

# Church in Transition: confident uncertainty

The best two pieces of advice about leadership I've gleaned over the last few months of this crisis are the need to lead with confident uncertainty, and to be a non-anxious presence. Both are more about character and a dependence on the Spirit than they are about strategies and vision. They also recognise the uncertainty the church faces as we come out of covid.

We simply don't know who will come back on a regular basis, how they will come back, whether online presence is sustainable, and whether the current financial model can work with a seriously ageing demographic. I fear some who hoped the crisis would trigger a widespread existential angst leading to a great turning to Christ may be disappointed, despite the growth of our online fringe.

However, there is a noticeable realism out there in the people of God, a realism that leads to openness to doing things differently. Covid may leave us with smaller church communities, but I think they will be deeper ones. Deeper communities that are more prayerful, open to the Spirit and dependent are well placed to be blown by the wind of the Spirit where He wills.

In the Diocese of Hereford, we have one church building for every 820 people! Even if everyone came to church, we wouldn't need to build any more. We have lots of conversations about parish share and how churches can be expected to pay it. Some of these are predicated on unhelpful illusions that there is a magic money tree somewhere that can be shaken if only we get rid of all our central diocesan staff. We can address some of these questions at a structural level with better giving strategies, but ultimately the best way of preserving a building, is the same as building the kingdom of God – have a vibrant worshipping community meeting within it.

**“What we need is the paradox of a hopeful desperation.”**



The root solution to most, if not all our presenting institutional problems is spiritual renewal. It is in this that I see the greatest post-covid hope. It's entirely proper that the church thinks strategically. We have limited resources and they need to be deployed to the most fruitful effect. But if we think that the clever application of strategic thinking alone will be sufficient to address our current challenges, we will be disappointed.

What we need is the paradox of a hopeful desperation. Hopeful, because we don't know what the future holds, but we do know who holds the future. Desperation, in prayer, because it connects our intrinsic inadequacy with the limitless power of God's resources.

Nationally, we are working on what a humbler, bolder, simpler church might look like. I can say confidently, without anxiety, that I have no idea. But if we bring that to God and seek his face from our hearts, I do know the Spirit will do wonderful things, bring the glory to Jesus, and bring new people into the kingdom.

**The Rt Revd Richard Jackson  
Bishop of Hereford**

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# Church in Transition: losses and gains



Reading John Eldredge recently, I was reminded of the need to attend to our losses in life and not imagine that the soul is somehow unaffected when things that we treasure and value are taken from us. In his latest book<sup>1</sup> Eldredge invites us, as a spiritual discipline, to face up to what he calls “unattended loss” and to give ourselves space to grieve; to be gentle on ourselves and to find in God, and God’s world, the comfort and healing that we need.

This is good advice in what has been a year of losses, and we will do well to attend to it in our churches as well as in our personal lives. Once the virus has done its worst we will need time to lick our collective wounds and to gently support one another as we mourn the loss of familiar aspects of church life that have been taken from us. We will need to take care not to leave these losses “unattended”. We will need God to restore our souls.<sup>2</sup>

## De-cluttered space

But while we give our losses a proper burial, we also need to take a good look at the newly de-cluttered space that they have created in our churches. Is the loss actually a gain for us? Is this just the kind of clearing-out that we needed to equip us for life and mission in the twenty first century?

Indeed, have we been pruned and shorn for a purpose? Is this the work of the divine gardener and the Good Shepherd thinning us out, cleaning us up, brushing us down and cutting us back so that we are ready for kingdom adventure in the decades ahead? Is the Holy Spirit shaping us into the humbler, simpler, bolder church that the Archbishop of York has written about recently?<sup>3</sup>

Everything in me says that our losses can be great gain.

## Re-set church life

One of the gains is the opportunity we have to re-set church life around the basics of our collective discipleship. Too often in church life the main thing is not the main thing. Our people get caught up in all sorts of stuff that is more about keeping the show on the road, than it is about growing into the greater stature of Christ and going deeper into the life of the Spirit.

**“...We have a chance to pause and pray and re-position the ecclesiastical furniture.”**

And now we have a chance to pause and pray and re-position the ecclesiastical furniture, so that the main things become the main things again. What a gain, if we set about doing this resolutely and prayerfully in our churches, dioceses and denominations!

