

A few words from your Reader ...

Dear Friends,

Last month we began a new chapter in the life of St. Paul's Church and Parish as we entered into what is commonly called a Vacancy, a time between incumbents. Having said a sad farewell to Fr Donald and Elizabeth it is now time to build upon the firm foundations which were laid down during the time they were with us and move forward with faith, into the future.



During a Vacancy, the Parish relies very heavily upon the commitment of its parishioners, with a large majority of the work being undertaken voluntarily. Our two Church Wardens, Alan and Sheila, now bear the huge responsibility of managing the day to day running of the Parish. They are ably assisted in their duties by the PCC and many other loyal parishioners but we still search for two people to step into the position of Deputy Church Wardens. Two extra people will help to spread the workload and ensure that there is sufficient cover available whenever and wherever it is needed. Please commit this search to your prayers that God may speak into the hearts of the ones He has chosen to serve this Parish. Maybe God is calling YOU!

On the subject of 'help needed', we are also looking for people to assist Sheila Redcliffe with the running of the Thursday Service. Previously Sheila worked alongside Elizabeth and Fr Donald, so ideally we are looking for at least two people. Can YOU help?

As you can see the time of Vacancy is providing us with many challenges but it is also an exciting time as we learn to work together for the good of this Parish. Yes, there may be changes and whilst every effort is being made to maintain each and every service in its present state, there may be times when we need to be adaptable.

For instance, when there is a fifth Sunday in the month, we will still be able to have a Songs of Praise Service. However, finding a priest for the Healing and Wholeness Communion Service has proved tricky. So instead, we are trialling a short non-Eucharistic 'Healing Service' led initially by Elizabeth O'Connor, Licensed Reader at St. Thomas's Church, St. Annes. This is a simple service with a reading and prayers; and for those who request it, the laying on of hands. It is a time when we will pray

for those in need of healing and place them into the loving hands of God. Please support us in this venture.

At the beginning of October we will have our Harvest Thanksgiving which will take place within a Songs of Praise Service. We will be supporting Bishop Julian's Harvest Appeal, entitled 'Fighting Hunger Together'. This appeal will support both Christian Aid, in fighting malnutrition in Columbia; and the Tearfund partner 'Eagles' in Malawi, where unpredictable weather is reducing food production. If you wish to make a donation towards this appeal, Harvest Thanksgiving envelopes will be available from mid-September.

In the meantime, the Church Wardens and PCC will be working hard to ensure that everything runs as smoothly as it possibly can. Any help that you can give will be gratefully received. Please keep them in your prayers and show them your support.

Yours in Christ,

Janet K.



A Prayer for the Vacancy

Heavenly Father, you have called us together as members of your Church in this parish. Deepen our love for you and strengthen our fellowship one with another as we face this time of uncertainty and change. Keep us faithful in prayer and worship; and fill us with your vision and energy as we seek to bring new life to our community.



Strengthen and guide Alan and Sheila, the PCC and the Parish Representatives as they take the Parish forward; and speak into the hearts of all those whom you are calling to serve in this Parish, that they may hear your call and be obedient to your calling. This we ask in the name of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.