

Flourishing in Ministry

Advice and support for lay and ordained ministers



The Diocese of Oxford is the Church of England in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

Together, we are the Church, called and sent by God as disciples of Jesus Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit. We are a living, growing network of more than a thousand congregations, chaplaincies and schools.

Together, we are called to be more Christ-like: to be the Church of the Beatitudes: contemplative, compassionate and courageous for the sake of God's world.

Together, we work with God and with others for the common good in every place in one of the great crossroads of the world.

Together, we are called to proclaim the Christian faith afresh in this generation with joy and hope and love.

Together, we are called to dream dreams and see visions of what could be, and see those visions come to birth.

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Quotations from the Bible are from the New Revised Standard Version.

Bishop's Statement of Intent

Bishops and archdeacons are committed to creating and sustaining an environment in which all can flourish as we work together to build the Kingdom of God. Each one of us needs to develop personal resilience, and good resources are already available to help us to do this.

As senior staff, we recognise that we have a role in what we model, and in supporting and encouraging the clergy and other ministers who serve in this diocese. We base this on an measured by outputs, targets are expected to be met or exceeded, financial reward depends on productivity, and job security depends on performance.

understanding of a God who longs for us to be all that we can be within God's created order. We affirm that a healthy rhythm of prayer, work and rest is necessary for wellbeing and wholeness, and that when this rhythm is permanently disturbed or

Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers...' The Bible, however, tells of a God who, motivated by the love which defines God's being, worked with creativity and imagination to form us and our world, and who, satisfied that what had been achieved was good, rested and enjoyed it.

It teaches us that

distorted we can become damaged.

The cultural norm in our society and era is one where overworking is almost expected, 'success' is work is something that makes us fully human, for it is part of our calling to be co-creators and co-stewards with God. It also teaches us about the seminal importance of Sabbath rest, and along with it, peace, abundant life and freedom.

The Bible tells us of a God who sent ravens to feed an exhausted Elijah and who 'gives sleep to his beloved' (Psalm 127:2). It reveals a God who in Jesus Christ modelled a pattern of availability and retreat, of intense self-giving and resting in the Father's love. He invited his friends to follow him, being realistic about the cost, but walked with them, encouraged them, taught them, nurtured their gifts and showed them how to find rest. He This insight is at the heart of the long tradition of understanding Christian ministry from Acts and the Pastoral Epistles, through Benedict and Gregory the Great to George Herbert and Richard Baxter.

However, the same Bible balances this teaching on personal responsibility and awareness with a call to care for one another and accountability to one another as the Body of Christ. We need one another to flourish and grow in the life of the Church: our ministries are enriched by the joy, and sometimes the frustration, of working

taught them to pray and to trust, and he cooked them breakfast.

The Bible tells us of a God who entrusts

complex and demanding ministries to imperfect people: learners in the Way. All ministers are called to take a primary responsibility for our own wellbeing as an integral part of offering ministry and service to others.

44 Jesus Christ modelled a pattern of availability and retreat."

with others.

We are all fallible beings, and all fall short of perfection. This Statement of Intent is

made in the context of the above understanding of God, in the light of our calling to be a Christ-like Church, and as we embrace and broadcast the values of compassion, courage and contemplation.

+Stan Oxford



Introduction

Awareness of the need to focus on personal resilience and wellbeing is at an all-time high, but search online for 'wellbeing' and the casual enquirer is offered a baffling array of support, advice and guidance.

General Synod has considered the issues surrounding clergy wellbeing several times. In 2017 the Ministry Division published findings from the Living Ministry research project, itself part of the Renewal and Reform programme.

pministrydevelopment.org.uk/ living-ministry-research

More recently, General Synod has recognised that 'the wellbeing of the clergy is crucial to the health of the Church at worship, in mission and in pastoral care.' In July 2017 Synod committed to working to establish 'a shared responsibility for the wellbeing of the clergy ... [and] a Covenant for Clergy Wellbeing.'

This booklet is intended as a practical resource for all those exercising licensed lay and ordained ministry in the Diocese of Oxford. It supplements existing provision for the support and wellbeing of ministers and it sits alongside Bishop Steven's Statement of Intent and online resources, including the Clergy HR pages on the diocesan website.

