

Epiphany 2019

To all Stipendiary Clergy

Date:

Our Ref: MS/ec-bp8479

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

At the start of a new year, and in this wonderful season of Epiphany, we are writing to all stipendiary clergy to wish you a happy New Year and to update you on a number of matters. We apologise for the length of this letter, and for its very practical nature, but we hope you will find a few minutes to read and pray over these various important matters.

Two items for prayer and requiring a response:

1. Women's Ministry Enabler

Since Jane Curtis moved from the diocese, we have not had anyone advising on Women's Ministry. In part, this has been because of other changes in staff – Bishop Guli and Archdeacon Claire's arrivals in particular. But the presence of two women in senior leadership in the diocese does not remove the need for someone who can give time and energy to specific work related to the culture change needed in all parts of the diocese, to be involved in what is going on nationally, and also advise on the 'mutual flourishing' to which we are genuinely committed (as expressed in the 'five guiding principles').

We are therefore inviting nominations for this role (details are attached). Please contact the Bishop's Chaplain, Revd Rosie Woodall, with nominations or for an informal conversation: Chaplain.Leicester@leccofe.org

2. "Intercultural Worshipping Communities"

You will be aware that our BAME Mission and Ministry Enabler Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy is funded by the national church Strategic Development Fund. Over the past year, Lusa has been researching BAME mission and ministry in the diocese and developing proposals for how we grow this work. We are now hoping to submit a 'stage two' application to SDF for additional funding to allow us to offer new resources to a number of churches (or fresh expressions of church) to enable the development of "intercultural worshipping communities" i.e. churches which intentionally seek to draw together people of diverse cultural heritages.

We have not yet finalised details of the bid (likely to include funding for stipendiary pioneers and additional curates) but we are keen to engage with churches who might be interested in being part of this work. PCCs and leadership teams will need to show evidence of a

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commitment to working with diverse cultures (which could be expressed in different ways). **An open evening for any churches interested in being part of this initiative is planned for Thursday 28th February at St Martins House.** Please contact Lusa to book for this event: Lusa.Ngoy@leccofe.org

In addition, we are also keen to support churches who are hosting BAME majority churches in their premises. We have already started offering safeguarding training to some of these independent churches, and we are keen to explore other forms of 'gift exchange' which enable a growing relationship and express our partnership in the gospel. **Again, can we ask you to contact Lusa if your premises are used by another church.**

Other items for prayer and information:

3. Shaped Everyday Roadshows

We are looking forward to seeing you at one of the 'Shaped Everyday' evenings being hosted by each deanery. Much of what will be discussed at these events will relate to things you are already doing in the whole area of discipleship. But we hope the evenings will be a catalyst for new conversations which can then be followed up in Deanery Chapter and Synod meetings and so encourage churches to go deeper in 'everyday faith'. Staff in Mission and Ministry are ready to support you and help resource these ongoing conversations.

It is likely that we will be looking to do a similar round of deanery roadshows in 2020. These will focus more on ministry (built on the foundation of discipleship) and will be the start of a much bigger conversation in the diocese about the shape of ministry and the resourcing of ministry in coming years.

4. Update on the Rural Commission

We are disappointed that we have not yet been able to appoint a Rural Discipleship Enabler to follow-on from the Rural Commission. This is a key appointment and many of the other recommendations of the Commission depend on it. After several attempts to shape this role, we have now agreed a way forward (thanks to the generosity of one particular benefice) and we hope to advertise the role very soon. We will then be forming a working group to help us implement the wider recommendations of the report.

5. Update on The Community of the Tree of Life

We are really looking forward to welcoming the first Novices to the Community of the Tree of Life in February. The building work on the community house is slightly behind schedule and so the Novices will spend their first few weeks in St Martins Lodge. Although the numbers for this 'seed group' are smaller than we hoped for – two Novices joining the Companion Group of seven – we are now getting more enquiries for the start of the first official community in September, and we are building some significant partnerships with other organisations working with young adults. Please continue to pray for the recruitment and discernment process, and for our first Novices. We are genuinely excited to see what God will do through this new community founded on such a historic site.

6. Living in Love and Faith

The *Church Times* recently reported on the *Living in Love and Faith* project and outlined the draft timeline for the production of new teaching resources on relationships, marriage and sexuality. The project team has been in touch with us to ask to speak at our Diocesan Synod in 2019. We have agreed to this but have yet to finalise a date.

At the same time, Akeley East Deanery Synod have passed a motion relating to this topic which we will also discuss at the same Diocesan Synod meeting. We will do everything possible to make this a helpful and safe conversation for all involved. Please join us in praying that all our conversations may be filled with hope rather than fear, and express our trust in God's sovereignty.

7. Thy Kingdom Come

Please also read the attached letter from Archbishops Justin and Sentamu regarding Thy Kingdom Come 2019. We sincerely hope every church will take part.

8. Permission to Officiate

Finally, for those of you who have priests with Permission to Officiate operating within your parishes, please note that following the House of Bishops new policy on ministry with PTO (July 2018), there have been some changes to previous practices. All PTO clergy will need to have a "Designated Responsible Person" – someone to provide local oversight and support – which for some PTO clergy will be a local incumbent (if they primarily minister in one benefice), and for others who minister more widely may be an Area Dean or similar. Revd Rosie Woodall will be writing to PTO colleagues about this shortly, but this is to pre-warn you that you may be approached to act in this way.

Please feel free to share these updates with your ministry teams and PCCs.

Thank you once again for your partnership and encouragement in ministry. We look forward to seeing you all at the 'Shaped Everyday' evenings, and then at the Chrism Eucharist (Thursday 18th April 11am).



The Rt Revd Martyn Snow
Bishop of Leicester



The Rt Revd Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani
Bishop of Loughborough