

The View

News for Clergy, Churchwardens, LLMs and Lay Chairs

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All manner of things shall be well

A reflection by Rt Rev Peter Hill

Never before has a little boy throwing a snowball at my missus given me such hope for the future! It was a socially distanced snowball of course!

For two hours yesterday in East London it snowed, a rare event indeed. A white carpet of hope appeared rapidly over rooftops, streets, and our local park. As across much of the rest of the country it brought people out into our open spaces in large numbers, especially those with young families. It was a sheer delight to make small talk again with neighbours, especially some we had never spoken to before. It was fantastic to see so many smiles and so much fun in the park as snowmen and snowwomen of all shapes and sizes rose up with the usual family discussion as to the best methodology, as parents and children worked together.

Understandably concern was expressed by the police and others at the scale of outdoor gatherings in the midst of lockdown, but certainly in this neck of the woods, even amidst the excitement, most people seemed to be observing all the safe Covid rules – barring the youngest children of course! Some of them had never seen real snow before.



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford

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For me it was a real sign, and even a sacrament of hope for our future. The snow soon melted away, but it suggested that when the horror of this dreadful pandemic is finally over there will be such great celebrations in our communities. We in God's church must be part of that, and even take a lead where appropriate. Inevitably, and rightly, those celebrations will be heavily tinged with lament for those who have lost loved ones and we will need to get the balance right in our worship. It will be thanksgiving, grieving and commemoration in equal measure. That period may come quite suddenly, so we would do well to begin to prepare now, even at this intense time.

In relation to this, part of this morning's lectionary psalm was so apt and reminds us that our gracious God remains ultimately in control of his creation:

*He gives snow like wool;
he scatters hoarfrost like ashes.
17 He hurls down his crystals of ice like crumbs;
who can stand before his cold?
18 He sends out his word and melts them;
he makes his wind blow and the waters flow. Psalm 147:17-19*

As the snow fell and peoples' joy lifted my spirit, I recalled that Julian of Norwich, the Christian mystic, lived through the devastating effects of our first recorded bubonic plague back in the 14th century. Her visions and writings came at a time of emergence from that 'Black Death', yet even then she could say:

'All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well'.

That is always our true Gospel hope in Christ, in and out of pandemic.

+ Peter

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News and information

National Register of Clergy

The Church of England has recently written to all active clergy to let them know about the introduction of a new National Register of Clergy. You can read a copy of their letter [here](#).

As you will be aware, the National Register is an important development in strengthening safeguarding in the Church. It was recommended by Dame Moira Gibb in her report into the abuse carried out by the late Peter Ball. Synod has passed legislation mandating the Register. Its creation is the result of the NCIs, and representatives from each diocese, working together over the past 18 months.

In summary, this means:

- Having a single, reliable, up to date register will enable clergy, churchwardens and members of the public to check the bona fides of all clergy with licence or PTO.
- The Register will show an individual's title and name, how they are engaged with the Church (current post/licence) and the Diocese, Area or Benefice to which they are licensed.
- The Register **will not** include contact, biographical or historical information.
- The Register is due to go live on the C of E website in May.

The National Register is being made possible thanks to the work taking place to bring in a new People System. This system will manage payroll and hold people data for stipendiary clergy, other ministers, and NCI staff.

In the letter, recipients are asked to confirm their details by visiting the Church of England website and entering a unique number that is printed on the letter. Please ensure that you do this by the deadline of 23 February.

We understand that there are problems with Royal Mail deliveries in some parts of the diocese at present so it is possible that you may not yet have received your letter.

If you have any questions, please contact the project team at psproject@churchofengland.org

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Bishop Guli's Election by the College of Canons

The College of Canon's will meet by Zoom tomorrow evening, Tuesday 27 January at 7.30pm to elect Bishop Guli as the new Bishop of Chelmsford. The election makes it possible for a whole series of events to take place which will lead to Bishop Guli beginning her ministry in the diocese later this year. The meeting will include a short act of worship and will be streamed live on the [Chelmsford Cathedral Facebook page](#).



Thank you to everyone who joined our first Generous God, Generous Disciples Webinar on Saturday. A recording of the webinar will be available on our website later this week.

