

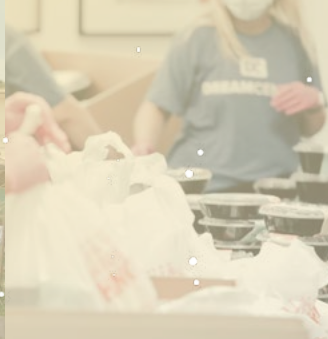
# European Anglicans

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Diocese in Europe | December 2020 | Annual Review



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Rededicating the English Church in Ostend

## European Anglicans (December 2020)

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Damian Thwaites

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# 2020: A Year Like No Other

## A Message from our Bishops

It has been a year like no other. In December 2019 we could never have imagined that we would see a December 2020 in these circumstances of the global Pandemic. Covid-19 hit Europe from mid-March. During the year, movement has been restricted, partially relaxed, and restricted once more as our continent has been faced with a second peak. Many have become sick; some have died. Perhaps travel will never be the same. We have been reminded of the fragility of our lives and our institutions.

We have been leading and helping each other since Covid-19 changed the ways in which we live, work, and worship; and we reflect on our Diocesan life this year in this European Anglicans Annual Review 2020. We start with some early year celebrations in Switzerland, before recalling pioneering online church in Genoa at the start of lockdown.

The Review offers a journey through this year in Covid-19 lockdown, in our prayer life and worship, including the highlights of our ordination and Dean's installation services. It then takes us on to our care and compassion for each other, looking at racial justice, safeguarding and gender justice, before bringing us to our mission in the Diocese, to serve the people of Europe and support the needs of our worldwide Anglican family. We recall our pan-Diocesan Advent service, and close with a selection of joyful Advent-tide offerings by our chaplaincies.

Our Diocese has withstood Covid-19 challenges this year with resolve and steadfastness. We should reflect with thanks on our position financially and operationally. We end the year with a future financing plan, which will alleviate burdens significantly for all chaplaincies in 2021.

During 2020, the Diocesan Board of Finance has also given hardship grants to those chaplaincies whose finances have been most gravely affected by the pandemic. We are deeply grateful for the support of our Diocesan staff in London and Brussels, keeping our offices running well, our chaplaincies supported by clergy and Readers, people safe, and our communications flowing.

At a time when we all feel exasperation at restrictions on our gathering and our travel, our chaplaincies have absorbed the shocks of the Covid-19 lockdown with amazing creativity, innovation and agility, as we have seen in large-scale online church. Our pan-Diocesan online services have also been a notable achievement in gathering us together in our Church family this year.



Our standing remains high, and our needs are recognised, in the wider Church and beyond. We were given a £210,000 emergency grant from the Church Commissioners, and in early December, a £250,000 award to support our development as a digital Diocese from AllChurches Trust. We also bid successfully for a £250,000 grant from the UK Government support programme for UK Nationals to apply for residency permits in France post-Brexit; as we write, Brexit, a further huge challenge on the shape of the future relationship between the UK and EU remains unsettled. Whether or not there is an agreement before the year end, there will be turbulence ahead, and we are seized of a raft of issues that will impact the Diocese now that the UK has left the EU.

We have also witnessed decisive global developments on racial justice following the death of George Floyd in the United States in May.

The work endorsed by our December Synod on the "Breathing Life" report is an important milestone as chaplaincies engage with these issues that lie at the heart of our humanity. In these times, our Diocese is committed to safeguarding our people, with notable success on the roll-out of training across the Diocese this year. And on safeguarding the future of our planet, we have a growing Diocesan network of environmental representatives for each archdeaconry whose work is to spread the good news of our eco-journey together on our aim to become an "Eco-Diocese". Furthermore, we have taken the first steps together on how we will discuss the Church of England – wide project on "Living in Love and Faith" with the appointment of a Diocesan LLF Advocate. Finally, we said "au revoir" to Meurig Williams last week following his ten

years as Bishop's Chaplain and his committed service to two Archdeaconries. Meurig leaves us with our prayers and good wishes for his new ministry in Ireland.

We know this will be a Christmas like no other. We are particularly aware of those whose families are separated by limitations on gatherings and travel and of those whose families have been affected this year by sickness or loss. Our church worship is restricted in many places. Christmas for most of us will be simpler this year. Yet we pray that it may still be infused with joy as we celebrate the wonderful news of the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

We send our warmest good wishes to everyone in the Diocese and to all who support our mission and work.

*+ Robert Gibbitt in Europe*

The Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes  
Diocesan Bishop

*+ David Hamid*

The Rt Revd Dr David Hamid  
Suffragan Bishop



# Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Lugano

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity this year in January opened in great style in Lugano, Switzerland. The occasion also celebrated the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Comunità di Lavoro delle Chiese cristiane nel Canon Ticino (Ecumenical body of the Canton of Tessin).

The assembled participants walked from the town centre to the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St Lawrence following the wooden cross used in the first walk 20 years earlier. The service was opened by Bishop Valerio Lazzeri, and priests and pastors from the member churches all participated. The youth choir of the Eritrean Orthodox Church provided a lively musical interlude.

Our Archdeacon, Adèle Kelham, as a former president of the Swiss National Ecumenical Council, was invited to give the sermon. It was the first time that a woman had ever preached in the Cathedral.

The joy of the worship continued with prosecco and pizza in the nearby trattoria.



# Confirmations at Christ Church, Lausanne

Friends at Christ Church, Lausanne share a report with us on confirmations in January 2020 in the chaplaincy: Lausanne was in the international news twice over on that cold and sunny Sunday, 19 January. The first occasion, the one you could see on international television, was the 3rd Youth Olympic Games. At Christ Church, the second event was even more important. This was the confirmation of nine candidates — six children aged 11 and 12, and three adults — one came 250 kilometres from Freiburg-im-Breisgau, in Germany.

By definition, confirmations are the prerogatives of a bishop. Sure enough, Bishop Robert had come to Lausanne to preside and preach. At Christ Church we do things well: we even had a duo of bishops, with the Old Catholics' Bishop Harald celebrating at the altar. The complex choreography of the service was the work of Christ Church chaplain, The Revd Christine.

To enter into the spirit of the day, here is an impression — slightly abridged — by Dillia, mother of twin confirmands: On the bright and cold morning of the confirmation, as instructed, the candidates arrived early, looking very dapper.

Accompanying grandparents, godparents, cousins, aunts and uncles and even a former au pair had come from as far as Australia.

Bishop Robert began his sermon by holding up a Newcastle United football shirt. What has football got to do with confirmation? Both are lifelong commitments, both involve following and belonging to a team. The language was simple, the message clear and obviously prepared with the confirmees, a majority of them young boys, in mind. It appealed directly.

Thank you to those who prepared the church the evening before. Thank you to those who came early to set up. Thank you to those who remained invisible and silent in the background. Thank you to the numerous children who somehow understood the gravity of the occasion and remained calm and quiet throughout the service — and to the Sunday club teachers who supervised them.

Thank you to the families who brought food. Thank you to the baker of the incredible rose-bedecked confirmation cake. Thank you to those who barely witnessed the service because they were working in the kitchen. Thank you to those who washed up and those who stayed to clean up the church. We are so blessed. All in all, it was a fabulous occasion!



**We are so blessed.  
All in all, it was a  
fabulous occasion!**



# Virtual Eucharist in Genoa

In early March, a chaplaincy in the Diocese took a pioneering lead in responding to the Coronavirus outbreak, making an online recording of a Sunday Eucharist service

Following the Coronavirus outbreak in Northern Italy, the regional authorities decided to lock down the Liguria, Lombardy and Veneto regions for a full week. This resulted in restrictions to people's everyday movements, and a ban on public gatherings, including church services.

Canon Tony Dickinson (pictured), Chaplain at the Anglican Church of the Holy Ghost, Genoa (the chief city of Liguria) decided this was not going to stand in the way of celebrating Holy Communion as usual on a Sunday, and that this situation required a different approach to connect with the people of his chaplaincy, where Sunday service attendance currently averages 35. He organized a video recording of the full service (Lent 1), with liturgy and the breaking of bread and wine. Segments of the recording were then posted on the church Facebook page. Here is Tony delivering the service:

In his sermon, reflecting on Matt. 4, 1-11 on the testing of Jesus in the wilderness, Canon Tony said:

"For all of us, for the rest of the people of Genova, for most of Italy, especially Lombardy and Veneto, the Coronavirus outbreak has led us into a kind of wilderness.

The fact that I'm having to say these things on social media rather than face-to-face in church is just one aspect of that. All of us are waiting to discover what will happen next."

All of us are experiencing something of that testing

which Jesus underwent, struggling as disturbing thoughts arise in our hearts: "How am I going to survive this?" (the bread question); "Why should I change how I do things? God will stop me from becoming infected." (the "throw-yourself-down" question); and "How can I turn this situation in some way to my advantage?" (the power question).

But when we find ourselves in the place of testing, the place of waiting, this "liminal space" the thing to do is to follow the example of Jesus. In reply to each of those questions from the tester he reaffirmed his trust in God."

On the experience of preparing and running an e-Eucharist, Canon Tony said:

"It has been an interesting experience, and one which has shown what can be done even with quite limited equipment. It has also revealed my near total inadequacy as a techie. Constructing the liturgy and videoing it on a smartphone took about twice as long as the service would have.



Uploading the video clips to our Facebook page took for ever!" DIY "ashes to go"

"e-Eucharist" followed the provision of DIY "ashes to go" in place of the Eucharist on Ash Wednesday. This was possible because the ban on public gatherings for worship did not prevent churches from keeping their buildings open for private prayer.

The Church of the Holy Ghost therefore prepared a small container of ashes and a dozen leaflets which contained the readings and prayers for the day, the words to be said at the ashing, and some material for reflection, and then left the church open at the usual hour for the midweek Eucharist. This permission to keep the building open for private prayer also enabled the church to run its planned drop-in quiet day from 9.30 a.m. the next morning.

[More information about this diverse and vibrant church community on their website can be found here.](#)



# EASTER

## An Easter Sunday like none other

In these times of Coronavirus, Bishop Robert led a virtual Easter Service from home. Introducing a Service of the Word to the 42 countries of the Diocese, the Bishop said:

"This is an Easter Sunday like none other. For the first time in centuries, Christians do not have use of our churches for public worship. Like the first century Christians, we are gathering instead in our homes."

He added that "even in the hardest of times, there is hope", despite the pain of physical separation and exile and that we can "gather virtually and in spirit to celebrate in word and song the good news of Easter."

The service was put together and delivered by Bishop Robert with his wife Helen, and virtually assembled contributions of readings and music delivered and performed by family members in London, Glasgow, Paris and Boston, Mass.

Celebratory hymns and music for Easter Sunday included Jesus Christ is Risen Today,

Now the Green Blade Rises, In Christ Alone, and Thine be the Glory. A postlude was played on piano from Handel's Judas Maccabeus.

Easter Service readings were from Acts 10 and Psalm 118. The Gospel reading taken from John 20 recounted the discovery of the empty tomb and the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene.

In his address, Bishop Robert reminded us of the significance of different colours at Easter: green, white, purple, red, black and gold. He said each of these colours has something to say about Easter: the green of new life; the white of service and care for others; purple with its depth and thoughtfulness; red and its struggle with suffering; black embodying sadness and mourning; or the triumph and joy of gold. Bishop Robert invited us to reflect on which colours represent our feelings best this Easter.

The Bishop added: "Easter 2020 is an Easter unlike any I have known. All of us miss the togetherness

of our natural families, and the togetherness of our church family. But perhaps the sense of isolation has given us a new sense of gratitude for simple things. It may have given us a new attentiveness to what is really important in life, and perhaps a new desire to draw near to God."

The video of the service has been viewed over 800 times since Easter Sunday morning, across the Diocese and beyond, including as far afield as the Grenadines in the Caribbean. You can continue to enjoy and watch A Service for Easter Sunday on our Diocesan YouTube channel.



# Diocese honours and thanks Churchwardens

## at pre-Feast of Pentecost virtual service

In May, the Diocese honoured and thanked Churchwardens for their spiritual leadership at a pre-Feast of Pentecost virtual service. Following the well-received Zoom service for licensed Clergy and Readers in the Diocese on Maundy Thursday, a further Pan-Diocesan virtual event gathered 260 people across the Diocese on 26 May for a Diocesan Service for the Commissioning of the People of God before the Feast of Pentecost.

