



THE ARCHBISHOP
OF YORK



10 Downing Street has announced today that Her Majesty the Queen has approved the appointment of the Right Reverend Doctor Eleanor Sanderson as Suffragan Bishop of Hull in the Diocese of York, following the retirement of the Right Reverend Alison White.

Dr Eleanor Sanderson has been Assistant Bishop of Wellington in the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia since 2017.

The Bishop of Hull is one of three Suffragan Bishops supporting and extending the ministry of the Archbishop of York in the Diocese of York, and has a particular responsibility for the Archdeaconry of the East Riding, encompassing the City of Hull, the East Riding of Yorkshire, and part of the North Yorkshire coast including Scarborough and as far north as Ravenscar.

Eleanor was born in Hinderwell, near Whitby in North Yorkshire and within the Diocese of York in 1977. She grew up in Derbyshire and came to faith whilst a student at Bristol University, where she studied geography. She studied at Victoria University in Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand, for a Master of Development Studies (2003) and PhD in Geography (2006), followed by a further Masters in Theology (2013) through the University of Otago. Her active and dynamic academic career continues with a prolific publishing record and a number of prizes and scholarships. She is a Fellow in Public Theology within the Centre for Anglican Communion Studies at the Virginia Theological Seminary, and remains a Research Associate at Victoria University of Wellington.

Ellie's ministry to date has been within the Diocese of Wellington; she was ordained in 2005 and was Vicar of the Parish of St Alban's, Eastbourne, Chaplain to Wellesley College, and the Diocesan Canon Theologian prior to her appointment as Assistant Bishop. She additionally served in a wide range of roles in academic and not-for-profit development organisations. In the Diocese of Wellington, she has led intentional discipleship programmes which resource Christians to go deeper in their relationship with God and equip them to build up mission and discipleship with others.

Ellie is married to Tim and is mother to two boys aged 12 and 14.

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell, said, "I'm delighted that Eleanor Sanderson will be the next Bishop of Hull. She has a great zest for life,

and the joy she finds in her faith just shines out of her. She and Bishop Justin Duckworth are torchbearers for the church in bringing it back to its central calling to attend to God, in order to go forward with really practical and sacrificial responses to modern challenges in the world we all share. Ellie has her feet planted on the ground and her eyes on Jesus as she rolls up her sleeves to get involved with God's people.

“She was born in the Diocese of York so this is a homecoming; I know that the Diocese and particularly the people of Hull, the East Riding and on the Yorkshire coast will come to love her quickly, and that she, Tim and their sons Joe and Zac will be taken to all our hearts as they join us in living Christ's story here.”

Bishop Eleanor Sanderson said, “I'm so excited and humbled to be called to follow Alison White as Bishop of Hull. It's a great honour to take this title from such a vibrant and historic city as Hull, and to renew a connection between this city and my family village of Tideswell in Derbyshire, which was also the home of the first Bishop of Hull, Bishop Pursglove in the 1500s. I'm looking forward to getting to know Hull and its people and to exploring the villages and towns of the East Riding Archdeaconry and the Yorkshire coast too.

“In Wellington we have recognised the need to stop and turn to God, offering ourselves in partnership with Jesus to be a transformative movement of local faith communities - and in so many places here I see the same thing happening, through the Mustard Seed and Multiply initiatives, through the processes of transformation within and through local churches as part of our commitment to Live Christ's Story. Above all, I have been deeply struck by how readily people here can testify to the hope of Christ visible around them. It will be an honour to interweave my own strands of faith, hope and love with the faith hope and love lived so vibrantly within the Diocese of York.

“I'm looking forward to living the friendship of Jesus alongside Archbishop Stephen, Archdeacon Andy, all the clergy and the whole family of God within the East Riding Archdeaconry, and to bringing my family to live in these wonderful communities within Yorkshire, serving God together in the land and coastlines where I was born.”

Bishop of Wellington the Rt Revd Justin Duckworth said, “It is with great heaviness of heart that we say farewell to Bishop Eleanor, Tim, Zac and Joe. Knowing them as we do we are certain that God will do great things with them in the Diocese of York. It feels a little like the seeds sown in Hull by William Wilberforce, the Clapham Sect and the Church Missionary Society blew to Aotearoa New Zealand, and now those seeds blow back again with Bishop Eleanor and family. We are excited to see the missional discipleship adventure unfold.”

Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia Philip Richardson said, “Bishop Eleanor’s appointment to the See of Hull is an occasion of both real sadness and deep rejoicing. Bishop Eleanor has made an extraordinary contribution to the life of our church over many years and most recently as a bishop in the Diocese of Wellington. She has brought her unique gifts to bear in a period of significant transformation in the focus of mission within that diocese. She has become a respected and highly valued member of the House of Bishops in this church. As such, we will be extremely sad to see her go but we genuinely rejoice in the discernment that God is calling her to serve within the Diocese of York as Bishop of Hull.

“This is a very significant call and responsibility which Bishop Eleanor is well equipped to meet. We know that our church will remain close to her heart as she will remain in ours. We wish her, the clergy and people of the East Riding every blessing in this new time of episcopal leadership.”

Bishop Eleanor's formal inauguration as Bishop of Hull will take place in the autumn of 2022; details will be published when confirmed.

ENDS

Notes for editors

Programme Wednesday 29th June 2022

10.00am: Following Downing Street's confirmation of the announcement, Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell will introduce Bishop Eleanor Sanderson at the Church of St John the Evangelist, St Georges Rd, Newington, Hull HU3 3SP. Media welcome.

12.00 noon: Bishop Eleanor will visit Skirlaugh Church of England Primary School HU11 5EB, to meet with staff, governors and pupils. Media welcome by arrangement with Martin Sheppard as above.

2.00pm: Bishop Eleanor will meet local people and church leaders at St Mark's Church, Bessingby Gate, West Hill, Bridlington YO16 4RU, to learn something of the community and social activities co-ordinated by the church there, and the leadership development work supporting it. Media welcome.

5.30pm: Bishop Eleanor will join the congregation at York Minster, the Mother Church of the Diocese of York, for a 'Jazz Eucharist' based on the music of Duke Ellington, to celebrate the Cathedral's Patronal Festival - the feast day on which the church commemorates St Peter the Apostle, after whom York Minster is formally named.

The Rt Revd Dr Eleanor Ruth Sanderson: further background

The Right Reverend Dr Eleanor Sanderson (née Grourk) has been Assistant Bishop of Wellington in the Anglican Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

and Polynesia, since June 2017. Eleanor (Ellie) is the first female bishop in the Diocese of Wellington and the fourth in New Zealand.

She was born in Hinderwell, near Whitby in North Yorkshire in 1977, and spent her childhood at the family's home of over four centuries in Tideswell, Derbyshire; the first Bishop of Hull, Robert Pursglove, was a native of Tideswell and is commemorated in the Parish Church.

Her husband Tim is from Wellington and works as a mechanic; this will be his first time living away from Aotearoa New Zealand. Their sons are called Joseph (12) and Zachary (14).

Ellie came to faith whilst a student at Bristol University, where she studied geography. This discipline, along with International Development and the intersection of spirituality and faith, have been close to her heart since that time: leading into a Master of Development Studies (2003) and PhD in Geography (2006), both at Victoria University of Wellington, and a further Masters in Theology (2013) through the University of Otago. She is currently Fellow in Public Theology within the Centre for Anglican Communion Studies at the Virginia Theological Seminary, and remains a Research Associate at Victoria University of Wellington.

Ellie was ordained in 2005 within the Diocese of Wellington and has served in a wide range of roles within academic and not-for-profit development organisations. Prior to commencing her role as Assistant Bishop, she was Vicar of the Parish of St Alban's, Eastbourne and Chaplain to Wellesley College, and the Diocesan Canon Theologian. Within the Diocese, she has led intentional discipleship programmes which resources Christians to go deeper in their relationship with God and equips them to build up mission and discipleship with others.

Recently the family has participated in building intentional Christian communities for young adults. They have lived near the University of Wellington and have taken part in building a residential community with students which has now grown to five houses, each with house leaders, daily prayers, weekly discipleship night and weekly patterns of mission together.

Ellie comments, "Living and breathing this community has been an important part of role modelling and supporting missional discipleship in my role as bishop in the last five years. It will be really hard to leave these folk, but the community is at a good stage of being led without us now."

She adds, "One of the hardest parts of saying goodbye will be the rich life of our 'Three Tikanga'* Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia. Part of my doctoral research was working in partnership with Melanesian Communities in Fiji and then later with women from the Mothers' Union in Tonga. My ordinations took place in mats woven for me by the women of these communities and symbolised my belonging and connection to them. So, our family has a deep sense of belonging in these Pacific Islands.

"But personally I feel really keenly the connection with William Wilberforce and Hull. The Melanesian communities in Fiji are a consequence of indentured labour. During my time in Wellington I've spoken at our Parliament in co-ordinated work seeking to prevent modern day slavery - so that connection feels quite fresh to me."

* The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia consists of three tikanga or cultural streams: Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia.

