Parish Pixels – a stunning show, in words and pictures

Congratulations to our Regional winners.
We asked you to capture the unique essence of your church in a photograph and a descriptive sentence – and your response was inspiring.

We received over 600 stunning Parish Pixels entries celebrating the fantastic diversity in our places of worship.

Pictures arrived from the Devon coast, northern Scotland, west Wales, Suffolk in the east, and all points in between.

We were astonished by the quality of the images, and the accompanying words which summed them up beautifully.

There were wonderfully distinctive exteriors – a lychgate silhouetted against the rising sun in Lancashire, warm light glowing from a service in Hampshire as snow lies thick outside, and golden autumn leaves framing a simple white church in the Highlands.

There were breath-taking interiors – the majesty of an ancient hammerbeam roof in Cambridgeshire, a magnificent stone altar, candlelit for Christmas, in Hertfordshire, and a friendly service in a Worcestershire pub.

And, of course, there were people – from toddlers to dancing worshippers to cheerful ladies knitting a community fellowship blanket to a laughing vicar heading down a bouncy castle slide.

The supporting descriptions were sometimes poignant, sometimes amusing, but always thoughtful and moving.

Our judges had a hard time whittling them down to nine regional winning churches, each of which receives a £1,500 prize.

Representatives from each winning church will now be invited to our awards ceremony in October, where the overall Parish Pixels winner will be announced and a further prize of £5,000 presented.

And now it’s time for you to have your say, and help choose the overall winner.

Please turn to our centre spread to see how you can ‘show your support’ and vote for your favourite!
A time of change

Our Church Insurance Consultants offer locally based advisory services to dioceses and churches throughout the country, usually face-to-face.

In her new home in Penzance, with a glorious view over St Michael’s Mount, Kay is happily settling in at her new ‘home’ church, St Mary’s. Kay is a Lay Reader, past Churchwarden and has sat on PCCs and worked at diocesan level. Coupled with 30 years’ experience in insurance, she believes her job is a perfect fit.

“I love my job so much, for many reasons. Interactions are very personal and I’m understanding that communities which are often remote, perhaps seasonal, have significant challenges… as well as being very beautiful. The environment is both coastal and rural, with transport and broadband challenges. I’m really looking forward to learning how the parish communities deal with those things. It’s a huge learning curve and it’s exciting.”

Each week is full of variety for Kay and the team, even if a little different at the moment. It might include a call with an archdeacon about cash; a Skype meeting with a diocese to offer training about metal theft; discussions with a church about cyber awareness; planning a webinar with police on reporting heritage crime, and a conversation with a Diocesan Advisory Committee. “We can’t wait to return to face-to-face meetings but there is still lots we can do in a different way.”

If you would like to speak to your local Church Insurance Consultant, please contact: meetus@ecclesiastical.com

Taking a sabbatical in 2021?

Ecclesiastical’s Ministry Bursary Awards provides financial support for members of the clergy taking extended study leave, and we are now accepting applications for sabbaticals taking place in 2021. You can find out more about the Awards, check the eligibility criteria and apply on our website. Find out more:

www.ecclesiastical.com/mba
A little preventative action can go a long way

Many of our communities were battered by flooding and high winds over the winter, resulting in unexpected damage and disruption.

The flood damage has included areas away from rivers, places where prevention measures may not seem so important due to surface-water run-off and saturated land. It is heart-breaking when a church building becomes flooded but the more prepared you can be, and the quicker you can let us know, the more you can save.

St Denys Church in Severn Stoke, Worcestershire, had already suffered flooding three times prior to the 2019/20 storms. Each time, they contacted the Ecclesiastical claims team quickly, allowing our experts to be on site straight away to provide immediate help and support.

Since their first experience, they have amended their emergency plans and devised different ways to respond to flood risk. One fantastic and simple way they have saved pews from the damage of flood water and resulting silt, is to raise everything on vegetable crates before the water level rises too high.

“The crates were kindly donated to us and stack very easily at the church. They are included in the emergency list along with helpers I can call upon. We were incredibly fortunate; on a Sunday evening, six or seven other chaps kindly came out and helped me. It took us about 35 minutes. Lucky we did as the waters came in that night!”

