

A Messy Baptism

Family and friends gathered in the youth centre in Colyton to support Poppy, the youngest member of Messy Church, as she was baptised at what is believed to be the first Messy Baptism in the area.

The 25 children and their families, along with Poppy's older brother Kai, aged 3, created the worship space by decorating candle holders, arranging flowers and hanging the welcome bunting they

had worked on together. Everyone was encouraged to write a prayer and Poppy's father Will chose a few to read out.

There was a dramatic retelling of the story of Jesus' baptism before Rev Hilary Dawson conducted the baptism ceremony.

Kathryn Radley, Children's and Families worker within Holyford Mission Community and in Beer/Seaton, described the service as "quietly moving". She said, "It was



the first time we had held a baptism in Messy Church and we felt hugely privileged and a little daunted too. The main concern was how we could give reverence to a sacrament in a youth club surrounded by our craft, games and food tables!"

But Kathryn added: "The common reflection afterwards was how close and how still all the children had been, mesmerised by the words, water and light."

Poppy's mother Sarah said: "It was a lovely occasion and we really enjoyed it. It was a very special day and we were humbled by the welcome that Poppy received into the Church. Thank you for arranging such a special event. I hope that there will be more baptisms in Messy Church as a result."

Rev Hilary Dawson, Priest-in-Charge of the Holyford Mission Community added: "Kathryn's thoughtful guiding of our work with children and families and her openness, has made this kind of thing possible."



MOTHERS' UNION groups from around our diocese gathered

in Exeter Cathedral for a special service marking 140 years of the work of the Christian organisation that works to promote family life. As well as marking the milestone, the new Diocesan President Nickie Johnson was commissioned by Bishop Robert as were the Diocesan Chaplains, the Trustees and other officers. Find out more about Nickie in the next issue!

Nickie is commissioned in her new role by Bishop Robert

Mothers' Union mark 140 years of ministry



Curates head for Holy Land



23 curates enjoyed their Holy Land experience

DURING January Bishops Robert and Sarah led the three yearly pilgrimage by curates from Exeter Diocese to the Holy Land. The ten day pilgrimage allowed the curates to visit many sites from the Old and New Testament, including those in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and near the Sea of Galilee. The group also visited Jericho and the Dead Sea as well as Palestinian schools and the Yad Veshem holocaust memorial.

Calling all thrill seekers!

DARING INDIVIDUALS are sought for the third Kenton abseil down the 120ft tower of All Saints Church on Saturday 3 September. Funds raised through sponsorship will go towards the church roof restoration and Oasis Relief, who work with communities in Zambia. Contact Pip Bowhay on 07795 167892 or email kentonabseil2016@yahoo.co.uk

Over the last ten years or so I have gradually become aware of a deepening calling to minister to children, helping them to explore the Christian faith and experience God for themselves.

My calling grew gradually out of a dull childhood experience of church and in my teens I gradually stopped attending. I found faith in a much deeper way at the age of 23 in an independent Pentecostal fellowship in North East Scotland (the LAST place I expected to be!) with vibrant children's groups both on Sunday mornings and outreach during the week.

Since that time I have gradually moved south, eventually to Devon. In each church I have attended I have been drawn to working with children and young people, to offer children the chance to experience a personal relationship with God at a young age.

My calling has gathered momentum in the last three years since moving to Devon and becoming part of a small rural church without a significant established children's ministry. My role, at St Mary's, Uffculme has covered leading a team on Sunday mornings as well as a monthly outreach café and running weekly Bible Story Clubs in a preschools setting and primary school and has thus extended to families as well as just children.

There have been many joys and frustrations in exploring my calling, particularly as my role has expanded in Devon. Progress in some areas has often been slow, but in other areas ideas flourish and it is incredibly rewarding to see children gaining confidence to pray out loud and to share their experience of God. As I type we are awaiting the arrival of our second baby – so who knows what this calling will look like in a few more months or years - I'm looking forward to seeing where God leads me!

Vocations Sunday is on 17 April.

vocation.churchofengland.org

www.callwaiting.org.uk

Sarah's calling

This month as we focus on vocations, **Sarah** tells us about her sense of God calling...



Called to be YOU

Last month I was in the Holy Land with Bishop Robert and a group of curates from this diocese and we had a wonderful time. One of the people we met was Najwa. Najwa spoke about how her faith in Jesus Christ is her motivation for the compassion she shows for some 70 boys who are cared for at Jeel Al Amal.

Set up by her parents Najwa now runs this boys home and school in Bethany for some of the most disadvantaged children in the surrounding area. It



Najwa, talking to curates, is motivated by her faith to run a boys home and school in Bethany

provides a secure and loving home and good education which enables many of the boys to go on to be successful. Najwa would say that this is her calling.

Now we don't have to be in Bethany to be called. Each one of us is called by Jesus Christ to follow him. In following Jesus we are called to grow in our understanding of him and of God and in doing so we will find ourselves flourishing into our true selves and becoming more Christ like. This is the fullness of life which Jesus speaks of in the gospel of John.

In following Christ we are also called to share our faith and reflect his love in the world. We need to have courage to speak to our friends and family of what Jesus means to us and to reflect his love to those we meet in our everyday life - welcoming the stranger, feeding the hungry and comforting the sorrowful.

Some of us may also find that we sense a personal calling by God to make a



THE RT REVD DAME SARAH MULLALLY
BISHOP OF CREDITON

specific contribution to the life of the world - a vocation as a nurse, teacher or doctor. And some of us may experience the prompting of others, and of God, to consider a more specific vocation in the Church - such as Church Warden, Reader or Priest.

17 April is Vocations Sunday. It is set aside in the church calendar to encourage all of us to take time to think about our calling and vocation.

No matter what the call, just like Najwa in Bethany, it is about becoming the hands and feet of Christ, seeing with his eyes and allowing his compassion to inspire and motivate all we do - that is at the heart of true discipleship to which we are called.

+ Sarah

www.jeelalamal.org
www.vocation.churchofengland.org