



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich

SSInews Easter 2019

Welcome to the Easter edition of SSInews. There are several things I want to tell you about.

Vocations Sunday

On 12 May. Do please use the opportunity if you happen to be preaching on Vocations Sunday to encourage others to ask whether God might be calling them to do more for him. It's an opportunity to talk about SSM ministry from first hand experience. If anybody wants to know more, there is plenty of inspiration on the diocesan web site under the 'Exploring Faith' tab, or they can talk to me or to Tim Jones (tim.jones@cofesuffolk.org or 07468 474065). It would be really exciting to find God calling people aged under 30!

Discipleship in Focus: Ministries Fair 2019

The Ministries Fair takes place this year at St Edmundsbury Cathedral on Saturday 2 November, 12.00 – 3.00pm, worship at 3.30pm. It will provide information, people to chat with and knowledgeable speakers throughout the afternoon from a wide variety of organisations and ministries.

For more information contact Tim Jones (tim.jones@cofesuffolk.org or 07468 474065) or David Pawson (david.pawson@cofesuffolk.org or 01473 298550).

Ordinations

Ordinations this year will be on Saturday 29 June, deacons in the morning at 10.00am (there will be up to 11 SSM deacons this year), and priesting in the afternoon at 3.30pm, where there will be 20 ordained SSM priest. This is the highest number for many years and worth supporting, not least by your prayers.

Pastoral support

We now have 12 SSMs acting as local pastoral supporters in the Diocese. They know who they are, and helpfully you do too. They will probably be making contact to arrange get-togethers in your area. This is part of the family of supportive networks to make you realise that you are not alone! You may not need their support, but there may be others finding it tough who would value your support.

Chapter meetings

I am working my way round chapter meetings particularly in the west of the Diocese, and discussing with them about SSM vocations and training and asking whether there is anything we can do to encourage more vocations. Some of the ideas coming forward are quite innovative and I am collecting these to report back to the Bishop's Senior Staff when I get the opportunity. Thank you if you have been at one of the meetings I have been to. If I haven't been to one where you are yet, then please feel free to email me with any ideas you might have.

SSM National Advisors Conference

I attended this in Oxford in February and took part in the discussions about where we are now and where we shall be. The Bishop of London, Susan Mullally, gave the keynote

address in which she questioned why we categorised ministry by remuneration. There was a lot of talk about the need to see SSMs as bridgebuilders and lead expounders of practical theology honed in the market place, and how biblically the church has always been reformed and extended by those who were the tent makers. The final report from the conference can be found [here](#).

National Bishop for SSM

Following the asking of a question from our Diocese in General Synod, a lead Bishop has now been appointed to put the SSM voice into the House of Bishops and central church bodies. He is the Rt Revd Alistair Magowan, Bishop of Ludlow, and I am looking forward to meeting him later in the year.

Progress on pastoral fees

Progress is slow, but we are making some progress, and I am in discussion with Anna Hughes on the way forward and hope to talk to Bishop's Staff soon.

National questionnaire

A new national SSM questionnaire has just been made available which will enable us to benchmark ourselves against other dioceses. I will be asking all SSMs to fill this in on-line shortly after Easter.

PTO and study leave

Following a change in the national guidelines for PTO, I have been talking to Jeanette Gosney and others about how we mark the change effectively from SSM to SSM with PTO. Subject to Bishop's Staff approving, from this year onwards SSMs will be expected to retire at 70, and a suitable form of liturgy will be put forward to enable an honourable marking of the moment.

There will be interviews with your incumbent (probably) and me (certainly), sometime in the three months leading up to the retirement moment, followed by a three-month break from active ministry. I want this to be seen as a creative opportunity for anybody approaching this time. It is an opportunity for you to reflect on what has happened for you so far, but it could also be a positive opportunity to reflect more widely on the nature of mission and ministry, with the potential for some really interesting research to be undertaken which could be useful for the wider Diocese. At the end of three months, your incumbent or Rural Dean will then offer you an opportunity to explore what you can offer to the on-going ministry in your area.

Statistics

In this Diocese there are currently 61 SSM ministers, representing 40% of all licensed clergy in the Diocese. The national average is 28%. Of these, 59% of SSM are women, national average is 32%. With impending retirements, we will need to ordain an additional 30 SSMs by 2022 to maintain the same level of ministry as we have now.

Contact me

As ever, if there is anything you want to share with me, or ask me, please feel free to contact me via ssm.advisor@cofesuffolk.org or phone 07860 868828.

The Revd Tony Redman, Bishop's Adviser for Self-Supporting Ministry