

# View from the Pew

*Janet Oldham*

Dear reader it falls upon me, veteran of 40+ years of this church to give you my very first view from the pew.

Now before I get started on this journey into sharing the fun, frolics, reflections, spirit and community of our church over the past month, I think I should humbly point out that this is just my view from the pew - 40+ years of sitting on a hard wooden pew does give some benefits; the graceful spread of one too many biscuits at post-church coffee have made the pew's more comfortable to sit on, but unfortunately the sight has not weathered as well. 20:20 vision is something I remember in my dim and distant past and therefore, even with contact lens rightfully positioned there will definitely be moments, events or reflections which many of you may rightfully observe that I probably fail to capture in these monthly reflections. Therefore I call upon you all - we all have our favourite pew and our own unique perspective of our church - to make sure that the ramblings of your church warden are sharply in focus, and truly a reflective view of all the pews - not just my favourite pew (right hand side, 8 rows forward from the back, directly next to the heating vent), - please take the time to stop me and make me hear your news. I look forward to a flurry of coffee invitations and fine dining to share your perspectives on what should be included - Please note I am not a big fan of coffee and walnut cake!

On to last month's reflections on what we all got up to as a Church. For ease of orientation I have split it into sections:

## Creative Church

Three great decoration events were staged in our church in the last month. Firstly, on a light but competitive note we had the annual decorated egg competition; a great display of creativity and expression of imagination. I never cease to be amazed at things folk can do with an eggshell or two! Congratulations to everyone who took part and I am glad I didn't have the job of selecting the winners – a hard task indeed.

Secondly, the flower team really excelled themselves with a wonderful display of flowers that captured the essence of Spring and, after months of cold miserable weather and colourless gardens, it was a sight to lift our spirits

as well as enhancing the beauty of our lovely Church.

The third decorating eggstravaganza was the beautiful edifice that was our Easter Cross of flowers; a magical representation of the symbol and story of Easter with everybody from the congregation having an opportunity to add a flower to the display. Well done to John and Joy for their hard work and I really liked the illumination of the cross – great idea John.

## Exotic Church

The 7<sup>th</sup> of April saw a full on immersion in what an African Safari experience was like, up close and personal. Isabel Hurley acted as guest game keeper to guide the Senior's Tea Party through the sights, sounds and experiences of her African Safari to Botswana and Zambia.

Stories were shared of a wide array of animals to delight the senses including, rhinos, hippos, lions (who apparently love to have their backs stroked, just like domestic cats!), and a canoe trip through crocodile infested waters. I have it on good authority that most of the seniors would apparently prefer the melee of swimming through crocodile infested waters, rather than face the assault on the senses of trying to get to the sole jammy dodger in our biscuit selection at post church coffee.

Joking aside, a lovely afternoon concluded with hymn singing and another delicious tea, courtesy of Janet Bird and helpers.

## Active Church

You've all no doubt seen Nick Knowles on the BBC in DIY SOS; well we have our own trusty SOS leader in the form of Derek Westwood, who on the 20<sup>th</sup> of April led a working party of good spirited volunteers to tackle the never ending challenge of on-going Church and hall maintenance, keeping our facilities in tip top condition. Thank you to all who took part and I am sure that Derek would be delighted to hear from anybody who has the DIY bug burning deep in them, to come and give a helping hand next time the maintenance party goes forth.

27<sup>th</sup> April saw our community spirit very much in evidence again, with the annual litter pick taking place. This event was first started by our

lovely friend, Denise Dilley; I am sure she was looking down on us with a wry smile on her face as we all tramped forth collecting bags of rubbish in the esteemed company of our Mayor, Councillor Jane Sartin and Councillors Peter Ruffles and David Poole. Denise's smile would have been even wider had the Councillors worn full regalia to add to the occasion but, as you will appreciate this was not practical and we benefited hugely from having a very proactive Mayor and Councillors participating. A very big thank you, to our Mayor, Councillors and volunteers for your excellent support.

### Messy Church

Last September the children from Messy church took charge of the flower beds to the East end of the church, and their labour of love is now really starting to pay dividends as a beautiful array of spring bulbs are starting to poke their heads through the still very much chilly soil. Children are the future of our church and Messy church is a lovely relaxed way for them to be part of our community whilst giving something back to the church as a whole; I really look forward to seeing their flower bed come to full vibrancy in the coming months.

### Spiritual church

Our Easter services were some of the best I can remember for many a year; Jo did an excellent job shepherding us through the story of lent and Easter, evocatively bringing it to life and helping us all to once again connect with the importance of Easter as a festival for us as Christians; a lovely meaningful and spiritual month.

So, I hope you have all got this far in my reflections; as requested at the beginning – just shout if I have missed something, invite me to your events or just take the time to chat to me about what you think is important about what is going on in the church and I will try and capture it in my view from the pew.

Until next time, I wish you a fulfilling, hopefully warmer and thoroughly enjoyable May.

Love  
Janet