

Ministers-at-Work

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Editorial



It seems to me that there are two big questions raised within this issue. Firstly the environment in which we all live and work. Whatever we do, and wherever on our precious planet we do it, the impact of climate change is part of our daily life. Farmers in far off countries have been experiencing the impact of unstable weather for a decade or more. Many of their governments have few resources to develop effective adaptations and mitigations. One of the problems they face is that each local community has different climate problems. One might need solutions to urban flooding, another a hardy drought tolerant crop. Migration has also increased as crops

fail and floods or droughts extend, exacerbating the refugee crisis in Europe. Now we are seeing serious floods in Europe, and wild fires in Australia and California, as well as shifts in the weather in UK affecting the balance of plants and animals we have for so long taken for granted. As you receive this journal, COP26 will be bringing together the world's leaders to work on what they can do. But all of us can contribute more, both as individuals and in our workplaces. For example, the NHS is responsible for 5% of the UK's carbon emissions. In my local NHS Trust, staff have been encouraged to suggest climate saving plans, from walking or cycling to work, to changes to asthma inhalers, from meat free Mondays to remote consultations. Even so, there is still lots to do to reach net zero. In this journal, Dorrie Johnson begins an important

conversation about how each of us, in whatever setting we are, can contribute. If you feel moved to respond with your own experience in this area, I'd be pleased to hear from you.

The second big question in this edition is about power and perspective. Hugh Williamson's interviews with priests and theologians who choose to do precarious manual jobs uncover their marginalization and lack of power in terms of the structures and organisations in which they work. But they also show something of how they can come close to the most powerless, through being with them, listening, laughing – even swearing! The Theology Discussion Group in September asked



‘Who is Jesus’. My feeling after reading Hugh’s interviews was that Christ is in these people, out there on the edge.

In terms of church power Ruth describes a visit from the Archbishop of Canterbury to Guildford, in which he spoke to business leaders, making the case for businesses to be active contributors to the common good. But, perhaps because of his position and perspective he does not seem to question the potential impact of a focus on profitability. Alongside that, Julian describes the Kingdom at Work Project: ‘a radically different approach to transforming the world of work through a process of discernment, partnership and action’. The team are looking for volunteer workplaces to pilot their material. There is also a summary of the International Worker Priest Conference in September, and details of our planned Reflective Weekend next February – for which you will also find a flyer attached. Enjoy reading – and do get in touch if you have ideas for an article.

Pauline Pearson

What can Ministers in Secular Employment do to raise environmental issues in the place of work? - Dorrie Johnson



It was Climate Sunday on September 5th. Did your place of worship mark it? Did your place of work know about it? Did it make any difference to either?

I believe that we have a moral obligation to protect the environment and promote the sustainable development of the planet for future generations, not least in the place where we work. It isn't and won't be easy. Hundreds of statements have been addressing this. Just a few examples:

The poor environmental performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the UK has been attributed to a wide range of barriers, both internal and external to the firm. However, the debate has seldom considered the interplay of factors beyond 'the firm'. In order for the debate to progress we emphasize the importance of situating the environmental practices of small firms within a context of national policy arrangements.¹ So began an environmental report in the *Business Strategy and the Environment* 1993

A 2019 Intergovernmental [Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#) estimated a million species are at risk of extinction, many within decades. It concluded that “we are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life.”² In June, this year, the Prime Minister said the way back from the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic was to “Build, Build, Build”. This caused some alarm amongst environmentalists, but building back “better, greener, and faster” is an opportunity to make development healthier. If the government wants to bring about a step-change in the nation’s health, planning reform could be a golden opportunity.³ Action to improve the nation’s resilience is failing to keep pace with the impacts of a warming planet and increasing climate risks facing the UK. (June 2021) There are

¹ <https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.347>

² <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk> › Insight

³ <https://www.gov.uk> › ... › [State of the environment, health, people and the environment Updated 23/07.2021](#)

strong benefits from taking effective adaptation action. The assessment identifies a range of steps that will have benefits in the next five years if implemented on a wide scale, such as building design and retrofit, habitat creation and improved access to information on climate impacts. Importantly, while the changing climate also creates some opportunities for the UK, these do not offset the risks and also require early action to realise.⁴



These are 4 random examples of concern.

