



To

- licensed clergy
- those holding PtO
- LLMs
- members of Bishop's Council
- members of the College of Canons
- members of the Cathedral Council
- churchwardens

The Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple
2 February 2021

Dear all

Attached is [a statement](#) to let you know that I will be retiring on the 3rd July.

It is a commonplace to observe that one of the effects of the pandemic has been to hasten the pace of change that was already coming towards us. In this

case the reality is that the pandemic has delayed things a bit in the hope that the diocese will get to a more convenient point for there to be a vacancy. I am confident that July will be time for me to go and for Bishop Karen to become the acting Bishop.

The Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple is a good day for me to let you know. Of course, the Festival is what it says. When I came here, the text of my first sermon was from John 12.21 when Greeks came up to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival and said to Philip, "Sir we wish to see Jesus". Thank you for all the ways in which you help people to see Jesus in churches, chaplaincies, the cathedral, schools, academies, colleges and communities across the diocese. It is a privilege to serve with you.

Today's festival is also known as Candlemas when church candles that illuminate the darkness were blessed by the light of Christ's presence among us. At this time of pandemic the light of Christianity has never mattered more. Beliefs and values give purpose and direction to our lives. This is true for individuals and it also informs the way we live together in a wider society. We are called to love God and love our neighbours as ourselves; and don't forget to love the beautiful earth which is our home. The Church is a crucial part of the region's social capital and is doing an amazing job of caring for our neighbours. It is a privilege to serve with you.

In remembering the presence of Simeon and Anna who were waiting in the Temple, the Feast of the Presentation is also something of a festival of old age. That older people are looking forward with hopeful expectation of God's promise being fulfilled, alert to something new happening, is a great encouragement to all of us as we grow older. The Church of England knows quite a lot about that in what is quite an elderly part of the country. We can be encouraged by the witness of the elderly expectantly looking forward and recognising fulfilment in what is new. Again, it is a privilege to serve with you.

I am grateful for the ten years we have been here in Salisbury. In many ways it has been a fulfilling ministry. Undoubtedly it has been a big responsibility and at times it has been quite challenging. The pace of life is a bit relentless and it became clear to me last year that I needed to plan for handing on the role.

We are finding our way through the immediate crisis of the pandemic but it is increasingly apparent that its impact is going to be with us for years. We are putting in place a good framework to address the issues coming towards us. The Channel Island Deaneries have been welcomed and the legalities should be nearly complete by July. Diocesan Synod this month will be considering a Mission and Pastoral Plan. We have already agreed an approach to our finances so that we will balance the budget in four years. To do this we need to address income as well as expenditure and at some time later in the year there will be a Giving Campaign.

There are opportunities here and the diocese is well placed to take them. The scale of what faces us will benefit from new and younger leadership. The diocese will be in good hands through the vacancy. I am confident in God's goodness and providential care. And, please note, I am not going until July!

Meanwhile, on, on... It is a privilege to serve with you.

God bless,

+Nicholas Sarum