



## Diocesan Education Newsletter Special Edition

### Celebrating the Ewe Matter project



**Our vision : Deeply Christian, Serving The Common Good**

## A message from Director of Education, Jeff Williams

In the joy of Summer time and in the lovely sunshine, we share with you the fun of this season of proms and party celebration, at the end of an academic year when we are looking back on all that has been achieved, and looking forward to all that is potentially gifting in our lives.

I do hope you will be able to enjoy and get to the end of this massively photo-filled Ewe Matter special edition of our Newsletter!

Mine is a sincere “thank you” to all who have made the Ewe Matter project a reality : the parishes, teachers, governors and support staff; the Bishops who believed in this zany project and blessed it; those in the central team who grappled with the practicalities; those who made the Year 6 Leavers’ Services a special time; but most importantly, the children who have been touched in ways that we might not appreciate for many years, such is the economy of God’s grace – though we are already being blessed by their comments and reflections.

Biblically, we think of goats when we think of sheep. I enjoyed sharing Zampognaro reflections in schools and churches at the beginning of the year – and will do so in the months ahead. It’s encouraging to hear of families and schools now placing a goat in their nativity scenes!

As one project ends, another begins: but please know that Ewe still Matter! 2018 marks a huge landmark in our nation’s history as we reflect on WW1 memories and so much that changed global perspectives 100 years ago.

Our Diocesan Le Bleuët project begins at the start of the new academic year, and will repeat on Remembrance Sunday in 2018. During the year ahead we will be encouraging schools and parishes to join us in creative and reflective Le Bleuët educational projects, for the benefit of our communities and children, as we continue to Serve The Common Good in ways that surprise people.

We are already preparing materials for schools to participate in a massive and creatively special textile hanging that will feature and form a prayer focus at next year’s Leavers’ Services,

Enjoy this Newsletter, and may you have a relaxing and recuperative break this summer holiday

Best wishes



**Jeff**



**Ewe Matter, the creative project designed to link schools and parishes across the Portsmouth and Winchester dioceses, has been celebrated in style.**



Services of unity and thanksgiving were held to rejoice in the efforts of schoolchildren and older people who have been joining together in creative activities in our villages, towns and cities.

Flocks of fibreglass sheep appeared at Winchester and Portsmouth Cathedrals and Christchurch Priory to join children in the

annual Leavers' services. Children and parishioners have spent weeks decorating the sheep to reflect their school's unique identity and Christian ethos. Around 2,500 children, currently preparing to leave our church primary schools, enjoyed workshops and services of thanksgiving and celebration as their sheep looked on.

The services became like giant sheep reunions, with schools transporting their colourful models to the cathedrals by various modes of transport, including the Isle of Wight and Gosport ferries, mini buses and trucks.

The Bishops of Winchester, Portsmouth and Southampton and Canon Charles Stewart at Christchurch Priory led the services surrounded by dozens of sheep, creating a colourful spectacle for the children, their teachers and cathedral visitors.

Ewe Matter was devised by Jeff Williams, Director of Education for Portsmouth and Winchester Dioceses. 'It's a way of linking parish churches and Church of England schools. The fibreglass sheep can be used by churchgoers who lead school assemblies on Biblical themes, and can be brought by schools when they visit local churches. They can even be used as part of Science, English and RE lessons.





'We've been thrilled that this idea has been so well received by schools. It's amazing how often sheep can be used in school, not just in RE lessons and collective worship, but throughout the curriculum.

There have been some really creative ideas, and many of the sheep seem to have taken on a personality of their own.

While we were happy to see the sheep altogether, once the three services were over, the sheep returned to their schools where they can continue to be a permanent resource for that school,' said Jeff.





## Getting there

Of course transporting a plump, heavy, fibreglass sheep to a cathedral does not form part of the job description for most teachers.

But being flexible and inventive is bread and butter to most of our school staff, and they were not going to be beaten by the challenge of getting their animals to the church on time.

A variety of transportation was employed to achieve this mammoth task, including the Wightlink and Gosport ferries, minibuses, cars, coaches and even the Winchester park and ride!

Children from Alverstoke Junior School pass HMS Victory as they transport their sheep to Portsmouth Cathedral via the Gosport ferry.



Trollies, including ones lined with grass, were a popular choice to ease the load.....



