

Diocesan Day for Readers Saturday 6th April 2019 “Keeping in-step”



A Day for Readers was recently held at St Paul’s Church, Canterbury. The overarching theme of the day was to consider how we could keep in-step with national developments within the diocese. Around 40 Readers attended the event which began with a time of worship.

The keynote address was given by Ruth Haldane who was recently appointed as the Reader Training Project¹ Manager by the Central Readers Council (CRC).

Ruth spoke about the context in which the Church finds itself and the outcome of the consultations which CRC held during 2018. She encouraged us to discuss a number of questions in groups, these were:

- What do you think your own Reader ministry will look like in 5 or 10 years? Will it or should it change; and in what way? The same was also asked of Reader ministry nationally.
- What changes are taking place in society, and in our congregations, to which we as Readers could respond?



¹ The Project involves developing new national resources for Reader training and continued ministerial development. The CRC are striving to help Readers to manage change, teach the faith, be missional on the frontline, to develop as leaders and enablers, to become a vital part of the 21st Century growing church.

- Who will we never reach if we only carry on always doing the things the way we do?
- What might sit alongside traditional sermons? How can we as Readers play a unique part in developing new ways of preaching and teaching?

To rise to the challenges we face, the CRC have identified three unique strands of Reader ministry. Readers as (1) teachers of the Faith; (2) as Enablers of Mission; and (3) as Leaders in Church and Society.

The CRC Training Project is creating resources to equip Readers under each of these strands. This is likely to involve blended learning – doing part of a module online, and meeting at least once during the module for formation and discussion.

After lunch, I gave a brief update on the diocesan strategy with suggestions as to how Readers could engage in some of the project strands particularly the *Changing Lives Prayer Network* and *Changing Lives Conversations*. I then posed three questions which were discussed in groups:

- What is the message you'd like the diocese to hear?
- What can the diocese do better to support you as Readers?
- What should I (as Warden) be saying to our new Bishop about Reader ministry?

These were some of the recurring themes raised in response to the questions:

- to recognise the training and commitment of Readers and to use them (not just during interregnums)
- importance of local collaborative, team ministry
- some Readers are focal leaders for their local church
- a desire for more 'in-service' training
- a need for more flexible training if younger people are to be encouraged to explore Reader ministry

The day concluded with worship.

Copies of the presentations are available from me by request.

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