

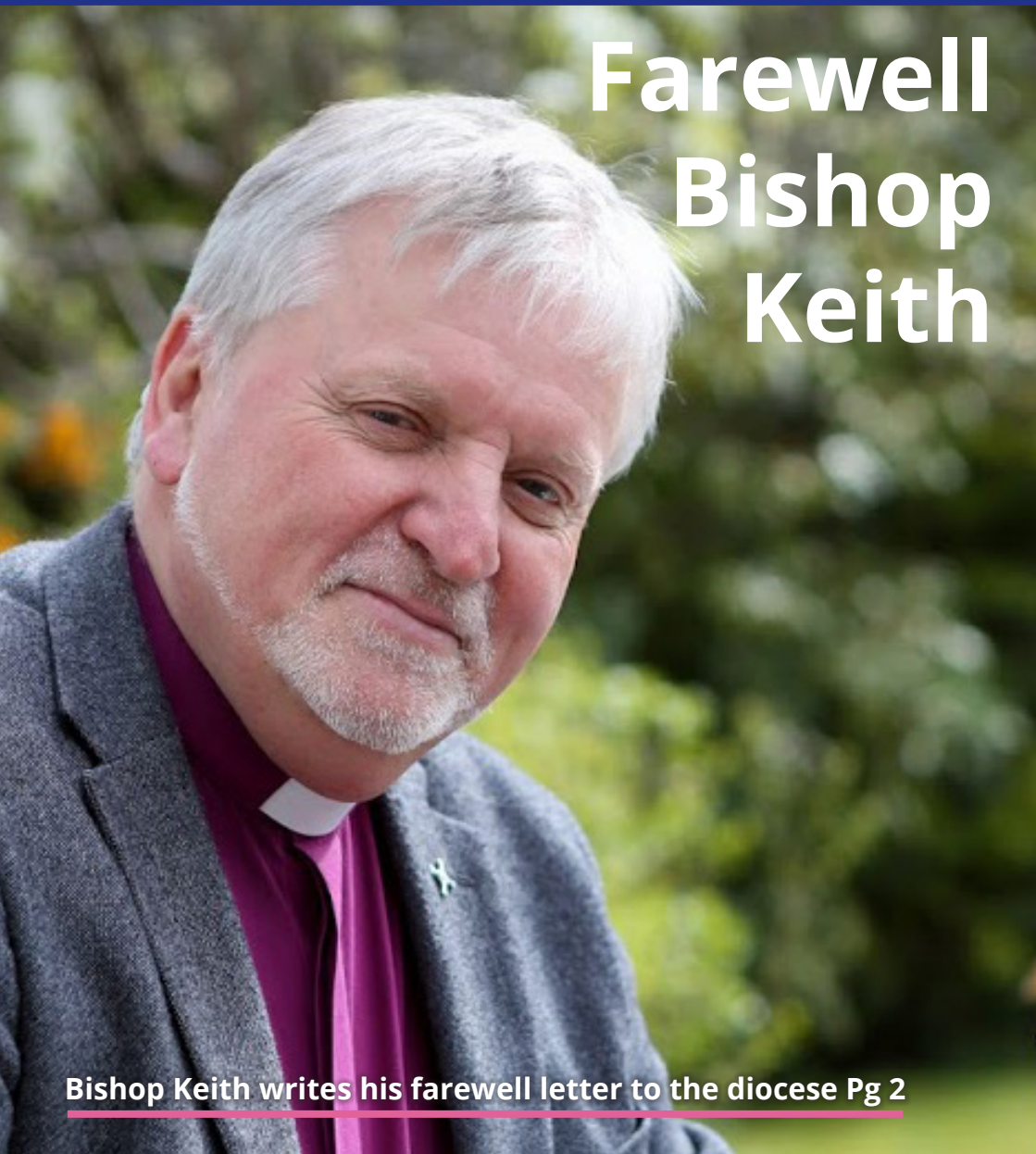
Chester Diocesan News

#EverydayFaith across the Diocese of Chester | March 2021



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Chester

Farewell Bishop Keith



Bishop Keith writes his farewell letter to the diocese Pg 2



A farewell from Bishop Keith

Bishop Keith Sinclair will retire from his role as Bishop of Birkenhead on the 08 March, 14 years to the day after he took up the post. His final service as Bishop of Birkenhead will be on Sunday 07 March at 3pm and can be viewed [online here](#). This is his final article for the Chester Diocesan News.

