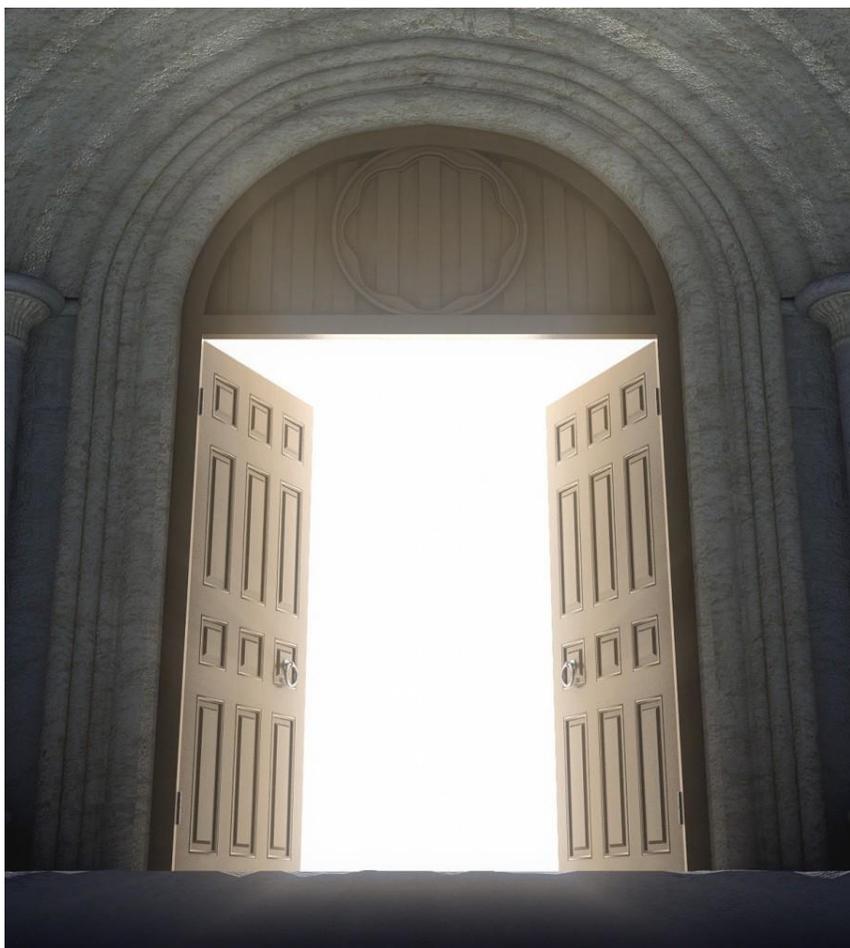


# Keeping in Touch

The Newsletter of St Mary's Church  
Portchester

No. 51 June/July 2019



## **From the Vicar**

The story was once told of a US Senator who was off work for a fortnight with flu, during which time a national crisis was being debated in the Senate. Being out of touch with events for a while, the Senator was asked by reporters on his first day back, ‘What’s the latest on the national crisis’ to which he replied, ‘Oh, I’m much better now, thank you.’

It’s felt like that for me for the past 6 weeks as I’ve been limited in my mobility and only firing on two cylinders since I broke my ankle. Suddenly my little crisis has taken centre stage in my life and has tended to dominate other things. Mind you, judging by the number of ‘likes’ my photo with boot and crutches got on Facebook, it seemed to have been the most interesting item of news in the church generally!

Seriously, it was a real pity for me to have missed all the Holy Week and Easter services, and several events since. Thank you so much for all the cards and Facebook comments, and to those who called. But thank you also to those who stayed away, as I was not much in the mood for visitors in the early stages.

Well, the ‘national crisis’ is hopefully coming to an end, and I’m feeling much better, and should be able to drive again and be more mobile from June. I am so grateful to Roger Millard and Vicki Powell who have acted as my chauffeurs – and to the many others who offered.

I don’t believe God caused my accident. Somehow I don’t think he’s into pushing people off the pavement at Winchester, but my respite has been really good. It’s given me time to slow down and reflect on life and ministry. I think all agree I was getting too busy, and my time off has shown me that the church continues without me. I’m hoping to delegate a lot more responsibility and ministry and really hope that many of you will take these on, and together we can be the Body of Christ.

Finally two little personal (slightly tongue-in-cheek) comments to clear up misunderstandings ...

