

Find out how your churches could grow

ARE you interested in church growth? Would you like to see more of those living in your parish engaging with God and to see a deepening of their discipleship?

Our diocese will host a day for clergy, Readers and others to discover more about the theology behind church growth – and to share some practical tips about how it could happen.

Our diocese's mission development adviser, the Rev Charlie Peer, will lead the day, which happens at St George's Church, The Hard, Portsea, on May 5.

"There is much discussion in the Church of England about church growth," he said. "The national Church's Renewal and Reform agenda talks about church growth, but is that just about increasing attendance at Sunday services?"

"On the day, we'll ask how we should understand growth as a concept, and what the impact of this is on our self-understanding.

"We'll look at how we promote a holistic approach to growth, and what type and style of leadership will enable growth. Come along to consider these and other questions."

The Continuing Ministerial Development day happens from 9.45am-3pm, and lunch will be provided.

To register, or find out more details, contact Patricia Gray on 023-9289 9656 or patricia.gray@portsmouth.anglican.org.

Church to mark five decades

IT'S a chance to remember the history of the church – and to thank God for those who have worshipped faithfully there.

Churchgoers, community groups and community leaders will gather for a Songs of Praise event this month to celebrate the 50th anniversary of St Alban's Church, West Leigh.

Hymns and songs will be chosen by individuals and community groups, including 90-year-old Frank Chandler, one of the oldest members of the congregation, local councillor Terry Hart, and representatives from the brownies, short mat bowls club and St Alban's C of E Primary School.

Some will be more traditional hymns and others will be more contemporary songs. The service will feature both organ-led and guitar led-music, depending on the hymn or song.

Graham Whitlock, who is now 81, joined the church in the late 1980s with his wife who has since died. He has served as churchwarden and is currently

PCC secretary.

He said: "It is a lovely, friendly, welcoming and spiritually uplifting church. The congregations have changed over the years that I have been here but the welcoming and friendly atmosphere of the church has remained constant. It is a lovely church to be a part of."

Churchwarden Cathy Stevens, now 70, has been part of the church for 41 of its 50 years. She was originally a Methodist, but started coming to Evensong after her family moved from London.

"My church life means so much to me, and I couldn't conceive of not being there. I like to think that we are friendly – I certainly try my best to stand at the door and

Cathy Stevens at St Alban's Church, West Leigh

welcome people."

The priest-in-charge, Canon Karina Green, said: "It is a celebration of 50 years of the present church building on this site. There was a previous church in St Albans Road before that.

"It's also a celebration of life in this community, which is why we have invited contributions not just from members of the congregation, but from individuals and groups from the local community too."

The church was originally

created in 1957 by St Faith's, Havant, to cater for those living in the new post-war housing in the area. The original building was a Nissan hut that had been used during the war.

The Songs of Praise event happens at 4pm on April 24, and will be followed by tea and cake.

The celebrations continue with a Eucharist at 3pm on Saturday 16 July – the actual anniversary of the church's dedication. It will be led by Bishop Christopher.



The bishop with school ambassadors Rosie Lloyd, James Morgan, Lucas Baker and Erin Harvey

Bishop helps school celebrate

BISHOP Christopher helped an Isle of Wight school mark its 200th anniversary.

Newport C of E Primary School spent a week marking the milestone, which included an anniversary meal, a dressing up day, anniversary cake and the chance to discover about the history of the school.

It is thought to be one of the oldest state schools in the country, opening originally in West Street in 1816.

And Bishop Christopher marked the occasion by visiting alongside the Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight, the Ven Peter Sutton, who is also a governor at the school.

The bishop led two assemblies where he blessed the school's Christian values of love, trust and hope.

He was then treated to a tour of the school by two of the pupils who have been designated 'ambassadors'.

Headteacher Jackie Pick

said: "The children were thrilled to have their worship led by Bishop Christopher.

"They really enjoyed meeting him and talking about the work they had done as part of our 200th anniversary."

The current building, in Kitbridge Road, is the third to house the school. After the original in West Street, Newport Primary moved to another part of West Street in 1909, and into its current building in 1989.

Pompey Chimes

The *Pompey Chimes* is the official newspaper of the Church of England's Diocese of Portsmouth, which covers 142 parishes in south-east Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Its circulation is 8,000, and it is produced monthly except for January and August. Each parish pays 15p for each copy, which allows our readers to pick it up for free on the final Sunday of the previous month. Paid-for adverts are dealt with by our publishers, Cornerstone Vision. For a list of editorial deadlines, see: www.portsmouth.anglican.org/pompeychimes

DEADLINE FOR MAY EDITION:
Monday 4 April

AVAILABLE TO COLLECT FROM DEANERY DEPOTS: Thursday 21 April

AVAILABLE IN YOUR CHURCH:
Sunday 24 April

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