



Praying for Revival

While our attention over the last year has rightly been focussed on the deeply disturbing decisions taken by the House of Bishops and synods concerning the blessings of those in same-sex relationships, contrary to the clear and explicit teaching of Scripture, it is easy to forget that there is a bigger and deeper issue that besets us, which will remain whatever the outcome of current debates.

On 20th May the C of E released its 'good news' that for the 3rd year in a row, post-covid, the weekly attendance figures of the church have increased! What may not be as clear is that the adult weekly attendance is actually still 8.3% lower than the previously projected decline of 12% over that period—i.e. since 2019 the C of E adult attendance is 1/5th smaller in 5 years (See [HERE](#) for more details). The failure to faithfully share Christ with our nation is by far the deepest and most serious crisis we are facing, and yet its seriousness has yet to hit home.

One reason may be because our Ebbsfleet network churches are on average in the top 95% percentile of Church of England churches, despite being generally not regarded as 'normal' by others. But my deeper concern is this crisis is largely not being responded to by anyone, including us. What is desperately needed for our nation is simply a revival—a whole-hearted return to the Lord in repentance and faith, that transforms lives, communities and our nation.

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⁶ At the king's command, couriers went throughout Israel and Judah with letters from the king and from his officials, which read:

"People of Israel, return to the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, that he may return to you who are left, who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria."

⁷ Do not be like your parents and your fellow Israelites, who were unfaithful to the Lord, the God of their ancestors, so that he made them an object of horror, as you see.

⁸ Do not be stiff-necked, as your ancestors were; submit to the Lord. Come to his sanctuary, which he has consecrated forever. Serve the Lord your God, so that his fierce anger will turn away from you.

⁹ If you return to the Lord, then your fellow Israelites and your children will be shown compassion by their captors and will return to this land, for the Lord your God is gracious and compassionate. He will not turn his face from you if you return to him."

2Chron 30.6-9

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Rt Rev Rob Munro
Bishop of Ebbsfleet

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The reason I fear we don't **really** want this outpouring of God's grace is that I have yet to detect the heartfelt prayer for revival that has preceded every documented gracious work of the Spirit of God, either from Scripture or from history. A deep committed sacrificial prayer has always been the precursor to God's gracious outpouring of blessing—but there are some significant characteristics in common with those prayers that merit our reflection.

➤ First, they are prayers where God's people have a deep sense of their own responsibility and guilt for the state of their nation, eg. *2Chron 30:6-8, Ezra 9:6-7, Daniel 9:5-6*. There is no self-righteousness or self-excusing—the revival pray-er owns the problem as their own! There is no excusing our unholiness or accommodating it—rather the admission that is our impurity that has deserved the judgement of God. It is God who has brought about the perilous state of his people.

➤ Second, they plead on the basis of God's gracious character rather than their own need. Eg. *2Chron 30:9, Ezra 9:8-9, Daniel 9:4*. The revival pray-er is focussed on the holy gracious character of God—they stand on awe, in unworthiness, before his sovereign judgement, not making excuses but honouring God's righteousness in the face of our sinfulness. Their worship is utterly God-focussed, celebrating his character, rather than pleading our response. They pray and sing of their sinfulness and God's grace, rather than saying how much we love him or feel about him.

➤ Third, they publicly confess and repent of the compromising they have been allowing, in particular their disobedience to the law of God. Eg. *2Chron 30:8, Ezra 9:10-15, Daniel 9:7-14*. Revival pray-ers are humbled by God's holiness and horrified by their sinfulness, not excusing or evading God's law.

➤ Fourth, they ask for God's honour not for themselves, without telling God what to do, they simply submit themselves to whatever God should choose to do. Eg. *2Chron 30:9, Ezra 9:15, Daniel 9:17-19*. Revival pray-ers express humble submission and readiness to serve God's will, whatever he should choose—whether in continued judgement or revival. They neither leave their people for purer pastures nor tolerate the compromising around them—they pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, and stand ready to do that will!