What can MSEs do, if anything (surely something?) to promote, at least a discussion about, environmental issues arising in the workplace? So much depends on the degree of

⁴ <https://www.theccc.org.uk/2021/06/16/uk-struggling-to-keep-pace-with-climate-change-impacts/>

choice and responsibility that one has, for how influential one can be. Is it possible for a single employee to make a difference, what responsibility does a manager, CEO, shareholder, financier, scientist, principal, have to bring about change? What can be done when several different organisations are involved in an activity?

There may be questions we can consider. These need not concern only the obvious interests such as heating and lighting, recycling or checking our environmental footprint.. for example

Do you work in a hospitality environment? Can you ask questions about:

- what is regarded as waste and how is it collected and discarded?
- how are fruit, vegetables, tea, coffee, other food stuffs sourced and prepared?
- are 'complimentary' toiletries provided, discarded?
- what cleansing materials and methods are used?

Does your company produce a product? Can you ask questions about:

- its length of use?
- can it be repaired?
- can it be recycled:
- the source of material used in its production?
- are there environmental consequences in its production?

Is your company involved in Office Supplies? Can you ask questions about:

- where and how are materials sourced?
- provision and use of paper?
- any waste resulting from production of office equipment?
- disposal of materials, for example, cartridges?

Is your work in education? Can you ask questions about:

- inclusion of environmental issues in a curriculum?
- use of materials?
- use of time and space?
- disposal of materials or food stuffs?
- practical exercises promoting care of resources?
- land use and transport

Do you work for a power or energy / utilities company? Can you ask questions about:

- How energy is sourced and distributed?
- How waste is measured and its method of disposal? and so on.

I won't add more, see p33 *CHRISM Worship Resources, August 2005* for a comprehensive list of employments. Already more could be added as society changes.

The need for action is urgent. Although no longer in paid employment, I am involved, as a Trustee, with a voluntary group in the community that has now included environmental

considerations in all its activities. We can only do what we are able to do, but at least we can do that.

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. [Hebrews 4:13](#)



“Managers see us as a number, we don’t really matter” - Hugh Williamson

Priests and theologians who choose to do precarious manual jobs as an expression of their Christian beliefs experience work in an intense way.

In his project **#PriestsInPrecariousWork** Hugh Williamson asks worker priests about their working lives and listens to what they say.

Some examples from Germany, Netherlands and France, recorded at the Herzogenrath conference.

Germany: Maria Jans-Wenstrup, 57, a former nun, packages consumer goods at a parcel delivery centre

I alternate between shifts from 6am to 2pm and 2pm to 10pm. I work every second Saturday. Its hard work. This was getting too much for me, physically, so I asked to reduce my hours. Recently I was given a permanent contract, which I didn't expect but am pleased about.

It's a chaotic place to work. We were lucky there was no major covid outbreak. We had to work harder in the pandemic as everyone was doing internet shopping. We parceled off mountains of packets of toilet paper!

I'm happy to be working there. Why? Because of the colleagues. When the company started two years ago it needed lots of people, quickly, with few qualifications or German language skills required. The biggest groups of colleagues are from Syria, Iraq and Eritrea. For a long time I was the only German, besides the managers of course. An Iraqi man working near me was a psychiatrist for 20 years. There's an Iranian woman who was a bookkeeper and Syrian sports teacher near me too.

There's a special atmosphere, a real spirit, when we are working together.

Do people know my background? Everyone there has a particular story. No one is trained for the jobs we do. My background is nothing special.

Netherlands: Anne-Marieke Koot, trained as a Catholic pastoral worker, cleans private homes for Dutch cleaning company.



