

**IDWAL**

(Inter Diocesan West Africa Link)

# *Pompey West Africa Links*

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## **Meet Max Cross our new IDWAL Chairperson**

So you heard that there was a new IDWAL Chairperson and have no clue who they are.  
Well let me introduce myself...

I have always lived in the Portsmouth area; was born in Leigh Park, lived in Bedhampton and raised in Purbrook. Suzy and I have been together since our early twenties. We have three grown children and Dave our dog. One of our children is a local primary school teacher and another was married last year and works with the Crown Prosecution Service. Our son works with Youth With A Mission, mostly in LA, Thailand and sometimes Europe. Interestingly his focus is on reaching those exploited within the sex industry, many of whom are trafficked from Ghana and other African nations.



I have apprenticed to Jesus since my late twenties and the journey has been life changing. Much to my surprise I was ordained in 2014. I say surprise because I had been quite happy as an independent project manager with the IT industry for the previous twenty years working with organisations like the Bank of England and Great Ormond Street. I now serve as Rector of Bedhampton Parish - the very church in which I was baptised as a child. This has been a real home coming for us, and Suzy and myself love being part of the community here. Finally I also serve as Chaplain in the Army Reserve. All of which keeps me busy.

It has been a slow start for me as IDWAL Chairperson mostly because almost immediately after it was announced the world changed for everyone. Never-the-less as things begin to settle into a new pattern I would want us all to really evaluate our IDWAL links and to look at where we are and the benefits to both Portsmouth and Ghana. If you have any views on the future of IDWAL or indeed just wanted a chat then please do get in touch.

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*Turn to pages 2 and 3 to read about Max's first trip to Ghana in August 2019!*

## Max Cross's visit to Ghana August 2019

The timber lorry was approaching head-on at a rather alarming rate towards the car. David sat in the front clenching the handrail as we continued on the wrong side of the road towards our doom. The rest of us simply said our silent prayers. In what seemed the last moment, our driver heaved the steering wheel, the car lurched away from the danger and our prayers were answered as we survived another Ghanaian driving drama. The journey up until that point had been less eventful. Twenty four hours before three Anglican parish priests, myself, Colin and David arrived at Accra with our team leader. Our leader Revd Dr Alison Morgan is a trustee of the Mathetes Trust and author of the Rooted in Jesus material which we had flown to Ghana to deliver.

Rooted in Jesus is a group course in Christian discipleship written for use in Africa. It is the only material of

its kind written especially for the use of ordinary African Christians, rather than translated from material developed for the West. It has a proven track record of success since it was originally developed in 2002 and this was the first time it would be delivered in Ghana. Bishop Felix from Koforidua, invited Rooted in Jesus to lead a



conference. This was a considerable commitment of people's resources, and the lay people's response showed his good standing in the diocese. Each parish had been asked to send up to four representatives to the conference, and 110 enthusiastic, mostly lay participants attended. The conference was hosted at the Anglican Senior High and Technical School in Kwabeng, and was opened by Bishop Felix and the five archdeacons.

On the first morning the music beat hit us as we turned the corner towards



the classrooms where the delegates were already gathered dancing and singing worship in obvious joyous anticipation of good things to come. There were a range of ages, and equal numbers of men and women. It was also clear that there was a spread of income and social positions. As the conference progressed the belief that they could lead people to Jesus and disciple them back home grew and the excitement remained. At the end of the conference the 110 group leaders were given certificates, and books in the local language of Asante Twi, or English for those in non-Twi speaking areas. The one on one conversations, workshops and prayer were some of the most encouraging and engaging times I have spent in ministry.





It wasn't all work though. On the Sundays before and after the conference the team was invited to attend two notable events in the life of the diocese. The first was the silver jubilee being celebrated by Archdeacon Paul Kwabena Akomea-Marfo, who has completed 25 years of ordained ministry; the second was the installation of her Ladyship Justice Mrs Sophia Ophelia Adjeibea Adinyira, a Supreme Court judge who becomes the first lay canon, and the first woman canon, of the Cathedral Church of St Peter, Koforidua. Each of these services lasted between four and five hours, and each was followed by a reception to which we were also generously welcomed. Another bonus was that St Thomas' and St Nicholas' in Bedhampton Parish were able to link with St Nicholas' in Kwabeng. It is early days for this relationship, but their priest Rev. Fr. Richard Kissi and I have high hopes of both parishes benefiting from this link. A most successful trip. **- Max Cross**

