

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



Celebrating Love.

Dear Friends,

We were captivated by the Royal Wedding, and perhaps you also joined the two billion viewers worldwide who turned on the TV to see Prince Harry and Meghan Markle marry. It seemed to me a remarkably positive and contemporary ceremony – in most ways, anyway.

It was a multi-cultural wedding, befitting Meghan's ancestry, with a gospel choir, a phenomenal young cellist and an address from the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. There was a sense of real celebration which broke through regularly. We were left wondering whether the Dean was being deliberately boring, or if his style derived from his chapel being a Royal Peculiar. The couple themselves looked very loving, coping well with the huge amount of attention they received. But the preacher....

The Very Revd Michael Curry had an interesting challenge for the sermon. Unlike the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Dean, whose wording was written into the liturgy, he had to create a sermon which will be circulated around the world and speak to royalty, political leaders and celebrities.

So what do you do? You preach the Gospel.

Michael brought in the wonder of love, both of Harry and Meghan as well as love for others. And he spoke of the love of God which can be reflected in all our lives.

He reminded us of Martin Luther King, a Christian minister who never failed to hope

and work for racial harmony in the face of shocking prejudice and violence in the US.

There was a sense of Christian unity, as he quoted Fr Teilhard de Chardin (the Catholic mystic writer, who was also a scientist) thinking of mankind's ability to harness fire and develop so many inventions.

Michael Curry spoke in a passionate manner, and in a very engaging way. He knew what he wanted and needed to say and he did so. He spoke of spiritual truths which fitted the occasion. He majored on love, on the reality and further need for racial integration, on the gift of science and on the wonder of the lives that God has given us.

And not once did he look down at his iPad. I felt inspired to feel that a Christian priest had preached in a manner that fitted the magnitude of the occasion. It is what all preachers should aspire to do.

Sermons are not for entertainment, nor for lecturing. They are not for haranguing people. I see them as a sharing of one's own spiritual feelings, based on the Scriptures and infused with our world's life today. They should give us ideas to support us, to make us think, to invite us to see ourselves differently – as loved and saved by God in Christ.

The fact that Harry and Meghan's Wedding Day was such a celebration of multi-culturalism, now reflected within the Royal family, as well as of their love and of the love of God is an experience which I believe we can treasure and rejoice in.

Love, Jo

More Weddings!

Our parish's big Wedding Day was on 9 June. David Toyn married Daniella, and we celebrated their love with a joyful ceremony.

They had decided on a football theme for their marriage, with a match programme available to sing hymns. I felt very proud to referee the proceedings, and there were no fouls or penalties. We all agreed that Dave and Dani are a very good match, and the result was just as we would have wanted.

Dave, of course, is a son of Richard and Dorothy Toyn, who – with James – are long-standing supporters of our church. How lovely to have this family wedding in All Saints.

Dorothy fulfilled her very special role of providing flowers for the wedding, including a triumphal arch as everyone entered and left the pitch – sorry, church. Maybe now they are married they think it is all over, but I assure them it has only just begun!

Later the same afternoon there was a second wedding of Lorraine and Phil. Large loudspeakers were brought in, and we were treated to a wisely chosen selection of disco classics.

This too was wonderful, albeit in a very different way, and Barry White singing *Just the Way You Are* and Bill Withers/Grover Washington singing and playing *Just The Two Of Us* seemed amazingly appropriate. Another great match.

Thinking of these three weddings make me aware of how each one speaks in a special way of the couple themselves and their interests and concerns.

We really can and do accommodate and appreciate gospel choirs, cellists, footballing themes, disco styling along with the serious taking of vows to love throughout all life brings our way.

A wedding should always be a reflection of the couple, whether in a traditional

ceremony or with special emphases. May God continue to bless Harry and Meghan, Dave and Dani and Lorraine and Phil for the whole of their earthly lives together.

The Reverend Nick Sharp

It was announced on 10th June that Nick has been appointed to a new post in Rye Park. He will move in early September.



He is the first priest to move away from Hertford since the Team Ministry began over ten years ago, and he will be missed from the team, from Hertford Heath and in the Deanery where he has previously been a joint Rural Dean.

