

**To all Chaplains in the
Diocese of Lichfield**



The Archdeaconry of Stoke-upon-Trent

25th October, 2018

Dear Colleague,

When Bishop Michael first came to the Diocese he invited us to “Come follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad”. It is a call to walk in the way of Jesus and the story of Chad, the first Bishop of Lichfield, gives that call its particular “local” flavour. Chad was a great missionary bishop, a person of great humility whose ministry was rooted in prayer and community and his life gives us a reference point as we seek to follow Christ in modern day Mercia.

Bishop Michael was also clear that this invitation to a new “Direction of Travel” embraces parishes, schools, fresh expressions of church *and chaplaincies*, recognising that all these are vital forms of Christian presence and witness in our Diocese.

As well as the **invitation** there is a **vision** of the kind of Diocese we want to become:

As we follow Christ in the footsteps of St Chad, we pray that the two million people in our diocese encounter a church that is confident in the gospel, knows and loves its communities, and is excited to find God at work already in the world. We pray for a church that reflects the richness and variety of those communities and partners with others in seeking the common good, working for justice as people of hope.

And there are **three priorities** which act as “lenses” through which we focus our work as church, schools, fresh expressions and chaplaincies. We want to *develop discipleship, encourage vocation and inspire evangelism*. The vision and the priorities need to be worked out locally and in each particular context. The Diocese wants to offer support, challenge and resource but not a blueprint. There is more on this at www.lichfield.anglican.org/our_vision/

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There are particular challenges of working out a *Diocesan* vision and priorities in a chaplaincy context. Chaplains often work for, or with, institutions that have their own distinctive mission statements and objectives which may or may not align with those of the diocese. Chaplains also often find themselves part of a chaplaincy team with ministers from other denominations or leaders of other faith communities and it is not appropriate to promote a diocesan agenda. Nonetheless, Chaplains can also feel disconnected from the life of the wider Diocese and many would like a more meaningful connection with diocesan life. As a Diocese, we have a lot still to learn in this respect.

With Bishop Michael's encouragement, I have invited a representative number of Chaplains from across the Diocese to meet in December with me and Simon Foster. Simon, formerly of the Saltley Trust, is now working with us on Chaplaincy development. In preparation for that meeting we would like to invite *all the Chaplains* in the Diocese to respond by email to this question:

How would you like chaplaincy to engage with the diocese around its priorities of discipleship, vocation and evangelism?

You may choose to write a three word answer or a ten page essay or something in between but we would be really grateful if you could email me (archdeacon.stoke@lichfield.anglican.org) by **30th November** with your responses, question and insights. If you feel that you would also like to be part of that smaller group meeting in December then please do let me know.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Parker', with a large, stylized initial 'M' and a long, sweeping flourish at the end.

Matthew Parker

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