Dear Friends in Christ,

"But I am among you as one who serves." (Luke22.27)

I'm writing to invite you all very warmly to our annual Chrism Eucharist in Winchester Cathedral at 11am on Maundy Thursday, 17th April. This is a wonderful opportunity for us all, across the Diocese, to offer ourselves afresh to the service of God at the start of the great three-day celebration of our Lord's passion, death and resurrection.

This year there is especial reason for us to gather together as this service will give us the opportunity to say farewell to Bishop David, who will preach for us, and to ask God's blessing on him and Helen as they move to the Diocese of Truro.

It's for that reason that I want to give you early notice of this service – so do please note it in your diaries. I also want to spread the net widely – hence letting you know of it via the Newsletter. Traditionally this service has focussed on the ministry of bishops, priests and deacons. But it's right too that we should focus on the ministry of the whole people of God, not least because encouraging such ministry has been such a key feature of +David's own ministry amongst us. So all are very welcome!

As well as sharing in prayer for the ministries to which God calls us, there will be the opportunity to be anointed with oil, as we ask God for the pouring out of the gifts of the Holy Spirit on his Church. And as we worship together, both lay and ordained ministers will have the opportunity to renew their commitment to the ministry to which they have been called, and the service will also include the blessing of oil for use in churches to anoint the sick, and the oils of catechumens and chrism for use at baptism.

We will send our more details in due course but please do note the date now and plan to come if you can. Jesus came amongst 'as one who serves'. +David and Helen have so evidently followed him in that, so please do plan to come and thank them for their faithfulness and fruitfulness amongst us.

With my love and best wishes, in Christ

+Philip