➤ Finally, they do this together, publicly! Those three model prayers of Hezekiah, Ezra and Daniel ended up circulated as Scripture, shared with others so others could own them too. Revival pray-ers do it together with others!

What Scripture shares is reflected in every documented revival of history— God has revived when his people have together owned their responsibility for their community, pleaded God's holy character, repented personally and submitted to whatever God would require to revive his people.

And my making these observations is not trying to share a magic formula to demand God's response to our situation, because revivals come from our heart's desire for this, not our minds sense of duty that we 'ought' to do it! But amidst our lamenting of the state of our church in England (and Church of England), I would make the appeal for us to begin to pray at least for that desire to pray for revival; for us put our usual prayer lists and desires second to this sort of prayer for a wholesale heartfelt renewal of our vision of God's holiness and grace and our own revival. As 1 Peter 4:17-19 observes, judgement begins with us, but so do the blessings that we share with others, 1 Peter 4 4:7-11.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R Munro'.

Bishop's Diary

Looking back since March's newsletter, here are some highlights:

March

- 24 Preach + local clergy mtg Elburton, Plymouth
PCC mtg + preach at St Leonards, Exeter
- 25 Oversight with Integrity Symposium
- 31 Preach at All Saints Fordham, Easter Day

April

- 9 Zoom call with Bishop of Peterborough
- 10 Ebbsfleet Team mtg
- 11 Orthodox Bishops Steering Group
Meet Two Cities Area Director of Ministry
- 14 Confirmation & Baptism St John's, Wimborne
PCC at Christ Church Westbourne
- 15 London Diocese Snr Staff mtg
Address ReNew Southwark
- 16 SMMIB Grant prep Zoom
- 17 Oversight Symposium follow up Zoom
PEV Bishop's mtg
- 18 Snr Leadership seminar
- 19 Alliance Group mtg
- 21 Preach St John's Hensingham
Confirmation St Bridget's, Moresby
- 22-23 Lichfield Clergy Conference
- 26 Meet Chaplain
- 30 Roadshows prep

May

- 1 Arborfield interview
Gafcon Zoom
- 2 Roadshow #1 Tunbridge Wells
- 5 Preach at St Mark's, Bexhill on Sea
Preach at Lighthouse Christian Centre
- 7 Roadshow #2 Yeovil
- 9 Roadshow #3 London
Cockfosters / Limehouse mtg
- 10 Meet Bishop Olubunmi
- 12 2 services incl Confirmation at St John, Clacton
- 13 St Luke's, Wimbledon PCC
- 14 Oxford Diocese Snr Staff mtg
Mtgs at Wycliffe College
Gafcon mtg
- 15-17 House of Bishops
- 19 Q+A Christ Church, Greenbank
Confirmation at St John's, Hartford
- 20 Virtual Coffee Surgery
PCC St James, Audley
- 21 Communion service at Castle Church, Stafford
Roadshow #4 Stafford
- 22 Ebbsfleet Bishop's Council
Ordinands mtg
- 23 Trinity Church, Buxton Trustees Zoom
Church Society Council Zoom

What's ahead...

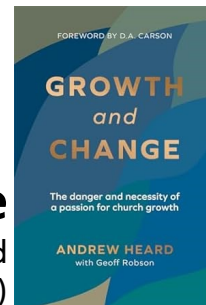
June

- 2 Confirmation, Holy Cross, Felsted
- 4 Roadshow #5 Maidenhead
- 5 Roadshow #6 Tooting

BOOK REVIEW:

Growth and Change

Andrew Heard
(2024, Matthias Media)



This book comes with a host of commendations which speak highly of it (including a foreword by Don Carson). I believe that these are entirely justified. It is a deeply theological and biblical work while also rooted in much wisdom in relation to the ordinary experience of church life. The author reminds us that it is so easy for leaders and congregations to get into ruts and to take refuge in the priority of 'being faithful'. He says that the way we run churches is a significant hindrance to growth.

