

Romans 15 v13

'May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the holy spirit'

Dear Colleagues

I hope you have managed to return to the new term refreshed and ready for the weeks ahead. Certainly, it will be a busy time for you all but I hope you can begin to sense a gradual return to routines that are more usual.

I read something quite unexpected the other day in 2 Corinthians chapter 2. In this chapter Paul describes us as being a pleasing aroma of Christ to all those around us. For me this was quite an unusual concept and not one I have really thought about before. In many ways I think it sums up where we have all had to position ourselves in the challenging months we have had to come through. During that time, it has been impossible to get all the decisions we've made correct. As well as getting a lot right, we have all made mistakes and we have had to adjust some of the policies and actions we have taken. Nevertheless, time has shown us that it is not always the specific actions that matter the most but the way in which we carry them out. So many of you have indeed been the pleasing aroma of Christ in the way you have served your communities and supported one another. I think this idea is an important concept to consider as we aim to move forward in sustainable leadership. There will always be specific challenges and we will not always get everything right but if we are focused on serving God then we will indeed be the pleasing aroma of Christ amongst our communities and with one another.

As an education team we have a strong desire to support you in fulfilling your role. One of our key priorities is to try to help you to be sustainable leaders through the challenge and demands of all you have to face. Recently I wrote to you outlining the opportunities to engage with [Your Space Therapies](#) and their webinars planned for 11 May or Thursday 25 May. These are designed to help you with issues of your own mental and emotional wellbeing. I hope that you will explore this opportunity if this is what you feel will be of benefit to you. There is no charge as the diocese has funded this as a key priority.

Similarly we have placed [online a resource by Nicola Cannon](#), the Head of Wellbeing for Clergy and Family. This is a PowerPoint presentation to give you strategies regarding handling anxiety. Feel free to explore this and if you would like to discuss ideas further do have a conversation with your School Effectiveness Officer.

You should have received our open letter and [Growing Partnerships document](#) this week. This initiative is designed to support you as you develop further meaningful relationships with the local worshipping communities around you. I must emphasise that the key theme of this document is support. It is not designed to add extra pressure or "show you what you are not doing". Instead we hope that it will encourage and inspire you in the variety of strategies you can use in partnership. There are a number of activities to support the launch of this initiative

and we hope that you and your local clergy will engage in the conversations and training on offer. Growing Partnerships is not designed to be a magic wand that will be fulfilled in an instant. Instead it is a strategy that we hope will support you to grow in partnership so that both school and church can be an active part in fulfilling God's mission in your communities. You will hear a lot more about Growing Partnerships over the coming months but if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

I am delighted to inform you that the Church of England Education Office has secured one of the training contracts for the provision of leadership training qualifications across the country. As a diocese we are very keen to support the delivery of all seven threads of the National Professional Qualifications. It is very exciting for the Church of England to be right in the forefront of leadership training. You can access further information on this from the [Church of England Foundation for Leadership website](#) and if you do not subscribe to Andy Wolfe's regular mailouts '[Called, Connected, Committed](#)' then I do urge you to do so as they will keep you fully informed of the latest developments. We hope to engage fully with this provision as we are excited by the opportunities it offers us all.

I hope that the next few weeks are rewarding and exciting times for you all. You remain very much in our prayers.

Yours sincerely

Trevor Cristin
May 2021

Learning with meaning and purpose: to know God and shape the world