

Communications Update – September 25th 2007

3rd Oct 2007

Feel free to forward this to others, or to use in diocesan or parish newsletters, magazines or websites.

Thousands come back to church

Two hundred thousand invitations for 'Back to Church Sunday' have been issued to the millions who want to go to church. Twenty thousand people are set to return to church with a friend this weekend (Sunday 30th September) as part of a major co-ordinated effort by the Church of England to pack the pews in around 2,000 participating churches. Details at: <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/news/pr8607.html>

People and Places podcast - Voices of the Church of England

The Church of England and Premier Radio have joined forces to feature a range of people across today's Church of England, via a series of new monthly 15-minute podcasts. Throughout the 'People and Places' series - available online at www.cofe.anglican.org/podcast and via the iTunes website - journalist Howard Dobson meets a variety of people in a variety of places, and Premier Radio's Cindy Kent contributes topical interviews recorded in London. In the first edition, Bishops' Selection Conference Secretary Kevin Diamond explains the route to ordination; National Mission and Evangelism Adviser Paul Bayes talks about Back to Church Sunday; and Catford curate Sheridan James introduces prayers for commuters.

Churches called to remember farmers at Harvest Festivals

The Bishop of Exeter has encouraged congregations not just to thank God for the food they eat but to remember the farmers who produce it at their Harvest Festivals. As Foot and Mouth disease continues to push farming into crisis, the bishop also called on churches to consider the Farming Help Charities when gathering their Harvest collections. Details at: <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/news/pr8507.html>

Archbishop of Canterbury visits Armenia, Syria and Lebanon

Following on from his visit to the United States the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams visits Armenia, Syria and Lebanon, from 22nd - 29th September. The Archbishop's visit to Armenia is a result of an outstanding invitation from the Catholicos, His Holiness Karekin II, who heads the Armenian Apostolic Church. The Archbishop, who has a long-standing interest in the spirituality and history of the Eastern Churches, hosted the Catholicos at Lambeth Palace and Canterbury in 2004. The Archbishop's visit to Syria and Lebanon will be shorter and forms part of his continuing personal engagement with Christian churches in the Middle East, and with leaders of other faiths in the region. Read further details on the visit here: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/releases/070918.htm>

Archbishop of York responds to Prime Minister on Zimbabwe

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, has responded to the statement of the Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, in the Independent newspaper and Mr Brown's interview on ITV News. Details at: <http://www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/cgi/news/news.cgi?t=template&a=1168>

Archbishop of Canterbury - hopes and prayers at the start of the Jewish New Year

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, sent a greeting to Jewish Communities at the start of the festival of Rosh Hashanah, marking the start of the Jewish New Year. His greeting touched on the themes of covenant and renewal, expresses the hope that the pressures on Jewish communities including anti-Semitism and pressure arising from international tensions may alleviate. He also hoped and prayed for the return of three Israeli soldiers abducted last year. Read the full greeting here: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/releases/070911a.htm>

Ethical spending could reduce mortgages

Applying Christian principles to handling money could reduce the UK's consumer debt crisis, keep mortgage payments down, and eliminate global poverty, according to a new booklet by John Preston, a Church of England specialist on personal finance and giving. Details at: <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/news/pr8407.html>

Autumn harvest of new resources

Church House Publishing is looking ahead to releasing a range of new resources in the run-up to Advent designed to inform and inspire churches and individual Christians. These include Reflections for Daily Prayer, a brand new set of daily Bible reading notes based on the Common Worship Lectionary; a blend of theological reflection and practical advice on Christian Initiation in Connecting with Baptism; and a marriage preparation course based on the popular book, Growing Together, that parishes could use to help them prepare couples for married life. Other new resources this season include a full-colour Christingle Cube created in partnership with The Children's Society; and updated versions of our popular series of leaflets exploring the key 'life events'. For more information on any of these new resources, or to order online, visit: <http://www.chpublishing.co.uk/feature.asp?id=2393694>

Archbishop of Canterbury: September 11th – lessons from history for faith and civil society

In a lecture entitled 'Faith Communities in a Civil Society – Christian Perspectives' given to the Christian Muslim Forum Conference in Cambridge, Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, considered the events and consequences of two events in history sharing the date of September 11th. Read the full text of the lecture here: http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/sermons_speeches/070910.htm

Church stresses need for local consultation and access to Planning System

Local people's access to the planning system should not be sacrificed simply to speed up decision making and planning legislation should tackle the proliferation of gated communities, the Church of England has warned the Department for Communities and Local Government. "Good community relations are a vital part of planning sustainable settlements and their consideration should always be part of the planning process", argues the submission from the Urban Bishops' Panel. Details at: <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/news/pr8007.html>

Green issues challenge international security

Climate change is not just a green issue; it is also a security concern, according to a briefing paper published by the Church of England. "Drought and other climate-related shocks risk sparking violence and conflict," the paper warns. Details at: <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/news/pr81climate07.html>

Archbishop of Canterbury's new climate change adviser

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, has appointed Paula Clifford on a six month secondment from Christian Aid to help further the Church of England's quest for sustainable solutions to climate change, following on from the launch of the Church of England's "Shrinking the Footprint" initiative. Paula has been at Christian Aid for nine years and has recently published a paper entitled "All creation groaning: a theological approach to climate change". The paper can be read at: http://www.christianaid.org.uk/Images/climatetheofinal_tcm15-26498.pdf

Back-to-Work Prayers to lift post-holiday blues

The Church of England published a selection of prayers to help weary workers 'kick the post-summer holiday blues'. The five prayers - by authors ranging from Charles Wesley to Sheridan James, a curate in Catford - have been selected to give busy people a chance to reflect and recharge with God's help. The prayers are taken from Pocket Prayers for Work (Church House Publishing, 2004) and are available at <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/prayers/>, alongside a range of other prayers on contemporary concerns.

Archbishop of Canterbury launches new research degrees

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, announced a new higher degree programme as an expansion of the Archbishop's Examination in Theology. Applications for PhD and MPhil degrees in Theology will be accepted from early 2008 with the first awards of the new MPhil degrees anticipated in 2012 and Doctorates shortly afterwards. Candidates will be examined to university standards in order to qualify. Read further details on the research degrees here: <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/releases/070911.htm>

Young audiences need trusted news sources

Government policy towards the news media should aim to promote the flow of information and mass communication, while setting standards of truthfulness, accuracy and fairness, Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops have told the House of Lords. Details at: <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/news/pr8307.html>

Archbishops' Council responds to Single Equality Bill proposals

The preservation of religious freedom, including the right to manifest religious belief in all its diversity, remains a cornerstone of an open, liberal and tolerant society, the Archbishops' Council has stated in its response to proposals for a Single Equality Bill. Details at: <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/news/pr8207.html>

Report highlights long-term role for missionary deacons

The role of deacons as missionaries to their communities should be taken more seriously, and people exploring a vocation to the priesthood should be encouraged to consider ministering as a deacon – the 'diaconate' - as a long-term option, argues a report from the Church of England's Faith and Order Advisory Group. Details at: <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/news/pr7907.html>

Tailor Made: Communications training to suit you - new programme launched on October 1st

Ever wished that more people knew about the good things that are going on at your church? The Communications Office's 'tailor made' communications training programme can help church people harness the power of the media to maximum effect. The new 2008 programme, to be launched on 1st October, features a half day aimed at helping get church websites noticed in cyberspace, and a day looking at ways in which a message can be made to stick in readers' and listeners' minds, as well as the popular radio, TV and new media courses. Visit www.commstraining.cofe.anglican.org from 1st October for details of the new programme and to book a place.