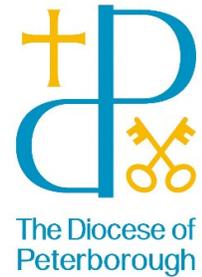


1 February 2017



**BISHOP'S LETTER No 19**

**From Bishop Donald To the Clergy and Licensed Lay Ministers**

*Copied to Bishop's Council, Diocesan Staff, Lay Chairs, Yaxley Deanery Clergy and Lay Chair*

***Dear friends***

There is quite a lot here. Please do share this letter, or parts of it, with others as you think right. Please take some time to pray about one or more of the matters I mention here. And please feel free to contact me about anything at all. We serve together.

**Bishops' Office**

My PA, Alex Tolley, is expecting a baby in early April. I am delighted for her and Craig. Alex intends to take the full year of maternity leave that she is entitled to, probably finishing work on Friday 17 March.

I am very pleased to say that I have secured the services of Jackie Newman as my PA while Alex is off. Many will know Jackie from her earlier roles in the diocesan office, and more recently as events manager at the Cathedral. She will start in my office in late February, shadowing Alex and learning the role. She will become my PA on 20 March, normally in my office three days a week, and working from home at other times.

Any emails sent to Alex during her maternity leave will be diverted to Jackie, whose direct email address will be [jackie.newman@peterborough-diocese.org.uk](mailto:jackie.newman@peterborough-diocese.org.uk)

**Bishop of Seoul**

Bishop Paul Kim retires as Bishop of our link diocese this year. His replacement will be Peter Lee, who was until last year Dean of Seoul Cathedral. Some will have met Peter when he visited us two or three years ago. We send our good wishes to Bishop Paul for his retirement on 23 April, and to Bishop-elect Peter, who will be consecrated and installed on 25 April. I intend to make a long-weekend visit to attend and take part in both events.

**Cathedral**

You may have seen the press release and my Charge to the Chapter, both issued on 6 January. If not, you can find them on the Cathedral website at [www.peterborough-cathedral.org.uk/newsarticle.aspx/41/charge](http://www.peterborough-cathedral.org.uk/newsarticle.aspx/41/charge)

This has been, and continues to be, a difficult time for many involved. But of course the life, worship, and witness of the Cathedral are continuing. My continued thanks to those who are making that possible.

The process of appointing a new Dean has begun. Consultations are taking place. A panel of five selectors has been set up: the Archbishop has chosen Lord Mawhinney as Chair, and Vivienne Faull, the Dean of York, to represent the other cathedrals; our College of Canons has elected Guli Francis-Dehqani to represent them; Bishop's Council has elected Gill Morrison to represent the laity; I am the fifth member. Advertisements will appear in the church press this month. I hope we will be interviewing in late March, and that the new Dean will take office in the autumn.

Please keep the Cathedral, those who have lost their jobs there, those bearing heavy pressures in all this, and the process of appointing the new Dean, in your prayers.

### **Children as Eucharistic Assistants**

You may know that General Synod has decided to allow children to serve as Eucharistic Assistants, distributing the elements at Holy Communion. This needs a few words of explanation, and some guidelines.

This only applies to those parishes where children are admitted to receive communion before confirmation, and only children so admitted will be eligible to serve as Eucharistic Assistants. Selection will be, as for adults, a matter for the Incumbent with the agreement of the PCC.

I believe this to be an appropriate development for those parishes where children regularly receive Holy Communion. It could also be right for Church School Communion services, with the agreement of the Head Teacher. I strongly recommend, though, that if children are included as Eucharistic Assistants, their ministry should not be restricted to serving other children: they should occupy the role fully, with adults as well as children receiving from them, whether in school or in church.

If you and your PCC want to involve children in this way, I stress the importance of careful selection and training. Rona Orme, our Children's Missioner, can advise on this, and I encourage you to approach her in the early stages of planning such a change:  
[rona.orme@peterborough-diocese.org.uk](mailto:rona.orme@peterborough-diocese.org.uk) or 01604 887045.

### **Healing and Deliverance Ministries**

In recent years Bishop John Flack has headed up both these important ministries in our diocese. He has now stepped down from these roles, and I want to express great thanks and appreciation to him.

Canon Mandy Cuthbertson will take over as our Adviser for Healing Ministry. She will be leading a small team, and is keen to develop this ministry, and offer support, across the diocese. She will be in touch with the clergy from time to time, and this has my full blessing.

Deliverance Ministry should always take place under strict guidelines and supervision. Our diocesan deliverance team includes people with professional skills in mental health, as well as many years' experience in this ministry. I am grateful to the Revd Anne Hindle for taking on the role of Adviser and leading the team, but I stress that requests for advice or help in this area should always be made to my office, as this ministry in the Church of England is rightly exercised directly under the bishop's authority. It is also, again rightly in my view, given minimum publicity.

## **Marriage and Sexuality**

You may well have seen some of the publicity over the statement from the House of Bishops, published on 27 January, especially if you inhabit or dip into the world of social media. The statement, available on our diocesan website, is the bishops' input to a General Synod discussion on 15 February. I believe it is saying the right things: that we must be genuinely welcoming to all, while maintaining the clear Biblical teaching that marriage is between a man and a woman for life. Do please pray for the synod, including for our diocesan reps, and for the unity of the Church of England under the bishops' leadership.

## **Roadshows**

I am holding a series of Roadshows this year. We have just had the first one, and there are three more to go, all on Saturdays from 9.30 to 12.30: 4 February at Towcester Racecourse, 29 April at Greetham Valley Golf Club, 6 May at Northamptonshire Cricket Ground. These are aimed particularly at those in leadership roles in parishes, but are open to anyone.

