

Oxford Diocese Synod

Digital update

Adrian Harris

Head of Digital, The Church of England

The importance of the web and social media

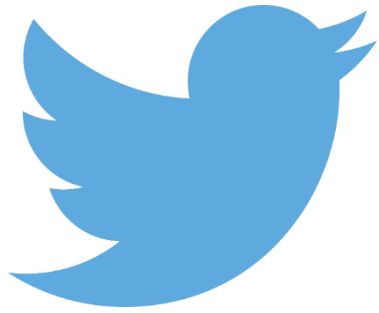


89% use internet

66% use mobile phones for web

57% use social media regularly

Source: 2017 Ofcom report



Twitter – monthly active users

330 million



Instagram – monthly active users

800 million



Facebook – monthly active users

2 billion

Our strategy

Evangelism

Discipleship

Common Good

Training

Social media

Apps and
audio

National
websites



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Our audiences



Young father



Irregular churchgoer



Exploring faith



Churchgoers



Bride to be

What have we been working on over the last two and a half years?



A Church Near You Schools Search

Find Your Local Church

Postcode or town/city GO

Enter postcode or town/city

Via www.achurchnearyou.com

Use this popular website for service times, seasonal events, contact details and more

Releases



13 November 2017

[Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic \(HBT\) bullying tackled in new guidance for Church schools](#)

10 November 2017

[Resignation of Lorna Ashworth](#)

09 November 2017

[Cathedrals attract record numbers at Christmas](#)

[More news](#)

[Sign up for Daily Digest](#)

In The News

Media enquiries: 0207 898 1326 / out of hours 07774800212

[Steel and cement companies falling short in transition to a low-carbon economy](#)

[Number of women in ordained ministry at record high](#)

[Independent Reviewer's report on See of Sheffield published](#)

Blogs



['Life, and for me motherhood, has been the most fertile training ground for priesthood'](#)

["It might boost my ego, but no one becomes a vicar because they saw it on TV"](#)

[What is the point of RE?](#)

Forgiveness and Reconciliation in the

Safeguarding

The Church of England is committed to the [safeguarding, care and nurture](#) of everyone within our church community.

[Reporting concerns and finding support](#)

[House of Bishop Policy & Practice Guidance](#)

[Media Statements](#)

Renewal and Reform

[Rural church growth at the heart of latest round of funding for dioceses](#)

[Video: Bishop of Liverpool on vocations](#)

[A Hopeful Future: Vision, Narrative, and Biblical hope, for Renewal & Reform](#)

[Videos Playlist](#)

Recent blogs:

[View more on Renewal and Reform](#)

Stories Worth Sharing



[Listen to stories worth sharing on Soundcloud](#)



[Listen to more](#)

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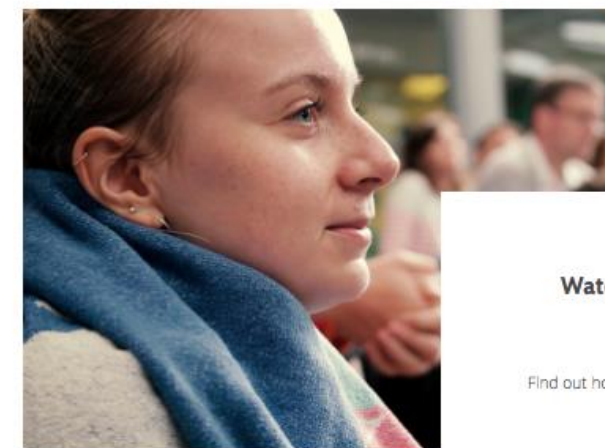
Archbishops



Join Us In Prayer



A video series capturing short stories from across the Church looking at how we work with and serve local communities.



Watch our videos from across the Church

Find out how local Christian communities live out their faith

WATCH NOW

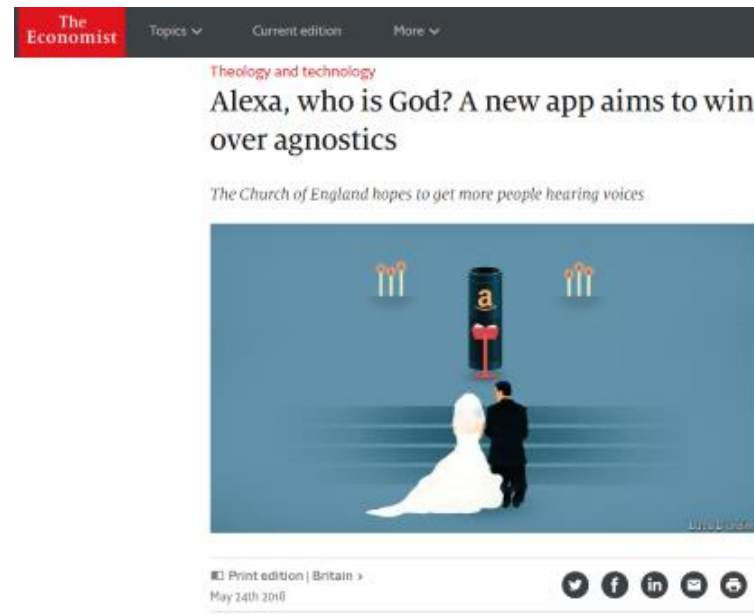
Lots of new video content for local churches to use



Alexa audio skill

- The Church of England Alexa skill has been asked more than 75,000 questions in the first year
- In a typical week people ask the following questions by topic area:
 - Read today's daily 'EasterPilgrim' reflection – 16%
 - Say a prayer – 40%
 - Explore the Christian faith – 31%
 - Share a grace before a meal – 6%
 - Where is my local church? – 7%.
- Planning to launch on Google in coming months.

