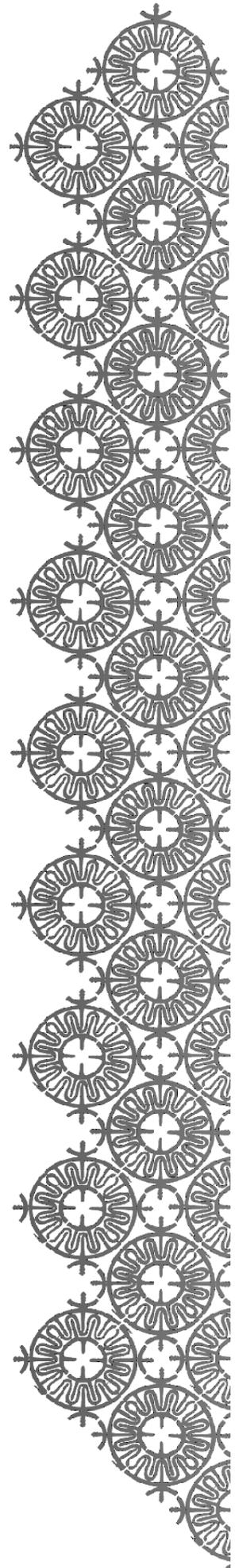




Service of Thanksgiving and Farewell

on the retirement of
the Right Reverend
James Langstaff,
Bishop of Rochester

Thomas the Apostle
Saturday 3rd July 2021
at 3.00pm





Growing in Christ since AD604

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Message from the Bishop of Tonbridge and the Dean of Rochester

Bishop James and Bridget arrived in the winter snow of December 2010 and are leaving amid the sunny, pandemic restricted summer of 2021.

In over a decade, Bishop James has ministered with tireless commitment to both role and God, bearing the unusual weight of diocesan Bishop, which places duties upon him the rest of us see only in part. Throughout he has been affable, kind and wise, giving people permission to try things for God and to believe them in faith.

His strategic grasp and attention to detail has guided the diocese through a complex decade and also enriched the wider Church in the arrival of women Bishops, reflection on UKME issues, his role as Bishop to Prisons and a legislative stint in the House of Lords.

Bishop James and Bridget have shown *epic* levels of hospitality (until curtailed by Covid), through the open and generous use of Bishops court. Special praise and thanks belong with Bridget. She has offered so much of this hospitality while also pursuing her own demanding professional career and giving immense support to the Cathedral Sunday Club and annual Nativity Play.

As we say goodbye to them today, it is worth remembering that Bishop James was ordained deacon in 1981, meaning we have only experienced a quarter of his ministry. Out there are thousands of people who have reason to be grateful with us, whose lives continue to be shaped by the experience of knowing him and his ministry.

Thank you, Bishop James and Bridget!

Bishop Simon and Dean Philip

About this Service

This Service of Thanksgiving and Farewell reflects the ministry of Bishop James during his time as Bishop of Rochester. After the Gathering, led by the Dean, there are five sections reflecting different areas of diocesan life – community engagement and chaplaincy, lay ministry, vocations, diversity, diocesan links – each including reflections from representatives who have worked with Bishop James in those areas. In the final part of the service, Bishop James will return the Diocesan crosier to the Cathedral.

ORDER OF SERVICE

At 2.50, the Mayor of Medway, the High Sheriff of Kent and other civic and honoured guests are received and escorted to their seats in the Nave

At 2.55, the Lord Lieutenant of Kent is received by the Dean and escorted to her seat in the Nave

At 3.00, ALL STAND as the procession enters

Organ fanfare

Remain standing

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Dean Brothers and sisters in Christ, we gather to give thanks for the ministry of James, Bishop of Rochester, to express our gratitude for his faithful service among us, and to send him from this place with our prayers and blessing to continue in the way of faith.

As we celebrate Thomas the Apostle, we give thanks for the episcopal ministry of Bishop James as a shepherd of Christ's flock and guardian of the faith of the apostles.

Let us pray.