## Re-think mission front lines

We have a chance too to re-think how we do our mission and outreach. The lockdowns and restrictions have set us more than ever in our homes and neighbourhoods and friendship groups. Many of us have got to know our neighbours better and have become more conscious about the needs and struggles of those we live near or work alongside. Maybe it has taken a pandemic to help us find the church’s missional front line, where we can incarnate the gospel, and share it, humbly, simply and boldly. What great gain!

## Re-position on the edge

Maybe, too, this is the time to accept the reality that the church is no longer at the centre of national and local life, and to actively choose to live from the edge rather

than from a place of privilege and entitlement at its centre. All the evidence tells us that the edge is a much more potent place for the church to live and move and have its being. It is also the place where

God has consistently positioned Himself, in Israel; and from Bethlehem to Golgotha; and where we will find Him wonderfully present today.

In all our losses, what great gain there might be!

**Kevin Roberts**  
Director of ReSource

## Church in Transition: deeper wells



We recently had a soggy wet holiday in the Peak District. Along an old miners' track besides a beautiful river in a valley nature reserve there was an abandoned building hiding a shaft heading underground. A ladder, some instructions, and a crank-handle lamp beckoned visitors downwards. One cocker

spaniel, three kids and the three adults in our household bubble descended the iron ladder (the spaniel insisted on not being left out). All seven were greeted by the inspiring sound of rushing water and the sight of a second river rushing underground. As we know in London, even when visible rivers like the Thames dominate the infrastructure, twenty one other rivers flow underground 'lost' to most of the populace.

Kevin has asked me to speak about deep wells in a season of change. Like it or not we are in a season of change in the Church of England. We are living through what looks like the drying up of many of our overground spiritual rivers here in the UK. Yet as we watch some of these waterways drying up, we should not lose heart. Through our spiritual heritage God has arranged for some wonderful underground streams to flow deep through the spiritual life of this country. He shows "love to a thousand generations of those who fear Him", and we have many of those God-fearing saints in our heritage.

### Holiness streams

A warning though: while we may look for deep wells to draw from these rivers and sustain us in our barren times, we must be careful what we pray for. For if, as we sometimes pray, these underground streams overflow to the surface and God 're-vives us again', these holiness streams may prove to be a lot to handle for our contemporary church culture.

Last night I read my son the story of when underground streams once burst above the surface. In the Genesis account the waters rose for 40 days leaving floods that remained for a devastating 150 days. If God causes the spiritual waters deep beneath our soil to rise up again will it be as a judgement or as a blessing?

In the book of Isaiah salvation often comes after judgement.



Warm congratulations to Richard Moy on his appointment to succeed Stephen Dinsmore as the National Director of SOMA UK. We are delighted that God has called Richard to lead SOMA UK in the coming season and we look forward to working closely with him in a growing partnership for Holy Spirit renewal.

Richard is currently the Resource Church Lead for *Christ Church W4* in West London, and a Regional Director for New Wine. He is completing a doctorate on the discipleship goals of the contemporary church, contrasted with those of John Wesley and George Whitefield. He is married to Nicola Moy who is the Vicar of *Christ Church W4* and they have three children and a cocker spaniel. Richard takes up the position of National Director of SOMA UK in September 2021.

Before the "streams flow in the desert and waters break forth in the wilderness" God first comes with 'vengeance' and 'recompense' to save us. Habakkuk, the 'wrestler', knew that God's glory would cover the earth like "waters cover the sea", but his famous prayer "revive us again" ends with "in wrath remember mercy". Is it not a dangerous thing to summon Someone so holy if we're not prepared to have the "Woe is me" moment Isaiah famously faces in Isaiah 6, or the wrestling with God implicit in Habakkuk's very name?

### The Spirit of holiness

Heroes of church history and unknown saints now wearing sparkling crowns in glory pursued holiness at all costs and left a legacy of underground streams we can draw on. The heritage is there. The situation on the surface is dire. Perhaps we have to be ready to invite the Spirit of holiness to move on us again, but will God need to "prepare the way" before we do?

*"Lord, I have heard of your fame;  
I stand in awe of your deeds, Lord.  
Repeat them in our day,  
in our time make them known;  
in wrath remember mercy."*

**Habakkuk 3:2**

**The Revd Richard Moy**  
National Director-Designate SOMA UK

# Church in Transition: space for new growth

Before we moved to Wigan for my new role friends helped us with decorating. One evening we prayed in the empty house with our friends and some future colleagues. Both house and garden were overshadowed by a forty foot London Plane tree. The fruit-less tree had nothing growing beneath it. Not the best sight for my keen gardener husband who was about to retire. As we prayed, God gave Steve a picture of the tree, as a metaphor for the church. The tree dominated all around it, blocking out the light, using up the water in the ground, preventing anything else from growing.

