

Keeping in Touch

The Newsletter of St Mary's Church
Portchester

No 45 September 2018

AUTUMN

A decorative flourish consisting of a white scrollwork line with several yellow and orange leaves attached to it, positioned below the word 'AUTUMN'.

From Rev Ian

Part of the humorous banter we clergy often receive on wet days, is that we somehow have a hotline to 'the man upstairs' (*sic*) and could we not have asked for more sunshine and less rain. My usual reply is that today he has answered the prayers of the farmers and gardeners (for rain) and next week you might get your sunshine – in other words, everyone gets a bit of something.

I hope you, like me, enjoyed the lovely weather we had for most of July when Portchester, and even all of the British Isles looked their best. Who needs to travel abroad when we can get weather like this? Of course, the long sunny spell did not suit everyone, and it did not take long for the complainers to start. By mid August we were back to the all too familiar dull skies and rain.

I for one like living in this country because of the great variety in the weather. I love autumn, the,

*“Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, Close bosom-friend of
the maturing sun; Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaves run; To bend with
apples the moss'd cottage-trees, And fill all fruit with ripeness to
the core...” (Keats)*

We are very fortunate at St Mary's that we are able to put on such a variety of worship services and other events. With the introduction of our monthly later Sunday service, there is surely worship now at our church to suit every taste? Like the weather, some prefer one 'season' to another.

One of the challenges of leading a larger congregation is that there is a great variety of ideas as to what the ideal St Mary's should look like, how the money should be spent, and who should be involved (or not

involved). As I said, not everyone gets everything, but everyone gets something. Let's be glad therefore, and rejoice to see other people blessed and active, and let's put away the selfish spirit which wants everything our own way, and turns negative when we don't get it. (James 4:1-3)

During the summer 'quieter period' at St Mary's, we still had some interesting events. In July 'The Friends of St Mary's' had their AGM and reported on a second successful year; Sea Sunday was led by Rev Phil; unfortunately the barn dance was cancelled due to lack of interest. In August we had a church barbeque (on the wettest day!). Throughout the summer we have had our series of lunchtime concerts which are growing in popularity each year. This year we have had so many offers, that we are extending the series into September. Our second 'Different Day' in August proved there is a need for this sort of day.

We have a very interesting autumn programme coming up, and a lot of people are working hard to put all this on. Let's bless them (and me!) by supporting the various Sunday services and other events, and let's avail ourselves of the variety of events we are able to put on.

Your friend and pastor,
Ian

Chancel Chairs

Since our last newsletter was produced in late June, some of you may have noticed the lovely 20 new chairs now in the chancel and crossing. These were given in memory of Kath Muckells who died last year and had been a longstanding member of the church. She had left some money in her will for St Mary's, but wanted it to provide some piece of fabric in her memory rather than into the general funds. The chairs were dedicated on 1st July.

Heating

Most of the members will have received a letter from Rev Ian regarding the heating. As you know, this has been one of the longest running sagas in St Mary's, even predating the demise of our hot air system in October 2014. Since then, there have been many discussions with the various authorities to do with the building's preservation as a significant historical church. We have now reached a solution. The current temporary system may remain for this winter, but early in 2019 a new system will be put in.

Some of you will know that this was not an easy decision, but after much discussion with many people, we felt we were left with no option. Could we therefore, ask that the congregation approach this positively, as complaining is pointless. We will have an excellent system which will heat the church well, probably the warmest it will ever have been. The system should last for a generation so will see most of us out! Let's be positive.

This will take about 8-10 weeks to install, and the only window of opportunity to do this without interfering with already booked weddings and other services, will be between January – March. This will mean that during the coldest time of the year the church will be without heating. We have considered various options, but believe that the best one will be to vacate the church during this time and to hold our services in Portchester Community School, White Hart Lane. This will not affect the Tea Room/New Room as this has its own separate heating system, so all events in this room will continue. More details about these arrangements and the issues surrounding the heating will be in the next newsletter.

Road closure.

On Sundays **9th and 16th September** the top of Castle Street (by the Methodist Church) will be closed to traffic in order that essential maintenance work can be done. This means that you will not be able to access Castle Street from the roundabout by the shopping precinct. Coming along West Street you will have to go down either Westlands Grove or Cornaway Lane into White Hart Lane.

Rev David Simpson.

This month we welcome Rev David Simpson onto our ministry team. David, along with his lovely daughter, Anna, has been a regular attender of St Mary's for several months. David is a chaplain in the Royal Navy, but during the times when he is not serving on the ships, he will join us here. He has served as a Curate at Romsey Abbey and was Chaplain to Southampton University. We look forward to his ministry among us.

Moved away.

