

# Keeping in Touch

The Newsletter of St Mary's Church  
Portchester

No 46 October / November 2018



## REV IAN WRITES ...

In October I reach another milestone birthday, which as ever gives cause for reflection on life and future ministry. Realising how uncertain life is, I seldom plan too far ahead. *'We make plans, but God laughs'* says a Jewish proverb. I've recently had a health check and all is well, which doesn't stop me from walking in front of a bus (not purposefully – mind on other things!). I've enjoyed my last 5 years at St Mary's. Thank you for the lovely gift of a bottle of malt whisky and flowers for Marilyn. I see the clock now ticking towards retirement, and if the next 5 years are anything to go by, in no time at all I will be gone and another will take my place. I am now probably more than half way through my ministry here. But there's time yet, and the next few years could be good. You will have realised by now that I'm not for winding down. The phrase *'You're dead long enough'* comes to mind, when I will be able to enjoy some bodily rest!

At the age of 63 Martin Luther the Reformer (remember last year?) declared, *'I am quite tired of living. May our Lord God come soon and quickly take me away.'* In 1538 he said, *'I am now exhausted and full of cares, yet I am plagued with many duties.'* A few years later he confessed, *'I'm fed up with the world, and it is fed up with me.'*

But that's not me! Mind you, there are days when I wish I could wind down – just keep things ticking over, start nothing new, upset no one, keep everything as it is. Not that I want a life of frantic activity, we all need some Sabbath rest in our lives, and perhaps the first few months of next year will allow that.

Of course, I realise there are many challenges ahead, and there are days I feel a bit down, but I tend to bounce back quickly. What gets me down? Lack of money, lack of volunteers, members and friends not coming to church anymore or not coming often; younger people who don't engage much; Christians falling out and not being able to be reconciled. What encourages me? God's Spirit at work in lives producing the opposite of all that. But that's what ministry is all about – helping people to come to know God and grow as disciples of Jesus in preparation for the future kingdom.

Please encourage me to encourage you to make St Mary's a good church to belong to; a place where we are not embarrassed to invite friends to, and a church which will continue to serve its community.

I'm taking the weekend 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> October off, and from Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> – Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> October I'll be at a conference, so not around much that week. I'm also away on Advent retreat from 14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> November. But then, I'm not indispensable!

Every blessing,

Ian

### **BATTLE'S OVER**

Portchester is a proudly patriotic village. Our close proximity to Portsmouth, the home of the Royal Navy; as well as the village of Southwick where the D Day operations were planned, has meant that many ex servicemen and women have settled in this area. The many homes with personal flagpoles displaying the Union Flag, and the growing numbers attending our 'Portchester Remembers' service in the precinct, are a reminder that this village gave many sons in the cause of freedom.

Beginning with this month, and leading up to Christmas, St Mary's Church will be hosting a number of events as we celebrate 100 years of relative peace in Europe. Of course tensions are never far from the surface as seen in the growth of the far right across the continent, the alienation of many sections of our community and the tough issues around Brexit. Our prayer is that we will have learned something as a result of our experience of war – something to pass on to the future generations. Despite the romance of war films, war is no game, and has resulted in untold misery. We seek not to glorify war, but to celebrate peace. Please join us in supporting as many of these events as you can:

- We begin on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> October 7.30pm, when Rev Ian Meredith will give a talk on ‘**The Church and the War**’. What was the attitude of the British and German churches to war, what mistakes were made, what lessons learned? This will be followed on 23<sup>rd</sup> October by a talk on ‘**Army Chaplains of the First World War**’, in particular, Geoffrey Studdart Kennedy known as ‘Woodbine Willie.’ The Rev David Simpson will follow this on 30<sup>th</sup> October with a talk on **Naval chaplains of World War One**.
- ‘**Poppies Red Cornflower Blue**’ is the title of a concert on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30pm.  
Don’t miss this much loved production to commemorate the centenary of WW1, with original songs written and composed by John Anderson, poetry of the time and a changing backdrop of evocative images. Through a collection of true stories we follow the lives of our young soldiers. With humour and sensitivity you will be taken on a journey; tracing the soldier’s excitement for adventure and patriotism for their beloved homeland, we will take you through their enlistment and training; until they find themselves in the trenches of France and Belgium. This popular harmony band of five from Dorset, playing guitars, bouzouki, flute, keyboard, fiddle and percussion will leave you with a truly memorable experience. Tickets are available after the services, or from the Parish Office and Tea Room.
- The **Theology Group on Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> November** 10.30am – 12noon in the Parish Hall will discuss some of the ethical issues around war. All are welcome.
- The film ‘**War Horse**’ will be shown on **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> November at 6.30pm**. Set before and during World War I, it tells of the journey of Joey, a Thoroughbred horse raised by a British teenager, is bought by the British Army, leading him to encounter numerous individuals and owners throughout Europe, all the while

experiencing the tragedies of the war happening around him. The film lasts 146 minutes and admission is free.