Bishop Robert presided, and lay officers from chaplaincies across the Diocese contributed readings from the Acts of the Apostles, Ezekiel and the Gospel according to Matthew, and offered prayers of intercession. You can find the [Order of Service](#) here. During the service, each member of the congregation lit a candle to signify the risen light of Christ present in the world and in our lives.

Bishop David preached the sermon, commending the work of Churchwardens in the Diocese: "Churchwardens, our gathering today is to honour you, in particular, and to thank you for your spiritual leadership during what has been a memorable Lent, Passiontide, Eastertide in the life of the Church. It has been a holy season unlike anything we could have imagined. But you, along with your clergy and Readers, and other key laity, have been creative, committed, and inspiring in leading the Church's life in lockdown. We commend you, Churchwardens, for your part in exercising spiritual leadership, and, as foremost among the laity, in encouraging your sisters and brothers in their discipleship."

Bishop David said the Coronavirus crisis has shown that, "even in our modern 21st century, scientifically astute and sophisticated people are hungry for faith"

in this time of global pandemic. The big question for our Church leadership is how to "respond to that hunger in people, in the new normal we are entering." Bishop David quoted the prophetic insight of Cardinal Bo of Rangoon, offered recently, that we should:

"Take advantage of the time to find and live the rhythms and relationships that you want to characterise our future. Take the time to pray and try to understand how this world works. Imagine and prepare for a changed world."

Bishop David added that this time is "a chance to reform and make our Church and its work and witness in the world even better."

Here you can read Bishop David's sermon in full. Following the service, there was a Question & Answer session with Bishops and Diocesan Senior Staff, which provided an opportunity to discuss updated Coronavirus guidance on public worship issued by our Bishops, and other topics of interest raised by members of the Diocese.

A video of this Diocesan event [can be found here](#) on the Diocese in Europe YouTube channel.



# Friends of the Diocese: Service & Event



The day for the Friends' Virtual Service and Event (on 20 October) with the theme Vocation and Service had finally arrived. It was a first for the Friends and there were more than a few butterflies (mostly mine) dancing around as the active participants gathered pre-service to check presence (fast messages to missing persons) connectivity, sound, visuals (too close/not close enough to the screen) and be given last minute instructions by the very able Technical Coordinator aka the Diocesan Secretary. There is no way of knowing but something similar must go on in any church vestry before a service. Pre-service beautiful music was provided by the new organist of St Matthew's, Westminster, who generously allowed use of some of his recordings. As the start time approached, more and more people were seen to be joining: a relief to know that there would be a congregation after all. Fifty-five people attended.

Welcomes were extended by Bishop Robert before he handed over to Bishop David to introduce the Liturgy, which was led by the Chaplain of St George's, Malaga, Fr. Louis Darrant, who had written it for this special occasion.

The Friends had supported the Ministry Experience Scheme with grants, so to have Dr Clare Amos, the Diocesan Director of Lay Discipleship give the background and current status of the scheme was enlightening. Two of the participants in the scheme, now interns in the Diocese, Rebecca Mathen from Brussels and Chaja Verkerk in Rome, spoke with enthusiasm and obvious excitement about their journey thus far and their placements. Every good wish goes to them as they continue to explore their sense of vocation. They answered questions put to them by the congregation with candor and confidence. There are four more interns placed in the Diocese of equal talent.

Along with other funding partners, the Friends are to support the long-awaited initiative for stipendiary title posts (curacies) in the Diocese from 2021

for three years. Andrew Caspari, the Diocesan Secretary and Bishop Robert were able to give an upbeat progress report.

Damian Thwaites, Bishop's Attaché to the European Institutions and Director of Communications, gave an update on Brexit. Noting that future residency rights in the EU has been the most commonly raised concern among people in the Diocese, he outlined the launch on 12 October of a £250,000 Diocesan Residency Support Project to help UK Nationals in France, fully funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. This project is offering services free of charge to support people who may need additional help applying for residency, notably the elderly and vulnerable. The project website at [www.frenchresidency-support.org](http://www.frenchresidency-support.org) has further information, including contact details, and links to official Government guidance as well as other resources.

As is normal in church-type events, there were announcements and updates from the Chairman of the Friends before moving on to the closing prayers and the Blessing.

By technical wizardry, the gathered congregation were split into groups for chats and refreshments (only if you had remembered to bring a thermos flask or glass of wine).

At this time when everyone's life has been very much restricted it was amazing that this remarkable Diocese was able to gather people from the UK, mainland Europe and perhaps even beyond, helping to expand horizons, bring a sense of much needed joy and togetherness as well as optimism for the future of the Church.

Written by: Jeanne French, Honorary Secretary

## Video:

### Diocese in Lockdown

In early July, we launched our quest to put together a video on Covid-19 lockdown, following on from our special focus on its impact on Diocesan life since mid-March, in our July issue of *European Anglicans*.

Diocesan Comms has now produced this video. We have put together what could look like a day under lockdown across the Diocese; by mid-July, we had already experienced the reality of well over 100 days of restrictions across the 42 countries of the Diocese.

This video features prayers, reflections, services, liturgy, and more. We hope it is a memorable medley, and that it will contribute to uplifting us as we continue to journey on together through truly testing times.

Made possible by the generosity of people and their offerings right across the Diocese, we encourage you to take five minutes of your day to [view this video](#).

## Diocese leads THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND weekly online service

Christians in the UK joined in worship with their brothers and sisters across Europe and beyond as the Church of England's weekly online service was led by the Diocese in Europe on 26 July.

The service for the Seventh Sunday after Trinity was broadcast on YouTube, Facebook, and the Church of England's website. It centred around a message that separation and isolation – even after months of lockdown and distancing measures – can be overcome through God. Here is the [YouTube link](#) to the Diocese in Europe service.

Bishop Robert introduced the service, talking about the historical and contemporary life and work of the Diocese in Europe, and how we serve over 300 congregations across 150 chaplaincies in continental Europe, Russia, Turkey and Morocco.

Filmed at the The Pro-Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, Brussels, service worship was led by The Revd Fiona Simon, Associate Chaplain. The [Order of Service](#) can be found here.

The Ven. Dr Paul Vrolijk, Archdeacon of North West Europe and Senior Chaplain at Holy Trinity Brussels preached. In his sermon, Archdeacon Paul spoke about the experience of people separated from family and friends for months during the current pandemic.

Preaching from the final section of Romans 8, which says that nothing can separate us from the love of God, he said: "I hope that at this moment you may feel connected to the God who loves you as we together listen to God's word, as we pray and worship together, as we hear the Eucharistic prayer and join spiritual communion.

"That the Holy Spirit may give you that encouragement and assurance; whether we face illness, or lock-down or isolation or job loss or uncertainty we may know that suffering will not conquer hope; that death will not conquer life; separation is never final."

Prayers were led by Ozichi Baron, a licensed lay Reader, and the readings were given by the Churchwarden Nicholas Deliyankis and Jaddua Solomon Abraham. Gayl Russell, who runs Holy Trinity's community kitchen, spoke about the work of the project which now feeds up to 500 people a week including refugees and homeless people in Brussels.

National Church Digital Communications team have told us that, across Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, there were 19,000 views of some length of our service that week, and that the service trailer had been seen 85,000 times across social media platforms.

Bishop Robert said: "I am delighted our Diocese was given this opportunity to record a Church of England weekly online service, which has enabled us to communicate the diversity of who we are, and what do, reaching a truly global audience online. I am very grateful to friends at Holy Trinity for all their hard work and contributions to making this project a great success."





## Covid-19: Resources

Here are the Covid-19 resources we've put together this year on the website ([which can be found here](#)).

These resources cover guidance and updates issued and published by:

- [Diocese in Europe](#)
- [Church of England](#)
- [Public Health Authorities](#)

### Diocese in Europe

### Guidance & Updates

### (Bishops' Letters)

- [14 Sep 2020](#)
- [9 Jun 2020](#)
- [26 May 2020](#)
- [29 Apr 2020](#)
- [13 Mar 2020](#)

### Links to our Covid-19 coverage since February

#### 2020:

- [25 Aug 2020](#): A Day in the Life of the Diocese in Lockdown (video)
- [4 Aug 2020](#): Covid-19 in Spain (article to the left)
- [29 Jul 2020](#): Diocese leads Church of England weekly online service
- [7 Jul 2020](#): Pan-Diocesan Restoration Service on Zoom
- [3 Jul 2020](#): *European Anglicans Magazine* - Life under lockdown
- [3 Jul 2020](#): Bishop Robert on BBC early lessons from Europe on easing Covid-19 lockdown
- [1 Jul 2020](#): Covid-19: 10 Things to consider if you're planning to attend a Church service in the Diocese (poster above)
- [6 Jun 2020](#): The meaning of Pentecost in the era of Coronavirus

[Articles June onwards can be found here >>](#)

### Further links for support and guidance

*Please note the Diocese in Europe is not responsible for the content of external websites.*

- [UK Government](#): Covid-19 information for the public
- [NHS](#): Conditions & Covid-19
- [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#): Covid-19
- [WHO Regional Office](#) (Europe):

Countries - this includes links to Health Ministries across national administrations in the WHO Regional Office (Europe) area

- [WHO Regional Office](#) (Eastern Mediterranean) – which covers Morocco
- [European Commission](#)
- [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#)

# *Bishop Robert's Reflections on la rentrée in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic*

The beginning of September marks the end of the summer holidays and the beginning of a new term. All of us have memories of returning to school at the start of a new academic year: wondering what our new class will be like; the mixture of excitement and apprehension at seeing old friends and discovering new ones. Seeing small children walking to school this morning in Brussels with packed satchels is for me a real sign of hope. And teachers will be wanting to give their pupils the best welcome and the best start to a new year.

This year, though, returning to school has a different feel. Children are physically distanced from one another and operate in social bubbles. Older children are required to wear masks. In the school at which my son teaches the primary aged children have to wash their hands six times a day – that alone is a major logistical exercise! The social, educational and mental health of our children depends on them returning to school, yet Covid-19 means this can only be done under strict conditions – for the well-being of parents, grandparents and teachers – and even the children themselves – although few of them are at serious risk from the virus.

The church in practice aligns itself to the school year,

so September marks the “rentrée” for us too. As adults, we know well that the restrictions of the past six months are by no means behind us. Covid-19 is a highly infectious and dangerous disease that has spread across the whole world. The church is a social institution that brings together large numbers of people in confined spaces, many of whom are in a vulnerable demographic. So we are continually having to balance our longing for corporate worship and close fellowship with our shared responsibility for controlling the Covid-19 virus.

Today marks the beginning of “creation-tide” in our church calendar. Theologically, I start from the premise that it is we human beings rather than God who are primarily responsible for the pandemic. A recent Grove Booklet[1] by TearFund director Ruth Valerio and others makes this point well. Whether the virus jumped across the species barrier from bats to humans at a live animal market in Wuhan, or whether it escaped from a Wuhan laboratory it was human behaviour that triggered the release of the virus into the human population. It was willful negligence that frustrated initial attempts to control it. And it was globalised interaction and mass travel that enabled the virus to spread rapidly to every continent. Earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes might fall under the

category of “natural disasters”, but the pandemic is mainly a disaster of our own making.

So it is equally down to us humans to control it. “Controlling the virus” means observing the detailed hygiene and physical distancing rules that are starting to become second nature for us. But as the crisis continues it becomes clear that more fundamental issues of social justice are at play too. Serious illness and death are more prevalent in certain disadvantaged sectors of our societies: those living in cramped housing, BAME communities, the poor and the obese (and obesity is often linked with poverty). In our developed countries, it is those in blue-collar employment who are suffering the most from the economic consequences of the disease. And people in poorer countries have faced economic disaster under the necessary conditions of lockdown. Far from being “the great leveller”, the virus has laid bare deep and nefarious social inequalities between people. Healing the world means addressing social injustice.

At a personal level, the experience of lockdown has challenged and provoked me in some unexpected ways. Firstly, I found myself enjoying the stability of having to stay in one place. I was able to develop a daily pattern of prayer and physical exercise that is so much more difficult if one is continually on the move.



Secondly, I found I was re-connecting with the natural environment in a deeper way. I became deeply aware of the birdsong in spring, I noticed the stars in the night sky, I loved the deep peacefulness that descended on our neighbourhood and rejoiced in the improved air quality. And without air travel my own carbon footprint was vastly reduced. Thirdly, I discovered possibilities for using technology for communication. Suddenly meetings that used to be planned weeks or months ahead could take place almost immediately on Zoom. And linked to this, I've discovered a new and more nuanced approach to "presence".

