



Ebbsfleet Newsletter

February 2023

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Consecration Service

The Rt Revd Rob Munro was consecrated as the Bishop of Ebbsfleet in a service at Canterbury Cathedral on Thursday 2nd February.

He was consecrated as bishop by the Archbishop of Canterbury and co-consecrators Bishop Mark Tanner (+Chester) and Bishop Jonathan Gibbs (+Rochester).

The preacher was the Revd Dr Jason Roach (Director of Ministries at London City Mission), whose sermon can be accessed via the [Canterbury Cathedral YouTube page](#).

Thank you to all who came to support Rob and Sarah at the service, and at the reception at the Westgate Hall afterwards.



The new Bishop writes...

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Philippians 1:4-6 "In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." There is always a joy in gospel partnership: seeing God answering our prayers for each other, supporting us as persevere in good work, and assuring us of His promises for our future. That has been my experience in my ministry over years and over these past few days in particular – the joy of knowing that together we are called to share and show the good news of Jesus, not independently but interdependently, as a body and a family. When we know the joy of who we are together, we can best understand how to work together to bring Christ to our lost world.

So let me first publicly thank Bishop Rod Thomas for his faithfulness and hard work, helping establish the integrity of complementarian ministry across the country in the Church of England, and graciously and sacrificially serving us in so many crucial areas. Thanks also to the team of Staff, Pastoral Advisors and Regional leaders for the fruitful partnership that has enabled our partnership to grow.

Let me also thank you all for the many prayers and greetings around my consecration, particularly to those who navigated the train strikes and remote location (at least from a northerner's perspective!). I had prayed that the service was able to show the integrity of a complementarian understanding of ministry, receiving male oversight in the act of consecration itself, but establishing that we are fully a part of the wider church, not having to be kept apart from it. The words of the service itself were a reminder that an obedient biblical faith and practice is what it means to be truly Anglican. One of the promises I was called by the church to make was particularly poignant: *Will you teach the doctrine of Christ as the Church of England has received it, will you refute error, and will you hand on entire the faith that is entrusted to you?* By the help of God, I will!



[Bishop Rob's introductory video](#)
[is accessible via YouTube](#)

What a time to be called to serve as a bishop in the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church! This week's Church of England General Synod debate could threaten to break our Unity on the doctrine of marriage, redefine our Sanctity with respect to holiness and sexual activity, undermine our Catholicity having little obvious regard for the wider Anglican Communion or beyond, and jeopardising our Apostolicity with respect to the clear teaching of Scripture. It is that serious! But our response should not be to fear or despair. Jesus is still on the throne; God's Word hasn't changed; the gospel still saves, and God's gift of marriage is a glorious gift from him, not something of our own construction. And the promise of God is to complete in us the good work he has started, as we do that prayerfully together.

It has been heartening to see a carefully-expressed unity about the doctrine of marriage represented by the CEEC and reflected in the summary from those bishops wanting to clarify the Church's teaching on Marriage. I will share another update on this in the light of what happens General Synod, but some links to key resources are below. In the meantime, **PLEASE PRAY!** Pray for courage and clarity for those who speak up for the historic biblical understanding of marriage and faithfulness. Pray for all who are impacted by such a public debate – not only for church leaders, but particularly for the many who

wrestle to remain biblically faithful in the area of sex and sexuality. Pray for the bishops as they respond to whatever is decided at synod, having already admitted that on many areas they are not united. Pray for our heart and attitude to be like Jesus – broken people were drawn to his grace, yet his truth radically challenged those straying from God’s Word. It is the gospel that should make our churches a safe place of welcome to all, and make us a people known for our self-sacrificial love and joy in Christ.

Personally, I would also value your prayers. Many of the practical arrangements this role requires are not yet in place – a house, office, PA, etc. Pray for re-establishing relationships with other bishops so that I am able to serve complementarian parishes in their dioceses. I hope over the next year to visit as many (if not all) the parishes who have made resolutions, so I hope to meet many of you soon (and don’t be afraid to put in a request for a visit). I very much look forward to serving you, in every way that I can. If you want a little more of a personal introduction to who I am, with some of my hopes and prayers for the future, follow this link: <https://youtu.be/64EtISl88Ys>. Watch out for another brief update next week.