Some of the Alexa coverage



Times front page

DAILY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

THE



TIMES

Tuesday May 28 2019 | thetimes.co.uk | No 72858

£1.80 Only £1.10 to subscribers

Handbag hell!

Is your tote ruining your back?

INSIDE
TIMES2

The new
science of
red wine

Say a little prayer for me: Alexa app helps users to connect with God

Mark Bridge Technology Correspondent

In centuries past people went to priests and prophets with questions about the Almighty. Now Christians and the curious are “connecting with God” through Amazon’s Alexa.

Tens of thousands have interacted with the Church of England through the digital assistant since the launch of its own voice-controlled app, Alexa Skill, a year ago.

Some 9.5 million Britons use smart-

speakers such as Amazon’s Echo to answer questions and control devices and the church said that more than 75,000 engaged with its new service.

The idea is to give information to newcomers to Christianity and spiritual succour for believers. In other words, users might ask Alexa to give them a prayer or a quick theology lesson, rather than to play them a pop song or reveal the football results.

People with an Echo speaker or Alexa on their phones can access the

app by saying: “Alexa, open the Church of England.” They can then ask the church questions about God and Jesus or the sacraments, or ask to hear prayers and religious reflections.

Instead of the normal Alexa voice, the responses were recorded by clergy and churchgoers, a mix of male and female voices and regional accents.

About a third of recent queries involved questions about religion such as “Who is God?” or “What is faith?”, while 40 per cent were requests to hear

prayers. Six per cent were requests for grace before a meal. Despite falling church attendance, 7 per cent were to ask where a local church was.

Asked “Who is a Christian?” the app responds: “Belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is at the heart of our faith. You can find a summary of what Christians believe that has been used since early times.”

One reviewer on the Amazon website wrote: “Such a great help when you are praying alone.” He added that he

would like sung psalms and hymns to be added. Another user said that he loved the app despite being a Catholic.

The church plans to launch a version for Google devices by the end of the year. Future features will include more details of local church events and connections to live-streamed services.

The Rev Katherine Hedderly, vicar of All Hallows by the Tower, in London, said: “It helps people who are new to faith to explore deep questions and to find a local church to take the next step.”

ITV's Loose Women

- Loose Women coverage particularly encouraging given demographics reached
- They amplified through their social media channels and on ITV.com
- Averages 900,000 viewers, with hundreds of thousands streaming on catch up.



AGE

Most popular with Millennials and Baby Boomers



GENDER

More popular with Women

With 31% positive opinion, Loose Women is more popular among Women than among Men

Source: 6,620 interviews - YouGov Ratings data collected between May 2018 and April 2019



Alexa launch



4.8 out of 5 stars ▼

★★★★★ Alexa, let us pray...

By [Scott Watts](#) on 24 May 2018

A great start by the C of E in engaging with the Alexa Community. Some great features. It would be lovely if, as this skill develops, Morning and Evening Prayer are added.

★★★★★ Just a great skill

By [simon](#) on 2 June 2018

Such a good way of starting the day and it doesn't sound like a robot either. Well done Church of England 😊

★★★★★ Kids can learn from Alexia

By [Mrs. Raj Fruzza](#) on 25 May 2018

Love it- great example to the kids on how to pray

Social media training in dioceses

■ Training day

- 400 attendees by end of June, 790 by October
- 1000 churches trained in 2018

■ Social Media Surgeries

- 1:1 sessions held with 27 Diocese

■ Labs Latest newsletter

- 73% growth, average open rate 58.9%

96% surveyed say the day is good, very good or excellent

- Home
- Login
- Register
- Help

Home



Quick Search Find Churches Find Events

We currently list 16,500 churches and 53,000 services.

