

Changes are Afoot

Don't worry! You haven't missed the September issue; there wasn't one. We've decided to adopt the same system as professional magazines and make each issue available towards the end of the previous month.

So this October issue should have been available on 27th September, but we've waited for the outcome of the annual parish meetings that day.

This new system means that you will find details of forthcoming events (when there are any) in the same month as the cover date.

The Vicar's Report to the APCM

This feels like a very peculiar time to be holding the Annual Meeting during which we look back on 2019. I don't know about you, but I find it hard to remember 2019 at all. This year, since the end of March, really has become all-consuming.

As a result, I have found it extremely heartening to re-read the Annual Report. It speaks of a positive year and is a reminder of so many important activities that we used to think of as normal. Do you remember, for example, when we used to have coffee after services; enjoyed a range of social events throughout the year; met together for Thursday Club once a month; welcomed what often felt like an increasing number of families to Toddler Group? So many expressions of God's love, and of course most of those activities have had to go on pause as we seek to play our part in minimising the spread of Coronavirus.

What I want to remind us this morning is that the expressions of God's love have not gone on hold. Indeed, as I read last year's Annual Report, I began to see the connections between all that we have been building as a community over the past years, and the ways in which we have been able to respond to unprecedented circumstances.

When I wrote the Vicar's report in February, I was anticipating events that the PCC had agreed upon as part of our Church Development Plan. We were preparing to start Messy Church on 1st April; we had plans for a Traditional Church Fete to celebrate our 125th anniversary, as well as celebratory services, and exhibitions for the Heritage Open Day. All of these specific activities have been impacted by Coronavirus.

Nevertheless, the core principles that underlie all that we do here at St Mary's have not changed. And everything that we have done in response to the circumstances we have been faced with is the result of all that we believe.

When the PCC put together the Church Development Plan, we were in agreement that our spiritual life must lie at the heart of all we do. Prayer and worship have continued throughout lockdown – and of course beyond. We have all found new ways to grow in our relationship with God, making use of the materials provided, and seeking out others. House Groups have found alternative ways to get together safely in order to learn and pray together, and those that have been unable to meet continue to look out for one another.

Caring for one another has had to take a different shape, but there is little doubt that it has continued. I have been privileged to be part of various email exchanges in which support, encouragement and love has been freely expressed and offered.

From the beginning of lockdown, Sunday Club has been meeting, supported by enthusiastic leaders and supportive parents. And even a global pandemic won't get in the way of our innovative Social and Fundraising Committee, who produced tea towels and recipe books to cheer us, and add to our coffers.

I am aware that much of this material will form the basis of next year's annual report, but it feels important at this stage to recognise that, although our plans have had to change, our values have not. Worship does not look the same now, but it is definitely recognisable. And if I started to thank all those who have come forward to help as we have

had to organise things differently, I know that I will fall into the trap of forgetting someone. Suffice it to say that it is a team effort.

None of us could have foreseen or predicted where we would end up by this stage of the year, but so many people have put their skills to good use to ensure that St Mary's continues to thrive. Who would have thought that instead of a servers' rota, we would need a Zoom host rota? Or that WiFi in church would become our top priority? Or that we would all become so proficient at preparing and reading risk assessments?

As we meet this morning, the situation remains as uncertain as ever. We are not living in comfortable times.

Yet perhaps as a Christian community we are just the tiniest step ahead of some others. Because we never believed that we were in control. We have responsibilities, yes. And we undertake them with great care, diligence and love. But when it comes to faith, we place that in God. It is not a guarantee against choppy waters; that we know only too well. Sometimes it can feel like we really are only clinging on. But we do so together. We do so in faith and in love. And we do so with a commitment that being held in God's love is something so precious; something that has the capacity to transform; and something that we simply can't help sharing with others.

So thank you all. For all that you did in 2019; for all that you continue to do in these challenging times; and most of all for all that you are.

Rev Theresa Ricketts



Who's Who on the 2020-21 PCC

Priest in Charge (aka Vicar)	Rev Theresa Ricketts
Churchwardens	Sara Tomlin & Dan Smithers

Our Lay Representatives on the 2020-2023 Epsom Deanery Synod (and therefore ex officio members of our PCC)		
Julie Stamford	Peter Harvey	Rod Clarke

Elected Members of the PCC	
David Eames	Term ends at 2021 APCM
Jacqui Potter	Term ends at 2021 APCM
Carolyn Harvey	Term ends at 2021 APCM
Roger Eales	Term ends at 2021 APCM
Judy Peake	Term ends at 2022 APCM
Colin Hooper	Term ends at 2022 APCM
Shaun Potter	Term ends at 2022 APCM
Jenie Dore	Term ends at 2022 APCM
Kate Nowak	Term ends at 2023 APCM
Sam O'Shea	Term ends at 2023 APCM
Daphne Richardson	Term ends at 2023 APCM
Jo Reynolds	Term ends at 2023 APCM

Other Members of the PCC	
Linda Charlton	Co-opted—Safeguarding
Jason Gray	Ex officio—LLM (Reader)
Rev John Richardson	By Invitation