Later in 2018 we hope to publish a companion guide to help churchwardens and laity to better understand good practice in collaborative, shared ministry and what constitutes a reasonable set of expectations for congregations to have of their ministers.

oxford.anglican.org/clergy-hr

We hope that these resources will help to articulate principles that promote ministerial flourishing and support every minister to thrive in their life and ministry.

Flourishing in ministry

Christian ministry, in all its forms, is demanding and diverse. It is a very public role, and the pressures are often felt by ministers' partners, children and wider family and friendship networks. A large part of the work is unseen by others. It can be hard to regulate working hours and to know whether you're 'at work' or not.

For many of us, work and home space are often shared. For some, ministry is offered alongside other roles, work and family commitments. Even in retirement there are those among

us who continue to exercise a ministerial role with great generosity.

As we seek to become more Christlike: contemplative, compassionate and courageous for the sake of God's world, our hope is that all who engage 44 clergy should guard themselves and their family against becoming victims of harmful levels of stress"

Good practice

All ministers are encouraged to take seriously the admonition in Acts to keep watch over themselves as well

> as the flock they oversee, and to take a responsible approach towards their own health and wellbeing.

> The Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy are clear: 'clergy should guard themselves and their family

with this calling will flourish and find contentment – a sense of shalom.

We want to see a covenantal relationship between bishops, ministers and benefices, in which all work together to make shalom a reality for those who minister, enabling them to flourish physically and mentally, financially and materially, in their relationships and in their ministry. against becoming victims of harmful levels of stress.'

Of course, sometimes that's easier said than done. But caring for ourselves as ministers is an ongoing process, a journey rather than a destination. While there's no one-size-fits-all picture of what is a healthy and thriving ministry, it is important to develop a pattern of prayer, work and rest which works for you. It will be a rhythm that is resilient and one that can adapt to changing pressures and circumstances.

We encourage all licensed ministers to care for their wellbeing by:

developing a healthy and sustainable rhythm of prayer, work and rest

acknowledging the needs and legitimate claims of your families and friends

reflecting on what will sustain you in your life and roles, seeking out and using appropriate resources

having a point of accountability to ensure that God is honoured in the way you inhabit your role.

remaining alert to the continuing invitation of God to explore your calling.

Senior Staff are committed to modelling healthy rhythms of prayer, work and leisure. They also want to support and encourage ministers in self-care through diocesan structures and resources by:

- challenging the culture of expectation of clergy overworking and limitless availability wherever it is encountered
- providing training, support, development opportunities and other resources for ministers in accessible and timely ways.

Parishes, benefices and deaneries are encouraged to support the flourishing of their ministers by:

- supporting, upholding and praying for them
- understanding the dimensions of the role and the demands it places on ministers and their families
- understanding ministry as a vocation, not a job, and developing realistic expectations about workload and availability.

Take a moment to reflect and pray using the list on page 9. What are the areas you need to pay more attention to? Who supports you already, and who could you turn to?

Spiritual director	
Soul friend	
Ministry accompanier	
Confessor	
A trusted peer	
Cell group contact	
Pastoral supervisor	
Prayer partner	

Did you know that the 2002 report *Affirmation and Accountability,* published by the Society of Mary and Martha, suggested an upper limit of 50 hours and a lower limit of 38 hours a week for full-time ministers?

Of course, there is often no such thing as a normal week, but it is a good

idea to keep an eye on how your hours average out over a week or a month.



Times of rest

Depending on the formalities of the way each minister exercises ministry, provisions for rest and annual leave feature in several documents, such as Statements of Particulars (SoPs), Role Descriptions, Learning or Working Agreements.

> Do you know what provisions are in place for you, and are you making the most of them?

Good practice is...

- making sure you take at least one 24-hour period of rest from ministry on a regular day each week
 - working an average of no more than 48 hours each week, in line with standard working times regulations
 - taking an annual retreat of approximately 5 working days (pro rata)
 - taking your full annual leave entitlement of 36 days, including 4-6 Sundays (pro rata).