We are going through the fifth re-organisation in the 20 years I've been doing this work. We'll soon have new bosses. We're worried if we'll get the same job conditions as before, the same pay and holidays? It's really difficult for my women colleagues with kids. It shows how insecure our work is.

I've been on the works council (representing workers' interests to the company) since 2006. It's difficult as the managers keep changing. They are young, around 30, and move on. We stay.

It's tiring work. In the pandemic it was worrying too. We worried about the health of the people we clean for, often older people, on their own, in small houses. Social distance was difficult, also as they were lonely, they wanted to talk a lot.

The work can be monotonous but I want to continue this life. I found a way of keeping motivated during the pandemic, by writing a short text every week about an experience at work. My former theology professor reads them and writes a short response too. We have 60 texts by now.

Vuk+, 52, Protestant pastor, prepares meals in a hospital kitchen, does the dishes, takes out rubbish, delivers food to wards.

We are about 12 people in the kitchen, working shifts. The pandemic was really tough for many - the situation at work, in families, illness, quarantine, loneliness and little chance to compensate for the pressure. Its only now that the effects of the pandemic are noticeable with colleagues getting sick. At least two people are sick every week, many of them for longer periods because of often psychosomatic illnesses. Everywhere people are saying, "I'm running out of energy. There's now more pressure than before Corona". Companies have restructured their work and distributed more work on fewer shoulders. Being sick is a way of coping.



The kitchen is a world of its own - every place of work probably has its own rules. I like to work in the kitchen, even if the tone is not exactly socially acceptable: I prefer someone to say to me: "You f**king w**ker, work faster!", to tell me the truth, rather than wrap up the message in cotton wool.

"F**k yourself!" That's how it is in the kitchen: banter, racism, insults, sexism are often normal. It's a way of dealing with stress at close quarters - afterwards everyone sits together and laughs and smokes. But that is not easy for many. It takes time to understand: there is often more love in an outrageous word than in a friendly one.

The Church does not have a good reputation with them. Sometimes colleagues ask me, "Have you been baptized? Were you abused as a child too?". Sometimes they take me aside, as when a colleague's father died. There are also conversations during the breaks. Sometimes it's just a quick gesture, a touch while working.

I worked as a pastor in a parish for 10 years. I remember when I told parishioners 16 years ago that I was going to do precarious manual labour, some thought I was just going through a phase. One said, "You are not a worker and you cannot become a worker. And do you know why? Your father and grandfather weren't workers either. "It's true. I am not a "worker", but I work, I am there.

+ real name withheld

France: Jean-Paul Havard, 62, Catholic priest, farm worker with dairy cattle

I work as a farm hand at two farms. I help the farmers bringing the cows for milking, and then milking them. For each of the herds I look after there are around 50 cows.

I've worked on the land before, in vineyards, with migrant workers, for many years. Working with cows is different. Its lonely work. They have their moods, just like me! For instance, one cow is always the first for milking. Each cow has its place in the herd.

Its hard work, especially for the farmers. They work every day, all year round, even if they get sick. I'm also there so they can take a break sometimes.

It's a privilege to be able to work on the land, to hear the call of the earth. It helps me too. In the last few years I've been depressed, and I'm not fully out of it, but my work is the basis of having a balance in my life.

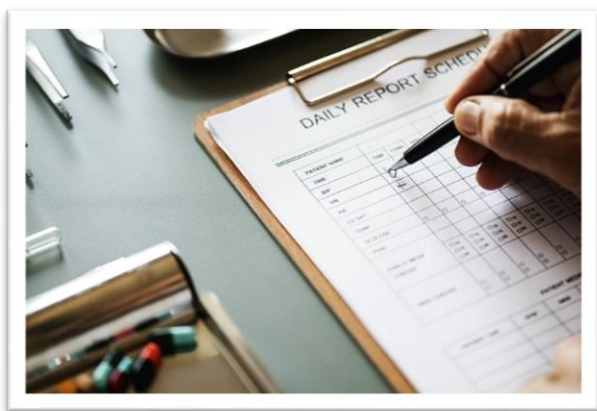
I'm also part of a team of priests in my local parish. I visit people when they are sick, when they are old. We help share

the gospel with people, in the church, and in daily life of the human community.