- **Friday 9<sup>th</sup> November at 7.00pm** is the kid's war film night with the showing of 'Goodnight Mr Tom'. There will be a free cup of popcorn and a lolly. There will be adult supervision.
- **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> World War I display** 'Portchester and the Great War' in the north transept 10.30am – 3.00pm.
- **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November 10.15am** 'Portchester Remembers' at the precinct. This year there will be some 'extras' both in the decorations around the precinct and people taking part in the service.
- **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November – Armistice Day.** The **10.00am** service will be a Service of Remembrance without Communion. The evening service at 5.30pm will be a community service and will be preceded by a parade from the car park at 5.00pm and afterwards a barbeque followed by the lighting of the beacon and ringing of church bells. The **11.30am (Later Service)** that day will not be a Remembrance service as such, but will include a short act of Remembrance.
- **Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> – Friday 30<sup>th</sup> Photographic Exhibition "Standing in Silence"**  
This work, by local photographer John Farnhill, is the culmination of a two-year project to document some of the key sites of conflict from the First World War. Rather than seek out the usual scars of war or the memorials that are so often pictured, these current, empty and organic landscapes invite the viewer to contemplate historic

events and complete their own narrative. These photographs will be exhibited at the Hoxton Arches Gallery in London in September and then as part of the First World War centenary commemorations at St Thomas's Cathedral, Portsmouth before transferring to St Mary's in November 2018.

- **Commemorative booklet 'War and Peace'** This booklet, edited by Kate Tame has been a real community project with poetry from local people, details of all those whose names appear on the War Memorial, and the names of those to be on the new World War II Memorial. It will be on sale for a minimum donation of £2 from the Tea Room, Parish Office and The Hub in the precinct. We would like to sell the bulk of these at 'Portchester Remembers' and wonder if some of you would sell these for us?

### **New War Memorial**

The enlarged War Memorial to include those killed during World War II will be unveiled at a special service on **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 11.30am**. It will be unveiled by Vice Admiral Sir Timothy Laurence (husband of Princess Anne) and dedicated by the Bishop of Portsmouth. Admission will strictly be by invitation and ticket only, and priority will be given to the relatives of those on the memorial, those who have subscribed, and other invited guests representing the armed forces and civilian community. Any spare seats will be by ticket only and you may apply for these at the Parish Office after 1<sup>st</sup> November. Beneath the memorial will be a special book with details of all those on the memorial, plus the names of civilians killed as a result of war, and those killed in later conflicts.

### **Heating and temporary re-location to Community School.**

The new heating system will be installed in the church in January, and this is likely to take a couple of months. The cost of this (around £160,000) has

meant that we have had to use up the entire building fund plus other available funds. Even with that, there will be a shortfall, and we are having to take out a loan of about £60,000. This was not extravagance on our part, and those in the church will know about the long running saga, and that given our church is Grade 1 listed, we did not have any option. This means that St Mary's will soon be in a serious difficult financial position, with no reserves, increasing monthly commitments and a reduction in income (more about that later).

During the time the heating is being installed, the church will be closed, but the Tea Room will be open as usual. The final service in church will be on Epiphany Sunday – 6<sup>th</sup> January. **Starting from 13<sup>th</sup> January** Sunday morning services will be held in the assembly hall of Portchester Community School on White Hart Lane. We are hoping to keep things as normal as possible. There will be no evening services during these weeks. The Wednesday evening Communion will either be held in the New Room or cancelled during this time, and we will invite that congregation to decide. Morning Prayer will continue as normal, but will be in the New Room.

All the activities in the New Room will continue as it has its own separate heating system. The Shrove Tuesday pancake party and Ash Wednesday evening Eucharist will be held at Portchester Methodist Church.