Look at the good practice points on this page and reflect on the past year. Which items didn't make it on to your own list? How will you ensure this year is different?

In a chaplaincy or workplace ministry?

Ministers working in chaplaincies or workplace contexts, as well as those ministers combining ministry with additional work and roles, are encouraged and expected to form a clear Working Agreement with their incumbent. This should recognise the good practice points above to develop a rhythm of prayer, work and rest which is appropriate and sustainable for you.

What needs to change?

All aspects of wellbeing are interlinked, but looking at them separately can help us to focus on what might need changes or adjustment.

On each of the pages that follow you'll find practical ideas and suggestions that others in the diocese have found helpful, along with some questions to aid personal reflection, and sources of further help and support.

Physical and mental flourishing

We all know that physical, mental and emotional health are closely linked. Our ability to be resilient in any kind of work context will depend on eating well, exercising regularly and getting enough sleep. It is surprising how hard this can be to do.

Here are some things which other ministers in the diocese have found helpful.

What would you add to the list?

 \checkmark

Spending time in a place you can relax, such as the garden

Eating well and taking proper meal breaks every day

Practising mindfulness or contemplative prayer

Taking regular non-work time

Turning your phone off!

Getting enough sleep

A vigorous walk and fresh air every day

Spending time each week on hobbies

Watching your alcohol intake

Monitoring how much of your day you spend in front of the computer and taking regular screen breaks

When we're overwhelmed

Sometimes life can overwhelm us. It's nothing to be ashamed of. Your bishop is able to grant a special period of leave during challenging times, such as moving a parent into a care home and clearing their house, or taking time to be with a child who needs us at an acute, crisis moment.

> If you ever find yourself in this situation, please contact your archdeacon or bishop as soon as possible.

Financial and material flourishing

Our individual financial and material circumstances vary hugely, but it's an area which has a significant impact on clergy wellbeing. Some of us receive a stipend, others offer ministry for no remuneration. Many live in tied accommodation. Some do, and some do not, have a house to retire to.

	ner factors which come into play lude:	Other ministers have noted how important it is to:
•	whether or not we have a working partner	claim full working expenses from the benefice
•	age and needs of dependent children	have adequate and well- maintained accommodation
•	age and needs of elderly parents	(if in tied housing)
•	whether we will rely on a clergy pension in retirement, or can also	know how and when to access financial advice
	rely on workplace pensions	get help with the tax return.
•	whether we have savings, and any income from these.	

Questions to think about

DON'T SKIP THIS PAGE. Take a moment to answer these questions honestly, then make a diary note to return to this page in a month or two to see what has improved.

Do you have a long-term health concern that affects your quality of life? What adjustments could be made to help you?

Pages 16-22 of this booklet are filled with useful sources of support and help.

Who in your support network (page 10) could help you to achieve any changes that are needed?

How well do you sleep, and is it enough?

When and how often are you able to shut off from work completely? What are the things that nurture and sustain you at these times? Do you take time to eat regular and healthy meals and do you take regular exercise? If not, what would help you to start?

Is your housing adequate for your (and your family's) needs?

How do you feel about your ministry? Is this as you want it to be?

Is your accommodation a source of stress? Are there simple adjustments you could make?

If you live in church housing, which parts of your home remain private and are never used for ministry? Is it time to establish some boundaries?	Have you got sufficient financial cover for critical illness or unexpected life events?
	When did you last turn off your mobile phone for 24 hours, or longer?
If you live in shurch housing, hove you	
If you live in church housing, have you started to make provision for your retirement?	What is your pattern for spending time with those you are close to?
Is your income adequate for you to maintain an acceptable quality of life?	
	If you live alone, how often do you set
Are your expenses for ministry fully reimbursed?	aside enough time to visit family and friends?
How is your training and retreat provision funded?	
	Do you communicate with those you love about the things that really matter?
How confident do you feel in managing your household budget?	

