**Reader AGM 2019**

**Warden’s report**

1. We marked 50 years of the contribution of women readers to the Church with a service at Foxhill on Sunday July 28th. Assistant Warden Fran Hiles led the service and Lynn Raphael from St Mary Magdalene, Ashton upon Mersey preached. We heard testimonies from two women readers about their current experiences (Sue Haddon and Brenda Baxendale), and also from Eileen Delight and Molly Dow who were both amongst the first to be licensed. It was a good afternoon and thanks are particularly due to the team at Foxhill who put on such a splendid tea.
2. The 50 years of women reader’s service was a special event, but given how much readers enjoyed simply being together and networking (with some good food!) Director of Studies Liz Shercliff and I have been wondering whether other such opportunities might be appreciated. We are currently putting together plans for a training day in the New Year for readers on the subject of barriers and gateways for adult Christian learning. We’ll see what the take-up is, but watch this space anyway.
3. As you will see from the Director of Studies’ report the number of people discerning a vocation to reader ministry is down from last year. Whether this is simply just a ‘low’ year for numbers or part of a downward trend I don’t know (certainly there is a downward trend nationally). However, I shall be working with a new member of staff (the Diocesan Director of Vocations, Rev’d Sarah Fenby) to see what more we might do to increase reader vocations.
4. We are now nearly fully staffed with deanery sub-wardens who work to support readers locally. A full list is available on the diocesan website. I am grateful for all they do.
5. Thanks are also due to Malcolm Winton for all he does as Secretary of the Readers Council and particular thanks for his initiative in re-writing the reader review self-reflection form to take into account the three main areas of reader ministry which emerged from the Central Reader Council’s national consultative initiative last year. This is a helpful reminder of the breadth of reader ministry.
6. As you will all know there has been a big consultative exercise within the diocese to seek people’s views on who should be the next Bishop of Chester. As Warden I was invited, along with 4 readers and 4 pastoral workers, to a consultative meeting of the Vacancy-in-see committee on 24th September. We met with the appointments secretaries for the Archbishops and Prime Minister and shared our views in a short meeting which was both relaxed and lively! Thanks to the readers who came: Malcom Winton, David Hollington, Belinda Priestley and Lynne Raphael.

**Director of Studies Report 2019**

The number of new Readers in training is down from last year, although 2018 was a ‘bumper’ year. Eight people started training in September. Seventeen progressed into year 3 (Year 1: Foundations for ministry).

Two Readers have progressed into the final year of the Bachelor of Theology degree.

It is encouraging that a number of licensed Readers continue to join our classes for Continuing Ministerial Development, and we hope this trend continues.

Online teaching materials have moved from the University of Chester Moodle site to chester.learn.anglica.org, a site owned and managed by the Church of England. This allows us to determine who has access to our courses, rather than it being restricted to those registered as university students.