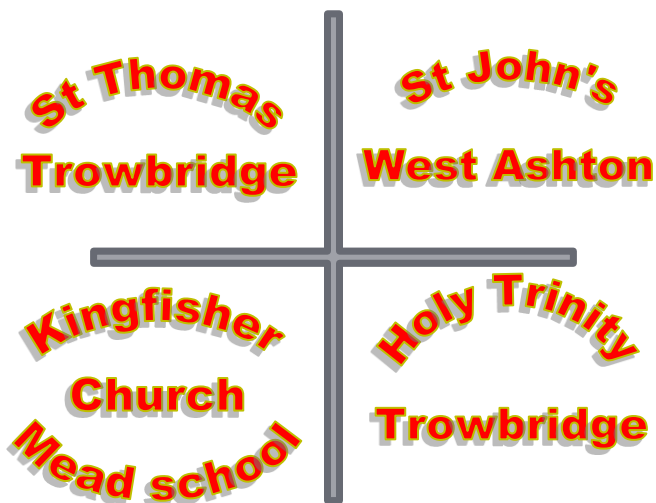


St Thomas', Trowbridge and St John's, West Ashton Monthly News July 2024



"Let us live like
flowers—wild
and beautiful and
drenched in sun."
- Ellen Everett

Hello Everyone

Wow! After 25 years of leading, guiding and teaching us, Allan our lovely vicar has taken his final services at all three churches and has now started his retirement.

It won't feel much like retirement yet, I guess, as Allan and Janet sort out the vicarage in preparation for leaving and Janet completes her final weeks of work before starting her retirement. Our prayers and very best wishes are with them as they make this significant transition.

I do remember Allan arriving in the parish all those years ago and particularly his first Christmas when he accompanied our family on a walk around the Avon valley at Freshford, an area he came to be very fond of. He even brought 3 gifts for our children which endeared him to them!

Being without a vicar might seem rather disorientating, but we trust and believe God will continue to equip us to serve him in and through this church during the interregnum. Last month, in his valedictory newsletter, Allan reminded us to strive for unity in the coming months. A message worth going back to and rereading. It also reminds me that you can always dig up an old YouTube service whenever you're feeling you need a dose of our old vicar!

As I think about our immediate future, I keep returning to Jesus' exhortation that we should seek God's kingdom above all else. *'But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.'* (Matthew 6: 33-4) That is what's important, now as always. We must keep our focus on Jesus in the coming months.

A couple of dates to highlight in the coming weeks to help us seek God's Kingdom are:

Bring your picnic lunch Sunday July 14th after Bishop Andrew has led the service at St Thomas'. We are planning to meet together as a church family and talk and share our thoughts about the future of the church (sadly the bishop can't stay for lunch). If it's nice we could be outside!

Thursday 4th July 7.30pm / Friday 5th July 2.30pm Prayer Meetings.

These evenings and afternoon prayer times will continue through the summer as we gather to pray and meet with God together.

Paul and I would like to take this opportunity to explain some of the things that are happening in the coming months.

Paul Edwards, Esther Brown and I have started work on the **Parish Profile** which is the extended 'advert' that goes out to prospective candidates who may apply to be our next vicar. We'd like everyone in our church to help us form this document. You can do this through: your Small Group if you belong to one; by attending the picnic lunch on July 14th; contributing through your Sunday morning group if you're a young person or filling in a sheet that will be available at the back of church.

Frankie is obviously still in the **church office** but will be without Andrew Palmer from mid-July as he moves with Jane to her new church in London. We wish them well and pray that God will bless them. We're considering with Frankie what support she might need. The office, as you know, is moving soon but we don't anticipate too much disruption to the day to day running once the relocation has occurred.

Another change as you know is that Hannah, our **Youth worker**, is returning to teaching. We're extremely grateful for her commitment and energy in this position and are pleased she would like to maintain her involvement in Apprentices. We have decided to wait until after the summer break before considering readvertising this post.

Liz Atkins heads up our **pastoral care**, and is the person to contact about any pastoral needs.

The service planning group have been busy planning and arranging our **services of worship** up until the end of the year. We're grateful to various clergy in the Deanery who have offered help and support in all our three churches.

I think it's fair to say that Paul and I are no longer wondering what to do in our retirement! It's great to be involved in this important time of our church life. We'll not get everything perfectly right, but our aim will be to seek God's Kingdom with you all.

God bless, John Chettleburgh

St John's Update

Halfway through the year, as the saying goes "time waits for no man". An inspection has taken place at St John's by Chantrey Conservation Architects regarding the dampness within the church. A detailed report has been issued and more in-depth inspection is to be carried out. The situation is "on going".