France: Lionel Vandenbriele, 40, Catholic priest, ambulance driver

The pandemic has been difficult in many ways. I work in a private ambulance company, transporting patients to hospitals. In the beginning, the amount of regular work diminished considerably. I was on short-time work for two months.

Then we started transporting covid patients in response to emergency calls. The risk of contracting covid was really stressful. It was a difficult situation. Also because our employer had moved us to a reduced work schedule, with fewer hours and less pay. It was really hard for colleagues with families. I felt privileged not to be in this situation. I regularly work with the same person in my ambulance. He is married and will soon have a child. We get along well.



The work itself is tough. There is intense pressure from management - there is more to do than before and every second is counted. They see us as numbers, we don't really matter to them. We try to resist, not only so as not to be slaves, but to truly be with the people we serve.

Germany: Albert Koolen, 61, Catholic priest, sorts packages at a parcel delivery centre

Until last March, at the beginning of the pandemic, I worked at a car rental centre at an airport. I was the chairman of the works council. I'd helped organize the workers to form the council. But then the company collapsed and I was unemployed. That felt like a really difficult time.

I decided to do some re-training, to drive a forklift truck, as I'd heard this might help me find work in a parcel delivery centre. There are many centres near where I live, with hundreds of workers. They are the industrial factories of our era.

Last October I got a job, through a temping agency, in one of these huge hangers. It's a centre for sorting parcels. 900 people work there. Many of them are from south Asia, such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh. From Africa too.

We mostly speak English. We don't ask too many questions, just try to get on with each other. But people sometimes open up. The other day a man from Eritrea told me his story of coming to Germany. He was on a makeshift boat across the Mediterranean. The boat sank, 400 people were on board. Some of them drowned. He lost everything.

It's hard work. I've developed a hernia, which has got bigger. I'm having an operation soon.

October 2021

The Chrism Theology Discussion Group – September: ‘Who do the people say that I am? Who is Jesus?’ - Ruth Brothwell

The September discussion group convened on zoom as usual with Ruth Brothwell leading our thoughts. This month our topic was – Who is Jesus?

It was based on the concept that this is a question often posed through our conversations at work with those people who do not know or understand why we are Christian people. It aimed to help us to reflect on the question ourselves and hopefully, find some new answers to share.

At the start of the meeting Ruth asked us all to do an almost impossible thing which was to try and suspend everything we thought we already knew. Everything we had been taught from pulpits and from theological training courses and to open our minds for awhile and really consider the question. She reminded us that the disciples had been out and about in the world much as we are. When they returned, Jesus himself asked them a question – ‘who do the people say that I am?’. They had replies – which we thought about.



We were reminded through the Gospel of Mark of some of the things which are said about the person of Jesus. Mark, because it was probably the earliest Gospel written and drew on where people were in their spiritual thinking way back then, before the early church had started to do some theology of its own. We also heard from the New Testament book of Ephesians. This is also said to be very early. Perhaps these passages had the persecutions of Nero as their background. We were challenged that while we may not feel that we are persecuted for our faith in quite the same way today – perhaps the peoples of Afghanistan would have a different view?

Passages were read out and considered. We heard how Paul talked about 'how the mystery was made known to me by revelation...a reading of which will enable you to perceive MY

understanding of the mystery of Christ....’ And how ‘in former generations this mystery was not made known to humankind as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit...of this gospel I have become a servant.... (Eph 3:3-7).

We heard from the Gospel of Mark that even the evil spirits were said to have known who Jesus was – The Holy One of God (Mark 1:24) and about the secrecy surrounding the idea of Christ being the Messiah. And what the word ‘Messiah’ really meant to the hearers of that time.

We discussed together what Jesus meant to us and who we felt he was. There were different ideas; from the traditional trinitarian theology of the Church to the idea of the loving and resurrected Christ being very much alive today with us and what that in fact meant for our everyday lives.