## A metaphor for the church

Obviously the tree needed to go, but a tree surgeon's quote of two thousand pounds was beyond our means, and that of a cash-strapped Diocese. The day before we started the first Alpha here I was at a meeting when Steve phoned me to say the tree had come down! I didn't believe him.

There was a storm that day, but only the sort of storm that brings down branches, not forty-foot trees. But two-thirds of the tree had split away and fallen. Miraculously, as it fell, it had twisted 45 degrees, missing our neighbour's bungalow, and 'just' hitting his garage. Now we could see in the 'V' of the split trunks that the centre of the tree was rotten, where fallen leaves had decayed.

As if the metaphor needed more layers of meaning!

Two days later the tree surgeon set to work, skilfully and quickly taking down the remaining trunk, reducing the once giant tree to a stump. Steve was now able to create a new garden, including using the stump to hold tree branches as a birdfeeder stand. Two years on there's greenery and flowers, with a patio for sharing with visitors (perfect for Covid-safe outdoor hospitality), and raised beds and fruit cages, yielding fruit and vegetables aplenty.

## A complete re-start

If we'd only trimmed some branches, there might have been enough space and sunlight to grow a few flowers, but little else. This garden needed a complete re-start, and God obliged, sending a storm, so that tree surgeon and gardener could then add their skills. Not everything we tried to grow has flourished, but much has - the largest beetroot was nearly two kilos.

I'll leave the reader to choose the part of this multi-layer metaphor that most speaks to you, but I want to focus on

one aspect: All our work for God and His church is a partnership - not only with our fellow labourers, but with God Himself. St Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 3.6, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth".

As we watch to "see what God is doing and join in", we are seeing signs of growth - little shoots are starting to develop their shape. Alpha has enabled churchgoers to become disciples, and we have two small groups that may soon become three. Others are exploring leadership, and together we're praying over ideas for planting fresh worship communities - among the bereaved, among Sunday School families, among elderly MU members who love to craft.

We're not wanting a new giant tree which might overshadow the small plants. Instead, we're planting seeds, and tending them, and watching with baited spirits to see where God is going to give the growth.

Some new shoots may not make it to self-supporting plants, let alone to fruitfulness. But we know that God is in the work, and we're trying to follow His lead.

**We wait with expectation and hope, because the tree came down.**

**The Revd Frances Shoesmith  
Hub Leader in Church Wigan**



*"There are going to be difficult changes ahead and hard decisions to make. But it is not the survival of the institution of the Church of England that matters, so much as the love that God has for us in Jesus Christ which has been entrusted to the Church, which is itself the bride of Christ and God's most precious beloved. As Hans Kung observed: "To stay the same when everything else around you changes, is not to stay the same." If we put our trust in God, and if we learn to love one another, then I believe we can become a simpler, humbler, bolder Church, better able to live and share the gospel of Jesus Christ."*

**The Most Revd Stephen Cottrell  
Archbishop of York**

# Church in Transition: ReSource Ministry

As the church changes, so ReSource is in its own process of change and transition. Of course, the message and the heart of our ministry will not change. We are here to enable little, local and ordinary churches to engage with the Holy Spirit for renewal, discipleship and mission.

That is a resolute, unchanging commitment to serve the church and support its leaders. But how we do this will need to keep in step with the changes that are, at one and the same time, the inevitable outcome of the pandemic and the creative action of God at work to re-shape and re-inspire the church for its mission.

It would be foolish to predict where this journey of transition will take us. There are as yet unseen bends and forks in the road ahead. And the Holy Spirit is wonderfully unpredictable and untameable, so who knows what the God of surprises still has in store for us.

What I think we can say, though, with increasing certainty, is that the online dimension of church, ministry and mission is here to stay in one shape or another. Indeed, for all our Zoom-weariness, and for all the faults and dangers of the internet, there is a growing sense that online communication is to the 21st century what Caxton's printing press was to the 15th century: a God-given apparatus to make Christ known.

So, while we long to be on the road again, meeting people face to face, we are also on our own transitional journey in online things. What we offer on this page is a beginning, that I hope will serve the church well.

