



Welcome

It is my pleasure, as the Archdeacon of Hertford, to welcome you all to these visitations and to record my gratitude and thankfulness to you as churchwardens for taking on this important office in the Church with all the responsibilities that it involves.

I welcome those who are continuing in the role and record a particular welcome for those who are new to the position – please know that I will continue to pray for you all as I ask that you will pray for me as we work together to Live God's Love with generosity and joy, imagination and courage.

I also welcome all the clergy and laity who have come to support you at this service and thank you for taking the time to join us as we worship God together and recommit our work to Him.

I am most appreciative of the work that goes on behind the scenes for these services and thank all involved from the Churches and Deaneries who have hosted us this year.

Reaching New People

The work of Reaching New People (RNP) is at the heart of our Diocesan Living God's Love Vision of growing God's kingdom in our world. In addition to continuing to build on our existing churches' ministry and mission we need to engage with those in our communities who have lost touch with the church or never engaged with the church, so that we develop sustainable Christ-centred worshipping communities of all ages and backgrounds across all traditions and contexts within our diocese.

Reaching New People is a programme within our Living God's Love Strategy which focuses on the strand of Making New Disciples through developing, sustaining and growing fresh expressions of church and new forms of worship by equipping lay leaders. The work centres on enabling churches to develop new forms of worship that are right for their own communities and contexts by helping them to understand the opportunities and develop the confidence and leadership skills to grow new disciples of Christ.

We are working with individuals, churches, new worshipping communities / fresh expressions of church and those with common interests through a range of events and activities:

- Vision Days are a great way to explore how you might take your first steps in reaching new people.

- RNP training courses are short courses across the year each with its own focus of exploring possibilities, integrating new forms of worship and engaging with people so that they can take steps towards discipleship.
- Learning Communities are bringing together groups of people to share their interests and build their experiences
- Webinars offer opportunities for sharing and exploring particular topics with experts from within the Diocese and beyond and if you cannot join live, you can listen when at a time to suit you.
- Coaching is helping people learn how to have conversations that lead to real change.

More information is available on the RNP website at www.reachingnewpeople.org.uk; you can also email the team rnp@stalbans.anglican.org and they can be found on Twitter and Facebook.

Church Growth Officers

As we seek to Live God's Love together - the Church Growth Officers The Revd Kate Peacock and The Revd Paul Davies are working to assist and encourage churches in their numerical and spiritual growth. That is more disciples of Christ to make a bigger difference in the world *and* more disciples who desire to grow in faith and relationship with God.

They work primarily with traditional forms of church and they focus on the key areas of:

- Planning for Mission – MAP work and facilitation
- Equipping for Mission – training and workshops
- Resourcing for Mission – giving and stewardship

Experience shows that this work is most effective when they work with parishes over a longer time frame. For 12-14 months they would work with PCCs, ministry teams and church communities to encourage, facilitate planning and vision, and be a 'critical friend' as together we seek to build God's Kingdom.

Their work can involve a variety of methods:

- Mentoring/coaching individuals including clergy
- Networking churches with others who have done similar work or projects to help share resources and wisdom
- Assistance with giving stewardship campaigns and digital giving
- Facilitate MAP sessions with PCCs or Ministry teams
- Assist with parish/benefice vision days

Their work within parishes and benefices is discerned with the local Ministry team and they tailor our approach to each context; there is no 'one size fits all'! The team would be pleased to hear from you as we work together for God's Kingdom.

For further information, contact the Revd Kate Peacock: 01727 818153
kpeacock@stalbans.anglican.org

Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF), Parish Share and Finance.

And so we turn to matters monetary.

Colin Bird is our new Chair of the board of Finance. He has been a church treasurer in this diocese for over 30 years and is presently a churchwarden. He was until recently Chairman of Marshalls Charity, which supports dioceses around the country. A Chartered Accountant, he was in practice with PriceWaterhouseCoopers for 33 years and was on the firm's main board. He was involved in sorting out many large companies in distress so the DBF should be no problem!

