



# GUILDFORD DEANERY NEWSLETTER

EASTERTIDE 2024

In *The Word Who is Life* Bishop Richard says

I therefore take this opportunity to invite everyone in the Diocese  
– lay faithful and religious, deacons and priests –  
to join with me in forging our parishes into communities of saints,  
into strong, lively and welcoming schools of discipleship.  
May they be communities where the Lord is known and loved;  
where the liturgy is experienced as an encounter with the wonder of heaven;  
where daily prayer is a natural part of life;  
communities of healing, where all are welcomed,  
their dignity as children of God always recognised;  
where young people grow in deep love for the Gospel,  
for the sacramental life of the Church and for prayer;  
where all know the riches of the Faith and seek to share it with others.

To help make this vision a reality it was announced earlier in the year that the community of communities which make up our deanery will become a single parish, under the joint leadership of a team of priests. Fr Jonathan How will be their moderator, who will coordinate their work as first among equals.

## FR JONATHAN WRITES:

### What has happened so far?

- The clergy team met in February with Canon Kieron O'Brien and Deacon Nick St John, who are supporting the development of our new parishes and in March with Bishop Richard.
- The appointment of the moderator has been announced, effective when the new parish is erected.
- A date has been identified for Bishop Richard to celebrate Mass at which the new parish will be entrusted to the team of priests. This is planned for 10.30am on **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September** and will take place at St Joan of Arc Church in Farnham. We hope that many of the lay faithful will come together that day to pray for the fruitfulness of our new parish.

### What are the next steps?

- Times of Eucharistic Adoration in each of our current parishes for the fruitfulness of the pastoral plan
- Reflection on the gifts and talents with which the Lord has blessed us - as individuals, and as parish communities - and to consider how these might contribute towards this renewed vision of 'Making our Church of today, everyone's Church for the future'.
- A meeting of representatives from the pastoral teams of each of our current parishes in May to help build a shared picture of our gifts and talents.
- Building means of communication across our communities – such as this newsletter.

**Why are these changes being made?** This is explained in detail in the pastoral plan, but essentially this new structure will make us better able to put into effect the mission of the church, the mission of sharing the love of God with all people. The structures that we are so used to have served us well, but the world is changing. We need to be able to engage with the world as it is today, and the people of today, who so badly need the Word who is life. The restructuring of our existing Deanery into a single parish is not an end in itself – it is a tool to make us better able to live as disciples of the Lord and witness to his love and mercy.

**Does this mean that we will see different priests each week for Sunday Mass?** No, the plan is that each priest will continue to celebrate mass in the particular communities under his care, so that we can enjoy the continuity that we all value so much. We will try to support each other as much as we can, and there may be times that we are able to cover for one another, but in general you will probably not notice a change in this respect.

**Will the mass times change?** No one likes change, especially changes fundamental as the times of holy mass. The plan itself does not envisage changes to mass times, and if the number of priests remained constant things could continue much as they are. But in reality as the number of priests available continues to decline, it is inevitable that there will need to be some changes. This is an uncomfortable fact that we cannot avoid.

**How will lay people be involved?** This is a new structure, and we will need to feel our way carefully and grow it together. All the clergy in the existing Deanery believe that it is essential that we should involve the lay faithful of the Deanery in the process of change, as well as in the running of the new parish in the future: "For in the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body" (1 Cor 12:13). There may be some particular experience, qualities or expertise that you have that have been given for the building up of the body of Christ in mission. It is in the interests of us all – and all those people who so badly need to hear the good news, and all the generations of future disciples yet to be born – that we make real the vision our Bishop has set before us the vision of our parishes as 'communities of saints' and 'schools of discipleship'.

We will try and keep you informed of what is happening as we go along. In May there will be a gathering of representatives from the parishes across the Deanery as a first step in building a shared picture of the way God is at work in our communities.

There is a lot of work to be done but please bear with us if the rate of progress does not seem as fast as you might hope. All the members of the clergy team are also working in their parishes and many of them also have substantial diocesan commitments. The lay people who work with us are also busy women and men. We will all do the best we can: this is such an important step forward, we need to act decisively, but carefully. It is the Lord's plan that we need to implement: not mine, not yours. The world needs the good news; we are the particular frail earthen vessels that he has chosen to entrust it to at this particular moment in time. We are the ones who have been sent.