**Personal Facebook.** From time to time some of you contact me to be my Facebook ‘friends’ and never get any response. The reason is that I don’t do Facebook friends, so if ever you find yourself ‘unfriended’ – everyone is. I’ve sometimes accidentally requested your friendship when on my personal page and thought I was on the church page. If you ever reach my personal page you’ll find out there why I don’t do ‘friends.’ But you are welcome to be my real friends!

**Greeting the Vicar at church (or being greeted by him)** I happened to mention in a sermon about the small number of people (in the past) who used to avoid me deliberately after church. I happened to know that they had issues with me anyway, so I realised what was happening. However, if the entire congregation stopped to make sure they greeted me or spoke on the way out, there would be a long queue and we would be there a long time. Likewise, if I don’t speak to you before or after services, please do not take offence. Work out how many people are in the congregation, and if each one had a three minute conversation, how long would we be there for. Most folk who know me realise that they can have a chat any time, they just don’t need one every week.

So, are we all friends again?

Your friend (but not Facebook friend),

Ian

**This week’s front cover: An Open Door and “Divine Renovation”**

This is based on the text from Revelation 3:8 ‘*I have set before you an open door.*’ This means that the Lord has given us a great opportunity to extend his kingdom and make a difference in people’s lives. We are currently

meeting in various teams and groups of the PCC to discuss more effective ways of being church.

At a special Leader's Day at Shedfield on 6<sup>th</sup> April around 40 of us met to think about the vision of St Mary's and in particular the principles in James Mallon's book, '*Divine Renovation*' the cover of which has the same image of the open door. This is a programme of church and parish renewal which is seeing many traditional churches come alive in the Spirit and reaching out to their community in fresh and relevant ways. The PCC have adopted this as a worthwhile programme for St Mary's, although our context is different. Many of the ideas in Mallon's book we are already doing anyway. One major feature will be to try and move the church more from people 'coming to church, to being the church' and from being nominal Christians who dip into church services, to being real disciples of Christ. The threefold emphasis will be on:

- Encounter with Jesus as what being a Christian is all about
- Discipleship as life-long learning about the faith
- Mission – service and evangelism.

We also want to create a new atmosphere in St Mary's of trust in the leadership, openness, respect for all, and mature and godly ways of dealing with difference and conflict. Will you journey with us to be the church God wants us to be?

There are 'library' copies of the book '*Divine Renovation*' on the shelf. Please feel free to borrow a copy and return when you have finished. We also have summaries of the book if you don't want to read it all, but just want the main points. Contact the Parish Office or Rev Ian.

## **Condolences**

We sadly announced that **Andrea**, Rev Anne Boggust's daughter died recently after a long battle with cancer. We had prayed much for Andrea over the past couple of years, and so have to leave the answer in God's hands. Our love and prayers to Anne and Clive, and Andrea's husband, Terry, and all the family.

On the same day, **Robin Thistlethwayte** also died; he had been ill for some time. Robin was the Squire of Southwick, owner of Portchester Castle and the Patron of St Mary's Church. His son Mark, currently High Sherriff of Hampshire, takes over as our new Patron.

In our last newsletter we mentioned that **Justin Dempster's** ashes were to be buried at St Mary's in June. However, the family have now decided to have this done at their home town of Southport.

## **Gifts in memory**

"The Friends of St Mary's" have donated a processional banner depicting the risen Christ, in memory of **David Williams**, the founder and inspiration behind the charity. This was dedicated on Palm Sunday and carried by his wife Rosemary. It will stay as a feature in the transept at present, as every Sunday is a celebration of the resurrection, but it will be carried in procession at festival services.

Our Verger, Roger Millard kindly donated a new Lectionary Book in memory of his late wife **Mary Millard**. This is the large red book which is on the lectern and from which the Sunday readings are read. We are grateful for these generous gifts.

## **Deputy Wardens**

Our four Deputy Wardens (Peter, Keith, Dawn and Kay) met to divide the duties of the Churchwardens between them. A copy of these are on each of the notice boards. This does not necessarily mean they will physically do all these tasks, but there needs to be someone you can go to if you have a query or want to help. Under the Deputy Wardens will be various other members of the PCC who will also take on special responsibilities.

## **New Teams**

We are in the process of re-structuring St Mary's to allow greater delegation and for tasks to be completed quicker. Already we have the following teams among others: Finance, Social, Fabric, and we will be creating more. We will be looking for more people to volunteer their services and to serve in these teams.

