



Dear All

I am always surprised that I actually have something to write about! The weeks have drifted away since the last blog in a sea of visitors, storytelling and preparations for the new academic year.

So in this Epistle to the Readers (Licensed Lay Ministers!):

- Bishop Tim – farewell!
- News about Readers
- Safeguarding & DBS – some thoughts
- “Worship Matters” – information and appeal for articles
- Sermon Resources
- Retreats, Quiet Days and Spiritual Direction
- Coffee and Conversation in North Carnmarth!
- Something to think about – thoughts from the emails
- Of Readers, Prophets and Vocation

## **Bishop Tim – farewell!**

I had an email from Bishop Tim asking if I would help distribute communion at his farewell service which of course I was delighted to do – even if I was in the second choices because others were not available.

I am sure that all of us there found it a moving service full of humour, emotion and thanksgiving – not necessarily in that order and not exclusively but I am not going to review the whole service!

I am passionate about the way that the Bible is read out loud in public worship and Esther Pollard's reading from The Song of Songs was a touch of class – a beautiful reading at just the right pace that sucked the listener into the message. Wonderful! (I may write more contentiously about reading in church in another blog.... what do you think?)

Reader Graham Ford (who I know will read this) sat next to me and his face was a picture as the music group played before the service and his dismissive words, "ecclesiastical wallpaper!" began and ended any conversation on the topic. However, as the service went on and they did not have to battle against the pre service chit-chat they actually did very well and when they played in communion Jane Kneebone and I had a cello (I think) directly behind us (as we carried our chalices) which touched the places that other music cannot reach.

Bishop Tim arrived in Cornwall around the time I retired from teaching having been sent home with what turned out to be pneumonia and the need of a new hip! His ministry at the helm in Truro has helped create the culture which has allowed people like me to find a place to help. Things began slowly following the pneumonia, as you might imagine, but it did give a good deal of time for prayer!



As I recovered I soon found myself with a ministry that gathered things to do like a rolling snowball! Thankfully the beauty of being retired and working voluntarily is that one can say "no", even occasionally to bishops, which I remember Bishop Tim pointing out to the North Carnmarth Rural Dean, Rev Caspar Bush, much to his shock!

As a volunteer with a 'snowball' ministry I sit mainly on the edge of things but it seemed to me that +Tim had a huge impact on the workings of the diocesan 'machine' in making it more inclusive, open and welcoming. In 2009 it felt a very distant and august body somewhere in the bowels of Truro and in 2017 it seems approachable, encouraging and even humble.

I really was very grateful to be given a small part to play in his leaving service as I have been humbled and delighted to be asked to do *most* of the other things I do in and around the diocese. This morning Jane Vaughan-Wilson was with us at St Andrews and asked me to do the intercessions which I jumped at – being given the opportunity to pray our congregation's prayers for +Tim and Sian as they leave us and to reflect privately on his impact on me.

So I am grateful for his humour, for asking me to do things (even if I have said "no" occasionally), for creating a lasting climate of collegiality in the diocese in which I can play a part as a small cog and for his deep care for us all.

He will be missed, especially, I am quite certain, by Bishop Chris with whom the buck stops until there is a new appointment which could easily be a year away! As our warden of Readers I keep him much in my prayers and I hope that the Readers, who are by nature a very mixed bunch of folk give him much joy and help rather than providing problems and being a burden.... though I cannot imagine how the latter might happen! :)

## **News About Readers**

Long-serving Reader Jenny Eglington, who co-led the prayers at the annual service last year is retiring and hanging up her scarf after many years. Now in her 80s, she is moving away from the diocese to live closer to grandchildren. Our thoughts and prayers go with her and our thanks for her many years of ministry.

Sue Barlow is also leaving the diocese and Reader Ministry. I do hope to have a long chat and lunch with Sue before she goes so I can put an article in the blog about caring for folks with dementia. Sue has been on the same Spiritual Directors Course that I have been doing and her wisdom and calm will be greatly missed. Hopefully she will be able to do this term's programme before she goes.

