



## Extending the walls of the tent: the Southwest Hub grows in Cornwall

In July twenty students from as far afield as Jersey and North Somerset came together to camp for a weekend in Looe in Cornwall. This was the launch weekend of the 2023-4 one-year Church Mission Society Certificate in Pioneer Mission. It was the first time since the Hub grew to include three dioceses that we spent the first weekend of the course all together on the same site, and it worked really well. The group connected at a deep level from the start through the sharing of lives and stories and interactive learning experiences.

The weather forecast predicted tent-destroying storms but the sun unexpectedly shone and the wind was more restrained than we feared! On the first evening we enjoyed a fish and chip supper in the Haven community hub listening to a talk by Sara Barron the Baptist pioneer who runs the hub with her husband Barney. The Hub offers all sorts of outreach to Looe's community: meals, community fridge and food waste projects as well as family and youth events. It was great to start the course hearing about the reality of pioneer mission on the ground.

After a windy night under canvas we gathered for teaching on 'What is pioneer mission?' starting with Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. Students explored as a group the reality of Jesus' pioneering and what it means to be in the space of another and to be guest rather than host. Lindsay Smith, pioneer curate in Portishead, led a fabulous contextual walk from our church hall classroom to a nearby allotment to help us experience the Pioneer Spectrum in an embodied way. After a full day of input and discussion we headed to Treargel Retreat Centre for a wonderful BBQ and agape meal where we discussed what kind of a community we wanted to be, ending an amazing day with a wander along the coast path. The group were able to see an example of pioneer practice through the work of those at the retreat centre as well as hearing about their local prayer practice and missional community gatherings.

On Sunday we were back in the church hall for more talks and discussions and sharing of food. The South West Hub is made up of students from Truro, Salisbury and Bath and Wells Dioceses with two other students joining from Dioceses further afield, 24 students in total, the majority from Cornwall. The student group is gloriously diverse in all kinds of ways, which deepens and enriches the learning experience for all. Students worked in the small groups they'll journey with in between module weekends to discuss how new initiatives start and crafted models of church from their collective imagination.

The weekend was organised by Lindsey Morgan-Lundie as Pioneer Network Developer for the Diocese of Truro and her husband Ben, vicar of St Martin's Church in Looe. The weekend challenged people in different ways; for some it was camping for the first time, for others it was pondering aspects of the teaching by Jonny Baker and Lindsay Smith, and for others engaging with their sense of call at a deep level brought tears and challenge too. It felt very much that the group was brought together by the Lord for purpose: the start of an exciting shared journey into all God has for the students as they venture deeper into their pioneer vocation.

