

## A Letter from Bishop Sarah

Tuesday 27 January 2026



Dear friends,

***'We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labour of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ'. (1 Thess 1:v2-3)***

It has been announced this morning by 10 Downing Street that I am to be the next Bishop of Ely. I realise that, as with all such announcements, this appears to come 'out of the blue' but in fact, my nomination comes at the end of a long, prayerful and searching discernment by both myself and the Ely Crown Nomination Commission. I am still full of wonder at my nomination as I have experienced what I can only describe as the surprising work of God's Holy Spirit in guiding the discernment to this outcome. I feel both humbled by and joyful at this turn of events.

There is of course real sadness for me in leaving Durham Diocese. I believe it will have been obvious to you that I have loved being here and have been at home in the North-East, in the communities we serve and in the Diocesan family. It is amongst you that I have learned what it means to be a bishop, called to serve and care for the flock of Christ, with the pattern of the Good Shepherd before me. You have shaped me and helped me grow into the bishop

that God has called me to be. I know that all I have been and done has only been possible because of the wonderful people I have shared ministry with.

I do realise that the news that I am leaving will spark many questions given that we are awaiting the announcement of the next Bishop of Durham. Please be assured that work is already ongoing by the diocesan leadership with Archbishop Stephen to make interim arrangements for the remainder of the episcopal vacancy and I am sure that all will be well. The timings of my move are yet to be confirmed, and I will write again when these are clear.

There will be other opportunities for me to share my thankfulness for you and for 'the work of faith, the labour of love and the steadfastness of hope in Jesus Christ' that we have shared over the past seven years in which I have been Bishop of Jarrow. I continue to pray for you with love and with hope for the future that lies before the parishes, people and communities of Durham Diocese.

Please pray for me in this time of change.

May the grace and peace of Jesus Christ our Lord be yours.

Bishop Sarah