



Dear Friends,

Once again, the joy of Christmas was tempered for many by the backdrop of the pandemic, with sharply rising hospital admissions, coupled with speculation over what a new year would hold. Then, this week, has come one particularly sobering figure amidst the usual myriad of daily data: more than 150,000 people have now lost their lives to the virus across the UK. Our prayers are with all those who have lost their lives over the past two years, for those who are grieving loved-ones, and for the NHS staff and key workers to whom we owe so much.

We hope that you all, eventually, had the opportunity for some well-earned rest, after your tireless ministry over Advent and Christmas. As we look ahead to 2022, we are pleased that the **Archbishop of Canterbury has set out arrangements** for the Diocese of Winchester, ahead of Bishop Tim formally stepping-down next month. As is customary, Bishop Tim will be laying down his pastoral staff to mark his retirement at Evensong on 6th February. You will see the Archbishop expects that the process for appointing a successor is then expected to begin towards the end of the year.

In his letter to the Diocese, Archbishop Justin confirms that Bishop Debbie will continue in the role of Acting Bishop of Winchester during the vacancy, working closely with Bishop David and the Bishop's Staff Team. Bishop Richard Frith, who as you know has been working with us in recent months, will formally take up the role of Archbishop's Episcopal Commissary in the Diocese. We appreciate all that he has been doing, and will continue to do, to help our diocese in this process of healing and reconciliation, and as we look ahead to the future.

The Archbishop will be coming to Winchester Cathedral for the 11am service on Sunday 16th January to pray with us and to commission the episcopal team. We are enormously grateful for the support he has provided. In turn, we would like to thank you for the prayers and support you have given to us.

With prayers,

Bishop Debbie and Bishop David

Correction – Bishops' update 11 January 2022

Please note that, while yesterday's update from the Bishops mentioned that +Tim's formal retirement date is 6th February, he will in fact be laying down his pastoral staff at Evensong on Saturday 29th January at 5.30pm.