

A message from Toby Webber

Dear Brothers and sisters

**Diocesan Conference 2018 – The Mystery of Faith - Believing it, Living it, Sharing it**

I've been asked to chair the small working group planning the diocesan conference taking place over 26-29 November 2018 at Swanwick. As it's quite a while since the bishops wrote their initial letter back in July, I thought an update might be in order.

I'm delighted to say that an exciting line-up of speakers has been arranged. Each afternoon there will be a keynote address to inspire our thinking on one of the big theological topics:

- Bishop Graham Tomlin (Bishop of Kensington in the Diocese of London) will speak on the incarnation
- Professor Ben Quash (Professor of Christianity and the Arts at Kings College London) will speak on the atonement. And finally
- Bishop Pete Wilcox (Bishop of Sheffield) will speak on our future hope.

We also have a line-up of evening speakers

- Amy Orr-Ewing (of the Zacharias Trust)
- (Provisionally) Tim Farron MP
- Bishop Richard Chartres

Each morning there will be a bible reading and reflection given by the Rev'd Professor Jenn Strawbridge (Associate Professor of New Testament in the University of Oxford and Fellow of Mansfield College).

The second half of each morning will feature a whole range of workshops linking into the theme set by the previous afternoon's talk. Then there will be lunch and free time. The working group currently consists of Bishop Philip, Canon Sue Penfold, the Revd John Chitham, together with Mrs Jean Duerden who is leading on logistical arrangements assisted by Mrs Rosie Strachan, the Revd Tracy Charnock who is leading on worship and the Revd Grant Ashton who is leading on organising the workshops, as well as me. Do feel free to have a word with any one of us.

Finally, please look out to a letter from the Bishop in the new year with the booking form attached.

In the meantime each incumbent/priest in charge will need to have chosen one lay person to bring with them – so if you've not yet done so please do identify that person who exercises significant lay leadership in your benefice and who could benefit from participation in the conference.

Also look out for a letter detailing the financial contribution we are asking each parish to make towards the conference.

I hope that whets your appetite for what should be an excellent time together in just over a year's time.

Yours in Christ  
*Toby*

Revd Toby Webber  
Vicar of Altham and Clayton-le-Moors  
(01254) 384321  
[tobywebber@btinternet.com](mailto:tobywebber@btinternet.com)