The support we provide to parishes in the form of paying for clergy stipends, housing, pensions and training relies on parishes being able to make the voluntary contributions requested under the parish share scheme. Parishes responded well overall to the 2018 requests, with a 3% increase in the amount of donations, but there is no doubt that a number of parishes are finding their financial positions challenging. We are acutely conscious that the strain of keeping church buildings in good repair often detracts from parishes' ability to achieve our common vision for the church in the community. We gratefully acknowledge the huge efforts from our church members in the parishes to continue to give generously to enable the parish contributions to be paid. These contributions are vital to continuing the Church of England's presence in the communities of the Diocese of St Albans through the mutual support which the parish share scheme enables. We are focussed on tight financial control of costs, but recognise that the challenge facing the church is the decline in members. Accordingly, we need to be fully behind the growth agenda being promoted by the Church of England nationally and in our own diocese.

The major focus of our efforts continues to be the support of our parishes and deaneries, schools and chaplaincies under Living God's Love which sees us Going Deeper into God, Transforming Communities and Making New Disciples of Jesus Christ. Of these priorities, the most challenging is that of Making New Disciples. To support all the work that happens to take this priority forward in our 'inherited' churches, as reported last year, we were awarded a five-year grant of £1.7m from the Church Commissioners to resource our project 'Reaching New People'. Under Living God's Love, the aim of this work is to make New Disciples of Christ by developing new worshipping communities and fresh expressions of church and by equipping leaders. The project has touched most, if not all of our parishes, in the second half of 2018 and so far in 2019. External research on the impact of this project will be available soon, enabling us to fine-tune the project's delivery, which is scheduled to continue until mid-2022. Our shared challenge will be to support changes to the diocesan strategy and operations as they adapt potentially to new ways of working thereafter.

However, the fact remains that it is the congregations of today who have to pay to support the ministry of today and we thank our Treasurers and Finance committee members for all that they do week by week, month by month to ensure that Parish Share contributions are collected so that the Common Fund is able to meet the costs of parochial ministry.

In 2018 the Archdeaconry of Hertford was apportioned just less than £4.1 million pounds (£4,094,592) of Parish Share after deducting Temporary Support Grants of £47,500 and Mission Aided Grants of £27,000. £3,797,859 (93%) was received by the end of the year, leaving a shortfall of £296,733 (7%).

Only Welwyn and Hatfield Deanery managed 100% payment by the end of the year. Stevenage Deanery and Hertford and Ware Deanery were both 397% paid and 3 further deaneries had paid over 93% of their contribution leaving only one below the 90% mark.

I am grateful for all that you do to support and enable the prompt and regular payment of Parish Share. We know that in some parishes, finances are challenging. However, 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 (www.parishgivingscheme.org.uk) the financial situation is manageable and under control.

The members of the Board of Finance are most grateful for all that you do in churches and benefices and in your communities to witness to God's love. Colin and other members of the Board are very happy to come and talk with you and your PCC if you would find that helpful.

We are also indebted to the Finance Team at Holywell Lodge who work so hard on our behalf and record our thanks publicly to them today.

Thanks to Martin Bishop

In particular I am sure you will want to join with me in expressing thanks to Martin Bishop, financial secretary at Holywell Lodge, who will be leaving the diocese at the end of June. Martin has been with the diocese for nearly 20 years and we are indebted to him not only for the skill and expertise he has brought to an increasingly complex and demanding role, but his care and commitment in both his professional and personal life to the vision of Living God's Love. He will leave with our prayers and best wishes as he moves to a part-time post and plans to spend more time with his family.

Vocations

As we continue to work together and pray together that we might Live God's Love with generosity and joy, imagination and courage, we come to consider our calling and that of others, to serve God in many different ways.

It is remarkable how often those training for ministry describe their own discernment of calling by talking about the prompting and advice of others. It is the people they trust – typically their Vicar, Reader, Churchwarden or other active lay person – who are the key workers in the campaign to recruit more men and women into licensed ministry.

The task is not insignificant. Simply to maintain current numbers of clergy the Church of England is aiming to double the number of Ordinands by 2020 - and progress is being made. In this diocese we need to recruit and train 20 new

deacons and priests each year (the recent average is 16.) Similarly, we need both to increase our Reader recruitment and to attract younger people to this ministry.

At a Diocesan level we provide useful resources for parishes to use, both printed leaflets and web-based material, and back these up with suitable workshops and events. Our team of Vocations Advisers are ready to see anyone who is discerning a vocation, and they regularly visit Deanery Chapters and Synods to encourage local church leaders to support their work.