During the summer we said farewell to Andrea Gregor-Adams and her family who moved back to Germany; also to Claire Colley who has moved to Cheshire. We are grateful for the fellowship and encouragement these friends gave, and we wish them God's blessing for the future.

Died

Sadly, two of our younger members have recently died. Michael Pearce, a well known chimney sweep ('Henry's') died after a long battle with cancer. As we go to print we have also heard that Geraldine Norris has died, after having had dementia for many years and was

latterly in a nursing home. Our thoughts and prayers are with them and all the family at this time.

Outreach – Parish Leaflet distribution

During September we will be engaging in a major outreach where we will be distributing a leaflet about St Mary's to every home in the parish – around 8,000 between Portchester and Port Solent. This leaflet will focus on some of the many ways in which St Mary's cares for its community. We hope that this will also attract some new people to join us, so do be on the lookout for visitors, and do all you can to make them welcome. We are asking for your help to distribute them. Could you please take a bundle for your street and deliver them through letter boxes.

New mental health group

During the summer our new support group for people with mental health issues was launched. It meets in Portchester Library on Mondays. Areas we are looking at include: budgeting and finances; managing stress, confidence building and empowerment. There will also be trips out and creative work such as photography and model building. Once a month there will also be a session at the Parish Hall. We are very fortunate to have the Richmond Fellowship to facilitate this, although several of the volunteers are from St Mary's, and we will be supporting this ministry financially. If you know of anyone who might benefit from this group, please contact Rev Ian or Wendy at the parish office.

Later Morning Service

We have held three of these and have been very encouraged by the numbers attending (particularly the number of families and children). A great deal of work goes into this, and we are grateful to all who have

helped. It would be our aim to have these weekly some time in 2019, but we need more musicians, stewards/welcomers and technical help. If you play a musical instrument, please come along. We are also in need of people to help with the audio and video side of things. Ray Norman writes, "You might think you cannot do anything with the sound team at St Mary's or that you don't have the skills needed to operate the sound system or to run PowerPoint. But we could give you the training necessary. We also need you to help set up for the later service, and to help out with the many concerts and courses we have throughout the year. This is a real opportunity to serve the Lord, for those who are technically minded. Please phone Ray Norman on 02392 347037 or E-mail ray.norman1@ntlworld.com

'Friends' donation.

Once again, the 'Friends of St Mary's' have given a very generous donation of £500 towards extending the sound system with the provision of more microphones and stands. This will greatly help the new music group at the later service and also concerts and plays.

Removal of pews

Down through the years, pews were removed to make room for the organ, the grand piano, space for the crèche and at the notice board. However, these pews were never removed from the church but have been shunted to various places: transept, chancel and at the back. They have cluttered the church and are extremely heavy to lift. They are not required, and now that we have 60 plastic stacking chairs, these can be used for concerts, carol services and when we run out of pew space. We are therefore applying to the DAC for a faculty to sell seven of these pews. There are several companies who will buy them, but if any members of the church are interested, please see one of the Churchwardens or Wendy at the office.

Kneelers

Some time ago kneelers were kindly donated and beautifully made for the commemoration of 1133. Again, there are far more of them than needed, and they are also appearing in piles all over the church. If you have a sentimental attachment or would like to have a kneeler, please help yourself. Any taken from the pews still in use will be replaced from the excess stock we have.

Other fabric projects

There are just a few more fabric issues to be finished, and we will shortly be applying to the DAC for permission to have these:

- **Entrance porch.** The idea is to give a more open welcome and provide more light at the west end of the church. It will be too expensive to build a new porch, so we are thinking of either replacing the existing glass with plain glass or just having glass doors. The wooden porch to remain as it is, although cleaned up.
- **Chancel spot lights.** Because the lighting is a bit dark in the chancel, during the winter months, celebrants have difficulty in reading from behind the altar. It is envisaged to have two spotlights. This will also light up the Communion table and reredos as a nice feature, without having to put on all the chancel lights.
- **Lych Gate.** The next time you pass the lych gate have a look at the wood at the base. It is rotten and crumbling away, which will mean that an important icon in Portchester is in danger of subsiding if not collapsing. Money will need to be spent to repair this.

Once the heating and these items have been sorted out, we will then look at the possibility of new bells and Phase II of the building project,

all of which have had to be put on the back burner because of the heating.

SEPTEMBER SERVICES AND EVENTS

We have put together what we hope will be a very interesting autumn programme. There is something here to suit everyone, so please reward those who have put so much into preparing them, by supporting where you can.

