

The Rt Revd Jackie Searle
Acting Bishop of Derby

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September Ad Clerum

24/09/2026

Dear Friends,

September is often a busy time of the year, with new things starting up, so thank you for all you are doing to serve your communities and to share the good news of Jesus.

When I am at my home church on a Sunday (Holy Trinity, Stratford-upon-Avon) I bring the Diocese of Derby on my heart and in my prayers. People there want to know how it is going and are praying for us, which is wonderful. When I was last there at the beginning of September the theme was 'Let your light shine' from Jesus' words in Matthew 5:

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.'

The preacher spoke about the sun and the moon – how in early understanding these were seen as 'the great light' by day and 'the lesser light' by night. What we now know is that the moon has no light of its own, it is reflecting the light of the sun. We let our light shine, to give glory to God – we reflect the light that is Jesus in the way we live our lives. I thought of our Diocese, with our peaks and valleys, our city, towns and villages, and imagined the light shining out of each place. I remembered a friend once telling me that even the smallest tealight, on a dark night, could be seen from up to two miles away. Let us not hide our lights away, in a world that needs the light of Christ more than ever. Let us shine as lights in the world, to the glory of God the Father.

Giving and stewardship: One mark of our Christian faith and discipleship is generosity. This generosity is being expressed in our communities through the giving of time and energy, gifts and skills, and the financial giving that supports the ministry of churches across the county. I am delighted that the Diocese of Derby has received several contactless giving devices from the National Church Institutions for free distribution to churches serving some of our lowest income communities. Alongside all forms of giving, these devices will help enable local mission and ministry, ensuring that every gift, however small, can contribute to



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building community and growing church. With support available through our Living Generously Advisor to help churches install, use and make the most of these tools, we are already seeing our diocesan vision take shape through the generosity of God's people. I encourage churches to continue exploring where God is at work in their communities and to join in with confidence, knowing that every act of generosity reflects the generosity of God. For more information regarding enabling contactless giving please contact Steve Johnson: steve.johnson@derby.anglican.org

Common Fund: As the Parish Support Team prepare to ask for your contributions for the common fund, I want to recognise, with gratitude, the financial giving across the diocese. Thank you for your teaching and example which enables such generosity. The offering of our whole selves to God, including our financial giving, is the essence of our spiritual life in response to God's generosity to us. 'All good gifts around us come from heaven above,' as we often sing at this time of year. When parishes contribute to the common fund, we are enabling the mission and ministry of our own church and ensuring that the most deprived communities in our diocesan family also receive ministry and care. The common fund also enables, for example, a good standard of housing for clergy, training for laity and ordinands, and essential services like safeguarding support.

After Diocesan Synod on October 17th, you will receive more information about Common Fund for the coming year. Please receive this prayerfully and respond generously.

Safeguarding and the INEQE Audit 2027: Safeguarding remains a key priority for the Diocese. Every Diocese in the Church of England has either had, or will have, a very thorough safeguarding audit, undertaken by an independent company called INEQE, a safeguarding and child protection organisation. It will be our turn in June 2027, and preparation of the audit is already underway. As we prepare, we want every parish, benefice and worshipping community to feel equipped and confident in demonstrating their safeguarding practice. The INEQE audit provides an important opportunity to reflect on our safeguarding culture, celebrate good practice and identify areas for further development. Everyone will be invited to participate in a diocesan survey from February, and some individuals may be invited to interviews, to attend focus groups or may receive requests for evidence relating to safeguarding within your parish or ministry setting. We encourage everyone to engage with the process – the audit will be incredibly helpful to us as a Diocese. The Safeguarding Team will be providing more information in the coming months, including resources and practical support to help clergy, parish officers and volunteers prepare for and participate confidently in the audit.

Guidance for Holy Communion: I have noticed that there is a variety of practice regarding the administration of Holy Communion, particularly intinction. If intinction is your practice, I would like you to restore the common cup as the norm at Holy Communion. This is established Church of England practice. For those who would prefer not to receive the common cup, be assured that receiving in one kind is a full receiving of Holy Communion. As Common Worship says, 'Communion should normally be received in both kinds separately, but where necessary may be received in one kind, whether of bread, or where the communicant cannot receive solid food, wine.' There is no provision for individual cups

(though an LEP may have different protocols.) I am setting out the norm for you, and am trusting in your pastoral wisdom as to when and how you make this change if it is not already your practice. Thank you.

For your prayers:

Thank you for enquiries about Bishop Libby's health. Bishop Libby continues to be on long term sick leave, and is glad of your prayers. I am happy to continue as your Acting Bishop whilst needed.

Please pray for the Dioceses Commission on 29th September, when the Diocesan Secretary and I attend, hoping to gain approval for the appointment of a new Bishop of Repton. If permission is given, the process of discernment and appointment is expected to take at least six months.

Thank you for all you are doing, please be assured of my prayers, and my commitment to journey with you for this season.

With love in Christ and all blessings,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Jackie Searle' with a cross at the end.

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