



Volunteers from Harbour Church lead a Hawaiian-themed family service at St Alban's Church, Copnor

Families flock to 4pm service

YOUNG families collect their Hawaiian drinks from the café bar, as their children race towards the bouncy castle or the face-painting corner.

The church is decorated with inflatable palm trees as volunteers wearing hula skirts and flower garlands staff the various zones within St Alban's Church. There is a chance to dress up in the Imagination Zone, play ball games in the Active Zone, and try computer games in the Games Zone.

After a few minutes, a worship group in Hawaiian shirts launch into action songs as children congregate around the stage. Then there is a Bible story and prayers before the Hawaiian-themed service ends – with Hawaiian pizzas.

This is the latest congregation launched by Harbour Church, our city's fastest-growing church. The 4pm service at Harbour Church, Copnor, is aimed at young families and aims to build on the success of its thriving Tots and Toddlers group.

Some of its congregation used to attend St Alban's anyway, some are volunteers from the main Harbour Church congregation, and some walk in off the street,

attracted by colourful publicity online and outside the building. The first service happened in June, and it will restart in September after a summer break.

Mum Sandra Baldwin said: "We've been coming since it started. Our kids, who are eight and three, love it. I used to bring my daughter to Tots and Toddlers, and I've found that and this service really friendly."

And Katherine Edwards, who brought her daughter Vegas for the first time to its Hawaiian-themed service, said: "I saw this on Facebook, and thought it looked great. We'd love to have her christened, so this is perfect for us."

The priest-in-charge of St Alban's, the Rev Alex Wood, also leads Harbour Church, which was launched in a refurbished city centre department store two years ago. It started with a group of 15 worshippers from Brighton who relocated to Portsmouth and aimed to attract students and young people to their church.

The church now welcomes more than 350 worshippers across all its congregations. The main Sunday morning service will relocate to St George's Church, Portsea, in September, as it has outgrown its Commercial Road premises.

Choir to be core of new church

THE vision in Milton is to create a vibrant new church plant of younger families – based around music.

Plans are being put together for the creation from scratch of a new children and young people's choir, and to use the power of music to launch a new congregation.

St James Church in Milton are planning to appoint a choir leader and admin clerk to set up the new group. They will connect with children and families through the local primary schools in the parish and aim to meet to rehearse and lead worship midweek.

In time, they hope that there will be opportunities for the choir to join with the main St James congregations for some Sundays and major festivals. But the main focus would be on building up a separate church plant based around the families of choir members.

The idea was put forward

by our cathedral's Master of Choristers David Price and the priest-in-charge of St James, Fr Paul Armstead, who is one of many who are in the Church today because of church music being a part of their youth.

"It would be good to show that a liturgical and sacramentally-based church can succeed alongside other forms of church planting," said David.

"We know that children can be the best evangelists of their own families. Music can bring the children to church and, modelled correctly and honestly, the parents and families may follow.

"Music is a powerful evangelistic tool for the Church, a tool that has been too often neglected of late. It should not be viewed as only for those who have already put a tentative step through the church door. Rather the participatory nature of singing in a dynamic group can open the 'soul to heaven's delight' and be the gateway so

worshippers from St Matthew's, Blackmoor, have been involved in planting a church just inside Guildford diocese.

The Beacon is a new worshipping community serving families who move into brand new homes in Bordon. The town is set to double in size with 3,500 new homes being built over the next 15 years.

The initial group of 15-20 worshippers are meeting twice a week in the Phoenix Theatre for worship and Bible study. They are now planning a new community church building in the heart of the town, including a community café, youth hub, 24/7 prayer room, hall and community garden. The

design will shortly go for planning permission, and building work may start in January.

Our diocese's **live | pray | serve** strategy includes four main elements – we're aiming to make disciples, grow churches, learn for life and to transform society.

We're aiming to grow churches by planting new congregations such as these, especially in under-resourced urban areas. We're also encouraging and resourcing larger churches to plant new church communities. These new congregations can be from a variety of church traditions.

Our brand new congregations are working alongside a range of 'Fresh Expressions' too – new

styles of worship within existing congregations.

Half of those attending Fresh Expressions aren't churchgoers

The number of Fresh Expressions in our diocese has doubled over the past five years. There are now 48 Fresh Expressions within our 139 parishes, according to a Church Army survey carried out in our diocese this year. They are attended by almost 2,500 people.

Of those, 25 are Messy Churches – the global initiative which combines art and craft, shared

would also work closely with and under the guidance of the priest at St James, Milton.

The project has already received the support of the St James PCC and is expected to last for between two and five years, until the church plant can become self-supporting.

food and an act of worship, which was originally launched at St Wilfrid's Cowplain, in 2004.

Half of those who are attending our Fresh Expressions weren't previously attending church, suggesting that our Fresh Expressions are successful at drawing new people in.

If your church is thinking about planting a new congregation or launching a Fresh Expression, please contact our mission development officer the Rev Andrew Hargreaves on 023-9289 9676 or andrew.hargreaves@portsmouth.anglican.org. If you are on the Isle of Wight, please contact the Rev Allie Kerr on 01983-531992 or allie.kerr@portsmouth.anglican.org

IN DEPTH: NEW CONGREGATIONS



Cathedral music staff lead choir workshops for children (Photo: Mike Cooter)

sorely needed for mission and discipleship."

The staff appointed would be part of the cathedral's music outreach staff, building on the success of the 'Cathedral Sing!' programme that sees choir members leading workshops in schools across the diocese. They