Healing Services

Our previous monthly services have been well supported and several have expressed praise and thanks for the help they have received at them. Remember that 'healing' does not always mean miraculous cures! Miracles *can* happen, but they are few, yet yours could be the time when '*the waters are stirred*' (John 5:7) Many receive peace, comfort and just the knowledge that they are not alone in what they are going through. So it's 'healing' in its widest sense. Rather than monthly, we are going to hold them at the start and finish of each teaching series. Our next one will be on 2nd September and after that on 18th November, both Sundays at 6.00pm.

House Groups.

The house groups this autumn will be looking at a five part study in Paul's Letter to the Ephesians entitled 'Good News for all'. We have previously studied Ephesians from a personal salvation aspect, but this series will be looking at community life in this letter. The photograph on the front cover is of a 'civic service' at St Mary's which brought the

community together. If you are not in a house group, please consider joining one, as they are a great way to learn about the faith as well as meet new people.

If anyone would like to write an Advent course, or have suggestions for one already published, please let Rev Ian or Diana Bolton know.

Evening Services

These will recommence on Sunday **9th September** at 6.00pm. Evening services tend to suit those who are already committed to the faith, as both the worship style and teaching require a bit more spiritual engagement, if folk are to get anything out of them. Having said that, all are welcome. This autumn we will be looking at themes from the Book of Proverbs, part of the 'Wisdom Literature' of the Old Testament. However, we will be making them relevant and practical to living today, concerning personal and social wellbeing. We have card flyers printed and posters around with the various styles of services and topics. Why not try an evening service if you find the mornings are difficult to attend.

An evening with Steve Legg.

Interest was slow to begin with, but in the past few weeks we have around 80 people now coming. We can cater for up to 100, so if you are interested, please get your ticket now from the Parish Office or after a church service. Although open to all, this will mainly appeal to families and younger people. It will be a great opportunity to introduce someone to St Mary's without it being a heavily religious event. Steve is a great communicator and an inspiring speaker.

The Alpha Course starts on Thursday 13th September and runs for 12 sessions. These are held at the Methodist Church hall and start with a

meal. These will be helpful if you are new to the church, exploring the Christian faith, or wanting to go over foundations again. If interested please contact Vicki Powell on 02392 200314.

Exploring Baptism – the course for parents interested in having their children baptised. We meet on four Friday evenings at 7.30pm at the Parish Hall starting on 14th September. If interested please contact Jennifer Jackson on 02392 611501.

The Harvest Supper will be on Saturday 29th September 7.00pm at the Parish Hall. There will be a nice meal with home grown entertainment of songs, poems etc. Please get your tickets from the Parish Hall or after the service. **The Harvest Thanksgiving** service will be the following day, Sunday 30th. This will be an all age service to which we are inviting the uniformed organisations. Donations of food are welcome and these will be donated to the Gosport and Fareham Food Bank.

OCTOBER

Because there is so much happening, we will produce another newsletter for October, but just to give you a preview, and to let you put dates in your diary, here are some things happening.

Theology Group.

There will be no meeting in September, so we start again on Thursday 4th October 10.30am – 12noon at the Parish Hall. Coffee from 10.15am. Our subject will be ‘Do all religions lead to God?’ This will be a relevant talk given our multi-cultural society today. There is a flyer and poster with the topics for November and December.

“Battle’s Over”

Along with this newsletter you will find a **leaflet ‘Battle’s Over’** outlining the various events happening at St Mary’s to commemorate the end of WWI on 11th November 1918. We’ll give more details of each event in each edition, so here’s the basics for October:

- **Booklet.** During September/October we hope to publish our booklet ‘*War and Peace*’ which will have the details of those whose names appear on the WWI memorial, plus the names of those to go on the new WWII memorial. In addition, there will be poems by people from or with Portchester connections. It will sell for around £2 per copy.
- **Series of talks.** Rev Ian will begin the series of events with an illustrated talk on Tuesday 9th October, ‘**The Church and the War**’. This will be a repeat of the talk he gave in 2014 (for anyone who missed it). It will be followed on Tuesday 23rd with a talk on WWI Army chaplains.
- **Concert.** On Friday 26th October there will be a concert entitled ‘**Poppies Red Cornflower Blue**’. The music will be provided by ‘Hunter’s Moon’ a five piece folk group who will sing material especially written for this year. True stories will be told through song and music with narration against a backdrop of projected images. There will be light hearted moments as well! Tickets are £8.50 / £5.50 and will be available from the Parish Office, the Tea Room and after the services. There will be refreshments during the interval.

War Memorial

We are pleased to say that donations of around £5,500 have come in, and in addition we have applied to Fareham Borough Council for a grant. So it looks like we have all the money needed, so the fund is now closed. A list of subscribers will be included in the programme for the

unveiling, and a permanent list in the specially made Memorial Book. It is hoped that we may be able to get a member of the Royal Family to unveil it sometime later this year.

