

To: All Clergy, Lay Readers, Lay Representatives, Alternative Lay Representatives, Vestry Secretaries and Treasurers – and for passing on to your congregations...

From John Mitchell, Diocesan Secretary

12th September 2021

As usual, our quarterly Diocesan Office Update begins with an important message from Bishop Kevin...

Dear Friends

Afghanistan is a long, long way away: despite news coverage, newspaper reports, radio interviews, the country itself is on another continent. The news coverage makes many of us feel powerless, makes us ask ourselves the question “What can I do? Or, indeed, “What has the situation there to do with me?” When I find myself asking those questions



then I become full of fear: fear not of military force, but fear of losing real hope in God who is love. Real hope, not simplistic optimism, that in the end the situation will sort itself out, but real hope in God because, as the liturgy states, there is no room for fear in love.

What Afghanistan teaches us is that to have ideas about God is right; it is only when we believe that our ideas about God are the only right ideas to have and to hold, then we lose real faith for a fraudulent certainty. Whatever faith is, it is not ideological certainty but faith in God who is love, removes fear and gives each one of us power. The power to empathise with the refugee and the exile, as they seek asylum in our midst. The power to recognise, and face, the refugee and the exile we recognise within ourselves. The child at school who is not interested in sport in a school famous for its prowess on the athletics track or football field, that child can feel isolated, excluded, exiled within and without, a refugee from the common experience.

Remember the gospel stories of Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners. Making friends with women, never mind women taken in adultery. Certainty stoned them, but with love, understanding, acceptance, Jesus showed empathy and real love. That is the power of love, the sign of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in our world: real hope searches to understand, to accept, to open ourselves to new experience, to new ideas in which we encounter God in new ways through new people. There is no room for fear in love because life with God is so exciting, love is exciting, life giving, and brings us to power.

We have power in the tiny donations of money we are able to make to aid agencies. We have power in keeping ourselves informed of what is going on in our communities and in the worldwide family of humanity. We have power in prayer for those whose lives are torn apart by violence, war, being somehow different, a refugee, in exile.

Remember the Biblical stories of God's people who were exiled, refugees, wanderers in strange lands. This is our history, our heritage as people of faith. It is the story of God's people, searching for God in the wilderness of their experience and of their hearts.

Recently, I have visited several projects helping those with addictions recognise what actually drives them to substance abuse of whatever sort, drugs, alcohol. Walking in certain areas of our city many of our people, especially young people, feel powerless and hopeless. The dedication, the love of those working in those areas, walking those streets: that is the dedication and the love which seeks to give power to those who feel powerless so often.

When we pray for Afghanistan, we pray for the peace of love which comes from understanding and acceptance. When we pray for those with addictions in our own communities we pray for the peace of love, which comes from understanding and acceptance. When we pray for ourselves, we pray that we may show the power of the Holy Spirit in understanding and acceptance. That is the blessing of God, which passes all understanding...

+Kevin 03/09/2021

Diocesan Council: in addition to Bishop Kevin's pastoral message above, at the 21st August meeting of the Diocesan Council, he reported on a number of highly positive recent events, not least the 25 confirmations he had undertaken across the diocese; the wonderfully encouraging (if attendance-limited due to Covid) Institution of Rev Keith Thomasson at St Ninian's, Troon; recent appointments in Kilmarnock and North Ayrshire, Airdrie and Cumbernauld (further details below); planning and preparation for the Lambeth Conference in 2022; the plans for COP26 in November; and a clergy conference in October that would allow him to meet with most of our clergy at once, and in person, for the first time since his mid-pandemic arrival in the Diocese.

Meanwhile, he remained acutely conscious of those charges in the Diocese who were in vacancy, and he and Dean Reuben outlined the immense amount of work being undertaken to offer assistance to these charges in a variety of ways that might offer hope for their eventual fulfilment.

From the Dean: in connection with the above paragraph, Dean Reuben makes the following prayer and action requests:

Would all Charges please pray for good priests to apply for the posts that are advertised in our Diocese over the coming 6 months. We need to receive applications from holy people who are focused on the mission of the Charges and engaging with the issues of the local areas all within the national and world context of the Climate Crisis Action Plan 10 Points of Guidance. People who are prepared to lead the congregations of our diocese in prayer, outreach and social engagement in our generation.

Eco-Climate Crisis Network - According to the new constitution the Diocesan Council has brought into being a Diocesan Network, the Eco-Climate Crisis Network. The work of this network is to assist Charges and individuals in the Diocese engage with the 10 Points of Guidance given to us by the General Synod in June. Petko and Dean Reuben are organising a series of monthly online meetings to address the various aspects of the Points of Guidance with which we are challenged to engage. Please look at the diocesan website for details which will be put up in due course along with advertising on our social media channels.

