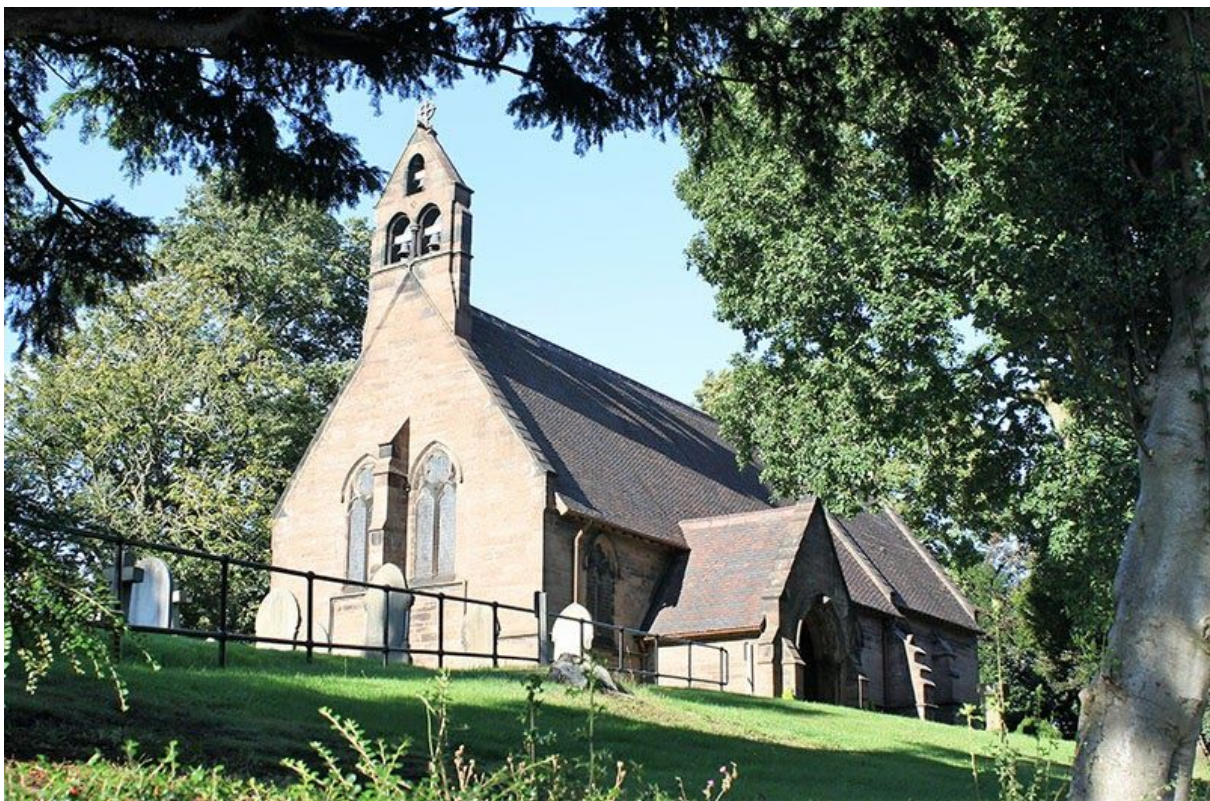


CHRIST CHURCH CROWTON CELEBRATES 150TH ANNIVERSARY (1871 – 2021)

Crowton's beautiful Victorian parish church will be 150 years old next year and parishioners are planning a major programme of events and fund-raising to mark the special anniversary.

After several years without a vicar, Christ Church, Crowton, which sits in a joint benefice with Norley and Kingsley, has just announced the good news that Rev Canon Ron Iveson, from Bidston on the Wirral, will take up a new appointment at the helm of the three churches in mid-February next year.



He will become **the 14th vicar** of the Grade II listed church, which has been the focus for thousands of Anglican weddings, funerals, baptisms and celebratory services in the rural village of Crowton, near Northwich, since it was consecrated on 2 November 1871 by the Bishop of Chester, William Jacobson.

To celebrate the 150th birthday, church organisers are planning to refurbish the church interior, install new pew cushions and improve the sound system. They have also commissioned Chester textile artist Sandra Christie to work with the local community to produce a new patchwork wall hanging, inspired by the famous hymn *'All things bright and beautiful'*.

A year of celebrations will start on Sunday 22 November 2020 with a special commemorative morning service, followed by Christmas festivities and a host of events including a pub quiz night, exhibitions, summer fete, garden open day, school fashion show, harvest supper, choral concert by the William Byrd Singers, a hilarious “Allo Allo’ evening with Kingsley Players and performance of a new play *‘Alice’s Quest for Wonderland: Down the Rabbit Hole with Lewis Carroll’* by local award-winning playwright Lynn Pegler. The current Bishop of Chester Mark Tanner will be guest of honour at a special harvest festival on Sunday 3 October 2021.

Anne Davidson Lund, Licensed Reader and chair of Crowton’s Parochial Church Council, said: “We are delighted to welcome our new vicar to join us during this special year. Christ Church has been home to a faithful worshipping community in the Church of England for 150 years and we hope to see it continue to fulfil that role for at least another 150.

“As times change there is always a need to review, refurbish and refresh the fabric of the building, to ensure its future safety and suitability. The 150th anniversary offers a great opportunity to raise funds to update the church interior and celebrate the ministry of the church in Crowton, strengthen relationships within the local community and welcome new visitors.

“Undaunted by coronavirus, we have planned a series of activities to take place throughout the year, some sacred, some secular, to offer us all opportunities to worship, celebrate and give thanks for the blessings we enjoy. It is challenging trying to organise events in the middle of a global pandemic - we are hoping for the best but prepared to cancel, postpone or move online if necessary.”

How it all began...

The opening of Christ Church, Crowton in 1871 must have been a huge relief for the local community. Before this the nearest church was in Weaverham and every Sunday would have involved a round trip by foot or horseback of nearly six miles.

The building was designed by the eminent ecclesiastical architect John Loughborough Pearson, who was also responsible for Truro Cathedral (England’s first new cathedral after the reformation), Norley’s Church of St John the Evangelist (1879) and dozens of beautiful parish churches across Cheshire, Yorkshire and Wales.

Crowton Church is built mainly of red sandstone in the ‘gothic revival’ style and was funded by tithes from the Weaverham benefice and private subscription. The first vicar was Oxford graduate, the Rev. Charles Spencer Stanhope, curate at Weaverham and son of the vicar there.

His family sponsored several of the beautiful stained glass windows which still adorn the church and also the first vicarage ‘Crowton House’, which was a gift to the parish.

Calling the faithful to prayer for 15 decades are three bells, named Faith, Hope and Charity, which were donated by the Lascelles family from Norley Bank and cast by Whitechapel company, Mears and Stainbank. They were taken down in 1970 in the interests of safety and restored in 1989 with an automated chiming system.

Over the years there have been a number of additions and improvements to the church, including: the conversion of paraffin lamps to electricity (1935); replacement of solid fuel heating by electric heaters (1936); installation of new choir and clergy stalls (1952); replacement of electric heaters by oil-fired central heating (1971); new electrical wiring and light fittings (1991); and the replacement of the original pipe organ with an electric model (1993).

For more information about the Crowton Church anniversary events, purchase tickets or donate to the church fund-raising appeal, please go to the website: www.crowton150.org.

Note to Editors

Issued by Pegler Communications on behalf of Christ Church Crowton PCC.

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