

On Saturday afternoon, around and during the England football match (!), the Digital and Church House Publishing teams updated General Synod on how we're supporting local churches and encouraging people into worshipping communities.

We've shared this blog so that dioceses and churches can find out more about what was discussed and [see a copy of the presentation](#).

A Church Near You

The exciting plans for phase two of [A Church Near You](#) were announced during the session.

This summer, churches will have the opportunity to use their page as their website, using their existing domain name. Extra functionality will be rolled out to ensure churches have the features needed to use the platform as their site, such as a gallery, news blogs and analytic information.

This will provide a secure website for churches and save some up to £500 a year.

A Church Near You editors will be the first to hear when phase two goes live. If you haven't yet claimed your A Church Near You page, visit www.AChurchNearYou.com, find your church's page and click 'Edit this church'.

Christmas 2018 plans

#FollowTheStar is the theme of the Church's 2018 Christmas campaign. Our aim is to produce a range of resources that equip regular churchgoers to invite family and friends into church. We are also creating *A Journey Through the 12 Days of Christmas* reflections that will be made available in booklet, social media, and audio formats for those open to and exploring faith.



The #FollowTheStar Christmas 2018 booklet

You can [find out more in the presentation.](#)

The posters, logo, family resources and reflection booklets will be available from September 2018. Keep an eye on our social media accounts for more.

Alexa skill and the new Church of England website

We shared some of the statistics from the [recently launched Alexa skill.](#)



- Praying morning, evening, night and daily prayers
- Saying grace before a meal
- Finding a church
- Exploring Christianity

Church of England Alexa skill usage

It's been encouraging to see how thousands of people – both Christians and those exploring faith – are using the skill to find out more about Christianity and use the prayer resources.

We also talked about the new Church of England website, relaunched in October 2017, and shared some of the analytics on how it's being used, particularly by those outside the Church:

79.6% of users are new visitors

- **1 million** new people engaged with the website
- **5.35 million+** page views
- **210,000+** video views
- **45%** of users via a mobile or tablet

#LiveLent research

We ran extensive research after [this year's #LiveLent campaign](#) to understand the impact it had on people's faith journeys. 54% said they found the resources very helpful and 23% extremely helpful in bringing them closer to God. The email open rate of the campaign was 48% against an average of 25% for religious content.

Some of the initial research from the Saltley Trust telephone interviews showed the impact the course had:

- Accessibility and brevity combined with good graphics/ thought provoking content were the most common positive comments
- Established a daily routine of spiritual engagement among those who usually don't have one
- Some have continued to do so since Easter – a number had moved on to 'Thy Kingdom Come' resources
- Gentle encouragement to engage in some form of witness - many talked about being challenged / stimulated / inspired to act on what they'd read
- A sense of personal spiritual renewal, or refreshing in their spiritual life – often in conjunction with other events / activities over the Lent and Easter period
- A sense of being connected to the wider church

A full copy of the presentation is [available here](#).

Our continued prayer is that this work will help Christians to grow in faith and give those exploring Christianity the opportunity to know the love of Jesus Christ in their lives.

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