Search by Postcode or Place

Enter a place for a list of suggestions or a postcode to use the parish finder - [How this works](#)

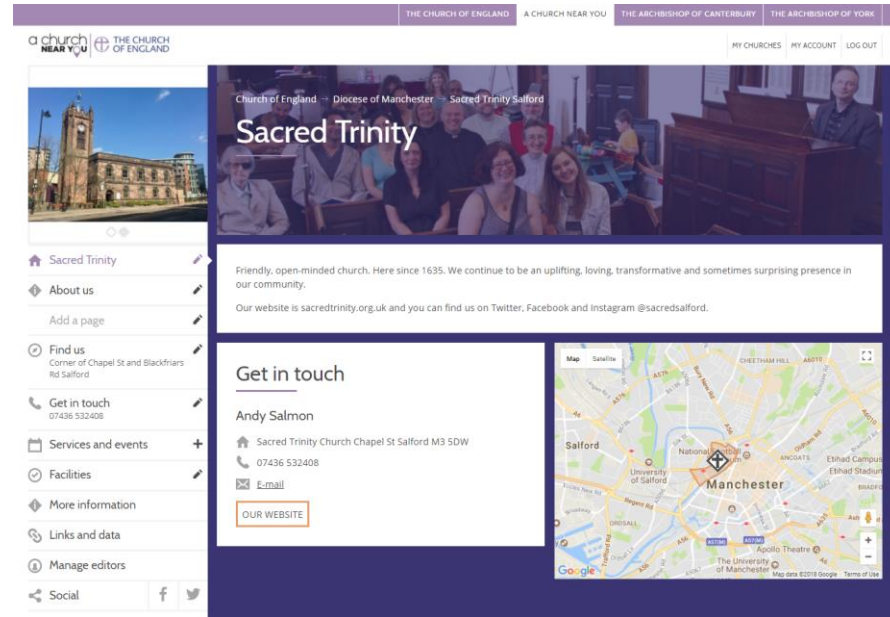
A Church Near You
What is A Church Near You?

Getting married?
We'd love to hear from you!

WW1 Commemoration
Many churches have added details of their plans for World War One commemoration.

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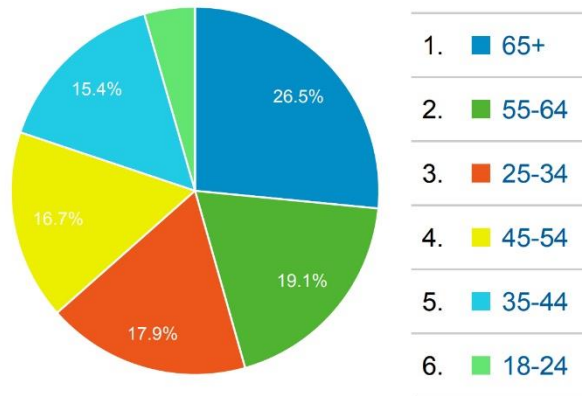


A Church Near You

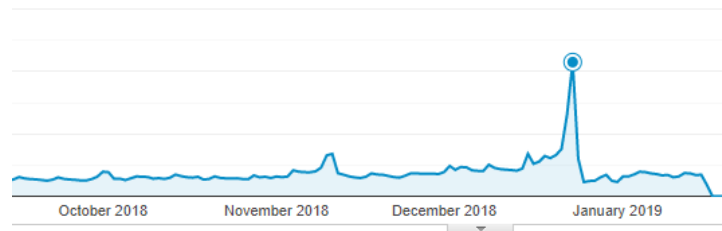
How churches can get the most out of the redesigned site – and what's now live

Who's using A Church Near You? *Activity this year*

A Church Near You offers the Church an exciting evangelism opportunity – the vast majority of visitors are new and the age split is broadly equal.

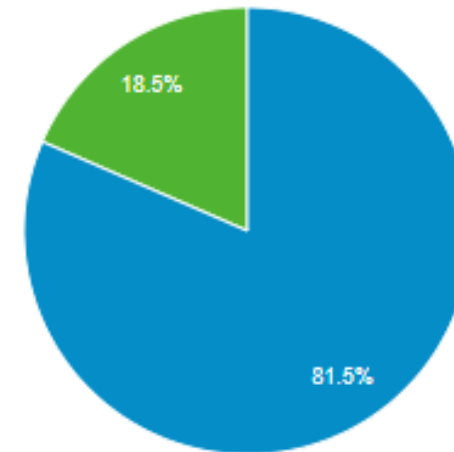


43,000 users on Christmas Eve 2018 – 153,000 pages views



Analytics for June 2018/2019

New Visitor Returning Visitor

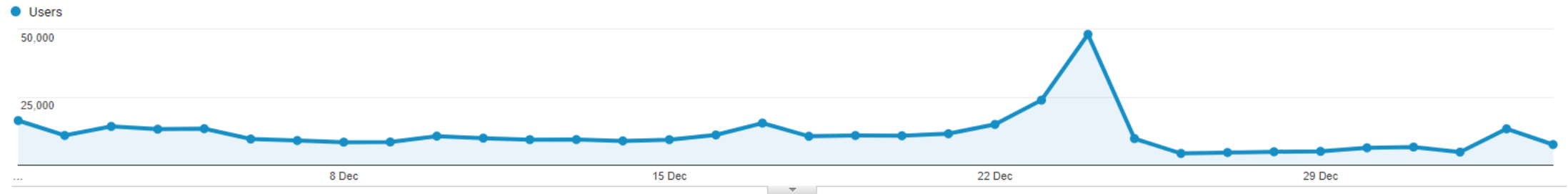


Users
1,284,652

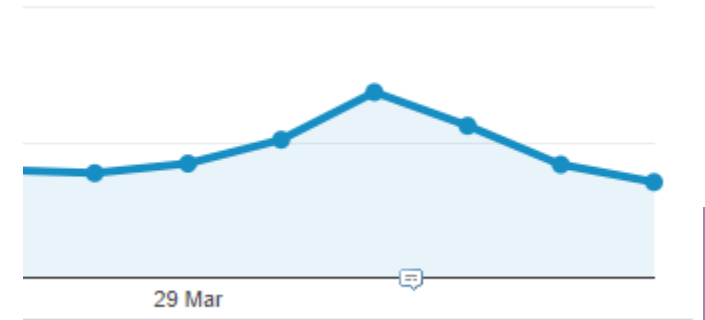
Number of Sessions per User
1.51

23,000 inbox messages sent to churches since launch in October 2018.

