

Monthly Letter, January 2021

From the Bishop of Sherborne, Karen Gorham



2021 by Another Road

‘They left for their own country by another road.’ Matthew 2:12b

I wonder what happened to the wise men. How were their lives shaped from that day when they left Bethlehem and returned to their own country by another road? How did seeing the longed for Messiah change the rest of their lives?

It was really encouraging in the Autumn to engage with clergy and laity from across the diocese to look back at what church life had been like in 2020. This time last year we would never have imagined or believed how the year would turn out, and yet amidst all the tragedy, the fear, the anxiety, the challenge, there have been many signs of hope, new life, creativity, energy, of discovering new ways to share the good news of Jesus Christ.

Our calling now is to go forward into this New Year, in the light of 2020, by another road. To take that which has been good, new and energising into our future, not just as the church, but also as individuals.

What may this look like? Well, for me my first three and a half years in this role meant spending a great deal of time indoors and in the car. My challenge therefore going forward is to consider how I continue to reduce my mileage and create space to take time to enjoy God’s creation. It is about deciding how I utilise the many benefits of Zoom without spending most of the week in front of a screen. It is about continuing to bring clergy and County leaders together around common topics whilst paying attention to the needs of the local church.

January 2021 will also be like no other January we have ever had. Whilst still taking care, with the possibility of being vaccinated by the summer, our resolutions can be about the life post-Covid we wish to retain and the new possibilities we need to grasp. So, what will

returning by another road mean for you? The Wise Men knew to avoid returning the way they had come. We need to learn that lesson too because the year 2020 will have taught us nothing if we go back the same way.

+Karen