Hertfordshire Festival of Music.

All Saints has been the main venue for the Festival, and some of us were present for the concert given by Stephen Hough on 10th June. The church was almost full for music by Debussy and Schumann, ending with Beethoven's *Appassionata* played with all the emotion and energy that the title suggests.

Hough was playing on a Yamaha piano brought in especially for the festival, and when we heard it we could understand why. It was such a beautiful sound, played by a brilliant pianist. The entire audience stood for an ovation at the end, showing that the feeling of ecstatic pleasure had been shared by everyone – and we were played a quiet Schumann piece as an encore, which calmed us down before we left the church.

Stephen Hough's own music was centre stage the next evening, with poems by Rilke, Wilde, Housman and others set to piano accompaniment. There was joy, tragedy, humour, spirituality all expressed in the words, so beautifully sung. Fewer people in the audience, we seem to stick with what

we know, but the hundred or so present really appreciated the concert.

On the Wednesday we heard cello and piano at the Friends Meeting House. The compositions were by James Francis Brown, one of the Directors of the Festival, and by Matthew Taylor who was present for the world premiere of a new piece. Both were wonderfully lively and rhythmic, utterly captivating, the energy of Gemma and Nicola producing sheer vitality.

Two short, gentle pieces by Stephen Hough were also played, and the conclusion was Beethoven's Sonata No. 4 which surprised by providing some moments which sounded not unlike the work of our more modern composers.

On Friday evening we moved from classical to jazz, back with the Friends, with the wonderful musical talents of Chris Eldred who played piano with gentle accompaniment and dazzling solos, Loz Garratt on Double Bass, sensitively underpinning and enhancing each song and Jess Radcliffe whose interpretation of songs from the Great American Songbook were at once sensitive and then stunning. We just managed not to cry during Somewhere Over The Rainbow.

The final day, on Saturday 16th at All Saints, featured Hertfordshire Young Musicians, giving them a very special performance space. The festival finale was Tasmin Little (violin) with John Leheman (piano) playing a varied selection of pieces including Brahms, Debussy, Clara Schumann and Amy Beach (good to see women composers represented) concluding with a dazzling performance of Ravel's Tzigane moving from five minutes of solo violin to a frenzied crescendo which only stops when – as Tasmin put it – you can't play any faster. A rousing conclusion to the Festival.

Next year there will be another Festival, and we are told that it will be headlined by Steven Isserlis, the great cellist, so it promises to be at least as spectacular as this year.

HFoM 2019 WITH STEVEN ISSERLIS

HFoM 2019
13-23 June
Principal Artist:
Steven Isserlis

Plans for the 2019 Festival are already well under way.
Steven Isserlis CBE will be HFoM Principal Artist.

Acclaimed worldwide for his profound musicianship and technical mastery, cellist Steven Isserlis enjoys a distinguished career as a soloist, chamber musician, educator, author and broadcaster. We are delighted to welcome him to the Festival.

HFoM 2019 will include an orchestral concert (a first for the Festival) as well as a full programme of events featuring celebrated local and international performers.

Sign up for the newsletter now so you know when the Box Office opens – 2019 events will sell out fast!



Volunteer for Hertswise

Hertswise forms part of a wider dementia initiative in Hertfordshire. Intensive practical and emotional support for service users is provided by the Alzheimer's Society's Dementia Support Workers and Dementia Advisers who support people receiving a diagnosis from the Early Memory Diagnosis and Support Service (EMDASS). Specialist emotional and practical support for carers reaching crisis point is provided by four Admiral Nurses hosted by Carers in Hertfordshire and Dementia UK working across Hertfordshire.

Our volunteers give their time and invaluable support to the Hertswise team.

The team are always on the lookout for committed and enthusiastic volunteers to assist with the smooth running of the activity sessions. In turn, the team will ensure that the time you share with us is satisfying and rewarding.

"I enjoy volunteering at the groups, because I like assisting with the activities and building rapport with the clients. It's also reassuring that every time I go, I know what my role is."

To find more, call HertsHelp on 0300 123 4044 (Monday – Friday 8am – 6pm) and see overleaf!