

We learnt about future of Church

IT was an inspiring weekend that helped us to think about the future of the Church.

Social analyst Graeme Codrington led a day-long conference at the headquarters of Ben Ainslie Racing in Old Portsmouth in December, as well as a session for young people the previous evening.

It was entitled *Zombies versus Aliens*, to capture something of the gap between how older and younger people see each other – both in the Church and outside.

His contention is that different generations think in completely different ways because we are all affected by the issues and values we grew up with.

Clergy and lay leaders heard about the changing face of technology, demography and institutional change – and how the Church might be best positioned to respond.

“We make a distinction between the ‘real’ world and the digital world,” he said. “Young people make no such distinction. And we know how we connect with God, but we have to be careful about saying that that is the only way that it can be done.

“I’m convinced that faith can only be done in community, but it might be that our model of



Delegates at the headquarters of Ben Ainslie Racing for ‘Zombies versus Aliens’

‘the gathered church’ might be superseded by ‘the networked church’ in future, as those digital connections become more important.

“The way in which we offer courses might have to change. Generation X has reached middle-age, and they are the kind of people who simply can’t commit to ten Tuesdays in a row for an Alpha course.

“We need to find different ways of doing that kind of thing – perhaps live streaming the sessions, or putting them all on a memory stick so people can do sessions at

their own convenience.”

He challenged people to examine why church services needed to have a standard liturgy – an innovation that might have seemed appropriate 200 years ago.

“In the digital world, we can find all sorts of liturgies online,” he said. “Standardisation is not the digital approach, and it will seem alien to those who have grown up in a digital world.”

The young people who gathered the previous night with Graeme at Aspex Gallery made videos that were edited overnight and shown to church leaders the

next day. They expressed how they felt about what the Church offers.

The Rev Ian Snares, vicar of St Wilfrid’s Church, Cowplain, was one of the delegates. He said: “I didn’t expect to be pitchforked into the future in quite that way, but it was good that we were. It raises the question of how you hold on to things that really matter, including some of our more traditional ways of doing things, while still moving congregations forward.”

For more information and more photos, see: www.portsmouth.anglican.org/zombies

Praise for schools’ ethos and values

INSPECTORS have praised two of our C of E schools for their Christian values, teaching of RE and collective worship.

Staff at Shalfleet C of E Primary School were delighted by a wonderful church school report, with every area being graded outstanding. The inspector said it was evident that the children were proud of their school and were able to explain its Christian values.

Her report said the school was outstanding because strong Christian values permeate the school, there is a dedicated leadership team who strive to develop such values, its collective worship is engaging and relationships in the school family are excellent.

Sue Shynn, head of RE and collective worship said: “I was thrilled. We did receive outstanding on our last inspection, but the criteria have changed so much over these five years.”

And Oakfield C of E Primary School was also described as outstanding in its church school report. Its strong Christian ethos makes a significant difference to the lives of children and adults, its acts of worship enable children to explore Bible stories, and the commitment of its leadership ensure its ethos is continually developing.

Generosity of worshippers is overwhelming

WORSHIPPERS have been thanked for their overwhelming generosity again after more than £10,000 was collected to help the vulnerable at Christmas.

The scheme run by Churches Homeless Action (CHA) involves churchgoers donating vouchers so that the homeless, asylum seekers and vulnerable families can buy Christmas gifts. Over £125,000 has now been donated over the past 11 years.

CHA chairman Canon Bob White said: “Each year we are overwhelmed by the response. The team who sorted the vouchers were humbled by the level of generosity that has been shown this year. Thanks to those who have donated and supported us in any way.”

Families use Lego to build own arks

BUILDING Noah’s ark, a rainbow and pairs of animals out of Lego was a great way to spend a wet Saturday afternoon.

The first session of the innovative project *Build@Church* was launched at Church of the Resurrection in Drayton – and families joined in the fun. The idea of the monthly session is to hear a Bible story, and then respond by using Lego and Duplo bricks. Families then look at each other’s work and pray together on that theme.

The church was set out with café-style chairs and tables, and piles of Lego bricks. The smaller children sat on mats on the floor to build with larger Duplo bricks.



Families at *Build@Church* in Church of the Resurrection

The Rev Paul Gully told the story of Noah using a Youtube clip of Lego Bible stories before the building work started. Then he showcased what different families were building on the

big screen, using his tablet.

Session leader Julie Minter interviewed children and led prayers, also using Lego bricks, before families were given tea and home-made cakes.

Mum Emma Welch, who brought Jacob, aged 5, and Mya, 1, said: “Jacob loves Lego, so we wanted to come, and we’d been to this church a few times. It’s a fantastic family event, and it’s fantastic to encourage the children’s imagination. There’s a nice buzz to the room and everyone’s working together to do their building.”

And Samantha Griffiths, from St Mary’s Church, Hayling Island, brought her seven-year-old son Thomas. His creation involved an ocean scene, including some people discovering dry land.

The next session is from 2pm-4pm on February 13. It’s then on the second Saturday of each month.