**To           :              Headteachers; Chairs of Governors; Foundation Governors; Ex-officio clergy; Deputy Headteachers; RE Coordinators**

(and please forward widely to your contacts & networks)

**From     :               Jeff Williams**

**Date      :               11th January 2023**

**Re           :              Fortnightly bulletin and resources from the Diocesan Education Team**

Dear colleagues

**Sprouts :** permanently banished from your Christmas dinner spread; seasonably-tolerated; or delightfully embraced? Excuse the mixed metaphor, but Sprouts for the Brits are somewhat marmite – you love them or won’t go near them! We ate just under **400 million** of them last year! I say *we*, as someone who from lad to young adult loathed and refused the over-cooked, smelly mush;  but on meeting my wife was introduced to a new way of cooking these delicious vegetables and now eat them with her **Christmas recipe** throughout the year, including hot summer days!

One of my much appreciated pressies this Christmas was from a friend who knew I’d really enjoy and be immersed in the over-sized book from prize-winning restauranteur and chef, **Yotam Ottolenghi.** Packed withamazing photos, engaging cultural reflections, historical snippets, while interspersed with enticing Middle Eastern recipes, it’s great! Having ventured into making (and testing on long-suffering friends & family) different flavoured **Hummus** throughout 2022, I was captivated by a quote in this Jerusalem-focused book **‘it takes a giant leap of faith, but we are happy to take it, to imagine that hummus will eventually bring Jerusalemites together, if nothing else will’**.

In a section of photos and reflections on the diversity, complexity and richness of those living in, or associated with Jerusalem, the writer says that Muslims, Jews, Christians, secularists and others in Jerusalem, ‘alas, although have so much in common, **food, at the moment seems to be the only unifying force in this** **highly fractured place.** The dialogue between Jews and Arabs, and often between Jews themselves, is almost non-existent. It is sad to note how little daily interaction there is between communities, with people sticking together in closed homogenous groups. Food, however, seems to break down those boundaries on occasion. You can see people shop together in food markets, or eat in each other’s restaurants’.

Having enjoyed participating in (and equally enjoyed observing) conversations in numerous Jerusalem **Hummusia** (brunch and lunch, hummus-focused eateries), it is obvious that discussions and lively disagreements over hummus typically resolve in a *we agree* or *we agree to disagree* followed by ‘cheers’ and a clash of coffee cups or wine glasses. So too at our family Christmas Dinner table this year – thirteen of us (long-term committed or recently-converted **sproutists** of the Williams clan) and three extended family with us from Mexico – who introduced a **Mexican Christmas dish** of honey-infused, roasted and mashed sweet potato (*nan’s recipe*) to our Christmas culinary experience – and, importantly our conversations!

Some Biblical commentators note in the Old Testament book of Ruth, that Hummus was offered to **Ruth by Boaz** – others assert it became a staple dish much later. What is beyond question is that chickpeas and hummus have been part of Mediterranean cuisine for centuries. It’s highly likely, and therefore an interesting thought and probable that **Jesus also enjoyed hummus**. In this post-Christmas season when we remember the gifts given to the baby, and the escape of the family, now refugees for fear of the toddler’s life, I’m no shepherd or magi, but I’d like to think I could humbly offer Him one of the many flavours of hummus I’ve made. In honesty, I think he’d probably opt for our family sprouts delicacy, with the accompanying retelling of enjoy all the conversations that have taken place over and as a result of them. I wonder what your humble but meaningful offering might be?

Meals and mealtimes in the Bible are always more than just a time of sustenance. They are acts of **hospitality and communing** with friends and family – but also with strangers, visitors and those, like Joseph, Mary and their baby, refugees or homeless people. Homeless and refugee individuals and families are increasingly present in our society, with an additional shockingly growing group in 2023 -  Food Bank visitors, who’d humbly appreciate and enjoy a meal with conversation. Having enjoyed the Friday night **seder meal** in Jewish homes in both Jerusalem and the UK, that weekly meal is always an ‘occasion’, and invariably includes discussions about history, culture, politics and much more. The youngest of children are encouraged and taught, how to contribute, and importantly by observation, adult modelling and demonstration, learn how to have even the most robust discussion while disagreeing well or laughing in agreement.

With my best wishes for 2023, with all the opportunities, challenges and blessings this year brings. May you **introduce, encourage and enjoy food conversations**, including where these invariably take you and open opportunities for flourishing and healing. Equally, may the notion of hospitality if new in your household be blessed, or if re-surfacing be enjoyed again, especially if the routine or whole notion of it has been minimised as a result of the changes to our behaviour post-pandemic.

