

God called me to write devotionals



David Strutt

FIVE years ago, David Strutt felt called by God to write a book of devotional readings. He was even given the title – *Sanctuary*.

He then kept writing down notes whenever God brought a passage of the Bible alive and slipping those notes into a box called *Sanctuary*.

After a couple of years, David, from Liphook Church, tried to start writing the book, but gave up after two days, as he wasn't happy with it.

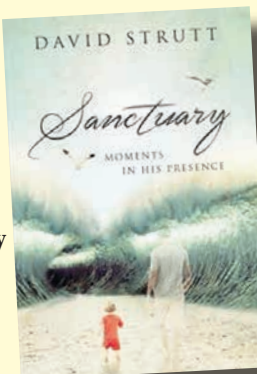
Then in August 2016, one of his Achilles tendons ruptured and he spent the next five or six months in plaster or orthopaedic boots.

He said: "As we packed to go on holiday to Dorset, with a

wheelchair in the boot, I was about to fill my painting bag with my watercolour kit when I heard God say, 'No, write. Don't paint this time.'

"He spoke so clearly that instead of taking my paints, I packed my laptop and my *Sanctuary* box.

"To my amazement I began to write and it flowed. I just knew what to write and at the end of a week's holiday I had already written the first month. It was an extraordinary experience as I never had to plan anything. It was as though the moment one day was finished, I knew what to write



on the next.

"This continued through the next four months and by January it was finished. It was a spiritually exhilarating experience and I hope it will bless many people, stimulating countless daily

precious times with God.

"Being able to write like this at a time of quite great adversity, of immobility and quite a lot of frustration, was an amazing grace gift from Father."

Sanctuary – Moments in His Presence is priced at £12.99.



Elsie Lewis

Students celebrate exam success

STUDENTS at our diocese's two C of E secondary schools celebrated exam successes over the summer.

The 16-year-olds at Christ the King College, on the Isle of Wight, coped well with the new grading system for GCSEs in English and maths, which involved grades between 1 and 9, where 9 was the top mark.

The benchmark figure for the number achieving five A*-C grades (or grades between 4 and 9), including English and maths, was 65 per cent this year – slightly up on last year's figure of 64 per cent.

Half its students achieved at least an A or better, and over a third achieved at least 2 As. And high achievers such as Elsie Lewis, Finlay Robertson, Elizabeth Martin, Georgina Turner, Tessa Crosbie and Miles Janes scooped a full set of 9s, A*s and As.

At A-level, 95 per cent of its students' grades were between A* and E, with 80 per cent of students achieving three or more A-levels. Among those with a full set of A*s and As were Benedict Baker, Chantelle Biggs, Jasmin Brooks, Ellie Guy, Jacob Lewis, Isaac Payne and Rachel Thornton.

Meanwhile, at Charter Academy in Portsmouth, 68 per cent of students achieved at least a grade 4 in English and maths, and nearly half achieving a grade 5.

One of their top performing students, Nabiha, achieved phenomenal results, with a grade 9 in English Literature and Language, a 7 in Maths, and A*s in Triple Science, Geography, Spanish, Media Studies and RE.

Moving on after 11 years of service

SHE has been devoted to serving those who live and worship in our diocese for the past 11 years.

Now our Diocesan Secretary, the Rev Wendy Kennedy, has announced that she will retire from this role early next January.

She has led our central diocesan team since 2007, and has also been responsible for managing the finances of the diocese and organising its system of democratic decision-making.

Her final day working for our diocese will be January 9 next year, and interim arrangements are already being discussed to support parishes, chaplaincies, clergy and office-holders ahead of a formal recruitment process.

Bishop Christopher has paid tribute to her commitment and skill and offered his personal thanks for her hard work.

"The scope of Wendy's work and involvement has reached every aspect of our life and mission," he said. "We shall miss her personally as well as for the skill, knowledge and time she has generously offered to us.

"There will be opportunities in the coming four months to offer her both our sincere thanks and also our best wishes and prayers for the next stage of her life and ministry.

"Nevertheless I place on



The Rev Wendy Kennedy: stepping down in the New Year

record now my personal gratitude to Wendy and the indebtedness of us all for her service to the Diocese of Portsmouth."

Wendy had always intended to retire aged 60, but brought the date forward a little before her 60th birthday to enable her and her husband Jon to join a particular trip to the South Pacific.

She said: "I am not retiring from work: but I am very richly blessed in having sufficient pension provision available now, coupled with limited personal financial commitments, to make it entirely practical for me to join

the honourable ranks of those who offer their skills and time through unpaid and voluntary work and ministry, while also pursuing other interests and having more time with my family.

"I would like to put on record here my sincere thanks to all those I have worked alongside, and to say how very much I have valued and enjoyed working for and with the bishops, clergy, staff and volunteers in the wonderful Portsmouth diocese over the years.

"Thank you to everyone for your companionship, generosity of spirit, kindness, and for both your

personal and professional support in our shared service under God."

On top of her day job, in her own time Wendy has throughout served as an assisting priest in her home benefice, comprising the parishes of Blendworth, Chalton, and Idsworth and she has helped occasionally in other parishes across the diocese.

She now looks forward with joy to being able to offer more time and hopefully a wider and deeper ministry in these parishes and wherever else may in future be considered helpful by Bishop Christopher.