Please do remember to email Joy Gunter if you would like to be prayed for by the Readers or if you would like to receive the list to pray for others. There are numerous readers whose health is problematic who are much in my prayers currently. [joy.lowenna@talktalk.net](mailto:joy.lowenna@talktalk.net)

## **Safeguarding and DBS**

I have to admit to being passionate about safeguarding and the importance of training, especially in a church context. As a DBS 'recruiter' I am less enthusiastic about following a



paper trail and ticking virtual boxes but I understand the issues. The training courses provided from on high in the Church of England contain many nuggets which are thought provoking and helpful and are certainly worth discussing and promoting but I know there is much which is repetitive and far too wordy. PowerPoint presentations with far too many slides and course lengths which test even the hardiest backside on church hall chairs do not make for good motivation. However, the issues are so great, and the consequences on folks lives so dire when we, as a church, do not get it right that as Readers we need to bite-the-bullet, put on a cheery smile and be motivated and enthusiastic ourselves so that we can help push the message to others. After all, it is about discipleship and loving others as Jesus loves us!

## **A Poem!** (Useful sermon material)

Lord, you call us to be story-tellers:  
planting your explosive news into our defended lives;  
locating us in the script of your human history.

You call us to be trailblazers:  
living in your future that we receive only as gift;  
subverting the fixed, fated world of low horizons.  
You call us to be weavers:  
tracing, stretching, connecting the knotted threads;  
gathering up unravelling, disconnected lives.

You call us to be fools –  
for Christ's sake: bearing life's absurdities and incongruities;  
puncturing our seriousness and grandiosity.

You call us to be hosts:  
welcomers of the sacred, intimate, transfiguring;  
lavish celebrants of our communities and homecomings.

You call us to be poets:  
artists and illuminators of inner space;  
naming, invoking, heralding your ineffable presence.

You call us to be gardeners:  
sowers, cultivators, nurturers of fragile lives;  
benefactors of your gratuitous harvest.

You call us to be conductors  
celebrating polyphony, coaxing symphony;  
orchestrating the praise of your inhabited creation;

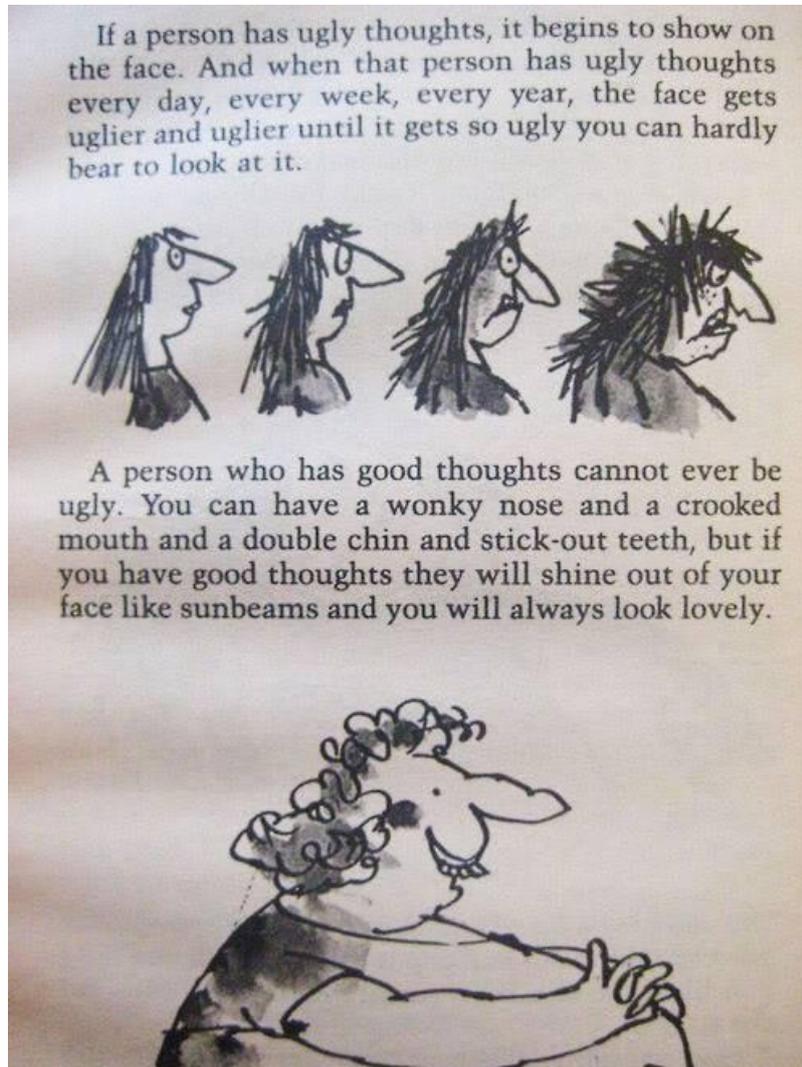
Lord, you lavish gifts on all whom you call.  
Strengthen and sustain us and all ministers of your church,  
that in the range and diversity of our vocation,



