

Prayer Briefing:

As we begin a new ministry in the Diocese of Chester, following Bishop Mark's confirmation of election to Bishop of Chester, we give thanks for God's blessing on our diocese.

Please pray for our diocesan senior staff

- For Bishop Mark as he and Lindsay prepare to move to our diocese following the Confirmation of Election last Wednesday;
- Also, for Bishop Keith, Mike Gilbertson, Ian Bishop, Tim Stratford, George Colville, Liz Geddes, Christine Broad and Roger Clarke as they lead the diocese and for our rural deans as they co-ordinate and support their deaneries.

For the Cathedral and Parishes

- Give thanks for how well some aspects of our lockdown ministry have gone;
- Please pray for our Cathedral and parishes as they re-open for private prayer and services, for the safety of all who are returning to church buildings, that God will guide and bless the re-opening plans, and renew the church;
- Please pray that our leadership teams would make wise decisions as they consider how to increase the number of services that they offer in church buildings and online.

For the Ordinands and ordination training

- We give thanks for and pray for those licensed as Lay Ministers earlier this month as they wait to be ordained deacon in October, for good use and encouragement during this time of waiting;
- Please pray for the deacons who await their priesting later in the year;
- We pray for those who are undertaking training for ordination;
- Please pray for the implementation of the new North West Theological Education Institute, for a smooth transition for staff and students.

And for the series of webinars entitled 'Back to Better'

As part of its response and support for parishes the diocese is offering a series of webinars to support lay and ordained church leaders as they re-open their church buildings and prepare for this new chapter in church ministry.

The final webinar is on July 30 at 7.30pm and will focus on faith in our everyday lives. The first four are now available to watch again online. We give thanks for all those that have taken part and for the technology that has allowed us to continue to share ideas and hold conversations.

Transforming Lives Together

- Thank God for the work of churches across the diocese in providing and other support, an amazing witness of God's love;
- please pray for those who are already struggling to feed their children and themselves and are now fearful about losing their jobs;
- please pray that we and others across the diocese will have wisdom to know how to help that happen.

- And for wisdom to help people move towards looking after themselves and others with minimum external support.

Our Link Dioceses

Melanesia

- We rejoice that there are still no confirmed cases in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu;
- Please pray for the continuing COVID-19 awareness training and donations of handwashing facilities;
- We give thanks for Bishop Alfred Karibongi and Bishop Nathan Tome, long serving diocesan bishops who are retiring. We pray for the election committees who will decide on their successors and for the Diocesan Offices during the vacancies.

Democratic Republic of Congo

- The Aru and Boga Dioceses are thankful for their link with the Diocese of Chester and for its prayerful support in difficult times;
- Pray for the work of these dioceses in their communities and trying to maintain connections with the church during the lockdown;
- Please pray especially for the wellbeing and safety of Bishop William and all communities in the Boga Diocese who are being affected by the militia violence in the Ituri province;
- Give thanks that Uganda has recently opened part of its border with the D.R.C. to allow in thousands of people who fled their homes in May after inter-communal clashes in north-eastern Ituri province and who had been stuck in no-man's land for more than a month;
- Please pray for the refugees who will be quarantined before being settled and for the aid agencies involved;
- Pray for the continuing work of all the aid and missionary workers in Aru and Boga, particularly the IPASC (Institute Panafricain de Santé Communautaire Medicine) who are working with the diocese to provide training on health care in the community and are delivering health and well-being projects.

As we walk carefully forward the words of this Northumbrian prayer are very apt:

Northumbria Blessing

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you,
wherever He may send you.

May He guide you through the wilderness,
protect you through the storm.

May He bring you home rejoicing
at the wonders He has shown you.

May He bring you home rejoicing
once again into our doors.

Thank you,
Jonathon and the Foxhill Team.