

The Rural Deanery of Louthesk

within the Diocese of Lincoln



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DEANERY NEWS: CANDLEMAS 2020

Introduction: From Deanery Synod

I am aware that there is a lot of content in this letter, but **I ask that people take the time to read through, disseminate the information as widely as possible, and engage with its content.** The coming weeks and months provide an opportunity to us to reshape the way we work and respond in constructive ways to the challenges we are currently facing. It is important that all our church communities are involved in this process so that together we can find appropriate ways to support each other, and grow in faith as a Christian presence in our local communities.

The November Deanery Synod discussed a number of aspects of life within the Deanery and possible ways in which we can move forward rather than just maintain what we have inherited. This focused around four discussion questions:

- What practical support would help people by providing easy-to-use resources for the life and worship of our churches?
- How we can equip each other to better live our lives of Christian service in our churches and communities?
- How we can recognise and resource people who minister in our churches?
- How we can reshape the ministry provided by the incumbent-status priests within the Deanery to best support the ministry provided by people at a local level?

One outcome of the synod meeting was to reconsider the way that benefices were grouped into Mission Communities, with and seek ways of working across the boundaries of benefices in a more intentional way. There had also been some prior discussion among Ministry Teams about restructuring our ministry so that the incumbents would work together as a 'college of clergy' providing collegial oversight of local ministry in our individual church communities. Synod agreed that this idea would be pursued by the incumbents, working together in discussion with other ministers to see what directions might be fruitful. **Each PCC was asked to reflect on its contribution and place in the deanery as a whole to feed into this process.**

What practical support would help people by providing easy-to-use resources for the life and worship of our churches?

There is much that is already provided but not harnessed to its best effect, and much more that could be provided by sharing resources. There are also benefits flowing from recent simplification of church legislation surrounding PCCs. Each of these areas provides fruitful possibilities for future development so that we can focus our efforts on the key tasks of worship, service and growing in faith. At the moment, progress on these is less well-developed, and will be better supported once our ministry is organised and working more collegially and collaboratively across our life as local church communities

How we can help each other to better live our lives of Christian service in our churches and communities?

One of the challenges of living busy lives is that we can let important things slip. This is just a true of our faith as anything else, and we hope to provide some ways in which we can support each other in growing in faith:

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|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Rural Dean: The Rev'd Nick Brown | | Chapter Clerk: |
| Lay Chair: Dr Paul Hill | Treasurer: Dr Jenny Ballantyne | Synod Secretary: Dr Anita Samaan |
| The Binbrook Benefice | | The Benefice of Fotherby, North Thoresby and Grainsby with Waithe |
| The Parish of Louth | The Benefice of North and South Somercotes, Marshchapel and Grainthorpe with Conisholme | |
| The Benefice of Legbourne Woldmarsh | | The Plurality of the Benefice of Midmarsh with Saltfleetby and Theddlethorpe |

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Lent Course 2020: To Love and Serve the Lord

Using the we plan to run courses in at least three locations and at different times so that as many people as possible have an opportunity to share with others in reflecting on the essentials of the Christian faith – though this may mean travelling to meet with others elsewhere in the deanery! The materials are intended to be helpful for people at different stages of their journey in faith, so please do encourage others to join – they do not already have to go to church!

A community of prayer: The Confraternity of Saint Herefrith

One of the things that we always need to pay attention to is the grounding of our life and work in prayer. To offer an expression of this within the life of the deanery, there are a small group of people who are looking to commit to meeting regularly and developing a pattern by which they can pray for the church, serve it in appropriate ways and deepen their own faith and fellowship.

This venture will be launched during Evensong at 6pm on Sunday 23rd February in St James, Louth. Do please come along to support this with your prayers on this evening, and do consider whether mutual support in Prayer, Service, Hospitality and Spiritual Renewal would helpful in your own life.

How we can recognise and resource people who minister in our churches?

At our Deanery Day in June we were provided information about the new categories for recognising and supporting people who undertake public ministry within the church. This was affirmed at the autumn meeting of Diocesan Synod, and is now available for us to use and develop as we shape the life and work of the church in our Deanery. In summary, this recognises 'public ministry' in the following ways:

- **Locally Recognised Ministry (LRM)**, of those working within our existing congregations; including those who may lead worship when no minister is available or support ministers in providing pastoral care.
- **Authorised Lay Ministry (ALM)**, of those who have a more public ministry potentially beyond the regular congregation; including leading worship, undertaking pastoral visiting (including taking communion to those not able to come to church and leading outreach activities in the local community.
- **Licensed Ministry** of who have a formal ministry and are licenced by the bishop to do this; including Lay Readers, Ordained Local Ministers, Associate Ordained Ministers.
- **Incumbent Ministers**, who support people undertaking formal ministry in these varied ways, sharing the Bishop's oversight of the local church.

Could I ask everyone involved in the life of our churches to think whether you would be interested in exploring ministry in one of these ways, or whether there are other people who you think might be prompted to explore ministry within your local church community. Please contact me, or encourage others to do so if you would like to explore this – or just come along to one of the Lent Group sessions and take it gently without commitment to go further!

How we can reshape the ministry provided by the incumbent priests within the Deanery to best support the ministry provided by people at a local level?

As the incumbent priests have met over the past few weeks and months we have been acutely aware of the support that is needed if we are to best support all the churches in the deanery, especially those who

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(under the current structures at least) have no incumbent of their own. To try to best support all the parishes of the deanery we have started to work together and are exploring how we can work collegially to provide oversight to all the churches of the deanery – supporting the local ministry of those who lead regular worship and support the communal life of each of our churches.

At the moment the following groups meet to support ministry in the deanery:

| Local level | Mission Community level | Deanery level |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|
| Parish of Louth Ministry Team (Monthly) | Louth and East Wold Chapter (Monthly) | Deanery Chapter (2 formal meetings per annum with Deanery Synod) |
| Fotherby and Somercotes Ministry Team (Quarterly) | Incumbents Meeting (Ad hoc) | |

It can be seen that this is a bit lopsided, and some places are better supported than others! Following the agreement given at the November Deanery Synod Meeting, I am working with the incumbents and others to look at how we reframe things so that we work more intentionally across the deanery. Things are fluid at the moment, but we are going to work from the following starting point to explore how we can shape things for the future:

At deanery level:

- **College of clergy (comprising the incumbent priests in the deanery)** Meeting regularly for prayer and worship and to share the Rural Dean's oversight of the whole deanery.
- **Mission Community Chapter** A monthly meeting for all licenced ministers (ordained and lay) in the deanery (replacing the current Louth and East Wold Chapter meetings), and providing opportunities for fellowship, study and administration.

At a local level:

- **Local Ministry Team Meetings** Building on the current Louth and Fotherby/Somercotes teams to support those undertaking ministry in our local church communities (including Locally Recognised and Authorised Lay Ministers). This is the area that needs greatest work, and for which we ask your prayer and support.

With thanks and in prayer

Once again, I ask that you read, reflect on and respond to what I have shared in this letter. More immediately, can I commend the Lent Course and Confraternity of St Herefrith to your prayers (and hopefully your action!)

Yours, with best wishes,

Nick Brown, Rural Dean of Louthesk

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