The theme will be our diocesan vision, with the focus very much on where we are now and where we can go, and the intention of getting as many people on board as possible. Our commitment to serve Jesus Christ as his disciples can be hard work as well as great joy: encouraging others, especially those with whom we share leadership, is so important.

These mornings might be particularly timely, as the final few months of last year saw the first dip in our parish share collections for some years. That is an area we need to look at together, in the context of our commitment to whole-life discipleship. If you haven't yet booked, please do so by emailing [suzanne.carter@peterborough-diocese.org.uk](mailto:suzanne.carter@peterborough-diocese.org.uk)

## **Sabbatical**

A number of people have been kind enough to ask about my sabbatical studies last summer. I have written up some notes, and am making them available to any who are interested. You can find them on the website at

[www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/bishop-of-peterborough/sermons-articles-and-talks](http://www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/bishop-of-peterborough/sermons-articles-and-talks)

I won't be testing you on the contents, but am happy to discuss my reading and thinking about seventeenth century history, theology and liturgy, and their relevance today, with anyone who is interested.

## **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding must continue to be a priority. I have three matters for your attention.

First, safer recruitment. This really is important. We can no longer just seek volunteers, or even choose people, and put them to work with children, young people, or in other church roles. Our recruitment must always bear in mind the principles of safeguarding. This is in our policies, and will be included in our regular training.

Second, DBS renewals. Clergy and Lay Ministers currently need their DBS certificate renewing every five years. We will lose our licenses to minister if this is not done. When you are asked to go through the process again, please do so promptly. With the online system, this is quicker and more straightforward than it used to be. But it is absolutely essential.

Third: Safeguarding Sunday. It is important to keep the basic principles of safeguarding before our congregations: not to cause worry or panic, but because everyone in the community must share responsibility for protecting the most vulnerable. We will soon be introducing an annual Safeguarding Sunday, with suggestions for prayers and preaching.

### **Bible Day – 18 March 2017**

Publicity is already going out for the Bible Day, where I will be looking at the importance of the Old Testament for our life in the church and the world today. We will also have a number of practical workshops. I am excited by that, and grateful to those who are doing the organising. As usual, this is for anyone who uses the Bible with others in any way: preachers, teachers, homegroup leaders, youth and children's leaders ... Please make it known, and consider bringing a group from your church.

### **Holy Week and Easter in Schools**

It is good to know of many churches involved in taking assemblies (or leading collective worship as the newer lingo has it). I was alerted to an awkward situation in the run-up to Easter last year. A Headteacher had invited the Incumbent to do an Easter assembly in the final week of the spring term. The Incumbent was only prepared to talk about Holy Week and Good Friday, but not Easter itself. He argued that we shouldn't anticipate Easter before the Festival. The Headteacher was not happy.

While I certainly believe in the cycle of the liturgical year, and personally feel uncomfortable with carol services in early or mid December, it is absolutely right and proper to be flexible, and fit our teaching into school terms. So, for the sake of the schools which we so much want to reach, please swallow any liturgical-year-pride, and celebrate the Resurrection with schools before Easter, Christmas during Advent, and other Festivals whenever makes sense for the school. I'm sure God won't mind.

### **Cathedral Confirmation – 15 April 2017**

As usual, there will be a Confirmation Service as part of the 8pm Easter Vigil at the Cathedral. Any parish, including those of Yaxley deanery, is welcome to bring candidates. This is usually a wonderful and dramatic occasion, though you and your candidates should note that it lasts the best part of two hours. Please get in touch with Canon Bruce Ruddock [bruce.ruddock@peterborough-cathedral.org.uk](mailto:bruce.ruddock@peterborough-cathedral.org.uk) by 24 March if you would like to bring candidates.

### **'Thy Kingdom Come' – Ascension to Pentecost 2017**

Archbishops Justin and Sentamu, together with the Presidents of Churches Together in England, are calling all the churches of this country to join in a wave of prayer specifically for individual people to come to know Jesus Christ for themselves.

You should find attached to this letter a note from Richard Ormston, who chairs our Mission and Pastoral Committee, and Miles Baker, our Director of Mission. They encourage us to get on board with this initiative, and to register that we are doing so. There are resources on the 'Thy Kingdom Come' website: [www.thykingdom.co.uk](http://www.thykingdom.co.uk)

### **Festival of Lay Ministry – 23 September 2017**

We are expanding our annual service of licensing new lay ministers, this year on 23 September, into a full-day Festival of Lay Ministry. I hope that all LLMs will be able to join us at the Cathedral. More details will follow. Please reserve the date now.

### **500th Anniversary of the Reformation – 31 October 2017**

This autumn will see many events celebrating 500 years since Luther's Ninety-five Theses, usually thought of as the key starting point of the Reformation, which changed the world in so many ways. Do look out for what is going on, and use this as an opportunity for reflection and teaching with your people.

### **Ministers Conference – 13-16 November 2017**

Booking details for our Conference will be out before long. Stipendiary clergy are expected to attend, while self-supporting ministers and licensed lay ministers are warmly invited. I look forward to seeing you there.

### **Pilgrimage to Israel and Palestine – Spring 2018**

I am still intending to lead a Diocesan Pilgrimage to the lands of the Bible from 23 April to 2 May 2018. Details will follow, but once again please note the dates if you or any of your people might be interested.

Thank you for your continued fellowship in the priestly ministry of the gospel.

With all good wishes.

Donald