



The Church of England
in Essex and East London
Diocese of Chelmsford

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To clergy (incl. PTO) and LLMs in the Diocese of Chelmsford

27th June 2022

Dear Friends,

I wanted to write once more before the end of the school term and the start of the summer period, with a few updates and to offer you once again my ongoing thanks and encouragement.

In my recent Presidential Address at Diocesan Synod, I outlined a little about the process moving forward, as we emerge out of the Holy Sabbatical and begin to discern what God is calling us to in the future. For those of you who were not there or haven't heard it, this is what I said: *"For now, we'll continue to allow the echoes of the Holy Sabbatical to take effect in our lives for the coming weeks and through the summer. In the autumn the three Area Bishops and I are planning a period of 48 hours away together to begin to give shape to some of what we're noticing and discerning, about our direction of travel as a diocese and about God's call into the future. This will then be further refined by conversations in the Bishop's Leadership Team, and in the late autumn and into the new year we'll look to ways of sharing our thinking and seeking your views so that through an iterative process, tweaking and improving as we go, we can find a way of articulating our hopes and our commitments."*

As we turn our faces towards the future with hope and anticipation of God's blessings, we do need to bear in mind that our financial challenges have not disappeared. We have, as you know, moved on from the language of RAG coding and sought to recognise the hurt and pain which that caused. However, there are still difficult decisions to make and I'm encouraging you to continue having those conversations locally and in your deaneries, in consultation with Area Deans and Archdeacons.

Wellbeing. At Diocesan Synod earlier this month we also began an intentional conversation around Wellbeing, through an introduction to the Clergy Wellbeing Covenant that will return as a longer Agenda item for debate in November. I'd like to encourage you to use the period between now and November to have conversations in your local contexts about what wellbeing means and how we can best look out for one another whilst also ensuring we each take personal responsibility for our own wellbeing, including putting in place good support structures. Over the coming weeks, a PowerPoint presentation and the Clergy Covenant documents will be made available on our diocesan website to aid your conversations should you wish to use them.

PTO and retired clergy and LLMs. I want to say a word by way of thanks and appreciation for our PTO and retired clergy and LLMs. I know that some changes nationally around structures and processes have caused some consternation and left some people feeling uncertain about their role and even undervalued, though that is not at all their intention. Let me take this opportunity to express my personal gratitude for the ministry, especially of our older/senior colleagues whom we should never take for granted and on whom we are increasingly reliant. Those with longer years and experience are a real blessing among us and I am committed to continued learning about how we can best provide support and utilise the wisdom and skills that they bring. Again, can I encourage you locally to consider what this might look like in your church, benefice, deanery, MMU and so on.



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Marriage in Church after divorce. This is to remind you that in the normal course of events clergy **do not** need to seek my permission in order to marry someone who has previously been divorced. This was explained in a letter from Bishop Peter, who wrote to you with my full agreement, shortly after I was appointed as Bishop of Chelmsford but before I began in role. My sense is that the previous convention of seeking permission was so firmly embedded that it continues to persist and so I thought a reminder might be helpful. I'm entirely content to trust your pastoral judgement in each situation. **To be clear, however, there may still be cases where you wish to consult me and you should feel free to do that. And you are still required to consult me where the marriage is to take place under an Archbishop's Special License or a Common License issued by one of the Surrogates in the Diocese.**

Liturgy of Baptism/Confirmation/Renewal of Baptismal vows. This is to let you know that an optional question which draws on the language of the fifth mark of mission and our care of the environment may now be inserted into any of these initiation liturgies.

Q: Will you strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth?

A: With the help of God I will

Should you choose to use this, it should be inserted between "Will you acknowledge Christ's authority ..." and "May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith...".

This addition was suggested by the Bishop of Oxford and is already in use in the Diocese of Oxford. It also has the support of the Bishops of Exeter (Chair of the Liturgical Commission) and the Revd Dr Matthew Salisbury (National Liturgical Adviser) and has been commended by the Bishop of Norwich (Lead Bishop for the Environment). I am delighted that our own Environmental Group are supportive of such an addition. The revision can be done under the provision of Canon B5 which allows the minister 'to make and use variations which are not of substantial importance' in forms of service, as long as they are not 'contrary to, nor indicative of any departure from, the doctrine of the Church of England in any essential matter.'

Visiting clergy and bishops. If you are inviting clergy from outside the diocese to take part in any way in a service, please remember that you must contact my [Chaplain](#), Rosie, so that we can do the necessary checks with the home diocese. Also, visiting bishops from overseas are not allowed to exercise any ministry without the permission of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Again, please contact my chaplain to initiate this, including if you have bishops visiting and involved in services in the weeks leading up to or following on from the Lambeth Conference.

Safeguarding Service. It has been my intention for a while to plan an annual service at the Cathedral, to recognise and give thanks for our Diocesan Safeguarding Team and our Parish Safeguarding Officers and to acknowledge the importance of safeguarding in our shared life. The heart of the Gospel message is one of love for all God's children and our churches and worshipping communities should reflect that by providing a place of welcome and safety to all, including children and those who are most vulnerable. I'm delighted to say that we have a date for the first of these services and I encourage you to make a note of it, pass it onto your PSOs and invite members of your congregations to attend in support: **Wednesday 21st September 2022, 7.30 pm, Chelmsford Cathedral.** More details will follow nearer to the time.



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Finally, please join me in praying for all those who were licensed as LLMs during a service at the Cathedral on Saturday 25th June, when we also gave thanks for all those engaged in many kinds of lay ministries. Please also pray for those to be licensed as Lay Workers on 3rd July, ahead of their ordination as deacons at Michaelmas.

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. (1 Cor. 12. 4-6)

I hope that many of you will manage a period of rest and refreshment at some stage during the summer. I am planning a break with my family during August.

It continues to be a joy to serve alongside you in this diocese and I am daily thankful for our shared ministry. This comes with my prayers, good wishes and every blessing.

+ Guli

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