Interesting trends on A Church Near You

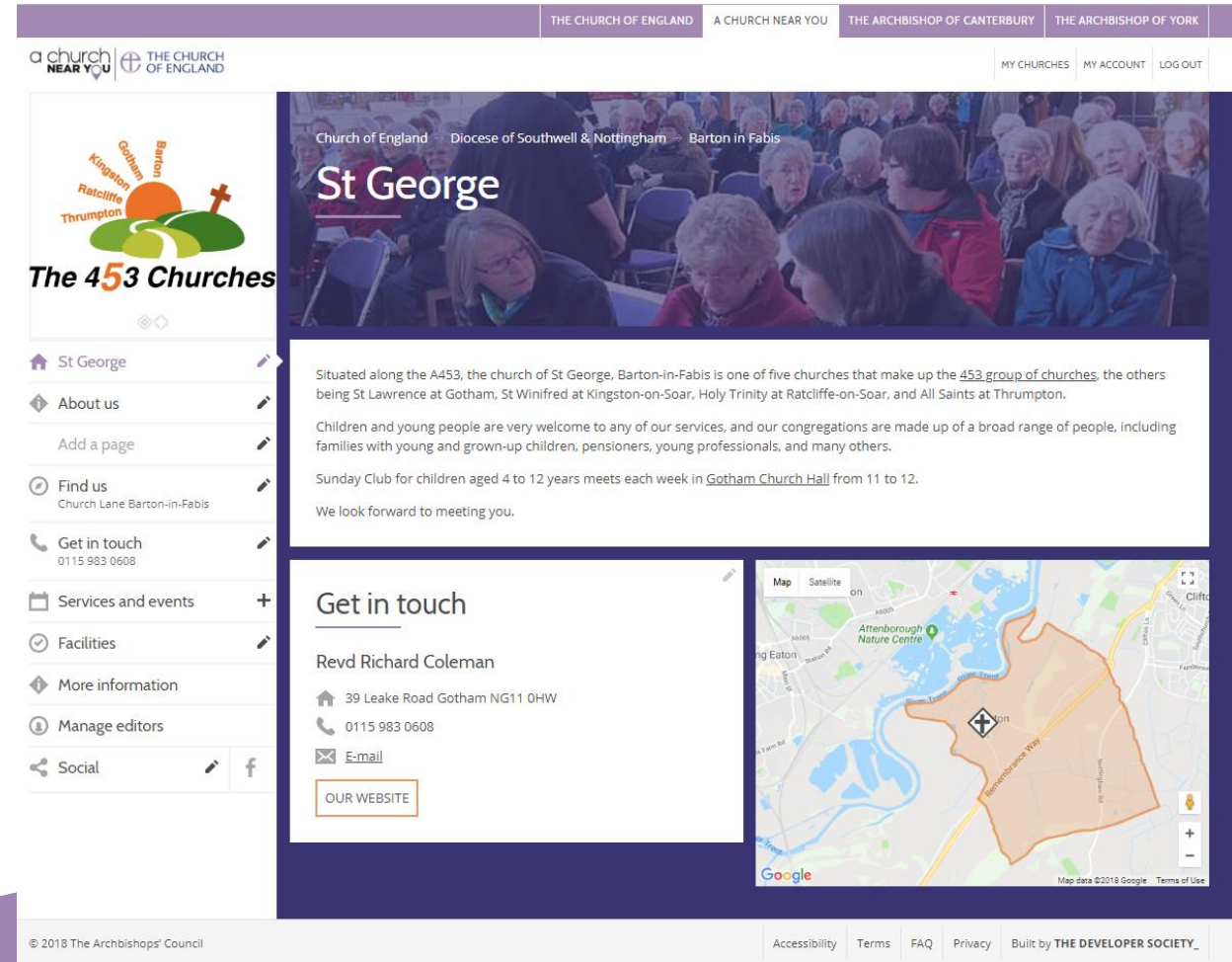


Users are most active in the 72 hours before a key calendar event – it's important to remember this and think about when we're leading people to our ACNY page. Are we inviting people to church on social on Christmas Eve?



What phase one offered churches

- A mobile-first site
- A page with the look and feel of a modern-website
- Increased personalisation tools – you can now add your logo, a cover picture and a welcome message
- Ability to add up to 10 pages, which could be for more information on your children's activities, outreach projects, church history etc.
- A simpler editing experience
- A safe and secure site
- Users can now find not only the closest church to them, but the church closest to them offering the service or event that they're looking for – thanks to the tags.



