

The Bishop of Oxford's Office

28 July 2016

Dear Everyone

My purpose in writing is two-fold.

First, to attach a letter from Bishop Steven Croft that gives details of the inauguration of his ministry here in this Diocese both in terms of the service in Cathedral on 30 September (which, sadly, is by invitation only as numbers are, inevitably, strictly limited) and then of the Archdeaconry Services in the following fortnight which are open to anyone who would like to come.

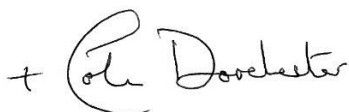
Secondly I wanted to say a personal 'thank you' for your support, love and prayers over the past two years. For me, serving as Acting Bishop of Oxford has been at times quite tiring but also energising and fascinating. Thanks to the superb team, lay and ordained, that serves right across the Diocese – and notably in the front-line of its parishes, benefices and teams – Oxford remains a wonderful diocese to work in.

I am also conscious that we face a time of political and societal uncertainty during which, as Bishop Steven says, we will have an increasingly important role to play. Whether we are thinking of all the changes in education or the public services in general we are moving to a situation where the non-governmental sector is being asked to provide more support than for several generations. Clearly we cannot replicate all that is being lost but I am excited by the way in which so many local communities and their churches are rising to the challenge.

Finally may I again commend the loveyourneighbour initiative:

www.oxford.anglican.org/loveyourneighbour? Following the Referendum it has been very sad to hear of people who are living here as our neighbours being treated as if they are not wanted. Happily racist incidents have been comparatively rare in the Thames Valley but the challenge to us is to ensure that we are a society where neighbours are loved and not merely tolerated. In the same spirit, may I also commend to you our updated Social Media Guidelines (www.oxford.anglican.org/socialmedia)? Let us continue to pray and work for 'loving our neighbour' to remain a characteristic of our lives together.

With every blessing



PS Sadly, recognising that there are continuing terrorist threats in this country it is worth looking at the police website on the need for vigilance:
www.npcc.police.uk/NPCCBusinessAreas/WeaponAttacksStaySafe.aspx