

New Diocesan Warden of Readers

The role of Warden of Readers in the Diocese of York passed to the Ven Dr Amanda Bloor, Archdeacon of Cleveland (pictured) from the Ven Sam Rushton, Archdeacon of York, on the 1st December.



The Warden of Readers is both a leader and an advocate for the unique ministry of Readers in the Diocese, who are lay people with theological and practical training, holding the Archbishop's Licence to teach, preach and minister in parishes.

Sam Rushton was a Warden of Readers for ten years, taking the post over with that of Archdeacon of Cleveland in 2010, and having served in the same role in the Diocese of Bristol before that.

"It has always been a source of joy and encouragement to work with the Reader family," she said in a letter addressed to all Readers.

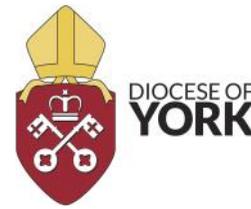
"I will miss you enormously."

Amanda Bloor became Archdeacon of Cleveland earlier in 2020 after Sam Rushton moved to become Archdeacon of York in October 2019. As well as serving as a parish priest, Amanda has worked as a Bishop's Chaplain and a Director of Ordinands in the Dioceses of Oxford and Portsmouth, and has undertaken research into the wellbeing of those in ministry.

"Over the years, in parish ministry and in specialist roles, it's been my privilege to work alongside some wonderful Readers and Licensed Lay Ministers and some hugely faithful people exploring a calling to become a Reader," said Amanda in her own letter.

"I hope that as Covid restrictions ease, there will be opportunities to meet you all, but until then, know that I am always ready to offer help, advice and support. Do get in touch, do let me know how things are with you, and do pray for me as I take up this role, as I will pray for you."

dioceseofyork.org.uk/readers



TheNews

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To the Saints of the Diocese of York

The Bishop of Hull,
Alison White,
writes:

Opening the Door

2021 will be a different kind of year in lots of ways.

It has crept up on us rather more quietly, without the usual celebrations, and hardly a party popper to be heard. But this year still comes to us as a gift and an invitation as we take a deep breath and step over the threshold.

There is a good northern tradition of 'first-footing': the first person to enter a home on New Year's Day comes bringing gifts and a blessing (God's perspective on coal and good luck!) I guess that won't have been possible for many households this time, unless the visitor was in their bubble! But at the start of this year we welcome again and afresh the One who can come close to us all, who stands at the door and knocks and wants to be let in – whatever the state of our home.

There isn't a day or a place where we don't need Christ's presence – we aren't created to go it alone. But for me there are moments when I especially need to be conscious of

Jesus who has made his home with us, come what may. Looking into this year, which is so full of unknowns, I want to open the door again and let him be always the first one to come to be with us.



Undoubtedly we will be facing some huge challenges in the months ahead, as a nation, as churches and for us personally. The temptation will be to shut the door against them and simply try to keep ourselves safe.

If it is true that Jesus is with us, then we can go into this new year in a different way. We can open the door and walk out towards all the possibilities as well as the challenges.

Because Christ is with us, Emmanuel, we become people who can bring gifts and blessing – if we are up for that.

+ Alison Hullen



THE HOUSE OF GOOD

Hull Minster features in one of the launch videos of National Churches Trust's 'House of Good' report into community engagement by parish churches.

From foodbanks to credit unions, churches across the UK provide a growing list of essential services for people in urgent need.

National Churches Trust (NCT) has long seen the power of churches to bring communities together and help them thrive. But we've never been able to measure it.

For the very first time, NCT's House of Good report quantifies the economic and social value of all church buildings to the UK. Not just the bricks and mortar but the welfare and wellbeing they create in our communities.

The ground-breaking report demonstrates that the total economic and social value that church buildings



generate in the UK is at least £12.4 billion per year which averages around £300,000 per church. That is roughly equal to the total NHS spending on mental health in England in 2018.

NCT believes that these findings are remarkable. They show that our churches are not just Houses of God. They are also Houses of Good – good that we risk losing if church buildings are not kept in good repair, and may never be able to replace.

See the videos and more at
www.houseofgood.nationalchurchestrust.org



The Bishop of Whitby has described the content of a new Joseph Rowntree Foundation report, 'Destitution in the UK 2020', as "Distressing and Shameful".

Bishop Paul Ferguson, who oversees the parish churches of Middlesbrough and Cleveland, was responding to a BBC Tees news report in early December on The Genesis Project based at St Oswald's Church in Middlesbrough, which is one of the local organisations responding to deprivation in the area:

Universal and Working Tax Credits, working in partnership with people with lived experience of the social security system to ensure that debt deductions from benefits are not drivers of hardship and destitution, and shortening the 5-week wait for the first UC payment that then leaves people facing unaffordable repayments.