Almighty and eternal God,
who, for the firmer foundation of our faith,
allowed your holy apostle Thomas
to doubt the resurrection of your Son
till word and sight convinced him:
grant to us, who have not seen, that we also may believe
and so confess Christ as our Lord and our God;
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

Dean Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

**All Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Community Engagement and Chaplaincy

Sit

Reading: Habakkuk 2.1-4

read by Matthew Girt, Diocesan Secretary, from the Quire Lectern

A reading from the book of the prophet Habakkuk.

I will stand at my watch-post, and station myself on the rampart; I will keep watch to see what he will say to me, and what he will answer concerning my complaint. Then the LORD answered me and said: Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it. For there is still a vision for the appointed time; it speaks of the end, and does not lie. If it seems to tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay. Look at the proud! Their spirit is not right in them, but the righteous live by their faith.

Here ends the reading.

Reflection

*by the Reverend Ruth Bierbaum, Kent and Medway Partnership Trust
Chaplain (Mental Health)*

Jubilate Deo *sung by the choir*

O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands:
Serve the Lord with gladness,
And come before his presence with a song.
Be ye sure that the Lord he is God:
It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves;
We are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
O go your way into his gates with thanks-giving,
And into his courts with praise:
Be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.
For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting:
And his truth endureth from generation to generation.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:
world without end. Amen.

Lay Ministry

Reading: Ecclesiasticus 2.1-11

read by Bridget Langstaff, from the Quire Lectern

A reading from the book Ecclesiasticus.

My child, when you come to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for testing. Set your heart right and be steadfast, and do not be impetuous in time of calamity. Cling to him and do not depart, so that your last days may be prosperous. Accept whatever befalls you, and in times of humiliation be patient. For gold is tested in the fire, and those found acceptable, in the furnace of humiliation. Trust in him, and he will help you; make your ways straight, and hope in him. You who fear the Lord, wait for his mercy; do not stray, or else you may fall. You who fear the Lord, trust in him, and your reward will not be lost. You who fear the Lord, hope for good things, for lasting joy and mercy. Consider the generations of old and see: has anyone trusted in the Lord and been disappointed? Or has anyone persevered in the fear of the Lord and been forsaken? Or has anyone called upon him and been neglected? For the Lord is compassionate and merciful; he forgives sins and saves in time of distress.

Here ends the reading.

Reflection

by Alan Mitchell, Licensed Lay Minister at St Augustine with St Luke, Bromley Common

Hymn

sung by the choir (congregation remain seated)

Christ triumphant, ever reigning,
Saviour, Master, King,
Lord of heaven, our lives sustaining,
Hear us as we sing:
*Yours the glory and the crown,
The high renown, the eternal name.*

Word incarnate, truth revealing,
Son of Man on earth!
Power and majesty concealing
By your humble birth:
*Yours the glory and the crown,
The high renown, the eternal name.*

Suffering servant, scorned, ill-treated,
Victim crucified!
Death is through the cross defeated,
Sinners justified:
*Yours the glory and the crown,
The high renown, the eternal name.*

Priestly King, enthroned for ever
High in heaven above!
Sin and death and hell shall never
Stifle hymns of love:
*Yours the glory and the crown,
The high renown, the eternal name.*

So, our hearts and voices raising
Through the ages long,
Ceaselessly upon you gazing,
This shall be our song:
*Yours the glory and the crown,
The high renown, the eternal name.*

Vocations

Reading: 1 Peter 1.3-12

*read by the Venerable Andrew Wooding-Jones, Archdeacon of Rochester,
from the Quire Lectern*

A reading from the first letter of Peter.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In this you rejoice, even if now for a little while you have had to suffer various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith – being more precious than gold that, though perishable, is tested by fire – may be found to result in praise and glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. Although you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, for you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Here ends the reading.

Reflection

by the Reverend Belinda Beckhelling, Curate at Rochester Cathedral

Anthem

sung by the choir

O for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

Return, O holy dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest;
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast.

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

Reading: Ephesians 2.19-22

read by the Venerable Julie Conalty, Archdeacon of Tonbridge (and Bishop-designate of Birkenhead), from the Quire Lectern

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Ephesians.

