DIOCESE OF CHICHESTER
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Director: Ms Lesley Hurst

Dear Colleagues,

As we enter the period of Advent, it is a joy to walk into your schools to the sounds of Christmas play rehearsals and a privilege to be able to attend some of these. We know that this is a particularly challenging time of year within school with so many competing demands and we would encourage you to ensure that you are able to rest when you can.

As the Diocesan Year of Mark begins this advent, I would commend to you Mark 6:31, which says *"Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest.""* This passage serves as a reminder for us that we need both physical rest to refresh the body and spiritual rest to refresh the spirit. It is our hope that the Christmas break will provide you the time and space for both.

To accompany the Year of Mark, Bishop Ruth has written a lent book exploring the compelling person of Jesus through Mark's gospel. Come Away With Me is a gentle guide to spiritual retreat, designed to be read anywhere, from a crowded train to a quiet moment in the sun. Reflecting on six moments from Mark's Gospel, Bishop Ruth offers a fresh vision of the cosmic, eternal, and divine nature of Christ. Each meditation invites readers to deepen their faith and experience the joy of Christ drawing near as they turn their hearts toward him.

Looking forward into the New Year, I would like to invite all recipients of this newsletter to our Spring Briefing session. Taking place online on Thursday 11th February from 4.30pm- 6.00pm. Spaces can be booked online: Heads' and Governors' Briefing Tickets | TryBooking United Kingdom

I would also like to invite all of our Headteachers to this year's conference, taking place at the Ashdown Park Hotel on Friday 5th March. Places are still available and may be booked here: Headteacher's Conference Tickets, Ashdown Park Hotel, Nr Forest Row | TryBooking United Kingdom If finance is the only barrier to you attending, please do get in touch with me directly to discuss options (lesley.hurst@chichester.anglican.org).

As we navigate these last few weeks of term, may I take the opportunity now to thank you for your dedication to the children and families in your care. We wish you and your own family a very Happy Christmas.

With best wishes



Lesley Hurst MA
Diocesan Director of Education

Rooted to grow by faithfully shaping education to know, love, and follow Jesus today.