



The Anglican Church of Luxembourg

the English Speaking Church Community (Anglican Chaplaincy): association sans but lucratif

JOAN TO BE APPOINTED AS NEW ASSISTANT PRIEST

The Bishop, Dr Geoffrey Rowell, has written to the Chaplain, and to his wife, the Rev'd Joan Lyon, indicating that he has decided to appoint Joan as Assistant Priest. There are still some details and formalities to be worked out, but it is expected that Joan will take up her new post in September.

Following the decision by the Luxembourg Parliament to give effect to the Convention signed between the Church, represented by the Bishop, and the Luxembourg Government, two stipends have been allocated to the Church for a "curé" and a "vicaire", which translates as a chaplain and an assistant chaplain.

Since the Chaplaincy of Luxembourg was founded, nearly fifty years ago it has been staffed by a chaplain on a half time basis, in conjunction with the part time post of religion teacher at the European School. Over time the English Speaking population has grown considerably in Luxembourg, as has the chaplaincy, to the point that, in accordance with the staffing ratios of the other churches in Luxembourg, two full-time priests are required, especially if the congregation is to grow.

The expectation, and the hope, of the Chaplain and the Chaplaincy Council had been that sufficient money would be raised to pay for the accommodation and other costs which are the responsibility of the chaplaincy. In the event, although the increased giving campaign was successful, it fell very short of affording to rent new premises for another member of staff.

Earlier this year the Chaplaincy Council discussed the question of whether the Bishop should be asked to appoint Joan and unanimously decided to make a proposal to the AGM to this effect which was overwhelmingly carried. (See www.anglican.lu AGM minutes for details of the discussion.)

At the time it seemed that this would require a change to diocesan policy. The Chaplain, Chris Lyon, explains, "When I was appointed one of the first things which was said to Joan at the interview was that she would not be able to work in the same chaplaincy. However when I contacted the Bishop's Chaplain to arrange a meeting, he was able to tell us that the policy had been relaxed, and that each situation would be decided on its merits. At the Chrism Mass service in Holy Week, held for the first time in Luxembourg, we were able to have a very good meeting with both Bishops and the Archdeacon, in which Barbara Thomson, one of our two churchwardens, was able to put the case for Luxembourg very well."

Joan is currently engaged in a counsellor practice which she will now bring to an end, though she will still be involved in some counselling, both to church members and non members, as part of her pastoral ministry.

Joan's appointment will be based on a fixed term licence from the Bishop probably for five years, renewable annually thereafter. One of the concerns raised at the AGM was what would happen when the Lyons leave. In the normal course of events Joan will retire before Chris, and the expectation is that by then the chaplaincy will be in a better position to afford accommodation for another assistant, so that a continuity of ministry can be maintained.

One of the big challenges which the Lyons face as they enter a new phase of their time here will be maintaining the boundary between their work and their personal lives. Chris Lyon comments " We are very aware of the risks, and we have taken care to define our separate areas of work responsibility as clearly as we can. What will be equally important will be to ensure that we know when we are not working, which is not always easy..."

Joan is very happy with the Bishop's decision; "I am delighted that Bishop Geoffrey will appoint me as Assistant Chaplain. This is an unexpected opportunity to which I have given much thought and prayer and I am very appreciative of the support of the Churchwardens and the Church Council. It has certainly been part of my own experience that God works in unexpected ways and I am looking forward to developing the life of the congregation as together we discover God at work within ourselves, in our church and in the wider community

