

## Collaboration ensures diversity in worship

WHEN it comes to North Gosport, working together doesn't mean bland worship.

The new team ministry will feature everything from charismatic worship led by a contemporary band to the richness of Anglo-Catholic liturgy. Innovative styles such as outdoor 'Forest Church' may co-exist alongside Taize-style prayers.

That's because the new team want to provide excellence in all areas – something for those who have grown up in the Church of England, and something for those who've never engaged with church before. It echoes the desire of our vision to grow in depth, impact and number

The new team ministry brought together worshippers from St Mary the Virgin, Rowner; St Matthew's, Bridgemarky; and St Thomas, Elson, into a single unit, with one PCC. The Rev Richard England, who is also vicar of nearby Crofton parish, is the team rector, aiming to provide visionary leadership.

Alongside him are the Rev Samantha Martell, who is the team vicar working primarily with the traditional congregations, and the Rev Jude Greenfield, who is the

team vicar working primarily to plant new worshipping communities. The fact they come from opposite ends of the churchmanship spectrum means they can cater for most people's needs. They were licensed together in May.

They are working alongside a team of retired clergy and lay people, who have formed themselves into a new leadership team – despite different church backgrounds.

"I think this is really exciting and has huge potential," said Sam. "One of the things we agreed was to be unapologetic about who we are. So I'll do requiem mass and benediction, whereas others will sing modern worship songs.

"Each church has its own selling point and sense of identity, and each can do a certain style of worship in an excellent way. St Mary's will be the charismatic church plant, St Thomas's can be an Anglo-Catholic centre of excellence, and St Matthew's can be the monastic base for Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Taize and so on.

"Even at St Matthew's, I'd love to do Forest Church outside,



The new lay and clergy team in North Gosport take a selfie at the licensing service for the Rev Samantha Martell and the Rev Jude Greenfield

centred around nature or a community allotment. We might form a new worshipping community that way, so the roles are a little interchangeable."

Treasurer Steven Smart worshipped in the previous parish and admits to finding elements of the change difficult.

"I can understand why people feel scared of changing parish structures," he said. "I did too, but I can see now that it is positive and exciting."

For the Rev Richard England, the cultural change of working in collaboration is actually more important than whatever structures we happen to alight on.

"Without some kind of cultural renewal, any structural reform will

make no difference," he said.

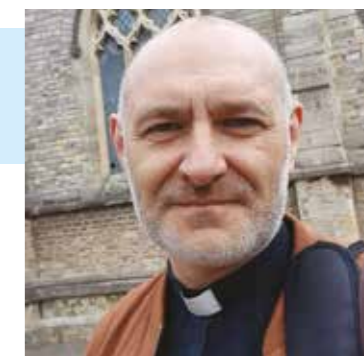
"In North Gosport, we passionately believe in parish churches, each with their own identity. But sharing the administration across a team ministry, and working in collaboration with other lay and clergy people, makes it far easier for us to have the time and energy to do mission.

"The deeper, messier work of cultural renewal is actually about transforming all our congregations into outward-looking, mission-focussed communities. The style of worship doesn't matter as much as the commitment to inviting and welcoming others into a community that loves God and loves others.

"Of course, the way that this team ministry chooses to do things won't be the same as the way team ministries do things elsewhere. There will be different models, depending on each local context."

## Our baptism means we all play a part in realising vision

BY THE VEN PETER LEONARD, ARCHDEACON OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT



*You are the body of Christ and individually members of it. 1 Corinthians 12:27*

THE human body is an amazing thing, made up of a variety of skin, bones, muscles and sinews, organs, nerves, a brain, a head, hands and feet. When St Paul compares the Church to a body, he is reminding us that each individual has a part to play, each individual is necessary for the church to thrive.

It is not ordination, or licensing as a Reader, or swearing-in as churchwardens which gives the rights and responsibilities to minister – it's our baptism.

In baptism we become part of the Body of Christ, we are commissioned and given a responsibility to play our part in ministry and mission.

We know this, and yet when we look across many of the churches in our diocese and beyond we see that – at times – not every part of the body is given the opportunity to live out their vocation. We sometimes see an overreliance on certain parts such as clergy, Readers, and churchwardens, and an unrealised potential in many of our church members.

As we seek to grow in depth, impact, and number, we will need to recapture that image of the Body of Christ. Every member of every church has their place

within a thriving body, with each individual living out the vocation given to them at baptism and using their God-given gifts in service of the world and the Church.

We have identified four key elements which we believe will help us to grow in depth, impact, and number and each of these elements is dependent upon each of us living out our vocation.

We need **Visionary Leaders**, lay and ordained working together. We need **Teams on a Mission**, both formal and informal, made up of a variety of people, mainly lay and some clergy, living out their individual vocations in service of their community.

We need communities of **Kingdom-Building Disciples**, where everybody recognises the part they have to play in living out and sharing the good news of Christ. And we need **Growth-Enabling Structures**, to underpin the mission and ministry.

"You are the Body of Christ and individually members of it". If we truly believe that, we need to recapture Paul's vision of the church where every individual has an essential part to play.



**GROWTH IN NUMBER:** Portsmouth Cathedral is one of many churches attracting those who don't go to church by sharing its digital worship effectively

with. As we collaborate, we'll also want to learn from each other about what works in each of our local contexts.

Worshippers in St Mary's Church, Brading, for example, have shown their commitment to environmental and ethical values by creating a small farm on a meadow they own next to the churchyard, and running a shop selling ethical products in its church hall – not every parish can do that.

Equally, Christians across Havant, Leigh Park and Rowlands Castle are placing faith as a focal point in their communities in a unique way – by inviting local people to rehearse, perform and watch pieces of drama, often based around the story of Jesus.

We continue to pray together as a diocese for our **Live | Pray | Serve** vision. Every Monday and Friday, video prayers filmed by worshippers from across our diocese are posted onto social

media and our website. You are invited to pray alongside us for God's guidance as we seek to grow in depth, impact, and number for the forthcoming decades.

You can find out more about our vision on [www.portsmouth.anglican.org/liveprayserve](http://www.portsmouth.anglican.org/liveprayserve). There are also links to frequently-asked questions about this vision, parish stories that help to illustrate it, and videos of those leading our prayers about it.