Three new Church of England primary schools are opening in the Diocese of Exeter, transforming the face of education in both urban and rural communities, and bringing much needed improvements for twenty-first century learning.

Diocesan staff said that ‘significant funding’ had been allocated to grow the family of church schools and to help improve those with inadequate buildings.

Trinity Primary and Nursery School in Exeter, which is the first to be opened by Devon County Council since 2012, will serve the community of Newcourt and grow to educate 420 primary pupils. It will also offer much needed nursery provision and create a hub where people can come together to build community networks.

It was opened by the Bishop of Exeter, the Right Revd Robert Atwell, and chairman of Devon County Council, Cllr Caroline Chugg, in June.

Presiding over the ceremony, Bishop Robert said: “It is clear to me that Trinity is a school in which everyone is valued, and this provides an excellent foundation to develop an outstanding school. Church of England schools sit at the very heart of communities, and I am delighted to see the close partnership between the school and the local parish which can only enrich what schools offer.”

Another new school is Chagford Primary, on Dartmoor, which will cater for up to 210 children living in Chagford and the surrounding villages.

The new purpose-built school replaces the old 1930s secondary school building that the primary school had been occupying.

The third school, in Okehampton, will open its doors to the first 15 reception pupils next month, and will move into its new building in the new year.

Diocesan Director of Education, John Searson, said: “We are delighted that the family of church schools is growing and that some schools that have put up with inadequate buildings in the past are benefitting from significant new funding to create twenty-first century learning environments.

“Our church schools serve their local communities so as to raise aspirations and improve life chances by delivering excellent educational opportunities. On behalf of the Diocesan Board of Education, I thank them for all that they do and pray that they are enjoying a well-deserved relaxing summer break.”
49 YEARS AND OUT!

Alan Barr has retired as Manager/Clerk of the Exeter Diocesan Registry after 49 years working for the Diocesan Registrar.

He started work with Michelmores as a junior Conveyancing Clerk and transferred to become the Registrar’s Clerk in the Diocesan Registry in 1969. Since then he has assisted the Diocesan Registrar in providing legal advice to the Bishop, Archdeacons, Clergy, PCCs and lay people. He has also prepared the legal documents for clergy ordinations, appointments, institutions, churches and churchyards and the administration of the faculty system, not forgetting Common Licences for Marriage. He once opened up the office rather urgently on a Saturday morning to issue a licence for a couple due to be married later that day.

He has worked with three Registrars, J F G Michelmore, Richard Wheeler and Martin Follett (who also recently retired) and has known five diocesan bishops and countless suffragan bishops as well as archdeacons and incumbents.

After nearly 51 years working at Michelmores (49 in the Diocesan Registry) he will be sadly missed. We wish him a long and happy retirement.

The Diocesan Registry is no longer based at Michelmores. However, the Register’s Office, which is now based within the Diocesan Office in Exeter, continues to provide legal advice to the Bishop, Archdeacons, Clergy, PCCs and lay people.

OBERAMMERGAU 2020

In 1633 the villagers of Oberammergau, Austria, promised that if God spared them from the effects of the plague sweeping the region, they would perform the Passion of Christ every 10 years. The village was spared, and the play continues to be staged every decade, involving around 2,000 local residents.

Having been at the last two performances, Caroline and Chris Padget, experienced tour leaders, are leading a trip to Oberammergau 2020 with McCabe Travel. The trip will run from 18-25 June 2020; for full details, email carolinepadget@gmail.com or call 01404 46452 or 07775536288.

FAMILY FEST 2018

A number of parishes collaborated to organise a weekend camp of fun, faith and family for over 100 participants.

Family Fest took place in the River Dart Country Park, and attracted people from all backgrounds.

With solemnity in the right places and huge amounts of fun around everything that happened, participants enjoyed activities, games, workshops, music and worship - not to mention a barbecue and fish and chip supper!

Fr Nick Debney, one of the event organisers said: “I admit it’s tough to organise, but when you see people gathered together in community like this it makes everything worthwhile”.