It was a stimulating and thoughtful discussion and brought to the fore some ideas which perhaps had made us think. Did we actually find it easier to think of the Holy Spirit at work in our lives? Was the Holy Spirit easier for us to understand than a resurrected Jesus? What actually WAS the Gospel that Paul felt he was a servant of and what did Jesus actually teach at the very start of his ministry long before we had grasped the theology of salvation through the cross.

Of course, we didn’t come up with any pat answers. The whole purpose of the Theology Discussion Group is to provide a safe place in which to ask questions and explore possible answers together. It was, as always, an exciting evening which sets us thinking for the future.

The Kingdom at Work Project - Julian Blakemore



CHRISM Endorses the Kingdom at Work Project

Testers required to trial new approach that aims to transform the world of work



In June 2021, the CHRISM Management Committee endorsed the Kingdom at Work Project and agreed to become co-partners with the Project's Steering Group and St Peter's Saltley Trust in developing the project's contribution to the world of work.

The purpose of the Kingdom at Work Project is to develop a radically different approach to transforming the world of work through a process of discernment, partnership and action, responsive to and empowered by the gifts of the kingdom



community (life, liberation, love, learning and servant leadership).

The fundamental aims of CHRISM are to help ourselves and others to celebrate the presence of God and the holiness of life in our work, and to see and tell the Christian story there. The Project fully aligns with these aims by taking a radically different approach to the transformation of the world of work which enables Christians to identify the hallmarks of God's kingdom at work, to discern the strength or weakness of these hallmarks and equip them to intervene in ways which enables their workplace to reflect more fully the hallmarks of that kingdom.



CHRISM has already encouraged the development of the Project through the engagement of certain of its members on the project's Steering Group - David Clark (author), Phil Aspinall and, more recently, Rob Fox and myself. The aims and method of the project were also discussed at the CHRISM Theology Discussion Group in February.

It is hoped that the link-up with CHRISM will lead to more CHRISM members getting involved to learn more about the Project, help test out the relevance of its methodology in their own work situation, and further refine and develop the approach.

Origins of the project

The Kingdom at Work Project came into being as a result of the publication of Dr David Clark's book *The Kingdom at Work Project: a communal approach to mission in the workplace* (2014). In partnership with St Peter's Saltley Trust, Birmingham, consultations with agencies involved in the faith and work field, including CHRISM, were held in 2014, 2018 and 2019 to explore the potential and future of the Project.

Whilst progress has been slowed by the pandemic, a zoom workshop was held on June 5th to make the Project known more widely and to invite those interested to test out its methodology in their own work situation. This was well received by the sixteen participants and has led to the development of a short handbook, with some supplementary guidelines and resources, to encourage those at work to engage in the communal transformation of their work group. The aim of the handbook is to provide clear and practical ways by which those at work can enable the life and activities of their work group to be enriched and empowered by the gifts of the kingdom community.

Next steps

The next stage of the Project is to find some willing volunteers to help us road test the handbook in their work situations and

provide feedback on what's good about it, what's not so good and how we could improve it to make it more useful. The objective is to produce a resource that is relevant to the ministry of all God's people at work and the changes and challenges they face, and that helps them to explore how their faith might enable their work group to develop a stronger and morale-enhancing sense of community by being transformed by the gifts of the kingdom community. If the road testing goes well and the handbook proves to be a useful aid to ministry, we envisage that it will be made more widely available.

The process of road testing the handbook will take place over the next few months and if you are interested in taking part, or would simply like more information about the Project, please email me at rev.julian.e.blakemore@gmail.com.

Julian Blakemore (K@W Project Co-ordinator) October 2021

Summary of the International Worker Priest Conference 3-5 September 2021: Albert Koolen (Trans. Phil Aspinall)

We were 13 people including 5 Germans, 2 French, 2 Belgians and one each from the Netherlands, Catalonia, Switzerland and England; and another joined us by video for part of Saturday.



