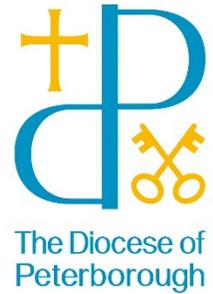


25 May 2017



**BISHOP'S LETTER No 20**

**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***

Ascension Day greetings. I know that many are keeping these ten days until Pentecost as a focussed time of prayer under the *Thy Kingdom Come* initiative. May God bless us greatly.

As always, please do share this letter, or parts of it, with others as you think right. Do feel free to contact me about anything at all. We serve together.

**Alex Tolley**

Warm congratulations to Alex Tolley and her husband Craig, on the birth of Harriet on 31 March. I hope that Alex will return as my PA next spring after a year's maternity leave. In the meantime, Jackie Newman is holding the fort very competently.

**Bishop John Flack**

Bishop John is retiring from his role as our Honorary Assistant Bishop, and he and Julia are returning to their roots in West Yorkshire. The debt of gratitude that we as a Diocese owe to Bishop John is enormous. We will mark his farewell in the Cathedral, at Evensong, 3.30pm, on Sunday 2 July, shortly before John and Julia move to their new home in Wakefield. All are welcome, but it would help us to know numbers for seating and for the reception afterwards. Please let my office know if you are coming and how many others you expect to bring:  
[franz.querge@peterborough-diocese.org.uk](mailto:franz.querge@peterborough-diocese.org.uk)

**Cathedral**

Interviews for the next Dean were delayed because of the illness of the panel Chair, but have now taken place. I am hopeful of an announcement this summer, and that the new Dean will be installed in the autumn.

You may have heard that Canon Bruce Ruddock has had to take early retirement from his post as Precentor on ill health grounds. We wish him and Vivien well as they move to near Chichester next month. Residentiary Canons are appointed by the Bishop, but I think it important to involve the incoming Dean fully in that process, once he or she is in post. In the meantime, I have appointed my Chaplain, Canon Tim Alban Jones, as Acting Precentor. We will

do all we can to maintain a good service in my office and at the Cathedral, over these next few months while we are short-staffed.

Please join me in continuing to pray for the Cathedral, and for all who work there, in the aftermath of what has been a very difficult time. I believe that there will be a better future, but many people have been hurt, and several have had to work extraordinarily hard in recent months. It is great to report that congregations have held steady, and even grown at the main Sunday morning Eucharist.

### **Roadshows and Diocesan Finance**

It was good to see many of you at the four Roadshows recently. It is also encouraging to see that parish share payments have started to pick up again following what I hope was a hiccup (albeit rather a big one) last autumn. I am optimistic about this over the next few years, but there is still a short-term cashflow problem: in addition to the pay freeze this year, we won't be able to replace some of the diocesan staff who are moving on or retiring this year. It will be necessary to merge one or two roles, and possibly to keep other posts vacant for the time being. I regret that we are having to freeze pay, and take these other steps, and I have real hopes that this will only be temporary. I sense a great deal of appreciation for our diocesan staff teams: Admin, Communications, Finance, and Safeguarding in Peterborough; Education, Mission, Training, and Vocations at Bouverie Court. But we rely on parish share coming in each month: please do all you can to ensure that.

### **Sabbaticals**

Archdeacon Gordon will be on sabbatical leave from 10 September to 10 December, and Bishop John from 28 December to 28 March 2018. Archdeacon Richard will be Acting Archdeacon of Oakham during Archdeacon Gordon's absence, then Acting Chair of the Board of Education during Bishop John's absence.

### **Safeguarding**

Many of you will be aware that Garry Johnson, our Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser (DSA), is retiring at the end of June. We are very grateful to him for his experience, wisdom, and hard work while he has been with us, and wish him well in his retirement. The new DSA is Bev Huff, who joined the team last year. She will be joined in July by an assistant DSA, Samantha Suddery, who brings a wealth of experience from her previous work in safeguarding for the Metropolitan Police. We look forward to welcoming her.

This year the National Safeguarding Team at Church House Westminster has produced a new suite of safeguarding training, including core (C) modules and specialist (S) modules. All clergy and LLMs are expected to keep up to date with their safeguarding training; details are on the safeguarding pages of our diocesan website. Safeguarding is a gospel imperative, an area of church life in which everyone has a role to play. We are working to promote a culture of safeguarding awareness at every level of church life.

### **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 all LLMs will be able to join us at the Cathedral. Full details of the day will follow.

There are a number of developments ahead for licensed lay ministry, not least the creation of possible new categories such as pioneers and parish nurses to go alongside Readers, pastoral ministers and evangelists. I want to keep our system as simple and straightforward as possible, without too much proliferation of titles - and to make it more flexible, so that those in training can move from one course to another with relative ease. At present, our pastoral ministers and evangelists train for two years, and the Readers for three. Much of the training is in common for the first two years, with specialist modules as appropriate. The third year of Reader training includes preaching and funeral ministry.

From September we will be licensing all the trainees as Lay Ministers after two years training. Many will have different specialisms, which will be reflected in the titles they bear and the ministry they exercise in the parish. After those two years those who wish, and who we discern to be suitable, will be able to do the third year of training, which will be followed by admission as Reader by a bishop in their own parish or benefice. The intention is to make the system simpler, more flexible, and better able to accommodate new ministries in the future. For this year only, as we move towards the new system, those who have completed the third year of Reader training will be admitted as Readers in the Cathedral service.

Those in training, and their incumbents, will hear more of the detail of all this in due time, but I wanted to share the plan widely now, for your interest, prayers, and comments.

### **Remembrance Day – 12 November 2017**

You may know that in each county there are Deputy Lieutenants as well as a Lord Lieutenant, representing the Queen on civic occasions, and performing other duties. The Lord Lieutenants usually come to the Remembrance Day service at the Cathedral, though they are also willing to attend an afternoon service elsewhere if invited. The Deputy Lieutenants are very happy to be invited to Remembrance or other civic events in parish churches or at parish war memorials. If you would like to invite one, please contact the Lieutenancy Office for your county (Cambridgeshire for those living in Peterborough): these are easily found on internet search engines.

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

This is just to remind you of the dates, and to encourage you to book if you have not already done so. I am grateful to the Planning Group who are doing very good work.

### **Bible Days – February/March 2018**

This year's Bible Day attracted 350 people, well up on previous years, and stretching the capacity of our venue. We have decided to hold two events next year, probably in Peterborough on 24 February and in Northampton on 3 March. Watch this space.

## **Pilgrimage to Israel and Palestine – 26 April - 4 May 2018**

Every parish should have received brochures for our Diocesan Pilgrimage to the lands of the Bible. Please make sure those are distributed appropriately, and ask Jackie Newman for more if you need them: [jackie.newman@peterborough-diocese.org.uk](mailto:jackie.newman@peterborough-diocese.org.uk)

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

With all good wishes.

***Donald***

**The Rt Revd Donald Allister  
Bishop of Peterborough**

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