Now live: *Free websites*

- Churches can use ACNY as their website – pointing their domain name towards their ACNY page.
- Step-by-step instructions guide editors through the process of redirecting their domain name to their ACNY page.
- Save many churches around £500 per year as ACNY is free.
- This allows churches to have a mobile-first, modern website that sits behind three layers of security, meaning it will still appear in search results after the Chrome update in October.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND A CHURCH NEAR YOU THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

MY CHURCHES MY ACCOUNT LOG OUT

Church of England → A Church Near You →

Custom domain setup

Sign-in to the 123 Reg control panel

Find the link to the control panel once you're logged in.

Sales: 0330 221 1007

Business Advice Centre **Control Panel** Log out Webmail Support

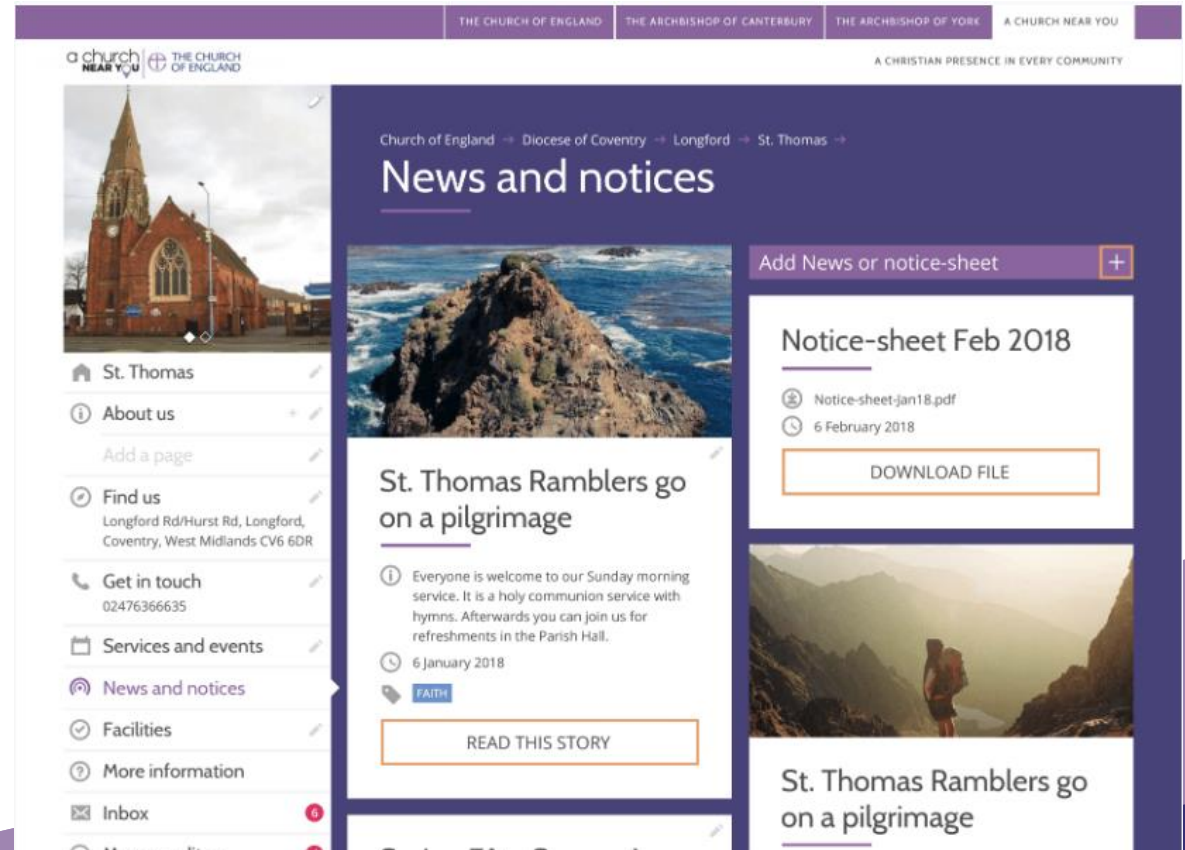
Market your site • Web Hosting • Office 365 • Servers • SSL • More

NEXT STEP

© 2018 The Archbishops' Council Accessibility Terms FAQ Privacy Built by THE DEVELOPER SOCIETY

Now live: *News stories and notice sheets*

- Churches will now be able to add short news stories about upcoming events and services and notice sheets.
- News pages can have documents attached and an image at the top of the story. These pages can also be tagged, so will be easy to find for users.
- The 10-most recent stories and news sheets will appear, with older posts being saved should editors need to refer to this at a later date. Expired services and events will also be saved here.



