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AD CLERUM

5ed Ionawr 2022 5th January

Noswyl y Ystwyll

Epiphany Eve

Annwyl Gyfeillion,

So we arrive at 2022, and we’re still not free of Covid, and uncertainty hangs over the continuing life of many of our congregations, with restrictions old and new in force.

Yet I hope that we do not begin this new year downhearted. We must remember that we are invited into this new year by none other than Christ himself. It is Christ who invites us to follow him into whatever future this year will present, and it is Christ who invites us to be his witnesses in these circumstances. “Come,” he says to us, “be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world, and now you must be my witnesses to the faith, hope and love which are the fruit of my incarnation and resurrection. I have come that you may have life, and life in all its fullness.”

Recalling that Jesus is both the author of our life, and of our ministry, is surely a source of encouragement, for whatever happens to the Church this year, its future depends not upon us, and our strategizing and our planning, however much they can contribute, but truly upon the leading of Christ, the Captain of our Salvation, and the inward working of Grace and of the Holy Spirit, which is poured out, by God’s promise, upon all who receive him as Lord and Saviour.

I am looking forward to this year - not because I feel up to the challenges that I know lie ahead, but because the one who invites me to tackle them has already won the victory, and is Immanuel, God on our side, God in our midst.

It is my prayer that you will find faith, hope and love in Christ this new year, and that acknowledging him as our captain and our guide, we may go forward with boldness, so that as we freely receive, we may also freely give.

**The new diocesan focus**

The letterhead of this Ad Clerum includes the new diocesan ident, as approved by the Diocesan Standing Committee, to guide us through the year of reconstruction that lies ahead of us. Much will be published in coming weeks about Faith, Hope and Love as the centre of our life. It is intended as a focus for our life, not a new initiative to replace all that has gone before, but to remind us of the purpose of the Church, and to invite us to focus our energies.

The threefold focus will be supported in the near future with the publication of a diocesan booklet, a sort of manifesto setting out how the focus impinges on our life, and, in the Summer, with a diocesan course which can be used by Mission Area Conferences or more widely.

I hope that you will find encouragement, inspiration, and support in this new focus, and that God will bless us as we seek to be faithful witnesses to his grace in our lives.

**Farewell to Archdeacon John**

John finished his ministry as Archdeacon of Wrexham at the end of 2021. Already confirmed as Bishop of Swansea and Brecon, he now assumes care of the diocese, and awaits his consecration as a bishop in the Church of God. Latest indications are that this will take place in Bangor Cathedral on Saturday, 26th February, depending on Covid restrictions. The event is likely to be by invitation only, and any availability of tickets will be notified in due course.

In the meantime, we are organising a Farewell Service for John on **Sunday, 23rd January, at 1530hr** in the Cathedral. Numbers will also be restricted for this service, on the basis of the numbers allowed for Cathedral worship due to Covid restrictions.

Mission areas in St Asaph and Montgomery archdeaconries are invited to nominate **one** person (lay or ordained) to attend, with mission areas in Wrexham archdeaconry invited to nominate **two** people. To this, additional places for the Cathedral Chapter and representatives from the Diocesan Office will be available, along with John’s personal guests.

Please would mission area leaders ensure my chaplain, Michael, has the names of the representatives nominated from each mission area no later than **Monday, January 17th**.

**Appointment of a new Archdeacon, and Interim Arrangements**

The Bishop’s Staff team have had an initial discussion on succession planning as John moves onto his new role. We are very conscious that the future life of the diocese is made uncertain because the impact of Covid on our congregations is still largely unknown, and we do not know how this will impact on diocesan life. We are also conscious that the numbers of regular worshippers have been in decline, and that the affordability of ministry is a major concern. We have therefore decided to undertake a review of the number and roles of archdeacons in the diocese before proceeding to a new recruitment process. In particular, we will have to consider carefully what any new archdeacon will bring in terms of skills and outlook which could enhance and complement the current team.

In the meantime, therefore, the present two archdeacons will assume responsibility for the Mission Areas in the Archdeaconry of Wrexham between them. Archdeacon Andy will assume responsibility for Borderlands and Mold Mission Areas, including the Mission Hub Church in Mold, and Archdeacon Barry will assume responsibility for the Alyn, Maelor, Offa and Wrexham Mission Areas, including oversight of Hope Street, with immediate effect.

**Hwyl a Helo**

December brought a flurry of interviews and appointments. I am delighted to announce here the appointment of **Jane Finn,** subject to completion of the usual formalities, as a Priest-in-Charge in Denbigh Mission Area. Jane will be coming from the Diocese of Leeds to work alongside Rebecca and Martin with special responsibility for Pastoral Care. Jane brings a wealth of experience from Halifax Parish Church, and we look forward to welcoming her to the diocese.

We also welcome back to the diocesan clergy **Richard Hainsworth,** who has been appointed, subject to completion of the usual formalities, as a Priest in Charge in the Estuary and Mountain Mission Area, rooted in Flint. Richard has had a few years outside parochial ministry, leading theological education in the Province through his work with St Padarn’s, and being a parent, but it is good to welcome him back to full time ministry.

It is also good to announce the appointment of **Ben Lines,** as a Priest in Charge in the Aberconwy Mission Area, as he completes his curacy, while **Toby Jones** will be seconded to Caereinion Mission Area for January and February before moving to Maelor Mission Area to complete his period of curacy. Ben and Toby have brought new energy to the Teulu Asaph with a whole cohort of younger clergy, and it is good to have their commitment and enthusiasm for our mission.