**Kevin Roberts**

**Director of ReSource**

## Social Media

ReSource makes regular posts on its Facebook page @ReSourceARM and its Twitter feed @ReSourceARM, and any video material is now published on our YouTube Channel *ReSource for Anglican Renewal Ministries*.

If you are a Facebook user do consider 'Liking' our page so that our news reaches you, and if you are a Twitter user please 'Follow' us. You can also subscribe to our *YouTube* channel so that you are notified of new materials as they appear.

Social media is one way of keeping in regular and two-way contact with ReSource and can be a quick way of letting others know about us.

## Online Retreats

ReSource is offering a number of online retreats over the coming months.



### A Sanctuary Day for Lent

On Ash Wednesday, 17 February, led by Garrie & Jill Griffiths

### Holy Week Sanctuary Hours

Palm Sunday to Easter Day, 7.00pm, led by Kevin Roberts

### A Sanctuary Day for Easter

On 8 April, led by Chris Oldroyd

### A Sanctuary Day for Ascension

On Ascension Day, 13 May, led by Kevin Roberts

### A Sanctuary Day for Pentecost

On 27 May led by Matt Beer and Telford Minster

Each Sanctuary Day will run from 9.00am – 1.00pm. Please see our website and social media for full details. The ReSource team also runs online Sanctuary Days for church groups and leadership teams, on request.

## Online Resources Hub

ReSource is in the process of building its online resources and looks forward to expanding the number and range of its courses and other materials during 2021. We intend that the Resources Hub on the ReSource website will be the go-to place for materials to serve 'little, local and ordinary' churches, looking to deepen their engagement with God the Holy Spirit, for renewal, discipleship and mission.

### Weekly ReSource Blog

thoughtful, inspirational pieces every Monday

### A Sanctuary Day for our Times-processing the experience of a pandemic

four retreat sessions for personal or group use

### Sermon Series on the Holy Spirit

eight short inspirational messages, to use in online worship

### The Empowering Spirit

a six-week course for small groups

### Pray around the Clock

a scripture and prayer topic for each hour of the day

Watch the Resources Hub for *Liberating Sabbath*, a seven-week study course written by Margaret Stevens and David Newman, and a *Prophecy* booklet and course by Keith Powell.

# Saints Alive! re-visited



At last! Only 6 months after the original publication date and two and a half years after John Finney and I sat with Kevin in a café in Kendal discussing the possibility, the first copies of the latest edition of *Saints Alive!* popped through my

letter box. I confess I was thrilled. I never dreamt that a little course we put together in a very ordinary parish in Nottingham could reach round the world and be used to bring so many thousands to faith and the fullness of the Holy Spirit. And here, after 38 years, was the latest fully revised edition!

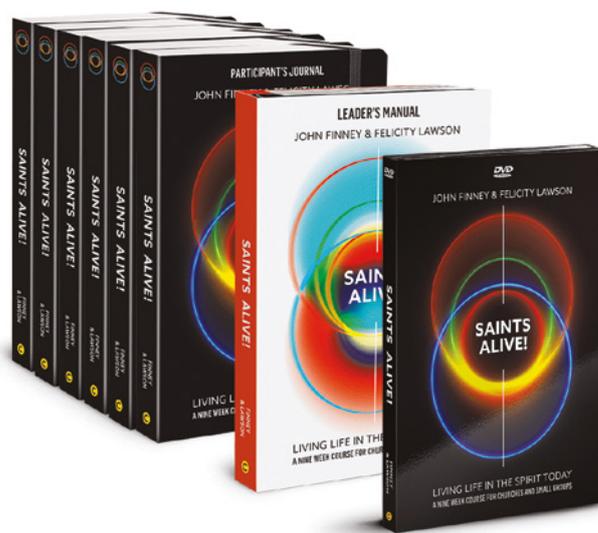
## Discovering the power of the Spirit

It was summer 1975 and the Holy Spirit was moving in new and remarkable ways at St Margaret's, Aspley. Church members were discovering the power of the Spirit and people from way outside the church were coming to faith. For a year we had used the Roman Catholic 'Life in the Spirit Seminars' which was great for established Christians, but we needed something which didn't assume faith in God or a knowledge of the church. I was sent away over the summer to produce something to meet our needs.

I produced three sides of A4 painstakingly typed on an old manual typewriter. We advertised the 'New Life' course and basically made it up as we went along, praying and learning what worked and what didn't. Hundreds of people came on the course over the next five years and asked for prayer to give their lives to Christ and be filled with the Spirit.

