

November 2022 Edition 82

*O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;**For his steadfast love endures for ever. 1 Chronicles 16:34*

Are you good at remembering dates? I have some friends who never forget a birthday. By contrast, I know people who have chosen wedding dates close to their birthdays to ensure that they don't forget their anniversary. 6th November is a date that has a special place in my own heart because it is the date that I was licensed here at St Mary's in 2017. Which makes this month my 5th anniversary as the incumbent here, first as Priest-in-Charge, and now Vicar. Doesn't time fly?!

Five years on and I am as proud as ever to be your Vicar. Every day I feel that I am walking alongside people who care deeply about one

another and seek to live out all you believe about God's love for each and every person. Of course we don't always get everything right, but we share our joys and struggles together.

It never ceases to amaze me how quickly each year passes, and once again we are approaching the beginning of a new church year, with Advent Sunday falling on 27th November this year. The PCC has been hard at work considering the Church Development Plan, which is a document which seeks to identify our priorities for the coming years. This will be discussed with the Archdeacon in April when we receive our Visitation.

Some of you will remember that the Guildford Diocese has the vision of being a Transforming Church, Transforming Lives. Within this vision, there are three key priorities:

1. Growing Discipleship
2. Growing Diversity (particularly growing younger)
3. Growing Community

These are also the three key areas of our own Church Development Plan. As we have started to develop our ideas for the coming year or two, it has been heartening to realise just how much we already do under each of these priority areas.

We have active House Groups, as well as opportunities for in depth study at Advent and Lent courses. The Toddler Group continues to be a great success, with more families than ever coming along on a Friday morning and a number of them choosing to have children baptised in church. We have admitted four children to Holy Communion and another three are preparing to be admitted. Sunday Club is also thriving. There are a number of ways that we reach out into the local community, not least the wonderful social events. I could go on.

Of course there is little doubt that the pandemic has had an impact these last few years. Perhaps the most significant ongoing challenge for us at St Mary's is that hall bookings continue to be considerably lower than before, which means that it is harder than ever to balance the books financially.



As we look ahead, the PCC is keen to set realistic goals, focusing on what will have a significant impact while still being manageable within the resources that we have – both financial, and in terms of volunteers. What this looks like at the moment is:

1. A desire to continue to build on the success of House Groups, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to join one if they wish, and hopefully having more opportunities for House Groups to come together, including at Lent and Advent courses
2. Evolution of the All Age Service – which will include bringing in the most successful aspects of Café Church, including the Worship Band
3. Ensuring that what we do at St Mary's is well publicised by keeping the website as up to date as possible and making use of Facebook

Obviously there is a huge amount that continues at St Mary's. The Church Development Plan is really only about highlighting a few specific goals. There are so many things that happen that are not mentioned in the plan, but continue to be of vital importance to the life of the community. And I continue to be grateful for the contribution that you all make.

Perhaps one of the joys of anniversaries is that they provide an opportunity to pause and be thankful. As I enter my sixth year in Cuddington, I want to thank you all for sharing this journey of faith, hope and love. May we continue to be attentive to all that we are being called to, individually and as a community.



November Services and Events

Saturday 5	08.30	Men's Breakfast at the Hogsmill Carvery
Sunday 6	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Sung Communion and Children's Groups
Sunday 13	08.00	Holy Communion
	10.30	Remembrance Sunday Parade Service
	18.00	Evening Worship
Monday 14	19.30	<i>Knit & Natter</i> in the Leverton Room
Wednesday 16	20.00	PCC Meeting in the Cuddington Hall
Thursday 17	14.30	Thursday Club in the Cuddington Hall
Saturday 19	10.00	Women's Group in the Cuddington Hall
Sunday 20	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Holy Communion and admission of children to Communion
Saturday 26	09.45	PCC Safeguarding Training Morning
Sunday 27	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Sung Communion

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



CHRISTMAS OUTDOOR MARKET

We are holding an outdoor Christmas market on

Saturday 3rd December

from 11.00 until 2.00