You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling-place for God.

Here ends the reading.

Reflection

by the Reverend Canon Jeremy Blunden, Bishop's Adviser for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic matters and Rector of St George's, Beckenham

Hymn *sung by the choir (congregation remain seated)*

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 How shall I sing that majesty
Which angels do admire?
Let dust in dust and silence lie;
Sing, sing, ye heavenly choir.
Thousands of thousands stand around
Thy throne, O God most high;
Ten thousand times ten thousand sound
Thy praise; but who am I? | 3 Enlighten with faith's light my heart,
Inflame it with love's fire;
Then shall I sing and bear a part
With that celestial choir.
I shall, I fear, be dark and cold,
With all my fire and light;
Yet when thou dost accept their gold,
Lord, treasure up my mite. |
| 2 Thy brightness unto them appears,
Whilst I thy footsteps trace;
A sound of God comes to my ears,
But they behold thy face.
They sing because thou art their Sun;
Lord, send a beam on me;
For where heaven is but once begun
There alleluyas be. | 4 How great a being, Lord, is thine,
Which doth all beings keep!
Thy knowledge is the only line
To sound so vast a deep.
Thou art a sea without a shore,
A sun without a sphere;
Thy time is now and evermore,
Thy place is everywhere. |

Reading: John 20.24-29

*read by the Venerable Dr Paul Wright, Archdeacon of Bromley and Bexley,
from the Quire Lectern*

A reading from the gospel according to John.

Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.'

Here ends the reading.

Audio Reflection

The Rt Rev Dr Farai Mutamiri, Bishop of Harare, Zimbabwe

The Rt Rev Jacob Chimeledya, Bishop of Mpwapwa, Tanzania

The Rt Rev Dr Given Gaula, Bishop of Kondoa, Tanzania

(The texts of these reflections are printed at the back of this service sheet and the audio will be played in the Cathedral)

Farewell

The Lord Lieutenant of Kent, representing civic life and institutions across the Diocese, bids farewell to Bishop James

Bishop James responds and is then interviewed by the Reverend Saju Muthalaly

Bishop Simon and Dean Philip present a gift on behalf of the Diocese

During the anthem which follows, Dean Philip, Bishop Simon, Bishop James and Bridget move to the Quire

Anthem

sung by the choir

The Lord bless you and keep you:
The Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious unto you.
The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you
and give you peace. Amen.

John Rutter (b. 1945)

Numbers 6: 24

Bishop James and Bridget stand at the Quire Crossing

+Simon ‘For everything there is a season,
and a time for every matter under heaven.’

With joy and sadness,
we mark and celebrate the ending of this time
and the faithful and fruitful ministry
of Bishop James as Bishop of Rochester,
our Father in God and chief pastor,
shepherd of the flock and teacher of the faith,
herald of the kingdom and steward of the mysteries of God,
a blessing throughout and beyond this Diocese.

Bishop James hands the Diocesan crosier to Bishop Simon and removes his mitre and cope

The Dean presents Bishop James with a pilgrim's staff

The pilgrim's staff presented to Bishop James is fashioned from rosewood (pruned from a rose near the Bishop's Gate in the Cathedral's Cloister Garth). The staff was crafted by Graham Huckstepp (Cathedral Head Gardener) and Geoffrey Huckstepp (Garden Volunteer), with engraving by Kay Williams (Dean's PA).

+Simon People of the Diocese of Rochester, I ask you to join me in praying for God's blessing on Bishop James and Bridget as we send them from this place, with our gratitude and our prayers, to continue their pilgrimage.

All God be your comfort and courage
and bless you with every good gift;

All God be your hope and support
and fill you with everlasting joy;

All God be your light and your way
and lead you in the paths of righteousness;

All and the blessing of God,
+ Creator, Redeemer, and Giver of life,
remain with you now and for ever.
Amen.

During the hymn, Dean Philip, Bishop Simon, Bishop James and Bridget move to the Nave

Hymn

sung by the choir (congregation remain seated)

Go forth and tell! O Church of God, awake!
God's saving news to all the nations take:
Proclaim Christ Jesus, Saviour, Lord and King,
That all the world his glorious praise may sing.

