

Dear all,

Yesterday I was at a meeting with the Bishop of Lincoln, along with other clergy, and some non-clergy from the deanery. The purpose of the meeting was two-fold. Firstly, it was an opportunity for him to say farewell and thanks before his retirement at the end of this year – a farewell tour, as it were. And secondly, it was an opportunity for him to hear how the discussions *regarding Resourcing Sustainable Church: Time to Change Together* was going. It was a great opportunity to share some of the feelings from our meeting last Saturday.

I'd like to thank all who attended that meeting for their time, effort and contributions. We will be considering the suggestions, and putting them together into a manageable plan for your further consideration and adoption. As I have said before, this will only work if it is realistic, reasonable, and supported by the whole church.

The meeting with the Bishop started with a *Lectio divina*-style reflection on a bible passage. The passage chosen was John's account of the first two post-resurrection appearances of Jesus to his disciples in John 20:19-29. We were asked to read the passage through aloud, to pause and think, asking God to speak to us, then read it aloud again. We were then asked what word or phrase particularly stood out to us, especially in the context of the last 18 months. You might like to try it yourself sometime.

The one that particularly hit me was 'When he had said this, he breathed on them...' We have spent the last 18 months or so desperately avoiding people coming too close to us, and breathing on us. We have had it rammed into us that other people's breath can be deadly, harbouring a virus often debilitating (perhaps for years to come), if not deadly. But this passage holds a total contrast.

This short phrase has three distinct parts.

Firstly, he has just said something. He has just said "Peace be with you", then immediately given them an instruction "As the Father has sent me, so I send you". It's quite breathless... (perhaps not the best expression here! – but you know what I mean). Peace... now go! He is giving them more than a wish, more than "I hope life will be peaceful for you". He is conferring peace on them, a promise and a reality. They have a task, but they will also have the 'equipment' needed.

Secondly is the breath. He is, quite literally, inspiring them. A direct connection. I have the image of the 'kiss of life' in CPR, reinvigorating a person, quite literally breathing life into someone.

And finally, what is breathed is the Holy Spirit, God Himself (or, as many like to think Herself).

I believe that this is not just for those disciples present at the moment, but is a promise and experience open to all believers. Expect that promise of peace, and that gift of the Holy Spirit. And He will be with you, wherever He is sending you.

Sunday is the Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity (Proper 20). It will be a Communion service, as usual. The hymns will be [Praise to the Holiest - YouTube](#), [God Is Here! As We His People - YouTube](#) (a different tune) and [All My Hope on God is Founded \(Tune: Michael - 4vv\) \[with lyrics for congregations\] - YouTube](#)

As last week, we will be recording the service, and uploading it later.

The lectionary readings for the service are Jeremiah 11: 18-20; James 3:13 – 4:3, 7-8a & Mark 9:30-37. The Psalm is Psalm 54.

Anglican chant: [Psalm 54 "Save Me, O God, for Thy Name's Sake" - YouTube](#)

And a modern version: [God Is My Helper \(Psalm 54\) Original Musical Composition by Joseph and Sierra Snode - YouTube](#)

Anthems suggested for this Sunday include:

[Blest Are The Pure in Heart - YouTube](#) (Malcolm Archer)

[Think of how God loves you - YouTube](#) (James MacMillan)

[Beati Mundo Corde - Byrd \(UniversitätsChor München\) - YouTube](#)

[A Song of Christ's Glory - YouTube](#) (Bill Ives)

[VOCES8 - Beati Quorum Via - YouTube](#) (CV Stanford)

This weekend is also the start of the Great Big Green Week. Here is a prayer from A Rocha.



### **A Prayer for Climate Change**

We know that whatever emotions we might be feeling about the climate crisis, we have a God who hears us and who we can talk to about anything. Here's a prayer you could use on your own or as part of a church service, written by Andy Atkins, CEO of A Rocha UK.

#### **A short chat with God about climate change.**

Heavenly Father, we're anxious about Climate Breakdown.  
It's already causing wildfires, crop failures, killer heatwaves and floods.

We're angry: it's so unfair, hitting the poorest hardest,  
Adding to human conflict and compounding nature's struggles.

From youngsters to grandparents, we need some hope:  
To see governments stopping the bad stuff and driving the good,

A fair transition to a low carbon economy, a nature-friendly way,  
Acting boldly on the science; no more denial or delay!

And this year, Heavenly Father, the climate summit will be in the UK too  
It's exciting and daunting: what should *your* people do?

We will praise you for your creation; commit our churches to act;  
Work together across neighbourhoods and nations;  
And call all leaders to be bold, just, honest with the facts;  
So, help us, Heavenly Father, to worship, act and speak up.  
Yes, we will worship, act and speak up.

A reminder - one alternative style service that has been suggested is that we hold a short Pet Service, before the main Sunday service. To this end we would like to invite folk to:

# Pet Blessing Service

(cuddly toys also invited!)

## The Priory Church

Outside – weather permitting!

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> September at  
9.00am



Please make sure all pets are under control, and that you are prepared to help clear up if there are any 'accidents'

One final note. As some of you are no doubt aware, I can get a bit OCD about notice boards! But they are important ways both of conveying information, and also giving a good impression of the church. It is very important to advertise events happening here, but I would be very grateful if posters were not pinned over others – especially if they are laminated posters that cost money, and can be used again in the future. If there is no spare space, please have a word with me, or at least remove any old/generic/unnecessary poster first. Many thanks.



Stay safe.

Blessings and love

Mark