NEW MAGAZINE TEAM

It’s all change in the Communications department as we say goodbye to Rebecca Paveley and the Revd Nicky Davies. Taking over the editorial content of the Diocesan Magazine is Abigail Meeke, who has been a journalist for 16 years. She has degrees in Theology and Creative Writing. The magazine is being designed by Sophie West, who has degrees in Modern Languages and Linguistics, and joined the Diocese as Executive Officer in 2014.

We’d love to hear what’s going on in your part of the Diocese! If you have a story for the magazine, please email abigail.meeke@exeter.anglican.org
A longing for young people to catch a glimpse of the ‘life giving joy of the Gospel’ is a key inspiration for each new day at school for Jonathon Ross-McNairn; the first full-time chaplain at Trinity School in Teignmouth. We caught up with Jonathon on a busy school day...

Conversations with God

Jonathon was a commercial property solicitor before a dramatic ‘Damascus Road’ conversion experience whilst on an Alpha course turned his “world upside down!” He then clearly heard God tell him to “leave the law and go and get ordained.” A message he found to be both “exciting and terrifying!”

He was ordained in 2011 and is now in his fourth academic year at the school which he is clearly enjoying.

Prayer is fundamental to Jonathon’s work in the school as he supports and encourages both pupils and staff in “their own personal relationship with God.”

He is currently trialling a new initiative called ‘Conversations with God’. He explains that it promotes everyday conversations: “We can talk to God at anytime and anywhere. If you were sitting in a room and God was opposite (just the two of you) what would you say? What would you ask for?”

He adds: “There is no set formula to praying. No magic words! We are called, as Jesus said, to pray in a childlike way. With honesty and rawness.”

Interactive prayer stations and a prayer tree are just some of the ways Jonathon encourages everyone to speak and listen to God. He said: “There is one main aim - to enable people to personally connect in prayer with God.”

As for Jonathan he prays best when he is out for a run. He said: “It’s monastic in a way. The ‘work’ of running enables me to connect with God through prayer and - vitally - to listen to what the Spirit may be asking me to do or say or often let go of!” He also values praying alone in the school chapel, a place he describes as ‘very special’.

He finishes: “The young people are curious about the world and as spiritual beings I want to create platforms for them to grow in that.”

“‘The young people are curious about the world and as spiritual beings I want to create platforms for them to grow in that.”

It is clear that Jonathon is doing all he can to support the prayer-life and spiritual development of the young people and sees his role there as a huge delight and privilege.”
The 5th of August 2018 is an important day for Exeter Cathedral: it is the day we install our new Canon Chancellor, Dr Chris Palmer.

The first reason this is important is that Chris will complete the new Cathedral clergy team. Exeter Cathedral has been through choppy waters, but a good deal of healing and re-shaping has gone on, and Chris’ arrival marks the end of the transition period. We’re back to full strength, we have a big job to do and now we must get on and do it.

The second reason Chris’ arrival is important is the focus of his work: pastoral care of the cathedral community, and outreach to the Diocese. That doesn’t mean he is personally responsible for doing all the work, but it is his job to champion those two vital areas of cathedral life, and to keep us up to the mark.

Pastoral care in any cathedral is not simple, because alongside a core congregation, there tend to be many more people who come now and then, and a goodly number who turn up with pressing needs. Our constant quest is to make this a place where all our congregations and visitors are welcomed as Christ himself, and where God’s love is experienced in practice.

Serving and reaching out to the Diocese is not simple either. We cover a huge area, so how can we engage effectively? One thing that’s certain is that a cathedral makes no sense apart from the Diocese: our role is to give the Bishop a seat, a spiritual home, and to be a focus for mission and worship throughout the Diocese. Building good relations with every church, offering a warm welcome, modelling good practice, coming out and about - these are all part of what it means to be a cathedral.

Chris’ appointment marks a new start; it’s a commitment to engaging more effectively with everyone across the Diocese. Give us a bit of time, and then please come and tell us. What do you want from your Cathedral? Of course, we will not, or cannot, do it all. But what you think and what you need really matters.