

The Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist

(Anglican Church of Southern Africa in Limpopo)
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To: All Clergy
All Churchwardens
All Diocesan Organisations

Please share this letter as widely as you can with the people of your church or organisation!

Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ: *“Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen”* (Revelation 1:7)

*I wish you, your family and your church a blessed
Advent, Christmas and New Year!*

Thank you to everyone who worked hard on the Diocesan Budget for 2016, and on your Parish budgets. Our DSC meeting last week approved the Budget without any major problems. Now the challenge is to live up to the promises we have made to God and one another!

Practical Resources for Our Vision

At Synod in August I shared in detail where I believe we are in fulfilling our Diocesan Vision, and what we need to do next. In particular, we identified three priorities for our life together over the next year or so:

- 1) **Practical Discipleship** – what does it mean to follow Jesus in everyday life?
- 2) **Multiplication with Transformation** – how can we start new churches and congregations that are not just “more of the same” but reach out to those who are not in church?
- 3) **Community Development using Church Resources** – how can we use our land and church buildings to serve our communities?

In all three of these areas, we agreed to give special attention to how we can include young people intentionally in everything we do, and how we can develop leaders, especially future clergy who can lead parishes as rectors.

1 VIP – Volunteer and Intern Programme

In October I wrote about the “VIP” – Volunteer and Intern Programme and encouraged you to get involved, in particular there are two things you can do:

- 1) Consider how your parish may be able to use a volunteer or intern in your mission and ministry, for example as a Youth or Children’s Pastor; or to help with a homework club.
- 2) Identify any young people who could serve as volunteers or interns – particularly those who believe God may be calling them to the ordained ministry.

If you are able to do something in one of these ways, please talk to Philip Moseki or Pat Lennox.

Attached is an application form for prospective volunteers and interns.

2 Guidelines for Leaders

Quite a few new church buildings and rectories are going up in the Diocese at present – a sign of growth and that we are planning for the future.

Diocesan Vision: To make disciples in vibrant, self-sufficient congregations established and linked to each other by sharing in resources; ministry & service; outreach & evangelism.

In order to help with this, the Diocesan Trustees have prepared two chapters of “Guidelines for Leaders”, our “user-friendly” guide to the Canons of the Province and Rules of the Diocese.

- 3) **Chapter 7: New Church Buildings**
- 4) **Chapter 8: Dedication of Churches**

You can get these guidelines from Jacky at the Diocesan Office, or download them from the Diocesan web site at: <http://www.stmark.org.za/leadership-team.aspx>.

Your Archdeacon can also guide you in doing everything required. If you follow the guidelines it will make your life far easier! You will also find that everything is in place for the new church building to be used in worship, ministry and mission.

3 ACSA Stewardship Programme

Last year, Provincial Standing Committee asked Growing the Church to produce Stewardship teaching material for the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. We have found that, by working with various Dioceses, we will be able to produce a new book each year for some time to come. We are hoping that the ACSA Publishing Department will print them so that you can buy copies, but in the meantime Book 1 is available on the Diocesan web site: <http://www.stmark.org.za/leadership-team.aspx>. You are welcome to download it print it, adapt it and use it. Each section includes a Bible Study as well as readings for a Sunday service.

Stewardship is about much more than giving money to the church! It is about using everything God has given us wisely and in the service of his kingdom – of course that includes giving, but so much more as well. The sections in Book 1, “A Way of Life” are:

- 1) Broadening Our Understanding of Stewardship
- 2) Good Lessons from a Bad Example
- 3) Stewardship of Our Gifts
- 4) Stewardship of Our Togetherness
- 5) Stewardship of Our Testimonies
- 6) About Time (Stewardship of our Time)
- 7) Rands and Sense (Stewardship of our Money/Finances)
- 8) Stewardship of Our Trash (Creation and Environment)

I encourage you to set aside a time to teach on Stewardship next year.

Finally, I have an exciting first half of 2016 coming up...

- ✦ Archbishop Thabo has asked me to be **“Minister of Finance”** (ie Liaison Bishop for Finances) as from the beginning of January. This is a big challenge, and I will have to let go of some of my other portfolios in the Province in order to give my best to this task
- ✦ My daughter **Tasha and her husband Karl-Robert are expecting twins** early in the New Year (27th January is the expected date)! So their daughter Rosie will soon have two baby sisters – and my grandchildren will jump from one to three. Please pray for them all.
- ✦ My eldest daughter **Katy is engaged to be married to Trevor Watt** (an Electrical Engineer, working in Belgium at present), probably on 9th April. I am delighted!
- ✦ Having postponed my **sabbatical in Australia** in October, I now plan to be there from about 11th April to 5th May.

Please find enclosed a copy of the Diocesan Diary for 2016 together with the Diary Notes. You can also find these documents on the web site at: <http://www.stmark.org.za/2016-diary.aspx>.

Yours in Christ,

†Martin

†Martin: St Mark the Evangelist

