

To all licensed clergy, clergy with PTO and licensed lay ministers

Date: Monday 19th February 2024

Our Ref: MJS/jrp-bp4103

Lent 2024

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

God of the Ashes, today, let us hold the tension of the story of our making – born of the dirt, beautifully connected to the earth we walk on. And yet, possessing the knowledge of our own mortality – that our common decay cannot be escaped. As we begin Lent, help us to become honest about the ways our societies and selfhoods are marred by injustice, cruelty, neglect, and greed. Help us to see our own role in the degeneration of the world; that as we push back evil around us, we might also admit those secret evils that dwell in us. As we name how we've been complicit in the ashes of this world, help us to bear them in solidarity and hope. Amen.

Breathe

INHALE: I will carry the ashes.

EXHALE: God, bring rest to the suffering.

INHALE: There is breath in these ashes.

EXHALE: No death is final.

Cole Arthur Riley | Black Liturgies

As we embark on the journey of Lent, the ash we were marked with reminds us of our connection to our earthly home, yet coupled with the fragility and temporality of human life. As we seek ways to draw closer to God through this period, either by fasting from certain things or proactively taking up a new discipline, may our repentance of the ways we have transgressed against those around us be heartfelt as we journey in the hope of forgiveness. We echo the Psalmist's plea to "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain in me a willing spirit" Psalm 51:10-12 (NRSV).

Diocesan Chrism Eucharist on Maundy Thursday, 28th March 2024 at 11am at Leicester Cathedral

We very much look forward to seeing you on Maundy Thursday as deacons, priests and bishops, as we gather to renew our ordination vows. This service is open to anyone, so please do extend a warm welcome to others, including church officers and lay ministers.

This service provides the opportunity for us to express something of what it means to be 'The Diocese' as we come together before God as members of the Body of Christ, and it is my expectation and hope that all licensed clergy will be present (while being aware that a midweek morning is not an easy time for chaplains and those in secular employment). Clergy with PTO are also very welcome to attend.

In this service, we are affirming our relationship to one another as ordained ministers, so we would be glad if you would all robe, as we express our solidarity with one another. Robing will be in the Kempe & Wycliffe rooms on the ground floor of St Martins House. The 'dress code' is alb and white stole, but cassock, surplice and scarf are also acceptable. All Readers, Associate Ministers and Lay Ministers are welcome to attend and robe in your cassock, surplice and blue scarf. Please make sure you are robed by 10.40am at the latest.

During this service, we will also bless the oils for use in ordination, initiation and healing. Oils will be available for collection after the service so please bring empty, suitable containers with you.

Lunch will be served at St Martins House, following the service. In order to help with numbers, seating and catering, **please book** using the following link: [Chrism Service 28th March 2024 - The Hub Diocese of Leicester \(anglican.org\)](https://www.anglican.org.uk/leicester/2024/03/28/chrism-service-28th-march-2024-the-hub-diocese-of-leicester)

We would appreciate, that if driving, you car share with others where possible, or take other means of transport as we continue our ministry as an Eco Diocese.

If you would like to sing with the scratch choir for this service (with a rehearsal on the day at 9.30am), please email Hannah Merritt, the Cathedral's Liturgy and Music Administrator, on cathedral.music@leicestercofe.org, indicating which voice part you usually sing, by Friday 8th March.

Walk of Witness – Good Friday – 29th March 2024

We are delighted to say that we are partnering with the New Testament Church of God (www.ntcgthelighthouse.org) in bringing back a Good Friday event to the City Centre (see attached flyer) between 9.00am and 1pm. There will be a walk of witness from Victoria Park, stopping at various points to pray, followed by a crucifixion drama by the Manna Theatre Company <https://www.mannatheatrecompany.uk/>. Volunteers are needed please to ensure it is a success, especially in stewarding but also in the drama itself. Attached is a volunteer information and costume sheet, as well as poster for the event.

Bishops' Lent Appeal

A reminder that this year's Bishops' Lent Appeal is in support of Baca, a charity founded in Loughborough which provides accommodation and therapeutic care for young people seeking refuge in the UK, without families. I (+Martyn) had the chance to visit Baca in September and meet a number of the staff as well as the young people in their care. I found it a truly inspirational occasion and was particularly impressed by the wrap-around support and specialist education they offer, which includes art therapies, sports activities, and life skills training which helps those in their care adjust to life in the UK and become familiar with its laws and culture.

Baca serves an incredibly vulnerable group of people. Many of the young people who arrive in the UK alone have endured unimaginable horrors, and when they arrive in the UK, they continue to face adversity. Often housed in unsuitable accommodation, like hotels, with basic needs unmet and no wider support, they are at extreme risk of being trafficked. As a result, nearly a third are reported missing. But the young people in Baca's care are kept safe, and supported to heal, so they can lead a happy and fruitful life here in the UK.

We know that finances are challenging for many people, making it difficult to fundraise within your communities. But, if members of your community do feel able to give, then here is how their money can help:

- £5 could equip new arrivals at Baca College with education starter packs
- £13 could provide an hour of learning for all child refugees studying at Baca College
- £50 could cover the setup costs for a new arrival's room

You can find out more about Baca's work at www.bacacharity.org.uk; and donations can be made online [here](#).

We are also hosting a webinar on Tuesday 12th March at 7.45pm with Jimmy Zachariah, CEO of Baca, and two leaders from within the diocese, Kat Gibson and Revd Claire Goode, who have, in different ways, supported refugees and asylum-seekers. It should be an inspiring discussion, and one which sheds light on the various ways we can all play our part, whether with our time, prayer, creativity, or financially. You can register to attend the webinar [here](#).

Intercultural Mission Conference

Please be reminded to sign up for the national conference on Intercultural Mission in partnership with ANIC, the Anglican Network for Intercultural Churches, taking place in St Martins House and the Cathedral on 20th to 22nd March. The conference will include a book launch (and free copies for conference participants!) for the new book co-authored by the two of us, Lusa Nsenga-Ngoy, Jessie Tang and Florence Gildea: *An Intercultural Church for a Multicultural World: Reflections on Intercultural Gift Exchange*, and a concert of intercultural music. [Book your free space here](#), while tickets are still available.

Permissions

The national church are considering a different approach to allowing permissions for visiting clergy to take services in another diocese. For the time being, please continue to direct enquiries through the Bishop's Office towards James Pickersgill, Bishop's Chaplain, on: Bishops.Chaplain@LeicesterCofE.org

Once again, this letter comes with our prayers and thanks for your ministry. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Yours, in Christ,



The Rt Revd Martyn Snow
Bishop of Leicester



The Rt Revd Saju Muthalaly
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