



DIOCESE OF OXFORD

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire

FROM THE BISHOP OF OXFORD
The Rt Reverend John Pritchard

Addressed to Parish Officers:

Churchwardens
Treasurers
PCC Secretaries

cc Bishop's Staff

29 October 2014

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Dear Friends

I'm at the end of seven exhilarating years as Bishop of Oxford and I wanted to write and thank you for all you have done and are doing for your church and, therefore, for the Kingdom of God. I've tried wherever I've been in our churches to thank the local representatives of this wonderful army of church officers, churchwardens, treasurers, secretaries and organists. Where would we be without you?

The glory of the Church of England is in its local churches, covering the country with a sacred canopy. We bear witness to God our Creator and Redeemer, and we seek to live and share the love of God with all, regardless of faith, no faith, some faith or not-yet faith. We enter the life of the community at every available point. We baptise, marry, and conduct funerals. We run schools, children's clubs, lunch clubs, food banks, street pastor schemes, pastoral visiting schemes, holiday clubs for young and old, and sometimes debt counselling and work with prisons and ex-offenders. And more.

But the heartbeat of the church, and where it finds its energy, is in our regular worship, Sunday by Sunday, keeping the people of God pointing to True North, to the beauty and glory of God. And you make sure all this happens, unsung, unpaid, sometimes unthanked. So here is my thanks! The hours of work and the frustrations are known only to you, to God and to those closest to you.

This seven years has been an exciting time for me. I hope you may have seen the article I wrote in the Door this month about what I've tried to do. I've failed as much as any, I'm sure, but it's been very rewarding trying to roll out the vision of Living Faith and to align our priorities around those five core colours on the Living Faith palette.

We have a wonderful team to serve you in our Bishop's Staff, and our various finance, buildings, mission and communications departments at Diocesan Church House. It's a lean team but highly motivated and I hope you are in touch with them whenever you need. Never feel isolated when a phone call or email could help.

But my main purpose in writing is to say thank you. We may or may not have met (it's a big diocese) but we've all been part of God's Big Team seeking the well-being and flourishing of our churches and communities. Ultimately God leads us in mission; our task is just to get in his slipstream for the particular time we have responsibility. Bless you for taking up the challenge.

Grace and peace to you and those around you.