

4 September 2018

The Bishop of Reading
The Rt Revd Andrew Proud

Next spring, I turn 65 and will have served as Bishop of Reading for eight happy, fruitful years. It seems like a very good time to retire and to move on to the next stage in life.

As I begin to plan for retirement I feel a deep sense of gratitude. It has been such a joy to ordain deacons and priests and see them grow and move on, and to have had the privilege of baptising and confirming so many. We have also made some great parish appointments, adding to a strong team of clergy and laity.

The Royal County of Berkshire is a very beautiful, special and diverse place, with so much going on, and we have many good friends here. I have much to thank God for, and I pray regularly for all of you.

My diocesan responsibilities have also taken me to the heart of vital issues for today's Church - safeguarding the vulnerable and leading in mission. They and my work with the Mothers Union have also kept me connected to the worldwide Church.

Looking back, we have achieved a great deal and I am so grateful to the Archdeacon of Berkshire, the Ven. Olivia Graham and my wonderful area team colleagues for their support, wisdom and friendship. The last few years have not been without pain and heartache, but that is the cost of pastoral ministry, as we share in God's costly, abundant, generous love.

It will be hard to leave, but there is still lots to do and ample time for us to say our farewells. I am planning to spend a few days in each Deanery in the lead up to Easter and my last official engagement as Bishop of Reading will be on Easter Sunday. A farewell service is planned for Wednesday 1 May in Reading Minster.

Many of you have, we know, been praying for Janice and me over the years. Please continue to pray for us as we begin to look forward to what God has for us next.

With prayers and all good wishes