## Nothing else like it

In 1980 John became a diocesan missionary and quickly discovered there was nothing else like it available. We were encouraged by Michael Harper and Lawrence Hoyle at Anglican Renewal Ministries to publish. They sold like hotcakes and John and I found ourselves running training events all around the country, something we did for the next ten years until he became a bishop. Since then, of course, we have had *Alpha*, *Emmaus*, *Pilgrim*, *Christianity Explored* and many other nurture courses but *Saints Alive!* was the first and I believe remains distinctive.



## Ideal for zooming

Despite the frustrations of the past year, I believe God's hand has been on this project. Because it is so flexible and designed for small groups *Saints Alive!* is ideal for zooming. Many, both within the church and outside it, are looking to explore the Christian faith and I am excited that *Saints Alive!* can have an important part to play in another generation coming to know Jesus in the power of the Spirit and being equipped for mission and ministry.

I am absolutely amazed that God could take my paltry offering all those years ago and, like the little boy who offered his loaves and fishes, use it to bless so many.

**The Revd Canon Felicity Lawson**  
Vice Chair of the ReSource Trustees

*"Having just led Saints Alive! for a leadership group I remain impressed that its unique combination of gentleness and directness makes it so consistently successful."*

**Chris Oldroyd, ReSource Minister**

*"Salvation changes everything – not just our destination but our everyday life en route! Saints Alive! is a wonderful way of introducing people to life in the Spirit and I commend it to everyone."*

**Paul Harcourt, National Leader of New Wine**

*Saints Alive!* is a nine week nurture course with a difference, designed to equip disciples in 'little, local and ordinary' churches to live in the power of the Holy Spirit and to make a difference in the church and the world. To find out more about the course and to purchase the Leaders Manual, the Participants Journal and the DVD go to [www.saintsalivecourse.com](http://www.saintsalivecourse.com)

## Welcomes and Farewells

Let's start with welcomes! God is continuing to build a wonderful team of gifted, committed Trustees and staff to lead ReSource's ministry, and that has continued during the national pandemic. It has been a joy to welcome Eleanor Jeans as a new Trustee, along with Ian Matthews and Mutsa James to new part time roles on the staff.

Eleanor brings to the Trustees a wealth of experience from her years as a professional violinist and a worship leader and performer with Wellspring. She has been a schools' and children's worker, a Director of Music, a Curate in Leicester and is currently Associate Vicar of Christ the King, Kettering. Eleanor is currently writing a course for Christian Singles, called 'Securely Single' and also leads worship for the CPAS Arrow Leadership Programme. We are just delighted that she is able to add ReSource into her ministry portfolio, and we look forward to all that she will bring to our life and work.

What a pleasure, too, to welcome Ian and Mutsa to the staff team. Ian has come on board to develop our online Resources Hub and brings with him twenty-five years' experience in Christian publishing, most recently with David C Cook, for whom he managed the *Saints Alive!* project. He has written as a freelancer for most Christian publications and for many years wrote a regular column on religious and cultural issues in *Christianity* magazine.

Mutsa is our new Media Manager, looking after our social media accounts and website to improve our communications. Mutsa comes to us with a degree in Communications and Media from the University of Leeds, and recent experience as the media coordinator at Gas Street Church in Birmingham. With her passion for all things creative she has already made a huge improvement to our online presence.

Sadly, there is a farewell too. Jerry Marshall has brought the Trustees the benefit of his experience as an entrepreneur and as the Director the Arthur Rank Centre. Sadly, he is standing down as a Trustee as he takes on an exciting new work, launching and leading *Transformational Enterprise Network*, aimed at inspiring and supporting Kingdom entrepreneurs. We shall miss Jerry's wisdom and fellowship but wish him well in this important new work.

I also need to announce here that my own time as Director of ReSource is coming into its final phase as I plan towards retirement at the end of September 2021. I never imagined that moving into retirement would be an easy transition for me, but that will be especially so as I stand down from a work at ReSource that I have lived and breathed for every minute of the last five years. Enough said now, but please pray for the appointment of my successor, with interviews in March.