Friday afternoon we were invited to the initiative "Keep the Church in the Village" in the villages of Keyenberg and Luetzerath. Even though the open-cast mining is long-dead politically, economically and, above all, environmentally, mining continues that destroy villages and churches, but the long-term government contracts with the firm RWE, giving it the security to plan its business for the long term, are apparently the priority...

Arriving in Keyenberg around midday we arrived just in time to observe the removal of the church bells - a very emotional moment for the inhabitants with shouts, abuse and tears etc. As so often in other situations and places we have to say that the Diocese of Aachen, to which Keyenberg and Luetzerath belong, has played a very disreputable role.

After a morning meditation on Saturday we had time for personal sharing under the question: "How did the last 1 1/2 years go for you ?". At the end of the morning Phil joined us with the support of the conference centre's video system. This was important for him and for us. As well as his personal

situation he also explained what had been written in the new paper from England.

To begin the afternoon we asked Ramiro to describe the current situation in Haiti (where he had worked for several years) - the tension between the solidarity of the poorest people, the interests of the armed gangs, and those of national and international politics. Afterwards, Lionel expanded the contents of the other newly-written paper from the Worker Priests of Caen.

After a break we worked in two groups on Psalm 37, introduced and facilitated by Anne-Marieke and Urs. It was a very personal exchange through which, as Jean-Paul noted at the end of the meeting, we were drawn much closer together.

After the evening meal, Jean-Paul and Lionel led a lovingly prepared liturgy in the middle of which were the words from Mark 7 "Be open !". During the evening we were able to eat and drink regional specialities in the bar and engage in amicable conversations.

Sunday morning (after morning meditation and breakfast) we had a round table update from the countries and regions from which we come (refer to the first paragraph).

It was immediately clear that we wanted to meet again next year. Lionel proposed two alternative dates: 2 - 4 September or 9 - 11 September - at the house near Lille already proposed two years ago. The preparation will, as in 2020, take place around the meeting of the French "Worker Priests in Active

Work" in Paris, 19 - 20 February 2022. Possible participants from our gathering were proposed.

And in conclusion, these were the proposals for possible themes for next year :

- The spiritual roots of the Worker Priest in different countries (e.g. in France, Madeleine Debrell and Charles de Foucauld).

Who are the equivalents in other countries ?

- Worker Priest and Worker Movements, also the Catholic workers groups. What is still present ?

- Migration and Europe

- What are the challenges for Worker Priests in the future ?

- How to live in the future as Worker Priests ?

- The future of work and working relationships (in the sense of Phil's input - increasingly individualised and isolated).

Archbishop of Canterbury – Visit to Guildford: Ruth Brothwell

For some time, the Guildford Diocese had been expecting the visit of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Naturally this had been delayed like so many other things but finally went ahead in September. During his visit, the Archbishop visited all of the Deaneries asking 'Big Questions'. The idea was to enable the public to ask him any of the big questions which bothered them at this time and to seek a Christian response to it. The visit culminated with a Business Breakfast at the local theatre where business leaders and members of Guildford Borough

Council gathered to also ask their questions and hear the Archbishop's response.

On behalf of Chrism I posed a question but actually it was much the same as was asked by many and became the first and priority question to be answered: The importance of allowing people to talk about their faith and their spirituality in the workplace.



The Rt Reverend Justin Welby began his events with some background as to who he was and what gave him the right to speak. At the Business Breakfast he especially concentrated on his background of work within the oil industry. He gave several examples of meetings he had held, poverty he had

experienced during business trips to Africa and then the ethical questions that he has battled with throughout his own career in that industry. Now, he had different issues.

I was impressed by the replies. Justin said, 'we need to have the guts to stand up for free speech...but not to use this to say things that bring problems to other people...we need to value each other and be sensitive to each other – don't judge – don't hector – Jesus said to the woman 'neither do I condemn you...'