## News update for your prayers

### BREAKING NEWS FROM LAMBETH PALACE (8 July)

By now we should have been preparing to meet our visiting Ghanaian Bishops arriving in Portsmouth prior to the Lambeth Conference. However, bearing in mind that the safety and health of all conference delegates is of utmost priority and that all Bishops and spouses have important leadership and pastoral roles in their own communities, it has been decided that

### LAMBETH CONFERENCE BE RESCHEDULED FOR BRITISH SUMMER 2022 IN CANTERBURY

However there has been one good lockdown outcome. The use of online worship in our parishes has enabled our Ghana friends to join with us from time to time. It was wonderful for Bishop Festus to join our Cathedral for occasional Morning Prayer and for us to join Good Friday worship from Sunyani Cathedral Mission House. Also wonderful for Bishop Festus to give the closing blessing for our Portsmouth Cathedral Whitsunday Eucharist.

### Canon Norbert Ayeebo RIP

Many will be surprised and saddened to learn of the death of Fr Norbert Ayeebo from St Matthews Tamale on 20 June. Norbert had been in hospital for 3 days being treated for pneumonia, typhoid and malaria. He leaves a young widow, Hannah, and two young sons: Raphael and Gabriel. We shall remember Norbert for his energy and vision and his amazing gift of friendship. He had recently completed a Masters degree in the USA, visited the IOW last summer and had been in regular email contact until a couple of weeks before his death. His older brother, Jacob Ayeebo, the former Bishop of Tamale, died last year. Their elderly father still lives in Yelwoko.

### Canon Ishmael Lartey

Canon Ishmael, Precentor of St Michael and All Angels Cathedral in Mampong, had been extending his visit to the UK after attending a conference in Canterbury when lockdown terminated all flights back to Ghana. He is currently staying with the Sisters at St Monica's Guest House in Kennington. IDWAL and others are assisting with the cost of his accommodation. He writes "I look forward to get back home when the borders get open. For the meantime I am good and trust that the will of God will be done".

**- Marion Syms**



# Lockdown in Ghana

COVID-19 has reached Ghana where the general living and medical facilities are less able to meet the pandemic. Mercifully there have been far fewer cases of infection and death than in the UK. The churches have been on lockdown and where giving is by weekly offering of cash this has had a disastrous effect on income. There have also been worries concerning food security. IDWAL has been so encouraged to know that some churches and deaneries in our diocese have been able to provide financial support for their linked churches in Ghana. Bishop Cyril (Asante Mampong) says that people are finding it very difficult to 'do as they have been instructed'.

The first phase of lifting of lockdown came on the 5<sup>th</sup> of June by His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. The Diocese of Sekondi has written:

## **IDWAL Committee**

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Canon Marion Syms

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Robin Green

### USPG

Canon Marion Syms

- Chapels must be fumigated before use and only the Body of Christ be received, observing the hygienic protocols.
- Services could be at 6am,7am, 8am, 9am, 10am, 11am (Evensong and Benediction at 6pm) and should have a targeted duration of one hour. Revivals and Crusades are to be put on hold.
- The rule is 25% of the congregation can converge for corporate worship but not exceeding 100 Church members at a time. People to sign up for preferred service. Contact details of attendees be collected for each service and recorded in a hardcover notebook.
- Depending on the number of entrances in each chapel the requisite number of Veronica buckets must be placed at each entrance with Soap, Tissue papers and waste bins; Alcohol-based Hand Sanitizers should be provided; members coming to each service must be in face mask. No mask – no entry.
- Offertory must be taken and bowls must be placed at vantage points within the chapel for this to be done without any waste of time (No bowl or bags should be passed around for offertory).
- There shall be procession and recession for Priests from and to the Sacristy but there would be no procession, recession or robing for the Choristers. However they could be at their choir stalls in casual wears.
- Children Sunday School and Bible study class for adults before Church services are temporally put on hold.
- Straight Said Mass is encouraged for the time being on Sundays. Singing of hymns should be limited to two stanzas. Matins does not precede Mass as well. Two Bible readings are encouraged during Mass.
- 10mins should be allotted for homily; 3mins should be used to explain nature of Mass and briefings of hygienic protocols before Church begins. Announcements are to be summarized in two minutes.
- Two robed Servers of the Sanctuary are enough for each service.
- Queue dancing is prohibited during Church service.
- No Baptism services, No Confirmation services, no Ordination services and No Anointing of Oil and Laying on of hands until further notice.