Sources of support

Physical and mental flourishing

What support?	Who is it for?	Contact
Individual medical consultations	All ordained clergy	St Luke's Healthcare for Clergy stlukeshealthcare.org.uk 020 7898 1700 (for self-referral)
Health checkup	Anyone aged 40-74	NHS health check healthcheck.nhs.uk
Safeguarding advice and training	All ministers and their families	Diocesan Safeguarding Officer oxford.anglican.org/safeguarding 01865 208290 safeguarding@oxford.anglican.org
Clergy HR advice and support	All ministers and their families	Diocesan Human Resources oxford.anglican.org/clergy-hr 01865 208269 clergyhr@oxford.anglican.org
Pastoral support	All ministers and their families	Your bishop, archdeacon, Area Dean, Deanery Lay Chair or deanery chapter
Retreat centres	All ministers and their families	Various religious communities For details, see the diocesan website
Retreat centre specialising in wellbeing in ministry	All ministers and their families	Sheldon Retreat Centre sheldon.uk.com 01647 252752 smm@sheldon.uk.com
Confidential online forum for clergy	All ordained clergy	The Sheldon Hub sheldonhub.org
Referral to confidential counselling/therapeutic support	All ministers and their families	Diocesan Pastoral Care Advisor oxford.anglican.org/flourishing (for contact details)
Mindfulness training	All ministers	oxford.anglican.org/flourishing
Resilience training	All ministers	Your archdeacon or area Parish Development Advisor (PDA)
Useful reading for mental health	All ministers	<i>Overcoming Anxiety</i> by Helen Kennerley

Financial and material flourishing

What support?	Who is it for?	Contact
CMD grants of up to £250 annually	All ministers except curates in training	Department of Mission oxford.anglican.org/cmd-grants cmdgrants@oxford.anglican.org
Educational/Training grant making bodies	All ministers	oxford.anglican.org /grant-making- trusts
Other grant making bodies	All ministers	Your archdeacon
Housing maintenance	Stipendiary and House for Duty ministers	Glebe and Buildings Department oxford.anglican.org/parsonages 01865 208248 buildings@oxford.anglican.org
Housing concerns (security, suitability, etc.)	Stipendiary and House for Duty ministers	Your archdeacon
Pensions advice and forecasts Retirement housing advice	All stipendiary ministers	Pensions board search 'churchengland-pensions- board' 020 7898 1000 pensions@churchofengland.org
Debt management and money advice	All ministers	Christians Against Poverty capuk.org Money Advisory Service moneyadviceservice.org.uk
Your rights and responsibilities	All ministers	Citizens Advice citizensadvice.org.uk
Gambling addiction	All ministers	Gamblers Anonymous gamblersanonymous.org.uk

Thriving in personal relationships

What support?	Who is it for?	Contact
Confidential counselling/ therapeutic support	All ministers and their families	Diocesan Pastoral Care Advisor oxford.anglican.org/flourishing (for direct contact details)
Retreat centre specialising in wellbeing in ministry	All ministers and their families	Sheldon Retreat Centre sheldon.uk.com 01647 252752
Confidential online forum for clergy	All ordained clergy	The Sheldon Hub sheldonhub.org
Marriage enrichment	All ministers and their spouses	Marriage Encounter wwme.org.uk
Marriage preparation	All ministers and their fiancés	Engaged Encounter engagedencounter.org.uk
Exploring your sexuality	All ministers and their families	onebodyonefaith.org.uk livingout.org inclusive-church.org.uk For confidential pastoral support
		see contact details at oxford.anglican.org/flourishing
Clergy spouse network	Partners of clergy	OxonSpice oxonspice.wordpress.com
Clergy adoptive parents network	Parents of adopted children	cadfam@oxford.anglican.org
Support for parents of LGBTI children	All ministers with LGBTI children	Joel Ministries joelministries.org.uk
Support for children with autism	All ministers	Various organisations, including: facebook.com/groups/AutisticAllies autism.org.uk
Support for children with learning disabilities	All ministers	Various organisations, including: oxfsn.org.uk ldox.org.uk contact.org.uk arc-uk.org

