

October 2021 Edition 69

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. Philippians 4:6

I wonder how you have experienced this past year. In some ways it feels as though time has passed very quickly – I simply can't believe that we have arrived at Harvest once again. Where did the summer go? Perhaps that is at least in part because we were not blessed with a particularly warm or sunny summer, though there have certainly been some beautiful September days to enjoy, with the softer light and changing colours.

Traditionally Harvest is a season of thankfulness, and there are certainly things to be thankful for this year. The choir has returned to lead our worship, which has lifted our spirits. There is something about music during worship that really does seem to draw us towards the mystery of God. We have been enjoying refreshments after our Sunday services for some weeks, but are now able to do so inside.

Many regular groups are meeting once again, and the parish barbecue on 12th September was a wonderful occasion, bringing us together socially in a way that hasn't been possible for so long.



Our thankfulness extends beyond the world of St Mary's. The relaxation of restrictions is possible because of the extraordinary efforts of so many people to enable the population to be vaccinated. And we are thankful, too, to those groups and individuals who have borne the greatest weight of the challenges we have all experienced over the last 18 months, most especially those working in the NHS, but also all those involved in continuing essential services and indeed education.



This Harvest we do have a great deal to be thankful for, and I hope that we will all find ways to reflect on that during this season.

It does, though, feel like we continue to be in uncertain times. While many of our regular activities are able to resume, there is a lingering sense of caution about what will unfold over the coming months. We probably all experience this differently. While some of us embrace our new freedoms with gusto, others remain unsure, preferring gradual and incremental change. We are probably all reminding ourselves to tread carefully with one another as we re-establish relationships that have been affected by such a long period of lockdown.

Ongoing uncertainty affects St. Mary's, too. You will remember that before lockdown the PCC had put together a Church Development Plan, setting out our priorities for the coming years. These are:

- Develop the depth and breadth of our spiritual life
- Establish a secure financial situation
- Enable our children and families to grow in faith and a sense of belonging
- Develop and grow our relationships with the wider community.

A great deal has been put on hold as a result of the pandemic. While we are confident that our priorities remain broadly the same, we just aren't quite in a position to re-start where we left off. More than that, there are things we have discovered during the pandemic that need to form part of our onward planning.

It is for these reasons that the PCC has agreed to a cautious approach as we plan for the months ahead. During our September meeting we discussed our priorities for the period up until Christmas. All being well, this will include Parade Services for Harvest and Remembrance Sunday; a Christmas Fair on 4th December; and a parish leaflet drop to publicise our Christmas services. We agreed that as a PCC we will have a programme of meetings that include broader discussions on key issues, as well as ensuring that the regular business is given sufficient consideration. We plan to have a fuller discussion about our longer term priorities before the New Year.

While the PCC has a particular role in shaping our plans, I hope that you will all feel able to contribute your thoughts and ideas as we emerge from the pandemic. Each of our experiences is valid – however you are feeling about the future of St Mary's, you are a part of shaping that future.

The word "unprecedented" has undoubtedly been overused, yet one of the advantages of a time that is "without precedent" is that we really do have to make up the way forward as we go along. I am thankful for the community of St Mary's and looking forward to the next stage of our journey together.



October Services and Events

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| Sunday 3 | 08.00 | Holy Communion |
| | 09.30 | Harvest Parade Service |
| Sunday 10 | 08.00 | Holy Communion |
| | 09.30 | Sung Communion |
| Monday 11 | 19.30 | Knit & Natter Group in the Leverton Room |
| Saturday 16 | 10.00 | Women's Group in the Cuddington Hall |
| | 10.00 | Men's Group Outing to the RAF Museum |
| Sunday 17 | 08.00 | Holy Communion |
| | 09.30 | Sung Communion and Children's Groups |
| Wednesday 20 | 20.00 | PCC meeting in the Cuddington Hall |
| Thursday 21 | 14.00 | Afternoon Group in the Cuddington Hall |
| Sunday 24 | 08.00 | Holy Communion |
| | 09.30 | Sung Communion |
| Tuesday 26 | 14.30 | Knit & Natter Group in the Leverton Room |
| Sunday 31 | 08.00 | Holy Communion |
| | 09.30 | Sung Communion |
| | 15.00 | Annual Commemoration Service |

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

Everyone is very welcome

The Next Vicar of Cuddington

When Theresa was appointed to St Mary's the Living had been suspended by the Bishop of Guildford and so she was made Priest-in-Charge. The time has now come for it to be reviewed and the Bishop wishes to re-instate the Living with Theresa as Vicar. Consequently there will be a service in the near future led by the Archdeacon of Dorking. No date has yet been fixed but it may be mid-week and it may be this month. Watch this space!