



## The Acting Bishop of Lincoln

December 2022

Dear Friends,

At Christmas we notice again that Jesus comes to us to be both special and ordinary as one of us. I have been reading about Jude Bellingham, the youngest and most successful English World Cup footballer in the current contest in Qatar. I am not a great football fan however, I am impressed by his skill and commitment. He comes from an ordinary background, but he has been supported to fulfil his dream. My nephew and niece are both mixed race like him and Marcus Rashford. I am proud that we are becoming a more diverse country where anyone can become an example to us about how we might live our lives as human beings. Jude and Marcus are joined by our successful women's teams in showing us that there are no limits to the breadth that football and other sports can deliver to us.

Jude's trainers and coaches all say that he always wants feedback about his performance and support about how to be excellent. We don't have to be especially clever or especially fit to be excellent at something. We just need to copy Jude's commitment to being the best we can be. That is not just about my success, it's about how I can help make other peoples' lives better by encouraging them. Jude shows us that this takes discipline and training.

Jesus goes from the manger to the cross. We can start small but think and pray big. We can always take risks for love throughout our lives. That may be the best Christmas present we can offer all year long.

Yours ever in Christ,

The Rt Revd Stephen Conway  
Bishop of Ely  
Acting Bishop of Lincoln