Thank you for who you will be and what you will do in our communities this year.

**Jeff**

**Book recommendation :** further to my reflection above, I recommend this book as a beautiful gift for someone or a treat for your own bookshelf or coffee table. It’s full of cultural and historical insights and culinary inspiration with amazing photos of people, places, items and food – Jerusalem : Yotam Ottolenghi & Sami Tamimi, Ebury Press ISBN 9780091943745

**Jerusalem Trust Grants:** Several of our schools have successfully applied to the Jerusalem Trust, which offers **grants of up to £600 for RE resources,** including a small number of grants for primary schools. Please see their [website](https://www.regrants.org.uk/) for more information and an application form.

**Farmington Scholarships:** Applications are now open for Farmington Scholarships for 2023 - 24, a great opportunity to research an area of RE that you are particularly interested in. Our **own diocesan RE teachers have been funded to research** areas such as teaching about the Trinity, Science and Religion and a new approach to coaching.  You can find out more on their website [here.](http://www.farmington.ac.uk/index.php/farmington-scholarships/) The **closing date is 29th January**. Please contact Jane.kelly@portsmouth.anglican.org  if you would like to be put in touch with a teacher who has already completed a scholarship.

**Online free event : Who Let The Dads Out? Parenting for Faith and National Parenting Initiative : Wednesday 8th March 12-1pm** -  Please let your communities know that The [National Parenting Initiative](https://url6.mailanyone.net/scanner?m=1pDjAV-0004Nm-5L&d=4%7Cmail%2F14%2F1672997400%2F1pDjAV-0004Nm-5L%7Cin6g%7C57e1b682%7C11094928%7C7440907%7C63B7EBE7C41EF7D1A7F6BC261EFA8AD1&o=wphtw%2F%2Fwt%3A.e.trpiohn%2Fku.g&s=2krapKPyDma-1mypXMdtHTX1GKU)  – a Christian charity in the UK with a vision to see churches support and empower families in their community are running this online session for churches in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight aimed at those who have a passion for seeing families flourish in their church and community. Free registration is here: <https://www.thenpi.org.uk/Groups/389463/Hampshire_and_Isle.aspx>

**Fully Funded DfE Early Headship Coaching Offer :** deadline for applications **19th February** – please see attached flyer for details.

**Coastal Learning Partnership – Trustee Vacancy.** We have a vacancy for a Winchester Diocesan-appointed trustee at our Multi Academy Trust serving our schools in the **Bournemouth area**. Please see the attached advert and feel free to contact me for further details – I’d be particularly keen to propose someone associated with schools or parishes in Bournemouth.

**Governor Training sessions** - please contact my pa Sam.powell@portsmouth.anglican.org to register for any of these online training sessions:

**Introduction to Foundation Governance** - Tues 24th Jan *or* Mon 27th Feb; **Collective Worship for Foundation Governors** – Weds 8th Feb *or* Weds 15th March;  **Training for Clerks new to Church Schools** - Mon 27th March

**RE Quality Mark :** This is a great way to celebrate good quality RE in your school! This **award scheme lasts for three years** and is available at bronze, silver or gold levels. You can find out more on the [REQM website.](https://www.reqm.org/)  Even if you don’t apply for the award, their RE audit tools and pupil questionnaires are very useful resources.

**RE Network Meetings :** These will take place in February, in a variety of locations across the two dioceses, including an online session. It was so encouraging to meet up in person again last term, to share ideas and resources and liaise with other RE coordinators in nearby schools. This term we will be looking at the **implications of the new** [**2023 SIAMS framework**](https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/siams-inspections#siams-2023-documents--resources) **for RE** and focussing on ways to support pupils with additional needs in their RE learning. Please see the attached flyer for dates and times and let Jane.kelly@portsmouth.anglican.org  know which session you would like to attend. It would be great if you could bring with you any materials or strategies that have worked well with **SEND pupils** in your school.

**Teaching about Easter *(not just chocolate, rabbits and baby chicks!) :*** If you or a colleague would like some support with creative ways to teach the **Understanding Christianity Salvation units**, there will be an **online session on either Thursday 2nd March or Tuesday 7th March from 3:45 to 5:15**, where we will explore the resource materials and (for schools that use Living Difference IV) look at how to fit our planning into the LDIV cycle of enquiry. This session would be particularly suitable for anyone who is new to using the Understanding Christianity resources, or who would like a refresher. Please let Jane.kelly@portsmouth.anglican.org know if you would like the Microsoft Teams link. This training is **also available as a bespoke staff meeting** for your school or a cluster of schools.