But on occasion, manpower was the only answer!

Fourteen of our church schools are situated across the water on the Isle of Wight and so a mini flock of sheep were forced to endure to Solent tides.

The reverend Allie Kerr, priest in charge at Whippingham with East Cowes, kindly accompanied three sheep and two lambs across the water on board the Wightlink ferry St Clare.

First came the bubble wrapping.....







Then lining up ready to set sail.....



The view from the bridge.....



And finally a selfie with the priest and captain!

## **A special effort**

Our smallest church Primary School, Hyde Primary in the New Forest, has just 47 children on roll – and just two Year Six pupils.

Only one of those pupils, Samuel Smith, was available to attend at Winchester Cathedral. But the school was determined that he would not miss out.

'Attending the Leavers' Service is traditional at Hyde and something that the children look forward to as an important part of being Year 6 - almost a rite of passage. It doesn't matter how many or how few children we have we feel that it's important that everyone gets the opportunity to have this wonderful experience of

worship in such a magnificent building. Samuel absolutely loved the day,' said headteacher Julie Dalziell. Sam was accompanied by his teacher Mr Wedick and his proud mum.







Once every human and sheep was in place the days could begin.



## Sheep-Themed workshops

Cathedral, diocesan staff and headteachers to plan sheep-themed workshops for the children to enjoy. Children toured the cathedrals looking for 'lost sheep', made clay gargoyles, pompom sheep and enjoyed singing masterclasses with cathedral choir staff.

A host of cathedral volunteers made the occasion special for the children, telling them countless stories of the history of the great buildings, while the children spoke to them about their inventive sheep designs. At Christchurch Priory students and colleagues from The Bishop of Winchester Academy joined in leading the activities. Local heateachers in organised a thorough tour of the historic Priory, taking in the crypt, old school room and 'body store'.

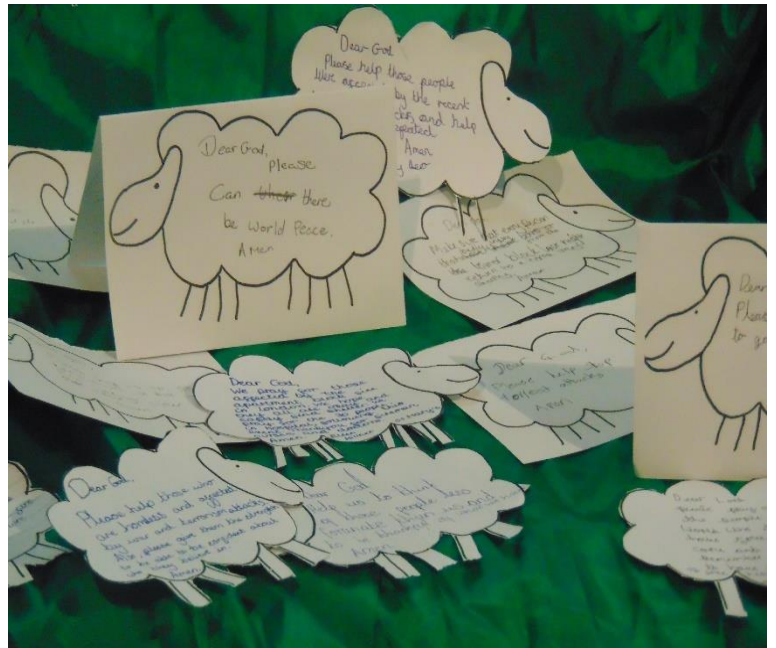


Children wonder at the beautiful of Winchester Cathedral's stained glass windows.





Prayers written on by the children on paper sheep adorn the Lady Chapel in Winchester Cathedral. The prayers were later given to the intercessions team to be read during services over the coming weeks. Portsmouth Cathedral also retained the children's prayers for worship.



A magnificent willow dome outside Portsmouth Cathedral provided a place of contemplation and reflection. Artwork and children's written thoughts were tied to the structure and provided a talking point for passing tourists.







Children focus on a puzzling art task that tested their mathematical skills as well as their creativity.

A sing school workshop with staff from the cathedral choir was one of the most popular activities of the day at Portsmouth. The cathedral offers an outreach service to schools finishing with a concert for parents.





