



## The Acting Bishop of Lincoln

### A Pastoral Letter to the Diocese of Lincoln – Eastertide 2026

Dear friends,

Eastertide is a season of new beginnings. As we celebrate Christ's victory over death and sin, we look for signs of Resurrection in ourselves, in our churches and in our world. As Christians, we are called to 'walk in newness of life.'

At the Easter Vigil this year, at which I witnessed more than thirty disciples making that journey through the joy of Holy Baptism and Confirmation, I spoke of the story of our salvation and how God is continually doing a 'new thing' in the lives of his people. My hope and prayer for our diocesan family is that together we will discover God at work in our own new beginnings.

This weekend we are welcoming Bishop Jean to the diocese, to her new role as Bishop of Grimsby. Her arrival marks a new chapter for the people and places with whom she will work, serve and pray, as well as a new beginning in Bishop Jean's own life and ministry.

I want to ask you now: what 'new thing' is God doing in your life?

If God is continually calling us to walk in newness of life, then I ask you, during these days of Easter, to ponder, listen and explore how God might be calling you to seek his kingdom and serve his people in new ways. I profoundly believe that in different ways we are like those first disciples, who as they walked the Road to Emmaus, were greeted by the Risen Lord.

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Here are some possible things to consider:

1. It can be helpful to think first of practical ways in which we can live out our calling as Christians. Across the diocese, there are churches of all shapes and sizes serving one another and our communities through prayer and worship, pastoral care, outreach to those in need, foodbanks, warm spaces, advocacy, working with young people, supporting local schools – to name only a fraction of the work and ministry we do together! Thank you for this. If you haven't yet got involved in any of these things, might this be the year to do so?
2. Then, this is the season of annual meetings and elections. There are many different ways to support the life of the church (and wider community) as officers and elected representatives, for example as Churchwardens, PCC members and Parish Safeguarding Officers, without whom our parishes could not function safely and faithfully. Might you consider standing for election? If you already intend to do so, or have done so faithfully for many years – thank you!

3. The coming-together of many of our Deaneries this summer reminds us of other important ways in which we can take part in our governance, for example through Deanery Synod, Diocesan Synod and General Synod. Could you share your voice in this way, discerning and shaping the work of the Church in our generation?
4. Then, there are other opportunities of which you may not yet be aware. Is there a special aspect of our common life which is important for you? We are looking to develop new roles for Diocesan Advisors who will offer guidance and expertise in particular areas to parishes, staff and trustees. In this context, I particularly wish to thank Martin Joy, who recently stepped down as our Diocesan Disability Advisor and who served with real passion and dedication to this important work. Might you consider serving in this role? Please contact the Bishops' Office ([bishops.office@lincoln.anglican.org](mailto:bishops.office@lincoln.anglican.org)) for further information about these possibilities.
5. Another way in which we can resource and support our shared life is through chaplaincy. We have dedicated chaplains supporting people in schools, hospitals, hospices, prisons, and emergency services. Armed Forces chaplains serve in bases across the county and abroad. We have been blessed with agricultural chaplains who care for our rural communities and industries. Our Anna Chaplains reach out to older members of our local communities in a context of prayer and pastoral care. These are just some examples of the way in which chaplaincy enriches the life of the Church.
6. It is in the context of chaplaincy and the Church's commitment to pastoral ministry that I want to talk about Living in Love and Faith. This process was brought to a close earlier this year. I know that there remains much pain, concern and anxiety with regard to sexuality and gender in the Church. I believe that we need to continue the work of listening to the experience of LGBTQIA+ people, offering pastoral support and leading in missional engagement. Services such as Open Table, in the city of Lincoln and elsewhere, provide valuable space for this. Another practical support, which many other dioceses already offer, is a team of volunteer chaplains. I am grateful to Rachel Heskins and David Margaron who have offered for, and been appointed to, this important ministry, and I will commission them at a service at Lincoln Cathedral later this year. LGBTQIA+ Christians are part of our Church and our presence and contribution should be celebrated.
7. I recognise, also, that there are individual Christians and supporting churches who hold a conservative position on sexuality. If, as above, the appointment of chaplains to provide pastoral support in this context would be welcomed, then I would be glad to enable that. I remain deeply thankful for the ways in which we live with difference in the Diocese of Lincoln, remembering the respectful way in which we spoke about these matters in Diocesan Synod, and believing that this is a gift we might offer to the wider Church.
8. There is a rich and diverse tapestry of ministry in the Church: chaplains and focal ministers, Readers and ALMs, deacons and priests, and many more. These vocations are only recognised and discerned when we take that first step towards exploring them. What new thing might be stirring in your heart? What new calling might you be seeing in someone else? We stand ready, through the work of our local churches, our College of St Hugh, our Warden of Lay Ministry, our Director of Ordinands and Vocations and the whole Vocations Team, to help all God's people explore their calling. This Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> April, is designated as Vocations Sunday in the Church of England, when we are all invited to reflect on our calling as Christians, and to pray for vocations to the Church's different ministries and offices.

Jesus tells us that the greatest commandment is to love God with all our being and to love our neighbours as ourselves. Through our Baptism, we all live out that calling in our churches, in our daily lives, in our words and deeds, in outstretched hands and in the quiet and faithful prayers of our own hearts.

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In every service of new beginnings in this diocese, we pray this prayer together:

*God our Father,  
in the name of Christ  
and in the power of the Spirit:  
we commit ourselves to you and to one another,  
to live, work and pray as one body in Christ;  
to do apart nothing which we can do together,  
and to do together what we cannot do apart.  
Give us vision, give us courage and give us joy,  
that the world may believe  
that Jesus Christ is Lord  
to your eternal glory.  
Amen.*

I invite you to consider how you might respond to the calling of God and his Church. Let this now be our prayer for all that lies ahead of us as God's people in Greater Lincolnshire.

With every blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicholas Chamberlain". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

The Rt Revd Dr Nicholas Chamberlain  
Bishop of Grantham  
Acting Bishop of Lincoln