The first half of the book is broadly making the case for the priority of growth (in both the numerical and maturity senses). There is a deep awareness of the dangers involved in this priority but the necessity is nonetheless insisted upon. I found much thoughtful reflection here on tensions and dilemmas which I have experienced in being a church leader. For example there is a nuanced grasp on how human responsibility and divine sovereignty play out in this.

Overall Andrew Heard encourages us to focus on the outputs of our ministry rather than simply being faithful in our inputs.

This is exemplified when he asks us to consider the focus of the Great Commission in Matthew 28. He points out that this call of the Lord Jesus Christ is not actually 'preach the gospel' but rather 'make disciples'. There is an excellent discussion of the words which lie behind the Bible's understanding of pastoral leadership (p164 onwards) which significantly shape his understanding of that. Thus he wisely does not rule out the need for a single elder in some circumstances, while recognising that a plurality of elders is important in the longer term.

The later chapters of the book are more orientated towards the practicalities of working out in everyday life of what he has set out in the earlier chapters. He particularly focusses on the need for clarity about the role of the church in God's purposes (back in p147 he states that 'the church is not a tool'). Chapter 12 can be viewed as key. It is entitled 'Leading with outcomes at the centre'. I found this helpful in thinking through what my 'retirement' ministry should look like.

Do not imagine that this is a book which is designed to make pastors and church leaders feel guilty, even though it is challenging. As I read through this it encouraged me that in some areas I was ministering along the right lines. Yet it also made me reflect that I could have done a lot better in other matters if I had been clearer about what the local church is for. All in all, I would highly recommend this book. It covers a lot of ground, is thought provoking, and is worth using to reflect on carefully. Potentially it will make our pastoral ministries much more fruitful.

Mark Burkill

Bishop's Pastoral Advisor for Northern Province

Ebbsfleet Roadshows 2024

We are 4 Roadshows in to our regional programme and it has been such a privilege to travel to different parts of the country and meet so many of our constituency. We've deliberately gone smaller, more intimate and local this year because diocesan situations are different across the country and we want more voices to be heard. We hope they are more accessible in geography and timing.

Thank you -

- For coming out and bringing your wisdom and questions
- For spreading the word and inviting your friends, colleagues, PCCs and lay leaders
- To the amazing host churches who are looking after us and facilitating
- For feeding back how we can improve
- To the team from Church Society, we love partnering with you

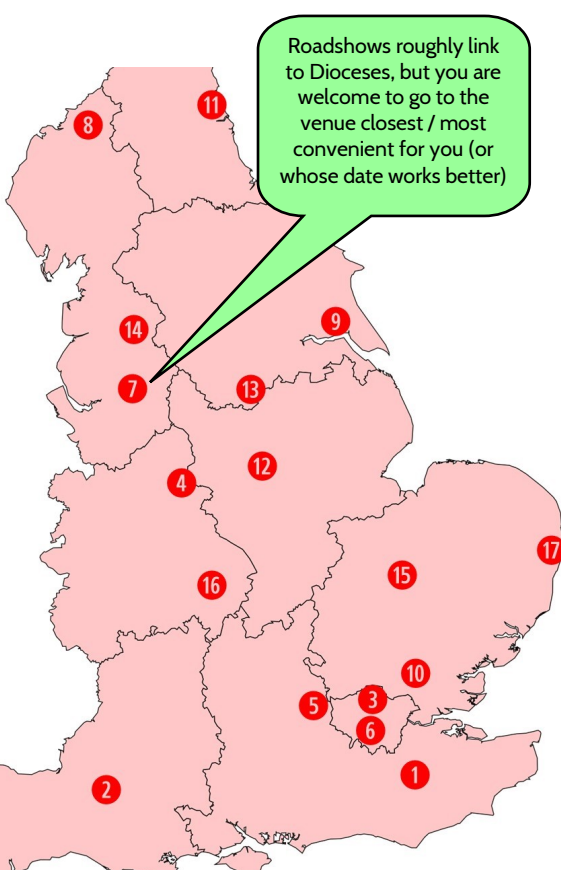
The remaining Roadshows are listed below and we'd love to see you at one of them. There's still time to sign up: click the relevant PM or EVE link (or both) to let us know you're coming. (You don't need to be on our ChurchSuite already, but we'd love to keep in touch with you. You can register [HERE](#)).