Children enjoyed sharing their sheep designs with Bishop Jonathan at Winchester Cathedral. Bishop Jonathan posed for dozens of photographs that the children proudly took back to school.







The beautiful interior of Christchurch's 900-year-old priory provided a dramatic backdrop to the banners representing each school.

The services at the end of June and throughout the first week of July, were held during the hottest days of the year. Children ate and played outside during lunch breaks at the services.







Meanwhile some of the Isle of Wight lambs enjoyed their own lunch inside Portsmouth Cathedral!

Cathedral volunteers at Winchester took advantage of the lunchbreak to carry on with the daily life of the cathedral.





## The Designs



The Very Reverend Catherine Ogle, the new Dean at Winchester Cathedral marvelled at the children's designs. 'I am so pleased to be here and to see all these wonderfully designed sheep,' she said.

The variety and inventiveness of the designs was the talk of each service. Sheep appeared adorned with the Christian values held dear by many schools of our schools. Others were decorated with Bible verses, messages of hope and quotes from children's favourite books. Other sheep wore wellies, socks and even Bournemouth football scarves.



The much-loved Petal and members of Wickham Church of England Primary School's colouring club who created her.



Children from Selbourne Primary School arrived with a rare interactive sheep. It sported a mirror on its flank, and a second mirror tied with a ribbon around its neck. By holding the latter at the right angle and by looking into the first mirror, children could see themselves reflected in their school values painted into the sheep's side.



Below are a selection of the sheep designs.





















# The Services



This year the diocesan education team tried to ensure as much consistency as possible across the services in Winchester, Portsmouth and Christchurch. The same readings, prayers and songs were used at all seven services so all children had the similar experiences. Children read prayers and some schools shared how they had designed and decorated their school sheep. However each venue had its own special contribution to make to the day.

In Christchurch Priory, an accomplished worship band led by headteachers and school staff accompanied some traditional and some modern worship songs. The cathedral garden was open to children in Winchester and in Portsmouth pupils experienced singing with the choir sing school.







In all services the parable of The Lost Sheep was read and acted out by the children. In Portsmouth the 'sheep' was eventually discovered hiding high up on a balcony overlooking the service.







Bishop Christopher shared his experiences of school with children in Portsmouth, telling pupils that Jesus would act like a shepherd towards them for the rest of their lives.





Children from St James' Church of England School, Emsworth, shared their sheep project in specially-written poem.

*St James have a little sheep  
Its fleece not as white as snow  
And everywhere that St James went  
Their sheep was sure to go!  
It followed us to the Cathedral one day  
To meet up with its flock  
And not a bleat was heard  
As the sheep all stood in shock!  
Every colour and design was there  
They were a sight to see  
As much as they looked differently  
They still gathered happily.  
It made us think, it made us ponder  
If sheep can do it then so can we.  
We may all look and think differently  
But we can share God's world in peace and harmony.*





## The Dismissal



At the conclusion of one of the Winchester Service Bishop Tim could not resist entertaining the children. He passed a sheep each to Dean Catherine and Bishop Jonathan so all three senior members of the clergy could have a dignified race wheeling the sheep down the cathedral aisle – the longest in Europe – much to the delight of the children!

The services were hailed a success by teachers and children. Peter Herbert, headteacher at Moordown St. Johns CE Primary School, Bournemouth, said: 'We are very grateful to Father Charles, Ian Penny and their team at the Priory for being so welcoming and enabling the children to have such a memorable day using the 900 year old Priory in a way that must surely make God smile!

Anyone watching the day would have seen tremendous team work from school staff and leaders involving the local community, Priory and diocese colleagues. Observers could not have failed to notice the 450 pupils 'flourishing' in life ready to begin the next chapter in their lives as they leave their Church Schools.'



# A Special Moment with BBC Radio 2's Chris Evans!

This year's leavers service was a particularly special moment for Eleanor Warringer, a Year 6 pupil at Alverstoke Church of England Primary School.