St Paul on a number of occasions talks about how he is present with the churches he has founded in spirit though not in body. The Holy Spirit links us together in a spiritual sense, and through our prayers for one another, even when we can't be present to each other physically. I believe that tools such as Zoom and Teams have given added meaning to Paul's insights.

We can now be present to each other across a whole continent – both audibly and visibly – albeit that we can't reach out and touch each other. So during the spring and summer the Diocese in Europe has been able to stage Zoom-based worship that brought people together who had never previously seen each others' faces. I have had some of the deepest one to one pastoral conversations of my episcopal ministry because I have been at home, properly centred and focussed, with all the relevant materials to hand, rather than trying to follow a delicate situation on

email from a hotel bedroom or via a poor quality phone signal on a train. Like St Paul, I have wondered: "how can I best be present to our Diocese spiritually, even though I can't be present in body?" And, rather to my surprise, I have looking to the term ahead, staff in my office have already spent many hours on the bewildering issues that bedevil international travel in the Covid-19 era. Events that involve lots of people coming together in multiple destinations (notably for ordinations) with shifting quarantine rules are particularly complex to organise. My office is all too aware of the upset that is caused when episcopal plans change, and a visit has to be cancelled. Under the "old normal" this almost never happened. But now, a change in quarantine rules can mean expensive cancellations and disappointment all round.

For many reasons, I am therefore planning to curtail travel – and especially air travel – in the term ahead. I want to set the best example in terms of controlling the virus, aware that travel is one of the most significant ways in which it spreads. And I'm aware of the sheer difficulty of making coherent and consistent travel plans at the moment.

To be specific: two of the countries for which I am lead bishop are France and Switzerland. The level of infections in both these countries, the reciprocal restrictions between them and Belgium, and the level of unpredictability and health risks involved mean, I think, that it will be better not to arrange visits to these two countries until after Christmas.

I hope this decision on my part might help chaplaincies with their forward planning arrangements. And I want actively to explore how I can be present to people in ways other than physical presence.

Yet it is "la rentrée". The children are returning to school, people are beginning new jobs in new countries, and some are seeking a place to worship. A sense of excitement is mixed with realism about the virus. a key challenge at this moment for all clergy and lay leaders is: "how do we provide a good level of welcome to new people in these Covid-19 circumstances?" Without the post-service gathering for coffee, it is vital that welcomers are identified and signposted who can make contact with newcomers. We will need to be diligent in following up names, emails and phone numbers. And Zoom-based events need to be as friendly and inclusive as possible to those who might be lurking on the edges.

Covid-19 has reminded us of our need for our togetherness; it has prompted many to ask deep questions about the ordering of our lives and societies; and in some it has generated a new openness to the life of the spirit. As we begin a new term, I hope our churches and chaplaincies can be places of fellowship and care, places where the hard questions of life are addressed, and communities where people are able to find answers to spiritual questions through encounter with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

[1] *Covid-19 Environment, Justice and the Future*, Ruth Valerio et. al. Grove Ethics, Cambridge, 2020

# *In the 12 months to Christmas, Diocesan Communications gave to me*



100 Diocesan website  
articles



Daily prayer tweets and  
a 16 Day Gender  
Justice twitter  
campaign



5 pan-Diocesan Zoom  
services



Press, TV and radio  
coverage including  
refugees & migration  
and Brexit



21 YouTube videos



3 European Anglicans



3 new e-News bulletins



1 Facebook relaunch



1 Instagram new look



1 Just Giving donate  
option



5 social media training  
sessions



... And an e-Christmas  
card!



## Setting God's People Free

### What is SGPF?

It is an initiative across the Church of England to enable the whole people of God to live out the Good News of Jesus confidently in all of life, Sunday to Saturday.

### Changing the Culture

This initiative specifically calls for two culture shifts within local churches as well as Diocesan structures. They are expressed as follows:

#### SHIFT ONE

We, ordained and lay, must teach and equip lay people to follow Jesus confidently in every sphere of life in ways that show the difference the Gospel makes. A huge number of lay people serve in positions of influence and leadership in the church, home, community, workplace, and society. Therefore, we need to enable every member of our congregations – lay and clergy alike – to follow Jesus confidently wherever they are.

#### SHIFT TWO

We, ordained and lay, must recognise that we are all baptised equally into Christ, that we are equal in worth and status, complementary in gifting and vocation, mutually accountable in discipleship, and equal partners in mission.

Switzerland has been chosen to pilot this initiative for the Diocese in Europe, so how are we doing and what have we learned so far?

Representatives from across the nine chaplaincies in the Archdeaconry attended both a second Diocesan Learning Community with other Dioceses and our own Swiss Archdeaconry Learning Community, facilitated by Becky Hall, an expert in culture change, also working with the UK team.

This Swiss Learning Community has triggered a flurry of activity from almost every chaplaincy. One of the principal ways of raising the profile of lay people and connecting to their everyday lives is to hear their stories. Most chaplaincies have been using tools, a popular one asking people what they will be doing "This Time Tomorrow", or interviews in different fora, e.g. services, council meetings, prayer groups, to understand better what lay people are doing in their everyday lives and to support and pray for them in the challenges that they face. Websites – look at the La Côte website to find a raft of videos describing everyday life and the part faith plays; or what about an online Advent Calendar with a contribution from a different member of the congregation each day?

Chaplaincies are being more intentional about including references to the "sent" as well as the "gathered" church in their services, intercessions, preaching, dismissal. Vacancies provide an ideal opportunity not only to show lay peoples' contribution to ensuring that the mission and ministry continues, but to build "Setting God's People Free" and the importance of both its culture shifts into the chaplaincy profile, role description and interview questions. At a Diocesan level, Clare Amos, Director of Lay Discipleship, has already produced a Rule of Life and is working on a Discipleship Course for lay people.

What have we learned? Mutual support is essential; hold a Learning Community event with a team from each chaplaincy, both clergy and lay – online is fine; create sub-groups, so that people can exchange ideas, learn from and encourage each other; provide tools – This Time Tomorrow, or Canterbury's "Changing Lives Conversations" provide a framework. Take small steps which fit your culture; create an action plan to hold yourself accountable; meet in a larger group periodically. Communication, of which this is an important part, is also essential. There is much to be done, including at Diocesan level, but this is a start!

Written by: Mary Talbot, SGPF Enabler



# Michaelmas ordination services:

## Ghent

Six Deacons and a Priest were ordained in the Diocese by Bishops Robert and David in Michaelmas tide ordination services this year in St John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Ghent and All Saints Anglican Church, Rome.

Annual ordination services for 2020 in the Diocese were originally planned in a number of locations. However, due to Covid-19 restrictions across continental Europe, it was decided that Bishop Robert would conduct ordinations in Ghent, while Bishop David would ordain candidates in Rome.

Many of the close family and friends of the ordinands were unable to attend due to distance and travel limitations due to the pandemic. However, after a three-month delay, and securing both locations, both ordaining Bishops and the

candidates were thankfully able to come together for the services.

As Bishop Robert reminds us in his Ghent ordinations [blog](#), being ordained deacon or into the priesthood "is a point at which candidates pledge their loyalty to the historic faith of the Church and their willingness to proclaim the gospel afresh to their generation."

Those ordained Deacon by the Rt Revd Dr Robert Innes on Saturday 26 September in St John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Ghent:

- Ann Elise Bolger, to serve as assistant curate (Stipendiary) in the Pro-Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, Brussels;
- Dorothee Joanne de Vries, to serve as assistant curate (NSM) in the Anglican Church in Arnhem and Nijmegen;



- Matthias Jozua Thijs, to serve as assistant curate (Stipendiary) in the Anglican Church of St James, Voorschoten.

Bishop Robert on Saturday 26 September in St John the Evangelist Anglican Church, Ghent, ordained Priest:

- The Revd Evelyn Harriet Elisabeth Sweerts

With grateful thanks to friends in Rome and Ghent, we're now able to share their footage of both ordination services in these two links:

- [Michaelmas 2020](#) - Rome Ordination Service
- [Michaelmas 2020](#) - Ghent Ordination Service

## Rome

In his Rome ordinations [blog](#), Bishop David quoted the sermon by The Revd Robert Warren, Chaplain at All Saints', in which the curates were told:

"You've been told where you are going to start. The future is outside our reach and outside yours. You do not know where you'll end and what a blessing you could become."

Edoardo Fanfani, a member of the All Saints' Rome congregation commented:

"Back in 2012, All Saints' was the first church in Rome to witness the ordination of two female priests, today about eight years later – we have witnessed yet another historical event. After having endured one of the world's harshest lockdowns, we Romans and parishioners of All Saints' have been blessed with a celebration of joy after a long time of distress but that is the Christian story, isn't it?"

Those ordained Deacons By the Rt Revd Dr David Hamid on Saturday 26 September in All Saints Anglican Church, Rome:



- Professor Dr Gottlieb Leopold Martin George, to serve as assistant curate (NSM) in St George's Anglican Church, Berlin
- Robert Rushforth Morley, to serve as assistant curate (NSM) in All Saints Anglican Church, Milan;
- Dr Valdis Teraudkalns, to serve as assistant curate (NSM) in St Saviour's Anglican Church, Riga



Watch this event via the Cathedral's website.

## Installation of the Reverend Canon Ian Tarrant

The Revd Canon Ian Tarrant was installed as Dean of Holy Trinity Cathedral, Gibraltar on 13 October. We feature this report with grateful thanks to friends at the Cathedral:

Holy Trinity Cathedral is the mother church of the Diocese of Gibraltar in Europe, and the seat of Bishop Robert Innes. The Dean of Gibraltar has responsibility for the Cathedral, its congregation, and chairs of the chapter of Canons, the ruling body of the Cathedral.

The position of Dean dates back to 1905 when Dean Decimus Govett was appointed as the first of a long succession. Robin Gill, Canon Theologian, has been acting Dean since 2012, and his leadership and care were much appreciated.

The long-awaited licensing and installation took place on 13 October. Due to travel restrictions at the time of the event in Belgium, Bishop Robert was not able to preside at the service. However, he sent a [video message](#) of congratulations and warm welcome, which was played during the installation service.

Thankfully, travel from the UK to Gibraltar remained possible, and Bishop David led the installation Service where he reminded the congregation that every member has a contribution to make to the life of the church. Archdeacon David Waller and Diocesan Registrar, Aiden Hargreaves-Smith were also in attendance.

The service was well attended by distinguished guests, both clerical and civil. The Roman Catholic Bishop of Gibraltar Carmel Zammit and his Vicar General Mgr John Pardo VG were met by a procession from Holy Trinity led by Bishop David, at the entrance

of the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Saint Mary the Crowned, and escorted to the Service of Installation. Other Christian denominations present at the service included the Minister of the Church of Scotland in Gibraltar The Revd Ewen Maclean, the Minister of the Methodist Church The Revd. Fidelio Patron, the Chaplain to the Forces Fr. Danny Hernandez, the Imam of the Islamic Mosque, and representatives of the Hindu community.

The service was a truly all embracing one, something for which Gibraltar feels proud of.

The service was recorded and currently available via the [Cathedral's website](#).

Interesting and happy times lie ahead, and the congregation, Wardens and PCC members of Holy Trinity Cathedral wish our new Dean and his wife Sally the very best for the future.



# A Tribute to Archdeacon Meurig Williams



**As Meurig Williams prepares to leave France for Ireland, members of the chaplaincies around France sent tributes and good wishes for the future.**

"I have always enjoyed discussing chaplaincy matters with Meurig, as I feel he really does listen to, ponder and inwardly digest what one has to say and may even act upon it. He is a person I would always turn to for a balanced view and for good advice."

*Sarah Palmer, St. Alban's  
Strasbourg*

You have been a good friend and a wise counsellor to us all: we're grateful that you were willing to take on the extra burden of being our Archdeacon. We thank God for your gentle humour and good grace. You will be a hard act to follow. We wish you every blessing as you follow St David to minister in Ireland.

*Giles and Chris Williams, Cannes*



We have enjoyed working with you, thank you for all your work in France. Our very best wishes for the future.

*From the Standing Committee*

Thank you for all that you have done and achieved for us in France. It has been a pleasure knowing and serving with you.

Please note that your wonderful voice can be well used in the rugby club where you are going.