Dear friends,
I'm writing this after my last live service in one of our parishes (St Michael and All Angels West Kirby) and before our Farewell Service on 7th March at 3.00pm in the Cathedral. Numbers will still be severely restricted so I do hope you will be able to join us online.

Thank you so much, on behalf of Rosie and myself, for all the expressions of thanks

that have come our way. It is very humbling, and as you can imagine contributes to a whole swirl of emotions.

My last day as Bishop of Birkenhead will be Monday 8th March, the 14th anniversary of my consecration.

We move to Openshaw, Manchester to a new house built just behind the church St Clements, who have already begun to open their arms to us. Though we will be in the Diocese of Manchester, we will be 20 mins from Stalybridge and Mottram Deanery, so will be far nearer parts of the Diocese of Chester than we are now!

Cont P4...

**“ Thank you so much,
on behalf of Rosie
and myself, for all the
expressions of thanks that
have come our way.”**

Bishop Keith



Here, Bishop Keith is shown attending Northwich-based Lion Salt Works where he would regularly celebrate Salt Sunday. Pictured with him is Kate Harland, their senior learning and operations officer.

... Cont from P3 Dear Friends

At the end of the service at St Michaels the congregation signed the words of a children's song by Doug Horley which I learnt from St Michael's and the Vicar Rev Cheryl Coverley;

"Wonderful Lord, Wonderful God, you are my shield and protector; I can lie down, go off to sleep, knowing you're watching over me. Wonderful Lord, Wonderful God, help me to trust you forever; I will not fear, 'cos you are near; I can lie down and sleep in peace"

(You can look it up on [YouTube](#) and see the actions and learn the song if you don't know it).

What Cheryl and the congregation didn't know, was that I had remembered this song, and included it in my sermon that day, not singing it, but asking the congregation to remember it. I asked them to hear it as a way of letting the two readings for the first Sunday of Lent speak, especially thinking of singing the song to a little child going to sleep.

The readings were from Genesis 9:8-17, the promise of God's covenant with Noah and with every living creature after the flood; and from Mark 1:9-15, the promise of the kingdom of God from Jesus after his own baptism and temptation in the desert.

If the little girl or boy to whom the song Wonderful Lord was sung should ask in the morning "Is it true?", these two readings could be part of the answer.

Yes it is true, because God has made his promise to us, and by the way, he has given us a sign, the rainbow; yes it is true, because God has come in Jesus, the beloved Son, and he has given us a sign, his baptism.

In my sermon, I asked us to sing this song and know it is true, because of the covenant and the kingdom of God, the rainbow and the baptism of Jesus. The one, the covenant and the rainbow, will lead us to rejoice; the other, the kingdom and the baptism, will lead us to repent.

As I now take my leave and thank God for every moment of serving with you here, I ask you to remember both the covenant and the kingdom, the rainbow and the baptism, the reasons for our rejoicing and the reasons for our repenting. The wonder of our Lord and God is that he gives us both, and it is in the giving of both that we have reason to trust and not be afraid. He is committed to us, and we are included in the promise to Noah, along with every living creature and have the blessing of life. We do not face another flood because though the possibility of judgement remains, the judgement has been taken by Jesus on the

cross where another speaks these words over him "This is God's Son". The shielding and protecting by our wonderful Lord comes because sin, death and their judgement are taken from us, and the invitation to lie down in peace has eternity for its horizon.

Who knows what 2021 will bring, who knows what will happen to the Church of England, our diocese or even our local parish community as it seems we are able to come down out of lockdown? But whatever happens, God's promise remains, God's signs remain; his covenant and kingdom remain; we come in repentance and faith, we receive that promise and we enter fully that joy. Nothing that has happened in 2020 takes away from that promise of God to Noah, or that proclamation of the kingdom by Jesus. I would say to the little children, God has not taken away either the colours of the rainbow or the waters of baptism; they are not undone, but they go together, and our generation does not need one of the signs, but both; both are God's before they are ours, and he intends both for us to know the life he gives us to live.

