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We're recruiting team to pioneer new styles of church

WE'RE appointing a team of ministers to create brand new worshipping communities.

Our diocese is showing its commitment to pioneer ministry by creating a new team of seven ministers to reach those with no Christian background or who struggle with traditional forms of worship.

Bishop Christopher has appointed the Rev Peter Hall, priest-in-charge of Church of the Good Shepherd in Crookhorn, as our first dean of pioneer ministry.

He will work alongside three brand new ministers who will be appointed to create pioneering new Christian communities in Portsmouth, Gosport and Havant.

One will work alongside the Rev Paul Armstead in the Milton and Eastney area; a second will inspire new Christian communities in the Leesland area of Gosport, and a third will work as a pioneer minister in Leigh Park, West Leigh and Warren Park.

Two other existing clergy have already been given pioneering responsibilities in areas where there are new housing developments.

The Rev Connie Sherman, priest-in-charge of St John's, Purbrook, has been given a larger role working in the new Berewood community west of Waterlooville, and the Rev Philippa Mills, minister of Whiteley Church, is doing pioneering work there.

We've also appointed our first trainee pioneer minister. Susie Templeton, who is training for ordination at Ripon College Cuddesdon, will spend time on placement at St Luke's Church in inner-city Portsmouth, during her training. She'll build on the work of our first pioneer minister, the Rev Mark Rodel – a pioneer minister there from 2008 to 2012.

The Rev Peter Hall, who has also been appointed as an honorary canon of our cathedral, said: "I'm really very excited to have been asked to undertake this role. I did a course run by the Church Mission Society (CMS) this spring



The Rev Peter Hall and the Rev Connie Sherman at the new Berewood development

which involved exploring pioneer leadership.

"I had the opportunity to get to know a group of pioneers and it was a great experience. Talking to them about how they feel called to work long term with those people right on the margins of society was really interesting and inspirational.

"I see my role as dean of pioneer ministry as one in which I would be supporting, encouraging and nurturing the pioneers themselves and the wider ministry of pioneers. Part of that is encouraging the pioneers to connect regularly so that they can listen, learn and grow from both their own experiences and from each other."

And Bishop Christopher said: "As a diocese, we are passionate

about exploring new ways of showing and sharing God's love through our ministry and mission. Peter brings a wealth of parish experience which he will use and build upon to support parishes and ministers as new and exciting initiatives develop."

Our diocese will be paying for its new team of pioneer ministers from money set aside by deaneries. We hope to receive a similar amount of funding from the national Church of England to do more in this area. We've bid for money as part of the national Church's Reform and Renewal agenda, which is aiming for radical change in leadership, theological training, discipleship, mission and simplification.

The Rev Connie Sherman said:

"We hope to work ecumenically to build a community in Berewood where there isn't really a community at the moment. We have the support of the headteacher of the primary school, which is the only place people really meet. We already have a playgroup, coffee morning and Messy Church meeting there."

Two other honorary canons have also been appointed. The Rev Will Hughes, vicar of St Peter's, Petersfield, rector of St Mary's, Buriton, and area dean of Petersfield, has been appointed an honorary canon. And John Gwynn, who chairs our diocesan finance committee and worships at St Nicholas Church, Wickham, has been appointed a lay canon of the cathedral.



The Rev Dr James Grenfell

Pathway director is in post

THE first students on our very own ordination course will start training this month.

The new Portsmouth Pathway course will be based at St Luke's Church in the heart of the city. It will cater for up to 15 trainee clergy and 20 lay Readers, who will be taught theology locally – without needing to be sent away to theological college.

It will give students the chance to put their theology into practice in inner-city parishes during their three-year course. It will also allow trainee clergy and Readers to train together for the first time, modelling collaborative ministry.

The Rev Dr James Grenfell has now been appointed as its first director. James was previously director of mission engagement for the Christian charity Us – formerly USPG.

The course was named 'Portsmouth Pathway' to reflect the fact that all who study are on a journey of discipleship. Most of the sessions there will take place in the evening or at weekends, meaning those who work during the day can attend.

It's a partnership between our diocese, Ripon College Cuddesdon, and Durham University.