

## **Archdeacon's Visitation Charge 2018**

### **Welcome**

May I welcome you all most warmly to this Visitation this evening. For many of you it is a return visit; I thank you for all that you have been doing in both this and previous years. However for some of you this is your first go at being a Churchwarden and I want to welcome you in particular.

Let me assure all of you that you do not undertake this task alone. You are supported by prayer and practical help from within your parish, by your Area and Rural Deans, by the Lay Chairs of your Synods, by Officers of the Diocese, some of whom are here tonight, and not least by me.

As I am keen to emphasise, we are in this together and it is together that we further the work of God in this Diocese.

Always welcome at these Visitations are the clergy and laity who come to support you and are here as your guests, so I extend a very warm welcome to all visitors.

Before going any further I would however like to thank especially the clergy, churchwardens, organist and parishioners of St Augustine's Limbury/St Andrew's Bedford for welcoming us to their parishes for this Visitation. I am most grateful to them.

### **Archdeacons' Visitation Enquiry and Checklist**

The Archdeacons' Visitation Enquiry process (previously known as the Archdeacons' Articles of Enquiry) was overhauled last year.

We are continuing to use an online Enquiry form, asking only for data we need but have not yet captured. This form, reduced from previous years, is designed to collate answers in an easy to use online format for both parishes, benefices and the diocesan office. If you are not a computer user, please do work with someone else in your parish to submit this return online. You will be sent a link to the Articles of Enquiry page of the website and asked to complete the questionnaire shortly.

The Visitation Checklist is also continuing in an updated format and we have streamlined the questions to make it easier to complete and more useful for conversation.

The purpose of the checklist is to help you as Churchwardens to prepare for conversation with the Archdeacon or those inspecting on the Archdeacon's behalf. The first part covers matters that are checked every year; the second part deals with the focus in a particular year, on a three-year cycle. There is no need to return the form before the inspection itself. The Inspector will have a copy of the blank form and will make notes with you at the visit. Thank you in advance for your preparations for the visits and the welcome and hospitality that you afford to those who visit.

This year I will be visiting myself in the Deanery of Luton.

## **Safeguarding**

The Anglican Church, and St Albans Diocese is committed to safeguarding as an integral part of its life and ministry. Safeguarding is about the action the Church takes to promote a safer culture.

Safeguarding is not new. It has always been with us, although not in the structured way it now is.

We have always looked after those who are vulnerable. We have always looked after those who are young.

The most important thing to remember is that everyone has a part to play in safeguarding. Everyone has a role. As Churchwardens, yours is an important one as the position of trust you now hold brings responsibilities and you have to be vigilant to defend those who cannot defend themselves and to guard against those who would seek to abuse.

Promoting a Safer Church is the national policy statement and St Albans Diocese and the parishes that make up this diocese not only follow this but actively promote it and ensure that we do all we can to make our churches the safest places that we can.

Our commitments are;

- Promoting a safer environment and culture
- Safely recruiting and supporting all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation
- Caring pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse or other affected persons
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns/allegations of abuse and other affected persons
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk.

We need to change a culture. The change has to come from within, from you.

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse has clearly documented our past failings and there have been harrowing experiences heard from those abused.

This diocese has demonstrated that we take safeguarding seriously through the recent independent audit. We are robust in our approach and work together to ensure that people are heard and concerns are addressed. We are not sitting back and strive to be better. We

are determined to change the culture that exists and make safeguarding part of our lives and worship.

*Diocesan safeguarding page: <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/safeguarding/>*

*Safeguarding documents can be found at <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/safeguarding-documents/>*

## **Reaching New People and Fresh Expressions**

### **Church Growth - part of our Living God's Love Vision**

Our work towards spiritual and numerical growth has three main strands i) renewing inherited modes of church

ii) developing youth and children's work

iii) reaching new people in new ways

Let me explore those three strands in more depth.

#### **Renewing inherited modes of church:**

We are committed to seeing all our churches and chaplaincies flourish as Christ centred communities. We are in the process of appointing a Church Growth Team to enable the development of effective Mission Action Plans and Giving Strategies through ongoing accompanying work. This will take the form of:

- Learning Communities
- Consultancy
- Coaching

Training will also be a key component:

- Firstly, Leading Your Church Into Growth Conferences are there to encourage and equip churches to grow in spirituality, in numbers and in mission. The next diocesan conference will take place between 18th and 21st March 2019. Please be encouraged to think about key leaders to invite to join you on this course.
- Secondly, MAP workshops to equip teams of key leaders to develop and implement effective plans that enable mission and growth.

At present we have one Church Growth Officer in post - Revd Kate Peacock. To enquire about ongoing accompanying work to support MAPs or the LYCIG conference please contact Kate Peacock. ([kpeacock@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:kpeacock@stalbans.anglican.org).)

