

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



Growing younger

Dear Friends,

During my summer break I spent a day at Wakehurst Place in Sussex where the Royal Horticultural Society has an amazing project collecting seeds from all around the world to preserve species and provide a bank of all the vast variety of plant species. They are kept in carefully prepared conditions so that they can be germinated and reintroduced, as the Prince of Wales put it "a reserve where life itself is stored". Each of those seeds, so precious, is a key part in the continuing ecology of our planet.

Thinking of seeds and growing, the Church of England is encouraging us to think in new ways about how we might flourish and grow once again. We have those precious seeds of Jesus' love to share with everyone and it is for all of us now to nurture those seeds and enable them to grow. How can we create the right conditions?

Watching through the glass at Wakehurst the researchers clean, examine and prepare the seeds so carefully reminded me of the part that we all have in church today to care for the seeds of the Gospel.

I couldn't help comparing it with the Sower in Jesus' parables, that great story about the reckless Sower, who threw the seed everywhere, in carefree abandon. Jesus said that the Good News of the Gospel is like this, we need to reach out widely to let everyone know about God's love, even if it does not always bear full fruit.

I would like to see how much we can grow our church by reaching out to as many people as possible and listening to what

they would want to experience when they come to church and what we can do for them.

The current phrase being used by the Diocese of St Alban's is **Growing Younger**.

Church congregations are, as we are at All Saints on the whole, older. With age comes wisdom and beauty, decades of rooting ourselves in the love of Jesus gives the mature members of our congregation a network of deep roots. Year after year, liturgical season after season, our ongoing commitment to love God and others yields a rich harvest.

Old is important but it is not the whole story, as our churches have bare patches when it comes to certain ages, particularly young people and these bare spots make us feel incomplete.

The curiosity and energy that young people bring help us all feel alive and vibrant. They refresh our fellowship together, adding depth, colour and enable our worship to be even more fruitful.

We need young people and they need us. We can help them by enabling them to feel that they are a key part of our church family their presence is important as the church of today and that they have something to give and share, a role to play.

I hope that you have some great ideas to share on how we might do this.

Please tell me your dreams and visions for this.

Here are some of mine:

- I would like the young people to take more of a lead role in our services, starting with our Family Service.
- It would be wonderful to restart our Prayers and Bears Toddler Service, giving carers a time to reflect and giving children a knowledge of the important Bible stories, a time to sing and then to play together.
- I want to start up a discussion group again and involve as many people as possible, by encouraging those who know something of their faith and those who would like to know more to talk issues over together.

I would like to encourage everyone to invite a friend to come to one of our social events, or services, to meet us and to perhaps feel that they might want to be part of the wider church family.

Let's value those amazing seeds that we have and yet also spread our seeds of God's Love as far and as widely as possible, so that we can grow younger and grow as the Church.

Love,
Jo

Celebrating Marriage

Sunday 15th September at 10.00am.

On Sunday 15th September during the 10.00am service we will be celebrating with Dorothy and Richard Toyn as they renew their marriage vows, taken 40 years ago on that day. We will be delighted to welcome back The Revd David Mowbray, the priest who married them, and who later became the Vicar of All Saints'.

As we have had so many wonderful weddings over the years we would like to invite everyone to join in with the celebrations by bringing a photo of their wedding day, coming to celebrate and share memories and have their marriage blessed.

The service will be the Family Eucharist, there will be favourite hymns and wedding music at the beginning and end played by Martin Penny, our Director of Music.

Please invite other couples to join us whether they were married at All Saints or elsewhere.

Single? We hope we can all rejoice together. You will be welcome, as ever.

Come to join in the celebrations of God's love as can be reflected in human love, and receive Holy Communion together as part of God's amazing All Saints Family.

Sacristy

We are in need of a few more people to help prepare the Sacristy for the 8am service. It is an important but straightforward task, which only takes about 10 mins to set up.

We would like to increase the rota of people, so that everyone would only need to do it once every 4-6 weeks. If you feel you would like to help with this, please speak to Janet Oldham or Marion Hassell.

