

The Church of England has today announced the winners of their first Digital Labs, held in East London on Saturday 24th February 2018.

The event brought together Christian coders, techies and creatives who have passion for using technology to equip and enable our 16,500 local churches. Delegates travelled from across the UK, Europe and USA to look at two broad themes: how to bring people to faith and how to grow people's faith.

The winners of the first Church of England Digital Labs event were:

- Ask the Church – a chatbot to enable people enquiring about faith to ask the Church questions through Facebook Messenger, Twitter and the new www.churchofengland.org website and, in future phases, Alexa, Google Home and Siri
- CofE House – a site to allow the sharing of high quality new and existing resources and digital assets, to support lay leaders and clergy across the Church.

The judges highly commended the Lend a Hand team, which aimed to connect those willing to volunteer in their communities with those that need help.

Hundreds applied for the event and it was run with a capacity crowd of delegates using the Google Sprint development approach. Seven proposals were refined in the afternoon and presented to a team of judges in the evening.

The judging panel was made up of: Lynda Davies, Senior Digital Producer for BBC Radio; Adrian Harris, Head of Digital at the Church of England; The Very Revd Catherine Ogle, Dean of Winchester; James Poulter, Head of Emerging Platforms and Partnerships at The LEGO Group; and Siku, an artist, author and theologian.

Commenting on the success of the first event, Adrian Harris, Head of Digital at the Church of England, said: "We're thrilled with the enthusiasm and breadth and depth of ideas generated from our first event. Our aim was to gather some of the best and the brightest together into a room to come up with practical solutions that help support and grow local churches".

"The two ideas we're taking forward to pilot in the months ahead are both very practical and aim to help grow people's faith and bring more people to faith to know the love of God."

Judge Lynda Davies, Senior Digital Producer for BBC Radio, said: "It was brilliant to spend a day with a hugely skilled bunch of people with real passion for how the Church could and should engage on different digital platforms. I'm very excited to see how the winning ideas develop and the impact they will make on many people's lives."

James Poulter, Head of Emerging Platforms and Partnerships at The LEGO Group and one of the judges and facilitators, said: "Watching the

teams come together with such openness, innovation and creativity was so encouraging, and the winning ideas are just a couple of examples of what the church can and should be doing to meet the needs of evolving demographics and the next generation of congregations."

Look back on the day on the [Digital Labs section of the Church of England website](#) or the hashtag [#CofELabs](#).

View a gallery of photos from the day below or [on our Facebook Page](#):

The work of the Church of England's Digital team is part of the Renewal & Reform programme, aimed at helping us become a growing Church for all people and for all places.

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/church-england-announces-digital-labs-winners>