

# A message from Bishop Andrew

## 2022



**Our days are filled with calls upon our time and attention. Among the least welcome are the cold sales calls that intersperse our day – those anonymous, brief exchanges with callers who address us by the name of a long-forgotten tenant of our home and with whom no kind of even fleeting relationship is possible.**

Several times a week, we might rush from the bathtub, meal table or meeting to pick up the phone, only to be asked whether we are the householder - and feel our heart sink and blood pressure begin to rise.

The poor fools who work in call centres have my pity, however - if only because I was for a while one of them, selling advertising for a local newspaper. So impossibly awkward did I find making cold calls that I tended to depart from the usual script and began my sales pitch with 'I'm so sorry for bothering you, you probably won't want this, and you must feel free to say no, but I have to call you....' Just occasionally, this grovelling approach actually worked, and one could have a proper conversation. I lasted but five months in the job, however...

Then there are other calls: calls which are so surprising, so welcome, that life seems to open up with their appearance. These little epiphanies can come through the phone – in good news of a job offer or an unexpected invitation. Equally they come in other ways: someone in need, for example, whose call upon our assistance somehow makes us more human; or perhaps in the form of a sudden revelation – like a film or piece of music, perhaps, which might fill us with a sense of expectancy, or expresses our yearning so deeply that we are renewed. These kinds of encounters not only inspire us, but they also ask something of us and call us forward into a different way of life.

'Behold', says the risen Christ in the Bible: 'I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice, and opens the door, I will come in, and will eat with him, and he with me.' Scripture invites us to imagine Christ as an unexpected caller: one who will not barge in, but patiently waits for our response. He does not want a minute of our time, or have an unrepeatable special offer, but comes to meet us that we might follow where he will lead. The Lord's arrival in our midst is the wonder of this season: bearing the light of the world, he calls us forth. As with gladness so many have done before, may we also follow.