Ministerial Flourishing

What support?	Who is it for?	Contact
Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD)	All ministers except curates- in-training	Department of Mission oxford.anglican.org/cmd cmdevents@oxford.anglican.org
IME Part 2 programme	Curates-in- training	Department of Mission ime2@oxford.anglican.org
Clarity of expectation in SoPs and working agreements	All ministers	Your archdeacon Human Resources clergyhr@oxford.anglican.org
Sabbaticals	All ministers	Department of Mission oxford.anglican.org/sabbaticals-study-leave
Individual or team ministry accompaniment (eg work consultancy, mentoring, coaching)	All ministers	
Consultancy for personal and parish development	All ministers	Parish Development Advisor (PDA) oxford.anglican.org/staff-list
Peer reflection and support in Action Learning Sets (ALS)	All clergy	-
Training and development for ministry	All clergy	-
Pioneer network	All pioneer ministers	Pioneer Hub Co-ordinator 01865 787400 paul.bradbury@churchmissionsociety. org
Spiritual direction	All ministers	Spiritual Direction Network soulfriend.org.uk Spi-Dir@oxford.anglican.org
Retreat centres in the diocese	All ministers and their families	The Retreat Association retreats.org.uk/findaretreat.php See diocesan website

Flourishing in every context

Licensed Lay	For Area LLM Advisors, see the diocesan website		
Ministers (LLMs)	Deputy Warden of Readers 01865 208212		
	LLM@oxford.anglican.org		
Self-Supporting	Area Advisors for Self-Supporting Ministry		
Ministers (SSMs)	oxford.anglican.org/self-supporting-clergy-nsm/		
	Archdeacon of Dorchester		
	01865 208767		
	archdeacon.dorchester@oxford.anglican.org		
Chaplains	Archdeacon of Oxford		
	01865 208263		
	archdeacon.oxford@oxford.anglican.org		
Curates-in-	Director of IME Part 2		
Training	01865 208258		
	ime2@oxford.anglican.org		
Rural clergy	Diocesan Rural Officer		
	01608 686749/07581 491713		
	ruralofficer@oxford.anglican.org		

When things don't go well

What support?	Who is it for?	Contact
Safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults	All ministers	Safeguarding team safeguarding@oxford.anglican.org 01865 208290
Media and communications support	All ministers	Communications department oxford.anglican.org/ communications 01865 208224 communications@oxford.anglican. org
Legal support	All ministers	Diocesan Registry wslaw.co.uk/contact-us 01865 297214 jrees@wslaw.co.uk
Conflict resolution, mediated conversations, facilitated meetings	All ministers Curates in training	Diocesan Conflict Transformation Team Contact via your bishop or archdeacon See the Curate's Handbook, or contact the Director of IME Part 2
Bullying and harrassment	All ministers	Human Resources oxford.anglican.org/clergy-hr clergyhr@oxford.anglican.org
Support if a complaint is made about you	All ministers	Your area Parish Development Advisor (PDA) or your archdeacon
		The Church of England Clergy Advocates (clergy section of UNITE) unitetheunion.org 0333 123 002
		Diocesan Pastoral Care Advisor To self-refer: 01865 351635 or see oxford.anglican.org/flourishing

What support?	Who is it for?	Contact
Concerns about spiritual abuse	All ministers	Your archdeacon or the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor 01865 208290 safeguarding@oxford.anglican.org
Pastoral support	All ministers and their families	Your bishop, archdeacon, Area Dean, Deanery Lay Chair or deanery chapter
Compassionate or special leave for personal crises	All ministers	Contact your archdeacon or bishop
Relationship support	All ministers and their partners	Relate relate.org.uk
Clergy marriage and relationship breakdown	Partners of clergy following relationship breakdown or divorce	Broken Rites UK brokenrites.org facebook.com/BrokenRites
Concerns about addictive behaviour	All ministers and their families	MIND mind.org.uk (search for 'addiction')

Thriving in personal relationships

Each of us needs to develop a pattern for maintaining lifeenhancing, supportive relationships that works for us. Some of us are single and need to be able to keep in touch with friends, who may live at a distance. Some are married, and our partner may themselves have a busy working life. Some have children, at different stages of life, who need different degrees of attention and support. Some of us may be struggling in our relationships.

We probably all know the feeling that we don't see enough of old friends, and if we rarely have more than one day off consecutively, it is hard to get away to do this. And we all know that relationships, whether with family or friends, suffer if they are not fed with attention, presence, communication and time.