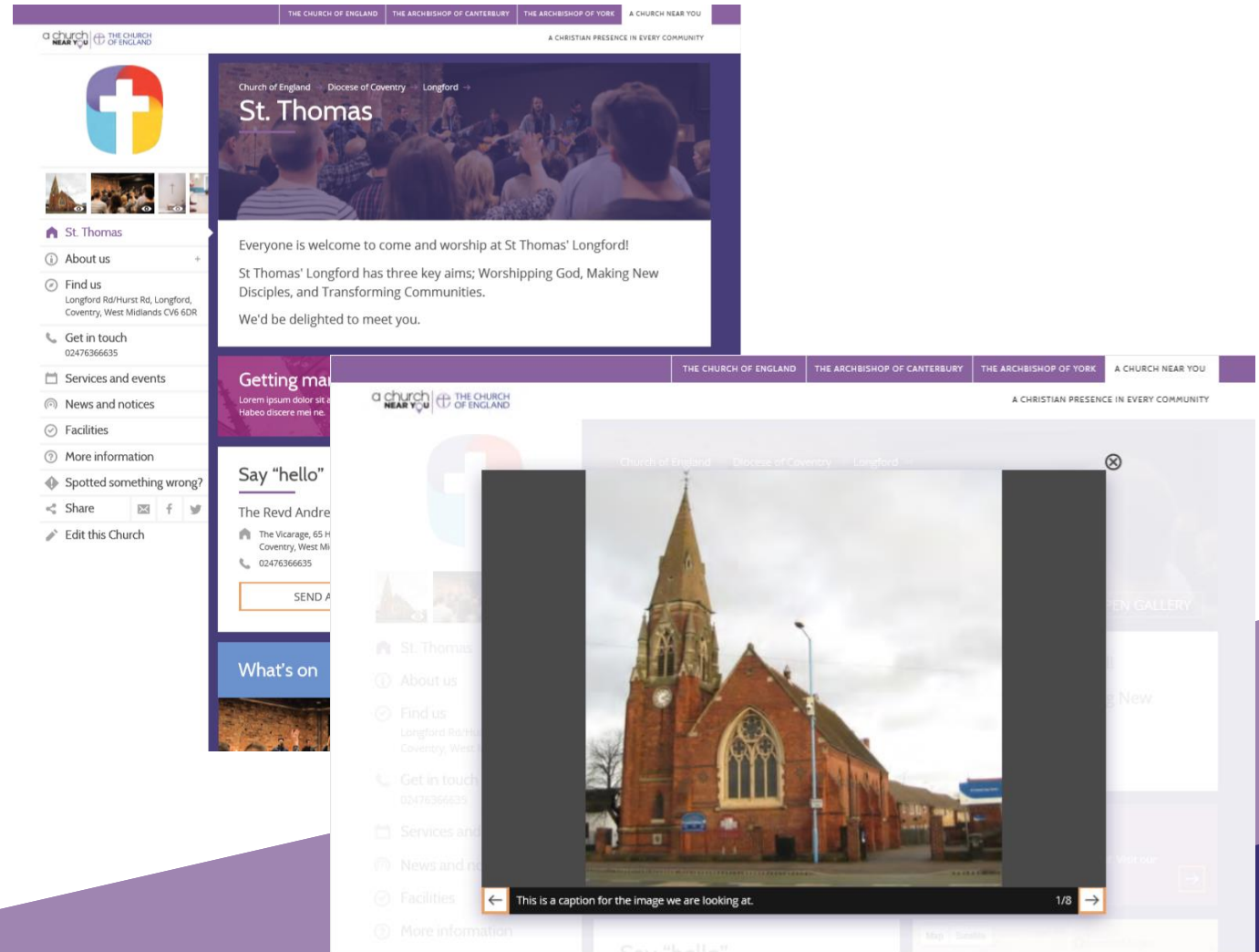
Now live: *Analytics*

- For the first time, ACNY will show editors the page's analytic information, including the views for the week, month and year.
- This is useful for planning what to post on your page and explaining trends in your church – if you have a particular busy Christmas, could it be due to an increased number of hits on your ACNY of users looking for events and services?
- This has been a popularly requested feature, and we're thrilled that so many churches are thinking so strategically about this resource.

The screenshot displays the ACNY website interface for St. Thomas Longford. The top navigation bar includes links for 'THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND', 'THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY', 'THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK', and 'A CHURCH NEAR YOU'. Below this, there are links for 'MY CHURCHES', 'MY ACCOUNT', and 'LOG OUT'. The main content area features a large image of the church building and a banner for 'St. Thomas' with an 'OPEN GALLERY' button. A sidebar on the left lists various church-related links: 'St. Thomas', 'About us', 'Add a page', 'Find us', 'Get in touch', 'Services and events', 'News and notices', 'Facilities', 'More information', 'Inbox', and 'Manage editors'. The main content area also displays analytics for 'Views this week: 102', 'This month: 2,897', and 'This year: 37,305'. Below the analytics, there is a welcome message and a list of key aims: 'Worshipping God, Making New Disciples, and Transforming Communities'. There are also sections for 'Getting married?' and 'Want prayer?' with placeholder text and arrows. At the bottom, there is a 'Say "hello"' section and a map showing the church's location.

