

Bishop Donald writes

Waiting with God

February ... the days are lengthening and the nights shortening, but it can still feel like winter. The early flowers are out, but they close up in the afternoon preparing for the dark and the frost. At the beginning of the month Candlemas (the Presentation of Christ in the Temple) ends the fortyday Christmas/Epiphany Season and leads us towards Lent. Later on Ash Wednesday begins our journey towards the cross.

February this year also sees the 60th anniversary of our Queen's Accession to the throne; a significant meeting of the General Synod as it begins to look at the details of how women bishops could change our Church and how we could provide for those uncomfortable with this; the beginning of Gordon Steele's ministry as Archdeacon of Oakham; and who knows what else on our local, national and world stages?

This may be the shortest month, but it is action-packed. Reminders of the past and pointers to the future. A world of uncertainty, but with the assurance of God's abundant provision and his trustworthy promises. The excitement of Christmas is over, the pain of the passion looms on the horizon, but beyond it the stunning and transforming joy of Easter.

February may be busy but it is a month of waiting, of preparation.

Noting the Queen's anniversary but waiting for the big celebrations in the summer; working on the details of the changes women bishops will bring to the church, but no final vote yet (that may well be this summer too); remembering that Christ's death and resurrection are at the heart of our life and faith, but keeping the great passion and Easter story on hold for a little longer.



Waiting is good for us. The great national and international debt crisis would be nothing like as bad if we could have retained the habit of saving up for things and enjoying them when we could afford them, instead of buying them on credit as soon as we are attracted by them (I'm not minimising the blame of those who offered credit to those who couldn't afford it, but it does take two to tango).

And spiritual waiting, waiting on God, moving forwards day by day with him, feeling and sensing each day the troubles of life together with the thrill of his presence, knowing that with Christ the best is yet to be: that is February.

With best wishes 

Bishop of Peterborough

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Produced by the Diocesan Office, The Palace, Peterborough PE1 1YB
Tel: 01733 887012 Email: communications@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

Around the diocese

Joe's remarkable journey

“Mum, I’m going for a walk across Spain.” About this time last year Joe Cameron had just watched *The Way*, Emilio Estevez’s film set on the pilgrimage route in Spain, and he knew at once what he wanted to do. His mother’s surprise was understandable as he usually avoided walking anywhere, and his family had never heard of the Camino de Santiago. Yet he felt so strongly that a month later, just after his 21st birthday, he was setting out alone on the 500 mile walk that would take him six weeks.

“It was totally different to the movie,” says Joe, “I had expected a long walk but it was so much more. Life slows down and you see things you wouldn’t normally notice. There’s the spiritual side of it. I had stopped going to church and praying a couple of years before, but as I walked my faith was rekindled.”

That summer when he got back from Spain, he noticed a post from Ian Holdsworth of the Peterborough Pilgrims to Santiago on an internet site for Camino pilgrims. Ian was looking for someone to develop pilgrimages for young people and to join the diocesan Xpect youth work intern scheme.

Joe applied and within weeks he had moved from Liverpool to Northampton to take up the role.

Now he divides his time between developing interest in youth pilgrimage as a rite of passage for school and university students, and honing his skills as a church youth worker. He is also organising a two week pilgrimage for ages 16-23 years, to take place in July 2012.

“There are already some students from Northampton University signed up for the trip, but I am looking for others to join us. The cost will be around £650, but this may reduce if my applications for various grants are successful. We are planning some day long training walks, and some fund-raising activities, so this will be a great chance for everyone to get to know each other before we set off.”

Anyone interested in finding out more about the youth pilgrimage is invited to contact Joe for details on 0751 4577250 or email camo1990@hotmail.co.uk



Around the diocese

Street Pastors making a difference

The Street Pastor teams set up in several towns in the diocese over the past two years are out and about on most Saturday nights, but especially so over the Christmas and New Year period.

In Corby the scheme has a rota of 31 trained Pastors drawn from many church denominations in the town. Since they started their patrols in July 2010, the Police have noticed a significant drop in the number of alcohol related incidents in Corby village (where most of the pubs and clubs are). Indeed they have asked the Pastors to start sending a team elsewhere in the town on Saturday nights so see if they can have the same beneficial effect.

“We have the ability to infiltrate areas where the authority figures like the Police may spark aggression. That is because we are non judgmental and will give time and love to anyone,” said Fiona Covington, one of Northampton’s Street Pastors. “Jesus commanded that we should go out and spread the good news. In this day and age actions speak louder than words and I feel that this is my way of spreading the word

*Corby (right) and Kettering (below)
Street Pastors head into the night.*

through action.” All Street Pastors are trained not to preach but “to help, to care and to listen.”

“We feel so encouraged by the people of Corby,” says Fiona Anderson. “We are starting to see the same faces and people come up to us and continue conversations where they left off last time they saw us. They want to be listened to.”

In Kettering, where there are 34 Street Pastors from 16 churches, this was their first festive season. Co-ordinator Fiona de Boltz says the streets were crowded but had a positive and good natured spirit.

Anyone interested in training as a Street Pastor, offering prayer support during their patrols, or making a donation towards training and equipment costs (to the local branch) will find contacts and information at www.streetpastors.org.uk.



Around the diocese

February welcome for new Archdeacon of Oakham

Canon Gordon Steele is to be welcomed as the new Archdeacon of Oakham at a service at Peterborough Cathedral on Saturday 25 February, at 11am. All are welcome to the service.

In addition to taking up the traditional role of an Archdeacon in supporting clergy and churchwardens in the northern half of the diocese, Gordon will also have spiritual oversight of financial matters across the diocese.

Canon Steele has been Vicar of St John's in Peterborough city centre since 2001. Here he has overseen a £280,000 development project and collaborated with the multi-million pound regeneration of Peterborough city centre, setting up a Community Interest Company so that the church

is integrated into the public realm and used more as a community resource.

Prior to his time in Peterborough Gordon was Vicar of St

Alban the Martyr in Northampton. Previously he served in parishes in Middlesex in the Diocese of London.

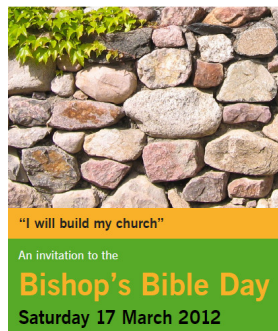
Before his ordination he worked with USPG [United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel] as Missionary Treasurer of the Diocese of South-West Tanganyika.



Building theme for Bishop's Bible Day 2012

Following the success of last year's event, Bishop Donald will be leading another Bible Day in 2012. It will take place on Saturday 17 March, at Northampton High School, and the theme is "I will build my church."

The Bible Day is open to anyone who uses the Bible in any way in their ministry, whether that is in the



church, in school, at work, in the community, in the home or elsewhere. It is also a time for worship and for meeting up with friends, old and new, from across the diocese.

Alongside the main teaching sessions led by Bishop Donald, there will be a range of workshops to choose from, all designed to help deepen our faith and equip us to help others to connect with the Bible.

A booking form is available at: www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/bibleday12.pdf, or call Sally Crossley on 01604 887049, sally.crossley@peterborough-diocese.org.uk