Eleanor broadcast on the Chris Evans' Breakfast Show on Radio 2 for his children's feature : 'what are you doing for the first time ever today?'. Eleanor spoke enthusiastically about the sheep project. Below she describes the experience in her own words:

*It was really exciting to take a sheep over on the Gosport Ferry (even if we did get a few funny looks!) and the day at Portsmouth Cathedral was interesting and kept us engaged. I enjoyed using code to make a secret message. When we arrived at the Cathedral, we saw the sheep from other schools, which were bright and colourful and reflected lots about their schools. The service was a celebration of us leaving our junior schools but it did make us feel a little sad as it meant that we were near the end of our time at junior school.*

*Speaking to Chris Evan's on Radio 2 was really fun because I got to speak to somebody that I normally listen to on the radio. It was also good to be able to talk*

*about what I really like and enjoy - plus it was exciting to talk about something new that I've never done before. Although I did feel a bit sad because I had to talk about leaving and I'm not ready to leave! Finally, it was nice to be wished happy birthday by Chris Evans!*





# The Shepherd's Crook

A shepherd's staff was placed in the cathedrals and worshippers were invited to write 50 words of reflection on what the staff meant to them.



It's looking pretty tatty now,  
With dents and scratches up and down.  
With nothing else for tool or weapon,  
I hacked through brambles and struck at wolves.  
To find ewe.

**The Right Reverend Tim Dakin**  
**Bishop of Winchester**

A piece of Yew, straight and true  
the handle worn by years and years of human hands  
seen hope and tears bears testament for you  
The gentle hue of usage through, the calm and tumult of this complex world  
speaks care, love, truth and offers life renewed

**Cathy Roberts**  
**Head of DAC, Diocese of Winchester**



No-one had touched it for centuries. The wood remained polished, the handle strong. It longed to be back in the quiet of the field, where only the bleat of the lamb would disturb the silence. The lambs also prayed for its return. They longed for the safely it promised.

**Charlotte Pawson**

**Year 6, St Matthew's Church of England Primary School, Blackmoor.**

Tucked away in the hay, the shepherd's crook emerged and crept along to have a look. The monstrous tornado in the sky sent up a cry, the rain bent down like a hook. The boat on the shore let out a roar and curried along the bay. Now the crook knew the way ahead.

**Caitlyn**

**Year 6**

The bishop's crook was clearly lovingly produced from a strong sapling, which had many small branches. Each had been trimmed off, leaving a series of heart-like shapes all the way up the crook. It seemed so appropriate to represent the love of a bishop for his flock.

**Susan de Candole,**

**Diocesan Registrar, Winchester**

The last time I was in the French Alps we saw a group of wolves cross the upper Alpine meadows where normally a large flock of sheep are kept. We would sometimes see and greet the shepherd. Sheep and wolves and shepherds and flocks and shepherd's crooks are not a thing of a bygone era, the Lord is calling all sorts of people to be his shepherds in schools, prisons, workplaces and hospitals and communities. Will you pick up the crook?

**The Reverend Canon Mark Collinson**

**Canon Principal, School of Mission, Diocese of Winchester**

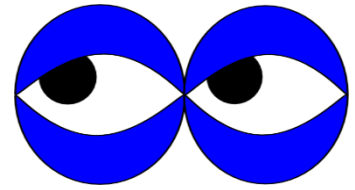
Children from two community schools in Southampton joined in the Ewe Matter sheep project after the ministry team from a local church heard about the project happening in church schools. Chris Stubbington, children's and families ministry coordinator at St John's Church, Hythe, helped children at local schools with the project. Along with the Rev'd Jo Elvidge, a mini leavers service was arranged at St John's Church to celebrate the work of children at Hythe Primary School and nearby Waterside Primary School. The sheep were brought to the church and stood pride of place and the same service that pupils had enjoyed in Winchester, Portsmouth and Christchurch took place.





# Ewe Matter : From My Perspective

A look at church schools through the eyes of people  
working in the school community.



**Sarah Page**  
**Education Officer**  
**Portsmouth Cathedral &**  
**Member of the Board of Education**

Nearly 1200 year 6 children came to the Church School Leavers' Services in Portsmouth this year. I doubt there's a single child in any of our Church Schools who couldn't now recount the story of the Good Shepherd! I'm so very glad that the year 6 children not only reflected on their time at Primary School but could see their hard work in school shared and celebrated in the cathedrals and Priory with other Christians and visitors.

I joined in with planning the project back in September last year and have fielded a huge number of emails from schools ordering and receiving their sheep. I was delighted to visit St Mary's Primary School, Bentworth to watch their children painting and hearing all about their school's values and ethos. I was later somewhat surprised to hear my voice on the Tim Dakin show on Radio Solent, telling all about our sheep and why *ewe* matter!

