

## **Announcement of resignation**

Dear friends, I'd like to make an announcement which in normal times would have been made at each church's Annual Meeting in March or April. As I want everyone to get the same message I'm reading it and will deliver it personally to those not here in church and without access to computers.

You'll be aware that for the last year The Diocese has generously given me special dispensation to only work the bare minimum of 35 hours a week required of a priest in a .6 post and to live in Ripon caring for my Mum before and after work and on my days off. Without that generosity I would not have been able to remain here. However it has become increasingly difficult to juggle the two roles, meaning that a vulnerable, confused, anxious and partially sighted 91 year old is suffering neglect whilst I have attempted to provide ministry of an acceptable standard.

The Church Wardens and I have been in touch with The Archdeacon and Area Bishop over the course of the last year and it was agreed that I should leave the parishes at the end of June. However, with the onset of coronavirus and subsequent lockdown I felt it would be irresponsible and pastorally insensitive to stick to that time frame leaving the churches to deal with lockdown when almost all retired clergy were self-isolating, so I deferred my resignation by three months. After consultation with Bishop Nick in June, he advised it was in everyone's interests that I leave with 4<sup>th</sup> October being my last working day, thus putting an end to harmful uncertainty and speculation and enabling the parishes to move on. Again as he said, leaving before a regular pattern of services and activities resumes will enable the congregations to start with a clean sheet rather than trying to resume what was done previously; furthermore, the transition from having a vicar that hardly anyone has seen for months into a vacancy will be virtually seamless.

As the country re-emerges from lockdown and the church forges a new way of operating, it will be imperative that our congregations have strong and decisive leadership which they will receive from The Area Dean and Archdeacon.

These are exciting times for the church and so it is vital our congregations have a fresh start and a new vision.

I will say things of a more specific nature to each of our congregations later, but for now I would like to thank you all for your faithfulness, prayerfulness, generosity to our churches and Christian witness, as well as the kindness and support you have shown to me. It has been a privilege to work alongside you as a priest for the last ten years. Whilst all too aware of my many failings, I have tried to be faithful to my calling.

I ask you to be respectful of the fact that for many years before I came we have had a policy within the benefice that those in the paid employment of the church do not receive gifts on their departure as they have been well remunerated financially in their years in office. Ministry is a privilege and is its own reward. Please, hear what I am saying; I would be offended by any suggestion of gifts or thanks. Praise and expressions of thanks are only due to those who give of their time in a voluntary capacity. I will say my Goodbyes in a quiet and individual way which is what I would wish. I will be sorry to be going but it is right for you and it is necessary for my Mum.

God bless you all. Alison.