

July 2023 Edition 89

*Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.
(1 John 3:18)*

From 20th until 22nd June, I spent 48 hours in Derbyshire at the Guildford Diocesan clergy conference. It would be impossible to distil all that we learnt in that short but intense time in a few hundred words, but I do want to give you a brief flavour of the time. There was such richness in each of the different sessions, that I am hoping that over the coming weeks and months I will be able to share some of the thoughts and ideas that I heard.

Guildford Diocese has a vision of being a transforming church which is transforming people's lives, and this was the focus of the conference, specifically the three goals of growing disciples, growing community, and growing diversity. We heard from three key speakers, each of whom was tasked with helping us move from ideas towards action in each of these three areas. In addition, Isabelle Hamley, a gifted theologian and priest, shared scriptural reflections each day on the three Diocesan goals. And if you thought that a clergy conference might be a bit serious, we also had a comedian to bring a little humour to proceedings.



As well as the scriptural reflections, which were profound and thought provoking, it was the session led by Sam Wells, on Growing Community, which I found the most compelling. Sam challenged us to recognise that our churches should first and foremost be seen as a blessing by our local community. You may know that Sam is Vicar of St Martin in the Fields,

the church in Trafalgar Square, which is well known for its work with the homeless, asylum seekers and countless others.

One of the keys to the work of St Martin in the Fields is that they are constantly seeking to work alongside others who are expert in different fields. If they reach out to asylum seekers, they do so alongside other organisations with insight and expertise.

Theologically, Sam Wells made a number of points. He said that the face of Christ is to be found in every individual, since we are all made in God's image. He reminded us to find God in those who may not profess themselves Christian, but who are clearly engaged in God's work in the community. How much we have to learn about God by listening to and connecting with others. He also pointed out that before the welfare state, a great deal of social outreach was done by the church. While we may be concerned about the current gaps in the state welfare provision, he pointed out that there is also a tremendous opportunity for churches to re-engage more meaningfully with the local community, ensuring that we play our part in community outreach.

I am delighted that members of the St Mary's congregation work alongside others in the community, whether at the Foodbank, in care homes, in local schools, uniformed organisations and countless others. I wonder whether there are other ways in which we can be a blessing to our local community, sharing God's love with others, and learning more about God's love from them.





Safeguarding Update

I am astonished to find that I have been Safeguarding Officer for six years. The actions and issues that land at the door of Safeguarding Officers in Guildford Diocese have changed somewhat during that time, so it is clearly time for an update.

Initially I compiled Risk Assessments for church activities, amongst other things, which unfortunately gave the impression that Safeguarding was a branch of Health and Safety, which for many means trip hazards and other accidents.

Safeguarding does mean making sure everyone is safe and supported while on our premises, but it is not about slippery floors or food poisoning. It is primarily about the flourishing of every human being. In John's gospel, (10:10), Jesus says, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." Above all else, safeguarding is about ensuring that every individual who comes into contact with the church has that possibility.

Safeguarding can be about human beings abusing other human beings and making their lives a misery. It may be controlling behaviour, threatening behaviour, making fun of someone, undermining someone's confidence, or it may be sexual abuse. The perpetrators work hard to keep their activities secret, but it is reportedly happening at all levels in society and in all places. We owe it to everyone who comes through our doors to do our utmost to ensure that anyone subjected to abuse on our premises is directed to the appropriate authorities.

Each one of us has responsibility in combatting the spread of abuse. Should you become aware of something that does not seem right, or see or overhear something that worries you or makes you feel uncomfortable, please contact me at safeguarding@stmarycuddington.com or leave a message and your

number on 0208 337 4026) or contact Theresa at theresaricketts@hotmail.co.uk or 07949 769580) to make us aware of it.

We are not asking you to make any judgements, just to alert us. We then contact the people who will investigate further and decide if action is needed. However, in an emergency, if you fear someone may be in immediate danger, please ring 999 and report what you have seen or heard.

This is a difficult subject to talk about. Thank you for reading this.

Linda Charlton, Parish Safeguarding Officer.

July Services and Events

Saturday 1	08.30	Men's Breakfast at Horton Park Golf Club
	19.00	Quiz Night with Fish & Chips Supper
Sunday 2	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Sung Communion and Children's Groups
Sunday 9	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	All Age Worship
	18.00	Evening Worship
Monday 10	19.30	Knit & Natter Group in the Leverton Room
Saturday 15	15.00	Women's Group Summer Tea Party
Sunday 16	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Sung Communion
Wednesday 19	20.00	PCC Meeting in Church
Thursday 20	14.30	Afternoon Club in the Cuddington Hall
Friday 21	10.00	Toddlers' Teddy Bears' Picnic
Sunday 23	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Sung Communion
Sunday 30	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Sung Communion

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

Everyone is very welcome