Cont P6...



Bishop Keith was one of several bishops who took part in the Crossroads Mission, spreading the word of God across northern dioceses. Here he leads an impromptu prayer with local residents in Lancashire.

... Cont from P6
Dear Friends

I cannot summarise what God has done over these last 14 years. As you have been kind enough to remind me of moments I had forgotten, I have been calling to mind those moments of God's promise and blessing, the parish visits; the confirmations and ordinations; the school assemblies; the visits to prisons and hospitals and hospices; the one to one's with clergy at different stages of their ministry; the new appointments and helping people find the next step; the unexpected questions and encounters, the involvement with the civic authorities, the building of networks across the churches and communities; the support of Christian ministries in schools, with young people and those in special need; the missions in deaneries and other dioceses; the encounters



Revd Cheryl Joy Coverley was the first person to be appointed as incumbent by Bishop Keith in 2007. She is still at the same church, St Michael and All Angels, Newton, West Kirby.

with those from other faiths; the funerals of those dearly loved and the baptism of those coming to faith in the Lord Jesus; the entering of controversy and the taking of risks; the experience of the faithfulness of God and his daily sustaining; the privilege of working closely with colleagues whose extra miles and labours of love have blessed me more than I can say.

In all of this, the Lord's keeping of us as a family; Rosie in her work in the University, and our three children, nurtured here in their teens, willing to come to confirmation, seeing God bring us through some testing times, and still singing Wonderful Lord. Four of us were able to join the link to the Congo and visit in 2012; three of us have been on the diocesan pilgrimages to the Holy Land. The covenant and the kingdom are for the world and participating in the worldwide Anglican Communion at the Lambeth, GAFCON and Global South conferences have been a time of both blessing and anguish.

Thank you, sisters and brothers, for all your prayer and service, for every expression of faith, hope and love. May you go on in the fulness of his covenant and kingdom, repenting and rejoicing, seeing the rainbow and the baptism together, singing Wonderful Lord, Wonderful God...

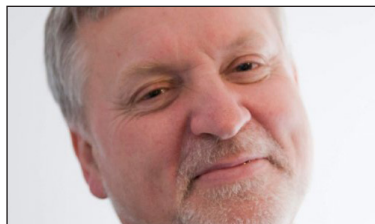
With love in Christ

+Keith

"Thank you, sisters and brothers, for all your prayer and service, for every expression of faith, hope and love."

Bishop Keith

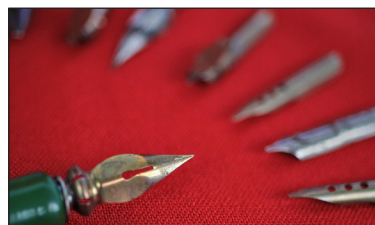
Events



Bishop Keith's Leaving Service

07 March 2021 - Online

Bishop Keith Sinclair will retire on the 08 March, His final service as Bishop of Birkenhead will be on Sunday 07 March at 3pm. [More...](#)



Poetry Break

11 March 2021 - Online

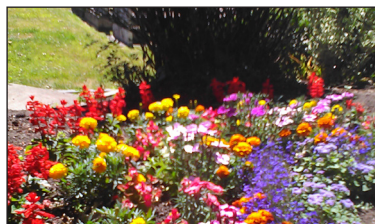
Poetry Break is a monthly coffee break for poetry lovers to gather. This will be an opportunity to hear poetry from others across the diocese. [More...](#)



Being inclusive

12 March 2021 - Online

Welcoming children and young people with autism - for those who would like to know more about ministering with children and young people with additional needs. [More...](#)



Explorers of Church Building Projects

16 March 2021 - Online

Discover how part of an urban churchyard was transformed to create an award-winning spiritual garden. [More...](#)



Support Trios

18 March 2021 - Online

With support trios each person in the trio has the benefit of the attention of two people intent on making the most of their ideas and ministry. [More...](#)