Justin reminded us that disagreement builds community. In terms of ethics, he said that if a company has a strong ethic, it enables good ethical decisions to be made. Profits versus benefits to society are not in conflict – we have enough problems without digging our own graves and jumping into them'

He talked a lot about 'the Common Good'. Health & Safety is a matter of life and death – cutting corners is not about the Common Good. Society works when we don't just shrug our shoulders.

He also described a notice which lists all the Archbishops going back to Thomas a Becket and including himself. 104 people – how did he feel? He is often asked the question. 'As if all 104 are sitting on his back!!' But, he said he often prays 'Lord, I really have no idea what you want me to do here'. He has learnt to trust and that if he misses a lot of balls....then someone else will pick them up!!

Afterwards the Leader of the Council shared with me that he thought Justin was extremely good and clearly a real leader.

Very reasonable and relaxing to talk too, definitely an impressive man.

Ruth Brothwell is a local Councillor and former Moderator of CHRISM

Chrism Online & Social Media Strategy

Introduction

Following the Reflective weekend in February 2020, the Chrism Management committee decided that it needed to be intentional in its use of Social Media and so the idea of the Chrism Social Media Strategy was born and conversations were held. The proposed strategy was agreed by the Management Committee in June 2021 and now the Management Committee is looking for volunteers to help deliver this.

The Strategy

The strategy was built upon two key principles

1. To focus on one area at a time, to ensure this was set up and sustainable before moving onto the next area, and
2. To focus on the quick wins before progressing to those areas that would require further planning, preparation and training.

This is illustrated below.

CHRISM Strategic Online State



Within the strategy the current website acts as the foundation from which we build from and the base to which people are pointed to in order to find the library of resources, information on Chrism events. This is predominately updated on a quarterly basis following each Committee Meeting.

From here we look to develop our presence in the following areas:

Facebook: is seen as the area to develop a community and relationships. The intention is to use this platform to make regular posts, such as the prayer diary, to advertise and invite members to regular events and for others to post events in here as they already do.

Linked In: is seen as the area to develop relationships within the Professional community and where appropriate to advertise the Chrism Events.

Twitter: is seen as the area to develop general conversation and debate through the user of daily posts and user interaction.

Of the three platforms, our starting point is Facebook and we would look to move to focus on the Linked In and then Twitter, as the previous one becomes sustainable.

Help needed.

What we have discovered though is that we need members who are confident and comforting in using these platforms on a daily basis to help shape what this will look like and to assist with the set up of scheduled posts or the inputting of the events.

So if you have a passion for using Social Media well and would be willing to help with one of these areas, please contact Ali Creasey via email. totleypassociate@gmail.com.

Ali Creasey is a member of the Committee and an IT Project Manager

A Treasurer's thanks

Earlier this year I was delighted by the arrival of an anonymous and generous four figure donation in CHRISM's bank account. I still don't know from whence it came and am content that there is no need to know. The Committee too is grateful and we have decided, initially at least, to ring-fence £1,000 from which to award bursaries to enable members to attend CHRISM and other MSE events that they may otherwise not be able to attend. If you like to apply for a bursary please contact

me, details in the rear of the journal. All enquiries are treated confidentially.

And once again - many thanks for the generous gift.

Rob Fox, Treasurer

CHRISM Theology Discussion Group

The CHRISM Theology Discussion Group was launched in September 2020 in response to an identified need amongst CHRISM members for an online forum to reflect on and discuss theological aspects of work and ministry in the world of work.

The Group is open to all CHRISM members and meets monthly by Zoom for an hour and a half. The Group is currently 42 strong, with an average attendance at meetings of around 15. Discussions are generally led by members of the Group. Discussion topics have included:

- The Importance of our Work to God and Us
- The Idea of Rest
- What is Work?
- Justice at Work
- The Kingdom at Work Project
- Christian perspectives on conflict in the workplace
- How can a camel pass through the eye of a needle?
Jesus' teaching on wealth
- Organisational values – help or hindrance to ministry in the workplace?

