

A well-known vicar who ministered in Cumbria for 15 years has been chosen as the next Suffragan Bishop of Penrith.

The Rev Canon Rob Sauer-Haigh, who is currently Residentiary Canon Director of Mission and Ministry in the Diocese of Newcastle, was



It means Rob will return to the Diocese of Carlisle where he had served all his ordained ministry until his move to Newcastle in 2020. He will also once again live in Kendal, having previously been the vicar of the town's parish church for 10 years, and will have a particular responsibility for continuing to develop the county's ecumenical God for All vision and strategy, based around its four key themes: Follow Daily, Speak Boldly, Care Deeply and Tread Gently.

Rob, aged 49, said: "I am thrilled to be returning to Cumbria; a place whose people and landscape I know and love so much. I come seeking to serve this place and its people, and to work prayerfully for the good things of God for us all over the coming years.

"As someone with 15 years' experience of ministry in Cumbria, I'm well aware of the great things that are being done in parishes and mission communities across the diocese and am excited at what lies ahead as together we continue the God for All strategy and vision. There are, of course, also challenges – for our communities and for the church - but it will be a privilege and joy to serve with people as we prayerfully share God's love and hope with our neighbours. I'm also thrilled at the prospect of meeting up again with so many valued friends – both across the county and the denominations - supporting them in their ministry and rising to the challenge to follow daily, speak boldly, care deeply and tread gently as servants of Jesus."

Rob has a deep knowledge both of the county and the Diocese, having served his curacy in Appleby Deanery before serving in the parishes of Dalston with Cumdivock, Raughtonhead and Wreay. He was Bishop's Chaplain for three years and Director of Ordinands for two and from 2010 was the Vicar of Holy Trinity Kendal and assistant Rural Dean for seven years. He is also currently a member of the Northern Mission Centre Steering Group, a collaboration between God for All and Church Mission Society to support creative and innovative mission which has its base in Penrith.

He was born and raised in Birkenhead on Merseyside prior to studying for a degree in Ancient History and Archaeology at Birmingham University, later completing his MPhil research in Archaeology. After working as an archaeologist, he worked for a church in Birmingham and then as a project manager in an IT firm before training for ordination at Wycliffe Hall in Oxford. He is married to Emma. The couple have three children: Ollie (20), Jemima (18) and Hal (16).

As Director of Mission and Ministry he has developed and overseen the Mission and Ministry team in the Diocese of Newcastle, including the training and equipping of lay and ordained leaders and encouragement of mission and practical evangelism in parishes.

Rob added: "My start in post in Newcastle coincided with the first Covid lockdown so it was an interesting introduction! I have loved being part of the diocese and it has been such a blessing to see people growing in faith and service in so many places. I'm particularly grateful for the kindness, warmth and humour of those I've worked with, and for such great colleagues, all of whom will remain much in my prayers."

Rob met diocesan staff this morning via a Zoom call as part of a day-long, county-wide tour he and Emma are completing with Bishop James. It also takes in Carlisle Cathedral, meeting staff and pupils at Beaconside C of E Primary in Penrith, a visit to the award-winning Low Sizergh Barn and Growing Well project, meeting organisers and volunteers at the Clothes Bank at St Mark's Barrow and time at St Andrew's Mirehouse with leaders and young people from Ignite Network Youth Church.

The Bishop of Carlisle, the Rt Rev James Newcome, said: "When I was first appointed Bishop of Carlisle, I was honoured to have Rob serve as my chaplain, so it is wonderful to now have the blessing of him serving as our Suffragan bishop. He is someone who has a passion for Jesus, for service and for the county of Cumbria. I know he will be welcomed back with huge excitement and overwhelming support, as together we further commit to our ecumenical God for All vision."

The Most Rev and Rt Hon Stephen Cottrell, Archbishop of York, said: "I welcome the appointment of Rob as Suffragan Bishop of Penrith. His love of the communities of Cumbria and his significant experience of mission in Newcastle Diocese will equip him well as he joins Bishop James in encouraging the people and the parishes of Cumbria in sharing the good news of the gospel. He has my prayers as he prepares to take up this new role."

Rob succeeds the Rt Rev Dr Emma Ineson who in May 2021 was appointed Bishop to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, based at Lambeth Palace in London. He will be consecrated at a service in York Minster on Friday 15 July, followed by a service of introduction and welcome at Carlisle Cathedral on Sunday 11 September at 3pm.

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