What to expect:

- Our Roadshows this year are planned to help us work out in detail how we can better **"Stand Together, Pray Together and Act Together"**
- They address the issues of PLF impaired fellowship from 2 directions:
 - How to respond collectively to the PLF challenges in a way that upholds our historic biblical faith while retaining our priority for evangelism and mission
 - To consider how to express a more biblical understanding of spiritual oversight that will support and encourage ministry, in a way that is more real, local and intentional—something that flows from "Principles Commending Ministry".
- We talk about women in ministry and ministers' wives in Complementarian contexts—we hope you (in particular) will be able to join us. An Ebbsfleet Women's Pastoral Advisor will be available to chat at each Roadshow.
- The afternoon sessions are focused on Ministers and Leadership Teams, the evenings more for wider key leaders from churches—but all are welcome at either session. There is little duplication between the two sessions, so we attend both if you can.
- There will be plenty of time for prayer and questions, and informal time between the sessions too. Tea, coffee and simple snacks are available (but no meals- we can usually give information of local facilities though).
- I am available for individual private meetings on the morning of each roadshow for any ministers who would value a personal one-to-one meeting (email us at admin@bishopofebbsfleet.org if you're interested in that).

Afternoon Sessions
1 - 4.30pm

Evening Sessions
7.30 - 9pm



To REGISTER please click the PM or EVE (or both) links:

①	2 May	PM / EVE	Tunbridge Wells	St Peter's
②	7 May	PM / EVE	Yeovil	St John's
③	9 May	PM / EVE	London	All Souls, Langham Place
④	21 May	PM / EVE	Stafford	Castle Church (St Mary's)
⑤	4 June	PM / EVE	Maidenhead	St Mary's
⑥	5 June	PM / EVE	Tooting	St Nicholas
⑦	13 June	PM / EVE	Knutsford	St John's
⑧	18 June	PM / EVE	Carlisle	St John's, Houghton
⑨	20 June	PM / EVE	Hull	St Andrew's, Kirk Ella
⑩	25 June	PM / EVE	Harold Wood	St Peter's
⑪	4 July	PM / EVE	Newcastle	St John's Hebburn
⑫	9 July	PM / EVE	Derby	St Alkmund's, Duffield
⑬	11 July	PM / EVE	Sheffield	Christ Church, Fulwood
⑭	16 July	PM / EVE	Blackburn	St Andrew's, Leyland
⑮	18 July	PM / EVE	Cambridge	St Andrew the Great
⑯	23 July	PM / EVE	Redditch	Christ Church, Matchborough
⑰	25 July	PM / EVE	Lowestoft	Christ Church, Lowestoft

the fridge door

JOBS—Chaplain to the Bishop of Ebbsfleet

Our Chaplain James Durbin is restructuring his work time which means that we are now looking for a second part-time Chaplain. This flexible post supports the Bishop in engagement with churches, dioceses and the Church institutions. It is part strategic and analytical – helping resource the Bishop in engaging with the wider Church; and it is part relational – supporting churches in practical advice and help.

The ideal candidate would be ordained and experienced with a heart for pastoral ministry and awareness of CoFE structures. It may suit a part-time incumbent.