## **Youth and Children**

To grow this crucial area of work we are focusing our efforts on working with parishes to start up youth and children's work where there is little or none, and other churches where there is youth or children's work but where it needs to develop to form young disciples. If you would like to benefit from ongoing accompanying work to develop youth or children's work then please do contact Margaret Pritchard Houston (Children's Mission Enabler) or Dean Pusey (Diocesan Youth Officer) via the Youth and Children's Administrator Julie Cirillo ([youthoffice@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:youthoffice@stalbans.anglican.org).)

## **Reaching New People in New Ways**

We recognised that in order to engage with non or de churching people in our communities and to help them grow in faith we need to do something courageous and imaginative. So this year we have started an exciting project to make new disciples of Christ by developing fresh expressions of church and equipping leaders.

The Reaching New People Team are now providing ongoing accompanying work with fresh expressions, churches and parishes through:

- Learning Communities
- Coaching
- Consultancy
- Monitoring
- Training - Reaching New People Training Courses, Vision Days, Webinars, Godsend Training App.

The RNP team will be running regular Vision Days to enable teams of parish leaders to explore how they will reach new people and help them grow in faith through fresh expressions of church.

For further information on the RNP project please contact the Reaching new People Team ([rnp@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:rnp@stalbans.anglican.org) )

## **Parish Share, Finance and Stewardship**

There is much for which we can give thanks and rejoice. In our diocese we have over the last five years increased the number of stipendiary ordinations by 50%. This means that we are well prepared for the increased numbers of parish clergy who will be retiring over the next decade or so. It is a fact that 40% of our clergy are 55 or over, so there are going to be many changes over in the near future.

Last year we were awarded a grant of £1.7m from the Church Commissioners. These funds will be used to resource our project, Reaching New People in New Ways (RNP). Our aim is to make New Disciples of Christ by developing fresh expressions of church and equipping leaders. The website will bring you up to date information.

Following this venture, a decision was made to restructure some posts and channel resources into a newly formed Church Growth Team. Like most dioceses, our church membership is falling and this new team will have the responsibility to encourage and energise effective mission action planning.

So much is happening to sustain the numbers of parochial clergy and to support parishes in all that they do.

However, the fact remains that it is the congregations of today who have to pay to support the ministry of today. Through the parish share the common fund is able to meet the costs of parochial ministry and in 2017 the common fund pretty much broke even. Yet we know that in some parishes, finances are challenging. Experience shows that in parishes where there is regular teaching on stewardship with annual renewal of pledges and usually supported by membership of the parish giving scheme (see website for more details), the financial situation is manageable and under control.

The Board of Finance is most grateful for all that you do in churches and in your communities to witness to God's love. We are very happy to come and talk with you and your PCC if that would help. We are indebted to the Finance Team at Holywell Lodge who work so hard on our behalf.

## **GDPR**

It would be difficult to miss the introduction of the new General Data Protection Regulation which comes into effect on 25th May. Parishes have all received details of the guidance available from the national church which was circulated last November. This is also available on the Diocesan website together with links to other useful resources including Frequently Asked Questions and more detailed guidance from the Information Commissioners Office.

The national church has also negotiated online training courses at heavily discounted prices. This is now available and you should have received an email informing you about the courses on the 11<sup>th</sup> May.

The Regulation places additional responsibilities on all of us who hold information about individuals, and whilst it may feel like one more burden to deal with, as an organisation where communication with people is key to what we do, and may involve personal and sensitive information, it is important that we all ensure that we take seriously the need to protect that information and respect people's privacy.

In view of the changes to data collection, you may have noticed that we only asked for a contact email address on our Churchwarden Certificate of Election this year. Once your attendance here tonight has been logged on our database, you will receive a link via email which will enable you to check your own information that we hold and add in any that is missing.

*GDPR information can be found at <https://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/data-protection/>*

## **100 Years since the end of World War I**

This year sees the centenary celebration of the Armistice and ending of hostilities in the conflict which came to be known as World War I or the Great War. It is very hard to over-emphasise what a huge and life-changing event this conflict was for so many in this country. There were very, very few families who were unaffected and British society was enormously changed. It is interesting to note that Remembrance Sunday, which this year actually falls on November 11<sup>th</sup>, has grown in significance and observance over the last two decades principally due to our armed services being engaged in current conflicts with the attendant casualties of war these bring.

The Great War is a subject taught in most schools both in historical, social and literary contexts and there are very few who do not have a good understanding about the scale and scope of the devastation brought by this War and also the many acts of service and heroism by both military, civil and medical personnel.

