

Forward Together in Hope Update: October 2015

Let's get the show on the road

The *Forward Together in Hope* 'Road Show' is well underway with over half of the 18 Deanery meetings now complete. Details of the arrangements for the remaining meetings are shown on the website (www.hope.rcdhn.org.uk). We are most grateful for the hospitality and welcome from across the Diocese and for the role that Deans, scribes, tea-makers and others have played in helping us to organise these open meetings.

It is particularly encouraging to see the strong involvement of schools as well as parishes. We've welcomed the opportunity to hear directly from people about the positive aspects they are discovering as well as their areas of concern. We will be compiling a summary of questions and responses and making this available widely across the Diocese.

New DVD now available



The latest *Forward Together in Hope* 'blockbuster' DVD, featuring people from around the Diocese, is now available. Disks are being sent to all priests and lay representatives and the content will also be available via the *Forward Together in Hope* YouTube channel – at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHt0VMXYZyhbb7jHE1p78ag> and via our website at www.hope.rcdhn.org.uk

The DVD is in two sections which follow a similar format; questions raised by individuals and possible responses. The questions are some of the most frequently asked at the back of churches and at meetings with people in different areas of the Diocese. The first part is short enough to be shown during Mass – possibly replacing the homily. The second part is longer, with more questions and rather more discursive responses. This presentation may be of use in group discussion. Please try to incorporate the DVD in whatever ways you can within the *Forward Together in Hope* journey in your parish. It would be great to hear your feedback on how it has been used and whether it has been a useful item.





Pinching other people's best ideas!

In each *Forward Together in Hope* Update we are aiming to share ideas and approaches being adopted in different parts of the Diocese so please keep sending these in.



Prayer Station at St Philips, Dunston

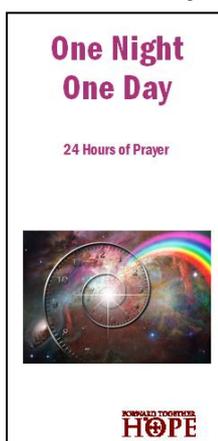
We have received this photograph from St Philip Neri Parish in Dunston. They have had banners made to act as a very visible focus for *Forward Together in Hope*. The idea has been picked up by other parishes in the area.

The banners feature the *Forward Together in Hope* prayer and the tree symbol. For information about the costs and supplier feel free to contact St Philip's.

Forward Together in Hope Pilgrimage Theme

St Joseph's, Birtley, held their Annual Pilgrimage to Holy Island on Saturday, 22 August, with this year's theme being *Forward Together in Hope*. 50 pilgrims from Birtley were accompanied by nine from neighbouring St Anne's Parish in Low Fell. On arrival at Holy Island, those who were able followed a gentle circular route taking in the sea-shore and Castle, reciting the Rosary on the way, while four of the 'fitter' members walked the Causeway. Fr Tony Duffy said Mass in St Aidan's Church, where the roof was almost raised with the enthusiastic singing from the congregation, accompanied by St Joseph's musicians. The trip was truly blessed with good weather and a great day was had by all!

24 Hours of Prayer



As part of *Forward Together in Hope* we are promoting the idea of 24 hours of prayer. The Spirituality Team have produced a very useful leaflet – setting out some key information on how you might go about arranging and co-ordinating one. This is entitled One Night, One Day and is available from the resources section of the website.



3am Prayer at Bedlington: praying for the local area – with people from different parishes putting their pieces of a jigsaw together.

Two communities have so far hosted a 24 Hour prayer – St Aidan's, Ashington and St Bede's, Bedlington and many people have fed back what an amazing experience it was. People from Ashington and Bedlington would be very happy to help others organise one locally. Other parishes including St Dominic's, Newcastle and St Joseph's, Sunderland have also made the church available for prayer during the night. For more information contact the Spirituality Department on 0191 243 3302 or spirituality@diocesehn.org.uk

Individual questionnaire – your help please

Many thanks to those who are promoting the link to the individual online questionnaire through bulletins, websites and other means. Just in case you've forgotten, the questionnaire is accessible via www.hope.rcdhn.org.uk

At the time of writing we have received around 970 responses – including over 50 hardcopies by post which we are entering onto the electronic version. Some emerging statistics...

