

Outdoor walking 'Eco' services, a play based on nature imagery in the Book of Job and Evensong with science experiments are to take place in Church of England parishes across the country as part of a project to foster better understanding between science and faith.

Trinity Church in Lewes, East Sussex, is to receive a grant to draw up 'eco system' services with walks starting and finishing at each of the church's three sites examining the natural environment with explanation from an ecologist and theological reflection and prayer.

Derby Cathedral is to receive money to mount a series of public lectures including Evensong services where scientists from Derby University will be invited to preach and conduct experiments to help congregations understand their work.

In York, St Michael-le-Belfrey church has received money to work with the Riding Lights Theatre Company in the city to create a dramatic performance based on nature imagery in the Old Testament Book of Job to be staged on three occasions during the York Festival of Ideas later this year.

In West Yorkshire, a project run by the Parish of Honley with Brockholes aims to involve congregations in the Holme Valley in the study of the challenges posed by climate change using the River Holme as a local example.

Exeter Cathedral will mount a Lent course on science and faith including talks and debates with contributors who include Rt Rev Dame Sarah Mullally, Bishop of Crediton and a former Chief Nursing Officer for England, scientists from the University of Exeter and the Chief Executive of the Met Office, Rob Varley.

The projects are among 10 to receive funding of up to £10,000 as part of the second wave of Scientists in Congregations, a grant scheme open to all mainstream Christian churches. The projects are aimed at helping churchgoers engage confidently with science, raising the profile of Christians whose vocation is science-related and changing the debate about science and faith in churches and communities.

Scientists in Congregations is part of Equipping Christian Leadership in an Age of Science, a three-year Durham University project run in partnership with the Church of England.

Rt Rev Dr Richard Cheetham, Bishop of Kingston, and one of the co-leaders of Equipping Christian Leadership in an Age of Science, alongside Durham University Professors David Wilkinson and Tom McLeish, said: "I have been very excited and encouraged by the range and quality of these local projects - they bear witness to the widespread and vibrant desire to enable a fruitful and stimulating conversation between science and faith which is much needed in contemporary society."

Rev Dr Kathryn Pritchard, Scientists in Congregations project leader, said: "We have been hugely impressed by the innovative and creative approaches demonstrated in this second wave of Scientists in Congregations projects and the calibre of the scientists who will be supporting this work.

"We are confident that these projects in churches and cathedrals will not only help raise the profile of scientists within Christian congregations

but will promote greater understanding of science and faith issues in wider communities across the country."

Here is a list of the 10 successful projects in the second wave of Scientists in Congregations grants:

1. **Debunking the myth: empowering young people to be Christians in science**

St Andrew's Church, Bishopthorpe and the Archbishop of York Youth Trust. Day conference for secondary schools in the York area engaging young people on science and faith and introducing them to scientists who are Christians.

2. **Exeter Cathedral - Lent Course**

Includes panel discussion held at Exeter University on science and Christian ethics, and a debate at Exeter Cathedral with support from the Bishops of Exeter and Crediton.

3. **Exploring Science and Christian Faith in a Rural Setting, Tyne Valley, west of Newcastle and Gateshead**

Series of monthly events on science and faith topics, including debates, with speakers drawn from universities in the North East.

4. **Faith in the Questions: Riding Lights Theatre Company/St Michael-le-Belfrey, York**

Grant to create a dramatic performance based on nature imagery within the Book of Job, to be followed by question and answer sessions in the style of 'Café Scientifique'. To be held in St Michael-le-Belfrey on three occasions during the 2017 York Festival of Ideas in June. A service celebrating the gift of science and scientists will be held to conclude the events.

5. **Faith, Technology and Tomorrow: St Mary's Church Longfleet, Poole, Dorset**

Opportunities for scientists, medical professionals, engineers and those with no background in science, from church congregations and the wider community to meet together. The project will run a series of activities and events to explore how Christian faith might illuminate questions of medicine and the environment in tomorrow's technological context.

6. **From Enlightenment to Entanglement: Derby Cathedral project in partnership with University of Derby**

Public lectures, Evensong services with scientists from Derby University and 'science in the cathedral' sessions to raise awareness of the contribution of Derby's Christian community to the Enlightenment. The project will also feature sessions with Christian engineers in discussion with leading theologians.

7. **Re:Think Worcester Encouraging Scientists in Congregations to Engage in the Science and Faith Debate**

Run by Bible and Science Worcester, an inter denominational group made up of members of Worcester churches with scientific and technology backgrounds. Project will run a series of presentations on science and faith aimed at 16 to 25 year olds from both church and non-church backgrounds.

**Science and Theology: Walking Through Nature Trinity church, Lewes**

'Ecosystem Service' walks starting and finishing at each of the church's three sites in Lewes. The walks will examine the environment, with explanation from an ecologist, and Christian teaching, theological reflection and prayer by a pastor or minister.

9. **Sing of God and Science, based All Saints, Teversham, Cambridge**

To create a book of songs on the theme of science and faith. The project will start working with a group of primary schools in Ely Diocese. Copies of the booklet will be sent free to all 80 CofE primary schools in the diocese who will be invited to give dramatic presentations of one of the songs at Ely Cathedral Science Festival in May. Some of the schools will make presentations of songs at the festival that they have written themselves on the theme of science and faith.

10. **Water of Life: Our faith and a changing climate: Parish of Honley with Brockholes, West Yorkshire, in partnership with the University of Huddersfield**

Led by the congregations of St Mary's in Honley and St George's in Brockholes, West Yorkshire. Engaging Christian congregations in the Holme Valley in deepening understanding of climate change, using the River Holme as a local example.

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/second-wave-scientists-congregations-grants-unveiled>