

A few words from the Vicar

I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:2-3)



There has been some progress regarding our forming a team with St Andrew's, St Thomas & St John's and St Mary's. The Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee has now given this the green light. They have also endorsed a proposal from the deanery to recruit a Team Rector Designate, who will lead the team formation process. This is important because it means, for now, there will be three stipendiary (i.e. full time and paid) clergy working within the team - a Team Rector and two Team Vicars (or Assistant Rectors – the exact role titles aren't important).

Clearly, once we have the Team Rector Designate on board we will be in a much better situation than the alternative, which was two full-time clergy covering the whole of Radcliffe and Ainsworth! However, in the long term, the deployment to the team will reduce to two full timers unless the projected number of deployable clergy radically (and unexpectedly) increases over the next ten years.

So what happens next?

Well, this is the Church of England and things have a tendency to move slowly so as far as the timescale is concerned, your guess is as good as mine! [Believe it or not, it once took me several weeks to obtain permission for some emergency repairs at another church.]

Whatever the timescale nothing much can be done before our Archdeacon (David Bailey) has briefed the four-parish Steering Group about the team formation process and how we go about recruiting the Team Rector Designate. Hopefully this briefing will have taken place by the time we go to print.

One thing is crystal clear though, the new team we will need more Readers and self-supporting clergy if we are to thrive, for example as we engage in mission together and provide cover as best we can for our preferred patterns of worship.

In the context of this parish, for some time now the PCC has recognised the necessity of growing the ministry team by identifying those with a possible calling to ordination or Reader ministry and encouraging them to go forward for selection. The PCC considers this to be a necessary building block for growing our church and we have a vocations strategy to prove it.

Well, inevitably you will get less of my time once we become part of a team so building a larger ministry team is now much more necessary. Indeed, without the support of a handful of self-supporting clergy within the team, we are likely to find ourselves celebrating Holy

Communion less often. So I would urge all of you to pray that God will call individuals within our congregations to come forward for Reader and clergy selection

Fortunately one of our Readers, Debra Johnstone, is exploring the possibility of ordination already, so I also urge all of you to pray for God's blessing upon her as she journeys through the selection process. But we need more like her, so if you feel that God is tapping you on the shoulder, please have a word with me.

Something else that doesn't need to wait upon the Archdeacon is for us to increase the number of opportunities for our congregations to come together. With that in mind there are two things coming up.

Firstly, at 4pm on Sunday 4th October a Pet Blessing Service will be held at St Thomas & St John. I can't wait to see how a bunch of cats, dogs, budgies and other assorted animals get on together! Hopefully the service won't be like something from 'Tom & Jerry' but, as they say, "nothing ventured, nothing gained!" Anyway, if you have a pet, come and join us.

Secondly, we will be hosting a 'bring and share' harvest meal at 4pm on Saturday 11th October in the Church Hall. The time has been deliberately set so that it isn't too late for young families or those of our older folk who don't like being out too late. The plan is that we all bring some food to share and during the course of the event we'll sing some of those old favourite harvest hymns. And if someone wants to do a turn or two to entertain us, you'd be most welcome.

It goes without saying that our Churchwardens will be looking for volunteers to set up, brew up etc.

Come along, and bring a friend or two!

Every Blessing

Dave