“...he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus!”

Yours in Christ,

Rob Munro

Practical details

Please note the follow practical details at this stage of Bishop Rob’s ministry:

Rob will remain based in Chester. For the next few weeks, Rob and his family will remain in the Rectory in Cheadle. It is hoped that suitable accommodation will be arranged very soon, and this is a key prayer request at this stage.

The best way to contact Bishop Rob is via email. Please use the new ‘Ebbsfleet’ email address bishop@bishopofebbsfleet.org to contact Rob directly.

The Ebbsfleet Team remain available to help. The Pastoral Advisers (Carrie, Dick and Mark) are all still available to assist clergy and lay leaders. Please note their new email addresses at the end of this newsletter. Meanwhile, the Office Team (Naomi and Allan) and the Bishop’s Chaplain (Mark Wallace) continue to support the Bishop and are also available via the contact details below.

Requests for visits are being processed. The Ebbsfleet Team are currently seeking to arrange visits for Bishop Rob to resolution parishes as quickly as possible, and to respond to the various requests that have been awaiting the start of his episcopal ministry. Please bear with us while we continue to make plans for the new Bishop’s diary. If you are expecting a response and haven’t heard from the Team by the end of February, please get back in touch to remind us.

Website and Facebook. Please note the web address of the new website (www.bishopofebbsfleet.org) and the link for the new Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/bishopofebbsfleet>)

A note from Bishop Rob regarding the House of Bishops' proposals

The text below was initially sent as part of an email on Friday 27th January, but is reproduced here for wider circulation.

Rob writes: Incumbents of resolution parishes will have recently received two letters from Bishop Rod Thomas, one on 20th Jan, one on 27th Jan. You may also be aware of the recent press release from CEEC (<https://ceec.info/ceec-formally-responds-to-house-of-bishops-proposals-and-subsequent-public-communications/>), which I commend to you.

I am hugely grateful to God for +Rod's sacrificial service, and in particular for his gracious and clear engagement in the Next Steps Group and among the Bishops. I fully support his clear evaluation of the current proposals that the House of Bishops will be presenting to the General Synod, and the conclusions he draws.

Our received doctrine of marriage, in accordance with Scripture, is that "...the union of one man and one woman marriage is in its nature a union permanent and lifelong, for better for worse, till death them do part, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others on either side" (Canon B30), and that includes understanding that "sexual intercourse, as an expression of faithful intimacy, properly belongs within marriage exclusively" (1999 House of Bishops teaching document Marriage: A Teaching Document).

Any move away from this understanding will have serious consequences for our Anglican communion and our mission. It is a serious concern that some recent public pronouncements appear to be at variance with this.

Please pray for the General Synod that these concerns will be heard; and I hope to bring some more detailed reflections on this in the light of their decisions.

In addition, a group of bishops concerned to uphold the Church of England's Doctrine of Marriage have produced a paper summarising its teaching in the light of these current debates. You can find a link here: https://mcusercontent.com/19c5fdd7dc76dacf1235e7563/files/5ae942ae-48de-416d-8078-3ca49ad89f6f/31123_The_Church_of_England_s_Doctrine_of_Marriage_paper.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0y7IbdCjwZHPBvOUklzh1tQjJpCirLbODjc8-85kgiDpPL6gpuPvFdOf8

Prayer Requests

Please give thanks to God for:

- the appointment of Rob Munro as the new Bishop of Ebbsfleet
- the 'Fellowship of Word and Spirit' conference that Rob will be attending this week
- all Bishops and General Synod members who are seeking to be faithful to God's word

Please pray for:

- Rob and the Staff Team as they begin work together this month
- the provision of appropriate housing for Rob and his family
- those serving on General Synod this coming week (6th-9th Feb)
- the church family in Cheadle as they adjust to this time of vacancy

Bishop's Staff Team & Contact Details

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