

A few words from the Vicar

'Being by God's Ordinance, according to Our just Title, Defender of the Faith, and Supreme Governor of the Church, within these Our Dominions' (Preamble to the 39 Articles of Religion)

A lifetime ago, on Wednesday, 6 February 1952, Princess Elizabeth learnt of her father's death and her accession to the throne.

She was staying in a remote part of Kenya and so flew back to Britain as Queen to be greeted by Prime Minister Winston Churchill at the airport.

Much has changed over the 60 years since then. Some of the changes are welcome, others are not so welcome but in all that time the Queen has served the people this country faithfully.

And so, it's right that this year, as a nation, we celebrate Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee.

But what's this to do with the Church?

Well, there are very strong links between the monarchy and the Church of England.

The Coronation itself is a profoundly Christian service rather than a secular ceremony. The Coronation takes place at Westminster Abbey and the Archbishop of Canterbury presides. During the Coronation the new monarch is anointed and presented with a bible, '... the most valuable thing that this world affords.' The new monarch also promises to '... maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion ...' and '... maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established in England.'

The principle of religious toleration was established centuries ago and is fully recognised in all of this. Nonetheless, through her Coronation oath Her Majesty has a special relationship with the Church of England as the Established Church. Not only is she a faithful member of the Church at a personal level, she is also Defender of the Faith and Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

Indeed, the Queen's Christian faith is evident from the content of some of her public speeches. A good example being last year's Christmas Broadcast when she talked of the human need for salvation, Jesus as Saviour and the centrality of forgiveness within Christianity. The speech can be found at <http://www.royal.gov.uk>.

There is much more I could say but the bottom line is this; the Queen is a Christian monarch and so the Church has every reason to celebrate during this Diamond Jubilee year. And celebrate we shall!

To begin with, Bishop Nigel and the Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester have invited everyone to attend a Diamond Jubilee Celebration Service for the Borough of Bury at St Mary the Virgin (Bury Parish Church) on Sunday 13th May at 6.30pm. This is an important civic event with the Mayor and leaders of the borough in attendance. I plan to be there and it would be good if we could be well represented as a parish.



Secondly, we are planning a 'Picnic in the Park' from 12.00 noon onwards on Sunday 3rd June on Ainsworth Recreation Ground. This is for the whole community and everyone is invited to come along so that we can have one big Ainsworth street party – in the park!

The concept is for a free picnic open to all (with people bringing along food to share) with music, some games/competitions with prizes (e.g. egg & spoon / wheelbarrow races), face painting etc. Look out for further information nearer the date.

The precise format will depend upon funding and, so far at the time of writing the Village Task Force have made a grant of £250 towards the cost of the event. Various offers of help have also been received.

Finally, don't forget our Flower Festival (29th & 30th June and 1st July), the theme of which is 'Jubilee – Something to Celebrate.' I must admit, I can't wait to see how all those groups planning floral displays interpret celebration and jubilee in flowers!

This promises to be a great weekend (so put it in your diary now) and finishes with a 'Songs of Praise' service in the evening.

So, let's celebrate!

Dave