#### **What can I do now?**

- Pray that our parishes will become communities of saints and missionary disciples.
- Reflect on your own gifts and talents.
- Try to find out about some of the other parish communities around you.

#### **PARISH WEBSITES**

Ash & Heath End <http://www.holyangelsash.org>

Cranleigh & Bramley <https://www.cpcb.org.uk>

Farnham

<https://www.stjoanofarcfarnham.co.uk>

Godalming <https://www.stedsgod.com>

Guildford <https://www.cpg.church>

Haslemere, Hindead & Chiddingfold

<https://www.catholicaslemere.com>

#### **SUNDAY MASS TIMES IN GUILDFORD DEANERY**



## INTRODUCING OUR CLERGY

Guildford Deanery is served by eight priests to whom the new parish will be entrusted and five deacons.

**Ash and Heath End** – Fr Robin Farrow with Deacon John Edwards

**Cranleigh & Bramley** – Fr Alistair Simmons

**Farnham** – Fr Niven Richardson

**Godalming** – Fr Jonathan How

**Guildford** – Mgr Canon Tony Barry (Dean), Fr Tristan Cranfield, Fr Roy Waters with Deacons Sean Evans, Edward Hopkins, Ian Hunt and Michael Phillips.

**Haslemere, Hindhead & Chiddingfold** – Fr Rajesh Minz

**Mgr Canon Tony Barry** grew up in Englefield Green and was formed at St John's Seminary, Womersley and ordained Deacon just two months before the Church of St Joseph Guildford was opened in 1984. He served as a curate in Caterham and Chichester and then a number of other roles in the Diocese. In 2000 was appointed to the Team Ministry in Crawley Parish. Working with three other priests the parish grew as neighbouring parishes were successfully merged. This time was a formative experience and prepared Mgr Tony for his appointment to Guildford. As well as valuing the opportunity of working collaboratively, the Team Ministry in Guildford has allowed him to fulfil his responsibilities as Episcopal Vicar of Surrey - supporting parishes across the county when the need arises: the other priests generously taking on more of the Guildford Parish workload. As a member of the Bishop's Episcopal Council Mgr Tony has had the privilege of being involved in the development of *The Word Who is Life* and he is a member of its Steering Group. As the Chair of the Diocesan Education Committee he is also keen that the schools are enabled to play their role in the Bishop's Vision.

**Fr Tristan Cranfield** is a member of the moderated clergy team in Guildford Parish, where he has served since February 2022. He is the Vocations Director for the Diocese and a member of the Council of Priests. Born in Shoreham, he grew up in and around Arundel, attending local Catholic schools, and served as an altar boy and chorister at the Cathedral. He studied Arabic and French at Oxford University, and lived abroad for several years in the Middle East. Before becoming a priest, he was a translator, mainly working with Arabic literature, but also spent some time working as a PA in a law firm and teaching English as a foreign language in Turkey, India and London. He was sent to Rome to train for the priesthood at the Venerable English College from 2011-2018, before being ordained back in Arundel. He has served previously in the parish of Eastbourne.

**Fr Robin Farrow** grew up in Maidenhead and was ordained priest in 2015, having previously served fourteen years in Sussex in the Church of England. He is married to Caroline and has five children. He was appointed to Ash in 2015. He enjoys reading and music when the children let him!

**Fr Jonathan How** grew up in Burgess Hill and was ordained priest for the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton in 1993. He has previously served as a priest in the parishes of Woking and Cobham and was appointed to Godalming in 2019. Fr Jonathan served for 18 years at St John's Seminary, Womersley, teaching both Philosophy and Liturgy and acting as Bursar and as Director of Studies. He is a trustee of the Diocese and chairs its finance and art and architecture committees. He is also a Trustee of the Secular Clergy Common Fund and of St Joseph's Specialist Trust. Outside of the Diocese he serves on the Joint Liturgical Group and is a member of *Societas Liturgica*. Fr Jonathan has an active involvement with the Scout Movement at local, national and international level, to which he has made a significant contribution in the areas of Spiritual and Religious Development and Interreligious Dialogue. In his spare time he enjoys climbing and mountaineering.