Concert with Portsmouth Cathedral Boy Choristers on Friday 12th October 7.30pm. This will be a charity concert organised by Michael Moore and tickets are available from the usual sources with the usual arrangements in place.

Christmas Fayre this is booked for Saturday 24th November. However, Hazel has indicated that she no longer wishes to organise this, but is willing to help a new co-ordinator. Is there anyone out there, perhaps one of our newer people who has a flare for this sort of thing? It has scope for new and creative ideas. Likewise, we need someone to organise St Mary's stalls at the summer Gala in June. Anyone interested please see Hazel or Rev Ian.

School Pastors

Andy Bullock (Carolyn Bullock's son) writes, “

“I had a great experience welcoming Kay, Vicki, and Carolyn back in February as volunteers to Portsmouth's Open Churches Project.

Please can you help in spreading the word amongst the congregation of the upcoming school (and street) pastor training, and perhaps share this newsletter as electronic or hard copy amongst your publicity platforms in the church?

I am ready to receive any requests for applications and can guide people through the process. We will be starting the year at Charter Academy and Miltoncross, and are hopeful for more schools, but would need more volunteers for that to be possible.

We expect there will be some who are hearing the call and they haven't yet missed the boat.

The first training session 'Loving Like Jesus' and 'Team Work' is on Monday 3rd September at 7.30pm at Oasis. This is an introductory session and an opportunity to meet those you will be training with.

The other confirmed sessions and venues for the training include:

- Saturday 15th Sept - Roles and Responsibilities at Portchester Methodist Church (compulsory)
- Sunday 16th Sept - Safety on the Streets at Portchester Methodist Church
- Saturday 29th Sept - Street Craft 1 at King's Community Church, Hedge End
- Sunday 30th Sept - Safeguarding at Portchester Methodist Church
- Saturday 13th Oct - Introduction to the Urban Trinity and Mental Health at Christ Church, Winchester
- Sunday 14th Oct - Exploitation in our Communities, School Pastors and Youth Culture at Portchester Methodist Church

I hear all of the modules are very good and I look forward to attending them all myself. But I appreciate it's a demanding schedule at this short notice and we wouldn't want this to discourage potential volunteers. The minimum modules to complete to enable volunteers to start their school visits is the R&R and Safeguarding days, and the School Pastor and Youth Culture sessions on 14th October would also of course be beneficial. The rest need to be caught up on within 18 months.

I hope this may be of interest and look forward to hearing from anyone,

Many thanks, Andy Bullock, School Pastor Coordinator

Finally, Wendy Pyatt writes

A day if the life of a Parish Administrator.

So what is a typical day like, well there isn't one.

My day can move very quickly from Weddings to Baptisms, to funerals, to invoices, back to Weddings, photocopying, Sunday hymn sheets, notices, grant applications, emails, another Wedding query, a query about a long lost ancestor, ticket sales, WW1 exhibition, WW2 Memorial, then the printer runs out of ink and a homeless person comes in looking for help. Then the vicar comes in..... and the phone rings! (...and that is only a few of the things I do)

It says on the door I'm open from 9.30am – 2.30pm, yes that's when the office is open for visitors and appointments but often I am there earlier and later. I'm actually full time at 7hrs per day. There are lots of things that I do before the office opens and after it closes as it's much easier to concentrate with no phone calls and visits, (which of course are part of my job too)! Things like difficult replies to e-mails, invoices, printing Keeping in Touch, counting the money, preparing the banking sheets, oh yes and cleaning the office! Anyone fancy doing my vacuuming and dusting once a week?

Sometimes I'm here at 8am in the morning to book someone's wedding as they work full time so come before work, I also have to come in on occasional Saturdays and Sundays if they can't get the time off work. Sometimes I'm here at 4pm for the same sort of reasons or even waiting for a delivery of stationary and candles!

I can't always answer the phone when it's ringing, answer an e-mail straight away or let people who are at the door in as I often have people in my office who have made appointments with me so that's their time! Please knock and wait, even if it is someone you know or a

member of the clergy, as they too may have arranged a meeting with me, we could be discussing a sensitive issue, it could be someone who is bereaved, has a pastoral need, or is on a short time limit as they have to get back to work.

So as you can see the Church Office is a varied and very busy place to work. So when you see me on a Sunday at church, please remember that this is my time to recuperate and calm my spirit, to be with God and to worship.

If you do need to speak to me about something connected to the office on a Sunday that's fine but all I ask is that you wait until after the service has ended. Please don't disturb me before or during a service or if I'm sitting quietly. Thanks