### **Lych Gate.**

It seems we are having one blow after another ..... In last month's newsletter we mentioned that the lych gate would need to be looked at, as its foundations were rotting. However, events went quicker than expected. It was inspected by the architect, who immediately pronounced it to be in danger of collapse! Indeed, the whole structure moved when pushed and a storm would blow it over. The tiles have been taken off and the structure is

now supported by scaffolding. The present gate was built in 1897 to mark the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria, and restored in 1935 to mark the silver jubilee of King George V. It was repaired and restored again 'by voluntary subscription in 1993 and dedicated to the memory of all who have loved Portchester Castle and St Mary's Church.' We are in the process of getting quotes as to the cost of repair and how much of it will have to be replaced or restored. This again is going to cost a lot of money, which we don't have. In previous years, the wider community of Portchester have been generous in raising the subscriptions necessary. We will give more information once things become clearer.

### **Financial and other challenges.**

You may have heard the rumour, but it's true – **the Christmas Fayre** has been cancelled this year. Hazel Powlesland, who has been co-ordinating it for years, announced she could no longer do so. Despite many pleas both in the notices and '*Keeping in Touch*', during the year, no one came forward to take over this role. Although someone has since offered, we feel this has come too late for this year, and several stall holders have already been told it was cancelled. As well as the loss of around £2,000 income for the church, it was becoming an increasingly popular part of Portchester's Christmas. Last year saw a record attendance.

Likewise, the 2019 Wedding Fayre has also been cancelled, and it looks like we will not be able to have any stalls at the summer Gala. All in all, our income will go down by around £5,000 due to these fundraising activities being cancelled.

The 'old guard' who used to arrange all these events are now feeling it is time to give up, and let younger folk take over. Sadly, the younger folk are not interested. The income of St Mary's has generally decreased due to several people who used to contribute generously, moving away from the

area. Others who used to attend more regularly no longer do so, and unless their giving was by standing order – when they don't come, they don't give.

We don't like going on about money (as many are contributing generously already and can give no more). Similarly we don't want to rely too much on fundraising. But we do need to think about our stewardship and discipleship. Is St Mary's Church worth keeping open? Is our ministry to the community an investment in God's kingdom? Are we proud of the fact that St Mary's gives 10% of its collection to local charities and other Christian ministries? Is it too much to ask that every member tries and give at least £5 per week (the price of a cup of coffee and piece of cake!!) Could more of you volunteer at the Tea Room and help us generate income by this means?

### **Distribution of Communion.**

On Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September (Harvest Festival) the Communion was at last distributed in the proper manner, in an unhurried and dignified way. This meant that the distribution took only 10 minutes instead of the previous 20 minutes. This requires all celebrants, deacons, chalice assistants and sidespeople to co-operate and work together and all do the same thing! The Celebrant/President always goes first to the person in the middle of the communion rail, and works in a clockwise direction. At the same time the deacon starts at their left and works towards the centre. All move in a clockwise direction with no overtaking. By the time the Celebrant comes back to the middle the row should be filled with communicants (for this we need the co-operation of the sidespeople). This system will work if we all do it.

Talking of Communion, did you ever wonder **where the wine we use comes from?** It comes from South Africa via a Fair Trade organisation

called ‘Stellar Employees Trust’ and it is called ‘Potterion Fair Trade Red Communion Wine.’ The company ships over 400,000 bottles creating a substantial benefit to the 350 workers at Stellar Organics in the Northern Cape. This brings better living to the workers and their families. A copy of their Newsletter is on the New Room notice board. We are also grateful to **David Edwards**, a member of our 8.00am service who orders these on our behalf and brings them to the church.

### **New communication method – “Mail Chimp”.**

In the next few weeks we are hoping to launch a new method of communicating St Mary’s news and events to you. This is by using a programme called ‘*Mail Chimp*’ and is basically a weekly e-mail. However it will be illustrated and have details of events and services. It will be sent to everyone who has given permission through GDPR for their e-mail address to be kept by us for such purposes. To ‘unsubscribe’ you simply click the button. We hope you will find it helpful.

