

## **FAWKHAM AND HARTLEY PARISH NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2018**



**Dear Friends,**

My apologies, it has been a little while since we had a Parish Newsletter. Firstly, I am writing this just after our Harvest weekend. Was lovely to share together in a Harvest Supper and Sunday services. And a huge thank you for all your gifts. Tinned food went to the Gravesend Foodbank. Flowers and biscuits to local people we are praying for, and financial gifts went to 'Sanctuary' – a charity supporting homeless people in the Gravesham area. It was very timely that the Gospel reading last Sunday were the beautiful words in Matthew 6: -

**Jesus said, "Do not worry about your life.....can any of you add a single hour to your life by worrying.....strive first for the kingdom of God....do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today"**

**CHURCHWARDEN VACANCIES:** These words can often calm me in a crisis and help me focus on God's Kingdom and the importance of putting Him first. But nowhere in this reading does it say that ceasing worrying is easy! Worrying is a natural human instinct and very much shows that someone cares. But Jesus is warning that over-worrying can cause us harm. No point worrying about something that may not happen. Trust in God is so important. However, in any organisation or charity, vision and planning are crucial. Therefore, lots of people leading companies and organisations do 'worry about tomorrow'. It is 6 months since I announced at the APCM that next year we will need 2 new Churchwardens. Obviously, Valerie, Andrew and PCC members will be around to help and offer advice and I am very grateful Valerie offered to stay on for one extra year. The worry is these first 6 months of the financial year have not produced any lines of enquiry from anyone willing to fill the role of Churchwarden. Please therefore understand my worries about tomorrow! If we do not fill these positions I am concerned that a lot of our ministry will be reduced as I will have to take on more administrative tasks and issues with our 3 buildings. If the thought of being a Churchwarden worries you, I would ask that you offer those feelings to God and realise that being a Churchwarden is first and foremost a privileged and exciting role. There are several ex-Churchwardens in our congregation who will tell you this. Therefore, please can you consider yourself for this role and you can find out through Valerie and Andrew what this entails. Please do not think you can leave it to someone else because at the moment people are not queuing up! Often, we ask the question, "Why me?" but actually, the question to ask ourselves is, "Why not me"?

**CONSULTATION RESULTS:** Thank you to those who filled out our recent Sunday services consultation. Some of you have been asking what the results highlighted. People's preferred place of worship was: All Saints' 33, Church Centre 14, St. Mary's 12 and No Preference 15. When there is no service at your preferred Church building, 30 people said they would worship at another service in Fawkham and Hartley. 9 people would worship at another service in the RNWK Group. 2 people would visit another Church outside the Parish and Group. Whilst 27 people would not go to Church on that particular week. That last figure causes me to worry! As you are aware, we are unable to maintain the levels of services that were held many years ago, therefore we need to get used to adapting more (which I know many of you are) and be prepared to share together more often within our Parish and Group. It does sadden me that someone would not come to Church if it is not their preferred style of worship or favourite building, as surely the most important part is that we are worshipping together as a community. The consultation results confirmed that we are never going to please everyone, so please have patience! And please be prepared to make sacrifices to what you may prefer. Discussions around how best to utilise the Church Centre for different types of services for younger families are ongoing. The other big problem with the Church Centre now is the lack of people willing to set-up the hall for

the service and serve at the altar. Peter has had quite a task to fill this current rota with volunteers. Can you help in the future? Without people to set-up the hall, we basically cannot have the service!

I received a few comments last weekend that it was disappointing to see low numbers at the Harvest supper and Sunday services. Poor attendance at services and events certainly causes me lots of worry and it is alarming that this appears to be reflected nationally at the moment. I certainly worry about the future of the Church of England. If we all feel it is disappointing that not as many people come to Church as they did in the past, then we all need to do something about it. It's not just down to me! Do we spend time inviting friends and neighbours? Do we pray for growth in the Church and others to come to faith? Believe me, I share your frustrations, but we must have faith and trust that God will provide for the future of the Church of England.

**STEWARDSHIP:** Finally, Parishes can only survive if we have enough resources and finances. As so many standing orders go up each year, so do the costs of running a Parish. Therefore, have you thought about your giving this year and whether you can up this for the coming 12 months. You might not be able to financially but maybe you could do with your time? Or vice versa. Standing Orders certainly help us plan better, so if you can contribute this way please speak to our Treasurer Brian Jelley on 704175. I appreciate I always seem to be asking more from the same people, however, this is the reality we face. I would be very keen to hear if you have any answers or solutions to how we can get more people locally to contribute to the life of our Church.

**An answer to all these things can help make sure we do not have to worry about tomorrow. Thank you for taking the time to read this, but now is the time to act! Andrew, Valerie and I look forward to hearing from you.**

**Blessings, Jim**

### **Churchwardens' Report**

As the nights begin to draw in, we can look back on another successful and eventful summer in the Parish. As part of the Rural North West Group, we are now worshipping regularly and prayerfully with our fellow congregations at Ash, Longfield and Ridley, and more and more of us are beginning to travel freely to these churches. During the summer, we have especially enjoyed the joint patronal services at St. Mary Magdalene, Longfield and St. Marys, Fawkham, and look forward to welcoming everyone to All Saints', Hartley for its patronal service on 4<sup>th</sup> November.

Our church buildings remain in a good state of repair and this is in large part due to the skills and efforts of Malcolm Harris and his Building Committee colleagues. We have been particularly pleased to see the installation of the new, more efficient and reliable, heating system at the Church Centre, together with the newly refinished floor, and the new lighting scheme at St. Marys Church. Our thanks also go to the many other people who help to make the parish tick. To those who warden, welcome, serve, arrange flowers, make refreshments, clean, run our children's activities, organise events, tend our gardens, and the many other roles, we say a heartfelt thank you.

We are always looking for more volunteers to help out with the above jobs. Please speak to Jim or either of us if you can offer some of your time, even if it is only a few hours a month. Please also support our fund-raising efforts over the coming months including the Church Quiz on 20<sup>th</sup> October, the Armistice Exhibition and History talk on 10<sup>th</sup> November, the Christmas Fayre on 17<sup>th</sup> November and the Broadway Showcase on 30<sup>th</sup> November. We will shortly be publishing dates for your 2019 diary, so please keep a look out for these.

Valerie Campbell and Andrew Gray  
Churchwardens  
November 2018