It's good to see everything that's being done by **the Genesis Project** which is linked with the Diocese of York's Joint Venture with the Church Urban Fund, **Together Middlesbrough & Cleveland**. With other church-based social engagement agencies, and a range of organisations of different kinds, Genesis is working as hard as possible to address poverty and deprivation, meeting people's immediate needs. But it is distressing and shameful that this situation exists in 21st-century Britain.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation's report on destitution in the UK this year shows that it's getting worse for many people. The north-east is the worst-affected region; Middlesbrough is the borough experiencing the hardest effect nationally, and Hull (also in the Diocese of York) is in third place. This is deeply worrying.

Destitution means choosing between 'eating and heating', reduced physical and mental health, and shorter life expectancy. Young people and lone mothers are especially at risk of falling into destitution, and whilst most destitute people aren't in work, many are in work or are self-employed with unstable hours and pay.

JRF makes some simple recommendations including extending the 'lifeline' uplift in

Archbishop Stephen has spoken about the Church of England's Living in Love and Faith programme, and how we're going to approach it in the Diocese of York:



**LIVING
IN LOVE
& FAITH**

"The bishops of the Church of England together are inviting the whole church to engage with the recently published resources for the next steps in the Living in Love and Faith (LLF) process in 2021.

"The Diocesan Leadership Team and I welcome these resources and commend them to you. You can find them on the LLF Learning Hub, which can be accessed via the Church of England website and copies of the LLF book can also be ordered from Church House Publishing. In the New Year we will be in touch with parishes to outline how we envisage the process working in the Diocese, and how that will be facilitated.

"We recognise that the conversations we will need to have may be difficult, but we urge you, and commit ourselves, to listen, and to learn from one another and from Scripture.

"The Church of England has six pastoral principles for living well together, which we fully support - to address ignorance, acknowledge prejudice,

admit hypocrisy, cast out fear, speak into silence and to pay attention to power. The bishops of the Diocese of York fully support these principles, and the statement made by the Bishops of Coventry and London that the recent instances of "specific and harmful targeting of some of the individuals who have courageously shared their stories as part of LLF is wrong and not in the spirit of LLF and the Pastoral Principles commended by the House of Bishops. Personal insults and attacks are contrary to the respect, love, grace, kindness and compassion to which we are all called."

"My hope is that through this process we will grow in love for one another and in faith in God, that all voices will be heard, and that we will be strengthened and encouraged to live Christ's story together."

churchofengland.org/llf

Living Christ's Story

The second 'virtual' meeting of York Diocesan Synod took place during the second national 'lockdown' caused by the Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic, necessitating participation from members' and officers' own homes.

The meeting began with a substantial Presidential Address by Archbishop Stephen. He began with the last words of John's Gospel:

"There are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." (John 21. 25)

I don't think John is just referring to all the things that Jesus said and did during his earthly ministry that didn't get written down; he is thinking about all the things that Jesus continues to do through the life of his church. Through us.

The Archbishop invited us to look afresh at the task entrusted to us as

the church in our part of the world, the ways that we live out that vision, and particularly the ways we express our vision to ourselves and the world.

He suggested a re-focusing of the vision we have come to express in the words Reach, Grow, Sustain along the following lines:

In the York diocese we are putting our energy into living Christ's story. Sharing a narrative of hope.

We will do this in four ways -

1. **Becoming more like Christ** – which means receiving and knowing the story ourselves. Before we do anything else we remember who we are: God's beloved children, those whom he came to seek and save. We also remember that we know this story by prayer and service as well as by bible study and learning (we will also start to use the Christ centred and Jesus shaped language of the national vision and strategy).

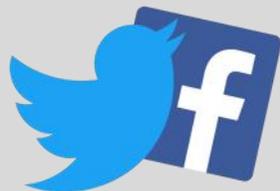
2. **Reaching people we currently don't** – by living and telling this story, remembering that the story we share is those two stories of what God has done in Christ and what God is doing through the Church down through the centuries and in us.
3. **Growing churches of missionary disciples** - which will be the best way of reaching new people and is the way we'll grow those we reach, but also to strive to be younger and more diverse and to take on board what the national vision says about becoming a mixed ecology church. In every community we want our churches to be places where the story of Christ is known and lived out, and where we let those stories lead us in the ways we have seen in the Mustard Seed and Multiply initiatives.
4. **Transforming our finances and structures** so that together we can support a presence in all the



neighbourhoods and networks of the diocese – to find a new story that will not just be about sustaining our life, but recognising that our life needs to be transformed in order to be an agent of God's transformation in the world.

Following further discussion and amendment, particularly at Deanery level, Archbishop Stephen will be inviting the next meeting of Diocesan Synod to commit ourselves together to all this.

You can read the Archbishop's full Address at bit.ly/ydsynodaddress201128



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