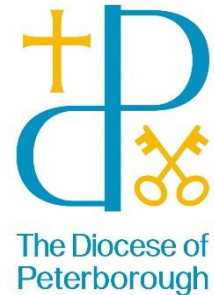


BISHOP'S LETTER No 40 28 November 2021

From Bishop Donald

To: Licensed Clergy, Licensed Lay Ministers, Clergy with PTO, Bishop's Council, Diocesan and Cathedral Staff, Diocesan Registrar, Churchwardens, Deanery and Diocesan Lay Chairs, final-year Ordinands, final-year Lay Ministry students; copied for information to Yaxley Deanery Clergy and Lay Chair



Dear friends

Greetings on this Advent Sunday, as we enter the church's new year with the reminder that Christ will come again as both Judge and Saviour. That is the context in which we should live the whole of the Christian life: always ready to meet him. I love Advent, but it is a strange season: penitential but with some wonderful rousing Bible readings and hymns; solemn and serious, but richly coloured and textured in so many ways.

I have recorded a series of four talks on Isaiah which could be used as an Advent series, or in various ways. You can find it on our website [here](#).

The new restrictions for the coronavirus omicron variant don't affect churches, but we should be cautious, and be ready for possible further restrictions over Christmas.

A message from Archdeacon Gordon:

To all who were able to attend my Farewell Evensong at the Cathedral on 31 October, an occasion that I will always remember;

to all who contributed so generously to my leaving gift, which will be well spent in setting me up fully for that next stage in life which now beckons,

to all who provided such kind words and pictures for the wonderful book of memories which Chel put together so beautifully, and which I will always treasure;

thank you all so very much.

It has been an enormous privilege to serve alongside you as Archdeacon of Oakham for almost a decade and I am grateful to you all. I wish you and my successor every blessing as you journey on in the service of Christ and his church.

*With my love and prayers, **Gordon***

“Christmas Voices from the Holy Land”

I commend this ecumenical prayer resource to you for Advent and Christmastide. Published by Friends of the Holy Land, proceeds go towards helping those who have suffered in Gaza, the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the divided communities in Israel. <https://www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/shop/advent-book-2021>

Holy Land Pilgrimage

If you would like to experience first-hand the places of our Lord, there are still places available on my [spring 2022 Pilgrimage](#). Please do get your booking in to be assured of a place.

Bible Days

I very much hope that next spring will see the return of our Bible Days. We have booked Northampton High School for Saturday 5 March, and the Cathedral for Saturday 12 March. Further details will be on the diocesan website in the near future, but do keep the dates for now.

Ministers' Conference

This is for all licensed clergy and licensed lay ministers, and will be held at Yarnfield Park on 7-10 November next year. Please put it in your diary now. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Vacancy: Bishop's Vicar for Church Schools

This is an interesting post we invented a few years ago, now vacant following Doug Spenceley's retirement. The BVCS provides temporary pastoral and ministerial support for church schools during parish vacancies and encourages sustainable contact by members of parish churches with their church schools. I am looking for expressions of interest, probably from retired clergy (but who knows ... ?)

A summary in bullet form:

- The BVCS is directly responsible to the Bishop;
- This is a part-time non-stipendiary post and expenses may be claimed;
- The role is supplementary to the ongoing work of both the Rural Dean and the Diocesan Schools Consultants;
- Support is temporary and should not place unreasonable expectations on the incoming incumbent;
- Work may include some leading of worship in the school and the parish church.

For a conversation please contact my office: bishop@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

General Synod

Morna Simpson, one of our newly elected clergy members of General Synod, has written a blog post about the meeting earlier this month.

<https://teaandtheology.org/2021/11/20/general-synod-musings/>

Jan Robinson

There will be a service of Holy Communion in thanksgiving for the life and ministry of the Reverend Jan Robinson on Saturday 11 December at 2pm, at St Leonard's Church, Yardley Gobion NN12 7UB. All who knew, worked or ministered with Jan are warmly invited. There will be refreshments after the service and time to share memories of Jan.

With thanks for our shared ministry,
and very best wishes for Advent.

+ Donald