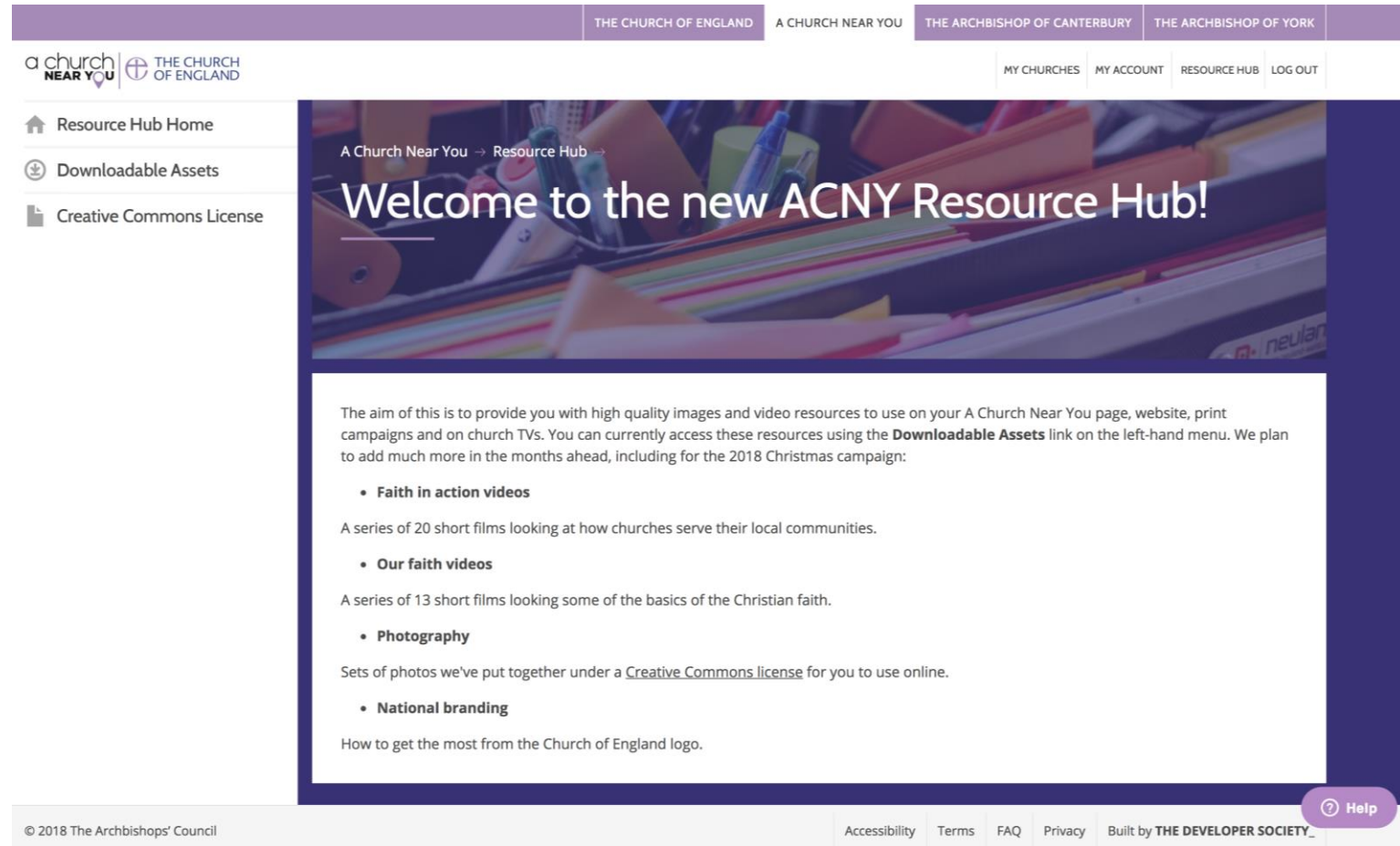
Now live: *Gallery*

- We know many editors will be thrilled to hear that the gallery feature is back. Churches will now be able to add up to 20 images.
- These can have a caption and show the life of your church – from special services to church away weekends.
- We're setting a limit on the number that can be uploaded to encourage churches to keep these up-to-date and fresh.



