

To all clergy and lay ministers

Date: 28th February 2022
Our ref: MS/ec-bp1043

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As we watch with horror the unfolding tragedy in Ukraine, it is easy to think that there is nothing that we can do to make a difference. Yet as Christians, we believe in the power of prayer. The Church of England has published prayers which you can find here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/worship-texts-and-resources/praying-peace-world>. The Diocese of Europe is also live-streaming prayers at 6pm GMT on Tuesday 1st March on its website www.europe.anglican.org, I hope that you will consider joining them.

Pope Francis has called for a day of prayer and fasting for peace in Ukraine and across the world on Ash Wednesday, 2nd March. The Pope has said: “Jesus taught us that the diabolical senselessness of violence is answered with God’s weapons, with prayer and fasting.” We must denounce the action of Russia in invading a free democratic country because it is evil, putting at risk the lives of every Ukrainian and the families of Russian soldiers, but also the relative peace of Europe which we have known for so long.

Peace is the gift of God which has been earned for us by Jesus on the cross. So just as we believe that prayer affects what goes on in the heavenly realms so too, we believe that prayer changes the one praying. We receive the peace of God in our hearts even as we pray for that peace to come on earth. We also receive the wisdom of God as we face difficult questions about whether our own country should increase its defences, or whether we should relax restrictions on refugees entering this country, and how we should protect the economically poorest in our society who will be most affected by the cost of living increases, which are a likely result of the sanctions being imposed on Russia. We must pray for our own government as well as the nations of the world as we face these questions together.

Wellbeing

In all this, we are mindful of the ongoing effects of the pandemic. We have a significant number of clergy and lay ministers who are unwell at this time, and many of us are still feeling fatigue and even exhaustion. So we want to remind you once again of the Diocesan Counselling Service (open to all clergy and licensed lay ministers) which can be accessed via anissa.chung@leicestercofe.org (more details here: www.leicester.anglican.org/info-for-leaders/wellbeing/).

Similarly, please consider booking yourself onto one of our Bishops’ Retreat Days at Launde Abbey, dates for the rest of 2022 are: Tuesday 22nd March, Thursday 7th April, Tuesday 17th May, Monday 20th June, Monday 6th September, Tuesday 4th October, Tuesday 29th November, Tuesday 6th December. To book a place please contact my office on 0116 270 8985 or bishops.office@leicestercofe.org. Numbers of people accessing these days have been

relatively small, but the feedback is always very positive as people appreciate the quiet and the hospitality of Launde. We know that for some of you, it is a long journey, but we would still encourage you to set aside the time.

Maundy Thursday Chrism Eucharist

It has been a long time since we have been able to gather properly as a diocesan family. We are delighted to say that we are planning a Chrism Eucharist on Maundy Thursday at 11am at St James the Greater Church, Leicester. All licensed clergy are asked to attend, to robe and process. PTO clergy and licensed lay ministers are also invited (and robe and process if you wish) and there should be space for Churchwardens and others (if your work allows). We sincerely hope that you will feel able to attend and express your support for your fellow ministers in Christ. Further details will be sent in due course, including an Eventbrite link to confirm your place (specifically needed for the lunch after the service). Enquiries at this stage can be sent to James Pickersgill (Bishops.Chaplain@LeicesterCofE.org).

Safeguarding training

You may be aware that because of the ongoing commitment to integrate safeguarding into the DNA of the church, safeguarding training requirements for those in ministry have changed. Those in authorised ministry need to complete ***Safeguarding Leadership*** training, together with ***Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse*** (RADA) and ***Safer Recruitment and People Management*** (SRPM). Clergy with PTO have separate safeguarding training modules.

The required training must be done either when previous training expires (after 3 years) or where not previously completed, as soon as possible. Modules can be completed on the Church of England Safeguarding Training Portal, <https://safeguardingtraining.cofeportal.org>. A detailed table of who needs to complete which safeguarding training can be found at <https://www.leicester.anglican.org/training-and-events>. If you are at all uncertain, please contact Louise.Warner@leicestercofe.org.

Can we also take this opportunity to remind all clergy and churchwardens that you must check whether someone has Permission to Officiate (PTO) in the Diocese before inviting them to lead services. Your Area Dean should have details of those with PTO but if necessary, please feel free to contact either the Archdeacons' or my office.

Shaped By God Together

You should have received a letter from your Archdeacon in the last few weeks, outlining how you can continue to engage in the Shaped By God Together process. This is an ongoing process of discernment, and we are keen that all churches continue to engage, even as we work with specific churches on the pilot Minster Communities. We are sorry that we can't offer support to every church this year – recent staff reductions mean we have reduced capacity and the decision to pilot the Minster Communities was necessary in order to learn how to do this well. However, we have recently been successful in a 'Capacity Fund' bid to the national church and, in time, this should help us to be able to offer more support. In the meantime, we need to ask for your patience as staff do the best that they can to respond to requests for help.

Finally, a note to say that Bishop Saju is planning a series of visits to deaneries throughout the rest of this year to visit clergy and other ministers. He will be in touch with you soon to book

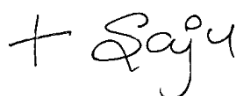
dates for this and greatly looks forward to getting to know you and listening to your experiences of ministry.

So as Lent begins, we pray that this will be a time of deepening your desire for God and your longing for his Kingdom to come on earth. We remain so very grateful for your partnership in the Gospel and we pray for you regularly.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Martyn". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

The Rt Revd Martyn Snow
Bishop of Leicester

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Saju". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

The Rt Revd Saju Muthalaly
Bishop of Loughborough

Bishop's Lodge, 12 Springfield Road, LE2 3BD

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