Details of our forthcoming webinars are set out below:

Spirituality and Giving, Wednesday, 27 January, 7.30pm – 8.30pm

We'll be joined by the Dean of Chelmsford, Nicholas Henshall who will lead us in a reflection on spirituality and giving.

Nicholas writes: "Although we easily focus on the practicalities of financial giving and its outcomes, in the New Testament giving is always a spiritual issue. Jesus talks about giving again and again – and his focus is always on the need of the giver to give. In this webinar we will be exploring these themes, and above all how we understand our generosity as a response to the generosity of the God we know in Jesus Christ, who fed thousands from a few loaves of bread and turned hundreds of gallons of water into hundreds of gallons of wine." [Register here.](#)

The Parish Giving Scheme, Thursday 4 February, 7.30pm – 8.30pm

In this webinar we'll explain how the Parish Giving Scheme can help you to encourage and enable giving in your parish. We'll be joined by Richard Jones who is the Lead Parish Giving Adviser for the Diocese of Hereford. Richard will explain how the scheme works and how you can get started. There will also be an opportunity for discussion and questions. [Register here.](#)

Dates for our other two webinars about stewardship resources and diocesan finance will be confirmed soon.

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The Bradwell Area Vocations day will take place by Zoom this year on Saturday 27 February between 10am and 2pm.

For further information and to register, please [click here](#).



Online Church Webinars

Supporting our parishes in developing online church

We have two Online Church webinars taking place in February. Details are set out below. For further information about Online Church, future webinars and recordings of previous webinars, [click here](#).

Evangelism in a Digital World, Tuesday 2 February, 7pm

We'll be joined by Ali Johnson, Digital Evangelist at Cliff College as we discuss evangelism in the complex and growing online space. [Register here](#).

Nuts and bolts session covering email, WhatsApp and Parish Websites, Tuesday 16 February 7pm

[Register here](#).

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Good News – Mustard Seed Moments from Church E20

This week's Good News story is written by Rev Saffron Ryan from the E20 Church Plant.

“What does Church look like during a global pandemic? Well, for Church E20 it has meant making the most of the outside during the Summer months with prayer walks in the Olympic Park, a socially distanced Church family outing to the Funfair, blackberrying, ice creams, and pebble painting to create a pathway of hope filled messages. Whilst Covid restrictions have in many ways meant increasingly keeping our distance from one another, this in turn has meant we have grown increasingly close to the community groups within E20.

We were invited to join in with the Chobham Manor residents Christmas Celebration. Over the space of a week, residents wrote messages of hope to decorate the playground railings and created stars to display in windows. On the Sunday afternoon, at 4pm everyone turned on their Christmas lights, socially distanced bubbles took part in a star scavenger hunt, and a nativity trail was facilitated by Church E20, with 100 goodie bags given out, and a car boot of Christmas donations for the foodbank collected.

The E20 Foodbank is another fantastic example of several community groups coming together to meet the needs of the most vulnerable during the pandemic. The Yard, East Village Management, Chobham Manor Residents, Chobham Manor School, Church E20, local individuals and businesses - Everyone has a role to play. Thanks to the Christmas appeal we were also able to provide toys, gifts, wrapping paper, and Christmas hampers, during December.

Like many we have also embraced the world of Zoom for gatherings, services, prayer meetings, bible study and over Christmas an interactive family theatre production provided by the wonderfully creative Artless Theatre Company.

However, everything I have just relayed, as much as it is good, does not fully speak of what Church E20 looks like during a global pandemic. To find it, you need to look closer, instead it is found in the stories of the individuals encountered and the face of God in the midst, like M, a single mum, who is going through some really tough times, she visits the foodbank each week, and each week we chat, she tells me of her love of cooking and I tell her of my terrible cooking attempts! One week when she came to collect food, she said, “today I have something for you”, it was a copy of her cake recipe, which she assured me that I would be able to make, so I did, and it was the best cake! A tiny moment and yet huge in Kingdom value. Those are the moments, those God in the midst moments, those moments when he surprises us, often small and fleeting, but of huge significance, that we need to share with one another.

Mustard seed moments.”

