

## ALIVE IN FAITH NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2023

### A message from Bishop Peter



The *Alive in Faith* Campaign continues to make a vital contribution to the work of the Church in proclaiming our faith in East Anglia. By enabling new projects in parishes and in support of the wider community, and through educating a record number of seminarians, your gifts to *Alive in Faith* are helping to secure the future of the Church in our Diocese. I know how grateful Bishop Alan was to everyone who supported the campaign, and I want to echo that gratitude myself as his successor. May God bless all of you who have made possible the vital work described in this newsletter.

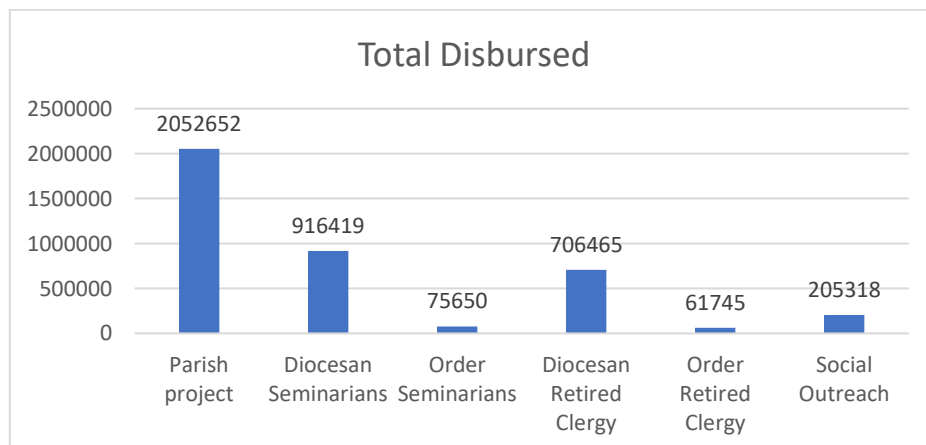
+ Peter

*Alive in Faith* is now a mature campaign. Of the amazing sum of £6.5 million pledged during the campaign by some 3,500 generous people, almost all has now been received. The flow of projects that supports is now very strong. A total of £4,018,248 has now been spent delivering social outreach, parish projects and supporting future and retired priests. This newsletter describes some of the work that *Alive in Faith* has been funding under its three aims:

† Seminarians who are well formed, and clergy who are supported when they step down from active ministry

† Strong and vibrant parishes that are addressing local needs

† Programmes of outreach to help those who are most vulnerable in our communities.



## Seminarians

With the help of *Alive in Faith*, we are educating eight seminarians at Allen Hall, Oscott, Rome and Johannesburg. Two were ordained deacons during 2022. This is a very strong number of vocations, and equals or exceeds the numbers in many larger Dioceses. Your donations have supported the costs of their education, which lasts for up to seven years, as well as supporting the living costs which they, like any student, face.

We also now have eight *Alive in Faith* priests. The most recently ordained, Fr Michael Smith, who is now serving at St John's Cathedral in Norwich, was supported by the campaign through his studies in Rome.



And *Alive in Faith* donations from our Benedictine-served parishes of Beccles and Bungay have helped to train Dom John George, of Buckfast Abbey, who was ordained in September.



**Dom John's ordination**

## Supporting retired priests

Our priests serve well past the ordinary retirement age, and do not have the opportunities many people have to put aside financial savings for their old age. Few have a home of their own. When they do step down from active ministry, our long-serving priests deserve security and comfort in their old age. *Alive in Faith* has helped us guarantee that. Four retired priests are now living in flats or small houses funded by *Alive in Faith* donations. The campaign has also enabled other forms of support to be provided to elderly priests in need.

## Social outreach

*Alive in Faith* is helping the Church's Christian witness by funding community projects across the Diocese.

The campaign has made significant donations to a range of causes including £50,000 to help Caritas Ukraine to bring food to housebound residents in Kharkiv, the second largest city in Ukraine. This city lies only 25 miles from the Russian border and so has been subject to siege and intense shelling. One of the Caritas volunteers in Kharkiv is Viktoria, who uses a bike for the distributions. "I work in IT and could easily get a job abroad," writes the 35-year-old Viktoria, "but I have many relatives here in Kharkiv who need attention and care. I would not be able to take them all out of Ukraine, and I also do not want to leave them without support." Before the conflict, Viktoria would regularly attend cycling races around Europe. Now she cycles across Kharkiv delivering food to older people and those with disabilities who cannot leave their homes. Viktoria is part of a team of volunteer cyclists whose support is a lifeline for housebound people in Kharkiv.



**Volunteer Viktoria delivers food to Kharkiv resident Larysa**

Among other projects *Alive in Faith* is funding are women's projects in Peterborough and Cambridge, and the SVP's move-on housing project for men in Cromer.

## Parish projects

Almost every parish in the Diocese has now embarked on a parish-based project funded by *Alive in Faith*. These range from landmark restorations and extensions to churches, through to more humble and practical improvements. There have now been a total of 58 parish projects carried out, accounting for expenditure of £2,052,652 over the lifetime of the campaign.



Among recent projects, at **St Luke's, Peterborough**, considerable housing development in the area has led to significant growth in recent years. There are now three Sunday morning Masses instead of one and attendance has more than doubled over the past five years alone. The church community is young and diverse, bringing much new life and freshness to the parish, along with a new voluntary aided primary school, St John Henry Newman.



**St Luke's growing congregation**

With limited resources it was a challenge to quickly adapt the church building to these changes, but with the help of our *Alive in Faith* funds and other donations, Fr Jeffrey and the parish have been able to make the best use of the space available.

At a cost of £120,000 the grounds have been fenced off, creating a safe space for outdoor activities, fire exits have been improved, the server's sacristy enlarged, kitchen and toilets replaced, and external storage supplied. In particular, three small rooms have been knocked together to create a useful small hall, which can be opened onto the church. In October, the building work was blessed, the children's choir sang 'Panis Angelicus' by Cesar Frank, and everyone enjoyed a buffet lunch with celebration cakes afterwards.



**Fr Jeffrey in the new small hall at St Luke's**

At **Sawston**, the parish has used its *Alive in Faith* funds to support much-needed structural improvements at the presbytery.

At **Buckden**, an organ and new sound system and a new boiler have been made possible by campaign donations.

At **Our Lady and the English Martyrs, Cambridge**, *Alive in Faith* has contributed to a major programme of refurbishment and restoration, including supporting the renewal of boilers and asbestos works.

At **St Mark's, Ipswich**, the parish has been able to redecorate the church and sacristy.

At **Ely**, the church heating has been renewed after a very cold Winter 2021, with a hydrogen-ready boiler to support the drive for net zero.

There are a number of large-scale and exciting projects in the pipeline for 2023.

### **Electronic newsletter**

If you would like to receive the *Alive in Faith* newsletter electronically in future, please email [AliveinFaith@rcdea.org.uk](mailto:AliveinFaith@rcdea.org.uk) with your name and parish.

### **Thank you**

Once again, thank you for your gifts to *Alive in Faith* over the years that have made the work described in this newsletter possible.