

To everyone at the Anglican Church in Norway,

A few days ago Bishop David Hamid wrote to me to formally invite me to be the next Senior Chaplain of the Anglican Church in Norway. It is a great honour, and I am very grateful to those involved in the selection process for the trust they have placed in me.

I look forward to continuing in the long line of faithful priests who have served the Anglican Church in Norway over the past decades. I have already met the Assistant Chaplains — April, Kirk and Peter — and I am looking forward to getting to know you all in the different worship locations across the country.

The links between the Chaplaincy in Denmark (where I currently serve) and the Chaplaincy in Norway are many and deep. For example, the Danish-born Queen Alexandra (wife of King Edward VII of England) who was so instrumental in the building of Saint Alban's Church in Copenhagen, was the mother of Queen Maud (wife of Haakon VII) who played such a pivotal role in the life of Saint Edmund's Church in Oslo.

I am also discovering many connections between my home country of Ireland and my future home in Norway. Apart from the Viking influence, there is also the lesser-known link through Saint Sunniva. Believed to have been the daughter of an Irish king, Sunniva settled on Selja island in Western Norway sometime in the tenth century. Later martyred for her faith, she became the patron saint of Bjørgin diocese and of Western Norway.

The fact that — as far as I am aware — I will be the first Church of Ireland priest to serve as Senior Chaplain in Norway underlines just what a diverse and international Chaplaincy it has become. I am told that there are members from over thirty different countries on the books, and my hope and prayer is that we can continue to be an inclusive, Christ-centred community which reflects the generosity and unconditional love of God.

I will be moving to Oslo in October and my first Sunday service at Saint Edmund's will be on Sunday 8 October. In the meantime, I ask for your prayers as I make preparations to leave Denmark.

As we say in Ireland, "Go mbeannaí Dia sibh go léir" — "May God bless you all."

Darren.