

100 Days of Prayer

Travelling Well Together – Sustaining Ministry

Week 8

Theme for the week: wellbeing, and sustaining healthy rhythms

Leading in Christian ministry can be deeply rewarding and joyful; it can also at times be costly and demanding for ministers and their families. Physical, financial, emotional and spiritual health, together with personal and professional relationships, within the wider context of vocation, all contribute to an overall sense of wellbeing for clergy and licensed lay ministers. Ordained and licensed ministry is inextricably interwoven with other aspects of life and with other people's lives. Ministers are often sustained by a very strong sense of personal calling, but the work can be lonely, and some ministers feel isolated in their ministry or in their personal lives.

The population in our diocese has increased over the past ten years, but over this same time, the number of clergy posts has reduced from 300 to 235. By 2025, each clergy post in our diocese was serving a smaller congregation (an average of 108 adults) but a larger average population (13, 964). Whilst we are moving away from “one vicar, one parish” and multi-parish benefices are more common, we need to actively explore new models of ministry that are sustainable and that enable the flourishing of all God's people.

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your

souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’ (Matthew 11: 28-30)

This week, we **give thanks**...

- for spiritual directors, pastoral supervisors, counsellors, prayer partners, coaches and mentors who support our lay and ordained leaders
- the Clergy Support Trust, the Charity for Licensed Ministers in the Diocese of Chelmsford (LMDC) and other charities that support clergy and licensed ministers in particular need
- for our Deanery Wellbeing champions and our Diocesan Wellbeing Steering Group

We **pray** that...

- all our clergy and licensed lay ministers would receive the support that they need to enable them in their ministries
- we would be bold and imaginative in our exploration of new models of ministry that will enable all God's people to flourish

Creator and lover of our souls:

teach us to release our burdens and accept your love.

May your love be the deepest reality of our lives,

and may we offer real love to others. Amen.