



PIONEERING IN RURAL COMMUNITIES NETWORK NEWSLETTER.

Issue 2 Spring 2021



COMMENT:

Welcome to our Spring edition of the Pioneering in Rural Communities Network Newsletter.

Easter is just around the corner. **Christ is Risen He is risen indeed.** It is in this that the Christian faith and hope is rooted. The Apostle Paul makes this striking observation about the resurrection:

And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 1 Cor 15v14

But what is this Hope, what does it look like? How do we grow it in our community? It is these questions I would like to address.

What is hope? The dictionary definition of hope is describing hope as a feeling of expectation and desire for a thing to happen. Other words that describe hope are aspiration, desire, expectation, aim, plan, dream. These words and descriptions of hope help make it much more tangible.

To see our hopes and dreams to become a reality it requires a starting point to have a vision, something to aim for. What does your dream look like? Having a vision gives our journey purpose and direction.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Rom 15 13 “

Here is a quote to reflect on:

“Keep your dreams alive. Understand to achieve anything requires faith and belief in yourself, vision, hard work, determination, and dedication. Remember all things are possible for those who believe.”
Gail Deaver’s

Do not give up on your dreams. Keep dreaming.

Peter Jones, Rural Pioneer Facilitator

Guest spot.

Our Guest contributor is from Alexandra Holmes.

My first foray into a rural pioneering role has been an interesting one. I was appointed to the post of Rural Pioneer (House for Duty Associate Priest) – not the snappiest title, I admit – in the first week of lockdown last year. After restrictions eased, I landed in the village of Rode in Somerset at the end of June, wondering exactly what pioneering in a pandemic might look like. It is a question I often return to.

One of the aspects of pioneer ministry that most attracts me is the fact that it is deeply relational and therefore highly responsive to its context. The profile for this role talked about sitting with, listening to, loving and serving the community and made numerous suggestions as to how this might be done by joining in with various groups. I realised quickly that precisely none of these suggestions were now doable apart from dog-walking – and then the dog went lame for several months which put a stop to that too! But all this brought about the blessing that, instead of meeting people in groups, I met people in gardens or for a walk on a one-to-one basis which meant it was possible to go much deeper with people than would have otherwise been the case.

That seemed to me to be a real sign of hope and I realised that pioneering in a pandemic in a new post could have a focus on hope. Both looking for signs of that Easter hope already to present in the community and also bringing some of the light and hope we celebrate at Easter into people's lives in as many different ways as possible, whether through casual conversations, helping those self-isolating or running an online dog show.

Part of my heart for pioneering is linked to my passion for social justice – I'm currently doing a PhD in this area at Chester University. I see this Kingdom-focus on social justice as another expression of our Easter hope and I find this hope already present in our community in the way in which a number of people raise justice issues regularly in conversations and on our Facebook page. It seems there is a real thirst for social justice growing amongst our community and that both excites me and gives me hope.

Pioneering in a pandemic, has been, for me at least, a lot about hope.

Forthcoming Event.

Advanced notice. A date for your diary. 18th September 2021.

I am pleased to confirm that the inaugural Pioneering in Rural Communities conference will take place on the 18th of September 2021 at St Nicholas Church, Corfe Mullen, Dorset.

Easter Reflections.

Easter in 40 words.

Love gave.

Help came.

Compassion reached.

Mercy saved.

Beauty filled.

Hope instilled.

Burdens lifted.

Grace revealed.

Death ended.

Breach mended.

Joy dances.

Peace extended.

Curtain torn.

Power soared.

Freedom breathed.

Life reborn.

He forgave.

Truth overcame.

Glory rose.

Light reigns.

Debbie McDaniel

Easter Prayer

We thank you that Easter is about all people,
That your love and your Salvation is for all who confess with voices, hearts and lives that
the tomb is empty because Jesus is Risen,
That we might know forgiveness,
That lives might be reborn
And your name glorified now and for all eternity.
Amen.