In the first instance, please email

admin@bishopofebbsfleet.org

to express interest & ask for more information

OPPORTUNITY FOR MISSION?
With the General Election on the 4th July, why not be the centre of your community as they prepare, and hold a hustings event!
A simple guide to how to do it is available ...

HERE

Act soon!



Ask the Candidates - Election Hustings

REMINDER!

Have you put up candidates for the Diocesan Synod elections which are happening soon??

Lamenting with Hope

ReNew Annual Conference

Hear God's Word taught and be spurred on from coaching sessions and interviews, and praise and prayer; be equipped to faithfully hold out the word of life in our communities so that we might see the salvation of England.

Leeds, 23-24 September 2024

Coaching sessions:

Staying hopeful:

- 1) in evangelism
- 2) in church leadership
- 3) with the global church
- 4) while contending.

Contending:

- 1) in a mixed parish
- 2) in a united church
- 3) when it's just you
- 4) with a view to leaving the CoFE

Speakers include:

Paul Darlington



Matt Fuller



Clare Heath-Whyte



Jonny Wei Sing Lee



Charlie Newcombe



Leonie Poole



Rico Tice



Tom Watts



...and many others.

Book now at:
www.renewconference.uk

Monday

Companions: Rich Aldridge (St Thomas Oakwood, London) and Leonie Poole (St John's Church, Lindsey)

10:00 – Coffee & Welcome
11:00 – Bible Reading 1: Psalm 74
Matt Fuller (Christ Church Mayfair, London)
11:45 – ReNew Agenda Update
Brian O'Donoghue (ReNew Pioneering and Operations Director) plus guests
12:30 – A Time of Thanksgiving
Jonny Wei Sing Lee (All Hallows Church Bingham, Blackpool)
13:00 – Lunch
14:00 – The Sovereignty of God
Ben Cooper (Cornhill Training Course & Grace Church, Sydenham, ANIE)
15:00 – Staying hopeful coaching sessions
16:15 – Contending coaching sessions
17:15 – Break
18:30 – Drinks
19:00 – Dinner
Plus Andrew Alderton (Latimer Trust) & Clare Heath-Whyte (St Lawrence church, Morden) in conversation.

Tuesday

08:00 – Bible Reading 2: Psalm 80
Chris Hobbs (St Stephen's and St Wulstan's Church, Birmingham)
09:45 – Persevering in hope
Kieran Bush (St John's Walthamstow, Chelmsford) and Charlie Sterne (All Souls Langham Place, London)
10:30 – A Time of Prayer
Jane Patterson (Christ Church Fallowfield, Sheffield & CEEC)
11:00 – Coffee
11:45 – The Sufficiency of God's Grace
Tom Watts (St John's Desandrie Hill, London & Visiting Lecturer in Anglican Ministry at Oak Hill College)
12:30 – Lunch
13:30 – Q&A
14:30 – Bible Reading 3: Psalm 84
Martin Ayers (St Silas Church, Glasgow, ANIE)
15:30 – Close

EBBSFLEET

TEST



VACANCIES

May 2024



- [Vicar](#)
St John's, Over (Chester)
- [Associate Vicar](#)
Hailsham Parish Church
- Director
Sussex Gospel Partnership
admin@sussexgospelpartnership.org.uk
- [Assistant Minister](#)
St Mary's Balderstone, Rochdale
- Women's Ministry Coordinator (pt)
Christ Church Leyton
philip.brentford@christchurchleyton.org.uk
- [Church Centre Manager](#)
St Peter's, Harold Wood
- [Senior Youth and Families Worker](#)
St Mary's Basingstoke
- [Ministry Trainees](#)
St George's, Wembdon
- [Youth & Community Worker](#)
Minister
Church at the Green, Arborfield Green
andy.earns@abch.org.uk
- [Associate Vicar](#)
Holy Trinity, Wallington

We are very happy to publicise vacancies to our network. If possible please send a link to a web page rather than an advert or job description, to admin@bishopofebbsfleet.org thanks!

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