**Fr Rajesh Minz** was ordained in 2008 for the Diocese of Rourkela in the North East of India. After ordination Fr Raj served as an Assistant Parish priest in his home diocese, setting up a new school. After two and half years he was transferred to St. Albert's Theological Regional Major Seminary in Ranchi, India where he had done his own theological studies. He taught theology there for two years before being sent to do further studies in Pastoral Theology at Leuven, Belgium. With the agreement of his bishop, who wished him to have the experience of living and working abroad as a missionary, he has served in our

Diocese in Bexhill since 2015, moving to Haslemere in September 2022. Fr Rajesh likes visiting the families, care homes, sick, elderly and housebound. His hobbies are: reading, writing, walking, basketball games.

**Fr Niven Richardson** grew up in Scotland, and was ordained priest in 1991. He came to Farnham in 2011, having previously served in Merrow and Burpham, Camberley, Seaford, Bexhill, Bognor. He really appreciates the natural countryside of Surrey and Sussex, especially the ponds and the seaside.

**Fr Alistair Simmons** is parish priest of Cranleigh and Bramley, having returned to his native deanery from the South coast. He firmly believes that knowledge of our faith and love of scripture can be effectively communicated and made more accessible through various artistic mediums – music, art, architecture, poetry, etc. – and he enjoys incorporating this aspect into preaching and teaching, especially as part of days of recollection and retreats. He believes that grow best as communities and individuals when we risk deepening our knowledge and appreciation of each other. It saddens him that invaluable local projects such as *Churches Together* seem to be kept going only by the older, committed generation in our parishes. He would love to see a re-flourishing and re-vitalisation of local ecumenical and interfaith dialogues, times of prayer and practical projects. Much does go on; we could do so much more. He says that “When our former bishop, Cormac Murphy O’Connor, once asked if I would consider pursuing further studies, I explained my long-held interest in *speculative theology*. (Those who know me well, know my love of pushing boundaries as well as embracing those who find themselves in, or beyond, the liminal spaces of our society and faith communities.) Unsurprisingly, perhaps, further studies did not materialise, not even when I later suggested Rahner’s *theology of symbol* or *war and peace studies* as alternatives!”

**Fr Roy Waters** was ordained Deacon in 2002 at Chilworth Friary following a career in telecommunications and served there until 2010. He was appointed a Diocesan MC in 2006 until 2012. When Chilworth Friary closed in 2010 he then served in the parish of Cranleigh and Bramley for the next seven years. Following the death of his dear wife Hilary in 2015, he returned to St John’s Seminary Womersley to study Canon Law. He was ordained priest in Arundel Cathedral in May 2017 and appointed to the Catholic Parish of Guildford. He has two married sons and three grandchildren.

**Deacon John Edwards** comes from Farnham. He was ordained in 2005 after a career in BT and serves Heath End and Ash. He is married to Ann and has three children and five grandchildren. John and Ann enjoy caravanning and narrow boating.

**Deacon Sean Evans** was ordained to the Permanent Diaconate on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021. He is married to Anna.

**Deacon Edward Hopkins** is originally from the Parish of the Nativity of the Lord in Redhill, Reigate and Merstham. Most of his working life was spent in Adult Education, where he focussed on teaching English to immigrants and refugees. Before starting seminary, he spent a year as a pastoral assistant at St Joseph’s in Dorking, and after three years of study at St John’s Seminary, Womersley, spent a year on a pastoral placement at Arundel Cathedral. He is currently based at Guildford Parish at the weekends while completing his training at Allen Hall seminary in London during the week. **He will be ordained to the priesthood on 22 June at Arundel Cathedral.**

**Deacon Ian Hunt** was ordained to the Permanent Diaconate on the 19th July 2021. Being born and raised in Guildford he was baptised in 2006, he is married to Sandy and has 4 children.

**Deacon Michael Phillips** was a professional soldier for 31 years, latterly as a soldier-diplomat. Ordained Deacon in 2009 Michael has been married for over 51 years with three daughters.

#### AND THE LAST WORD GOES TO FR NIVEN

What motivates me about the life of the new parish is all that is written in *The Word Who is Life*. The power of the positive and energising words speak of a church effervescent with life. It is full of dynamism and hope. It is this kind of parish that I am looking forward to. The words open and openness are used in the prayer that we are invited to say as we prepare for the forming of the new parish, drawing on the way that *The Word Who is Life* speaks of our communities as places where all are welcomed and of lively communities of faith. To be part of this is exciting and I look forward to this journey we will all be travelling on together.