## **EVENTS AND SERVICES IN JUNE**

**Church walk and picnic.** Ann Hawker organises a parish walk a couple of times a year. It is a gentle ramble discovering the delights of the Hampshire countryside. On Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June we are meeting at 1.00pm at Meonstoke Village Hall, Pound Lane, Meonstoke, SO32 3NP. Please sign up on the notice board if you would like to join us. Lifts can be arranged. Contact Ann Hawker

**Evening service.** We were not able to have any post-Easter services this year due to the Vicar's accident and also a shortage of ministry team members able to help us out. But we are holding a special one off 'Prayer Service' on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> June from 6.00pm – 8.00pm consisting of 4 x 30 minute services conducted by each of the four churches in Portchester.

**Market Outreach.** Each Wednesday during the summer months we have an outreach stall at Portchester market at the precinct from 10.00am – 12noon. This is a great opportunity to get out and meet the parish, and we have many good conversations about the church, life and faith. New members of the team are always welcome to join us. We start on 5<sup>th</sup> June.

**The Theology Group** will meet on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> at 10.30am at the Parish Hall. This month Greg More will lead us on the topic of ‘life and death’ – sounds interesting, so all are welcome to come along. The group will not meet in July/August but will start again on first Thursday in September.

**The lunch time concerts** start this month on Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> at 1.00pm through until 22<sup>nd</sup> August. Admission is free and there is a retiring collection. See notice board and leaflets for details.

**Men’s breakfast** on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> from 8.00am – 9.45am. The speaker this month is Eric Standen. We are looking for offers to lead the worship, and also offers to speak or if you know someone who might come along and speak. Please see Rev Ian.

### **Pentecost Sunday – 9<sup>th</sup> June**

On Pentecost we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit on the early church. We encourage you all to come along to the 10.00am Parish Eucharist wearing as much red as possible – or at least something red. Red is the liturgical colour for the day, representing the flame of the Spirit which fell on the disciples.

There will be no later service (11.30am) service that day, (*but see notice re 30<sup>th</sup> June*) and there will be no refreshments served after the 10.00am service. Cars are asked to be moved as soon as soon as possible. This is because of .....

## **“Thy Kingdom Come”**

This is the culmination of a 10 day season of prayer which began on Ascension. It was initiated by the Archbishop of Canterbury some years ago and has grown into a world-wide inter-denominational event. It is a call to church to pray for many people to know Jesus and for the in-breaking of God’s Kingdom. Portsmouth Diocese is organising today’s event which is expected to bring over 1,000 people into Portchester Castle. There will be a ‘Big Picnic’ from 1.00 – 2.30pm, and we at St Mary’s are selling hamburgers etc and the Tea Room will be open as a means of raising funds for our building project. At 2.30pm there will be an open air service with worship led by the band from Harbour Church. There will be children’s activities as well as prayer tents offering different styles of prayer. St Marys is being asked to provide 4 welcomers and to help tidy up at the end. The event finishes at 4.00pm and special parking will be in the recreation field behind the Vicarage.

**Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 7.30pm at Portsmouth.** ‘In the Arena’ an evening for men with Rob Parsons from ‘Care for the Family’ and Gerrit Bantjes former paratrooper and fitness coach to Cardiff Rugby Club. This will be looking at the challenges men face in life (relationships, marriage, finances, pressures, attitudes) and how to successfully come through them. We have booked 20 places. Sign on notice board, see Rev Ian or confirm with Parish Office.

**Portchester Gala** Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June from 11.00am. Sally Young and Tanya Simpson will be co-ordinating St Mary’s Summer Fayre this year. Please have a word with them if you would like to help or if you can donate bottles (preferably filled!) There will be a BBQ and the Tea Room will be open.

**Confirmation** at 6.00pm on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> there will be a service of Confirmation at the Cathedral at which three of our members will be confirmed: Charmaine Bentley, Vanessa Edney and Isobel Miller. Please come along and support them. The next confirmation in the diocese will be on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> **December** 4.00pm at Bishop's Waltham. We already have one interested; any others see Rev Ian.

**On Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June** 7.30pm there will be the Archdeacon's annual Visitation Service for Fareham and Gosport Deaneries and this time it will be held at St Peter and St Paul Church, Fareham. This is for the swearing in of new Churchwardens, and although we have none to be sworn in, our Deputy Churchwardens will be present and will meet with the Archdeacon beforehand. This will be the service at which Hazel's 5 year term of Churchwarden comes to an end, and we hope that quite a few of you will attend the service and also to wish Hazel a happy retirement!

On Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm there will be a Sung Eucharist for the **Feast of Corpus Christi**. This is the annual service of thanksgiving for the Holy Communion. Incense will be used.

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June will be our All Age Service. After the all age services during the summer (June, July and August) we will be having a BBQ and Games. We tried this out in May and it was successful, and Ron and the Social Team are offering to run this monthly, so please support us.

