

To all Licensed Clergy, Clergy with PTO, Licensed Lay Ministers, Focal Ministers, PCC Secretaries and Safeguarding Coordinators

Date: Monday 12th January 2026

Our ref: MJS/jrp-bp6001

Baptism of Christ

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Happy New Year to you all. We hope this finds you well having had a joyful Christmas. And now, as we celebrate the festival of the baptism of Jesus, so we give thanks for the revelation that he is God's Son. This is the Good News that we seek to share with others. We pray for you at the start of this new year, that God will give you "a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him" so that "you might live for the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1).

Centenary of the Diocese of Leicester

During this year and on into next year, we will be marking two very significant milestones. On the 12th of November 1926 the Bishop of Peterborough became the first Bishop of Leicester and the new diocese (principally the County of Leicestershire and the City of Leicester) was formed. And just a few months later, on the 21st of February 1927 the church of St Martin's Leicester was hallowed as Leicester Cathedral. (History buffs will know that there had previously been a Bishop of Leicester in the 600s, but the See of Leicester was then absorbed into other dioceses before being revived in 1926).

We believe that it is important to mark these milestones, not because "the Diocese" or "the Bishop" or "the Cathedral" are somehow special in themselves, but rather because each is a sign of God's faithfulness over generations, and because they remind us that every one of our 320 churches, 97 church schools, multiple chaplaincies and all our worshipping communities in their various contexts are part of something bigger in all our diversity. In other words, you – every person receiving this letter, and all in your churches, schools, chaplaincies and worshipping communities – you are the Diocese of Leicester!

With this in mind, this is what we intend to celebrate (based on our three key questions <https://www.leicester.anglican.org/content/pages/documents/three-key-questions-leaflet.pdf>

- 1. our partnership with God (God's faithfulness to us),**
- 2. our partnerships across the Diocese (sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ),**
- 3. our partnerships in our communities (loving service of the world)**

A small planning group, chaired by Jonathan Kerry, has been established and further communications will follow with more details of events. However, we want to highlight now that these events will be spread around the diocese. We, as your bishops, and as a sign of our partnership with you, would like to work with you to jointly host celebration events around the diocese. This could be a Benefice event, a Minster Community event, a Deanery event, an ecumenical event or a community event - the important point is that it reflects the themes above.

We are also looking to join with the Leicester Cathedral Choir in visiting different areas of the Diocese to host 'Together Celebration Services' as we give thanks for God's faithfulness.

Please start thinking about this now – and feel free to contact Jonathan Kerry (Diocesan Secretary) or James Pickersgill (Bishop's Chaplain) if you would like to discuss possibilities.

Minster Communities

Please find below a summary of phase 3 of the Minster Community formation process; and an outline of our proposed ministry discernment and appointment process; this was promised at the last clergy gathering in November 2025.

Phase 3 process: <https://www.leicester.anglican.org/content/pages/documents/summary-of-phase-3-process.pdf>

Discernment and Appointment Process:

<https://www.leicester.anglican.org/content/pages/documents/phase-3-ministry-discernment-and-appointment-processes.pdf>

We want to emphasise the importance of discernment in these processes. We will of course do everything we can to ensure open, transparent and fair processes for all appointments. Yet we hope that you will understand that every Minster Community will be different (while working to the same principles) and therefore the process may have to be adapted according to the local needs.

Similarly, we also want to emphasise that nothing will be done without the agreement of the post-holder and where relevant, the PCC. Common courtesy, quite apart from the law, demands that you are fully consulted in any changes. We are seeking to do this throughout the Minster Community process.

There will be an opportunity for all **licensed clergy** to discuss this as we meet at the next clergy gathering on **Wednesday 11th March 2026** between **9.30am and 1pm** (finishing with lunch). Please book this through the Hub [here](#).

The next Lay Ministers Gathering will be held on **Saturday 7th March 2026**, and full details will be coming out shortly.

Bishops' Study Days 2026

Our next Bishops' Study Day for all ministers (ordained and lay) takes place on **Thursday 14th May 2026** at St Martins House and will have the theme of 'Justice and Love'. Although we are always hesitant to speak of the "three-line whip", we do want to be clear that stipendiary clergy are expected to attend the whole date unless there is a very good reason. This is all part of our partnership in ministry as well as our commitment to lifelong learning. Please book in through the Hub link [here](#). Also please mark the Autumn study day in your diary as **Wednesday 25th November 2026**.

Diocesan Chrism Eucharist

As always, we will gather on **Maundy Thursday, 2nd April 2026**, at 11am at Leicester Cathedral, as deacons, priests and bishops, 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. Robing will be in the Kempe & Heyrick 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. Lunch will be served at St Martins House, following the service. In order to help with numbers, robing, seating and catering, please book through the hub link [here](#).

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.

If you are driving, please consider car-sharing or using alternative transport options - such as trains, park-and-ride, or the new city centre hopper service - as we continue our ministry as an Eco Diocese.