### **The date of St Mary’s**

Last month we asked about the date of the founding of St Mary’s Church, and some interesting information has come in. The date 1133 is now disputed by historians, and the earlier date of 1128 is on a list of churches of that year held by the Bishop of Winchester, which includes St Mary’s, Portchester. Why is this important? Because in 10 years time the church could be celebrating 900 years! This will be an important milestone in the life of the church and will give us many opportunities to raise our profile. Next year we are hoping to organise a historical symposium where historians will speak about the founding of St Mary’s, and what their conclusions are. It’s not a case of quoting booklets printed in the past hundred years or so – often they simply repeat the wrong year. We need to get back to the oldest manuscripts. These are mainly in Latin and held in the Winchester archives.

## **OTHER OCTOBER EVENTS AND SERVICES**

Our main ‘special events’ are those surrounding the war centenary, but other things are happening as well.

**The evening services** have been fairly well supported, and the teaching which follows has been based on the Book of Proverbs. This series finishes at the end of October, but there are also new November services on different themes.

**Men’s breakfast on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October.** We have welcomed some new members, and yet there is room for a few more! Our October speaker is Colin Chambers a member of Fareham Community Church and friend of Brian Fatcher. Colin was Nelson Mandela’s bodyguard in South Africa and will be speaking next year at one of our later services.

**Later Service.** This month will be on 14<sup>th</sup> October. These services are going well and are attracting several new people to the church. It would be our aim to go weekly sometime in the Spring, but we cannot do this until we can get more musicians, people to operate the PowerPoint and also help with the audio and setting up.

**Nell Wycherley, MBE** (needs no introduction!) will be presenting a ‘Happy Go Lucky journey in song’ at St Mary’s on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October at 2.00pm. She will be giving a talk and sharing some of her singing story using recorded excerpts of Song Recitals from 1962 onwards. Entry is free and there will be a retiring collection in aid of the building fund.

Nell has also a special anniversary in her life and ministry. On 3<sup>rd</sup> October she will have been a Reader in the Church of England for 20 years. Her

ministry has been much appreciated in Portchester during this time, and she is always on popular demand to conduct funerals.

### **Day conference on ‘The Holy Spirit’**

The Alpha ‘away day’ on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October is being extended to a day conference on the Holy Spirit. The speaker will be our Vicar, Ian Meredith who will speak on the Holy Spirit’s role: in the world, in people’s lives, in Christians and in the Church. This may interest people who are newer to the faith, or not too sure about the Holy Spirit. There will be a cooked lunch as part of this so we are limiting it to 30 people and there is a signup sheet. It will be held at Shedfield Church from 10.30am finishing around 3.30pm. There is no cost, but there will be a basket for donations.

## **NOVEMBER**

The month of November is known in the Church Year as ‘The Kingdom Season’. It is particularly a season of ‘remembering’. The following services will be held this month:

- **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> All Saints Sunday.** Although All Souls Day is the 1<sup>st</sup> November, it is more widely celebrated now on the first Sunday afterwards. Incense will be used at the 10.00am service.
- **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> All Souls Service.** Likewise, All Souls Day is the 2<sup>nd</sup> November, but our tradition has been to observe it on the Sunday afternoon following. At 3.00pm there will be a special service to which all those who have been bereaved, and whose family funerals were conducted by our ministry team, will be invited to the service. As each name is read out, a family member may light a candle. This will be followed by tea and cake in the church. Donations of baking are always welcome and the Tea & Company teams will be there to serve.

- **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup>** at 10.00am there will; be a special **Service of Remembrance**. There will not be Communion at this service, but those wishing to partake of the Lord's Supper are encouraged to come at 8.00am.
- **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup>** at 10.00am there will be a special '**Liturgy for the Persecuted**' and the theme of the service will focus on persecution of Christians today throughout the world. There will be a special 'Prayer for the persecuted' on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November at 2.30pm at Sally's house.
- **Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>** will be our All Age Service.

**On Friday 16<sup>th</sup>** November at 7.30pm the '**Friends of St Mary's**' are putting on a concert with the 'West End Singers'. Details will be in the notices and we hope for good support for this group who are dedicated to helping St Mary's be a community resource for now and future generations.

**A Healing Service** will bring our Sunday evening services and other events to an end on 18<sup>th</sup> November at 6.00pm. These services have been very precious times with many people testifying to having received a real touch from God. Sometimes a real healing has been granted; at other times new strength and courage has been given – it is good to know we are not alone, and that there are friends who will pray for and with us.