**BCP Launch of New RE Syllabus:** For schools in Bournemouth and Christchurch, the new RE syllabus ‘Refocus’ will be launched at a conference on **January 19th** at Merley House in Wimborne. Free tickets are available [here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bcp-agreed-syllabus-launch-tickets-475234628567#:~:text=Join%20us%20to%20celebrate%20the%20launch%20of%20the,Thu%2C%2019%20January%202023%2C%2008%3A30%20%E2%80%93%2015%3A00%20GMT) The day will focus on a worldviews approach to RE teaching and Free tickets are available [here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bcp-agreed-syllabus-launch-tickets-475234628567#:~:text=Join%20us%20to%20celebrate%20the%20launch%20of%20the,Thu%2C%2019%20January%202023%2C%2008%3A30%20%E2%80%93%2015%3A00%20GMT). This syllabus will now replace ‘Any Questions?’ for BCP schools.

**Hampshire RE Training:** Schools using Living Difference IV may be interested in Hampshire CPD opportunities, including RE in EYFS, Assessment in RE and RE subject management. There is more information on the [Hampshire RE website.](https://re.hias.hants.gov.uk/course/index.php?categoryid=44) Please note that these need to be booked through the [Learning Zone](https://hias-moodle.mylearningapp.com/mod/page/view.php?id=481) booking page.

**Strictly RE 2023:** There is still time to sign up for this year’s national [Strictly RE conference](https://www.natre.org.uk/courses-events/strictlyRE-2023/), which will be held online over the weekend of 28th – 29th January and also includes access to twilight CPD sessions throughout January. This year will focus on Abrahamic religions and diversity and depth in RE.

**Spirited Arts Competition:** Last year’s winners have been announced and their artwork can be seen online, and this year’s new themes have been published on the [NATRE website.](https://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/spirited-arts/spirited-arts-2023/) These include ***Green Faith, Green Future? Where is God Today?* and *All God’s Creatures.*** The competition and accompanying resources are a great way to introduce more creativity into your RE curriculum.

**Worlds Apart Video:** If you are teaching the **Science and Religion** **unit in Y5 / 6,** then have a look at the new [Worlds Apart video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXXj_YB--_g) about the dialogue between Science and Religion. (This has been made by the Theos Think Tank, who produced the excellent [Nobody Stands Nowhere](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFRxKF-Jdos) video about worldviews.) You may also be interested in [Older Than The Stars](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Older-Than-Stars-Karen-Fox/dp/1570917884), by Karen Fox, a great picture book offering a non-religious view of how the world started.

**Free songs for collective worship : Praise-along -**a new collective worship project, uniting UK primary schools with the same monthly song and assist you to: Deliver meaningful collective worship; Follow Christian themes throughout the year: Unite in shared values : Encourage children to explore and experience faith for themselves; Support children’s social, moral, spiritual and cultural development; Support your school's SIAMS objectives; Enhance children’s emotional well-being; The songs have been written by leading children’s song writer [Kelly Fort](https://url6.mailanyone.net/scanner?m=1p2rnY-0000JT-6J&d=4%7Cmail%2F14%2F1670409000%2F1p2rnY-0000JT-6J%7Cin6j%7C57e1b682%7C11094928%7C7440907%7C63906CD46B5092BBC7AC0D708621B20D&o=%2Fphtw%3A%2Fwtstuw.eofhotu.ar%2Fo.kkcsdprwct%2Foueeril%2Fkltr%2Ftrof-y&s=GSeJ71Aghvmks24h8of7hX__-zo) and are available at [www.praise-along.com](https://url6.mailanyone.net/scanner?m=1p2rnY-0000JT-6J&d=4%7Cmail%2F14%2F1670409000%2F1p2rnY-0000JT-6J%7Cin6j%7C57e1b682%7C11094928%7C7440907%7C63906CD46B5092BBC7AC0D708621B20D&o=wphtw%2F%2Fwt%3A-a.plseari%2Fmoc.gno&s=T-szdsYwPbPUbbDLUEyep5JUdxE) For more details - jane.praisealong@gmail.com m: 07738 114850 <https://www.praise-along.com/>

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