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

0116 270 8985, bishop.leicester@leicestercofe.org, www.leicester.anglican.org

If you would like to sing with the scratch choir for this service (with a rehearsal on the day at 9.30am), please complete the following form by Friday 20th March please: <https://forms.gle/94aoGw5FjRHdKzVx9>

Communion by Extension and Children Being Admitted to Communion

We are receiving increasing requests for permission to have communion by extension. While this is completely understandable given the reduced numbers of full-time stipendiary clergy, we want to remind you that, while communion by extension is valuable in particular circumstances, it should not become the normal setting in which people receive the consecrated bread and wine. Rather, it is a way for those who are unable to make the main gathering of worship to partake in the Eucharist, and it is intended to be used with 'a minimal interval of time' between the service where the bread/wine is consecrated and the communion by extension service.

However, in light of the realisation that we do have fewer priests in certain areas, we have amended The Bishops' Guidelines to enable further conversations and discernment, which can be found here: <https://www.leicester.anglican.org/content/pages/documents/communion-by-extension-in-the-diocese-of-leicester-epiphany-2026.pdf>

Just as adults are sustained through the bread and wine of Christ, children also are as well. You will find here <https://www.leicester.anglican.org/content/pages/documents/admission-of-children-to-communion-2023.docx> the diocesan guidelines to admitting children to receive Communion. Enabling this for children between ages 8-11 can also be a good way of beginning the preparation with them towards confirmation.

Other frequently asked questions about services can be accessed here:

<https://www.leicester.anglican.org/content/pages/documents/bishops-office-faqs-2026.pdf>

Prayer Diary

Prayer is at the heart of all we do as a Diocese. As we are encouraged as we read in 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 to 'Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you'.

In our responsibilities as an Eco Diocese, our commitment to be net zero carbon by 2030, as well as weighing up staff time and the cost of printing and postage, you will have read in Diomail that we have taken the decision to cease production of the Prayer Diary in a printed booklet format. Instead, we have created a prayer calendar which can be found on our Diocesan website and will be available each week in our e-newsletter, Diomail. If you are not already a subscriber to Diomail, you can [sign up here](#).

A link to the Prayer Diary for January – April 2026 can be found at leicester.anglican.org/prayer-diary/

Thank you for all your on-going prayers and do keep praying for the life, witness and ministry of this Diocese that we will be a beacon of God's love in a hurting world.

Safeguarding Audit by INEQE

You may know that all dioceses in the Church of England are undergoing a safeguarding audit by the independent safeguarding organisation INEQE (see here <https://ineqe.com/churchofengland/>). Please pray for our Diocesan Safeguarding Team and the Diocesan Safeguarding Oversight Group as they prepare for our own audit in the Autumn of this year. It is a very rigorous and demanding process, but we trust that it will be helpful for our own learning and practice.

Bishop's Chaplaincy Lectures

In the first Bishop's Chaplaincy lecture of 2026, Lord Alan Beith will explore the place of law in public life, the tensions it now faces, and why it continues to matter.

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

0116 270 8985, bishop.leicester@leicestercofe.org, www.leicester.anglican.org

Lord Alan Beith served as the Liberal Democrat MP for Berwick-upon-Tweed from 1973 until 2015, when he entered the House of Lords (for a few years, Bishop Martyn lived in Berwick-on Tweed and so he knows Lord Beith from this time). Alan was the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats for 17 years and served variously as the Party's spokesperson for Constitutional Affairs, Treasury Affairs, and for the Lord Chancellor's Department. He has been a Methodist circuit lay preacher for 60 years, and founded the Historic Chapels Trust, which cares for Nonconformist and Roman Catholic churches and chapels which are no longer used for worship.

The lecture is taking place at St Andrew's Jarrom Street on **Wednesday 28th January 2026** between **5.30-8pm**. This is a free event and open to all, to find out more and register to attend please [click here](#).

The next two lectures are taking place on:

Thursday 30th April 2026 at 6pm, at **Leicester University**, with speaker Elizabeth Oldfield.

Autumn Term at University of Loughborough, details to follow in due course.

Details about each of the lectures will be shared in Diomail, so please do look out for them.

Retreat Days at Launde

Finally, a reminder of the retreat days at Launde which are open to all clergy and lay ministers and are intended simply as a gift of time and space. Dates for the next few months in 2026 are:

Thursday 19th March

Tuesday 11th August

Thursday 16th April

Thursday 3rd September

Tuesday 5th May

Saturday 19th September

Thursday 11th June

Wednesday 7th October

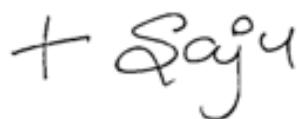
Tuesday 7th July

Wednesday 17th November

For more information and to book your place, please contact our office on

Bishops.office@leicestercofe.org or 0116 2708985.

With continued thanks and blessings for your ministry in Christ,



The Rt Revd Martyn Snow
Bishop of Leicester

The Rt Revd Saju Muthalaly
Bishop of Loughborough