

A few words from the Vicar

There has been some more progress regarding our forming a team with St Andrew's, St Thomas & St John's and St Mary's. The four parish steering group has now met with our Archdeacon, the Ven. David Bailey.

At the meeting David informed us that an initial draft of the legal documentation to establish the team has been produced but is to be modified slightly following comments received from the Diocesan Mission & Pastoral Committee. Once the Committee is happy with the draft, it will be forwarded to interested parties for comment, including our own PCC.

David advised that, rather than wait until the team is legally constituted, the favoured option would be for the process leading to the appointment of a Team Rector designate to operate in parallel with the process for legally establishing the team. However, before the appointment process can begin, the steering group will need to undertake a lot of spade work to determine how the team will operate, particularly the likely allocation of responsibilities to the three clergy working within the team (i.e. the Team Rector and two Team Vicars). In this, David was keen to point out that the goodwill and active participation of both Revd Carol Hayden and myself is essential if we are to be successful.

It is hoped to begin the search for the Team Rector designate in the New Year. However, I would wish to avoid a situation where we act in haste, repent at leisure (as I'm sure you would too), so if we need to delay the search until we're ready, then so be it.

So, watch this space! As always, I will endeavour to keep our readers posted as and when I have news; subject, of course, to the need (should it arise) to maintain confidentiality.

What else is happening? Well, November 9th is Remembrance Sunday.

As usual, in the evening at 6.30pm we have a special service for those who have been bereaved. Invitations have been sent to the next of kin of those for whom we have conducted funerals over the past 12 months. However, the service is open to anyone who would like to attend, no matter how long ago their loved one (or loved ones) died. During the service, the names of the dead will be read out and those present will be invited to light a candle in memory of their loved one.

If you would like the name of you loved one listed and read out at the service, please contact Gwen White (01204 595378) or leave a note of their name in the special box at the back of church.

Also as usual, at 10.30am we will be holding a special parade service, during which we will remember those who have died in war, place poppy wreaths in front of the Lord's Table and observe two minutes silence. Our parade services are normally fun occasions accompanied by a good dose of chaos, but not on Remembrance Sunday when it is appropriate that we adopt a more serious, indeed somewhat sombre mood.



I always find Remembrance Sunday moving, particularly at the point during the service when the bugler begins to play the Last Post. This is partly because I lost (and therefore never knew) an aunt who died in the London Blitz and a great uncle who was killed in action at El Alamein. It is also partly because I remember an uncle who had been mentally scarred by his treatment as a Prisoner of War of the Japanese and my father's tales of growing up in East London during the Blitz, with all the horrors that entailed.

This year Remembrance Sunday will be especially moving because we have been remembering the centenary of outbreak of the First World War – the war to end all wars (I wish) – and will be anticipating the centenary (on 25th April 2015) of the Gallipoli landings during which men of the Lancashire Fusiliers won six VCs before breakfast but during which so many local men serving in that regiment were killed or wounded.

But Remembrance Sunday isn't just about remembering the past; it's not just about commemorating those who made the ultimate sacrifice in generations gone by. I find Remembrance Sunday especially moving these days because it reminds all of us that today's generation of service men and women continue to find themselves in harm's way in performance of their duty. Indeed, the situation seems to be changing all the time in Syria and Iraq so who knows what will be the extent of our involvement in the war against the Islamic State by the time you come to read this.

Whether we have someone in the forces or not, this is an especially appropriate time to remember in our prayers both those who serve and their families.

Every Blessing

Dave