**Preparing for Study Leave – a brief checklist of things to do or think about for parish clergy and others**

**For study leave itself:**

* Book visits/retreats
* Apply for grants – CMD from Lesley Steed, list of other organisations on diocesan web site
* Confirm and arrange to meet with a supervisor, preferably not your usual spiritual accompanier.
* Reflect on the purpose of your study leave and set yourself a few clear goals

**Absence from benefice:**

* Ensure you make the people you work with are aware that you are not around, and delegate one person the responsibility for contacting you with key information should you need to.
* Sunday cover
  + who will take services?
  + Who will take responsibility for liaising/being present for any visiting clergy?
  + Do you need to give keys to anyone?
  + Brief churchwardens on emergency procedures
* Mid-week cover – regular services, home communions, hospital visiting
* Occasional offices:
  + Who is taking funerals?  Who is receiving requests? Have funeral directors been told?
  + Wedding bookings – who is doing them? Any weddings need covering – who will do them? Anything else you normally do – registers? Rehearsal booking?
  + Baptisms – preparation? Bookings?
* Open churchyards – who will cover headstone requests?
* PCC meetings
  + who will chair? Have you briefed chair - agreed what decisions should/shouldn’t be taken? (Suggest they treat it as a ‘vacancy’ – i.e. no major changes).
  + Any APCM prep?
  + Noting of retaining minutes of meetings
* Pastoral care – what provision is there?
* Schools
  + does anything need to be done to cover for you – assemblies,
  + services in church,
  + absence on governors’ meetings – apols given etc
* Admin
  + who will check incoming emails?
  + Does any ‘secretary’ know what to do with enquiries?
  + Who will produce and check pew sheets?
  + Church mag vicar’s article?
* Updating website/social media pages
  + weekly info?
  + Who will do it?
* Finance – is there anything related to finance – signing off cheques, paying bills etc that you need to think about?
* Communication
  + how will people know you are not available? Set out of office on your e mail account.
  + what will go in pew sheet/church newsletter/mag/website/social media?
  + What will wider community know?
  + What message will you put on your phone and your email? (especially if you have only one phoneline)
  + who should callers/emailers contact?
  + are there any circumstances when you want to be told of something (eg death of someone in parish?)?

Nearer the time:

* Spend at least a week before the leave starts clearing your desk. The grant of study leave is a privilege to be spent on yourself, not dealing with parish business.
* Make sure the Bishops leave officer knows how to contact you, as he might once or twice, to check all is going according to your plans.
* Arrange a “well person” medical with your GP, if you have not done so within the last two years.
* Inform your Area Dean of your dates and arrangements for handling things in your absence
* Think about how you will “re-enter” normal life, and how you will pick up the strands again afterwards.
* Think about how and with whom to share your experiences and new insights, in addition to the Bishop’s Leave officer

If you have other thoughts on things to add to this list then please let me know: [tony@theredmans.co.uk](mailto:tony@theredmans.co.uk).