But the real results will come through local enthusiasm and initiative, and the quiet ministry of 'tapping on the shoulder'. Will you talk to people about serving God through his church? Will you identify potential future ministers and give them opportunities to get involved in your parish? The recently launched 'Great Vocations Conversation' (www.churchofengland.org/greatvocationsconversation) is a really useful resource.

Further information is available from the Revd Charles Burch, Diocesan Vocations Officer (01442 833298 dvo@stalbans.anglican.org) and on the Vocations webpage at www.stalbans.anglican.org/ministry/vocations.

Safeguarding

As we reflect on the growth and involvement of so many in our parishes and benefices, it remains critical for everyone's wellbeing that Safeguarding continues to have high priority in all the parishes of St Albans Diocese. We follow the lead of the national church and work towards our commitments identified in the policy statement Promoting a Safer Church.

Safeguarding has never been as prominent as it is today, particularly in the media. The media has highlighted the past and current failings of many organisations, the Church being one of them.

At times it may seem that there is an ever growing list of compliance. We must be clear that this compliance is there for good reason. We cannot let the mistakes we have made in the past be made again. We must ensure that we always appropriately support those who disclose their suffering, act on what they tell us, and make sure that our churches are safe places.

The House of Bishops Guidance, Roles and Responsibilities Practice Guidance 2017 sets out specific guidance to Churchwardens in regard to safeguarding:

Churchwardens work with the incumbent, PCC and parish safeguarding officer to:

- Ensure that in the period of a vacancy (during an interregnum), that the incumbent's safeguarding roles and responsibilities are fulfilled, in consultation with the PCC, parish safeguarding officer and the Rural/ Area Dean;
- Pay attention to the specific needs of children and vulnerable adults when undertaking health and safety inspections and risk assessment;

- Ensure that risk assessments are carried out before new activities are undertaken;
- Ensure that all parish activities with children and vulnerable adults are adequately supervised and insured;
- Ensure that the parish has procedures for responding to complaints and grievances;
- Answer questions regarding safeguarding as they arise in the archdeacon's visitations, and respond to any specific safeguarding advice, which may be given from the archdeacon.

We are very fortunate to have such good support from our Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser Jez Hirst and our Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser Martyn Hedley whom simply ask that each of us keep safeguarding in mind at all times and ask for advice whenever we need it.

We are all called, in God's name, to be vigilant, to be supportive and to report all concerns. It is only by working together that we can get Safeguarding right from now on.

Further information is available from Jez Hirst (01727 818107) and Martyn Hedley (01727 818106), safeguarding@stalbans.anglican.org or on the Safeguarding webpage at www.stalbans.anglican.org/ministry/safeguarding.

Safeguarding Newsletter No.9 (May 2019): www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Safeguarding-Newsletter-May-19.pdf

Safeguarding News Letter No. 6 (February 2018 – Training): www.stalbans.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/Safeguarding-News-February-2018.pdf

Archdeacons' Visitation Enquiry and Checklist

The Archdeacons' Visitation Enquiry process (previously known as the Archdeacons' Articles of Enquiry) was overhauled two years ago. We are continuing to use an online Enquiry form, asking only for data we need but have not yet captured. This form, greatly 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.

The Visitation Checklist also continues 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 in my name.

This year I will be inspecting myself in Buntingford Deanery.

Further information can be found on the Archdeacons' Visitation webpage www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/archdeacons-visitations
Archdeacon's Visitation Enquiry Form:
www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/archdeacons-visitation-enquiry

GDPR

The new Data Protection Act 2018 came into force on 25th May 2018, using principles which were taken from the old act that everyone was already abiding by and so for many the basic working practises were in already place. What it has done has been to re-focus people's attention on good governance based on the rules and regulations updated to reflect the data landscape of today. The main change has been the need to re-examine procedures, carry out risk analysis, write Privacy Notices and document the findings.

This has not been an easy process for the Church to manage, particularly as it is not like other organisations. Being large is one issue, but having people, or groups of people, responsible for personal data at many levels and sharing that data to manage and communicate effectively, showed up several grey areas in the legislation. However, once some common sense is applied then solutions can be found.

Everyone has a responsibility to take care of the sensitive personal data we hold, not losing sight of the fact that every day we pass our personal data to many organisations trusting them to be good stewards.