Go forth and tell! God's love embraces all;
He will in grace respond to all who call:
How shall they call if they have never heard
The gracious invitation of his word?

Go forth and tell! The doors are open wide:
Share God's good gifts - let no one be denied;
Live out your life as Christ your Lord shall choose,
Your ransomed powers for his sole glory use.

Go forth and tell! O Church of God, arise!
Go in the strength which Christ your Lord supplies;
Go till all nations his great name adore
And serve him, Lord and King for evermore.

Woodlands (186) ~ Walter Grottores (1877-1949)

James E Seddon (1915-1983)

ALL STAND

The Blessing

+James Our help is in the name of the Lord,
All **who has made heaven and earth.**

 Blessed be the name of the Lord,
All **now and forever. Amen.**

 The Father, whose glory fills the heavens,
 cleanse you by his holiness
 and send you to proclaim his word.
All **Amen.**

 The Son, who has ascended to the heights,
 pour upon you the riches of his grace.
All **Amen.**

 The Holy Spirit, the Comforter,
 equip you and strengthen you in your ministry.
All **Amen.**

 And the blessing of God almighty,
 ✠ the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
 be among you and remain with you always.
All **Amen.**

Bishop James and Bridget leave the Cathedral via the Great West Door

Remain standing as the other processions exit

Organ Voluntary: Sortie in E flat ~ Louis Lefébure-Wély (1817-1869)

The Cathedral Church of Christ
and the Blessed Virgin Mary



The Rt Rev Dr Farai Mutamiri, Bishop of Harare, Zimbabwe

Farewells are never easy, and are often sad, but they can also be taken as a form of celebration of one's wonderful life and work. At the Diocese of Harare, we join with the Diocese of Rochester in bidding farewell to you Bishop James and Bridget, your wife. The Diocese of Harare has a long-standing special link with the Diocese of Rochester, through which we support and encourage each other in God's mission. I was honoured to attend your consecration as Bishop of Rochester in June 2010, and we have journeyed and known you and your wife since that time. In the process, we have learnt countless things from you and your team. Amongst them is your spirituality and leadership style. You also shared in our troubles. You took time out of your very busy schedule to visit us in 2011, and you witnessed how we were being persecuted and also saw our church properties being dispossessed. I remember the worship we held together in a tent and how you encouraged us to soldier on. The burden that was so heavy upon us became lighter. Thank you for standing with us during our dark moments. Your legacy will remain in our hearts forever.

The Rt Rev Jacob Chimeledya , Bishop of Mpwapwa, Tanzania

Hello brothers and sisters at the Diocese of Rochester. Receive greetings from your brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Mpwapwa. I would like to take this opportunity to give thanks to Bishop James. Bishop James was a man with a great heart and mission minded. He was and remains, an encourager, a supporter of the mission of the Church. He was a friend to our partnership through team visits from both ends. And so, we thank Bishop James and Bridget his wife. I still believe that the success of Bishop James was a result of support from his wife Bridget. So, Bridget, thank you very much for supporting our brother Bishop James Langstaff!

The Rt Rev Dr Given Gaula, Bishop of Kondoa, Tanzania

Dear friends in the Diocese of Rochester, on behalf of the people of the Diocese of Kondoa, myself and Lillian, I would like to take this opportunity to thank God for the ministry of Bishop James, which has touched so many people's lives in this diocese. Our relationship between the Diocese of Rochester and Kondoa, has grown-up from strength to strength because of Bishop James' encouragement to all of us. He has visited us many times and during his visiting, he has encouraged us so much, and his preaching of the Word, his gentle heart has been a really good model, to me personally as a bishop, but also the pastors of this diocese have learnt so much from him. We encourage him to come and see us. Having retired is not the end of our friendship, but we believe that he will continue to be our friend. May God bless him, so much. Thank you.

(Videos of these and other contributions from our Overseas Companions Links are available on the Diocese of Rochester's YouTube channel.)