'**A Different Day**'. Our third day is being held on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> November. These are days when we invite anyone who is normally on their own to come and spend a day in the company of others. We have welcomed between 30/40 friends on each occasion. This month it will be a Christmas theme of craft, sing-a long- bingo, plus the normal fish and chips and cakes. All we ask for is £5 to cover the lunch. Please sign up at the church or book at the Parish Hall.

**Switching on Christmas tree** and lights at the precinct will be on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November at 5.00pm. We hope to see many of you at this popular growing community event. As well as school choirs, there will be the Community Choir and other entertainers. The Mayor will switch on the lights and Rev Ian will be the MC for the evening and give a short Christmas message.

**American style Thanksgiving Meal.** Our social team has been busy organising some events, and the next one will be this meal on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November in the church. These social events are becoming more popular and with new people joining the church, you need to get your ticket soon. Several were disappointed they could not get tickets for the Harvest Festival, so sign up as soon as tickets become available.

### **Advent ‘Posada’**

We’ll not say too much about Advent/Christmas in this newsletter, but we need to give notice on the ‘Posada’ which will be set off on its journey on Advent Sunday – 2<sup>nd</sup> December

**Christmas Day Lunch.** As in former years, we are putting on a three course Christmas lunch at the Parish Hall for those who would otherwise be on their own. This will start at 12noon. We are having to limit this to 50 people, so you need to book at the Parish Office soon. There is no cost to this as the local community rally round and help towards the day.

### **Christian TV in the UK: Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN)**

Many of you will know that our Vicar is quite scathing about most American TV ‘evangelists’!! However, there is a UK based Christian broadcasting network, which is different, and he has asked Libby Arthern to write something about it:

“As the days grow shorter and we all spend more time at home, (often with the TV on in the background!), do remember that there is a very helpful and entertaining UK based TV

Channel -TBN.UK (Trinity Broadcasting Network), available free to over 90% of our homes in Britain. It can be watched on Free View channel 65 / Sky channel 582 / online at TBN.ORG (also face book/twitter etc) .The huge variety of programmes, (usually approx 25 minutes long) are all carefully chosen to be soundly biblically based, and to encourage us in our Christian lives, and in our relationship with God .The programmes are delivered in many different styles to suit us all, whatever our ages, (including children, 4 to 5 pm week-days and Sat /Sun am).

Many programmes are made in the UK, and include speakers like Rev Nicky Gumble, J. John, Canon Andrew White, Graham Kendrick, as well as many well known and trusted international speakers. There is a mix of discussion/ worship / teaching/ documentaries/ chat shows / interviews / varied Christian music/ film, and news of God's love in action in the UK, and across the world.

Please do explore TBN.UK this autumn/winter, (& maybe include family, & friends/neighbours with your favourite programmes, as you discover them), and be encouraged in your faith every day. Do remember to pray for this unique outreach with the Gospel, direct to so many UK homes, (including our own!).

A local man commented "Oh yes-TBN is great!-I watch it every night - I understand so much more (about faith) now. It's made a big difference."

A lady shared "I had a long time at home as a carer and TBN kept me going - it reminded me that Jesus loved me, and was with me all the time - it was such a blessing, and still is! It helped me to feel part of God's family still, even when I couldn't get to church. I really do thank God for it being on my TV."

## **Looking ahead**

2019 and the years ahead could be very exciting years for St Mary's growth and development. But there will be difficult challenges as well. The leadership of the church will be very important as major decisions will be made. There will be significant changes at our new APCM (church AGM) to be held sometime in the Spring. After serving as a Churchwarden for 5 years, Hazel Powlesland will be standing down. Tony Fuller has served for 3 years but has indicated that he does not want to stand for re-election. Jan Fuller has also indicated that she is standing down as Treasurer. So we are looking for two new Churchwardens and a new Treasurer. Rather than the usual scrambling around looking for a people a few weeks before the meeting, we thought it would be good to give people time to think and pray about this. These three roles are also members of the PCC and Standing Committee, so there will be a 'cabinet reshuffle.' If you are able to recommend people who might be approached, please contact Rev Ian. It would be good to have some new people lined up by January.

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## **St Mary's Parish Church**

**Portchester Castle**

**Sunday services: 8.00am; 10.00am and 6.00pm**

**(Baptisms 12.30pm)**

**Weekdays: Morning Prayer, Monday – Friday 9.00am – 9.20am**

**Wednesdays – Holy Communion 6.30pm – 7.00pm**

**Fridays (Parish Hall) 10.00am – 10.40am**

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