

NEWS FROM THE PETERBOROUGH DIOCESE

STRICTLY EMBARGOED

Not for publication, broadcast or internet distribution before 9.00 am, Thursday 5 November

NEW BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH ANNOUNCED

The Prime Minister's Office has announced today that the next Bishop of Peterborough is to be the Ven. Donald Allister, currently Archdeacon of Chester. He succeeds the Rt Revd Ian Cundy, who died in May. The Church of England's Peterborough Diocese unites churches in Northants, Rutland and most of Peterborough city.

The dates of Donald Allister's consecration as a bishop (which will take place in London) and his installation in Peterborough are as yet undecided but it is hoped that they will be in the early spring.

As his role was announced, Archdeacon Donald said, "I am overwhelmed by this new job but believe it is the Church's call and God's call to me. I'm looking forward to leading the Diocese of Peterborough, and getting to know the people, churches and communities there."

The Dean of Peterborough Cathedral, the Very Revd Charles Taylor, said "I very much look forward to welcoming, installing and working closely with Donald Allister. He has a great loyalty and love for the Church in all its diversity, a breadth of pastoral and administrative experience, a heart for mission and a care for the community.

"His track record reveals a man who, while firm and confident in his faith, has not clung to fixed positions but shown himself willing to travel with others. He will, I am sure, be a bishop for the whole diocese, for people of faith and people of none."

The Bishop of Brixworth, the Rt Revd Frank White, who has been acting diocesan bishop since the illness and death of Bishop Ian, also welcomed the news. "I am honoured to welcome Archdeacon Donald as he becomes our bishop," he said. "As the leader of the diocese he will bring fresh ideas and new energy helping us all live more hopefully in a world which needs God's healing love.

"He will draw on his wide experience as an archdeacon, an excellent foundation for the more public role of the Bishop. As his colleagues in the diocese we look forward to welcoming him and his family to the area."

Archdeacon Donald says that his first priority will be to listen to the clergy and lay leaders of the diocese, "and hearing from them how they see what's going on in their areas and the needs and opportunities of the Church. My chief aim is to be a bishop for all the people and parishes of the diocese," he adds.

"I also relish the opportunity given to me in this new appointment, of sharing faith with people for whom it might be a new thing and of encouraging them further along the road towards knowing God for themselves."

A fuller statement by Archdeacon Donald will be available at today's press briefings (details of which were sent yesterday) and can be distributed electronically afterwards. A biographical summary is appended, and a feature-length biography detailing his current views and experience and including additional comments and quotes is already available on the diocesan website: www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/people/donaldallister.htm

The Ven. Donald Allister

Donald Allister is 57, studied medical science then theology at Peterhouse, Cambridge and then trained for the ministry at Trinity College Bristol. He was a curate at St George's Hyde in Cheshire (1976-79) and at St Nicholas Sevenoaks in Kent (1979-1983).

He became Vicar of Christ Church Birkenhead in 1983 and in the six years he was there saw the congregation grow from about 40 elderly worshippers to some 200 people of mixed ages. In 1989 he moved to be Rector of St Mary's Cheadle (Cheshire) where he introduced mixed-age worship and new liturgies, developed links with local schools, and built the staff team to eight full-time and two part time people.

He became Archdeacon of Chester in 2002. In that role he has been the Bishop of Chester's adviser on healthcare chaplaincy, chaired the group which manages and seeks to improve clergy housing in the Diocese of Chester, been closely involved with the diocese's work in church schools and the care and development of church buildings, and designed a new and fairer system for diocesan financing. He is also a member of the Church of England's General Synod and of its Council for Christian Unity (of which the late Bishop Ian was chair for some time).

He is married to Janice, a GP, and they have three adult children.

CONTACT TODAY AND FURTHER INFORMATION

Archdeacon Donald will be available to meet the media in Peterborough today and also in Northampton tomorrow. Details were distributed yesterday. There will be opportunities for brief one-to-one interviews and photographs in both locations, but his wife Janice will be present only on Thursday morning due to her professional commitments.

For further information or for a photograph please call Derek Williams (Bishop's Administrator and Press Officer) on 01733 887014; Liz Hurst (Diocesan Communications Officer) on 01733 887012 or Alex Low (Bishop's Secretary) or Liz Gray (Assistant Secretary) on 01733 562492. If there is no response from the landlines please call Derek Williams on 07770 981172, who will be present at both venues.