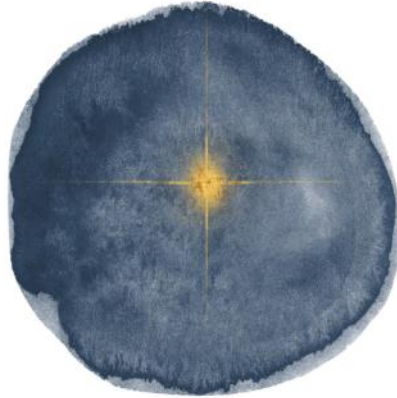


Winter 2021



A message from the Reverend Mark Badger, Area Dean

By now many of us will have had messages of 'Merry Christmas, Happy Christmas, Happy Holidays, and Tiding of Great Joy delivered through our doors.

Sadly, for many, Christmas is not always a time of unadulterated goodness and light. For those who have suffered loss –whether a parent, a child, a beloved partner, friend, a cherished pet a job or simply meeting with friends –Christmas can also be a frightfully painful season, more a reminder of what's been taken away than what's been given!

The last two years have been very difficult and there are many who will be feeling a sense of loss. The lights, decorations, parties, gifts and festivities make this a time of year that people look forward to, however, it is also one of the toughest times of the year for people who have experienced loss.

Few of us imagined when we first heard of the coronavirus that we would now be approaching our second Christmas of a global pandemic yet as those we look forward to celebrating again the coming of Jesus into our world, we can do so with hope.

(continued....)

(...continued)

Hope is a portion or part of faith. I suppose you could say that faith and hope are overlapping realities: hope is faith in the future tense. So much of faith is hope. Our hope is grounded in the rock-solid statement that "God didn't spare his own son." God's love for each and every one of us is so immense, so perfect and everlasting that nothing can separate us from it – as it says in the bible nothing can separate us from the love of God that is shown to us and lavished upon us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This is the Christian HOPE in God in Jesus Christ. It is the confident affirmation that God is faithful, that he will complete what He has begun. It is also, therefore, that confident expectation which waits patiently and ardently for God's purposes to be fulfilled.

In Jesus, the Christ Child of Bethlehem, the crucified Messiah, we have hope for the future – that we will be redeemed. In him we have hope for the present – that we are not alone, but are loved and have purpose. Hope even over the past – that our failures are not greater than God's power to transform.

The message of Christmas is that in the darkness and despair of the world around us, in a world of hatred and violence, in a world where many are excluded, a child was born. And with the birth of the Christ Child, a light that can never be extinguished began to shine. It was and is a light that brings hope and promise to all humankind.

Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.

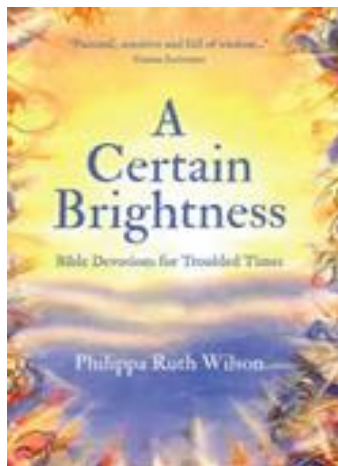
2 Corinthians 2:15



BOOK REVIEW

A CERTAIN BRIGHTNESS

Philippa Wilson knows very well what it means to be depressed, and she has hung on to God – or trusted that God would hang on to her – through many episodes of depression. In each short chapter of this beautiful little book, she takes a 5 word quote from Scripture, reflects on it, and ends with a prayer and the verse of a hymn. The words bring hope and “a certain brightness” in times of despair. She also suggests ways to cope with depression, and advice for helping others who are depressed. For anyone who suffers from bouts of depression or anxiety this book will come with refreshing honesty, sensitivity, and encouragement. It's a must.



*David and Rosemary Webster
Lyttelton Well Bookshop*



The Lyttelton Well

your local Christian bookshop

Open Monday to Saturday, 10am to 4pm

**6 Church Street, Malvern WR14 2AY
(next door to Malvern Priory)**

t: 01684 573702

e: bookshop@lytteltonwell.co.uk

Read any good books lately?

If you have a book recommendation that you think would encourage others in the Deanery, we'd love to hear from you.

e: sarah.kelsey@motov8.org.uk

STORIES FROM ACROSS THE DEANERY

Results from the Deanery Survey

When the new Deanery of Malvern and Upton was formed, the Deanery Leadership Team (DLT) decided that in order to get to know the priorities of the Deanery from the ground up, we would commission a survey seeking to understand what the Deanery thought our priorities should be.

One of the principles that we've tried to work to is looking at what parishes can do best on their own, what groups of parishes could do best together and then what we can do most effectively together as a Deanery. This way we would be able to focus our attention and efforts on what was the most important and effective strategies for growth.

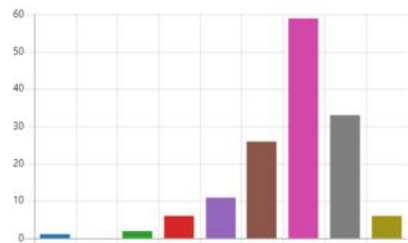
The survey was filled out by 144 different respondents and reflected a good cross-section of the Deanery. Every benefice responded and there was a good variety of respondents from clergy to churchwardens, LLMs to congregation members.