*God bless, David Albrecht,  
chaplaincy Warden, Aquitaine*

Both personally and on behalf of the church council, I want to thank you for all the support you have given to us at St Marc's in Grenoble over the past several years...Your wisdom and calm advice have been of immense help and encouragement to us. We pray that your move to Ireland will go smoothly, and that you will find fulfilment and blessing in the rather different environment of parish life. Our prayers go with you.

*With our very best wishes  
David Bailey, Churchwarden*



# Residency Support to UK Nationals in France

In early October, the Diocese in Europe launched a £250,000 project to support UK nationals living in France with residency permit applications. Under the EU exit Withdrawal Agreement agreed by the EU and the UK last year, UK nationals wishing to remain legally resident in the EU will require “settled status” by June 2021. It is estimated over 1.3M UK nationals currently live in the EU, including over 400,000 in France. The French authorities have launched an online portal for the submission of applications to obtain residency permits.

The Diocese in Europe Residency Support Project [website](#) provides official Guidance published by UK and French Governments on residency. The Project has expanded its support to the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region, which has the largest proportion (an estimated 40,000) of UK Nationals living in France, to enquirers across the country.

In France we are working closely with three other voluntary organisations to help people who need additional support with their residency applications. A Helpline is fully staffed to answer queries on the French portal, and includes casework support. The Helpline number is **+32 (0) 5 32 80 00 05**. Over 600 people have been supported so far by our Project services, which are receiving highly positive feedback.

The Diocese is one of eight voluntary organisations successful in receiving grant awards under the UK Nationals Support Fund Programme (UKNSF) administered by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). The British Embassy, Paris and its [Consulates in France](#) are working closely alongside the UKNSF projects, and will continue to deliver their normal consular services for UK Nationals.

Launching the Project, Bishop Robert said:

“I am delighted to launch our Diocese in Europe Residency Support project to help UK Nationals in France. The ability to remain legally resident has been the biggest post-Brexit concern among people who have contacted our Diocese over the past year.

I recognise the prospect of applying for residency is a truly daunting one for people right across the Diocese, particularly when deadlines are tight. And it can be particularly tough for older and isolated people, for whom our service is especially intended.

So we hope our new service with its friendly helplines and web facilities will help. Let me emphasise, too, that the Diocese in Europe is offering a service to all. We’re not just here for those who might join us at a Church service. And we look forward to you being in touch.”

In a message to the [Aquitaine Chaplaincy](#) The Revd Tony Lomas said:

“For all of us who are resident in France, [Brexit] is going to mean something of an administrative upheaval and we will all, without exception, be required to obtain a new residency permit ... it’s really encouraging that our Church is taking such a pro-active approach to helping the British community in Nouvelle-Aquitaine.”

You can see Tony’s full video message on the Residency Support project [here](#)

The full list of eight organisations across EU/EFTA who are providing support under UKNSF are:

- AIRE (Bulgaria, Greece, Iceland, Norway)
- Age In Spain (Spain)
- Asociación Babelia (Spain)
- Church of England – Diocese in Europe (France)
- CIFSA (Cyprus)
- Franco-British Network (France)
- International Office for Migration (France – Brittany, Normandy, Paris; Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain)
- SSAFA – (France, Germany, Cyprus)

Look out for further updates on our Residency Support Project and Diocesan media in 2021.

# “Breathing Life”

## An invitation to share in belonging together through racial justice

Reflections and Recommendations from the Diocesan Working Group (WG)

### Introduction

The death of the African-American citizen George Floyd at the hands of police officers on 25th May in Minneapolis - in the midst of an already volatile climate caused by the COVID-19 crisis - gave rise to waves of protest across the United States under the movement of Black Lives Matter. Archbishops and bishops of the Church of England who rallied to support the movement have said that it is time to “own up to” and “repent” of white privilege, within the Church as in other parts of society (see article by Hattie Williams, Church Times, dt. 12th June 2020). In other parts of the Western world solidarity protests followed. Earlier sporadic outbreaks of protest and a ground swell of discontent against widespread racial injustice in societies and their institutions suddenly peaked in intensity and persistence, regrettably also in violence. The media highlighted the theme. The issue of racial injustice could no longer be side-lined; it demanded that it be confronted, the more so as there have been other such incidents which have followed close on the heel of George Floyd in the US, the UK and in Europe.

Any violent expressions causing harm to life and property cannot be condoned. Violence cannot be met with violence. Just as unequivocally it needs to be stated that: Every human life matters equally. One must recognise the fact that the fundamental human rights of the African-American community have been systematically trodden underfoot since they have lived in that part of the world which today lays claim to being a model democracy. Their cry for justice has been picked up by minority ethnic groups of colour also in Europe – in solidarity and out of their own experience of discrimination. A newer feature of this protest is found in the visible and vocal support of many ‘white’ compatriots.



How long have they too been blind in one eye to latent racism in their communities, a blindness which almost as a matter of course impinges on the human dignity and rights of those of other or mixed ethnic origins? Churches too have heard the clarion call.

In the words of The Rt Revd Robert Innes, Bishop of the Church of England Diocese in Europe, ‘there remains far more to do to encourage minority ethnic ministry and representation’. In response the Bishops in the Diocese in Europe commissioned a working group to bring together shared wisdom and provide a policy document that can help us and perhaps the wider Church of England to engage with the question of racial justice as a matter of urgency.

### Members of the Working Group (WG)

- The Revd Smitha Prasadam – Chaplain of St Alban’s Copenhagen
- Ms Ozichi Baron, Brussels (from 15.10.2020)
- The Revd Augustine Nwaekwe – Chaplain of Ostend, Bruges and Knokke
- The Ven Dr Leslie Nathaniel – Archdeacon of Germany and Northern Europe and the East (Chair)

Regarding the composition of the Working Group, it is just a coincidence that the people in the group are located where they are. They are keenly aware of the struggles and needs across the Diocese in Europe as a whole and have themselves experienced struggle and humiliation.

## Key points about this policy paper

The WG will not be using the acronym BAME but will be spelling out Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic repeatedly in order that it enter the vernacular. Where this is not so, we are currently using the term People of Colour, meaning a self-understanding of people who have experienced racism. Like the terms Black or White, the term People of Colour does not mean different shades of colour here, rather it represents exclusion or marginalisation due to racism.

This policy paper is prepared for study and engagement within the Diocese in Europe and may be a useful paper for the wider Church of England to engage with. This may have resonance for other partner churches elsewhere.

The WG met on five occasions and presented to the Bishops Staff Meeting on 01.10.2020 a first draft for the attention of the Bishops and the senior staff of the Diocese. All of them have engaged carefully with the first draft.

On 06.10.2020 it was sent with the strong recommendation of the Bishops to all chaplaincies for discussion and study along with the following questions:

1. What does it mean to you to be a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion of which the vast majority of its members are people of colour?
2. Please identify how and where systemic or institutional racism persists – support your answer with examples from your own experience?
3. In addition to the recommendations in this draft policy document, what other specific strategies would you like to suggest to enrich the document?

The WG is delighted at the range of responses it has already received either by email or through telephone conversations. This draft has incorporated the responses received, as appropriate.

At the outset it should be noted that this paper shares reflections to enable and equip the Diocese in Europe to engage with racial justice. We are aware that other areas of discrimination, such as gender justice, disability, sexuality, also demand addressing. But our current task is to focus on Racial Justice, to bring it more into the centre of the church's attention and concern.

This policy paper does not set out to give a complete overview on the subject or the history of discrimination and the struggle against it. In its present form it is a call / an invitation to share in belonging together through

racial justice. There is no doubt that the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement has meant that issues around racial discrimination could no longer be side-lined. Furthermore, it was evident that matters of racial justice had been held at bay for far too long and needed to be addressed with urgency. However, this paper is not simply jumping on to the bandwagon of the BLM movement.

Some have pointed out that the paper has not done justice to history. For example, it fails to mention William Wilberforce's or Olaudah Equiano's successful campaign to abolish slavery or the British role in opposing apartheid in South Africa etc. The WG is clear that these examples, rather than taking the wind out of the sails of the current paper, lend strength to its case. This is exactly the heritage it calls upon, namely the unequivocal stand against racial discrimination. The banning of the slave trade and the successful fight against apartheid quite clearly have not laid to rest the evils of race discrimination once and for all. The struggle needs to go on in so many areas of public life, including that of the church.

In terms of episcopal appointments there is wide consensus that the gifts and potential of the Black, Asian, Ethnic and Minority people need to be recognized. We are aware that in the former Bishop of Rochester and the former Archbishop of York there have been two important examples of people of colour who have been in senior episcopal leadership. However, there are currently no diocesan bishops from the Black, Asian, Ethnic and Minority communities. The reasons for this in today's contextual reality within the Church of England just cannot be explained away under the heading other cultures function differently to ours or that the way they do things is better (for them). Such an argument would, for the people of colour, speak against integration, the possibility of learning from each other and being a uniting community. Furthermore, it is important to note that of the 73 suffragan bishops in post in the Church of England, there are only 5 from the Black, Asian, Ethnic and Minority communities, including the Suffragan Bishop in Europe. The WG furthermore notes that there is one suffragan bishop-designate awaiting consecration and there are 4 vacancies. In the light of the initiatives to overcome racial discrimination, it will be important to observe and comment on how these vacant suffragan bishop's posts are filled.



Some responses seemed to suggest that the synodical tradition in England is not easy to be fully understood and grappled with by people of colour. This argument is not sustainable, since such a synodical tradition is not new to the churches of the Anglican Communion. For example, the Church of South India with its synodical tradition, was formed in 1947, compared to the Synod of the Church of England that was instituted in 1970. This paper is not about trying to make people of colour operate like white people, rather it is about expressing joyous and joint ownership, also in areas of leadership. Therefore, the question which the WG asks at the outset is: "Can we in the Church of England as a whole, in all honesty demonstrate that WE NEED AND BELONG TO EACH OTHER?" The WG is not convinced that this is the case, given the lack of visibility in key roles of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities. The setting up of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Racism Action Commission is a much-needed response and the direct result of the current outcry against racial discrimination. It is geared to implement key structural and cultural changes within the Church of England on race.

Speaking to the General Synod during a debate on the Empire Windrush Legacy, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said there was 'no doubt' that the Church of England is still 'deeply institutionally racist'. Furthermore, the Archbishop said he was "personally sorry and ashamed. I'm ashamed of our history and I'm ashamed of our failure ... I'm ashamed of my lack of urgent voice to the church" (see Article by Adam Becket, Church Times, dt. 11th February 2020).

This policy framework "Breathing Life" is a response from the Diocese in Europe and an invitation to engage with the embedded concept of belonging and need. It calls for a powerful compulsion to act. This is a belonging that is God's initiative rather than ours. It is our faith that provides us the entry into this community (see Meeting God in Paul by Rowan Williams).

It is our hope that this policy document will breathe life in chaplaincies across Europe and within the Church of England as a whole.

May we by God's grace firmly uphold the cause of the Gospel truth that each brother and sister of whatever colour or provenance is equal in God's sight. With no reference to other current usage, we reclaim the biblical covenant of being made and restored in God's image to work towards the vision of Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela's Rainbow People of God, that the world may believe.

## Is there a definition of Racism?

The Convention of the United Nations defines the term "racial discrimination" as: any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life (International Convention On The Elimination Of All Forms Of Racial Discrimination entry into force 4 January 1969)

## How does Racism manifest itself?

There are a wide range of examples that may fall short of legal infringement of human rights yet are no less racially discriminating. Many would fall under the term 'racial profiling' – a euphemism for discrimination. Some examples:

A taxi driver may drive past, ignoring a customer of colour; one may look discouragingly at the Sinti-Roma community. In Germany, racism would be associated with the Holocaust; in South Africa with the history of Apartheid; in the USA with slavery; in the UK with Colonialism etc.

In our church context it is seen in the glaring under-representation and exclusion in decision making at both local church committee and higher synodical levels. It is also seen in the demeanour, disregard and disrespect as well as the lack of sensitivity based on skin colour that often devalue meetings and honest conversations. One can point to a lack of greater intentionality in addressing issues concerning discrimination on the basis of race on the one hand; and on the other hand to the 'inclusion' of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people as token and exotic (a kind of well-meaning racism). together and live out both its theology and its practice.

What is lacking is whole-hearted welcome to leadership and decision making. What is needed is space and value for the contributions and perspectives of People of Colour. Are we ready to see the potential in the other and prepared to share responsibility? Are we able to recognise the potential in the other and delegate responsibility? Are we equally ready to sacrifice our own place at the table in order to welcome another?

