



ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

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September 2021

Jesus said... “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”[John 12: 32]

Greetings in the name of the Lord!

From Friday 24 to Monday 27 September this year I am full of anticipation to be with you in Guildford diocese. I come for a particular purpose – to join you in setting out the invitation of the good news of Jesus Christ.

A huge amount of hard work, prayer and organisation has already gone into this and I am so grateful for those who have given so much already to make it happen. With less than 2 weeks to go I wanted to get a message out far and wide in the diocese giving a bit of background to what is happening, and how you might be involved.

The church of Jesus Christ lives to bear witness to the good news. Compelled by Christ’s love and empowered by the Holy Spirit we do this in our worship and in our life together, in our service to the communities we are called to and in our words. Evangelism is the act of heralding or proclaiming this good news. It isn’t news which is known unless it is told, and it is too good for people not to be given the opportunity to hear.

It is my deepest conviction that the Church of England is called to set forth the good news of the love of God in Christ, that others who hear it might themselves join us and become his witnesses. I know the Guildford diocese lives to see the church transformed so lives are transformed. Isn’t it what we long to see for our neighbours and friends, our children and work colleagues? And hasn’t this last 18 months given us even greater cause to be bearers of the message of hope, peace, forgiveness, belonging, meaning, direction and strength that is ours in the one who was dead but is now alive.

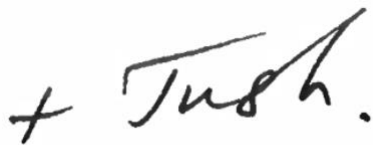
It is to set out this good news to those living in the diocese of Guildford that I come among you this September. There are over a dozen events organised with the aim of creating opportunities for people to come along and hear how the good news speaks directly to our lives in 2021. And whilst I am already nervous about coming, I come confident not in myself, but in the power of the message of the good news, and utterly reliant on the work of the Holy Spirit to open hearts and hands, ears and eyes to the revolutionary message of God’s work in Christ for every single person.

I wonder if I might make three requests:

- Pray – it is God’s work to enable people to be receptive to his offer of life. Please pray that the Holy Spirit would work in lives making them receptive to his love. Also for all the preparations and arrangements – that they might so smoothly.
- Invite – who could you invite to come along? We all know a number of people whose lives are so in need to living in response to the love of Christ. Think who you could bring along, pray about it, then take the step and invite them. Each event is going to be as accessible as possible for those who know little of the faith. All the details of the weekend are on the next page.
- Be involved – whilst I am joining you to issue the invitation we know that coming to faith is a journey. In the weeks and months that follow many churches are planning to run courses which are the ideal place for people who have shown an interest to continue to learn about Christian faith in a welcoming and engaging way.

We will be joined by 14 members of the Archbishops’ College of Evangelists who will be working with the deaneries to help everyone engage. And I hope I will be joined by you and your family, friends, neighbours and colleagues.

May we have the great joy of seeing God at work drawing people to himself!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read '+ Justin Welby'.

The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby
Archbishop of Canterbury