

JULY 2023

# EBBSFLEET NEWS

Supporting Churches in Gospel Ministry



## MAJORING ON MAJORS

By Bishop Rob Munro

What is the greatest crisis of our generation in the Church of England? You may think the answer is obvious, because the proposals concerning propagating the 'Prayers of Love and Faith' has preoccupied nearly every meeting and conversations for me over the past few months. As we await the outcome of further synodical deliberations and episcopal manoeuvrings, the uncertainties and frustrations have been exhausting and unsettling to us all. In the midst of it, God has been doing some amazing things – bringing together a growing coalition of evangelical streams with others, determined to uphold the traditional biblical understanding of marriage and sexual intimacy. It is a pressing immediate priority to stand together, pray together and act together to resist any move away from the biblical norms that have undergirded our Anglican identity for generations. Please continue to do that! But that is not our greatest and most pressing crisis!

In John 4:27-28, the disciples knew that their current crisis was to find food and drink for Jesus, who was too tired to follow them to the village to get those resources. And when they returned they didn't..

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### JOB VACANCIES

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pass comment that Jesus had needed to enlist the help of a Samaritan woman to get himself water (v.27), but they were surprised that he didn't seem bothered about their food crisis (v.31-33) and assumed someone else had fed him first. Instead, Jesus challenged them to open their eyes more widely than their immediate crisis, to what He sees as more urgent and important than even his own sustenance. "My food... is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. ...open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest" (v.34).

### **As food is given to sustain our physical bodies, Jesus is saying it is gospel work that sustains us spiritually!**

We are not supposed to be contending for the faith so as to just secure our place in the Church of England, we are to be commending the faith to a ripe harvest field where we are called to reap what has been sown by others. The big crisis for the Church is our ineffectiveness at working for the harvest that Jesus gave his life for. That is why we speak up on the PLF issue – because having a church conform to current cultural norms is a disaster to mission. Every province or denomination where that strategy has been adopted, has only then declined. When the fields are ripe for harvest, we shouldn't be debating about whether or not change our crops for the future, when there's much to bring home!

I have had the joy of confirming a couple of dozen people in recent months and ordaining a dozen others – it has been a wonderful privilege to hear many testimonies of God's grace and anticipate much future fruit. But it has not been a revival. Post-Covid and pressured by PLF, our numbers are down, our volunteers are more tired and fewer, our energy is sapped, and our fears for the future have grown. What will re-energise us? Jesus' food! "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish his work!" (v.34) To prioritise evangelism and to persevere in serving God's people.

The most powerful answer to the angst of the PLF is to be the recipients God's grace and blessing by the fruit He gives to us faithfully sharing the gospel. That has only ever started with us on our knees in prayer, and continued in engaging actively outside of the church family with the 98% who are lost without Christ in our communities. Let's be much better at mobilising our churches for evangelism, than we may have been mobilising them for PLF! Without the former, the latter is pointless!

But in addition, Jesus reminds us that we need to persevere in this work, not give up, because we may only be one small part of His wider purpose bringing a person to life (v.37-38). If we give up or get diverted, we may frustrate God's wider purpose that is intended to feed us spiritually and eternally.

So what is Jesus' solution for our presenting crisis? Major on the majors! Do the work of evangelism, persevere in it, and you will be fed spiritually by its fruit! Let's make sure that our complementarian churches are known as being fruitful, even amidst the fraught times – fed by Christ to share Him!

## **PLF UPDATE** **LIVING IN LOVE & FAITH**

The General Synod in February approved the House of Bishops proposal to permit 'Prayers of Love and Faith', which include blessings, to be used in the context of couples who are in same-sex civil unions, with the caveat that this should not be indicative of a change in the Doctrine of Marriage – which has thus far only ever included the understanding that the proper place for sexual intimacy is hetero-sexual marriage.

Three groups were then set up to: revise the proposed prayers, provide pastoral guidance as to their use (*including updating the current guidance from 'Issues in Human Sexuality 1991'*), and explore appropriate 'pastoral reassurance' for the conscience of those objecting to their implementation. These groups have recently been disbanded unexpectedly, with their work not complete, although indications are that a newly constituted combined group will continue this work.

The General Synod in York is expected to only receive a report on progress, ahead of more substantive proposals in November (an extra Synod meeting put on specially). In the meantime, there have been a number of serious challenges to the original proposals, including to their legal framework, from the CEEC and an Alliance of wider Networks, including HTB, New Wine, Forward in Faith, Catholic Group, UK Global Majority group, ReNew, Living Out and Myriad.

