



THE OLIVE BRANCH

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE DIOCESE OF CYPRUS
AND THE GULF - HARVEST 2026

Farewell Georgia



After more than forty-two years, Canon Georgia Katsantonis, the Bishop's Personal Assistant to five of the

six bishops, who have led our Diocese, has decided to retire. Georgia joined the Diocese in 1984, as PA to the Rt Rev'd Harry Moore, second bishop of the Diocese. In addition to supporting the work—and families—of successive bishops and the central Diocesan Office, she also served for a period as Provincial Secretary.

At her installation in May 2023 as an ecumenical lay canon at St Paul's Cathedral in Nicosia—the first such canon in the Diocese—Bishop Michael Lewis noted Georgia's *"remarkably long and devoted service and her accumulated shrewd wisdom and knowledge: an observant Orthodox laywoman, who knows more about the ways and varieties of worldwide, as well as local Anglicanism, than most Anglicans."*

Georgia will be greatly missed in parishes across Cyprus and the Gulf, and especially by her colleagues in her home from home, the Diocesan Offices in Nicosia. She herself wrote: *'The friendships formed over 42 years are among the greatest gifts my ministry has given me, and I hope that they will continue long after my working life has come to an end.'*

The Committee of the Friends were delighted to honour Georgia with Honorary Life Membership of the Friends, and our President, Bishop Sean, presented her with a certificate at her farewell service.

AGM of the Friends

Members of the Friends gathered on 27th July at All Hallows by the Tower for their AGM and Eucharist and as well as Bishop Sean and Jenny, we were delighted to welcome the Rev'd Ian and Carol Nicholson, who were visiting from New Zealand. Ian served as Manager of the Epiphany Church prior to their move to Cyprus as the parish priest of St Barnabas' Church, Limassol. Bishop Sean had already circulated a very full report on what had been a turbulent year with nearly all countries of the Diocese in some way directly involved or impacted in the ongoing war with Iran.

Two members of the Friends Committee stepped down after six years of service: **Canon Ian Calder**, who previously served as Chairperson of the Friends and has taken on the responsibility of co-ordinating the South-West Gathering in Gloucester and this last year in Exeter; and **Ron Maitland**, who for many years has co-ordinated the Autumn Northern Gathering in York, as well as editing a previous format of the Olive Branch.

Two new members were elected:

Canon Paul Maybury, the Rector of Leeds, but who served in the Diocese as the Spirituality Co-ordinator, working closely with Maggie Le Roy and as Bishop's Missioner in the South-East Cyprus Chaplaincy with particular responsibility for the parish of St John the Evangelist, Deryneia;



and **Robert Yesubrabha**, who was a member of the both the Tamil and English-speaking congregations at St Christopher's Cathedral, Bahrain and now lives and works as a physiotherapist in Harrow.

The Rev'd Canon Christine Goldsmith



It was a great sadness to hear of the death of Chris Goldsmith. Chris was a real pioneer in the Diocese of Cyprus

and the Gulf, among the first cohort of those ordained, who had been selected and trained in the Diocese and she was the first woman to be ordained in St Paul's Cathedral, Nicosia, by Bishop Michael in 2016. She served as a curate at St Barnabas' Limassol and developed a ministry to refugee families in the Kofinou camp. Moving with her husband Rick and their dogs to Lincolnshire, she clearly flourished and found a deep joy in rural ministry in the UK. As Bishops Nicholas and Jean of Lincoln Diocese wrote: *'Chris was a person with a joyful and steadfast faith, a passion for sharing the gospel, and a heart for our rural communities.'*

As Friends, we send our condolences to Rick, those who knew Chris well in St Barnabas, her colleagues in ministry and the members of the Wolds Gateway Group of parishes, whom she served so faithfully. A Memorial Service will be held in St Barnabas on 2nd October at 12noon.

New Priest for St John's, Muscat



St John's, Muscat look forward to welcoming a new priest on Sunday October 1st, **the Rev'd Dr Andrew Warmback** after a lengthy inter-regnum. Andrew and his wife Alison come to the Parish from South

Africa, where he has been serving as Rector of St Michael's, uMhlanga in South Africa, but has previously served as locum priest at St John's, so he knows something of the challenges ahead. He was ordained priest in 1996 at the Cathedral of the Holy Nativity in Natal. In addition to a Bachelor of Divinity from Rhodes University, he holds a PhD from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, examining the environment, poverty and the Church in South Africa.



A major international gathering, including Bishops Sean and Julius, representing two of the three our linked dioceses is being hosted by Christchurch, Jebel Ali in October. After a period of such uncertainty, this is a sign of hope and confidence in the Anglican community.

Great Joy in Two Ordination Services



In the last few months there have been two Ordination services in Cyprus, occasions of great joy for the two congregations.

The first took place on June 6th in St Mark's, Famagusta, in northern Cyprus: **Henry Ikediogo** ordained deacon. Henry for many years has faithfully served the community largely of students, who worship there.

The second, more recently, on 5th September was the Ordination to the priesthood of the **Rev'd Maria Evangelou** at St Paul's



Cathedral, Nicosia attended by many colleagues from across the island. We wish them well and assure them of our prayers.



Northern Gathering in York:

Wednesday 21st October, 10.30am, at the Bar Convent, 17 Blossom Street, York, YO24 1AQ - a gentle walk from York Railway Station.