



THE BISHOP OF LICHFIELD

To: All Clergy and Lay Ministers in the Diocese of Lichfield

7 September 2013

My dear brothers and sisters in leadership

Over time, the ways in which people offer worship to God has developed and changed according to the context they are in, and the culture of the age. Public worship is a core part of the life of the church. Through worship we build up and sustain the Christian community. Worship is an expression of our love for God, our desire to grow as disciples and our sense of being part of a worldwide community. Worship which connects the people of God with their creator must be authentic to the community, and offered out of the best that we can give at any particular time.

Encouraging more people to participate in the leading of public worship is a way of responding to the changing culture we live in, but it is also about recognising and affirming that the gifts of God are given to the whole community. Many people's gifts are primarily given to be used in their communities and work places, but they may also have gifts that could be shared through leading worship.

Refreshing our patterns of worship may create space for God to speak to us with new voices and in different words – to proclaim His eternal truths in ways that connect with people in our churches and communities in a fresh way.

To this end, I invite you to participate in a Diocesan experiment in worship. Between September 2013 and September 2015, I am giving permission for parishes to experiment with new patterns of worship. This may be through trying different types of service of the word, all-age celebrations or informal worship. It may be by inviting members of the parish who are not licensed to lead worship. It is, in effect, a period of, where we can travel the length and breadth of our liturgical realm and take in new vistas without exiling ourselves beyond its flexible borders.

Whatever type of worship God might be calling you to in your parish, we would like to hear about what you are doing. We hope you will share with others any experiments that you undertake – whether they work out well or not. Part of experimenting is risk taking, and through this process we hope to be able to learn from what doesn't work, and move forward together with new patterns forged from the things that do work well.

A set of resources and guidelines to support those in your parish who are already involved, or wish to become involved in worship leading is being developed and uploaded periodically on the Diocesan website. Please send any feedback on your experiences to the Director of Lay Development, Dr Lindsey Hall.

+Jonathan Lichfield



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