We are very grateful to Phil Townsend, our IT and Facilities Officer who worked hard with the Church Commissioners and Parish Buying at Church House and helped to make online GDPR training available to all Dioceses throughout the country immediately before the 25th May. It is disappointing therefore, to see so little take up in this Diocese with only 120 people having completed the On-line training at the highly reduced rate of £12.00 per course, from the choice of five courses provided. However, the training is still open and can be returned to for refresher courses until May 2021. Further information is available on the Parishbuying website www.parishbuying.org.uk/categories/gdpr-e-learning.

We also take this opportunity to thank Phil Townsend for all his work to support us, much of it behind the scenes but vital to our work in our Diocese and wish him an enjoyable retirement.

Further information can be found on the Data Protection webpage:
www.stalbans.anglican.org/diocese/data-protection

The Chancellors

This past year has also seen the retirement of the Diocesan Chancellor His Honour Judge Roger Kaye QC. We wish to place on record our great thanks to Roger for the generous and empathetic way he has exercised his office. Chancellors are

responsible for all the Faculty process and we have been particularly grateful for the way in which Roger has worked closely with the Archdeacons and Diocesan Advisory Committee, entrusting to our judgement those matters which may be delegated and always holding in great importance the missional needs of our parishes when adjudicating on Faculty petitions. Whenever a personal matter has come before him, Roger has applied the law in a most sensitive way, always taking the trouble to ascertain from the Archdeacons the background and pastoral implications of a ruling.

We are delighted that Bishop Alan has appointed the Deputy Chancellor, Lindsey de Mestre QC as the new Chancellor. Already in a notable judgement, Lindsey has shown a particular understanding and support for the missional and pastoral vision of our parish churches, ruling in favour of a parish in the face of considerable opposition to their plans from an Amenity Society. As Archdeacons we look forward to continuing the excellent working relationships with our Chancellor and the Diocesan Advisory Committee.

Church Security

The security of our church buildings remains an issue, with opportunistic break-ins at a number of churches recently in several parts of the diocese and three further thefts of roofing metal before Easter. We want our churches to be welcoming rather than turned into fortresses – they are there for everyone and there is a recognised security benefit in having our churches open during daylight hours as well as for events, with people popping in as visitors, volunteers or worshippers. Do encourage the congregation and neighbours to keep an eye on the church and to report suspicious behaviour or unexpected work. Take sensible precautions to protect high-value items. David Bevan, our Historic Church Buildings Support Officer, has arranged a number of workshops in deaneries where there have been a high number of break-ins and/or cases of metal theft. If one has not happened in your area, please contact him for further advice.

If the worst happens, it is vital to have insurance cover so that local people do not have to pick up the bill. Please check that you are complying with your insurer's basic requirements, such as using Smartwater forensic marking to protect metal inside and particularly outside the church. Smartwater does not last forever, so if your church applied the free bottle when Ecclesiastical sent it out, you may now need to obtain a fresh supply and get it brushed on by volunteers or a local contractor. Any significant lead or copper roofs should also be protected by a roof alarm with grants available.

Whilst the flames at Notre Dame are fresh in our minds, the parish church of St John the Baptist, Royston suffered a major fire just before Christmas. Neither fire was started maliciously, but it is important to keep all parts of the church tidy, so that flammable materials are not available.

Please also check that the five-yearly inspection of the fixed electrical installation and other routine tests are up-to-date. It is worth routinely setting aside time in a PCC or fabric committee meeting to think about your fire safety provisions and access arrangements for the emergency services (to the church and getting inside

the building) in the event of a fire. We would encourage churches to have a fire rescue plan with input and a visit from the Fire Service.

It is also good to review your local procedures and training of sidespeople and others on matter of security, fire safety and also personal safety of individuals and the congregation. Terrorist or hate crime attacks on churches in this country are extremely rare, but the Government continues to make available funding to enable any churches at particular risk to make security improvements.

For further information, please contact:

Emma Critchley (Diocesan Pastoral Secretary) ecritchley@stalbans.anglican.org
01727 818132

David Bevan (Historic Church Buildings Support Officer)

hcbssupport@stalbans.anglican.org 01727 818108

Ecclesiastical Insurance – guidance - www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/church-security

Ecclesiastical Insurance – Policy Information - www.ecclesiastical.com/documents/church-insurance-made-simple-administering.pdf

Fire Safety - www.stalbans.anglican.org/dac/dac-advice-leaflets

Government funding for church security - www.gov.uk/government/news/places-of-worship-to-get-security-funding-boost

Alban Life

Alban Life is the new quarterly magazine for all the parishes and communities of the diocese. Aimed at the people who make up the 34,000 in our worshipping community, its aim is gently to encourage, inform and inspire people across the spectrum of belief and interest in the Christian faith.

