

## **ST MARY THE VIRGIN RIVERHEAD WITH DUNTON GREEN**

### **DEANERY SYNOD REPORT FOR THE 2021 APCM**

There has been one Deanery Synod meeting since the last APCM in October 2020 on Thursday 12 November 2020. The meeting was held via Zoom.

We welcomed Bishop James who had been visiting the Deanery, mostly virtually. We also welcomed Mrs Judith Howard, a licensed Parochial Assistant, to speak about the Deanery prayer link.

#### **Address by Mrs Judith Howard**

Judith runs the Sevenoaks Deanery prayer sheet, which always includes requested prayers. It is published each month and sent to the clergy for use and distribution in their parishes. It is an evangelical tool in our Diocese, which is available on the Diocesan website each month.

She asked for clergy in each parish to appoint a representative for prayer to send their contribution each month by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. There are five out of 15 parishes contributing at present. She asked that we use this resource and encourage others to use it. Parish topics and special prayers for seriously ill parishioners are usual inclusions.

Judith said she holds two meetings a year for the group of praying reps .

#### **Address by Bishop James**

The Bishop commented he will be 65 years old and is retiring in July 2021, after 11 years in office. He is looking forward to a different pace of life. When appointed he saw his role as a ten year calling.

#### **What is Rochester's Future?**

A "Vacancy in See" committee has been formed. It will ask for a statement on behalf of the Diocese of what we want in a Bishop.

With regard to finance, some Dioceses are running out of cash and national discussions are in progress, looking at organisation and savings. Consideration is being given to sharing resources and services in adjacent Dioceses. Good management with investing for the future is required with possible changes for deploying ministry. There will be investment in communications following experiences during the Covid lockdown, which have shown a successful new way of remotely conducting services online. A national pot of money is to be made available.

Rochester Diocese is not badly off financially because income has reduced by less than other Dioceses. Giving has been sustained, raised by appeals, for which there has been a brilliant response. There has been good management and cash flow is in a good place.

Covid must make us think imaginatively for what we can aspire to in the future, with faith. Covid is not the will of God and Bishop James is convinced good will come out of these distressing times.

Bennet Smith, Margaret Nicholas

April 2021