Work begins on Lundy’s Church

Work to keep open Lundy’s iconic church as a sanctuary for visitors and worshippers is underway, but more donations are needed.

Work has begun on St Helen’s Church on the island of Lundy in our diocese to conserve it for the future and develop it into a centre for learning and research as well as worship. The project plans to completely recover the roofs, repoint the walls and relay the floors. It is due for completion by spring next year.

As it has for the last 120 years, St Helen’s will continue as a place of worship and a place where people can celebrate important events in their lives such as baptisms and marriages. But, once repaired, the building will also provide educational facilities for the schools who come to visit Lundy’s unique natural environment and at present have no wet-weather base.

The project, costing £1,400,000, has benefited from grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, The National Churches Trust, Devon Historic Churches, All Churches Trust, The Doris Field Trust, The Lundy Field Society, with £400,000 being raised through local fundraising.

Rev Brenda Jacobs, Team Rector, Hartland Coast Mission Community, said: “We are very grateful for the grants we have received. They have caught our vision for St Helen’s which will remain as the centre of worship on the island but will also provide a place of sanctuary, study and refreshment to all who visit Lundy. We look forward to the reopening of the church and hearing the bells ring out once more.”

To donate to the project please visit: www.sthelenslundy.co.uk
IDEAS FOR GROWING YOUR RURAL CHURCH

Growing the Rural Church has recently updated their webpages with a range of information and ideas to help your rural church engage and work with your community. You can also watch their new video and read a case study to get a flavour of what they are up to. Follow Growing the Rural Church on Facebook and Twitter @GtRCDevon and visit their webpage on the diocesan website.

ASH TREE SURVEY MONITORS DISEASE

Ash trees are increasingly affected by Ash Dieback, a disease caused by a fungus (Hymenoscyphus fraxineus). The disease causes leaf loss and crown dieback in affected trees, and it can lead to tree death.

It is clear from the European experience of the disease that a significant number of ash trees could be lost from Devon over the course of perhaps the next 10 – 15 years – up to ten times the number of elm trees affected by Dutch Elm disease.

Martyn Goss, the Diocese of Exeter’s environmental officer, said: “One of the really sad features of our time of living on a desecrated planet is the increasing loss of animal and plant species, and Ash Dieback is the latest of a number of diseases now likely to decimate Devon’s mature tree population.”

For further details on what to look for and who to send your findings to, as well as other details contact: david.curry@arocha.org.

BISHOP SARAH MOST TWEETING BISHOP

Bishop Sarah has been named by Premier Research as the bishop who tweets the most.

Despite joining Twitter just 18 months ago, Bishop Sarah has sent almost 3,000 tweets. She said: “I tweet because it is a way of linking to people who don’t always come to Church. “

The Church of England’s communications team is running training for those who want to explore using Twitter or Facebook for their Church. The training is on offer in Exeter on 12 October. See our website for details or email communications@exeter.anglican.org to find out if there are spaces still remaining.
From tragedies to commuter woes, life as a railway chaplain is never boring. The South West’s newest chaplain to our railways talks about what motivates him.

Full steam ahead for Steve

Steve Coslett is the new Railway Chaplain for the South West of England and is based in Devon at Exeter St David’s station. He was born in Torquay and previously worked as a Police Constable for Devon and Cornwall Police before going for ordination training at Moorlands College in Hampshire when he was 23. He is now ordained as a Baptist minister and has recently returned to his home county after working for a charity working with street children in Mexico.

Steve is employed by The Railway Mission which provides Railway chaplains across England, Wales and Scotland. Chaplains are on hand to support railway staff and assist the British Transport Police as well as offering vital help and care to travellers in the event of rail suicides.

Steve, who was able to assist at a recent suicide in Dawlish, explains: “Railway chaplains are really valued when there are fatalities. Chaplains were on hand to help both at the Manchester bombing as well as the Grenfell Tower fire. They were based at nearby stations. We are on the cutting edge at times like those and a lot of work is going on.”

For Steve, it's his strong faith that helps him to support others at difficult times. He has gone to church all his life and had a full submersion baptism at aged 18. He said: “It is in Him that I find strength.”

Steve also recognises his limitations and the value of proper Sabbath rest. He said: “In Mexico I got burn out. I realised I needed to let go and recognise that I have my limitations and give it to God.”

Now back to full strength, Steve is careful to get proper rest and is really enjoying his “relational” work with all he meets on the trains around Devon and further afield.

He adds: “It is exciting to go where God is leading. It is about taking those opportunities when they pop up.”

Look out for Steve on your next train journey.

Contact Steve on: 07793 246533

“Chaplains are… on the cutting edge… a lot of work is going on”
Stuck in a traffic jam approaching the motorway recently I was overjoyed when the sat-nav pinged and told me a faster route had been found. Following the instructions I left the route I had set out on round country lanes with blind bends, had to reverse twice to let other traffic through and finally came back to the very same motorway one junction on and into the very same traffic-jam I thought I had avoided, more stressed than before, with the sat-nav telling me I was now going to arrive at my destination even later than it had predicted earlier!

When you are travelling alone without a passenger to navigate sat-navs are very useful but they have their limitations so I was rather amused to see a sign on a church in Plymouth telling me that “God’s guidance is better than any sat-nav”: not difficult I thought, after my recent experience.

In the days before sat-navs were even thought of, John Henry Newman, found himself becalmed in the Straits of Bonifacio, between Sardinia and Corsica; eager to get back to England he had previously been stuck in Palermo for three weeks trying to find a passage back home and had boarded an orange-boat bound for Marseille thinking his journey would soon be over. It was the experience of being becalmed for a week with his eagerness to get on to where he wanted to be that led him to compose the poem ‘Pillar of Cloud’ which we might know better as the hymn ‘Lead, Kindly Light’ In it, he contrasts the eagerness to choose our path and know our destination with the faithful acceptance of God’s guidance step by step.

If we just want God to be the sat-nav of our lives to get us to where we want to go, by the quickest route possible, we will be disappointed. If we accept that God’s guidance is infinitely better than any map, route-planner or sat-nav then we will be content for his light to guide us step by step to the destination he intends us to reach.

Lead, Kindly Light, amidst th’encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on!
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me.

John Henry Newman