As soon as it was safe to access the church three weeks later, one of Ecclesiastical’s Disaster Restoration experts was on site. It’s incredible the experience they have and within two days had swilled out the silt, provided a damage list and installed de-humidifiers and blowers. They check regularly and can even monitor humidity remotely. The whole Ecclesiastical process has been very efficient and we’re doing well.” John Henderson, Churchwarden, St Denys.

With increasingly erratic patterns of weather-caused damage, it’s never been more important to review your emergency plans and procedures, and ensure everyone knows how to put them into practice, to prevent serious impact.

Some top tips to prevent flood damage:

- Brick buildings; purchase covers for airbricks that can be used and removed.
- Consider flood barriers for buildings and keeping a stock of sandbags.
- Fit non-return valves to drainage systems. Check gutters, pipes, drains and culverts are in good repair. Ensure surface-water is not being directed towards buildings.
- Move valuable items to above potential flood levels.
- Raise electrical sockets and wiring to above flood levels. If refurbishing, consider flood-resistant flooring and materials, like tiles, plastic skirtings or stainless steel.
- Review and update flood, fire and recovery plans, including contacts and procedures.
- Update staff and volunteer flood response training.

Should the worst happen, contact our claims team as soon as possible who will provide advice and work with you to identify the right thing to do. 0345 603 8381 – open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or email: churchclaims@ecclesiastical.com

For more information about flooding, visit: www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/church-flood-advice

Risk Advice Line

Whenever you need information about managing risk and can’t find what you are looking for on our website, our experts are here to help.

Call: 0345 600 7531
Email: risk.advice@ecclesiastical.com

Please have your policy number to hand. The line is open from 9:00 to 17:00 Monday to Friday excluding Bank Holidays.

We also have a preferred supplier network offering a range of risk management products available at preferential rates.
Show your support!

Congratulations to our nine Regional winners.
The first stage of our Parish Pixels competition is complete. Now our judges would like your help in deciding the overall National winner. Please ‘show your support’ for your favourite entry by voting online at:

www.ecclesiastical.com/parishpixels

1 Scotland
St Cuthbert’s: Like the ice appears to break the window, we are a beautiful church in a broken world doing our best to live as Jesus commanded.

2 North East
St Stephen’s C of E Church: We are a church family that is open and active every day to support our local community through the beautiful chaos of life and help people to discover the love and grace of God.

3 North West
Freedom Church: We may not have our own church building and we may live in an area of deprivation, but we believe that it doesn’t matter where you meet to worship God, as long as you meet to worship God.

4 East Midlands
St Stephen’s: We will not be beaten by metal thieves!

5 West Midlands
St Luke’s: The St Luke’s family has been sparkling like a diamond at the centre of the community of Kingstanding for over 80 years, shining out the love of God for all to see.

6 Wales
St Teilo’s: A place for quiet reflection.

7 Eastern
St Paul’s: We are open every day of the week, welcoming all, offering space, time and hospitality to our local community and beyond.

8 South East
Parish Church of St Stephen: Inspired by the angels, our choir fills our beautiful building with uplifting music to worship the Lord and feed our souls.

9 South West
All Hallows: We celebrate our faith joyfully.
 Keeping your buildings safe

In these unprecedented times, we are collectively facing many changes and one of those is the temporary closure of your church property.

If your church property is unoccupied for any length of time, it can be at greater risk from things like escape of water and unfortunately, whilst the majority pull together and find new ways to support one another, a minority can try to take advantage and commit theft, arson and anti-social behaviour. We have five top tips to help keep temporarily closed buildings safe:

- **Protect against electrical fires** – turn off and unplug electrical equipment with the exception of security systems.
- **Guard against escape of water losses** – turn water supplies off at the mains where possible.
- **Protect your property** – remove bins away from the property, lock ladders away and ask neighbours to report suspicious activity.
- **Periodically check the property** – try to stop by on a weekly basis, perhaps as part of permitted exercise or a shopping trip.
- **Review your health and safety arrangements** – include any additional precautions necessary to secure premises and protect people.

For more information about protecting your buildings and other COVID-19 advice, please visit: www.ecclesiastical.com/church/coronavirus

There are many wonderful examples of how communities are supporting one another and finding new ways to remain connected and deliver services. We would love to hear yours. Please send your examples and stories to: churches@ecclesiastical.com
Another million pounds to support church youth work

Another million pounds is being made available by Allchurches Trust – charitable owners of Ecclesiastical Insurance Group – to support churches and Christian organisations to connect with young people.

