

At the end of 2012 Paul finishes his appointment at St Clare's. He's not quite sure where he's going yet so we don't want to say goodbye to him. But we do want to thank him for his time on Synod Executive.

I'm delighted to have the opportunity to thank Paul tonight because I've particularly appreciated his contribution to Executive. Paul came on to Executive four years ago when I became Synod Superintendent. It was at a time when there were lots of experienced lay people on Executive but not many experienced presbyters.

We were really glad when Paul accepted the invitation to join Executive. Especially knowing that attending meetings isn't Paul's favourite thing to do! We appreciated his willingness to make himself available again for the sake of the Synod.

Paul has brought some wonderful qualities to Executive meetings. His ministry has been based in the parish and that's given him a lot of wisdom about the church at the flax roots. It's been reassuring for me as a new Superintendent to have that wisdom to draw upon.

Paul has a great sense of fun. We tend to laugh a lot at Executive meetings! But he's also a straight talker who isn't afraid to speak out if he doesn't agree with something. And he has the rare capacity to change his mind and to admit it when he does.

Paul has a real commitment to collegiality. He's been the chief organiser of Brewersgate which has offered clergy and their families a chance to meet together regularly for friendship and support. Tonight I also want to acknowledge Lynne who's been so much a part of that ministry. Lynne, you and Paul have a gift for hospitality that's legendary. Thank you for being the person you are.

Finally, the thing that stands out for me about Paul is his love for family. He's been a fantastic example of someone who's kept the needs of his family to the fore even in the midst of a busy ministry. That's not always easy to do and it's something that I think we could all learn from.

Paul, we hope that all your dreams for an overseas ministry next year come to fulfilment. But if they don't, we'll be glad to keep you in the Synod. We may even find some more jobs for you to do! Blessings and love from all of us.

Rev Dr Susan Thompson, Synod Superintendent