It was a pleasure to prepare some resources for schools to use in the project, with help from other associate staff. My favourite part was researching all about sheep. I found out so much and wanted to do so much more (ever the teacher!) I learned about sheep's vision, their eating habits, enclosures, fears and poisons, wool classifications, spinning techniques ... I cannot profess to now be an expert, but I seem to have read (and retained) quite a lot of sheep trivia! All I need to do now is to meet a *real* shepherd! Although, working in the cathedral means I am reminded of the Good Shepherd every single day and it heartens me know of His love and guidance for all His flock.

I hope all your sheep continue to be a focus in your acts of worship in the new autumn term, and that you look forward with me to next year's intergenerational projects!

## **Andy Poole**

**Headteacher, St Clement & St John's Church of England Infant Academy, Bournemouth**

As a Headteacher and musician, I find that my initial emphasis is always about the music I want the children to sing and engage with when I'm planning for collective worship. Music has always been such a powerful emotive power for me and I've always known God through music, as a choir boy, organist and worship leader.



I (sort of) fondly remember assembly at my own junior school, singing 'Magic Penny', 'The Ink is Black', 'Go Tell it on the Mountain' and probably anything else from 'Come and Sing', but I was amazed to find that when I became a teacher they were still the staples of school assemblies. And the boys...always the boys at the back of the hall just didn't really want to sing.

So I began bringing in some new music to assembly and even leading with my guitar! New favourites became 'Shine, Jesus Shine', 'We are Marching in the Light of God', 'Great Big God' and 'Amazing Grace, (My Chains Fell Off)' amongst others. These new songs encouraged all the children to sing and worship in their own way and the boys joined in! There is nothing like leading a singing assembly, getting the children to sing acapella and lifting their voices to God. When they just let go, moving swaying in praise and worship – it's amazing.

It's been an honour to be part of the worship team at Christchurch Priory at the Year 6 Leavers' Service for the past two years. Knowing you're worshipping in a place which historically has been so full of prayer and praise to God, encouraging children to sing, lift their hearts and continue to develop their own sense of self is such an encouragement. The whole worship team left feeling like something special had happened, particularly during the song 'My Lighthouse'. The Rend Collective who wrote the song have such an amazing way of writing melody and chorus bits where you 'aaaahhh' along, raising voices in praise. So as I begin to plan for next year, I'm considering what new worship songs to introduce, I need to ensure those boys at the back are engaged, so I'll probably be thinking about 'The Lion and the Lamb', 'This is Amazing Grace' and definitely want some actions for 'Mercy Road' by Worship Central – I just know when they break out in song, that's going to make change it from an assembly to a *worship time*.

## **Sammy Jordan**

**Families and Schools Ministry Leader, Highfield Church, Southampton, Member of the Board of Education & the Diocesan Associate Education Team (pictured right)**



What do you get if you cross an angry sheep with a moody cow?

An animal that's in a baaaaaaaaaaaaad moooooooooooooo!

So began the Ewe Matter journey, when a group of us sat around a table in the Diocesan office brainstorming ideas, on a spring day last May, as the heavens opened and Noah seemed a far more appropriate topic!

Fortunately, I didn't have to think of the sheep jokes. My background is as an RE teacher and teacher trainer so my input mainly went into the RE lessons and assemblies in your Ewe Matter packs; but what I loved about the project was the opportunity the concept provided for work with pupils across the curriculum. I like slightly bonkers ideas and have had a fair few myself. So the idea of fibre glass sheep, decorated by schools across the diocese as part of a project to explore who our shepherd is and what it means, in a Christian context, for us to be sheep; all culminating in the sheep being brought along to the leavers service at the cathedral, definitely 'floated my boat'...(no Noah reference intended).