As I have written before, now is a time to Pray together, Stand together and Act together, as we seek to uphold the clear biblical teaching on marriage and sexual intimacy. I commend the CEEC website, [www.ceec.info](http://www.ceec.info) as a helpful resource for information and expressing that unity which is necessary in upholding biblical faithfulness.





# Bishop's Diary

Looking back since the last newsletter, here are some highlights:

2 <sup>nd</sup> May	Meeting York resolution clergy in Hull
10 <sup>th</sup> May	Regional Conference in London
11 <sup>th</sup> May	London College of Bishops meeting
13 <sup>th</sup> May	Meeting with +Southwark
14 <sup>th</sup> May	St John's Barkham for Morning Service & Confirmations at St Nic's Sevenoaks
15 <sup>th</sup> – 17 <sup>th</sup> May	House of Bishops Residential in York
22 <sup>nd</sup> May	New Ebbsfleet PA starts – Steve Drake
22 <sup>nd</sup> May	SE Regional Bishops meeting
23 <sup>rd</sup> May	Licensing in Chester & Church society Council
24 <sup>th</sup> May	Chester Association meeting
25 <sup>th</sup> May	Regional Conference in London
28 <sup>th</sup> May	Morning Worship & Evening Confirmations at Harold Wood (Chelmsford)
29 <sup>th</sup> May – 3 <sup>rd</sup> July	MOVING HOUSE to Tarporley from Cheadle
4 <sup>th</sup> June	Preach at Christ Church Wharton
6 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> June	College of Bishops in London
8 <sup>th</sup> June	Regional Conference for NW in Leyland
10 <sup>th</sup> June	Ordination in Chester
11 <sup>th</sup> June	150 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary service at Trinity Buxton
12 <sup>th</sup> June	5 Guiding Principles Commission in London
13 <sup>th</sup> June	Regional Conference for Midlands & NE in Derby
15 <sup>th</sup> June	Regional Conference for SW in Exeter
18 <sup>th</sup> June	Confirmations at St Nic's Tooting
19 <sup>th</sup> June	CEEC roadshow day in Manchester
20 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup> June	Dialogue workshop training in Leicester
21 <sup>st</sup> June	Preach at Licensing in West Ham
25 <sup>th</sup> June	Confirmations at Castle Church Stafford & BBQ
25 <sup>th</sup> June	Ordination at St Thomas, Kidsgrove
26 <sup>th</sup> June	PCC consultation in Sheffield
28 <sup>th</sup> - 29 <sup>th</sup> June	London Ordinands Deacons' retreat (& FWS council meeting)
1 <sup>st</sup> July	Ordination in New Ferry (Chester Diocese)
2 <sup>nd</sup> July	Ordination in Sheffield (pm) & Manchester (evening)
3 <sup>rd</sup> July	Ordinations in London (8 Deacons, 3 Presbyters)
5 <sup>th</sup> July	Two Cities clergy residential in Lancaster
6 <sup>th</sup> July	Church Society Council in West Bromwich

## Some Highlights of what's ahead

7 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup> July	General Synod in York
9 <sup>th</sup> July	5 Guiding Principles Commission
12 <sup>th</sup> July	Interviews for Incumbent of Emmanuel Wimbledon
15 <sup>th</sup> July	Installation in St James' Chorley
16 <sup>th</sup> July	Preach at Terrington St Clement
18 <sup>th</sup> July	House of Bishops meeting
24 <sup>th</sup> July-6 <sup>th</sup> Aug	SUMMER BREAK
15 <sup>th</sup> August	Consultation on Complementarian senior appmts
30 <sup>th</sup> August	Leaders consultation at Maidenhead
31 <sup>st</sup> August	Speaking at JAEC conference

## Strengthening our fellowship

Here are some jobs our resolution churches are advertising (click the ad for links)...



### HOUSE FOR DUTY ASSOCIATE MINISTER

We are looking for someone who loves Jesus to join our Ministry Team at Moulton Parish Church, Northampton. The successful candidate will assist the Vicar with preaching and leading at services and pastoral care and discipleship of the Church family.

**Hours of work:** Minimum of 3 days per week.  
**Housing and associated costs paid.**  
**Closing date for applications:** 4th August 2023

For full Job Description and Person Specification, please contact:  
[admin@moultonchurch.co.uk](mailto:admin@moultonchurch.co.uk)



### WE ARE RECRUITING FOR A YOUTH & CHILDREN'S LEADER

STARTING SEPTEMBER 2023



We're recruiting...

