

# COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

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## 'M:Power-ing' leaders

Following the Diocese's first successful bid for national church funding in 2017 three key projects to grow the church on estates in Lancashire have been moving forward, *writes Ronnie Semley, Diocesan Communications Manager*. One of those projects is the new 'M:Power' training centre at St James, Lower Darwen. M:Power has a remit to train future leaders for urban mission, lay and ordained, and has already embarked on its training programme following the recent commissioning of the M:Power team by Bishop Jill (pictured). [Read more about M:Power here](#), in a piece which also featured in the Church Times.

## Hearing God's call

On April 4, the Diocesan Growing Leaders Team, based at the Diocesan Offices in Blackburn, is praying and fasting for more people to hear God's call to vocation - either to lay ministry or to Ordination, *writes Rev. Nick McKee, Diocesan Director of Vocations*. There will be no specific events to attend, but you and your parish are invited to join with the Team in prayer for vocations that day. Our Leadership and Deployment Strategy commits us to maintaining the current numbers of stipendiary clergy, but this relies on more and more people hearing and responding to God's call in their lives. So, as you pray, do reflect on anyone in your congregation whom you feel may have the gifts and the call to lay or ordained ministry.

## Pathways to Prayer

Right at the heart of delivering our Diocesan Vision 2026 is the call to make disciples of Jesus Christ, *writes Ruth Hassall, Diocesan Director of Discipleship*. One of the key priorities within that theme is to commit ourselves to praying with greater depth and urgency for the Kingdom of God to come. To support and resource this, several 'Pathways to Prayer' events are planned this year to provide an opportunity for all people of every tradition to explore fresh perspectives on patterns and styles of prayer, contemplation and meditation, through a diverse range of workshops. The first is on Saturday, March 30, with Bishop Philip at Whalley Abbey. [More information and booking details](#).

## Response to New Zealand terror attacks

Following the terror attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand, last week our Bishops issued a [joint statement](#) condemning the shootings, with prayers for the families of the dead and injured. Diocesan clergy and people from parishes across the County have also been taking part in peace vigils in the days since, including [one in Blackburn](#) and another [in Preston](#). Another vigil, organised by Building Bridges in Burnley, takes place in Burnley tomorrow night (Friday). [More details about that event here](#).

HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

## Prayers for Brexit

This week, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have been encouraging parishes across the country to hold Brexit conversation and prayer events. The hope is these events will help bring the country together over the weekend of 29-31 March, and particularly on March 29 – the original date set for leaving the EU. If your parish is able to hold an event – it can be large or small; specifically organised or perhaps held on the back of an existing prayer event – you will find an article with a [message from the Archbishops here](#) on the national Church of England website and a variety of [supporting resources here](#).

## Children's Ministry Conference

Over the weekend of March 2 and 3, the fifth annual Children's Ministry conference, organised by the Board of Education Children's Work Team, took place at the Barton Grange Hotel near Preston, *writes Sarah Earnshaw, Children's Work Adviser for the Diocese*. The title of this year's conference, attended by 100+ delegates, was 'P is for Parent'. The aim was to explore how churches can support and encourage parents to use everyday opportunities to reflect something of God; whether they have a strong faith or very little. [Read a more detailed report](#) (includes audio downloads of keynote sessions).

## Preaching 'refresh'

Later this year, Bishop Philip will be leading a 48-hour clergy residential at Whalley Abbey on preaching from November 11–13 which will provide an excellent opportunity for clergy to reflect on how they can keep their preaching sharp, fresh and effective. There will also be plenty of time to pray together and support each other. Book as soon as possible. More details and booking information [available via this link](#).

## Liverpool Mission event

Bishop Julian, Bishop Philip and Bishop Jill have reflected on the recent four days of mission in Liverpool Diocese as part of the latest Northern Bishops' Mission event led by the Archbishop of York. Each Bishop took a supporting team from parishes across the Diocese. [Read a report here](#).

## ... and finally ... Dorothy, 92, is confirmed

Communications Update usually finishes with an 'and finally...' story, but never was the heading more apt than for this month's '... and finally!' That's because it's about wonderful Dorothy Hopwood who was confirmed recently by Bishop Philip at the age of 92! Events conspired when Dorothy was younger to prevent her confirmation but – proving that it's never too late – Dorothy's confirmation finally took place after being arranged by her parish priest, Rev. David Stephenson. Her story captured the imagination across local and regional media – including BBC Radio Lancashire – as well as national Christian media and on social media. [Report, with links to other coverage](#).

**Communications Update is issued every month to all parishes across the diocese and is also available in pdf and Word file format on the diocesan website [www.blackburn.anglican.org](http://www.blackburn.anglican.org) under Resources / Communications Resources.**