

NEWS from the Church of England

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Bishop of Carlisle appointed as Lead Bishop on Healthcare Issues

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have announced the appointment of the Bishop of Carlisle, The Rt Revd James Newcome, as lead bishop on healthcare issues.

This appointment reflects the importance which the Church of England gives to healthcare as a national priority and the significance of physical, mental and spiritual care for the good of all. Alongside his diocesan duties, Bishop James will work closely with the Mission and Public Affairs Division of the Archbishops' Council (MPA), which represents the church's views on healthcare to the government, NHS and other agencies and is also responsible for supporting the Church of England's healthcare chaplains across the country.

As lead bishop, Bishop James will work to keep healthcare issues high on the agenda in the Church of England's engagement with public policy. He will also work with the other diocesan bishops and MPA to ensure that the church's healthcare chaplains receive the support they need from the dioceses and central church structures.

The appointment of a lead bishop for healthcare was a recommendation of the review of the church's Hospital Chaplaincies Council, chaired by Dame Janet Trotter, which reported earlier in 2010. The report argued that a lead bishop for healthcare would help to establish stronger links between healthcare chaplains and their dioceses and would express the church's support for chaplains as part of its wider concern for the health of all.

Bishop James said: “I am delighted to accept this challenging role as part of my ministry and mission as a bishop. The physical, mental and spiritual care of all people is a concern which the church has consistently supported from the days of the earliest hospitals set up within religious institutions, to the formation of the National Health Service which was part of the vision of Archbishop William Temple before the War, right to the present day. I have been enormously impressed by the work of our chaplains in the NHS who make a massive contribution to patient well-being and who also minister to staff at all levels. I know something of the pressures, dilemmas and challenges which face healthcare staff, and I will do all I can to support them in prayer and by mobilising the support and wisdom of the church wherever I can.”

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York said: “Bishop James brings energy, warmth and imagination to bear on one of the major issues facing everybody today. Not only the practical provision of medical facilities, but the whole question of what it means to be well, is under question as we face the challenges of technological and medical advances alongside limited resources. For centuries, the church has been in the business of personal and public health and well-being – this is a subject on which the Christian faith has much to say, and we are delighted that Bishop James has agreed to lead in this field on behalf of us all.”

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