Pioneering Parishes

Update from the Edges 3 | July 2026



Location: Britain

What we do: Help churches go into all the parish and engage with unconnected people in their community in a context-appropriate way

Discovering creative ways to share the hope of Jesus with people

Dear friends,

We hope that this update will encourage you in your faith, just as we are encouraged in ours when we read updates from other CMS partners discovering creative ways to share the hope of Jesus. Linked at the bottom of our update you can find a reflection written by Andy Roberts – CMS's CEO – about the changing shape of mission and how true success means stepping aside to let others lead. You can also read a thought-provoking piece about the essential influence of migration on mission.



Great excitement at the arrival of the Pioneering Parishes book!

A wild ride

It's been a rollercoaster few months here at Pioneering Parishes. Let's start with the most exciting news: our book, **Into All the Parish: Pioneering Practices for Every Local Church**, has just been published. The book has been called "a 'must-read' for all who want to see their local churches thrive".

In August 2023 Church House Publishing asked Tina and Greg to write a practical book for church leaders on culture change. They prepared a proposal for the editorial board and were delighted with the affirmation that what they proposed was a "hopeful, conciliatory and constructive contribution to contemporary church life and the church's mission". After three years of work, Into All the Parish: Pioneering Practices for Every Local Church is available now.

Into All the Parish moves away from attempts at rejuvenation of the parish church based on replicable strategies or programmes into a "way of being". **Reviews of the book** are pouring in and many are commenting on the "practical companionship offered" for congregations wishing to make this change.

A wake-up call

Last spring Greg and Tina led a Pioneering Parishes residential weekend for curates (vicars-in-training) in the Diocese of Exeter.

One of those present, Rev Julie Wheeler, had a growing sense "of something dormant waking up in her". As she explored further, she sensed a call to pioneering that had gone to sleep. This wake-up call eventually led her to a six-month pilot role, based at All Saints Church, Sidmouth, exploring missional opportunities on the seafront area.

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With Jesus
With each other
To the edges



This has been a fruitful and encouraging six months as Julie has spent time on the seafront among locals and visitors and has included: offering a listening space, creative prayer opportunities, telling Jesus stories, acts of kindness and a re-affirmation of baptismal vows in the sea!

The beach, with its tidal flow of water, is a "liminal" space where the rules of normal life don't apply and people can be more open to the Holy Spirit's invitation to connect. It is a great example of someone going to the edges – literally the edges of the land – meeting people where they are with the kindness, patience and creativity of God.

Julie is now deepening her understanding and practice of pioneering on the CMS Certificate in Pioneer Mission, which is offered as a partnership between CMS and the Anglican Church in the south west of England. As we went to press we heard that Julie's role has been made permanent. This is a recognition of the quiet and steady fruitfulness of this ministry and in the hope that God will continue to meet with visitors and locals through her posture of humble listening, prayer and creativity. Julie was licensed as an associate pioneer priest at the end of July.

She says, "I'm very grateful for the wake-up call that happened through the work of Pioneering Parishes, which has led to such a joyful opportunity to join in with the mission of God."

The future of Pioneering Parishes

In addition to our usual training and the excitement and busy-ness of the launch of Pioneering Parishes book, we have been looking ahead to changes at Pioneering Parishes. Our current funding has come to end and that means over the coming weeks and months we will be pivoting to a new way of working. We'll be meeting with some of our partner dioceses (Carlisle, Lichfield, Truro, Exeter and Bristol) in the next few weeks to discuss how we will continue to work together. We also still have places available on what may be our last open course, Values Day in September. So if you've been thinking of coming along to a course, please don't miss this one. Greg and Tina will be sticking around so please do keep in touch. You can continue to reach us at pioneering.parishes@churchmissionsociety.org

Thank you for supporting Pioneering Parishes in its current form. We will be back in touch with an update on our future in due course.

Please pray with us:

- for everyone who has trained with us over the last three years, that they would continue to join in with what God is doing where they are,
- for everyone who buys the book, that they find it helpful as they develop the five key dynamics in their parish,
- that the Pioneering Parishes movement might continue to grow and enable the good news of the kingdom to reach a wider range of unconnected people.

Tina and Greg
Pioneering Parishes







Photos from top to bottom: *Rev Julie Wheeler has been putting pioneering into practice in Sidmouth including through a labyrinth on the beach, a baby Jesus pebble and lighting candles on New Year's Eve.*



Discovering creative ways to share the hope of Jesus

We love to hear from other CMS partners sharing the hope of Jesus with people not yet connected to church. Read Andy Roberts's reflection on his time with the charity ReVive in Brazil and hear his thoughts on how mission needs to keep creatively changing. And be challenged by a thought-provoking piece on the role of migration in mission. Read and learn more about creative mission at **churchmissionsociety.org/bringhope**

Please note that opinions expressed in updates are those of CMS partners, not necessarily of Church Mission Society.

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