

27 February 2015

From Bishop Donald To the Clergy No 14

copied for information to diocesan staff, lay chairs, and the clergy of Yaxley Deanery

Dear friends

Greetings to you for a peaceful and reflective Lent. I hope this finds you encouraged as we live and walk the way of the cross together. There are a number of matters I want to share with you.

Easter Confirmations, 4 April

As usual, there will be a service of Confirmation as part of the Easter Vigil in the Cathedral, at 8pm on Easter Eve. Candidates from any parish in the diocese, or from the Yaxley Deanery of Ely Diocese, will be made welcome. Details from, and numbers to, Canon Bruce Ruddock bruce.ruddock@peterborough-cathedral.org.uk by 20 March please.

Easter Communion, 5 April

This is a reminder for those who have been in the diocese a while, but may be news to those who have joined us in the last year or so: I give my blanket permission for any parish to have a service of Communion by Extension on Easter Day and Christmas Day, provided that the PCC agrees, that the service is led by a Deacon or Reader with my licence or permission to officiate, and that the elements have been consecrated at a service earlier that day or on the Eve of the Festival.

General Election, 7 May

As we approach a General Election, you may have seen some of the controversy about the House of Bishops' Pastoral Letter, and the tedious repetition of the old question as to whether the church in general or bishops in particular should be involved in politics. I believe that the Pastoral Letter, which I saw and commented on at various stages of its gestation, is a good one and well worth studying. It is currently available on the Church of England website at <https://churchofengland.org/media/2170230/whoismyneighbour-pages.pdf>

STARBURST, 9 May

The recent *Anecdote to Evidence* report highlights the importance of working systematically and well with children and young people if a church is to grow. I am delighted that once again that Rona Orme, our Children's Missioner, is organising STARBURST on Saturday 9 May. This is a day conference for all who work with children or who have responsibility for seeing that the work is done. With a first-rate keynote speaker and a wide range of workshops, I warmly invite you come along with the people who undertake children's ministry in your benefice. All the details and on-line booking can be found at: <http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/news-and-events/events/details/12233>. We have seen much fruit grow in some of the parishes that have attended in past years. I will be leading the opening worship and a Bible

study in one of the workshop slots. This should be a day of rich blessing for everyone so I look forward to seeing you there.

Shared Conversations, 11-13 May

You are probably vaguely aware of the follow-up to the *Pilling Report*. The Archbishops are sponsoring conversations across the Church about homosexuality in church life and particularly in ordained ministry. For Peterborough Diocese this all begins with a Regional Shared Conversation in May at Hothorpe Hall. The five dioceses of the East Midlands (Derby, Leicester, Lincoln, Peterborough, and Southwell & Nottingham) are each being asked to send ten people, including one bishop, for a three-day consultation: a safe space for listening and understanding each other. I have chosen our delegation to represent all the perspectives within the diocese and to be as representative as possible. Please pray for me and the other nine as we join our colleagues over those days. Once this is concluded I will look at the best way to hold conversations within the diocese before General Synod has a major focus on this in July 2016.

Alex and Craig, 24 July

Warm congratulations to my PA Alex Low, who will be marrying Craig Tolley on 24 July. I am sure you will want to share with me in wishing them much joy and happiness together. Alex will change her surname and her e-mail address, but the alex.low address will be forwarded to her new one for the sake of those who might forget the change.

Summer School on Prayer, 3-7 August

There are a few residential places left on the summer school, but also there is the opportunity to join us for one or more of the day workshops. These run each day from 9.45am to 4pm and will cost £25 each including lunch. Places are limited so early booking is advised. The workshops will be as follows:

- Making space for the still small voice
- The psalms
- Prayer, reflection and creativity : Lord, we are clay; you are our potter

Do look at the publicity on our website and consider joining me for that week, or just for one or more days, and recommending it to any you think might benefit.

General Synod Elections, Summer 2015

Each General Synod serves for five years. The July meeting in York will be the end of this Synod. Over the summer and early autumn a new Synod will be elected to take office from November. As a diocese we will have to elect three clergy and three lay people to join me as our Synod members. Current members are eligible to stand again. Details of the elections will be out in due course, but for now do be thinking about anyone you might want to encourage to stand for election.

Clergy Day, 12 November

In the years between our three-yearly Ministers' Conference we hold a clergy day at the Cathedral for mutual encouragement and training. This year the date will be Thursday 12 November. More details will appear later, but please book the date now.

