

These three remain: faith, hope and love.

But the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 12 v 13

Vacancy Update

During our vacancy, we have been progressing through a script shared as the “Archdeacons Newsletter” which has guided us through the steps to publish our parish profile, advertise, shortlist and appoint a new incumbent. Recently however, we decided not to proceed to interview, but instead to re-advertise. Since then, I have become aware of a number of questions arising, including “Why did we fail to attract a suitable candidate”, “Do we still have hope that we will find the right candidate” and “Does this now mean we are frozen in time until Easter 2025”. All of these are good questions but tell of the profound disappointment which we felt and shared when we decided not to interview. A lot of this has arisen from the fact that until this moment, the vacancy had been proceeding by clockwork, and then suddenly the wheels stopped turning.

It's important to reflect and understand the nature of these questions, as we really have every reason to be hopeful going forward. We have produced a clear parish profile which states who we are, and our needs, and we have been commended on this by the Diocese. Bishop Paul has gone out of his way to tell us that we should continue to keep the bar high, rather than somehow accept that we need to lower our sights to attract more candidates. As you know Bishop Paul visited us early in the vacancy when he saw for himself the strength of our community, and the clear message is that we have every reason to continue to expect a successful outcome and have hope for the future. Everyone I have spoken to has said this is about finding the right person, even if this takes us a little longer.

Of course there are consequences in this delay, not the least of which is for the amazing support we have so generously received up to now from John, Maggie and Jason. It is only right that we should now accept additional help as we continue our vacancy, and what you will see going forward is visiting clergy coming to support our regular worship. This includes Revd Des Williamson on 11th August, and Archdeacon Martin Breadmore on 22nd September, and others beyond.

But does this now mean our worship is frozen until Easter? Whilst we have inherited a post pandemic pattern of worship from Theresa, including the use of Zoom and the card-reader, it is apparent that there is a need to apply some minor tweaks to how we operate through our extended vacancy.

One of the strengths of St Mary's is the integrated way that so many individuals play a part in how our worship operates, including assistant wardens, readers, intercessors, chalice assistants etc, and the way that everyone pulls together to make this all work. For this reason, Dan and I want to apply any such tweaks carefully that plays to our strengths, where everyone feels part of this and pulls together. Again, its important to get this right, rather than to rush to do it quickly, even when a tweak can appear to some to be almost trivial. Top of our list of tweaks is bringing the pulpit and lectern back into regular use and applying the changes to the operation of Zoom and the sound system setup to make this happen. This will likely proceed during August.

Dan and I remain hugely grateful for the support of everyone who continues to pull together to help us through our now extended vacancy. Following a time during August when a number of us are away, we have no doubt that when Archdeacon Martin visits us on 22nd September, he will see the same core strength of unity that Bishop Paul observed earlier, and we should then be well placed for considering those candidates who feel called to apply, when we meet to shortlist in early October.

Peter & Dan, Churchwardens

Theresa and Ian's Wedding — A Day to Remember

On Friday 26th July 2024 Theresa and Ian were married by the Bishop of Winchester, Rt Revd Philip Mountstephen, in Winchester Cathedral.



Exploring Spirituality

The Spirituality of Summer

Continuing our Exploring Spirituality sessions,
we are holding a gentle service in church
on Sunday 4th August at 6.30pm

Do join us to reflect on the joys of this season

ALL VERY WELCOME

August Services and Events

Sunday 4	08.00	Holy Communion (Common Prayer)
	09.30	Sung Communion
	11.00	Baptism
	18.30	Exploring Spirituality of Summer Service
Saturday 10	14.00	John & Daphne's Open Garden
Sunday 11	09.30	Sung Communion
	14.00	John & Daphne's Open Garden
Monday 12	19.30	Knit & Natter Group in the Leverton Room
Thursday 15	14.30	Afternoon Club in the Cuddington Hall
Sunday 18	09.30	Sung Communion
Sunday 25	09.30	Sung Communion
Sunday 1 Sept	08.00	Holy Communion (Common Prayer)
	09.30	Sung Communion
	11.00	Baptism

Morning Prayer is said in church every weekday morning at 9am

Everyone is very welcome