64% of the responses to date are from females and 66% are from people aged 50 or over. The highest number of returns from any one parish so far is over 60 and there are around 40 parishes where no responses have yet been made. 82% of the replies have been from people who attend Mass at least once a week.

We have contacted all schools in the Diocese asking them to publicise the questionnaire in any communications with parents and guardians – in an attempt to spread the net beyond the doors of the church. We've also issued press releases and are looking for other mechanisms for getting this 'out there'. Please can you help us by whatever means you can to publicise this within, and particularly beyond your parishes? We are keen to learn how those who have ceased to worship with us actually see us.

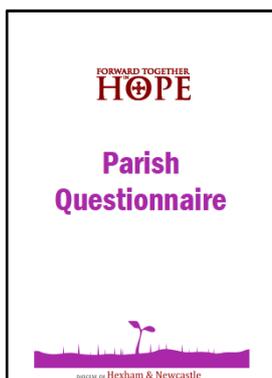
Survey for young people

While the individual questionnaire can be completed by people of any age we are very conscious that hearing the views of young people is a really important part of *Forward Together in Hope*.

We have decided that a questionnaire specifically for young people aged 11-19 will be launched through secondary (and middle) schools and parishes after the October half term.

We are providing a very short DVD featuring only young people that we hope will be used extensively by schools (e.g. in assemblies) along with presenters notes and a short 'flyer'. All of these are designed to encourage young people to go online and tell us their thoughts, ideas and aspirations for the Church. We really want to understand how young people view things. Once again, we'd be very grateful for any help and support you can offer in alerting young people to this opportunity to air their views.

On the way to Advent – Returning the Parish Questionnaire



The completion of *Forward Together in Hope* Parish Questionnaires is now well underway and the target date of 29th November for returns is starting to look a lot nearer than it did before! This note sets out how the questionnaires are to be returned. The 'good news' is that we've tried to reduce the amount of work at parish level by deciding that completed questionnaires are simply returned by email (rather than using a more involved online system). To ensure safe receipt and acknowledgement of your questionnaire we would be grateful if you could follow the steps below. If any aspect of this is even slightly unclear please get in touch to discuss.

- a) Enter all information into the Word version of the Parish Questionnaire. This is available on the Exploring the Way Resources CD and through the *Forward Together in Hope* Website (http://hope.rcdhn.org.uk/resources/exploringway_main.php). Please note, those using older versions of Word may find that it is better to use the version of the questionnaire specifically designed for older versions. Again, this is available using the link shown above. If you are uncertain about this – just get in touch.
- b) Once you are happy that you have completed all relevant sections of the questionnaire and that this has been agreed within the parish, save a final version and attach this to an e-mail. Those parishes that have more than one church site will need to complete a supplement (*Parish Questionnaire Supplement for Sections 8 & 9*) for each site and these will also need to be attached to the e-mail.
- c) Please use the following subject line in your e-mail **Parish Questionnaire for PARISH NAME, LOCATION** - Where PARISH NAME is replaced by the name of your parish and LOCATION is replaced by the Town or Area.
- d) Within the body of the e-mail please identify ***a specific contact person with their e-mail address and telephone number*** who we can contact if we have any initial queries.
- e) Send your e-mail with attachments to hope@diocesehn.org.uk. The receipt of your Parish Questionnaire will be acknowledged personally by e-mail within one working day. If you do not receive an acknowledgement please get in touch with tony.sacco@diocesehn.org.uk or phone Tony on 0191 243 3304.

Any questions or concerns whatsoever about this please do get in touch.

Getting involved

Forward Together in Hope will require a lot of activity at local level. Please consider getting involved in this – speak with your lay contact or Parish Priest. Also, the *Forward Together in Hope* team at the Diocese is always on the look-out for skilled volunteers who can support and contribute to this work in various ways.

Finding out more

For the latest information about *Forward Together in Hope* and for access to the range of resources, please visit www.hope.rcdhn.org.uk

To contact one of the *Forward Together in Hope* team, (Jim O’Keefe, Tony Sacco and Nancy Gash) e-mail: hope@diocesehn.org.uk or phone 0191 243 3304.

Tony Sacco – October 2015