

Grace and peace to you, as we lean into Lent and Easter lies ahead.

WISHING YOU JOY, ENDURANCE, RENEWAL AND INSPIRATION ON YOUR LENT JOURNEY!

At this time of year church altars are draped in purple to symbolise repentance and the pursuit of spiritual renewal. This journey which characterises Lent is also part of our daily struggle throughout the whole year. St Paul writes in his letter to the church in ancient Rome that 'everything that does not come from faith is sin' (Romans 14 v23). That sets the bar very high. If you only thought or said or did one thing wrong each day, and lived for seventy years, there would be over twenty-five thousand reasons why God could not let you into his heaven at the end of your life, but for the cross, where God's wrath, justice and mercy meet. So, St Paul joyfully proclaims that 'there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus' (Romans 8 v1). It is a theme which is taken up in the profound worship song 'His mercy is more' - [His Mercy Is More Praise and Harmony Beautiful God - YouTube](#), with the wonderful lyric 'Our sins they are many, His mercy is more'.

Earlier in his letter, St Paul, therefore, asked: 'Shall we go on sinning, so that grace may abound?' and answered his own question emphatically, 'By no means!'. It is not out of a sense of self-flagellating duty and self-loathing that we are called to drag ourselves forward, but rather to 'fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith' (Hebrews 12 v2), so that we are continually inspired; and that same verse in Hebrews goes on to say that Jesus 'who for the joy set before him endured the cross'. That's a remarkable statement. Crucifixion was the most agonising and excruciating form of execution in the ancient world, and yet such was the joy that Jesus knew, and anticipated would be his in heaven, that he was able to endure the cross. How amazing! If we can grasp just something of that profound truth this Lent, our spiritual renewal will have begun.

Jesus' spiritual compass was firmly set from the very beginning of his ministry. In the desert he came face to face with his greatest adversary, facing temptations that offered him the illusionary prospect of being able to circumvent all the trials and tribulations of his future ministry. Yet, in the power of the Holy Spirit, he chose the pursuit of spiritual sustenance over physical satisfaction, sacrificial service over superior status and courageous challenge over corrupt compromise. After passing these three tests of character, he called the first disciples, proclaiming to all who lived in Galilee that a new day had dawned - 'on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned' (Matthew 4 v16). We are privileged to live in the light of this new day which has dawned, where God's mercy abounds and there is joy to be found in repentance and renewal, this Lent and, indeed, every day and in every season of the soul, where the agony and the ecstasy of Christian living flourish together, touching heaven and changing earth, until one day our joy is complete in God's presence and heaven is our eternal home.

HEADTEACHERS' CONFERENCE – TEACHING AND LEARNING, WITH TOM SHERRINGTON

We look forward to welcoming you to Kettering Park Hotel for our spring term Headteachers' Conference, on 19 March. Tom will build on his teaching for us at our March 2024 Headteachers' Conference, helping us to explore effective coaching and professional learning, in the context of improving teaching and learning across a whole school, lead four main sessions on this theme: 1) instructional teaching, generative learning and the MARGE model; 2) a deep dive on questioning, from cold calling to whole class discussion; and 3) & 4) coaching with WalkThrus. We are also looking forward to welcoming colleagues from several LA schools and independent schools in Peterborough Diocese to this Headteachers' Conference. A copy of Tom's biography is attached. Bookings can be made up until 5 March via [Headteachers' Conference 19 March 2026](#).

PETERBOROUGH DIOCESE EDUCATION TEAM TRAINING COURSES COMING UP SOON

Safeguarding in a Resource Base led by Matt Sparling, Tuesday 3 March 2026 9.30am – 12 noon via Zoom

RE Network Meeting led by Ziggy Brown, Tuesday 3 March 2026 4.00pm - 5.15pm via TEAMS

New to Leading RE – Session 2 led by Ziggy Brown, Tuesday 10 March 2026 1.00pm – 3.00pm via TEAMS

RE Conference led by Ziggy Brown & Jane Lewis, Thursday 12 March 2026 9.30am – 3.30pm at Bouverie Court

DSL Refresher Training (Northamptonshire) led by Lesley Pollard, Wednesday 18 March 2026 9.00am – 1.00pm via Zoom

Collective Worship Network Meeting led by Sandy Ettridge Thursday 19 March 2026 4.00pm – 5.00pm via TEAMS

Governor Roles and Responsibilities led by Andrew Read Tuesday 24 March 2026 6.30pm – 8.30pm via Zoom