All being well, we shall have six candidates for ordination to the priesthood, and the Ordination of Priests is scheduled to take place in the Cathedral on the last Saturday in June. God willing, we shall also be able to welcome a full cathedral for this occasion. Our six candidates are:

**Stephen Hayes**, serving in the Tanat Vyrnwy Mission Area,

**Adrian Johnson**, serving in the Mold Mission Area,

**Chris Lawton**, serving in the Aber-Morfa Mission Area,

**Natasha Quinn Thomas**, serving in the Dyffryn Clwyd Mission Area,

**Patrick Williams**, serving in the Wrexham Mission Area, and

**Michael Winwood**, serving in the Maelor Mission Area.

I am also pleased to announce that I am making the following appointments for the summer. God willing, I shall ordain six candidates to the diaconate on the first Saturday in July. They are:

**Alyson Goldstein**, who will serve in the Denbigh MA,

**Dan Morgan**, who will serve in the Mold MA,

**Grace Lomas**, who will serve in the Aberconwy MA,

**Marcus Pipe**, who will serve in the Wrexham MA, and

**Gareth Williams**, who will also serve in the Estuary and Mountain MA

I am very sorry to record here the death of the Rev’d. **Glyn Morgan**, who died peacefully on New Year’s Day after a short illness. Glyn had a distinguished ministry in the diocese of Bangor, before a period in school chaplaincy in Oswestry, before joining the diocese of St Asaph in 1988. He was a passionate priest, and advocate of Welsh language and culture, and we will miss his vigorous contributions to diocesan life.

**Clergy Synod**

The diocesan Synod for all licensed clergy is to be held on Tuesday, 1st February, between 10am and 4pm, and will be held by Zoom.

Here is the link to access the Synod :

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84534842557?pwd=TVRUTzNadGlONjVXR2dqeFBtT2FWUT09>

Meeting ID: 845 3484 2557

Passcode: 608652

Please note the link will be active from 0930hrs

The theme of the Synod is “***Proclamation***” from the four ‘P’s of LyCiG, and the speakers are Archbishop Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York; John Bell of the Iona Community; and Bishop Philip North, the Bishop of Burnley. Clergy should make themselves available to attend for the whole day, and once again, anyone wishing for permission to be absent should email me at the earliest opportunity.

**Diary and Events**

This diary below includes dates for events where all clergy are encouraged to attend, or required to attend as part of their professional commitment. Please ensure that these dates are in your diary, even where the exact format may be open to change**.**

**2022**

10 January Licensing of ***Simon Piercy*** as an Associate Priest in Borderlands Mission Area.

16 JanuaryLicensing of ***Ben Lines*** as Priest-in-Charge in Aberconwy Mission Area (St Michael’s, Llandudno Junction) 16.00 hr

23 January Farewell Service for the Rt Revd ***John Lomas***, Cathedral, 1530hr

30 JanuaryCommissioning of the extended Valle Crucis Mission Area (St Collen’s, Llangollen) 11.00hr

Confirmation for Tanat-Vyrnwy Mission Area (St. Myllin’s Church, Llanfyllin) 15.00hr

01 February Diocesan Clergy Synod (via Zoom)

**Later in the Year**

09, 11, 12 March Spring Ember Days

23March MAL training day (venue to be decided)

14 April Chrism Eucharist and Renewal of Vows (Cathedral)

16 April Easter Vigil and Confirmation (Cathedral)

05 June Pentecost Confirmation, 1530hr (Cathedral)

22 & 25 June Petertide Ember Days

25 June Ordination of Priests, Cathedral, 1000hr

02 July Ordination of Deacons, Cathedral, 1000hr

23 & 24 September Michaelmas Ember Days

14-17 Novr **Residential Clergy School** (Swanwick Conference Centre)

22 Novr MAL training day (venue and format to be decided)

14, 16,17 Decr Advent Ember Days

**In particular, please note the dates of the residential Clergy school next November, as this may require some participants to be making special arrangements for their families, in order to be able to attend.**

**Notes and Queries**

**Lent Prayer Card 2022**

Preparations are in hand to make the Diocesan Lent Prayer Card available to you later in the month as usual. I will be inviting all members of the Teulu Asaph to be joining me in saying the prayer once again, every evening in Lent ay 1800hr. The prayer this year has been composed by Sally Harper, our Director of Spirituality, and focuses on the key words that frame our diocesan strategy going forward: Faith, Hope, and Love. Please would mission area leaders / administrators confirm the number of prayer cards they would like to reserve by contacting Michael at Esgobty **no later than Monday, 17 January**, and they will be sent out in good time for circulation before Lent.

**PTOs**

The process of renewal of some PTOs continues into this new year as we await the completion of safeguarding training and / or DBS rechecks. Currently 54 new PTOs have been issued and I look forward to issuing my PTO to the remaining thirty or so clerics that are waiting for the aforementioned processes to be completed. Only clerics with new PTOs should now be officiating at public worship, and mission area leaders will be receiving shortly the roll of those now authorized to officiate until December 31st, 2024, with further updates issued as other clergy complete the process of renewal.

**Residential Clergy School : 14-17 November**

I hope these dates are already secure in your diaries. I look forward to seeing you in Swanwick for our residential clergy school which will focus on leadership in our churches and maintaining our own spiritual health. We will be joined by CPAS, Dr Peter Walker and the Rev’d. Liz Devall. Archdeacon Andy and the planning group have been working hard on the arrangements and further details and registration forms will be available in the next edition of the Ad Clerum at the beginning of February.

I give thanks to God for you all as we enter 2022. The diocese has proved highly resilient faced with the challenges of Covid, and the fact that we are a team who can stand together will benefit the future which we build together. Be bearers of Faith, Hope and Love in the coming year, and may God bless your every effort and ministry.

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