The leavers services at Winchester Cathedral were extra special this year because they were the culmination of the Ewe Matter project, which brought an extra level of engagement to the services. It was amazing to see all the different sheep, so many colourful and inventive designs (and that's just their feet) which were testimony to the divine creative spark inside us all. The cathedral leavers services are always a privilege to be part of and a massive kingdom opportunity. I am



always struck when I see 600 children in the cathedral each day, by the knowledge that, for many of them, this act of worship in a 'church' is a rare occurrence; and one that might get even rarer once they leave their church school. Because of this, I want the days to 'shout' to the children that they are welcome, that we are delighted to have them there, that they are special, important, that we are proud of them, that God loves them and has a plan for them ...and sometimes we even say this in words! The tone of the services this year was especially warm as we weaved together the themes in the story of the lost sheep – that God loves them and wants to find them – with celebrating and marking the end of their time at primary school. Children read, sang, lead our prayers, shared the story of their school sheep, acted out the story and even took part in a jigsaw competition! As the service ended the children were reminded through their lit candles that they take this message back not just to their primary schools but hopefully into their new schools too ...that's the challenge!

One recent survey reported in the Daily Telegraph (17 June 2017 survey commissioned by Hope Revolution Partnership a Christian youth organisation) suggests that visiting church buildings is more significant in young people finding/exploring faith than previously thought. 13% of teenagers reported that they decided to become a Christian after visiting a church. This compares with 6% of 11-14 year olds attending church in the research of church statistician Dr Peter Brierley in 2006. In this context our leavers services at the cathedral are an even more precious opportunity. Dr Brierley's recent research suggests that the majority of over 30's returning to the church had some connection with it as a child. Seeds were sown and many years later they are producing a harvest. That's my prayer for our church schools, projects like Ewe Matter and our leavers services; that the seeds planted will, over time produce a harvest.

### **Alison Coulter Diocese of Winchester: Chair of House of Laity**



As part of my role as Lay Chair for Winchester Diocesan Synod, I helped to organise the Synod conference in October 2016. Nearly 200 Synod members and guests spent 3 days in the beautiful Derbyshire countryside, (where there are lots of sheep!) and we agreed our strategic plan for the Diocese together. It was also a great time to get to know each other, to pray together, to hear some excellent speakers and to hear what God is saying to Winchester Diocese. About this time last year, I was praying and thinking and planning for the conference, and I felt this verse was important - "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the Kingdom." So I started to think about sheep, and how the Bible often uses the picture of God as our good shepherd and how we are like sheep, the flock in his care.

I was then really excited to speak to Jeff who asked if it would be possible to bring a large sheep to our conference for us to decorate! He explained that he wanted to use sheep as a theme for the school leavers services this summer, and how schools would be asked to decorate and bring their sheep to the Cathedral, and to think about how God uses the stories and images of sheep to explain his love and care for us.

So during our Synod conference we had different Bible verses on our tables each day about sheep – these are below – and different sheep on our tables. There was a competition for the



best play dough sheep, and you can see how good Synod members are at sculpture in these photos! On the final day, the sheep moved to the chapel, and left behind some chocolate raisin droppings on the tables! As well as sheep on the tables, we had our own large sheep to decorate – this happened in the evenings in the bar – and we had a competition to name her. The entries included Ba Ba Ba Ba Babara Ann, Wooliam Woolberforce, Baaaarnabas, Jewelia, and Ewenity! But I decided that the winning suggestion, from a few people, was Ewenice. Eunice in the Bible is the mother of Timothy (the name of our Bishop), a helper of St Paul, and we know that she brought Timothy up as a Christian and taught him the Bible. Her name, Eunice, means joyful victory. I felt that this was a great name for our Diocesan sheep.

It was so lovely recently, when I arrived for evensong in Winchester Cathedral, to see a whole flock of beautifully decorated sheep grazing quietly in the nave! And amongst them was Ewenice, looking very well indeed, and happy with her new friends. It reminded me again that we do not need to be afraid, because our loving Shepherd Father God has been pleased to give us the kingdom.

Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Luke 12

I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me – just as the Father knows me and I know the Father – and I lay down my life for the sheep. John 10

“Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep”. John 21

To the elders among you: Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them – not because you must, but because you are willing, as God want you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory. 1 Peter 5

***If you would like to contribute to the From My Perspective feature in future editions, please email 250 words and a picture to [sue.bowen@portsmouth.anglican.org](mailto:sue.bowen@portsmouth.anglican.org)***

The diocesan education team have some initial plans for next year’s leavers services, including the creation of several huge hangings, made up of individual collage/textile/painted panels from each school. The focus and theme will be ‘Memories’, marking the significance of 2018 and the hundredth anniversary of the end of The Great War. Our project name is ‘**Le Bleu**et’ – resources to follow soon!

