

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have announced the appointment of a new interim Theology Adviser, the Revd Canon Dr Jessica Martin, currently Canon Residentiary for Learning and Outreach at Ely Cathedral, to work alongside the Revd Dr Tom Woolford. Tom and Jessica will work as Joint Interim Theology Advisers to the House of Bishops and Secretaries to Faith and Order Commission (FAOC), on secondment for a six-month period starting in March 2024. These interim roles are in place while a substantive recruitment process is underway for a permanent successor to the Revd Dr Isabelle Hamley, who leaves the NCIs at the end of February to take up the role of Principal of Ridley Hall.

The Archbishops said: "In the last week, there has been a lot of public commentary about the appointment of the Interim Theology Adviser to the House of Bishops. This has required care to resolve, not just for individuals involved or affected by this appointment, but for the wider LLF process. We are grateful to Jessica and to Tom for their willingness to work together as interim Joint Theology Advisers. We remain concerned about the negative tone of debate in some parts of the Church, especially on social media. We must all do our utmost to disagree in a manner which shows the love of Jesus Christ to every person we encounter, especially those with whom we disagree. We are confident that Tom and Jessica will model this in their new roles and support the bishops in our work."

Bishop Robert Innes, Chair of FAOC, said: "The Faith and Order Commission is an important resource for the national church representing a diversity of theological opinion and learning. I am confident that the Commission will be well served by our two new Interim Advisers. They are fine theologians, and I am personally looking forward very much to working with them."

Dr Jessica Martin said: "It is a great pleasure to fulfil this interim role, working alongside Dr Woolford in the service of the whole Church, and modelling a mutual charity within difference in the advice he and I offer together to support the bishops and FAOC."

Dr Tom Woolford said: "I understand the vital importance of ensuring that trust in the LLF process is maintained and I welcome the appointment of Dr Martin as Joint Theology Advisor. I intend and anticipate that we will both individually, as well as together, strive to provide advice in a neutral manner, and I look forward to our working together in support of the bishops and FAOC."

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