

**Saffron Walden Deanery Mission Weekend "Come to Life"**

Bishop Stephen is leading our Deanery Mission Weekend in May. In line with second strategic aim in the Transforming Presence Paper, “Evangelising Effectively”, the weekend is to encourage the churches of our Deanery in sharing the good news of God’s love in Jesus Christ.

The Saffron Walden Deanery represents 36 Parishes in North West Essex with Revd. David Tomlinson as the Rural Dean, the Team Rector of St. Mary’s Saffron Walden and Villages Team Ministry. The Area covered by the Deanery is bordered by Stansted Airport in the South and stretches to the Cambridge and Hertfordshire county boundaries, and is a member of the Chelmsford Diocesan Synod.

The Deanery Mission weekend is a time set aside for specific events that share the gospel with those on the fringe or outside the church, set in the context of understanding how people grow and develop faith, and how we become a missionary church, renewing our faith as we share it with others.

The Parishes in the Saffron Walden Deanery are arranging a wide range of activities which will take place mostly during the weekend of the 18-20 May 2012, and importantly looking at effective ways to continue the Evangelic Process after the Mission Weekend.

David Tomlinson, in the Deanery newspaper distributed at the launch of the planning for the Weekend wrote that “recovering the essential meaning of evangelism and rising to the challenge of finding appropriate and authentic ways of sharing the good news is urgent and vital.”

Living in a missionary context where increasing numbers have little or nothing to do with the church and many are largely ignorant of the Christian faith, the need for effective

Evangelism is increasingly pressing. Our urgent calling is to rediscover the courage and joy of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

The Saffron Walden Deanery Mission Weekend provides an opportunity to explore

how evangelism is best done in each of the Parish Churches. Each church is being asked to consider its own locality and what kind of event would attract local people.

The next step is to decide how and who is to make some kind of presentation of what difference it makes to believe in Jesus Christ. The goal is to find an event that is

repeatable that can become integral to what each church offers.

Events being planned include: Photography Master Class at St Mary's Elsenham on Saturday 12th May, followed by an exhibition of the photographs taken on Saturday 23rd June with Gospel presentation: A Celebration of the Book of Common Prayer - An evening in celebration of the 350th anniversary of the BCP. A talk through of the evening prayer , a break for supper then a service of Evening Prayer: A Coffee Fundraiser for St Clare's Hospice, Friday 18th May at Ugley Village Hall. Talk giving a Christian perspective on facing illness and death: Forestry Fun for All Ages by Ashdon Church words and poems pinned to trees, Pet Service in Hadstock Church: Rogation Ramble starting at Manuden Church, and many more innovative ideas

Reflection and review will be a key aspect of what happens after the Mission. Appraising the event can result in improvements or in deciding to try something else. Many Deaneries are watching our Deanery Weekend with interest, and what lessons have been learned. We will have a follow up article in “The Month”

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