If you are interested in joining this group and would like to be added to the invitation list and receive Zoom links for the next and future meetings, please email rev.julian.e.blakemore@gmail.com for details. We look forward to welcoming you.

Revd Julian Blakemore

Mentors

Do you feel on your own in your situation / job / diocese? Do you think you might benefit from connecting with a mentor? Or have your experiences as an MSE given you a wealth of insights which might support someone else newer to the role? If you fit either of these and would be interested to look at opportunities for informal mentoring, please get in touch with a committee member, and we will get you connected!

Forthcoming Events



Chrism Reflective Weekend 11-13 February 2021

‘Place, Space and the Social Imaginary: The Eucharist in Community’.

Led by Jessica Martin, at Rydal Hall, Ambleside, Cumbria, LA22 9LX, across the weekend we will explore the eucharistic in domestic space and in virtual space, the connections (and disconnections) the pandemic experience of virtual eucharists has created with the daily lives and work of worshippers, and the longer-term theological implications of our practice of eucharist during the recent period of social restrictions.

Session 1: ‘united in prayer and the breaking of bread’

Session 2: ‘the hallowing of place and presence’

Session 3: ‘space and the social imaginary’

Session 4: story and repetition

Session 5: sacramental stories, sacramental patterns

Session 6: memory and the body

Jessica Martin grew up in Woking, Surrey with her three brothers, daughter of two sociologists of religion. She read English at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, running it alongside being a single parent.

She worked as an academic in the field of English Literature, thinking particularly about religious writing and religious lives in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the early 2000s

she trained as an Anglican priest, pursuing the academic and priestly vocations in parallel as a self-supporting minister. She left academic life in 2010 to become a parish priest in South Cambridgeshire.

Jessica has been Residentiary Canon for Learning at Ely Cathedral since 2016. Her book *Holiness and Desire*, about the roots of human desire and the consequences of its modern



commodification, came out in 2020. In 2021 she gave the Bampton Lectures at the University Church of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford, on the topic '*Four-Dimensional Eucharist*'. It will appear as a book of the same title, exploring the influence of the eucharist on modernity and modernity on the eucharist.

From the Membership Secretary

Dear friends,

It's nearly time for annual renewals for CHRISM membership. Membership runs for a calendar year, so subs are due on or around 1st January each year. If you join in October or later, your membership will run until 31st December of the following year. If your standing order is set up for later in the year, we would be very grateful if you could change it to January.

Please return the membership form that is enclosed with your journal. Only about half ever come back, and we find that we lose touch with a few members each year, so it's important to complete the form, even if you think nothing has changed. While there is space for a signature, I'm quite happy to receive electronic forms via email – saving you paper, envelope, a stamp and walking to the post box. I'm looking forward to hearing from you all.
Sue Cossey, Membership Secretary

And Finally.....



On parting for a while...

A note plays softly
In the rain and mist,
Weaves gently into tuneful melody,
Draws out the counterpoint,

And threads above the steady beating drum.

One hand stretched out is joined,
The movement slow,
Then swinging past at speed
They move, pulling in one,
Another,
And letting others go.

Together dance,
Circling in the dust
Of daily life,
Lifting the rainbow arc
Of love, and justice, high,
Drawing each other forward,
Acting to transform,
And live community,
In hope...

CHRISM is on Facebook, 'Ministers at Work':

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/129656640430436/>

and LinkedIn, at:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=3756477>

CHRISM is the National Association of CHRistians In Secular Ministry

for **all** Christians who see their secular employment as their primary Christian ministry, and for those who support that vision. To further this aim, CHRISM publishes a quarterly Journal, releases occasional papers and organises an annual retreat. Conferences are held regularly and worldwide links pursued.

CHRISM welcomes members, both lay and ordained, from all Christian denominations, encourages them to be active within their own faith communities and to champion ministry in and through secular employment.

If you would like confidential support as an MSE, please contact any member of the Committee (see inside rear cover)

Further information may be obtained from the Secretary or the Journal Editor.

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