Would you be interested in a **Contemplative Prayer Group**? This is a different style of praying and involves silent meditation. A few in the church have enquired about starting this. On Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> June at 10.00am the Rev Ruth Tuschling, Diocesan Director of Spirituality will be coming to speak to us about what is involved. It will be held in the north transept and anyone is welcome to come along and find out more.

## **Concert leaflet**

On Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June there will be a concert with the **Solent Fellowship Band** of the Salvation Army in aid of the 'Friends of St Mary's'. Tickets are £8 and available now. We have produced a leaflet with details of all the concerts this year, both those organised by Michael Moore and those organised by the church (including the summer lunch time concerts). There should be one in this newsletter, but please help us distribute the extra ones on the shelf to as many interested people as you can think of.

Because there is no Later Service in June, we have decided to have an **evening service on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> at 6.00pm** which will be in the style of the Later Service. We will make this a '**Praise & Thanksgiving**' night to thank God for the blessings on our church in the past few months, and to mark the end of term before the holiday season begins.

## **HAPPENING IN JULY**

**Rev Ian will be on holiday** from Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July and back at work on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> July. If you require the services of any of the clergy during that period, please contact the Parish Office and Emma will put you in touch with who is on duty.

On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> July from 2.00pm the staff of **St Edmund's School**, Portsmouth will be having their annual retreat in St Mary's Church and churchyard.

The speaker at the **Men's Breakfast** on 13<sup>th</sup> July will be Ross Rowe. Ross and Cayt are here with us for one year on secondment from the Australian government. We have really appreciated the help they have given us at St Marys. The breakfast is at 8.00am followed by worship, talk and discussion, and will finish at 9.45am.

**Paul and Hazel Woodman** will be opening their garden on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July as part of the 'Open Garden' season. There will be a small admission charge and will be in aid of the Friends of St Mary's (Saturday) and the Mayor of Fareham's charities (Sunday).

**On Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> July** it will be our All Age service followed by BBQ and Games. On that day the 'Runners' will be out in force. The last time this happened there were some unfortunate incidents between some runners and members of St Mary's. We have had a meeting with the organisers and we have agreed to respect each other. We hope to have the paddock car park opened, and they will run from the recreation ground, rather than the castle. They have been given the use of the recreation field for their parking, so if you are driving to church, and their stewards wave you into their car park, just politely tell them you are going to the church. Hopefully there will be no issues this time.

Also just to give you notice, the Castle will be having their annual event on **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> August** and this will have an impact on our services. We will let you know the arrangements nearer the time.

## **SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH**

### **Bishop's Lent Appeal raises £520.**

The total raised from St Mary's this year was £520. Most was Gift-Aided which will bring the total to over £600. The main recipient of this year's Lent Appeal will be HEADS TOGETHER, a mental health initiative spearheaded by The Royal Foundation of The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and The Duke and Duchess of Sussex, which combines a campaign to tackle stigma and change the conversation on mental health with fundraising for a series of innovative new mental health services. The

money raised will also support local charities working in our area among people, especially children and young people, facing mental health challenges.

### **Monday meeting in the Library**

St Mary's Church in partnership with the RICHMOND FELLOWSHIP, sponsors and supports a group meeting on Monday afternoons (1.00pm) at Portchester Library. The theme is creativity - writing, photography, as well as general chat. It's a self-support group but facilitated by support workers. You are welcome just to turn up, but would have to register if you want to continue. If you know of anyone who would benefit from this, please let them know.

## **OTHER NEWS AND EVENTS**

At the age of 85, **Rev Michael Thomas** has decided it is now time to 'hang up his cassock'. Michael conducted his final regular service at the Friday Communion service on 26<sup>th</sup> April at Portchester Parish Hall. A cake was especially baked by Margaret Andrews. Michael was Vicar of St Mary's from 1969 - 1998 during which time the church experienced charismatic renewal, numerical growth and the planting of two daughter churches. Many who came to faith during these years still serve St Mary's today. Three years ago, the present Vicar, Rev Ian, invited Michael who still lived with his wife Anahid in Portchester, to become part of the ministry team. He has been a great help and a blessing, and will continue to be available in an emergency, but will not be part of the regular rota. Enjoy your well earned rest, Michael.

