

Our Ref: +MBW,+RT&ADs/ajh

15th September 2022

To: All Licensed Clergy, All Chaplains, Churchwardens and Chapelwardens, Parish Officers, All Readers, PTO, Honorary Assistant Bishops, Area Deans, Assistant Area Deans, Lay Deans, Deputy Lay Deans, Diocesan Staff, Diocesan Registrar

Dear Sisters and Brothers

We wanted to write at this time of national mourning to join with you in remembering Queen Elizabeth II and in giving thanks for her life. She was an example to us all, of faithful service, and a witness to the love of God in and through her life. May she rest in peace and rise in glory! We also pray together for our new King, Charles III, as he follows in her footsteps. May he know God's guidance and wisdom in the years to come.

Supporting our communities during this time of mourning

There have been many ways in which you have expressed care and service over these past days, in offering worship for reflection and remembrance; opening churches for prayer, the lighting of candles and provision of books of condolence; in comforting those who grieve. **Thank you!** It is at moments like this that the country looks for beacons of light, and our faith in Christ inspires such hope. Her late Majesty was someone who really lived her faith fully and it has been inspiring to see how that faith has become a talking point across much of the media. How we live and tell the story of God's love for the world authentically at this moment will be significant.

The protocols in relation to this time of mourning have already been forwarded to clergy and parishes. Do [visit the Church of England website for the latest guidance and resources](#). We now know the funeral will take place on **Monday 19th September at 11am**. It is a national holiday and many will therefore be able to gather to watch the TV coverage. Some churches intend to stream it live so that people can come together rather than watch alone. There is [no requirement for a special licence](#) for such an event.

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On the afternoon and evening before the funeral, churches are being encouraged to hold services of reflection and requiem. Some of you have already notified us of your plans and timings. Please do publicise these widely across different media so that as many members of the public as possible can attend. We also now know of the national plan for **a minute's silence at 8pm on Sunday evening**. This may be an opportunity for local vigils to be held in community spaces. We want to encourage you to make plans that work best with both national expectation and your own local context. You hold the expertise for what will work best where you are. We know that you will do that well.

Responding to the cost of living crisis

Meanwhile the cost of living crisis continues to cause concern both in personal financial challenges in relation to fuel and food, and the increasing expense required in maintaining our local churches.

This winter will bring some huge challenges for people within our communities. Some will be faced with a choice between eating and heating. Our food banks are already experiencing high demand and some of our churches are offering regular weekly meals for children, families and the most vulnerable.

Some of you are now beginning to consider how you might also provide warm spaces for people within your churches and halls, where people can spend time comfortably. Thank you for all the creative thought and care you are putting into such plans. We know this will be costly both in terms of time and indeed in energy bills. The new Government last week shared its energy plan to support households over the next two years and we understand there will be some equivalent help for businesses and charities including churches, promised for six months. Our Buildings Adviser, Emma Brown, has given some assistance in addressing the issues, questions and concerns you may have in a [helpful guide available on the diocesan website](#), along with a [link to the Warm Welcome website](#).

The impact of the cost of living crisis on our churches and diocese

We are all facing financial challenges at this time, and in coming together we can support one another through it. Together we can help each other understand the challenges we face, both individually and collectively, and seek ways forward.

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We will be holding Zoom sessions this autumn and we hope many treasurers, churchwardens and others currently carrying responsibility for these financial burdens will join us at these sessions to share their challenges and explore ways of supporting and learning from each other.

Bishop Michael's arrival

Bishop Michael moved into the diocese during August. He has begun ministry among us this month. We are delighted to have Bishop Michael with us and he is looking forward to meeting many of you on his deanery visits throughout the course of this autumn and into the new year.

We will be welcoming Bishop Michael publicly to the diocese and county on **Saturday 12th November**. Because the capacity of the building is limited the installation service, which will be held at 3pm at the Cathedral, will be ticketed. We will be sharing details of how everyone can join us in welcoming Bishop Michael on the day early next week, but please do put the date in your diary and if you do receive an invitation please can we encourage you to RSVP quickly, so that if you can't come, your space can quickly be made available to others?

Finally

This letter comes with our thankfulness for all the ministry and service you are offering at this time of national mourning and for all you give and are!



+ Michael. + Ruth
Aree Semi Adrei

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