we may be catalysts of your kingdom in the world,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Roger Spiller (1944- )



A bit from Roald Dahl pinched from Rev'd Arwen's Twitter feed!

## **Worship Matters:**

Shelley produces this occasional newsletter for Worship Leaders that helps share good practice and the Reader's Steering Committee feels that it is important that this should go to Readers too. Shelley would like contributions and it seems to me that Readers are ideally placed to help worship leaders and others by sharing their expertise and experience.



## Retreats and Quiet Days

Our annual quiet day is on November 30<sup>th</sup> at Epiphany House, led by Colin Brown. Below are a couple of links which will tell you a little about him. Colin trained in the Church Army, is husband to Angela, our curate in Redruth and has a studio with the artists collective at Krowji in Redruth. His wide experience means the day will be a great one.

[http://www.churcharmy.org.uk/Articles/460621/News/Blog/Mind\\_your\\_language.aspx](http://www.churcharmy.org.uk/Articles/460621/News/Blog/Mind_your_language.aspx)

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/cornwall/content/articles/2009/07/09/artevangelisttext\\_feature.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/cornwall/content/articles/2009/07/09/artevangelisttext_feature.shtml)

So far I have three confirmed bookings. In order for the day to run we need more names to make it worthwhile. I have abandoned the idea of quiet days between April and June due to lack of interest and /or pressures on the calendar – I do hope that this one will be successful.

Having a Spiritual Director and taking time out to be quiet and reflective is an important part of ministry and there are many opportunities and resources to help. Here are some links worth browsing!

<http://stjustandstmawes.org.uk/prayer/quietdays/>

<http://epiphanyhouse.co.uk/programme.html>

<http://www.degibnaprayerchapel.org.uk/>

<https://www.foweyretreat.co.uk/courses/about/>

<http://www.trelowarrenretreat.org.uk/>

<https://www.chemin-neuf.org.uk/en/home/chemin-neuf-community/community-life>

One of the questions we ask all potential Readers in Training is about what sustains them as a Christian. We focus on their spiritual life, how they pray and whether they have a spiritual director. What would you answer these days?

**Some things to think about from Wendy and others...** Some provocative thoughts to get the juices flowing!

- Is the Christian faith is boring in comparison with other far more colourful faiths which make real demands on their adherents, in clothing, learning a language with a



strange alphabet, having very family based traditions, are more esoteric etc. Children love that.

- Is it true that teachers in the main know almost nothing about the Christian faith and how much does that matter?
- Is your experience in talking to people that it is seen as totally irrelevant to life?
- Is Christian worship taken in the same light as Father Christmas and the tooth fairy, after all a god made the world in seven days with two human beings and a talking snake etc., etc.
- As far as church goes most congregations in my experience have learned their faith in Sunday School and have not moved on from literal beliefs in Noah's Ark, Jonah and the Whale and Jesus walking on water.
- The positive point is that in the main, when people stop hiding the last hundred and fifty years of biblical scholarship from congregations and start teaching it, people have been known to like it!
- In a very small way I am experimenting with Free to Question, Free to Explore the Bible without feeling threatened that for some reason it's not allowed! Just with a few members of our church once a month on a Tuesday morning.