Middle Leader Development Day 1 led by Andy Lakatos, Thursday 26 March 2026 9.30am – 3.30pm at Bouverie Court

KEY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY LATER THIS YEAR

SUMMER HEADTEACHERS' CONFERENCE AT KETTERING PARK HOTEL – SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT – 11 JUNE with Andy Buck

ANNUAL SERVICE OF DEDICATION AND THANKSGIVING FOR DIOCESAN SCHOOLS AT PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL – 7 OCTOBER with Bishop Debbie and Archdeacon Richard

AUTUMN HEADTEACHERS' CONFERENCE AT KETTERING PARK HOTEL – REINVIGORATING AND REFRESHING YOUR SCHOOL'S THEOLOGICALLY ROOTED CHRISTIAN VISION – 5 NOVEMBER with Professor Trevor Cooling and Andy Wolfe

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION QUALITY MARK (REQM)

Val Griffiths, Headteacher, and Rachel Connors, RE Subject Lead, at St Andrew's CEVA Primary School in Northampton, would like to offer their support for Headteachers and RE Subject Leads who may be considering the REQM. Val and Rachel would be able to provide an overview of the REQM, to explain how the criteria for the award can be used to shape a development plan for RE in your school, and to offer advice on the application and assessment process. Further details are attached.

GOVERNANCE IN A CHRISTIAN MANNER

Please find attached a complimentary copy of 'Governance in a Christian Manner', written by Mike Simmonds. Mike is currently supporting governance in the Dioceses of Chichester and Chelmsford. He writes and provides training and support for governors in those dioceses, tutors on the Liverpool Hope University governors' course and speaks widely. He also hosts the monthly Governance Podcast at tinyurl.com.

POL-ED – POLICE FORCE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR PSHE AND CITIZENSHIP

Pol-Ed is a PSHE and Citizenship educational programme that provides schools with free lessons, assemblies and resources covering a range of topic areas, which is becoming increasingly popular with many of our schools. A copy of their brochure and their lesson themes are attached.

Moreover, we are pleased to invite you to a dedicated Pol-Ed input for schools in Peterborough Diocese on Monday 9th March from 4.00-4.30pm. This session will be led by Sgt Tom Regan, who will provide an overview of the Pol-Ed programme and a guided tour of the website. The session will explore how Pol-Ed supports schools in delivering high-quality PSHE and RSHE, with a particular focus on:

- Keeping children safe
- Supporting personal development
- Meeting statutory RHSE guidance
- Strengthening partnerships between schools and police.

During the tour, you will see:

- The breadth of curriculum resources available from EYFS through to secondary
- Assemblies, lesson plans and ready-to-use materials
- How content links to safeguarding and current priorities
- Practical ways schools are embedding Pol-Ed into their curriculum.

There will also be time for questions and discussion, giving you the opportunity to explore how Pol-Ed could support your specific school context. We hope you will be able to join us on Teams.

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join: <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/33081042619480?p=TE0Fggohvi1mlUgT9g>

Meeting ID: 330 810 426 194 80

Passcode: FX3Y2bc9

EXPERTED – WHAT IT IS LIKE TO LEAVE EARTH IN A ROCKET AND LIVE ON A SPACE STATION

Pupils in Years 5 – 8 are invited to an afternoon Q&A with Britain's first Astronaut, Helen Sharman, exploring how she became an astronaut and what it is like to leave Earth in a rocket and live on a space station. Further details are attached re. this 30-minute webinar at 2.00pm on 18 March.

COMIC RELIEF – RED NOSE DAY

It's Red Nose Day on 20 March. You can register to fundraise and download an information pack here: [Register to Fundraise for Red Nose Day | Comic Relief](#).

NO PLACE LIKE HOME ART & POETRY COMPETITION

Dr Krish Kandiah, Founder of the Sanctuary Foundation, who spoke at our Headteachers' Conference last summer, has just announced this year's art and poetry competition that invites 7-19 year-olds to reflect on what life is like for 43.3 million children around the world who are displaced. Students can create either a portrait piece of artwork or a piece of poetry illustrating their empathy with or experience of being separated from the place they call home.

These creations will be judged by a fantastic panel of celebrities, refugees, and journalists with the top 30 entries going on display in The British Library during National Refugee Week (15-21 June). They will also be featured in a special national online assembly, in the press and elsewhere. The prize ceremony will be at The British Library on 15 June. Further details can be found here: [No Place Like Home – Art and Poetry Competition for Schools - Sanctuary Foundation](#).