Diocesan Synod 2021

We had our first-ever 'virtual' Diocesan Synod by Zoom on 31st July this year, and thanks are due to all who enabled and participated in this event. A summary of the main issues discussed and decided upon is (or soon will be) on the Diocesan Website. These included:

- The adoption of a new Constitution more appropriate to our times and our Canons, with particular regard to the election of members to our Diocesan Council (our Charity Trustees) and to General Synod, as well as the encouragement of our Regional Councils to renew their status as places of fellowship, sharing and influence with a greater freedom to shape their own destinies.
- A report from General Synod on a number of important issues, especially on Climate Change (as above).
- An update on our new Diocesan Centre (see below).
- A detailed explanation of the principles of Transitional Ministry being piloted by the Canon Missioner in the Heartland group of churches, a pilot from which the Diocese hopes to extrapolate useful principles for vacancies that emerge across the regions in future years.
- Proposed changes to the Scottish Liturgy 1982. Further details are on the Provincial website at [Scottish Liturgy 1982 with Alternative Eucharistic Prayers - \(Revised 2021\) - The Scottish Episcopal Church \(anglican.org\)](#)
- The decision to close St Mungo's Alexandria (see below).

St Mungo's, Alexandria: in accordance with the wishes of the Vestry, and the recommendation of Diocesan Council, Synod approved the decision to close St Mungo's, where a service of thanksgiving for its ministry and the deconsecration of the building took place at 3pm on Sunday 29th August. Although a sad occasion in many ways, the afternoon was, in others, a wonderful celebration of a ministry that had begun in in the 1870s and a church building that had opened in 1894.

Bishop Kevin presided over a Sung Eucharist that was both glorious and poignant, ably enhanced by choral assistance from St Bride's, Hyndland. An extremely moving sermon was preached by our former Primus, The Rt Revd Richard Holloway, whose spiritual journey had begun at St Mungo's. Alas, illness prevented Richard from attending in person, a source of sore disappointment to him; however, the upside to this was that we were able to broadcast the recording of his words that he had made at home for use in the service against the possibility that he might not be able to attend, and we can therefore share it with others who could not attend in person. The text of his sermon is attached as a separate PDF document to this newsletter, and a link to the recording is at <https://bit.ly/AlexandriaSermonRichardHolloway>.

Clergy and Charge News: some of the information below has already been broadcast on our social media and website, but its repetition here should ensure greater awareness of recent Diocesan news in this area...

Rev Canon Stephen Hazlett: in July Bishop Kevin was pleased to announce the appointment of the Rev Stephen Hazlett, Rector of Greyfriars, Kirkcudbright and St Mary's, Gatehouse of Fleet, as the newest Canon of St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow. Stephen has served in the Diocese since 2016, in a journey of ordained ministry spanning over three decades from Portrush, Belfast, and Bushmills, through Sunderland, to Rotterdam.

Bishop Kevin said: "Canon Stephen's appointment is an exciting development for both Galloway and the whole Diocese. He is handling three long-term vacancies in the region and helping the Diocese discern a new vision and pattern of ministry for these charges, alongside his own congregations. He will be a great addition to the Cathedral Chapter and his voice will be a valuable asset in the wider mission of our Diocese."

Please pray for Stephen, his family, and the Diocese, as we follow God's call for the future of God's people in Glasgow and Galloway. His installation at St Mary's Cathedral will be announced at a later date.

Kilmarnock and North Ayrshire Team: in August, Bishop Kevin was pleased to announce the following two appointments: the Rev Harriet Sarah Johnston as Priest-in-Charge of Holy Trinity, Kilmarnock, and the Rev Lee Johnston as Priest-in-Charge of the North Ayrshire Team.

Harriet says, “I’m really looking forward to becoming Priest-in-Charge of Holy Trinity Church. The congregation has found innovative ways of keeping in touch and worshipping together during the pandemic and are involved in an impressive range of ecumenical and community initiatives. I’m looking forward to meeting them in person, getting to know them, and discovering a shared vision of what God can do in Kilmarnock.”

And Lee says, “I am delighted to be going to St Andrew’s and St Peter’s in North Ayrshire to support their Christian worship and witness as Priest-in-Charge. These churches collaborate closely together and with other denominations; they warmly welcome refugees and the wider community; and have lived with change courageously during the pandemic. I’m most looking forward to meeting everyone in person, at services and during visits, as we encourage one another towards God’s future for us and the communities we serve.”

Bishop Kevin commented: “We are delighted to make two such strong appointments from within our diocese to these two charges who are seeking a way forward in ministry over the next decade. The skills and talents which Lee and Harriet bring to the charges, and have already been shared in their training curacies of Lanark and Bishopbriggs, will enable much growth and adaptation as we look to the new reality of ministry post-pandemic. We look forward to being able to support them both as they take on new responsibilities in these charges and witness the flourishing of all associated with Holy Trinity, Kilmarnock and the North Ayrshire Team. It is a very exciting development for the charges in the diocese that these talented young priests are committed to the diocesan vision of building the Kingdom of God in Glasgow and Galloway.”

Please pray for Harriet and Lee as they make preparations for their moves over the coming months and pray for Bishopbriggs and Lanark as they prepare to hand on their curates to the wider life of the diocese.