## Rationale of Belonging

We are moving from “once not being a people to now being a people” (1 Peter 2.10); from exclusion to inclusion. This is central to belonging. People of colour need to experience belonging.

Quoting Rowan Williams: “Those who were once strays, migrants, exiles, foreigners, are now insiders. They now belong. They are neither a collection of random individuals nor a group of barely tolerated marginal oddities. They are citizens of a proper civic community. In other words belonging to God’s people is being neither Jew nor Gentile. It is a 3rd reality beyond the rival identities of different sorts of insider – the insideness of the Jew confident of God’s choice of Israel and the confidence of the Roman citizen” (see Meeting God in Paul, Rowan Williams).

## Biblical Imperative – Embracing a people’s theology

The logic of the cross is the hope that violence and injustice will be overcome. If we as Christians wish to embrace the challenges of the cross, we are compelled to also see such challenges through the eyes of those discriminated against. There is merit in using George Floyd’s dying words “I can’t breathe” for God breathes life into creation; we hear the last breath of God’s Son on the cross, and moreover the resurrected Christ breathes peace on his disciples. We should put this within the framework of an activity which breathes new life into the old – or breathes new life altogether.

The Black Movement for racial justice in the 1960s showed the relevance of a people’s theology. The music known as spirituals continues to touch the hearts and minds of people across the world. A person of colour listening to the songs “He is King of Kings, He is Lord of Lords; Jesus Christ, The First and Last” or “We Shall Overcome” would immediately understand this call to freedom; a freedom in Christ and liberation from any shackles. No preacher nor theologian is required.

The following suggested Bible verses provide the framework within which we can locate any work on racial justice; from which all other justice will naturally flow.

**Galatians 3.28** – “There is no longer Jew or Greek, slave and free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” This is a seminal verse, which can resonate with fresh meaning in our

in our current context. Paul would like us to understand belonging in a different way. A belonging which makes origins, status and the like inconsequential. All meet at the same level in Christ Jesus.

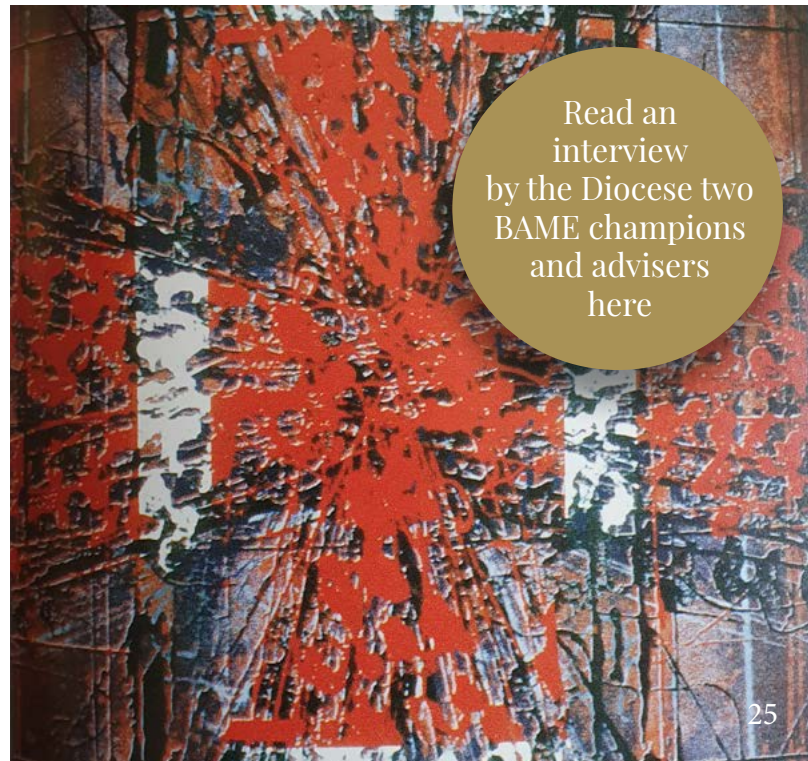
**Deuteronomy 16.20** – “Justice and only justice shall you pursue”. From the Torah itself we hear time and again God’s call for justice for all. Speaking out means that silence is not an option; it is the extended arm of racism. Exodus is liberation; Incarnation is God in our midst; the Holy Spirit is empowerment for transformation. Good theology compels racial justice as God’s creative call.

**Matthew 5.6** – “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.” The Beatitudes call into question our whole way of life. Looked at differently, racial justice could be our: “Be: Attitude”. How do we show our hunger and thirst for righteousness? After all, what is righteousness, but justice?

## Institutional Picture

A close look at the current state of the Church of England reveals that:

1. The distinctly Anglican vision of transforming unjust structures as articulated in the five marks of mission has not been given the much-needed attention it deserves in terms of overcoming racial discrimination. These 5 marks of mission help us to hold together our calling to proclaim the good news and social responsibility. The church needs to be together and live out both its theology and its practice.



Read an interview by the Diocese two BAME champions and advisers here

The British Parliament is today more diverse and better represented than the Church of England governing bodies. There are about 65 MPs from the Black, Asian, Minority, Ethnic communities and 2 of the 4 most senior offices of State are held by people of colour. This is unfortunately not the make-up of the European Institutions, notably the European Parliament.

3. There is no Diocesan Bishop from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community.
4. In the 42 dioceses there is only 1 Cathedral Dean and only 3,9 per cent of the 7700 clergy are from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people (see ministry statistics published in 2019).
5. There is a worrying and visible lack of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic representation in all synodical bodies.
6. A feature of chaplaincy councils and diocesan decision-making boards and committees is the underrepresentation of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people.
7. Underrepresentation is further painfully evident in senior leadership. The WG is aware that the Diocese in Europe is blessed with a Bishop and an Archdeacon from the Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic community. However, there is a lack of representation of People of Colour as Cathedral Deans, Area Deans, Canons, Chaplains and Licensed Readers.
8. The potential of people of colour is not recognised and a plethora of unfounded reasons are given regarding suitability, which is in direct contrast to public institutions.
9. Covid-19 has affected people of colour on the frontline disproportionately. This makes visible the commitment of people of colour to a cause and their willingness to even pay the ultimate price, which is not given appropriate recognition. Our intention is an appeal for all to flourish together; that it is good to learn and grow alongside Christians from the worldwide Anglican Communion; that the dynamics of Inclusion Exclusion be overcome; that it is about equal opportunity by creating an environment for each one of us to be open to discover the gifts and potential in the "the other." Anything less is but the disfigured face of Christ.

## What is also being addressed?

There is fear regarding the location and significance of statuary in church and cathedral precincts, yet in reality what is being questioned is a one-dimensional telling of history.

It is Christ crucified that is to be preached. This is the generation when people of colour have themselves recognised that they have much to share at all levels. They have recognised that they do have the ability to "take up their mat and walk." They have recognised that one can learn from the past, but that the past cannot and should not be allowed to dominate the future for both people of colour and majority populations.

## Addressing racial injustice and discrimination - Recommendations

- Provide an irresistible invitation to engage, which is seen as an opportunity and challenge that cannot be rejected.
- Create opportunities in the diocese to include the contributions of Christians from all over the world who could number up to 70% in parishes and chaplaincies. This group of people may have been deliberately or inadvertently made to feel less than equal. This is often based on assumptions about (in) ability to raise money, to network and to play due part in church operations.
- Enable greater representation of people of colour in Chaplaincy Councils.
- Explore and implement leadership opportunities for people of colour.
- Delegate responsibility where possible and encourage shared responsibility.
- Recognise privileges based on skin colour alone which offers an inherent advantage to some.
- Skin colour should no longer determine who does or does not do certain jobs in the church. (Examine critically who is / isn't engaged in a variety of church jobs including reading, interceding, cleaning, coffee-making, chairing meetings etc)
- Speak out if you witness or experience racial discrimination. Silence is collusion.
- Raise awareness of the pain of racial discrimination. Unconscious Bias Training is a helpful instrument.
- Empower Chaplains to take action which is both affirmative and/or remedial so they themselves do not collude with unjust practices.
- Empower Chaplaincies to create space for honest conversations.



- Empower Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic members to play a fuller part in the life and witness of the church by additional training or support as necessary.
- Be aware that “accent discrimination” can pose as a socially acceptable form of discrimination but can be a subtle form of racial discrimination.
- Make Inclusive Justice a component part of the selection process and training syllabus for people in ministry. Do not overlook people of colour in discernment. The WG is heartened by the number of ordinands of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities in the Diocese in Europe. This needs to be built on as the ripple effect will be altogether transformative.
- Expand horizons by telling the whole story of colonial heritage through the eyes of the colonised.
- 16. Celebrate our diversity and all that is good while repenting of all that continues to cause pain, division and oppression through the use of creative liturgies and symbolic action to move everyone on.
- Challenge and reject membership of political parties with a racist agenda.
- Collate bible studies on racial/inclusive justice for wider circulation.
- In terms of a come over, support and expand our horizons policy organise a Symposium that includes voices across the communion, such as, the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church, The Most Rev. Michael Bruce Curry and younger theologians, women and men.
- In terms of the plaques, statues, stained-glass windows and historic buildings, raise awareness that the answer is not tearing things down, rather it is about reflecting on history with fresh eyes, not allowing history to dominate, but to be able to use history to reconcile and transform. One example that we were alerted to, was a stained-glass window depicting the crucifixion scene. The unrepentant person was, it would appear, depicted as a person of colour. It is the conviction of the WG that a small plaque to explain this point is needed. The plaque would encourage people while reflecting on the beauty and theology of the stained-glass window, to note this disturbing point. This is all about education, since how we look at history will determine how we act and behave today.
- Establish the permanence of the Bishops Working Group for Racial Justice as the Diocesan Working Group for Racial Justice.

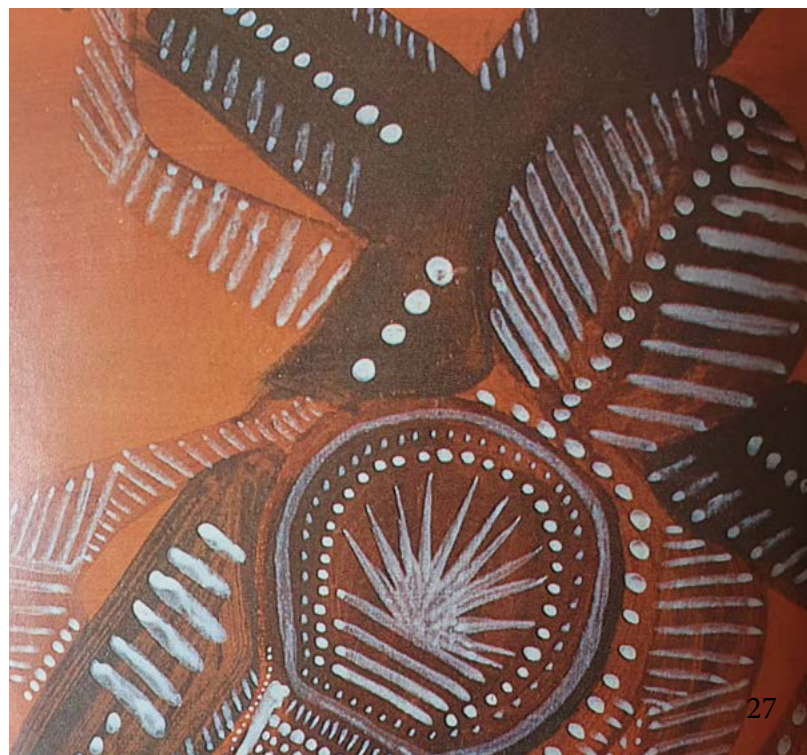
## Time frame for a policy statement

It is our hope that within this next triennium all chaplaincies undertake an audit of their mission, ministry and practices for the cause of Inclusive Justice focusing particularly on Racial Justice that has not been appropriately addressed to date.

As per the decision at the Bishops Staff Meeting, this draft was sent to chaplaincies encouraging them to discuss the matter further and send their comments to the Bishops Working Group. The letter to the chaplaincies by the Bishops included a request to address three questions (See page 2, Key Points about this Policy Paper). This policy paper in its current form is an updated version incorporating comments received, as appropriate.

*Bishops' Working Group on Racial Justice for the Diocese in Europe*

*This paper was adopted by Diocesan Synod on 11 December 2020.*





# Diocese joins 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence

The Diocese in Europe joined the annual global campaign this year against Gender-Based Violence that began on 25 November 2020, the UN International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and ended on 10 December, which is UN Human Rights Day.

