

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

Change, loss and opportunity



Dear Friends,

Hertford town centre is certainly changing. As I write, Marshalls is on its final Sale prior to closure, another larger store leaving us. It follows Loch Fyne, Superdrug, Waitrose and – er – the Card Factory, etc. There seem to be a few signs of re-development, but so far it feels mainly like loss. Marshalls particularly strikes one as it has been a local family business for many years, not to mention that they recently laid my new stair carpet!

We all have a perception of the things that we can rely on, and we are very fortunate in so many ways in this area. However, there are times when we take things for granted, just as we may do so with people, and we need to value what we have and build positively for flourishing.

This is certainly a time of rapid economic and social change and while much of that can be embraced, there are certainly losses also.

Finding and building faith feels different now to the way it was when many of us first became believers. There was a real culture of church-going in the country and a perception that we were a Christian nation.

Now Sundays are mainly another shopping day and for children usually a time for sport rather than the Sunday Schools that nurtured many of us.

I feel that is a real loss, yet I then ask myself if the church kept pace with developments in society and if we failed to ensure that our caring and teaching ministry kept in sync with people's changing expectations and needs.

The Church of England has been looking at new ways of engaging in recent years. The current phrase of "Reaching New People" suggests to me that the wider church is realising that we cannot simply continue in the same old way.

The important message about God's love and of his Son's message of reconciliation and hope should be shared more imaginatively. Jesus' message is for all of us, here and now, and if the older forms of communication and involvement no longer work we need to prayerfully seek new ones.

Marshalls had a notice outside their shop for several years: "New customers welcome – no experience necessary". It was a good point, although it may not have worked as well for them as one might have hoped. The church recognises that many people, both adults and children, have little experience of attending worship or of understanding the words and actions of Jesus. It is wise to notice what is happening, but unwise to sit back and lament that things are just not what they were.

We who have faith need to identify clearly that knowing and loving God is a fulfilling and wonderful thing, perhaps obscured by the presumptions of the past that there will always be new disciples, and share imaginatively and lovingly (and sensitively) with people whom we meet either at church or in other situations.

For All Saints, I feel that it is vital that we look for new opportunities of offering care and of encouraging people in faith. Looking outwards in mission is essential. But I also strive – with others - to improve what we

offer when people come to church, with well-prepared worship, with a real caring welcome (and cheerio!), with the building made increasingly suitable for all who want to use it and with preaching which draws on our traditions but has a contemporary edge.

It is my hope and prayer, and the focus of my ministry – as part of our shared responsibility - to work in a world where so little feels permanent any more so that the Light of Christ which enlightens our lives may hold and guide us all.

Love, Jo

A Lasting Legacy

All Saints' is such a breath-taking and glorious building for sacred worship, concerts and community outreach, which we have inherited from faithful and generous past generations of worshippers and friends, that it is important for us to think about how we can pass this on to future generations.

One vital way is to leave a legacy to All Saints. All legacies, no matter how large or small, make a huge difference to our lovely church's sustainability. Within many people's memory is the legacy from Reginald Cull that meant that building work could be paid for to ensure that the tower did not fall away from the main building and the beautiful glass doors and back rooms brought the church into the 21st century.

Please remember All Saints' in your will. It will make all the difference for generations to come.

Annual Memorial Service

This year the Memorial Service will be held on Sunday 21st October rather than in November as has been the custom.

We therefore need to have details of any friends or family members that you would like to include in the list as soon as possible. Forms are available at the back of church

and should be returned to Martin Penny or Jo by 16th October at the latest.

Over the past few years the list of names read out has become progressively longer and we are concerned that recently bereaved families who come specifically to the service may find it a particular ordeal. We are looking at ways to make the list more manageable. One way of doing this might be by ensuring that whilst we name all those who have died within the last few years, perhaps where there are many members of the same family who passed many years ago we just remember those as members of a named family.

I would appreciate your opinions or suggestions as to how we might proceed in the future. This year however we will include all individual family members' names that you wish to give us as we have done before. However we will not assume that we should carry forward names from previous years.

Love Janet (Bird)

Team Eucharist- 25th November, Christ the King

The Memorial service has been moved this year because we will be having a Team Family Eucharist for Christ the King on 25th November at which we will be very pleased to welcome Bishop John Gladwin who will be preaching.

Bishop John was born in Hertford, attended Richard Hale School and was a member of All Saints' choir. He is the former Bishop of Chelmsford and on his retirement in 2009 became Chair of Citizens' Advice.

To celebrate this occasion we are planning to hold a Bring and Share lunch after the service for all who would like to attend. I would welcome specific offers of food items so that I can co-ordinate what I need to ask other team church members to provide.

Many thanks
Janet Bird