1. An Assistant Minister to lead a new Sunday congregation
2. A Men's Worker Both full time.


Closing dates 27<sup>th</sup> July



We're recruiting...

1. A Student Minister
2. A Curate / Assistant Minister Both full time.

Closing dates 1<sup>st</sup> September



We are recruiting!

An **Assistant Pastor** to pastor Emmanuel Bishopston and lead a joint Youth Ministry

Closing date 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023



Are recruiting a **Lead Pastor** closing date 8 September 2023, contact [applications@gracechurchdulwich.org](mailto:applications@gracechurchdulwich.org)

HELPFUL RESOURCES-  
A BOOK REVIEW

## Embracing Complementarianism

G Beynon & J Tooher (Good Book Company)

It is not enough to say that the Bible teaches that men should lead in the home and in the church family. This admirable book is a great guide to what else needs to be said (and practised).

Yes – it reminds us that men and women are equal but different and it looks carefully at the key biblical texts surrounding this issue, but it says a lot more. It speaks of godliness being expressed through our gender.

The real strength of the book is that it is reluctant to give a list of Do's and Don'ts. It speaks about key convictions based on Scripture shaping our practice of complementarian ministry.

It recognises the importance of a particular church context and culture in working these out in our circumstances. The appendices on specific issues such as preaching, 'grey areas' and women on staff teams are very helpful.

Every church that has passed an Ebbsfleet resolution ought to work through the areas this book addresses. And, as the authors urge, the conclusions the church leadership arrives at about their complementarian practice needs to be carefully communicated to the entire congregation.

By Mark Burkill  
Northern Regional Advisor



## Could you help serve the Ebbsfleet team?

At the end of August this year, Rev Mark Wallace, chaplain to the +Ebbsfleet is returning to full-time parish ministry – which is a delight for him and his parish, but a challenge for the +Ebbsfleet team. We are seeking someone to be called to serve as a half-time chaplain to Bishop Rob From September 2023.



The role of Senior Chaplain to the Bishop of Ebbsfleet is designed to provide support for the Bishop in his engagement with the House and College of Bishops, Dioceses, Parishes and other local church congregations as well as with bodies external to the church.

The role is part-time (as a 0.5 post) funded at incumbent status. The ideal candidate would be an ordained Anglican with a heart for pastoral ministry, an awareness of how the structures of the Church of England work, an a confidence in holding confidential information, and an attention to detail. There is a debree of flexibility to suit the successful candidate, and it might particularly suit a part-time incumbent or ordained woman deacon.

If you are interested, feel free to contact +Rob or Mark Wallace ([mark.wallace@bishopofebbsfleet.org](mailto:mark.wallace@bishopofebbsfleet.org))

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Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. *Hebrews 4:16*

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# News & Prayer Updates

## Personal Updates from Bishop Rob



It has been a busy couple of months! Steve Drake has begun as my PA based in Chester finally with a direct line to contact the office on 07710 242324. Personally, we've moved house, with not quite enough time to properly unload, but Sarah my wife has been doing amazing things in my absence while I've been travelling the country! Both she and my son have jobs in the pipeline – so thank you for your prayers and God's grace!

## Compelled to Resist

It is not too late to connect in with the CEEC "Keeping Faith" as a response to the proposed Prayers of Love and Faith, and sign their petition (<https://declaration.ceec.info/>). This is a time to **stand together, pray together** and **work together** to see biblical teaching on marriage and sex upheld.

**Pray** for the CEEC in initiatives to be heard by those reviewing the Bishops' response to ongoing process.

**Pray** for the growing coalition of those seeking to uphold biblical marriage in the Church of England – for unity & grace

**Pray** for those who are on the newly formed co-ordinating group, which has unexpectedly replaced the three groups, revising prayers, producing guidance and planning provision / 'reassurance'.



## A word from Steve Drake

*Hello! I joined +Rob as his Assistant last month. Thank you for your welcome and patience as I settle into the role and get up to speed. You can reach me using the contact details on this page.*

*Many of you will be familiar with Churchsuite. We use this to keep track of our relationships with all the clergy, ordinands, explorers and interested parties in our network. If you received this newsletter, it's because you're registered with us on Churchsuite. In the coming months we are looking at changing the way we use it so that you will be in more control of your own data. Instead of having to email us to say (for example) that you've changed your mobile no. or we have your postcode wrong, you'll be able to change it yourself.*

*I look forward to meeting many of you in due course and I wish you a peaceful summer with rejuvenation and renewal from unexpected sources.*



## Bishop's Staff Contact Details

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