ACADEMIES MAKING SIGNIFICANT CHANGES

The DfE has published the revised [Academies: making significant changes or closure by agreement - GOV.UK](#) and they have shared with us the below summary of the changes. These changes make it clear that academies don't need to apply for a significant change consent to add a nursery (including increasing the physical capacity of the school) or expand a nursery age range as such changes will now be classed as below threshold changes. This means the 'below threshold' element of the guidance at page 21 will apply.

Please note that, under this 'below threshold' guidance, schools should still consult with relevant stakeholders including the local authority and Diocese. A Deed of Variation is likely to be required under the academy funding agreement to reflect the change in age range and, as further protection for the Diocese and site trustees, the guidance makes clear that academies will be asked by the DfE to demonstrate that consultation has taken place and confirm they have the relevant consents, including from the Diocese and/or any site trustees when requesting this deed of variation.

Summary of the key nursery changes:

- Academy trusts are no longer required to apply via the 'significant change' process to add a nursery, expand a nursery's age range, or increase the physical capacity of the school to accommodate a nursery. These are now 'below threshold' changes.
- Trusts are expected to follow the advice on making 'below threshold changes', which for nursery changes specifically highlights the expectation that trusts consult relevant stakeholders, including local authorities and religious bodies (where appropriate), before making the changes. Trusts must also secure any relevant consents, such as the consent of land trustees or the relevant religious bodies if the academy has a designated religious character.
- Academy trusts are still required to apply for a significant change where they propose to:
 - remove a nursery or reduce nursery provision
 - reduce the physical capacity of the school (by 31 or more places) to accommodate a nursery
 - acquire a satellite site to accommodate a nursery.

GARFIELD WESTON FOUNDATION

Garfield Weston Foundation is a family founded grant-maker that gives money to support a wide range of charities across the UK. In total they donate around £100 million each year. They support a wide range of charities that make a positive difference, working in different sectors in the UK. These include welfare, youth, community, environment, education, health, arts, heritage and faith. Applying to the Foundation is simple and straightforward. Further details can be found here: [How to apply - Garfield Weston Foundation](#).

NATIONAL EDUCATION NEWS & THIS WEEK'S SAFEGUARDING BRIEFING

Compilations of recent academy and school news from school improvement consultant Tony Stephens are attached, together with a safeguarding briefing from specialist safeguarding consultant Andrew Hall.

BREAKING NEWS – BILLIONS TO BE SPENT TO MAKE MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS MORE INCLUSIVE

The BBC reported early this morning that the government has said it will spend billions to make mainstream schools in England more inclusive for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Further details of the BBC report can be found here: [Ministers say billions in SEND funding will make schools more inclusive - BBC News](#). This was followed an hour later by the government's press release on gov.uk - [Specialist SEND support in every school and community - GOV.UK](#).

WHITE PAPER – 'EVERY CHILD ACHIEVING AND THRIVING' AND SEND CONSULTATION

Just before lunchtime today, the government published [Every child achieving and thriving - GOV.UK](#). In introducing this, the government has commented that 'This white paper and accompanying documents set out the government's vision for schools and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) reform to support every child to achieve and thrive.

'Every child achieving and thriving' outlines our ambition to improve the lives of all children and young people. We aim to achieve this by:

- shifting children's school experience from narrow to broad
- ensuring those who have been sidelined are included
- taking children and communities from withdrawn to engaging with schools

The '6,500 additional teachers delivery plan' sets out our plans to recruit 6,500 more teachers and is intended to be read alongside 'Every child achieving and thriving'.

The [SEND reform: putting children and young people first consultation](#) outlines our proposed reforms and asks a series of questions to get the views of everyone with an interest.'

NATIONAL SOCIETY SUMMARY BRIEFING ON WHITE PAPER AND SEND CONSULTATION

Details of a summary briefing from the National Society for Education on the government white paper and forthcoming SEND consultation are attached.

PRAYER FOR THE BEGINNING OF LENT

Father God, at the beginning of Lent, we thank you for the precious gift of your Son Jesus Christ and for his life here on earth. We thank you that Jesus went around doing good, healing people, welcoming the stranger, offering forgiveness, giving hope to those without hope, bringing joy to those who were sad, mending broken lives. We pray that, during this special season of the Church's year, we may learn more about Jesus' life and come to understand more of your amazing love for us. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

AND FINALLY, SOME PRAYERS OF BLESSING FOR YOU FROM SCRIPTURE

'May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.' (2 Corinthians 13 v14)

'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.' (Romans 15 v13)

May I wish you every blessing for the season of Lent!



Peter Cantley
Diocesan Director of Education