It is good practice to take two consecutive days off at least once a month, so that you can go away overnight, or just to stay at home and have a slightly longer time off duty.

Here are some things other ministers do to help them develop and maintain their relationships:

take time (including occasional weekends) away from the benefice to visit family/friends living in different parts of the country
always take a regular day off
be present to those you spend time with – let the phone go to voicemail
if you have a partner, schedule a weekly date night
spend quality time with someone you care about
Look out for destructive behaviours that can form when we're stressed.

Ministerial flourishing

Health in ministry is sustained by a healthy prayer life. This is foundational to everything else we do. Being daily, hourly 'in Christ' is what connects us with our calling, gives us a sense of purpose and keeps us going when things are tough. We all need to know that we are loved by God, that we are OK, and it is important that our sense of wellbeing does not depend on the approval or affirmation of others.

Burnout comes not from doing too much but from doing too much that is not meaningful to us. In reality, most of us have to spend some of our time doing things which we find draining or frustrating, but if we spend most of our time in this way, we become exhausted. Making sure that we do enough of what we find life-giving is important in sustaining healthy ministry.

Each of us needs to develop a pattern for ministry that works for us.

Here are some things other ministers do to care for their ministerial health and development:

- take regular and sufficient time for study and Continuing Ministerial Development (CMD)
- have access to a reasonable level of competent and regular administrative assistance (paid or voluntary) in the benefice
- Set clear boundaries
- Say no more often
- Learn new things

- Talk to supportive colleagues
- Be clear about time off
- Make opportunities for your ministry to be creative
- Meet regularly with a trusted person or mentor who will be honest with you
- Take a quiet day once a month and spend it somewhere out of the parish such as your local convent, or go for a long walk.

Making a Plan

Write down what you would like to get done in the short, medium and long term, and make sure that the urgent doesn't always displace the important. Stephen Covey's 7 Habits of Highly Effective People covers this issue in a helpful way.

Questions to think about



The next page lists some questions which might help as you review your ministry:

Do you have a spiritual director, and How much time do you allocate each are your meetings fruitful and helpful? week for reading and study? Is it enough? When was your last annual retreat? When will you begin planning the next Do you have effective administrative one? support (paid or voluntary)? Do you have a supportive, trusted How effective is your time management? and appropriate network of people to What can you do to improve it? confide in? (see page 10) Are you clear about when you are on Do you attend Deanery Chapter duty and off duty? regularly? Is it supportive and helpful? If you work in a team, do you meet Is your pattern of prayer sustaining you? regularly for prayer and mutual support? If not, what do you need to change?

And finally...

Ministry is about people, in all their wonderful variety. There will always be times in ministry when relationships are strained, when behaviours are difficult or challenging, when PCCs are at war with each other or with the ministers, when there is conflict in teams for any number of reasons.

In ministry we also, from time to time, have very difficult issues to deal with. Caring for ourselves when these things happen is very important. Skilled, knowledgeable outside support can also be vital.

Pages 16–22 of this booklet contain useful sources of advice and support, but they can't possibly cover every eventuality. The key thing is to talk with someone you trust, don't bottle it up.

We hope you found this booklet useful. Further resources, including a Q&A which clergy in the diocese can contribute to are available at:



I am clear what I want of the clergy

'I am clear what I want of the clergy. I want them to be people who can by their own happiness and contentment challenge my ideas about status, about success, about money, and so teach me how to live more independently of such drugs. I want them to be people who can dare, as I do not dare, and as few of my contemporaries dare, to refuse to work flat out (since work is an even more subtle drug than status), to refuse to compete with me in strenuousness. I want them to be people who are secure enough in the value of what they are doing to have time to read. to sit and think, and who can face the emptiness and possible depression which often attack people when they do not keep the surface of their mind occupied. I want them to be people who have faced this kind of loneliness and discovered how fruitful it was. as I want them to be people who have faced the problems of prayer. I want them to be people who can sit still without feeling guilty, and from whom I can learn some kind of tranquillity in a society which has almost lost the art.'

(An extract from The Parson's Role Today by Monica Furlong)



oxford.anglican.org/flourishing

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