



THE ANGLICAN, ROMAN CATHOLIC, BAPTIST, METHODIST & UNITED REFORMED CHURCH in the East Midlands

November 2022

Dear Church Leaders,

We are writing directly to you in a way that we have never done before: we are contacting every single church leader, Ordained or Lay, in the churches we cover with one single request. **In order for the Church to be as effective as possible in both urban and rural contexts we strongly urge you to work together, as never before, with ecumenical partners.**

We may be facing the possibility of an economic crisis not known for decades, rising energy bills, inflation, increasing poverty, no one can be sure how serious this may become. We all know that there is much anxiety and fear as to what may lie ahead, for our communities, for the churches in which we serve, and indeed for ourselves, as none of us will be immune should the situation develop in the way that is being reported.

There is much talk of creating warm places in church buildings, providing soup and hot drinks but this may be beyond some of our communities, and indeed costs money.

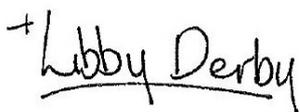
It is a truism to state that we can be far more effective together than we can apart. In the coming months we will need to overcome any obstacles that have prevented us from working collaboratively in the communities we seek to serve. The cold and hungry are not interested whether those who care for them are of a particular denomination; therefore, as disciples of Jesus, we need to come together as one.

Only you and your neighbouring colleagues will know what is possible in your context; so, we invite you to meet together as soon as possible to consider what might be done. It may be that you heat a single space for mission, projects (i.e. luncheon clubs and coffee mornings), or even worship. This does not necessarily mean worshipping together at the same time but in relay, one after another, so that we may maintain our distinct doctrines, practices, and characteristics, yet whilst saving costs and building unity through the act of sharing space collaboratively.

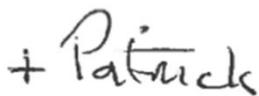
We are also sending you a copy of the resource, "Energy Crisis Toolkit" produced by the Diocese of Derby. Whilst some content is only pertinent for Anglican churches it contains some very helpful information and advice. Although this letter is not being circulated directly to churches in the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham, we know that many of Nottinghamshire's parish churches are already committed to responding to the urgency of the situation facing us all and we urge you to make contact with them if you have not already done so.

One thing is for sure, whenever the world has been in crisis, God has found new and creative ways of responding and redeeming a situation. This is a time when as one, the churches of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire can rise to the challenge, make a huge difference and witness for Christ in a truly effective and meaningful way.

Every Blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Libby Derby". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

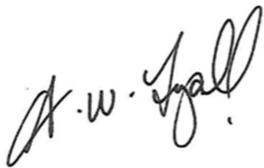
Rt Revd Libby Lane
Bishop of Derby

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Patrick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Rt Revd Patrick McKinney
Bishop of Nottingham (Roman Catholic)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Fegredo". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Revd Mike Fegredo
Regional Minister (East Midland Baptist Association)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A.W. Fyall". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Revd Andy Fyall
Deputy Chair, Nottingham & Derby District (Methodist)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gill Newton". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Revd Gill Newton
Chair, Sheffield District (Methodist)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geoffrey S Clarke". The signature is written in a cursive style.

The Revd Geoffrey S Clarke
Moderator | The United Reformed Church, East Midlands Synod

Heating, Homes and Cost of Living Concerns

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in...” Matthew 25 v35

We are all very aware of the issues around Fuel Poverty and the Cost of Living increase - if your church or organisation are already doing things to help then please do let us know what you are doing - sharing ideas, good practice and our stories are some of the best things we can do at times like this – with that in mind we are sharing the following helpful resources we know of to help you at this time:

Church Action on Poverty has a page on the Cost of Living Crisis with some suggestions of what can be done:

<https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/cost-of-living-crisis-6-useful-church-responses/>

They also have Debt Centres and money courses and can be contacted on 0800 328 0006 or you can find more details here: <https://capuk.org/i-want-help>

Please also check with your local district council as they too will likely have similar pages to the following, which have some helpful links and suggestions for enquirers too.

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/business-community/financial-support-for-residents-and-community-groups/accessing-benefits-and-other-government-support>

<https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/householdsupportvouchers>

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/community/cost-of-living/cost-of-living.aspx>

Foodbanks in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire - for details of where they, and how to contact them to find out their individual opening hours etc, then please click on these links:

[List of Nottinghamshire Foodbanks](#)

[List of Derbyshire Foodbanks](#)

Other helpful Links:

Warm Welcome: A national scheme to equip and coordinate churches and community groups to set up ‘warm spaces’, just launched with the backing of some Churches, being coordinated by the ChurchWorks Commission. See www.warmwelcome.uk

(Though this blog helpfully sets out some of the issues that churches should be considering as they think about how setting up a Warm Space sits alongside a commitment to striving for justice:

<https://gracetruth.blog/2022/07/13/fuelling-the-problems-by-corin-pilling/>)

Responding to a Deepening Crisis: A very useful small resource from Jubilee Plus which pulls together lots of simple and sensible suggestions for how churches might respond to the challenges of the rising cost of living:

<https://www.jubilee-plus.org/docs/Responding-to-a-Deepening-Crisis.pdf>

Enough to Live: This is the campaign coalition JPIT has been coordinating, formed to highlight the particular impact of rising living costs on people on the lowest incomes, and to advocate for urgent and sufficient government action to address this: <https://jpit.uk/enough-to-live>