**The Alpha Course** is a course we run each year for those new to the faith, exploring Christianity, wanting to go over the basics again, or preparing for Confirmation. This year's course is on Tuesdays and starts on 17<sup>th</sup> September at 6.45pm and will be held in the church. It starts with a meal,

so no need to cook your evening meal. The co-ordinator is Vicky Powell and if you would like more information or to book a place, contact her on 02392 200314 or E-mail: vivkipowell777@btinternet.com

### **Brian Boxall writes .... “The Friends of St. Mary’s Church, Portchester”**

The Friends of St. Mary’s Church, Portchester was established about four years ago. David Williams, who sadly passed away earlier this year, thought of the idea of this group and through his hard work and enthusiasm the Friends now has over fifty members. David worked tirelessly to found and maintain the group and has been the mastermind behind almost all of its ventures. He will be sadly missed.

The Trustees of the Friends are determined to continue David’s legacy. It has planned events for 2019 and is looking at projects for 2020. As usual all of the profits from any events will be used “to help fund the preservation, maintenance and enhancement of the fabric and fittings of the ancient Church of St. Mary’s Portchester so that future generations can enjoy and admire and to foster the interest and enthusiasm of the local community and the many visitors.”

This year the Trustees have organised the return of the Solent Fellowship Band to a St Mary’s Church on **Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June** at 7.30 p.m. Tickets £8 and drinks will be on sale at the event.

Paul and Hazel Woodman are holding two “Open Gardens” at their home this summer and have kindly agreed to donate any income from the **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> July** event to the Friends in memory of David Williams. The garden at 5 White Hart Lane will also be open on **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July** as part of the ‘Fareham in Bloom Open Gardens’ where income goes to the Mayor’s charities.

Our AGM this year will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> July. St. Mary’s Tea Room is open and after the meeting you can pop in for refreshments.

**A Flower Festival is to be held on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August, Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> August and Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> September.** The theme will be “Musicals” and is being co-ordinated by Mrs Margaret Andrews. The Friends are organising other events to be held during the Festival including Musical Inputs and a “Songs of Praise” to culminate the event on the Sunday.

During 2019 the Friends donated further monies to complete the Sounds System at St. Mary’s Church which has benefitted the many people who use it. The group also financed a “Whitsun Banner” which marked the contribution of David to the Church and his wife Rosemary proudly carried it into Church during the Whit Sunday procession.

Membership of the Friend’s of St. Mary’s costs £10 annually and forms can be obtained from Patsy Monks, the group’s secretary. Current members do include some of St. Mary’s congregation but many are from the local community. The entire profits raised from Friends’ events and membership income is used to enhance St. Mary’s and projects which can be totally financed by the group are supported.

### **Food for thought**

Finally, Jacqui Wheatley submitted this little verse on the subject of making people welcome.

### **Welcome**

*If after church you wait awhile,  
Someone will greet you with a smile,  
Though if you quickly rise and flee,  
We’ll all seem stiff and cold maybe.  
The one beside you in the pew  
Is perhaps, a stranger, too?  
All here, we have our fears and cares,  
All of us need each others, prayers.  
In fellowship we bid you meet,  
With us, around God’s mercy seat.*

## **Relationships**

Of course, the Sunday welcome is one thing, but real fellowship is something we extend to one another throughout the week, and at times other than church services. Some people come up with all sorts of suggestions about encouraging younger people to be part of the church, and this part of an article is challenging:

“What do teenagers and young adults want?

Believe it or not, more than cool, praise bands and contemporary music and skinny jeans, they want

- your time.
- your heart.
- and your attention

*and* they want a chance to actually connect with people.

As a result, churches that create community will do better with teens and young adults than churches that don't. So how do you do that? Well, prioritize chances to serve, connect and grow together. A great small group strategy and serving strategy can help so much with this.

Community doesn't mean that everyone has to know everyone. But it does mean everyone needs to know someone. Relationship is something every church can be great at.”

## **Keeping in Touch.**

News and events happen all the time at St Mary's and there is no way that a bi-monthly or even monthly newsletter can really keep you up to date with everything. You really do need to look at our **FACEBOOK PAGE** which we try and keep up to date with something new every day.

**St Mary's Parish Church  
Portchester**

**Sunday Services**

8.00am Holy Communion  
10.00am Parish Eucharist (with Sunday School)  
11.30am Later Service (2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of month)

**Mid Week Communion Services**

Wednesday 6.30pm New Room (St Mary's Church)  
Fridays 10.00am (Parish Hall)

Vicar: Rev Dr Ian Meredith  
Tel: 02392 375422; E-mail: irev@ymail.com

Parish Administrator:  
Emma Capps  
Parish Hall, Assheton Court, PO16 9PY  
Tel: 02392 321380; E-mail: stmaryoffice@btconnect.com

Church website:  
[www.stmary-portchester.org.uk](http://www.stmary-portchester.org.uk)

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