordinated evangelism events shared across the Church in recent history. The diocese of Gloucester is officially taking part in the initiative this year, asking churchgoers to invite someone they know who used to attend church to come back on Sunday 27th.

The Revd Andrew Braddock, Diocesan Missioner said. "As with Experience Easter, Back to Church Sunday provides local congregations with a ready made opportunity to invite people they know to something they love. Coming at the end of September, churches may choose to combine it with harvest festival celebrations. For many a simple invitation – and the offer to go with someone to church – may turn out to be a significant step on a journey of faith."

For more details visit www.backtochurch.co.uk or contact the Diocesan Missioner, the Revd Andrew Braddock –

abraddock@glosdioc.org.uk, 01452 610346.

A New Publication for Schools and Churches for Harvest

Experience Harvest is a new resource produced by the Diocese of Gloucester to support churches and schools engage with children and younger people with the Christian faith. This resource follows on from Experience Easter and Experience Christmas, which are hugely popular. The pack provides detailed instructions for setting up six stations in different parts of a church, with themes such as Harvest of the Sea, Harvest of the Garden and Harvest of the Flocks. Children can be led through these stations and can engage in a variety of practical activities. Other new publications available through the Diocese include Experience Pentecost and Prayers for Life, which offers 100 prayers for every event in the life of a Primary School. For more information, please contact Carolyn Wright cwright@glosdioc.org.uk or telephone the REsources Centre on 01452 835559.

What's happening at Gloucester Cathedral

Saturday 19 September 7.30pm

ORGAN RECITAL

Stephen Cleobury, Director of Music, King's College, Cambridge

Including works by Schumann, Bach, Howells, Couperin, Franck, Mendelssohn.

Tickets £8 (inc glass of wine) you can order by phone call 01453 760900, or collect in person from Gloucester Cathedral Shop or on the door.

For more information contact the Chapter Office one 01452 528095

Regular weekday service times: 8am Holy Communion; 8.30am Morning Prayer, 5.30pm Evensong. Wednesdays 7.30am and 12.45pm Holy Communion. **Saturday services:** 8am Holy Communion, 8.30am Morning Prayer, 4.30pm Evensong. **Sunday services:** 7.40am Morning Prayer, 8am Holy Communion, 10.15am Sung Eucharist (with Children's Church), 12.15pm Holy Communion, 3pm Choral Evensong.

What's On this month

www.gloucester.anglican.org

All listings correct at time of going to press. We can accept no responsibility for any changes or errors. Always check with the organiser before travelling.

What's On this Month

Events and special services near you -

Sep 3

Celebrating the Gloucestershire Federation of Women's Institute's 90th Anniversary

There will be a WI craft exhibition in Tewkesbury Abbey. For further information please contact Claire Redstone on 01684 850959. Tewkesbury Abbey Office is open between 9.00am - 2.00pm

Sep 5

Gloucester Day Parade 2pm-5pm

Representatives from all Churches are invited to participate in the first Gloucester Day Parade to take place in modern history. The event is scheduled to take place in the Historic City of Gloucester on Saturday the 5th of September 2009. For more information contact Alan Myatt on: 07973472896

Email: alanmyatt@blueyonder.co.uk

Sep 7

Spirit of Peace - Bring & Share Supper

Venue: The Friendship Cafe, Barton Street, Gloucester. The Bring & Share food should not contain any meat or alcohol please.

For more information contact: Jane Ozanne or Rev'd Geoff Crago on

Email: info@spiritofpeace.co.uk or g.crago@btinternet.com

Sep 12

Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust Sponsored Ride and Stride Event

Sponsored Ride and Stride - all over Gloucestershire. Cycle, walk or horse ride a route of your choice calling in at as many churches and chapels as you can manage. Money raised through sponsorship will be equally divided between a church of your choice and Gloucestershire Historic Churches Trust, to be used in support of churches in need all around the county. For more information contact: Ailsa O'Connor

Telephone: 01285 643343

Email: rideandstride@ghct.org.uk

or visit www.ghct.org.uk

Sep 12

Friends of Deerhurst Church Annual Lecture

Annual lecture on "Deerhurst Priory Architectural Developments in the later 11th and 12th centuries" By Professor Malcolm Thurlby of York University Toronto, Canada. Tickets: £4.50 (Students £2.50) on the door, including wine and cheese.

or visit www.deerhurstfriends.co.uk

Sep 19

Local Ministry Event - 'Pastoral Care'

This event investigates issues relevant to pastoral care today. It also explores how we care for

ourselves during busy times and if we have a healthy life balance. For more information contact Natasha Stone on: 01452 835544

Email: nstone@glosdioc.org.uk

Sep 19

Come and Sing Faure Requiem

Music at St. Peter's Church, Rendcomb with: Catherine Burton - soprano, Philip Brotheridge Baritone, Organist - John Wright, Directed by Philip Colls. Performance at 7 pm, Free entry. For more information contact Rosalind Wise on: 01285 831702

Email: rosalindwise@uwclub.net

Sep 28 – Oct 2

The Call of Mary and Martha - Retreat led by Brendan O'Malley

Sep 28, 9am - Oct 2, 5pm. Engaging with the struggle to find harmony and balance as we seek to co-operate with the work of God through our personal Rule of Life. Open to everyone. Cost: £290 (20% ministry discount.) For further details contact Society of Mary and Martha, Sheldon, Dunsford, Exeter EX6 7LE on: 01647 252752

Email: smm@sheldon.uk.com or visit www.sheldon.uk.com

Thank you to everyone who is sending in details of their coming events. Please include name of event, dates, times, brief details, admission prices, and contact details for anyone needing more information.