**Kevin Roberts**  
Director of ReSource

### Mutsa James

*"I am super excited to be joining the ReSource team and to be part of a ministry that seeks to see little local and ordinary churches alive in the Holy Spirit. Social media has been a vital tool for keeping our church communities connected during the pandemic. I am looking forward to using my creative social media skills to be part of ReSource's exciting vision."*



### Eleanor Jeans

*"I'm delighted to be joining the Trustees of ReSource this year. What a great bunch of people with a wonderful heart for Jesus. It is so encouraging to see the transforming power of the Holy Spirit at work and to see God's Kingdom grow and I am really excited to see how I can be a part of supporting and encouraging the ministry entrusted to ReSource."*



### Ian Matthews

*"The books and courses that ReSource - Anglican Renewal Ministries as it was then known - provided were some of the first things given to me as a new Christian. Having access to good quality, biblical, Spirit-filled resources is essential to formation, discipleship, and healthy, growing Churches and it is with a sense of excitement and God's leading that I am stepping into this new role in this new season in ReSource's life and ministry."*



## News Items



**RESOURCE**

### ReSource Bookings in 2021

We are running a few open online Sanctuary Days this year, with more information about the first of these on page 5. As you look into the year ahead, do think and pray about the possibility of ReSource Ministers leading an online Sanctuary Session or renewal event for your churches or church leadership. It can be for a small group, or a larger gathering, so please don't feel you are too few in number to warrant setting some time aside to meet with God in the power of the Spirit. Strangely enough the Holy Spirit doesn't seem to mind having to turn up in an online event!

You may also want to start thinking towards life after the pandemic, when we will be free to meet again in person, to explore having a ReSource event locally, for your own church or leadership. It is lovely to see bookings coming in for this year, and we are raring to go after this long pause in our travelling ministry. Do be in touch with Clare in the ReSource office to start a conversation with us about dates and possibilities. I think many of us will need time in the Sanctuary, and times of refreshing, after the soul sapping demands of last year.

### Alongside

The pandemic and its various lockdowns are clearly taking its toll on our church leaders. They are to be congratulated for helping to steer our churches through unprecedented circumstances and uncertain times and have done so with huge commitment and imagination. We thank God for them but are also aware of just how demanding this year has been and how much they need our prayer, encouragement, and support. Please pray for ReSource as we apply for the funding to make a new staff appointment to launch, promote and manage our *Alongside Scheme* to reach more church leaders.

### Finance Update

Thank you to all those who both pray for the work of ReSource and give to our work financially. Both are vital contributions, and especially so during the uncertain days of the pandemic. We ended 2020 in a much healthier financial position than we feared we might when the national restrictions began in March, for which thanks be to God. Indeed, thank you for the resilience of your giving through the year, including to the annual Autumn Appeal which brought in over £23,000 in donations and new standing orders. Please keep our funding needs in your regular prayers in 2021.

### Director Appointment

Kevin says more on page 7, but please pray for the appointment process for his successor as the Director's post is advertised in February, with interviews planned for March 2021. Indeed, please keep an eye on the website and our social media posts for details of the appointment and draw it to the attention of anyone you think may be a suitable candidate. The post will be Telford-based, or within easy commuting distance, and the postholder will have a month's overlap with Kevin from 1 September. Please pray for the Trustees and all those involved in discerning the person of God's choosing.

**Bishop Mark Tanner**  
Patron

**Bishop John Holbrook**  
Chair of Trustees

**Kevin Roberts**  
Director

**Lydia Farnham**  
Administrator

**Clare Olliver**  
Bookings Coordinator

**Kathy Smith**  
Finance Officer

**Ian Matthews**  
Resources Manager

**Mutsa James**  
Media Manager

**Esther McCafferty**  
Intercessors Facilitator

**Kevin Lawrence**  
Fundraising Consultant

**James Lazarus**  
Development Consultant

**Merisa MacInnes**  
Development Consultant

### Giving to Resource

If you feel moved to give to the work of ReSource, thank you!

Single donations can be made directly into CAF Bank, *ReSource for Anglican Renewal Ministries*, account number 00032578 and sort code 40-52-40 or through the *CAF Donate* button on our website. Regular donations can be made by standing order, using the form available in the *Ways to Give* page of our website or from the office. Gift Aid forms are available on the website or from the office, as is information about how to remember ReSource in your will. Thank you!

### Contact

ReSource  
Meeting Point House  
Telford,  
Shropshire,  
TF3 4HS

T: 01952 371300  
E: office@resource-arm.net

 @ReSourceARM  
 @ReSourceARM

Charity no. 1180394