Combating violence against women and girls is a key priority for the worldwide Anglican Communion and its Churches across over 165 countries. Bishop Robert launched our support to this campaign with a [video message](#) in which he said: “We must act today against violence against women and domestic violence. Our Christian faith calls us to shine a light in these dark places.”

One in three women in the world has experienced violence, ranging from psychological to physical. Women are abused in their own homes, stalked, harassed, raped, mutilated, forced by their family to enter into marriage, or sterilised against their will. It is often very difficult for women to speak out against such violence.

National and European surveys and awareness-raising campaigns have shown how widespread domestic and sexual violence are, and evidence being gathered indicates these have increased during the Covid-19 lockdown.

We are engaging in work in the European Institutions, which are committed to preventing and combating such violence. The Council of Europe, founded in 1949, is an international organization dedicated to upholding human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In 2011 the Council of Europe adopted the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (known as the [Istanbul Convention](#)). It entered into force in 2014 and 45 Member States and the European Union have signed the Convention.

The Istanbul Convention is widely recognised as the most far-reaching legal instrument to prevent and combat violence against women and domestic violence as a violation of human rights. The Convention covers provisions on prevention and protection, prosecution of perpetrators, and the need for Governments to



ensure they have co-ordinated policies on these issues. Anglicans in Europe gave our wholehearted support to the Anglican Communion's 16 Days of Activism 2020 against [Gender-based violence](#).

We carried videos and daily tweets on our social media channels to share information and raise awareness on the Istanbul Convention, with faces and voices of women across the Diocese (see opposite) as well as by [Mandy Marshall](#), Director of Gender Justice at the Anglican Communion. You can view the full series of tweets on our [Diocesan Twitter](#) feed (25 November-10 December).

Our campaign was well received, with twitter engagement and support from the Council of Europe, the Anglican Communion, and our Anglican UN Representation, as well as from The Rt Revd [Rachel Treweek](#), Bishop of Gloucester.

Bishop Rachel is working to scrutinize the UK Government's Domestic Abuse Bill in a group of women bishops, work which includes pressing for UK ratification of the Istanbul Convention.

In the Diocese, our campaigning efforts will continue as an integral part of the Anglican Communion effort, making the case in our engagement in the Council of Europe with UK Government and Parliamentarians to ratify the Istanbul Convention in 2021, which will mark ten years since the Convention was opened for signature.

Here are some links for you to find out more about the 16 Days annual global campaign, Gender Based Violence and the Istanbul Convention on these websites and social media:

**Anglican Communion:**

[www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/gender-justice/ending-and-preventing-gender-based-violence.aspx](http://www.anglicancommunion.org/mission/gender-justice/ending-and-preventing-gender-based-violence.aspx)  
@AnglicansENDGBV

**Council of Europe:**

[www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/](http://www.coe.int/en/web/istanbul-convention/)  
@coe  
@CoE\_EndVAW  
#IstanbulConvention

Johanna Nelles, Executive Secretary to the Istanbul Convention has written this piece urging UK ratification: [www.icchange.co.uk/16Days/Council-of-Europe](http://www.icchange.co.uk/16Days/Council-of-Europe)

**16 Days Campaign:**

[www.16dayscampaign.org](http://www.16dayscampaign.org)  
Twitter: @16DaysCampaign  
#16DaysOfActivism

**IC Change:**

[www.icchange.co.uk](http://www.icchange.co.uk)  
@ICChangeU

IC Change are running a petition to Parliament which registered electors in the UK are able to sign.



**PREVENTION**



**PROTECTION**



**PROSECUTION**



**CO-ORDINATED  
POLICIES**



# Safeguarding: IICSA

On 7 October, Bishops Robert and David wrote to the Diocese:

We address this letter first and foremost to victims and survivors of child sexual abuse, and share it, as an open letter with everyone in the Diocese.

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) yesterday published its Investigation Report on the Church of England and the Church in Wales.

Our words today cannot express deeply enough our sorrow and sadness that you have suffered abuse. We are truly sorry that the publication of this Report may itself cause renewed pain for you. We do not claim to understand the depth of your hurt, pain and suffering. We do not doubt the sense of injustice you are wholly entitled to feel at the failure of the Church to listen, respond or act. Child sexual abuse is a disfiguring violation of human dignity. Wherever abuse concerns Church Officers, you have been betrayed by their actions as perpetrators of this abuse. The IICSA Report states emphatically that, as an organisation, the Church has failed to care for you.

We offer you today our unqualified apologies.

Some victims and survivors have disclosed the abuse they have suffered. Others continue to suffer in silence and find their life situations a burden that must be unimaginably hard to bear. It has been possible for some to be able to rebuild shattered lives. But we recognise that for all who have suffered abuse, the memory of lived experience is lifelong,

and that survivors may feel a need to access support at any point.

We assure you of this, as we lead and pastor in the Diocese in Europe:

**“ We will listen.  
We will respond.  
We will act. ”**

We cannot truly be Church in the Spirit of Christ if we are not Safe Church. We will listen. If you wish to report abuse in the past by Church Officers in the Diocese in Europe, or if you wish to report any concern regarding abuse in our Diocese that may be happening now, we urge you to be in touch with us. The length of time since reported abuse is no barrier – we want to hear from you.

Please be assured also that we are ready to receive any reports of child abuse, wherever they may have been committed.

We will respond. We will offer you the support you need in the Diocese. [Our Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor and her team](#) are ready to help you, providing advice in the strictest confidence.

[Safe Spaces](#) is a free, national support service independently run by Victim Support and was launched last week. It provides a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused through their relationship with the Church of England. The national Church has also approved a proposed plan for an interim pilot support scheme for survivors and is preparing to put in place a reparations fund for victims and

survivors of abuse perpetrated by Church Officers.

In the Diocese, we are engaged [currently in recruiting more senior independent members](#) on our Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Committee. We are working to ensure everyone will know how and where to access appropriate local support and services available, as well as from our Safeguarding team. We will be working with chaplaincies on gathering this information. We will also assess future safeguarding training needs in the Diocese, specifically to support better the needs of victims and survivors. We will work as swiftly as we possibly can in the Diocese to provide consolidated guidance on these areas.

We will act. The Diocese has taken decisive action in previous cases of abuse against children by Church Officers, following Diocesan Safeguarding Policy, and including fullest co-operation with police and law enforcement authorities in and beyond this Diocese. There have been cases of criminal conviction. We will continue to pursue all investigations regarding cases in the Diocese, ensuring due process in the Diocese is followed to its conclusion.

In the Gospel according to Luke, Chapter 12:2 Jesus says, “there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.”

We pray and hope fervently that all who are suffering from the impact of abuse will feel able and guided to walk into Christ’s light, by disclosing what has happened to you.

IICSA’s Investigation Report on the Church of England reveals a situation that requires not just that we respond well, but that we respond in the best possible way to you, in an effort to bring some measure of support and comfort to you who have endured the worst early life experiences.



## Safeguarding: Interview with Di Smith

In an interview published on 20 July, Di Smith talks about her roles as Independent Chair of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Committee, and the Past Cases Review 2 Reference Group.

### **What is the Independent Chair's role?**

The role of the Independent Chair is important in ensuring that the safeguarding provision within the Diocese is secure and subject to robust and independent scrutiny. As Independent Chair I am a critical friend, supporting and encouraging as appropriate, but also providing challenge when necessary.

### **Tell us about your safeguarding experience.**

I have worked within Education and Children's Services for over forty years. In the early part of my career I taught in schools and was Deputy Head of a special school and Headteacher of an inner city primary. Throughout my career I have worked to improve the life chances of vulnerable children and young people. I have held the

statutory role of Director of Children's Services in four local authorities with responsibility for ensuring the safety and well-being of children and young people.

For the past ten years I have worked as consultant in different parts of England supporting local areas to improve safeguarding and services to children and young people. In recent years I have taken on a number of chairing roles including Independent Chair of a Safeguarding Children Board and Independent Chair of a Children's Services Improvement Board. I am also the Safeguarding Trustee for the Children's Society.

### **What does the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Committee (DSAC) do?**

The purpose of the DSAC is to provide advice, strategic support and guidance to the Diocesan Bishop and his staff in respect of safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

It also provides advice to the Bishop and Diocesan staff about action to be taken in difficult cases. This is likely to include provisions for setting up a Core Group when needed. It is also responsible for reviewing cases retrospectively in order to identify any lessons that need to be learned.

### **Why is the Past Cases Review 2 (PCR2) so important?**

PCR2 is an important part of the Church's overall commitment to improving the way we respond to allegations and concerns. It is an essential step in making the Church a safer place for all and demonstrates a commitment to responding well to all survivors of abuse.

The overall purpose of PCR2 is to identify both good practice and institutional failings in relation to how allegations of abuse have been handled, and to provide recommendations to the Church of England that will lead to improvements in its response to allegations of abuse and in its overall safeguarding working practices.

### **What is the most rewarding thing about the work you do for the Diocese?**

The most rewarding thing is working with a knowledgeable and experienced team who are committed to ensuring that the Diocese in Europe continues to develop and improve its safeguarding arrangements. We are all working together with the support of chaplaincies across the Diocese to make the Church a safer place for all.

# Bishop Robert: "The mission of the Church across our Diocese is to serve the peoples of Europe"

On 8 February Bishop Robert reaffirmed our Diocesan mission to serve the peoples of Europe, as the UK leaves the EU.

Speaking in an interview published in the *Church Times*, the Bishop commented:

"I was delighted to go along to an event hosted by the Mayor of Brussels on the eve of the UK's exit from the European Union. The love and warmth towards the UK at the event were plain for all to see. The EU and its member states regret deeply this UK decision. So do I." At the same time, the Bishop added he believed that "we now need to move on from these recent years of division and discord."

Looking ahead, Bishop Robert said:

"The mission of the Church across our Diocese is to serve the peoples of Europe, as we have been doing for over 400 years. As Anglicans in Europe, we will use voice, influence, and social action across our 300 congregations wherever we can, amongst those who need our support and care."

The Bishop spoke of the mission of the Diocese in Europe across age groups and boundaries. He stressed commitment to helping the elderly in our communities who wish to remain living in the EU to do so after Brexit, and to supporting the continuing provision of opportunity for young people from the UK to live in and experience the rest of Europe, culturally and educationally.

Bishop Robert also told *Church Times*: "Our voice will be heard in defending the rights and dignity of those on the margins of society and shaping our communities as places of welcome across Europe, especially for refugees and migrants fleeing the destruction of their lives and persecution". He also committed that "in our mission and engagement across European institutions, we will combat racism, discrimination, and xenophobia in all their forms."

Bishop Robert stressed the importance of our ecumenical relationships across the Diocese in Europe, saying "in all of these areas, we will join in common cause with our brothers and sisters in European Churches at all levels and make our voice heard across the EU, and by the UK Government, as it seeks to negotiate a new phase of partnership with the EU beyond 2020."

Bishop Robert described post-Brexit challenges ahead for Europe as "huge and unprecedented"; and that "they go to the heart of how we sustain enduring future relationships rooted in the peace, prosperity and friendship with all nations that are our Christian calling."

## **Brexit day**

Brexit day on 31 January was marked by services and events in the Diocese, as over 45 years of UK membership of the EU came to an end.

In **Brussels**, a service was held at the Chapel for Europe:

Sarah-Jane King, who helped to organize and lead the service told us: "It was packed out. People queued to get in and were standing at the back and on stairs. We had people from Holy Trinity, Brussels and St Paul's, Tervuren and other churches, but many attending were non-churchgoers which was wonderful. People really engaged and feedback from messages and conversations afterwards was that they found it meaningful and helpful, the mood and tone were just right: God with us."

The service was covered by a range of UK, European and international media, including Sky News, *Los Angeles Times*, Austrian, Danish, and Italian media.

In its main Brexit piece on 1 February, the *Financial Times* reported:

"In the EU quarter of Brussels, officials and their friends and family were among those gathering for a service commemorating Brexit day at the Chapel for Europe. Attendees at the packed church described an emotional service, with some worshippers breaking down in tears, as they offered prayers for a continued spirit of co-operation and harmony between the EU and the UK."

In **Luxembourg**, meanwhile, Chaplain, The Revd Geoff Read and friends at the Anglican Church of Luxembourg



co-organised an event with BRILL (British Residents Living in Luxembourg), the international English-speaking Roman Catholic community, Pulse of Europe, and Europa-Union Lux.

