

# These fresh services aim to attract new disciples



**We're creating new worshipping communities across the diocese, offering something different alongside the traditional**

It was a significant moment as nine adults each made their commitment to the Christian faith at All Saints Church, Ryde, amid bubbles and confetti cannons. And it was symbolic of the new phase in the church's life too.

These newcomers to the faith are part of the church's contemporary congregation, which was launched a year ago and is already attracting up to 100 adults, teenagers and children. The 11am service includes a worship band and Kids' Church and sits alongside the 9.30am traditional Eucharist.

And the fact that the baptisms happened in the church as it was being renovated was also significant. Ambitious work to refurbish the inside of the historic building had just started and will continue until November.

That includes installing a new heating system, sound system and new seating – including using the original pews. A new café area at the rear will aim to enhance its



**Above: the contemporary congregation at All Saints' Church, Ryde; top: the church hosted a series of baptisms in July**

hospitality. And these developments will sit alongside the church's historic features.

All Saints is just one example within our diocese of a brand new congregation being created to cater for a distinct set of worshippers. Many of these new congregations aim to attract those

who might prefer a more accessible style, or families with children. It's part of our diocese's strategy to rejuvenate our churches.

Part of that strategy involved creating a new ministry team covering all five churches in and around Ryde, which includes All Saints. The Rev Olly Mitchelmore

## Barn Church to start this autumn

IT has been a vision that Emma Andersen has had for some time – to create a new congregation worshipping in a barn.

She'll now become the person in charge of making 'Barn Church' happen across the Meon Valley in her new role as associate priest of Swanmore, Newtown, Soberton, Hambledon and the Meon Bridge benefices.

She's working alongside the Rev Liz Quinn and the Rev Jill Kingston, as part of a team covering villages in this part of the Meon Valley.

Her main priority will be to offer an alternative style of worship. Barn Church will be designed as an all-age, contemporary Sunday service, deliberately meeting in a venue that isn't a church building.

It all starts at 9.30am on September 21, in the Soberton guide hut on Soberton recreation ground.

"We'll be trying to reach those who don't already come to church, and aiming to create new disciples from the villages across the Meon Valley," she said.

"We want to make it all-age and interactive, in the sense that discussion and fellowship will be a high priority. People might discuss in small groups that include



The Rev Emma Andersen (right) is licensed alongside the Rev Liz Quinn (left) and the Rev Jill Kingston, at a service in St Barnabas, Swanmore

children. We want to make the worship contemporary, but stripped back – not necessarily a big worship band.

"And the venue is designed to be a neutral one, rather than based in a church in one specific village."

Emma ran an Alpha Course over the summer, to create a fledgling congregation. She's also become involved in schools work to help raise its profile.

She said: "There are 10,000

people living in the Meon Valley and around 5,000 would say they are Christian.

"We do see some of them regularly in church, and many villagers would attend at Christmas, Easter and other festivals.

"That's great, but it means there is plenty of potential for a community worshipping in an alternative way to take off."

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was given the role of developing the contemporary congregations, while his colleague the Rev David Morgan took charge of more traditional worship.

"We are thrilled to see this vision coming to life – the vision for different styles of worship as well as the vision for the building itself," said the Rev Heath Monaghan, who is team rector.

"The renovation work will prepare us for the next stage of our mission to Ryde, equipping us to offer an even warmer welcome to the whole community, in a space that honours both tradition and transformation. We have already welcomed dozens of new adults and children to the 11am service. The church is usually

buzzing with all generations, with significantly more young people and children.

"We've seen guests who came on our Alpha Courses become regulars, and the enthusiasm of our congregation in inviting friends and neighbours to join. We've run three Alpha Courses in the past 12 months, with another starting in September.

"We're also seeing a growing number of people committed to midweek connect groups – where relationships can deepen. Those groups take turns to serve others by welcoming people on Sundays or cooking meals for the congregation. And there has been some amazing community

outreach – family fun days, all-age Christmas spectacles and so on, that have attracted more than 300 people each.

"One of the most touching recent moments was when a relatively new member of the church was expecting a baby. We thought we'd throw her a small baby shower, and 27 women from the congregation turned up with gifts and treats to share. It reminded us that we're not just hosting a Sunday service – we're building a community that is absolutely living out our faith and loving one another."

Another way in which the churches of Ryde are developing is by offering the chance for young people aged 18-25 to serve on a