The latest round of grants took the total amount of Growing Lives funding awarded by Allchurches Trust to over £1.3 million pounds, benefiting more than 140 projects. St Margaret’s Church in Aspley, Nottingham, has a £7,000 Growing Lives grant to develop its ‘Bee family’ programme – an after-school community group aimed at young families who live on the local estates.

With demand for grants still high, Allchurches has decided to continue the Growing Lives programme into 2020, making another million pounds available.

Allchurches Trust chairman, Tim Carroll, said: “Our Growing Lives grants programme supports a wide range of projects with young people at their heart. It’s always inspiring to read about the innovative ways in which the organisations we fund are working together to meet local need and realise the power of young people to strengthen community.”

Under Growing Lives, grants of up to £25,000 are available and the amount depends upon the cost of the project and the level of need in the community, ranging from 10% of project cost to 80%. Churches can apply for a grant under this programme even if they have received funding from Allchurches in the last two years, as long as it is for a different project. The programme is open to cathedrals.

You can find out more at: www.allchurches.co.uk/growinglives

St Margaret’s Church in Aspley, received a £7,000 grant to develop its ‘Bee family’ programme...

Funeral plans

A funeral plan from Ecclesiastical is an ideal way to make financial provision for your funeral, as well as reducing the worry for your loved ones at a difficult time. You can pre-plan your funeral in as much or as little detail as you like. Making your funeral wishes known in advance and providing for the cost makes sound financial sense.

Please contact us for your FREE information pack or visit www.funeralplans.co.uk to find your nearest funeral director.

Call: 0800 055 6503
Email: info@epsfunerals.com

Car insurance tailored for the clergy

Ecclesiastical Insurance Services offers extra tailored motor insurance to the clergy, with benefits including business use (relating to the church), no direct charges, no administration fees for changes to the policy, and up to £500 cover for church goods in the car.

Our Clergy Motor Insurance isn’t available through price comparison sites or online, because we think it’s important to speak to you so we understand your specific needs. Give us a call today to find out more.

Call: 0345 450 9396
www.ecclesiastical.com/church/car-insurance
We have donated more than £325,000 to churches around the UK

Trust130 is a special promotion to increase our support to local churches and their communities. It was initially introduced as a one-off giving programme in 2017 to celebrate and thank our church customers for trusting us over the previous 130 years.

Raise money for your church with a Trust130 donation – now extended until 31 December 2020

Trust130 is very simple… For every new direct home insurance policy taken out with Ecclesiastical, we offer to donate £1301 to an Anglican church or cathedral of the policyholder’s choice.

A donation of £130 may not sound much, but churches and congregations have used the donations to fund all sorts of things. From the restoration of church artworks to new sound systems, from family BBQ and fun days to new chairs to replace pews, and from structural repairs to new noticeboards and kitchen equipment, the money really does make a big difference.

There is no limit to the number of donations you can receive, so start spreading the word.

If you would like some posters or postcards to help you promote this locally, please don’t hesitate to contact us on 0800 783 0130.

If you or your church family would like to know more, or to get a quote, simply call on 0800 783 0130 quoting CHMAT20 or visit: www.ecclesiastical.com/trust130

Has your church benefited from one of our Trust130 donations? We’d love to hear how the money has helped your church. Please send your story to: trust130@ecclesiastical.com

* Subject to terms and conditions – please visit www.ecclesiastical.com/trust130

Do you need financial advice you can trust?

We know how important having reliable guidance about your finances can be. That’s why our Ecclesiastical Financial Advisory Service (EFAS) provides expert, unbiased, independent financial advice for clergy, church people and PCCs including:

- fully-independent pension and retirement planning advice about the clergy pension, other church pension schemes and all other plans and schemes you or your partner have from previous employers or insurance companies across the market
- saving and investing for your future (including ethical investments and PCC funds)
- life assurance and protection for you and your family
- mortgage advice and specialist advice for those living in tied accommodation who want to buy a home, or re-mortgage.

To find out more about the advice we can offer, contact our team on 0800 107 0190 getadvice@ecclesiastical.com

Please note: the value of investments can go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested. Your capital is at risk. Your home may be at risk if you do not keep up the repayments on any mortgage secured on it.