Harriet and Lee will live in the rectory at Kilmarnock once it has been made ready for their occupancy by the Diocesan Property Committee and the charges. The current intention is to license Lee on Thursday 14th October at 7pm. We anticipate that this service will take place at St Andrew’s Church, while details of Harriet’s licensing will be announced in due course.

Rev Kirstin Freeman’s departure from All Saint’s, Bearsden, was announced earlier this year, and on Saturday 9th October, she will be instituted as Rector of Holy Name, Cumbernauld at 12 noon, after which (at 5pm) a second service of Institution will take place at St Paul & St John’s Monklands. We offer Kirstin, and both charges, our love and our prayers as they move into a new period of mission and ministry together, and we pray for All Saints as they enter a period of vacancy.

Rev Heller Gonzalez (St Augustine's, Dumbarton) has recently been welcomed into the Cisterian Order, where he has taken up the name of Br James Martin at his novitiate within the Order. Please see <https://cistercianorder.com/our-latest-news/> for further details.

Rev Jim Benton-Evans has recently left the East End Team in Glasgow for a move to the Diocese of Brechin, where we wish him well, and thank him for his recent service to our own Diocese in youth work and broadcasting.

Dr Lisa Curtice will be ordained Deacon at St Mary's Cathedral **on Saturday 26th September at 5pm**, after which she will serve as a curate across Renfrewshire, enabling and assisting all of the charges in that Region, an initiative enabling talents to be shared widely, as well as enhanced by, and for, members of those congregations.

The Dean: at the same service on 26th September, **Dean Reuben Preston** will be installed as Dean of the Diocese, an event postponed during the lockdown stages of the pandemic.

For any of the services mentioned above, please check on the relevant charge/Diocesan websites for details of attendance limitations that may, or may not, be in force. If in doubt, and you would like to attend, please contact the Diocesan Secretary.

Lay Ministry Reflection Day: Rev Les Ireland shares details of this below:

**Emerging Together in Hope and Fear: Pilgrims to Our New Future!
Saturday 9th October, 10.00am – 1.00pm.**

Everyone in licensed Lay Ministry (Lay Readers, Pastoral Assistants, Eucharistic Assistants, Worship Leaders) is welcome to join us. This will be an online event.

Programme:

10.00am Worship

10.20am How are we doing? How is emerging from the pandemic going? A chance to share experience, both positive and negative.

10.50am: Are there things where we can help?

11.00am: Break, including a chance for quiet, thoughts and tea/coffee

11.30am: Reflection on a Bible passage (Mark 4: 35-41)

12.15pm: Feedback, mutual encouragement

12.45pm: Closing Prayers

“Lockdown” seems to have gone on forever, although we are now emerging, and have been for a few weeks. Lockdown has disrupted most of our lives, and the life of churches. It has disrupted and changed the ministries we all have had in the past. People are emerging in hope, in fear, in uncertainty. For many of us, the period of emergence is more complex, more difficult than the period of lockdown itself. This

morning is to help us face the feelings engendered in us as we move to restart our ministries, and to seek God, and how God may want us to move forward. Ultimately it is a morning to help us renew our certainty in God, while facing the uncertainties of our world and our ministries.

Nearer the time we will re-circulate this invitation and circulate the Zoom details. However, we recommend that you register with Les949@btinternet.com to be sure to get in! If you want to know more, please call the Rev Les Ireland on 0141 776 3866.

Diocesan Centre Update: an update until the end of July is included in the Synod information on the website. Since then, final snagging issues have been identified and resolved, so that we *should* be in full possession of the building in the second half of September. It will take some time to organise the movement of equipment, records, files and those items of furniture that we plan to retain, as well as the purchase of new furniture, so it would be foolish to predict a date of final habitation, let alone predicted work patterns of office staff as we begin to adjust to post-lockdown (but still Covid-affected) existence. On a more definitive note, however, those who have visited the office in its near-handover state have been hugely enthused by its beautiful, modern appearance and suitability for the multi-use functions that it was designed to fulfil.

SEI 2021 Lecture, Tuesday 28th October, 5pm: our Diocese is honoured to be hosting this annual event, which will be introduced by Bishop Kevin, who hopes that as many as possible might attend, either in person at Glasgow University Chapel (there is space for 100 people) or online. The lecture is organised by Canon Anne Tomlinson, Principal of the Scottish Episcopal Institute (well known to many readers of this update through her previous work in and across the diocese), and is being given by the Revd Dr Michael Hull, on the topic of *To Filioque or Not to Filioque*. Further publicity, and registration details for attending either the physical or online event can be found at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/to-filioque-or-not-to-filioque-the-warrant-of-holy-scripture-tickets-169336888191>

For those non-theologians (like me) who were unaware of the *filioque* controversy that shaped the Nicene Creed which most of us repeat each Sunday, simply reading that publicity has enlightened me already (as well as led me to a Google search!), and it's hoped that many others are moved to find out more on 28th October. A poster for the event is also attached.

Kind regards

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