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**U2, Madonna, Robbie Williams and Coldplay could be singing live in your local parish church**

# TUNE IN FOR GIG OF THE CENTURY

POP legends U2, Madonna, Elton John and REM could be playing live in your local church this month.

Churches around our diocese are being encouraged to show the Live 8 concerts on big screens to help ram home the message behind the Make Poverty History campaign.

The gigs, which will also feature Coldplay, Robbie Williams, Keane and Paul McCartney, will happen on July 2 as part of the build-up to the crucial G8 summit in Gleneagles, hosted by Tony Blair.

Unlike Live Aid in 1985, the performers won't be raising money for Africa, but trying to raise awareness about aid, trade justice and third world debt.

Portsmouth was named as one of nine cities where the concerts would be relayed outdoors on giant screens, but council officials said the clash with the International Festival of the Sea made that

impossible. Diocesan social responsibility adviser Nick Ralph is therefore urging churches to step into the breach.

"The Live 8 concerts will be a fantastic way of raising awareness about the crucial elements behind the Make Poverty History campaign," he said.

"As the Church and Christian aid agencies have been among the prime movers behind the campaign, it makes sense to open up our churches to those who want to watch the gigs.

"Churches could show their hospitality to those watching, give out literature about the campaign and talk to people about the issues. What an opportunity for

us to ally ourselves with an international campaign for social justice and talk to people about what the Church really stands for!"

He has given advice to churches about the technological and legal requirements they need to meet to

show the footage from the five concerts, in London, Philadelphia, Berlin, Paris and Rome.

Many of our churches have already been involved in the year-long campaign, which has involved supporters wearing white wristbands and organising special events.

Some of our churchgoers may even make the long trip to Edinburgh on July 2 for the Make Poverty History rally there ahead of the G8 summit. Many will wear their wristbands on July 1 - national white band day.

The idea has been to convince the UK government to use its influ-

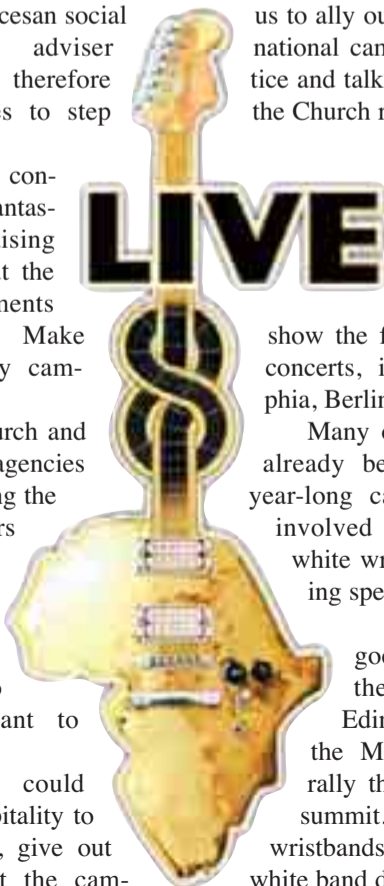


Photo: EMPICS

U2 frontman Bono has already been prominent in the campaign

ence to tackle world poverty during 2005, when it will host the G8 summit and preside over the European Union between July and December.

The three aims are to secure more and better international aid, fairer rules governing trade between nations and the cancellation of poorer countries' unpayable debts.

Christians in Petersfield showed their solidarity with the millions in poverty worldwide by marching through the streets last month.

Members of the ecumenical Petersfield Area Churches Together (PACT) group dressed in white and bound themselves together to symbolise how poverty ensnares poor communities.

They then converged on the Square outside St Peter's Church, where campaigners encouraged passers-by to sign postcards to Tony Blair.

Worshippers at St Mary's Church in Fratton hope to tie a Make Poverty History white band around their tower to symbolise the church's commitment to the cam-

And those at St Mary's, Brightstone, will promote the campaign during their festival, from July 7-10.

And four nuns from Portsmouth, two Anglican Sisters of Bethany and two Catholic Franciscan Missionaries of Divine Motherhood, were among 1,000 from religious orders who lobbied their MPs about global poverty in May.

They met at the Methodist Central Hall, to hear speakers talk about the issue, marched to Parliament carrying banners and balloons and spoke to their MPs.

Sister Rita-Elizabeth said: "Mike Hancock MP was found to be well informed and very sympathetic to the campaign. He said he will try to do everything he can to help ensure the campaign is a success."

For information about which churches are screening Live 8, see: [www.portsmouth.anglican.org](http://www.portsmouth.anglican.org). For more details about the campaign, see: [www.makepovertyhistory.org](http://www.makepovertyhistory.org) or [www.tradejusticemovement.org](http://www.tradejusticemovement.org).