



Attendance creeping up

THE number of people worshipping each week in our churches has grown for a fourth year in a row, our Statistics for Mission have confirmed.

There were 8,000 people worshipping each week in 2024 in our churches. That number has increased each year since the Covid pandemic, but remains below the 9,600 figure recorded in 2019. That number dipped to 4,600 in 2020 when churches were largely closed, but has increased each year since.

These figures mirror the national picture, as attendance also grew in the whole Church of England for the fourth year in a row.



Lay pioneer recognised

A NEW lay pioneer minister has been commissioned on the Isle of Wight – to recognise her role at inspiring creativity and spirituality.

Ali Mascarenhas was commissioned to work in the parish at a special Celtic-style service at St Mary's, Brighstone. Ali led the work there over the past four years on community projects including working parties in the churchyard, nature talks, a group creating mosaics and outdoor Celtic worship.

Ali (*above, centre*) is pictured with her vicar, the Rev Jackie Maw (*left*) and Tina Hodgett from the Church Mission Society's pioneering parishes, who helped to train Ali for this work.



Net zero on the agenda

STUDENTS from Christ the King College were among those sharing at the first net zero carbon conference on the Isle of Wight. Newport Minster hosted the conference that gathered worshippers and organisations from across the island.

The theme was 'Towards an Eco Island', and delegates heard from local church leaders and organisations pioneering new technology to help island residents care for the environment and live more sustainably.



Clergy given new roles

BISHOP Jonathan has appointed the Rev Daniela Eisentraeger to be the new vicar of St Luke's, Southsea. She is currently interim associate priest at All Saints and St Peter's, Maybush, in Southampton, and will be licensed on January 27.

Meanwhile, the Rev Sandra Matthews (*above, right*) has been appointed as team vicar for the Meon Valley parishes. She is currently rector of Whippingham with East Cowes and priest-in-charge of Wootton, and should be licensed on February 25.