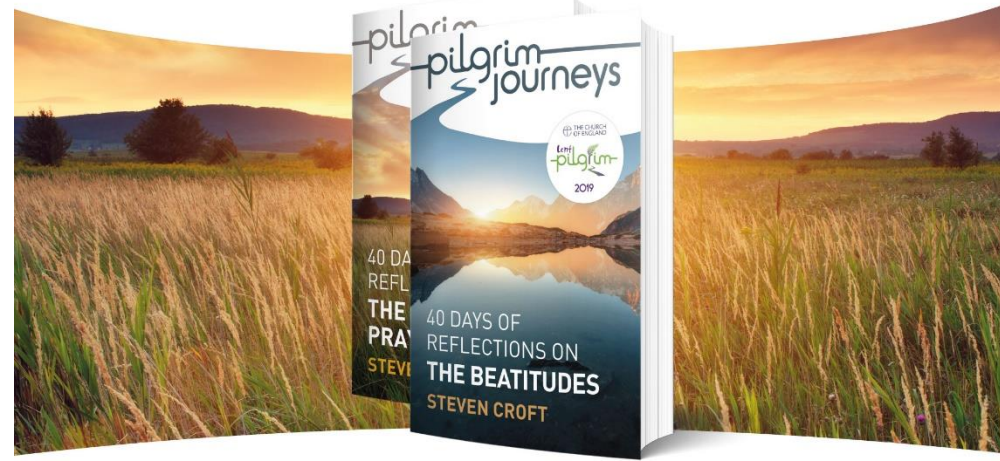
Now live: *Resource Hub*

- A central hub for high quality imagery and video resources for use on your ACNY page, website, print campaigns and church TVs.
- **More new features soon:**
 - Benefice home page
 - The ability to copy events,
 - Inbox that prepopulates emails with the subject line and address
 - Add Clergy biographical information.



93% found LentPilgrim helpful, very helpful or extremely helpful in bringing them closer to God

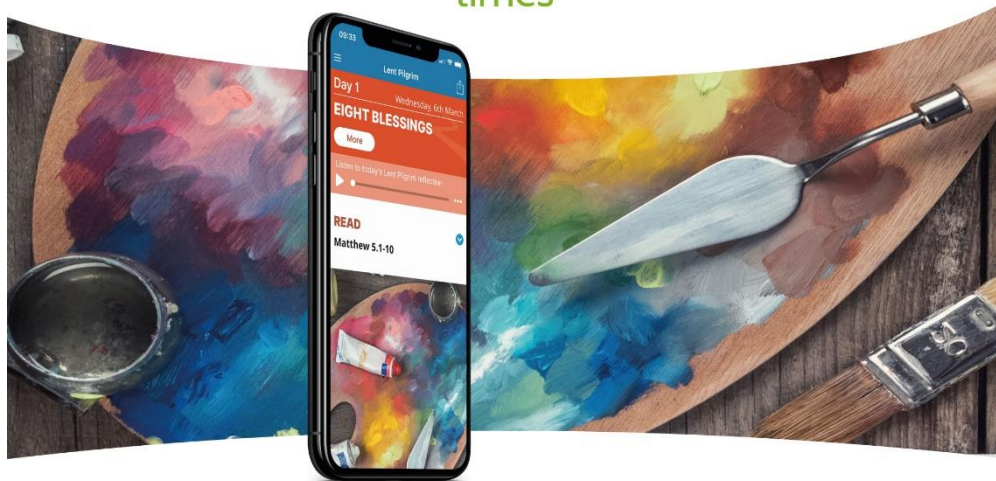
40,000 copies of ChurchHouse Publishing LentPilgrim and EasterPilgrim booklets sold.



Apple and Android app downloaded

14,000

times



26,000

subscribers to the daily email



Easter
pilgrim



Lent
pilgrim

Easter
pilgrim



Lent
pilgrim



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Feedback on LentPilgrim and EasterPilgrim

- “It was concise and easy to use and provided meaningful reflections”
- “The material was very thoughtfully written, straightforward but challenging”
- “Short and pithy meditation for each day. Can be read at any time”
- “It is very good to share on our Church Facebook page for many to follow”
- “It was so good having the gentle teaching through the Beatitudes leading us to Easter”
- “I loved the daily email alerts. It was like an alarm call”
- “I was so encouraged by the Lent Pilgrim devotionals they were really good I would love to have regular devotionals from the Church of England”
- “We were running a Lent course on the Beatitudes and this dovetailed in with great success”
- “Helped to rekindle a daily habit”

Out of five, how many stars would you give LentPilgrim?



One star – 1%

Two stars – 1.64%

Three stars – 8.39%

Four stars – 35.7%

Five stars – 53.2%



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



#FollowTheStar

What were the key results from the campaign?



- Total social media reach of 7.94 million – up by 1.14 million on 2017
- First time the campaign spanned digital, print, traditional press and broadcast in terms of publicity – helping to raise awareness nationally and reach many millions of new people
- Reflections written by Revd Dr Isabelle Hamley were very positively received across channels and widely used in print, app, Alexa and BBC Radio (500,000 weekly listeners and 1.5 million on Christmas Day)
- More than 120,000 copies of the #FollowTheStar booklet sold – 50% more than the figure for #GodWithUs in 2017
- A Church Near You received more page views than 2017 - up from 1.5 million to 1.66 million
- More than 50,000 items sold through the online store – bookmarks, booklets and flyers were particularly popular.



Building on 2018 with 2019 campaign

- Reflections:
 - Booklets
 - Email
 - App
 - Audio for Alexa and app
- Video content
- Social media campaign
- Online shop
- Update A Church Near You
- Big launch at Lambeth.

"I found getting involved in the campaign was fantastic. We've had a good response from the local community and have seen more new people to our church in January."

"I thought this year's marketing was among the best I have seen. Thank you!"

"My faith is quiet and personal rather than church-going and I found the reflections excellent, thought-provoking and helpful"

User feedback

**Team focused on supporting, equipping and
enabling local churches**
Close partnership with Church House Publishing

Q&A