The city centre Roman Catholic Church was open during the day with a message board, and candles to light. In the evening, there was a 90-minute Brexit Vigil between 2230-midnight in a reflective event attended by 150-200 people of all nationalities, including the UK Ambassador.

Short reflections were offered on three questions:

- While Britain has been part of the EU I have valued ...
- Now Britain is leaving I feel ...
- Now Britain is leaving I hope ...



RTL news followed the Luxembourg event

There were two minutes' silence at 23:58, the tolling of the church bell, singing of Auld Lang Syne accompanied by a bagpiper, and a Coupe d'Amitié.

Photos are reproduced with grateful thanks to Sarah-Jane King and The Revd Geoff Read.

## Diocese features in Netherlands TV Brexit coverage

The Diocese has featured in the Brexit coverage of the Netherlands TV channel NOS (BBC equivalent). Its main evening current affairs programme "Nieuwsuur" on 29 January followed the European Parliament's approval of the Withdrawal Agreement earlier that day.

The news item included interview comments from Bishop Robert, and filming at Holy Trinity Pro-Cathedral, Brussels.

In a piece focused on the emotional and practical impact of Brexit on British people working in the EU institutions, the Bishop said UK officials serving in the EU had "a sense of not being valued by their home country."

The Bishop said he prays for "continuing strong and warm relations between Britain and our European friends, and for reconciliation and peace."

At Holy Trinity, Reader Ozichi Baron (pictured) led prayers "for our leaders in these difficult and uncertain times and for the European Union as they prepare for Brexit."

You can access the full NOS item [broadcast here](#)



## Presidential Address for Diocesan Synod Gathering, 23 June 2020

I remember the encounter well. It was early March, and I was meeting an old medical friend for lunch in Brussels. But as soon as I met him, he behaved strangely. He refused to shake my hand, instead offering me his elbow. He enquired more than usually about my health. When I told him about my travel plans, he wanted to know whether my visits were essential and whether I couldn't cancel them. Then he began explaining to me in great detail about the Coronavirus, infection rates, morbidity rates, and how much all our lives were going to have to change. It was a wake-up call! At that moment I realised the seriousness of the crisis that was coming upon us. And a week later we were all in lockdown.

So it is that, since March, for the great majority of us, our lives have been transformed. We have been physically isolated from one another, and our church buildings have been closed. At a personal level, my niece's church wedding has been cancelled, and the funeral of a priest in our family is taking place at the crem. with max 20 people present. The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have been massive on physical well-being, mental health, on our elderly, on our children, on our young people. Covid-19 is a social, health and economic crisis across Europe of a magnitude unparalleled in our generation.

In these conditions of fear and uncertainty, church life has been especially important. Our buildings have been closed. But the community of the church has been meeting virtually and pastoral care has continued through phone calls, appreciative messages and acts of kindness. Jesus is alive, and so is his church.

**“ I want to extend my sincere thanks to all ”**

members of our chaplaincies and congregations who have adapted to these changed circumstances with remarkable agility, and who have sustained community life through these strange times. Many of us live in countries that are not our maternal home, and that poses additional challenges in terms of making sure we understand local rules and expectations. It can feel particularly lonely when travel is banned, when you can't visit family or when you are confined to your own home. So I am truly grateful to the whole baptised people of God in each place for the way you have adapted and cared and prayed and stayed faithful to God and to each other during these strange times. I want to extend my sincere and appreciative thanks to our clergy and lay officers, who have sustained church life in very difficult circumstances. Many of you have shown an extraordinary ability to adapt to an online way of working, and you have created imaginative streamed or Zoom-based acts of



worship. Work with children has continued with online gatherings, Godly Play and Minecraft. Members of chaplaincy councils have been gathering by Zoom. I am especially grateful to locum clergy who in some cases have kept up their pastoral and liturgical responsibilities even after returning “home”, and to Churchwardens managing their chaplaincies during a vacancy. I am very aware that this work is tiring and that relationships are harder to maintain over the ether than face to face. Thank you all so much for your skilled and patient service and leadership during this first half of 2020.

2019, when things were “normal”, now seems a long time ago. But we recall that 2019 had its own stresses, most particularly the uncertainty of the “whether”, “when” and “how” of Brexit. Many in our Diocese faced real fears regarding residence status, health care rights, pensions and employment. It was a very difficult year. And yet, in many respects, our Diocese more than survived – it thrived! Along with Bishop David, I had the privilege of visiting many chaplaincies over the year and it was a joy to see at first hand the vibrant life of our congregations and to hear stories of people coming to and growing in Christian faith. At a Diocesan level we continued to strengthen our commitment in particular to safeguarding, archdiaconal ministry and communications. Andrew Caspari took up his post as Chief Operating Officer and Susan Stelfox as Head of Finance, whilst

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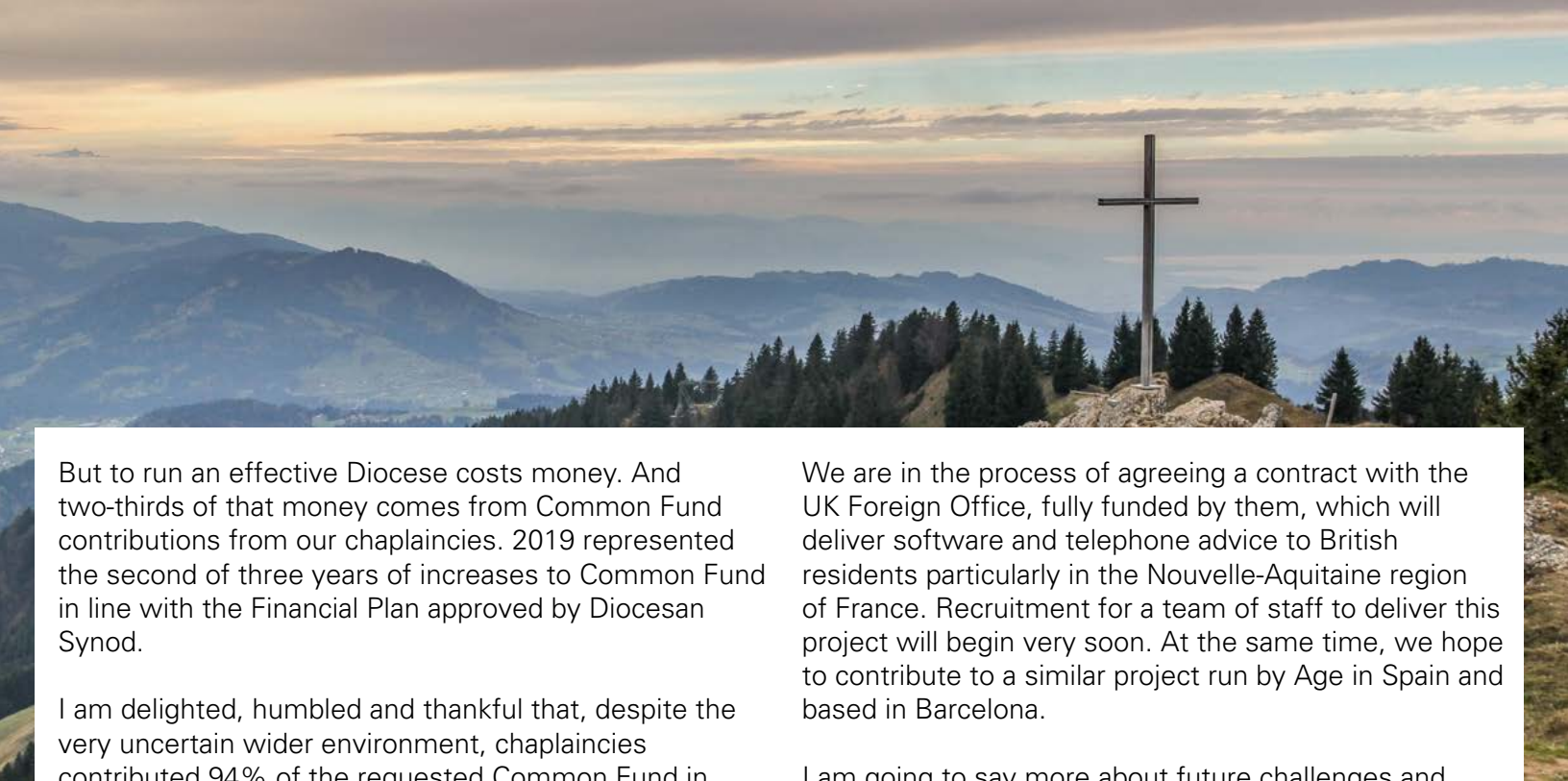
**2019 was a very difficult year...and yet, in many respects our Diocese more than survived – it thrived!**

Grace Fagan joined us as Safeguarding Manager. Leslie Nathaniel and David Waller became free-standing full-time Archdeacons and Ian Tarrant was appointed to be our new Dean in Gibraltar. The strengthening of our Diocese that these new appointments represent has, I believe, been vital for us to meet the challenges of our time. During the crisis, both Bishops, the Chief Operating Officer and Director of Communications have been meeting weekly. In addition, a wider Coronavirus Co-ordinating Group that includes the Archdeacons have also been meeting weekly. Bishop David and I have been writing every two weeks to our Clergy, Readers and Churchwardens to give you what advice we can about operating chaplaincy life properly and safely.

We have held a number of Pan-Diocesan Zoom events for clergy, readers, Churchwardens, most recently in connection with Black Lives Matter. These have been well attended and have been important in building our sense of being a part of the wider Diocese.

In our Brussels office we have had twice weekly meetings by Zoom for all staff, and in our London Office these meetings have happened daily. All organisations whether public or private sector, charitable sector or churches have found these last months deeply challenging. The fact that our Diocese has weathered the storms so well is a tribute to a strong and cohesive senior team, and to office staff who have adapted cheerfully to very different patterns of working, I am very grateful to all our Diocesan staff for their dedicated efforts to support the mission of the Diocese in trying times.





But to run an effective Diocese costs money. And two-thirds of that money comes from Common Fund contributions from our chaplaincies. 2019 represented the second of three years of increases to Common Fund in line with the Financial Plan approved by Diocesan Synod.

I am delighted, humbled and thankful that, despite the very uncertain wider environment, chaplaincies contributed 94% of the requested Common Fund in 2019.

This is a huge achievement, and I am greatly heartened by your generosity. Moreover, some 20 chaplaincies made contributions to the Hardship Fund, in addition to the Common Fund. Please know my deep appreciation for your generous gifts, freely given.

During the crisis, we have all felt financial stresses. Those chaplaincies that rely on income from plate collections, special events, bookings of premises and visitors have been particularly badly hit. Because of these stresses, the Diocesan Board of Finance took the exceptional decision to give back £0.5m, made up of an across the board Common Fund rebate plus hardship grants to those chaplaincies most in need. It is, of course, very good that there is sufficient financial resilience that we can help one another in this way.

And now in late June our chaplaincies are re-opening. But with physical distancing, hygiene regulations and bans on singing, this isn't quite church life as we knew it. We are having to discover a new normal for life in a world where Covid-19 is still a threat. Having negotiated the complexities around the "whether" and "how" of re-opening, there are some matters that we will want to pick up and issues with which we are re-engaging.

Brexit hasn't gone away. Many of us will need to be working out our residence entitlements, healthcare and pension status in a post-Brexit Europe. As a Diocese, we have identified a particular opportunity to contribute in helping retired people in France and Spain to access national registration processes.

We are in the process of agreeing a contract with the UK Foreign Office, fully funded by them, which will deliver software and telephone advice to British residents particularly in the Nouvelle-Aquitaine region of France. Recruitment for a team of staff to deliver this project will begin very soon. At the same time, we hope to contribute to a similar project run by Age in Spain and based in Barcelona.

I am going to say more about future challenges and future plans a little later. But for now, the Archdeacon of Switzerland will be talking to us shortly and will mention the Setting God's People Free agenda. This is also being billed in the national Church of England as "Everyday Faith". We were all set to pilot this in Switzerland and will very much want to pick this up again as soon as we can.

Those of you who are General Synod members will know that the Summer Residential Synod in York has been cancelled though there is to be a one day virtual gathering. I know that members of this Diocesan Synod will be keen to know what has happened with the Living in Love and Faith project relating to human sexuality. The team of 60 people involved have been continuing with their work and a draft of the book has been sent to external readers ranging from academic theologians to lay people in the Church of England to readers from the wider Anglican Communion. However, precisely because of the importance of the project, the Bishops have felt that the work should not be published until the pandemic situation allows us to give it proper priority and consideration.