The first thing to say is that the vast majority of respondents came from the laity and therefore reflect a much more "congregational" view. The second thing is that none of you will be surprised that the majority of respondents were in the 65-74 age range, with the 75-84 the next highest. This reflects the congregation demographics of the

3. What age range would you place yourself in?

[More Details](#)

| | |
|------------|----|
| ● Under 18 | 1 |
| ● 18-24 | 0 |
| ● 25-34 | 2 |
| ● 35-44 | 6 |
| ● 45-54 | 11 |
| ● 55-64 | 26 |
| ● 65-74 | 59 |
| ● 75-84 | 33 |
| ● 85+ | 6 |





Deanery as a whole, and when taken alongside the question around children and young people in church, does point to where there is a significant gap in our age profile.

The vast majority of our Deanery sees themselves as either rural or semi-rural suburban, with a few small exceptions. Overall, the data we collected from the survey is consistent with other datasets that we have about the Deanery, and this means that we can have some confidence that the ideas expressed in the responses are grounded in the reality of our Deanery.

The two questions which of course are the most important are the ones exploring what the priorities for the Deanery should be, along with what changes might need to happen in order for those priorities to be achieved.

In answer to the first question there were three overwhelming responses. The three priorities for the new Deanery should be:

- Greater collaboration on Children, Young People and Families work
- Working to provide greater engagement with our communities
- Collaborating to share resources more intentionally

Each of these priorities (along with more information on the data collected) will be explored in more detail at our Deanery Synod in January. In the synod meeting we will have the opportunity to delve into these three priorities and what this might look like in practice. In the meantime, it would be great if individual PCCs also had a look at these and asked the question **“Is this what we want the Deanery to be focusing on in the next five years?”**

Rev'd Phillip Johnson, Vicar of Malvern Link with Cowleigh and member of the Deanery Leadership Team

NEXT SYNOD:

Our next Deanery Synod is on Thursday 20th January, at 7:30pm on Zoom

To sign up, please go to: <https://forms.gle/ugyZ1GDinXGeksm3A>

or email sarah.kelsey@motov8.org.uk



The good news of Jesus in a climate crisis

In my work at Tearfund, I'm constantly seeing the impacts of the climate crisis. More extreme droughts, more powerful storms, and people who've worked hard to grow their crops or start businesses being pushed back into poverty as the conditions around them get evermore intense.

But I'm also seeing the incredible witness of churches around the globe: young Christians turning e-waste into solar panels in Nigeria, starting recycling projects in Haiti and campaigning for change in Brazil. Each of these churches brings practical solutions to the community while demonstrating their love for Jesus with those around them.

Concern about the climate crisis continues to increase in the UK. In a recent survey IPSOS found that 80% of people in the UK think climate change is now a global emergency. In our own research at Tearfund, we discovered 98% of Christian teenagers have friends who are concerned about climate change. What would it look like for our churches here in Malvern and Upton to share the good news of Jesus with people in a way that connects to this increasing source of fear and anxiety?

And what if that response could be exactly what the world needs to avert catastrophe, too? Gus Speth, the former Dean of Forestry at Yale reflected after years of working on the environment: "I used to think the top environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. I thought that with 30 years of good science we could address these problems, but I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy, and to deal with those we need a spiritual and cultural transformation. And we scientists don't know how to do that."

The church has a rich history of spiritual and cultural transformation. From the Old Testament laws that guided Israel to be a witness of radical justice and creation care to the nations around them, to the subversive culture of the early church that turned much of Roman values on their head.

We now face an emergency situation, but as followers of Jesus we know God hasn't given up on his creation: he chose to be born into it, with a plan to redeem and restore. In 2022, could we find ways to partner with those in our wider community, responding to climate change together, and in so doing find opportunities to share the news of a God who loves and cares for the earth and for all people?

*For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,
and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether
things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace
through his blood, shed on the cross.*

Colossians 1:19-20

*Jack Wakefield,
Tearfund*



Jack is a Campaigner at Tearfund, supporting Christians in the UK to pray, speak up and live differently to help tackle the climate crisis. He's passionate about zero waste living and long walks, and recently helped to launch the Climate Emergency Toolkit for churches. Jack is based in Worcestershire and has recently spoken at our Deanery Chapter meeting.

jack.wakefield@tearfund.org

NEWS, EVENTS AND RESOURCES

Time Apart: Poetry and the Epiphany

`TIME APART` - A `Quiet` Day: at Holland House (our Diocesan Retreat House in Pershore) led by the Rev.Paul Hunt.

The theme: `Poetry and the Epiphany`

Saturday January 15th 2022, from 10am to 4 pm

Cost £35 (including lunch and tea)

ALL WELCOME

Find out more at www.hollandhouse.org or (01386) 860330



Deanery Synod

Our next Deanery Synod is on **Thursday 20th January**, at 7:30pm on Zoom.

To sign up, please go to: <https://forms.gle/ugyZ1GDinXGeksm3A>, or email sarah.kelsey@motov8.org.uk.

Lent Course

We are planning a Deanery Lent course based around the LICC Gateway 7 material on Mark's Gospel.

The first and last sessions will be in person and the remainder on Zoom.

- | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| Session 1 | Saturday 5th March (in person) |
| Session 2 | Wed 9th March (Zoom) |
| Session 3 | Wed 16th March (Zoom) |
| Session 4 | Wed 23rd March (Zoom) |
| Session 5 | Wed 30th March (Zoom) |
| Session 6 | Saturday 2nd April (in person) |

Venues will be confirmed in the New Year. To sign up for more information please go to: <https://forms.gle/4csyviaviSkEVLrx5> or email sarah.kelsey@motov8.org.uk.

