



THE BISHOP OF CHICHESTER

The Rt Revd Dr Martin Warner

THE PALACE, CHICHESTER, WEST SUSSEX PO19 1PY
TELEPHONE: (01243) 782161 FAX : (01243) 531332
e.mail: bishop.chichester@chichester.anglican.org

Thursday, 18 October 2012

Dear All,

As you will know, Bishop Wallace Benn announced some time ago his intention to retire in the latter part of this year. He and his wife Lindsay have decided that the end of this month (31 October) is the right time for that decision to take effect, after 15 years of ministry in the Lewes Episcopal Area.

In his personal statement, below, Bishop Wallace vividly evokes the highlights of his time in East Sussex where I know that so many people have benefited from his tireless work and energy in witnessing to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

He has been sustained through this entire ministry by the devoted support of Lindsay and by the warmth and strength of his family life. On behalf of us all I wish him and them every blessing in his retirement.

The most recent part of this ministry has fallen during a profoundly disturbing time for the Diocese of Chichester. The publication of the Interim Report of the Archbishop's Visitation has challenged us all with its uncompromising conclusions and demands for truth, transparency and reform.

It is vital that we all grapple with the extent and impact of past failures and wrongdoing and the terrible damage that has been done to people's lives. We are only beginning to appreciate the extent of the safeguarding issues Bishop Wallace faced in East Sussex when he arrived in 1997 together with the systemic weaknesses in Church safeguarding procedures.

With the rest of us, Bishop Wallace has welcomed and supported the resolve to implement the recommendations in the Interim Report. His retirement challenges us to appoint a successor who will continue the commitment to an improved culture of confidence and competence in the care and safety of our children, young people and vulnerable adults.

At the outset of my ministry as the diocesan bishop, it is incumbent on me and on us all to keep faith and see through the task of meeting the expectations in the Report. Our duty to the survivors of abuse requires that. To this end I am grateful to Bishop Wallace for his encouragement and heartened by his prayerful support for us.

+Martin Cicestr:



Bishop of Lewes
The Right Reverend Wallace Benn

Bishop's Lodge, 16a Prideaux Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN21 2NB
Tel 01323 648462 • Fax 01323 641514 • Email bishop.lewes@chichester.anglican.org

**DIOCESE OF
CHICHESTER**



Thursday, 18 October 2012

Dear All,

I want to thank all those of you who came to my farewell services over the summer. Lindsay and I were overwhelmed by the numbers and are grateful for all the retirement cards and letters that we have received. I mentioned at the farewells that I had hoped to retire at the end of August but had to address a few unresolved issues. I can now tell you that I intend to retire at the end of October.

I feel privileged to have been the Bishop of Lewes and remain indebted to Bishop Eric for his generosity in appointing me to the role 15 years ago. I will have many happy memories of events such as the first Lent course (which was attended by about 2,000 people each week and with many queuing to get into church), Party on the Pier events for young people and the establishment of Bible by the Beach. But other memories will be of clergy and congregations creatively and faithfully sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with their parish and we will continue to remember you in our prayers.

I wish Bishop Martin every success as he takes over the leadership of the diocese and appoints my successor. I welcome his resolve to implement the recommendations of the Visitors' report and know he would value your prayers.

I had hoped that there would be some resolution to the CDM procedure before I retired but there is no news yet and I will be in contact again. These have been difficult days, not only for me, but also for many people, including survivors, compounded by inaccurate reporting and false allegations. We have been deeply moved and encouraged by the hundreds of letters of support and kind wishes that we have received during this time from the clergy and people of East Sussex. We will always be hugely grateful to you and to a faithful God. We entrust you to His safekeeping.

"May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ"
II Thessalonians 3:5 ESV

As Ever in His Love

+ **Wallace**

Wallace Benn
Bishop of Lewes