As we now enter a period of deconfinement, Archdeacon Paul Vrolijk has a very apt headline for restarting church which encourages us to restart in a way that: "all are kept safe and none are left behind". It is all too easy to lose people. There will be opportunity a little later to think about the challenges that lie ahead. But I want to conclude this address with one of the best known parables: "the lost sheep". "Which of you", says Jesus, "having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?"

# **Bishop's Council and December Diocesan Synod**

The Bishop's Council of the Diocese met over two days on Zoom on 18/19 November. They covered a wide range of issues, many of which arise from the pandemic and Brexit. The Council agreed a new financial plan for the Diocese to run from 2020 to 2024. A key element of the plan is to freeze the Common Fund request to chaplaincies for a further year in 2021 and then introduce only small increases in the succeeding years. This means that the Common Fund request will not exceed the previously planned amount until 2024.

In addition to a reduced Common Fund request the Council agreed a proposal to set aside a Covid-19 hardship fund of £150,000 in 2021 to assist chaplaincies whose finances have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic. This builds on the fund this year which has distributed nearly £200,000 so far primarily to support clergy in chaplaincies where there was a risk that stipends might not be paid.

The plan forecasts a cumulative deficit for the Diocese of £1.4 million over 5 years by which point the annual budget needs to be balanced. The deficit will be funded from reserves.

The Diocese has successfully applied to the Church Commissioners for assistance and they awarded a grant of £210,000 to the Diocese from their emergency funds.

The Chief Operating Officer, Andrew Caspari said:

“The funds received from the National Church will make a significant impact on our ability to help chaplaincies most in need at this difficult time. We are very grateful. The agreement of the Bishop's Council, with no opposition, to the financial strategy is a significant step in our plans for the future and represents a careful balance between our urgent needs and the long-term financial health of the Diocese.”

**“ The funds received from the National Church will make a significant impact on our ability to help chaplaincies most in need at this difficult time. We are very grateful. The agreement of the Bishop's Council, with no opposition, to the financial strategy is a significant step in our plans for the future and represents a careful balance between our urgent needs and the long-term financial health of the Diocese. ”**

The Council also considered the implications of Brexit for the Diocese and in particular issues around GDPR. There will be more detail on this in the coming weeks, and the objective is to make this as simple as possible for our chaplaincies.

The Council also heard reports from across the Diocese which reflected the challenges chaplaincies have faced and some of the solutions they have found during the pandemic.



In normal times the Diocesan Synod and the Bishop’s Council have gathered in the Summer and Autumn respectively to discuss how things are being run and paid for as well as to consider future plans. This year we have moved to the city of Zoom. We have met, debated, shared tea and coffee and prayed together from our small boxes on screens. Following on from Bishop’s Council, Diocesan Synod met over two days on 10/11 December.

The gathering looked to the future. We were addressed by the Archbishop of York, who talked about the Church of England’s vision for the 2020’s. It describes a church which is “[Simpler, Humbler and Bolder](#)”. Archbishop Stephen recognised how the Diocese in Europe could provide inspiration for this objective and play a leading role in developing the vision in an ecumenical context.

As featured in this Review, “Breathing Life” is a strategy document developed by the Working Group on Racial Justice chaired by Archdeacon Leslie Nathaniel. The group presented the document to Synod where it was universally acclaimed. Thought was given in small groups as to how “Breathing Life” and our commitment to racial justice will be embedded in the life of every chaplaincy.

The Church of England is committed to being Carbon Neutral by 2030. Archdeacon David Waller and our Environment Officer, The Revd Elizabeth Bussmann encouraged the Synod to consider how this will be achieved at local level given the unusual circumstances of many chaplaincies and the buildings we use. The Diocese is committed to reducing travel where possible, and the experience of 2020 has assisted with this.

The third big topic discussed in small groups was the unanimous adopting of the “Clergy Covenant on Clergy Care and Wellbeing”. This places responsibility on Bishops, the Clergy and the Laity equally to ensure that our clergy are operating in a framework that enables them to be well and to thrive. [Details can be found here](#). The covenant is to be interpreted with care in the particular context of the Diocese in Europe and the creation of Chaplaincy [User Guides](#) is an important step along the way.

The Synod also heard how, across the Diocese, we plan to approach the discussions in the Church of England about “Living in Love and Faith”. This seeks to address the issue of how questions about identity, sexuality, relationships and marriage fit within the bigger picture of the good news of Jesus Christ.

Revd Canon Prof Jack McDonald is the Diocese’s LLF advocate, and he was on hand to [answer questions](#).

Significantly, Synod gave its approval to the important work that will have to be undertaken as a result of Brexit to put the right arrangements in place to continue to share data across the Diocese in a way that is compliant with UK and EU Data Protection regulations. There will be more on this in the new year.

A good-hearted gathering ended with sad farewells to, and an address from, Archdeacon Meurig Williams. Tears were visible in many an eye, even on zoom, as we watched the [slideshow of tributes](#) from the Archdeaconry of France accompanied by a Welsh Choir singing “Lord of All Hopefulness”.

**Read Bishop David’s opening sermon at Synod**



# Bishop Robert: Praying for the Wider Anglican Communion



The Coronavirus increases our fear and anxiety. We naturally worry about our own families, especially if we are separated from them. National leaders rightly prioritise the well-being of their own citizens. And national churches are inevitably concerned foremost with their own territories. But this proper familiar and local concern can easily lead us to neglect the needs of the wider world.

After Easter I was due to attend the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. Its meeting was postponed to August – and there are surely questions about whether this large international conference can happen then. In July, Bishop David and I were supposed to be attending the 10-yearly Lambeth Conference for Bishops from all over the world. But it was postponed until 2021, virus permitting. These big gatherings are major opportunities for Christian leaders from across the globe to meet, be informed about the realities and challenges we face and support one another. What is more, the Anglican Communion Office has furloughed most of their staff, and the Archbishop of Canterbury is not able to undertake international visits. In this context, we have to work harder at pan-Anglican fellowship and mutual understanding.

The Diocese in Europe represents about a quarter of the countries in the Anglican Communion. The Archdeaconry of Gibraltar is linked

with the Diocese of Peru, and the Archdeaconry of North West Europe is linked with the Diocese of Luweero in Uganda. And we have many members who have migrated from countries in the global south. Our Diocese is, arguably, that part of the Church of England which is most open to the rest of the world.

I was therefore delighted to have opportunity to preach at the Anglican Communion Office's [virtual Sunday Service](#) for the fifth Sunday in Easter. Other contributors to the worship came from Papua New Guinea, Mexico, Malaysia and Hong Kong. I took as my text John 14:1 – Jesus encourages his disciples “Do not let your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me.” Seldom have Christians across Europe been so united with brothers and sisters across the globe in facing a common threat. In the face of our common fear and anxiety, Jesus exhorts us to deepen our faith and trust – to know the God who is truly our rock and our refuge in times of trouble.

The virus brings a direct threat to health and an indirect threat to economic well-being. Of course, developing countries don't have the health services we enjoy in the West – I'm told DRC has just 11 ICU beds with ventilators. But in the global south, where economies are fragile, the financial costs can be equally or more catastrophic. Lockdowns mean crops are not harvested. School closures can mean children miss their main meal. And financial downturns amongst Western

importers mean business failures for exporters and impoverishment for populations.

The last two Bishop's Appeals in our Diocese have been for wider Anglican Communion projects. The Advent 2019 Appeal was for the Anglican Communion Fund. The Lent 2020 Appeal is for a new school classroom in the Kenyan Diocese of Mumias. These appeals help to focus our prayers and concern as well as our giving.

A Christian lockdown spirituality will need to include a profound sense of gratitude for what we do have: developed health services, sophisticated economies and – for most of us – relatively pleasant homes in which to shelter. I do hope that, from that sense of gratitude will flow a concern for our brothers and sisters in other parts of the globe, where the virus could be devastating. I hope they will know that we have not forgotten them. And I hope you will join me in committing to pray for our Anglican Communion partners in these difficult times.

For more information on the Anglican Communion, you can visit their [website](#).



# Bishop Robert's Advent Appeal 2020

Bishop Robert issued his Advent Appeal 2020 on 12 October:

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last week, we witnessed a deeply sobering point in our global struggle against Covid-19: over 1 million people worldwide have now died from the virus. We know and see the impacts of Covid-19 in our own communities here in Europe, and the stresses and strains it brings for us all in our daily lives. We see too, numbers of infections and deaths increasing once more among us, across the Diocese in Europe.

In Morocco (within our own Diocese) there have now been over 140,000 confirmed cases, and nearly 2,500 deaths. In South Africa, despite introducing one of the severest lockdowns in the world, over 685,000 cases have been recorded. In some areas of Africa, Covid-19 is exacerbating both ongoing violence, conflict and bloodshed and existing health crises, like tuberculosis. Lack of testing and data issues mean the real numbers in Africa may actually be far higher than those recorded. John Nkengasong from the Africa Centres for Disease Control told the BBC yesterday: "I don't think we are over the first wave yet, we have not yet hit the bottom at all."

in response to emergency needs right across the Communion, you may have seen that the Archbishop of Canterbury launched a Covid-19 "Together in Unity" Appeal. I am delighted that his Appeal has already raised over £100,000. My Advent Appeal this year is to urge your support for the work the Anglican Communion Fund is doing to alleviate the ravaging impact of Covid-19 in the poorest parts of the world. The Anglican Communion Fund (ACF) is making a difference on the ground to people who are suffering every day, the human cost of this pandemic.

## **Behind the statistics are human life stories**

of deprivation from lack of food, access to basic hygiene and sanitation facilities, and worsening economic hardship in the poorest communities for those unable to work. Illustrated examples from ACF-supported projects in Sudan and Mexico [can be found here](#). Where you have relationships with churches across the Communion, you will know of their situations, with first-hand reasons to support an Appeal to help those who have already lost so much and have least.

I am delighted that, with your help, the Diocese raised nearly £15,500

for my Advent Appeal 2019 to promote the empowerment of women in the Anglican Communion. I should add that ACF also provides key support to our own work representing the Anglican Communion in the European institutions, on issues such as migration and refugees, human rights, freedom of expression and belief, and domestic violence against women.

I attach some [resources](#) you may wish to draw on for your chaplaincy bulletins and newsletters on ACF's Covid-19 projects. Among these you will see that Bishop Moses Zungu from Maridi Diocese in South Sudan expresses his gratitude for ACF's support, saying, "You held our hand during our most trying moments." I hope we in our Diocese can help with an outstretched hand to brothers and sisters in the Anglican Communion who are suffering so deeply right now from the impact of Covid-19, by supporting the work on the ground by the ACF.

Please give as generously as you can to this Advent Appeal. You can find details of how you can donate [here](#).

# Advent in the Diocese

We journeyed into Advent on 30 November with another pan-Diocesan Zoom Service, at which Dr Clare Amos, offered reflections on the Gospel according to Mark. You can watch a video of the service [here](#).



Chaplaincies across the Diocese have been sharing delightful images of their Advent celebrations, ranging from Advent calendars, Nativity Sets and Carols, to weekly ideas for children to send in ahead of Church services.

We round off our Annual Review with a selection of wonderful examples seen on social media. Just click on the pictures, and please keep sharing your offerings across the Diocese!

## Holy Trinity, Geneva

Holy Trinity are displaying some impressive Nativity sets!



## La Côte Anglican Church

Another Swiss chaplaincy, La Cote Anglican Church has produced this colourful Advent Calendar.



## Anglican Church Ostend-Bruges

In Belgium, meanwhile, children from the Ostend-Bruges chaplaincy are being asked to draw something in a weekly picture challenge!

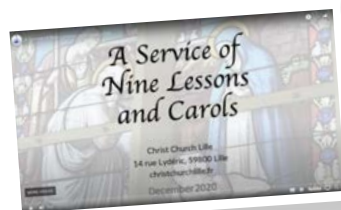


## All Saints' Church Rome

At All Saints' Church Rome, Chaja Verkerk, one of the Diocese Ministry of Experience Scheme participants this year has preached the sermon.

## St. Alban's Church, Copenhagen with Aarhus

Anglicans in Denmark are sharing daily Advent Windows videos with readings. Here's one from 6 December from Isaiah 42, read by The Revd Canon Ulla Monberg.



## Christ Church, Lille

And at Christ Church, Lille a full service of Nine Lessons and Nine Carols has been put together.