Delivered direct to parishes and partly paid for by advertising, it has been very well received across a range of readers. Described by some as 'gently missional,' we hope that parishes will continue to value it and actively give copies to worshippers and visitors alike.

PRE-LAMBETH HOSPITALITY

Next year offers the diocese a unique opportunity. In the summer of 2020, the next Lambeth Conference will be held in Canterbury – a meeting of all the bishops, some with their spouses, from across the whole Anglican Communion. Prior to going to Canterbury we will be hosting about 20 bishops, some with spouses, for 8 days. They will be based in each of the Deaneries and take part in a programme of events at parish, deanery, archdeaconry and diocesan levels.

In the invitation extended to them by our own bishops we if when they come, they might help us *“to refresh our vision of our involvement in God’s Mission in the*

diocese and review how our global connections help us in that calling." In other words, help us with God's Mission in St Albans Diocese.

So far, we know that along with the Caribbean bishops whose dioceses we are formally linked with we also have bishops, some with spouses, from Pakistan, Canada, Bangladesh, South Africa, Tanzania, USA, Brazil and Australia visiting us. We are wanting to learn from them, ask them to contribute to the life of the diocese and to tell us – as encouragingly as possible – what we look like to someone from outside.

Saying we – the Church of England – is part of a global family of churches – the Anglican Communion – is one thing; *meeting* face to face, talking to and learning from other members of that family is a totally different and exciting prospect. So, keep July 15th to 22nd, 2020 as open as possible in your diary and be a part of this unique experience.

For further information contact Stephen Lyon, the Diocesan Coordinator for this initiative at: lambethhospitality@stalbans.anglican.org

Mrs Lynne Griffiths

Many of you will know my PA Mrs Lynne Griffiths from your contact with her by email or phone or in person at events such as this afternoon/evening. I would like to publicly thank her very much for all her work in the office and for her support which benefits us all day by day.

Contact details: archdhertpa@stalbans.anglican.org 01727 818159

Miscellaneous

Churchwardens Training will again take place in September. We will meet for our half day training on Saturday September 14th from 9.30am – 1pm. Further details will be circulated but do please keep the date free. This will again be held at the Hertfordshire Guide Centre, Cottered, nr Buntingford SG9 9QP.

I am most grateful for those colleagues from the Diocesan Office and others who supported our Visitations.

The offering which was taken during the services was as usual for the Archdeacons' Discretionary Fund which is used to relieve need, often sudden and unexpected, amongst our clergy. In 2018 the same offerings raised around £1,536 for which I thank you.

Conclusion

As we listened again to those words from the Letter to the Romans, we were encouraged to

...present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our spiritual worship. We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, so that

we may each discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

We are called to be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. If it is possible, so far as it depends on each of us, we are to live peaceably with all.

By sharing our stories, by sharing the faithful examples of those who have inspired and encouraged us in our journey of faith, by praying together and working together and dreaming together, hopefully we will learn how to live a faithful life for today - a faithful life which is meaningful, relevant, and life giving, not just to ourselves, but to everyone we meet so that together we may journey forward Living God's Love with generosity and joy, imagination and courage.

And so I invite you now to take a few moments of quiet to reflect on how you will heed God's call to you to participate in his work in your parish or school or chaplaincy, at work and school and at home, in the PCC and Synod and Chapter, using the gifts he has given you so that together we may journey forward living God's love with generosity and joy, imagination and courage.

Moment of quiet

As we come to commission our Churchwardens, to pray for them and to encourage them in their continuing ministry, I'd like to end with a prayer we prayed at my collation and that I have prayed every day since. Let us pray:

*Tender God,
as we step out afresh to live your love
and serve Christ in the world,
we ask that your guiding hand would hold us fast
and lead us confidently through all that life has to offer.
Bless us as we seek to make new disciples.
Inspire us as we worship and ponder your word,
so that we might go deeper into God.
Encourage us so that our lives might transform our communities.
Amen*

The Ven Janet Mackenzie
Archdeacon of Hertford
May 2019