

## An update on the Newport & Carisbrooke Pastoral Reorganisation

From an early age we're taught to follow instructions to work out how we're going to do something. Which makes a lot of sense, you've got to know how to do something otherwise you won't be able to accomplish it. Which, when you're six and talking about making a replica of the Thunderbirds top secret island base, is correct (anyone else remember the Blue Peter design?!). Follow the instructions, stick to the plan and BAM! You're Scott Tracy or possibly Lady Penelope, whizzing planes around your cornflake packet model of Tracy Island.

But as we get older, things get a bit more complicated. Firstly, you have to replace Tracy Island with IKEA flatpack furniture. Easily more complicated, inevitably less fun. Secondly, most things we want to do or achieve can be done lots of different ways and thirdly, we often have vague, more conceptual ideas of what we want to do - *"I want to get fit, I want to learn a language, I want the church to connect with young people, I want the church to grow"*. Things are constantly changing around us, new opportunities presenting themselves and contexts changing so if we continue to try and apply the same instructions to new situations we will miss opportunities and be left behind while God does exciting things in other ways with other people.

Like me you will know that sometimes we have tried to do things over and over and not succeeded. If as a church you have been trying to grow over the last few years and it isn't happening, but you're still doing the same things, applying the same old instructions and not listening to God or the world around you or considering ways you need to change then with the best will in the world, you're fighting a losing battle.

This is why it's important to understand that it's ok to change to help us reach something we want. Humans, and churches, need to grow and expand and change and sometimes that's uncomfortable, but always it gets us somewhere new and closer to where we want to be.

This is going to be a big year for the Anglican church on the island, in all sorts of ways. We are about to start the process of recruiting a team for the reimagined parish of Newport and Carisbrooke. Conversations are happening with Churchwardens and PCCs about this process. Other parishes are already engaging with the new **IsleLead** vision document and undertaking new and exciting things, sharing good practice and making suggestions for developing it. The language of **Live : Pray : Serve** is being used widely to aim for **Growth in depth, impact and number** across the island.

In addition, I am delighted to announce that Hannah Barraclough will be joining the Newport and Carisbrooke team as curate. She will be ordained deacon at Portsmouth Cathedral on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July, please do hold her in your prayers as she completes her course at Cuddesdon and prepares for this new phase of life.

I have been in a lot of meetings recently discussing church sustainability and someone asked me what makes a church sustainable? Is it numbers? Is it financial security? Is it a solid waterproof building? It isn't any of those things, they are rather symptoms of the bottom line of sustainability with is **GROWTH**. It doesn't matter how much money you have stashed away or how new your building is or how good your liturgy is or how many guitars and drum kits you have. What matters is that you are growing. It doesn't have to be massive growth, just steady constant growth in disciples and discipleship, because after all if you're not growing then ultimately you are dying – that's just a fact.

So if you are not growing as a disciple or a church what are you going to change, what are you going to do differently in order to grow? If you are growing how are you going to ensure that you maintain that growth and don't become complacent?

Be open to changing. It is scary and challenging and hard work but also exhilarating, exciting and fun. We can do it because at the centre of our faith is a rock, solid ground, a Saviour who does not change.

*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever.*

*Hebrews 13:8*

*God of endings and beginnings,  
we give you thanks for the life of our churches and  
the faithful worshippers and ministers  
who have served you and the people of our communities over many years.*

*Guided by your spirit of wisdom and courage  
help us to take this work forward in new and exciting ways  
that we might all be encouraged to*

***Live** clearly as your disciples,  
**Pray** that many more people would come to know you and your love  
and **Serve** the world around us.*

*In Jesus' name,*

*Amen*