Ministers' Conference, 13-16 November 2017

I realise that not all of you will have your 2017 diaries to hand, but those who do, or whose diaries like mine are electronic, might like to note the dates of our next Ministers' Conference. We have booked a conference centre with more bedrooms than The Hayes at Swanwick, so we should be able to take our growing number of clergy and lay ministers. The venue is Yarnfield Park, near Stone in Staffordshire.

On the subject of our Conference, the recordings of the talks at last November's Conference are now available on our website. Please use them as you will. I will be glad to hear any further feedback, or suggestions for the future, as we begin to think about the next one. And I would be interested to know if any of the small deanery study groups that started in November have continued to meet.

Bishop's Chaplain

You may have seen that Canon Julie Hutchinson is returning to parish ministry this autumn. This is good news for the Oakham Team, and particularly the villages for which she will be responsible, but she will be greatly missed after 4½ years in the high profile and demanding role of my chaplain.

Julie has a sabbatical planned for this year, so with her summer holiday and moving leave, she will actually finish in post at Easter. I hope to have a new chaplain in place by September, but please be aware that we will be short-staffed in the office over the summer.

Advertisements for Julie's successor will be on our website from today and should be in the Church Times next week. The job descriptions of bishops' chaplains vary widely, and I believe the Peterborough one is an extremely interesting one. I intend to link the role with the long-vacant fourth residentiary canonry at the Cathedral, so we will be looking for a relatively senior priest, certainly someone who has been an incumbent and perhaps a rural dean. I will welcome applications from women or men anywhere in the country. Please encourage anyone you think might be suitable to have a look at the vacancies page of our diocesan website where they will find a full job description as well as details of how to apply.

Bishops' Visits

Just a reminder that both Bishop John and I are very happy to visit parishes on Sundays for "normal" services as well as for festivals, patronals etc. And we are happy to confirm even just one or two candidates as part of a normal Sunday Eucharist. We are especially keen to visit churches or congregations we have not seen before or for quite a while. To book one of us please contact my PA Alex (alex.low@peterborough-diocese.org.uk) or Bishop John's PA Chel (cheryl.craggs@peterborough-diocese.org.uk). Or if you just want a bishop, contact

either PA as they both have access to our electronic diaries and can easily see who is available on the dates you request.

Eucharists in Church Schools

People have been asking whether a Church School needs a license to hold a service of Holy Communion. For the avoidance of doubt I can confirm that it is permitted for a Church School in this diocese to hold Eucharistic services for pupils, staff and parents, if conducted by a priest who has my licence or permission to officiate. For public worship beyond the school community, the building would need to be specially licensed.

Permission for Occasional Ministry

New safeguarding regulations mean that we have to be extra-vigilant about who can officiate in our churches. Licensed clergy and readers of this diocese, and those with my permission to officiate, are covered for their involvement in normal services or occasional offices. However, those licensed or with permission to officiate in other dioceses are not. So if you want to invite a priest from another diocese to lead a service, this needs my permission (and I will need to check their status with their bishop before I can agree). In the case of an ecumenical colleague, I would need to check their standing with the appropriate district chair or moderator. And, to complete the picture, a priest from overseas would need permission from the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Assistant DDOs

You may have seen that we have appointed a number of Assistant DDOs: Philip Ball, Adrian Holdstock, Lakshmi Jeffreys, Rachel Watts, and Brian Withington. I am grateful to these five, who are spending up to half a day a week on the important but time-consuming business of seeing potential ordinands. This reflects the very good news of increasing numbers of candidates for ordination, not least young adults (but sadly, as across the country, very few young women so far). Please note that all enquiries and referrals about possible ordinands should still be made to Canon Steve Benoy as DDO.

Spiritual Direction

Recently I inaugurated our new Diocesan Fellowship of Spiritual Directors. This follows on from the excellent training course which has been led for ourselves and Leicester Diocese by Sister Rachel and Alison Christian. More Directors are still being trained, and supervision and accountability, so important in this area of work alongside confidentiality, are being put in place. Please contact Sister Rachel (sister.rachel@ymail.com) if you are looking for a Spiritual Director, or if you are interested in training.

Persecuted Christians

We regularly pray in our churches for persecuted Christians. This is right and proper. However I notice as I travel around that we often restrict those prayers to the countries of the Arab world, Pakistan, or north Africa, where persecution certainly takes place. But we often seem to forget North Korea, which a number of reports

recently describe as the hardest country in the world to be a Christian. Please continue to pray for the persecuted Church, and do ensure that North Korea isn't forgotten. **Christian Solidarity Worldwide** give reliable information on their website www.csw.org.uk

With all good wishes in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald". The script is cursive and fluid.

The Rt Revd Donald Allister
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