Reactions please...

## Of Readers, Prophets and Our Vocations

I was going to write a thoughtful piece on this subject and put it off countless times and then yesterday this dropped into my inbox from the Richard Rohr Daily Meditations newsfeed. (Details of how you can get them at the bottom)

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### Signs of a Prophet Thursday, September 14, 2017

*Over the next few days I'd like to share thoughts from my friend, author and peace activist John Dear, who lives here in New Mexico. I believe he has been a prophet of nonviolence for many, many people. John offers twelve signs to help us identify a true prophet.*

First, a prophet is someone who listens attentively to the word of God, a contemplative, a mystic who hears God and takes God at God's word, and then goes into the world to tell the world God's message. So a prophet speaks God's message fearlessly, publicly, without compromise, despite the times, whether fair or foul.

Second, morning, noon, and night, the prophet is centered on God. The prophet does not do his or her own will or speak his or her own message. The prophet does God's will and speaks God's message. . . . In the process, the prophet tells us who God is and what God wants, and thus who we are and how we can become fully human.

Third, a prophet interprets the signs of the times. The prophet is concerned with the world, here and now, in the daily events of the whole human race, not just our little backyard or some ineffable hereafter. The prophet sees the big picture—war, starvation, poverty, corporate greed, nationalism, systemic violence, nuclear weapons, and environmental destruction. The prophet interprets these current realities through God's eyes, not through



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the eyes of analysts or pundits or Pentagon press spokespeople. The prophet tells us God's take on what's happening.

Fourth, a prophet takes sides [the "bias toward the bottom" or the "preferential option for the poor"]. A prophet stands in solidarity with the poor, the powerless, and the marginalized. . . . A prophet becomes a voice for the voiceless. Indeed, a prophet is the voice of a voiceless God.

Fifth, all the prophets of the Hebrew Bible are concerned with one main question: justice and peace. They call people to act justly and create a new world of social and economic justice, which will be the basis for a new world of peace. Justice and peace, they learned, are at the heart of God; God wants justice and peace here on earth now. And the prophet won't shy away from telling us that if we want a spiritual life, we must work for justice and peace. Sixth, prophets simultaneously announce and denounce. They announce God's reign of justice and peace and publicly denounce the world's regimes of injustice and war. Like Martin Luther King, Jr., they hold high the alternatives of nonviolence and disarmament and lay low the obsolete ways of violence and weapons.

## **How access the Rohr readings and other materials:**

### ***Daily Meditations: Rebuilding Christianity "From the Bottom Up"***

*Drawing from his own Franciscan heritage and other wisdom traditions, Richard Rohr reframes neglected or misunderstood teachings to reveal the foundations of contemplative Christianity and the universe itself: God as loving relationship.*

*Each week of meditations builds on previous topics, but you can join at any time! Watch a short introduction to the theme "From the Bottom Up" (8-minute video) – [click here](#). If you've missed earlier messages, explore the [online archive](#).*

*Feel free to share meditations on social media: go to CAC's [Facebook page](#) or [Twitter feed](#) and find today's post. Or use the Forward to a Friend link at the top of this message to send via email.*

*For frequently asked questions – such as what versions of the Bible Father Richard recommends or how to ensure you receive every meditation – please see our [email FAQ](#).*

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*Did someone forward this message to you? [Sign up to receive CAC's free daily, weekly, or monthly emails for yourself by clicking here!](#)*

Whilst on the subject of Richard Rohr, a plug for a course at Epiphany house!

## **Enneagram and the Spiritual Journey**

**Friday 3rd November 2017**

7.30pm - 9.30pm

**Saturday 4th November 2017**

10.00am - 5.00pm

**Led by The Revd Dr. David Rake**

**Epiphany House, Truro, TR1 3DR**



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