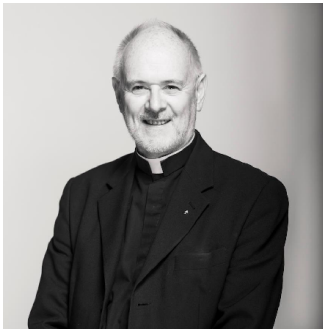


A few words from the Vicarage ...



Now in mid Lent, with Easter almost upon us we see the changes in the seasons most acutely at this time - with all the new growth beginning to show through. Of course, we look also to grow as a church and are keen to attract new growth here - in much the same way as in the gardens around.

In developing our faith there is also new growth to be found - this we are seeking to achieve via our Lent discussion group which is meeting throughout Lent on Monday evenings. This gives an opportunity to explore the journey towards Good Friday and Easter in the company of fellow travellers who seek to know God better.

I am also mindful that we have our Annual Parochial Church Meeting on Palm Sunday - another opportunity to invite new growth and development in our senior leadership team - the PCC. As Sheila Swindells is not seeking re-election this year as churchwarden, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank her for the work she has done in this capacity - it has been a real pleasure to work alongside Sheila and I'm sure I speak for all when I wish her all the best as she steps down to the 'back benches'.

We need a strong team at the helm and I hope and pray that we will have a good APCM at which the right people will make themselves available - not only a new churchwarden, but also to fill the seven PCC vacancies - 4 for 3 years and, due to changes in the last 12 months, 3 for 1 year.

The position of Secretary to the PCC is also vacant, due to unforeseen circumstances - so yet another vitally important post needing to be filled. Where would we be without our ever willing band of sidesmen/women? We also appoint people to undertake this essential work. So, if you are interested and are willing and able - there are

plenty of opportunities available for you - please don't wait to be asked
- volunteers are needed..

Of course, Lent is the time for our Churches Together lunches - when we meet in each of the five church centres for hospitality and fellowship . All money raised this year will go to Christian Aid's '*Super Soup Lunch*' and the *Barnabas Fund* (a charity which supports Christians who are displaced or persecuted for their faith).

We also look forward to meeting together on Good Friday for the act of worship witness on Woodlands Road outside our charity shop, before processing to St Joseph's for joint worship there.

Finally, it is with great delight that I noted that two of our church families celebrated a wonderful milestone last month - with the Diamond Weddings of both Arthur & June Kimber and Alan & Barbara Rouse. Such an achievement is becoming rarer these days, so to have two so close together within our church is even more remarkable - our congratulations to all four - may you have many more anniversaries to enjoy.

I hope that you will have a good Lent and a truly blessed Easter.

God bless you all,
your Vicar,
Fr D.

St Paul's Stalwart to receive Royal Maundy

On Thursday, 17th April, 2014 Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II is to distribute this year's Royal Maundy at Blackburn Cathedral and we are delighted to record that one of those to be presented is from this parish, our own Mr Ken Pocock.

Ken has been chosen for this honour due to his long and faithful service to his church and church family. All at St Paul's wish to congratulate Ken and trust that he will have a truly memorable day.

Maundy Thursday is steeped in tradition and the monarch's age is reflected in the number of Maundy coins handed out - a custom which began in the 15th century.

As the Queen is in her 88th year, at this service in Blackburn, 88 women and 88 men from this Diocese have been invited by Buckingham Palace to be presented with the coins by the Queen.

Each Maundy Thursday, Her Majesty attends the Royal Maundy service at a different cathedral or abbey in the UK. The service takes place on the Thursday before Easter to commemorate Jesus' Last Supper with the Apostles; its observance recognises the services of local 'senior' residents to their church and community. In addition to attending the service, in a practice dating back to medieval times, Her Majesty presents the 'Maundy money' as a symbolic gesture of appreciation.

The Bishop of Blackburn, the Rt Rev Julian Henderson, reacted to the decision to hold this year's service in our Cathedral by saying, *"It will be wonderful, in my first year in the diocese, to be able to welcome Her Majesty The Queen to the Cathedral. Normally people visit Her Majesty to receive honours, so it is symbolic that this is the only occasion that The Queen travels to make an award."*

The Vicar, Fr D, reacted to Ken's invitation by adding, *"What a wonderful honour for Ken. This is well deserved and is an acknowledgment of his many years service and dedication to his church - I couldn't be more pleased."*