



THE ARCHBISHOP  
OF YORK

Downing Street has announced that His Majesty the King has approved the appointment of the Venerable Rick Simpson, currently Archdeacon of Auckland, as the next Bishop of Durham.

Rick will succeed the Right Reverend Paul Butler who retired from the role in February 2024. We give thanks to the Right Reverend Sarah Clark, Bishop of Jarrow, for her service as Acting Bishop of Durham in the interim; last month Bishop Sarah was announced as the next Bishop of Ely.

Reacting to his appointment, Archdeacon Rick said: "I am humbled and delighted to have been called to be the Bishop of this diocese, which I love. My deepest hope is to be able to walk alongside and encourage our local Christian communities as they seek to both show God's love in action and help people to come to life-changing faith in Christ – and through this see our churches grow. It is also an honour to be tasked with representing the needs and voices of people in this region in the national church and the House of Lords."

Bishop Sarah Clark said: "I rejoice in the Venerable Rick Simpson's nomination as the next Bishop of Durham. God's clear call of Rick, confirmed by the Durham Crown Nomination Commission, places a person who already loves the people, parishes and communities of Durham Diocese and the North East at the heart of this hopeful new season. The voice he will bring to the wider church and national roles will be shaped by his long experience of the challenges and joys of life and faith in this land of Cuthbert, Bede and Hild."

The Archbishop of York, Stephen Cottrell said: "Archdeacon Rick has served the Diocese of Durham with dedication over many years. He has a wealth of experience in supporting and enabling parish ministry. His deep local knowledge of the Diocese will be an asset in his new role as Bishop of Durham. Please join me in praying for Rick and for the Diocese as he begins a new chapter of ministry, inspiring all to grow in mission, leadership, church life, and in engaging younger generations."

The Dean of Durham, Dr Philip Plyming, said: "I am delighted that Rick has been called to be the next Bishop of Durham. He is well known and widely respected across the Diocese and his blend of missional energy and wise leadership, both rooted in a deep sense of trust in God, are what we have been praying for in our next Bishop. At the Cathedral we look forward very much to working with him and seeing God continuing to be at work in this generation."

The Vice-Chair of Durham's Diocesan Board of Finance, Canon Margaret Vaughan, and the Diocesan Secretary, Canon James Morgan said: "As Archdeacon, Rick has encouraged our churches, chaplaincies and schools in their mission to bring people to faith in Jesus Christ. We are excited that he will now lead the Diocese as Bishop, shaping and taking forward our programme of Diocesan Transformation. We pray for him as he prepares to take up this new role."

Rick has served in the Diocese of Durham since 2006 when he came to be Priest in Charge of St Brandon's, Brancepeth, helping the church to thrive and develop its mission and the Initial Ministerial Education (IME, Phase 2) Officer for both Newcastle and Durham, supporting curates and

training incumbents. He became Archdeacon of Auckland in February 2018. He was a member of the Wilkinson-Jay Response Group, advising on the development of Church of England safeguarding. He served previously in the Diocese of Newcastle where, as Vicar of Holy Trinity Jesmond, he saw the church grow strongly in number and discipleship over ten years.

Rick enjoys the outdoors, especially wildlife photography, playing guitar, sport, films and novels. He is married to Rachel, and they have ten Godchildren and one cat.

The installation of Rick as Bishop of Durham will take place at Durham Cathedral in the summer. Episcopal arrangements for the short interim period between Bishop Sarah's confirmation of election to Ely and Archdeacon Rick's confirmation of election to Durham and consecration are in hand and details will follow shortly.

[Watch a welcome video from Rick here](#)

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