Many of our parish churches have War Memorials, either inside the church or within the boundaries of the churchyard and there are also many Commonwealth War Grave Commission headstones in our churchyards. There will of course be great and impressive National Acts of Remembrance and Prayer but I do urge you to commemorate the centenary of the Armistice at a parochial level also. This is a great opportunity to make our parish churches a focus of local Remembrance, celebrating a shared history and faith. The Poppy is a potent and instantly recognisable symbol which has been used to great effect in some of our well known national buildings, most especially the Tower of London and the Field of Poppies there some years ago. I do urge you to be imaginative in using records, photographs, costume and symbols in establishing a compelling focus for this most significant year of Remembrance together with special services of worship remembering those who gave their lives, dedicating ourselves to a generous use of the freedoms so dearly won for us and praying for the gift of peace especially for those communities of the world in our present day torn apart and on whom the most terrible suffering is inflicted.

Each Remembrance Sunday, after are spoken Binyon's solemn words which begin "They shall grow not old", the reply is "We will remember them". May our Remembrance in this notable year of anniversary be imaginative, sensitive and worthy.

There is information available to help in your preparations and links to it will be appended to the Charge.

<http://www.centenarynews.com/article/centenary-news-countdown-to-first-world-war-anniversaries-in-2018>

[www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/church-england-world-war-one](http://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/church-england-world-war-one)

### **Pilgrimage**

Next year we are offering the Diocesan Pilgrimage. In May, my wife Liz and I are leading a 10 day pilgrimage to the Holy Land. We shall be based in Jerusalem and the Gallilee. We shall be fling from London Luton airport. I have some brochures with me this evening – we would love to have you as part of our party.

In September, my colleague Archdeacon Janet will be leading a party along the Camino Trail to Santiago de Compostela. He tours offer some limited walking but also uses coaches.

These pilgrimages are both now open for booking. You can find further details on the Diocesan website.

In 2020 there will be 3 pilgrimages to Oberammergau in June, the summer holiday and September. Again details are on the website.

<http://stalbanpilgrimages.org.uk/>

### **Miscellaneous**

Churchwardens training will take place on the morning of Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July in the church hall of All Saints' Kempston. Any churchwardens are welcome, but especially those of you who are serving for the first time.

Thank you to the parishes who contribute to the Archdeacons' Discretionary Fund which is used to relieve need, often sudden and unexpected, amongst our clergy. Contributions are always gratefully received. The offering at tonight's visitation is for the Discretionary Fund and there are Gift Aid envelopes available; please give generously. Last year the same offering raised over £600 for which I am most grateful.

Copies of this visitation charge will be distributed electronically within the next week, with hard copies in the post for those unable to receive email.

After I have admitted you, I am sure you will be pleased to know that refreshments will be available and there will be an opportunity to view displays of many aspects of the work of the Diocese and you will have an opportunity to meet colleagues from the Diocesan Office who are here to support and assist you tonight. On your behalf I would like to thank them for giving up their time to be with us – and may I also, on your behalf, thank them hugely for all their support of us throughout the year. There is no doubt we are fortunate to have such a wonderful and gifted team supporting us day by day.

Once again, thank you for offering yourselves as churchwarden and in the words of our Living God's Love prayer, may you undertake your office with generosity and joy, imagination and courage for the sake of God's world and in the name of Jesus.

I would now like to admit you to the office of churchwarden in your respective parishes for the coming year.

## **USEFUL WEBSITES, LINKS AND CONTACTS**

Safeguarding: Mr Jeremy (Jez) Hirst, Tel: 01727 818107 Mob: 07867 350886

email: [safeguarding@stalbans.anglican.org](mailto:safeguarding@stalbans.anglican.org)

Disclosure and Barring Service:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>

A Church Near You: <http://www.achurchnearyou.com/>

Church of England: <https://www.churchofengland.org/>

Diocese of St Albans: [www.stalbans.anglican.org](http://www.stalbans.anglican.org)

### **Information for Parish Officers**

- PCC Secretaries and Administrators: <http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/secretaries-and-administrators/>
- PCC Treasurers: <http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/finance/finance/>
- Churchwardens: <http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/churchwardens/>
- Stewardship Officers: <http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/ministry/christian-stewardship-and-giving/>

The Parish Resources website: <http://www.parishresources.org.uk/>

The Churches Legislation Advisory Service: [www.cmainc.org.uk](http://www.cmainc.org.uk)

Ecclesiastical: [www.ecclesiastical.com](http://www.ecclesiastical.com)

DAC Advice Leaflets: <http://www.stalbans.anglican.org/finance/dac-advice-leaflets/>

Conservation Register: <http://www.conservationregister.com/>

Environment: <http://www.ecocongregation.org/>

General Advice: <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/>

Insurance and other advice: <http://www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters/index.aspx>

Maintenance: <http://www.maintainyourbuilding.org.uk/main/>

VAT: <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>

Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust: <http://www.bedshertshct.org.uk/>

If you are exploring grant aid for your church building, please contact the DAC Secretary in the first instance, who has lists of grant sources tailored to your circumstances, that can be sent to you.

*Open Church Sunday Administrator:* Susan Sims, email: [openchurches@gmail.com](mailto:openchurches@gmail.com)