

From Julian Hubbard Retired Clergy Officer for the Diocese of Guildford.
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Dear friends

This letter comes with greetings towards the end of the forty days of Eastertide as we look for the abiding meaning of the Resurrection: staying risen indeed! I carry two watchwords from those who have gone before which help me at least over faith in Resurrection. One is from the scholar Geoffrey Lampe who (in paraphrase) said of his own faith as he aged “the less I believe, the more”. The deepest convictions abide, the detail recedes. The other is from Emily Dickinson, via Bishop John Tinsley: “tell it slant”. Divine revelation is not direct, leaves space, is allusive and persuasive as a parable.

The churches face a number of doctrinal and ethical issues at present, of which same-sex marriage is but one. We are aware of change all around us and the churches are not alone in seeking firm ground, rather than flux. I am finding the recent book by Professor Mike Higton “The Life of Christian Doctrine” (T & T Clark 2020) very helpful for its insight into the dynamic character of Christian belief. He presents the role of doctrine as helping the church to engage with the world and discover “how much more it has yet to know, as it journeys deeper into the abundant love that God has opened for the world in Jesus of Nazareth”.

In response to this theme of change, I hope that some of you will be interested to join an **afternoon of reflection and learning** on the changes we have seen in the course of our ministry. We are fortunate to have three excellent speakers. They are Professor Amelia Hadfield, Head of the Politics Department at the University of Surrey who will help us consider the political and social background to the church and its ministry: the Revd Dr Jeremy Worthen, Team Rector of Ashford, Kent whose theological work on ecclesiology will assist in plotting our shared belief about the church over the period: and the Rt Revd Richard Cheetham, recently Bishop of Kingston and now an assistant bishop in Guildford, on what he has seen and learned as a bishop.

The session is from 2.00 to 5.30pm on Tuesday 27 June at the Cathedral Refectory. It includes a break for tea and a chance to meet friends old and new. Those who wish may stay for Choral Evensong in the Cathedral at 5.30. There is ample free parking. A voluntary contribution of £3 per person will be appreciated. Partners are also welcome.

I hope that this will be the first in a series of such events, now that there is more confidence about meeting together again. If you have views or suggestions about themes or speakers, please let me know. **And if you would like to come on 27 June, please send me an email julianrhubbard@gmail.com or call 07930 436 527 to book.**

The 10% pension increase in April was welcome news from the Pensions Board. However, the similar increase in rent and other rising costs may make short work of the uplift. A reminder that the Board now has a dedicated staff member to advise on welfare who can be contacted by email housingservices@churchofengland.org or by phone on 020 7898 1824. Also the Clergy Support Trust (formerly Sons of Clergy) welcomes contacts from retired clergy families by phone 0800 389 5192 or email at grants@clergysupport.org.uk or through their website www.clergysupport.org.uk And if I can help in any way, I am pleased to do so: please simply contact me.

Retired clergy with permission to officiate may now be elected to deanery synod, as a welcome result of changes adopted by the Diocese. It is important for us to be represented in the councils of the church: after all, we outnumber incumbents by 50%, and have perspectives to offer for the present and future of the church. Please let me know if you are elected. If you missed the opportunity but still wish to stand, please ask your Area Dean about by-elections.

With prayers and good wishes for Ascension and Pentecost

Julian