St John's has had two services this month, one led by Allan and one by Rev. Liz Gifford. Allan's last service at West Ashton was on the 9 June - this was a busy day, as it was commemorating the 80th Anniversary of D Day (see display in churchyard), a christening (see picture of Albie Allan Rush) and the last service at St John's before Allan hits the road of retirement. The day carried mixed emotions. It was wonderful to welcome Albie into the family of the church but heartfelt sadness in saying goodbye to Allan and Janet. We trust they both enjoyed their refreshments after the service and were pleased with the gifts given by the congregation. (Gifts : flowers for Janet and a pictorial record book of St John's and a framed photograph of the beautiful east window). May St John's wish Allan and Janet much future happiness and may they refer to : Isaiah 55:12

Dates for your diary : Next service at St John's :

7 July, Service of the Word - 10.30am

(St Thomas has kindly invited the congregation of St John's to join them on

14 July, when the Bishop of Ramsbury (Bishop Andrew), is visiting and will take the Holy Communion Service. A light lunch is being provided and it will be an ideal chance to discuss the parish profile which has to be formulated to acquire a new incumbent. Service time 10.30am)

4 August, Service of the Word - 10.30am

"Shepherd of our souls, we do wander at times. We are grateful that You're always seeking us to bring us back to Your side. If you wish God to lead you, be willing to follow". Amen.

Jean Robertson



A fond retirement farewell given to Revd. Allan Coumts and his wife Janet, on his last service at St John's, West Ashton on 9 June, 2024.



Diocesan Synod 4.6.24

Allan, Marjory, Chris and myself, with Joan from West Ashton and Judy Wright went to Rev Jane Palmer's church for the last Deanery Synod before she leaves.

Jane took us through the re-elections of John Joy, who visited our church on June 2nd to tell us about Kadugli, and Chris Hicks to be our Diocesan Synod reps with the addition of Dawn Sawyer joining them. Funding for the exciting 10 year program is being bid for in 3 areas of our Deanery –

Our Holy Trinity, Trowbridge, which in the last meeting was identified as being a possible community hub. Bishop Andrew and Jonathan Parfitt are praying through what would be a great extra resource in Trowbridge.

St Laurence School in Bradford to have a worshipping community under Flourish (look it up under 'CofE Flourishing Schools', an amazing provision based on John 10.10).

New housing areas.

Changes in roles – For now, Alan Jeans is standing in as our Archdeacon in place of Sue Groom.

Alistair Wood has left St John's Upper Studley.

Rev Chris Hunter is the new vicar of Canalside – Staverton, Hilperton, Whaddon and Semington.

As Rev Jane Palmer leaves us on 14th July, she and our Allan Coutts were thanked by Rev Jake Eggertsen, who paid a tribute for all they'd done in the Diocese.

Jane told us that churches would be receiving an automatic 50% rebate on DBF fees paid last year. (It sounded good news, but I wasn't sure I understood so I asked Jane after the meeting what it all meant. She told me not to worry as she had explained it all to St Thomas' Treasurer, Pat Kerbey, phew!)

Liz Pike's brother-in-law, Rob Jackson, rounded off the meeting telling us how the Chaplaincy he's involved in through Bridge Youth Project, brings faith, hope and love to children, parents and teachers.

Ruth Chettleburgh

Quiz

How about another of my little puzzles for you?

For this one, can you unscramble the names of popular singers past and present?

1. JOE MONTS
2. SIR O LUMLY
3. SAD IDROY
4. A LIME NEEDS
5. BORN BY CIGS
6. OILA BEEF
7. ANN REVLY
8. SEEK KINTHER NINJA
9. FAT RANK RAINS
10. AID PAUL
11. BAD WE VIDEO
12. IBIS LIMA BLOWER
13. FAT WILY ROTS
14. KOUNIMI ELEGY
15. NO NOT JELH
16. SURE SNOW STALL
17. THRUD JIGWY
18. LOUD LING LIEGE
19. HOLY DUDBLY
20. KILL CABCAL
21. EXIT PILOT
22. BARED ALL ON ICE
23. HAD FATIMA
24. SLEEPY LIVERS
25. YALYEN JIGEN
26. SHOE CLACKiN JAM
27. DEAR HENS
28. ALOHA FAT IMP

That's all for now folks
Have a great day

Tony Ludlow

When going to a Christian Event remember these words

I am reading a book Jane Butler passed on to Ivor and I, it is The Keswick Convention 1936. This is from the days before you could buy a CD of a talk, download it or watch online. In the early days they produced a book with all the talks from the convention. It is fascinating reading it. The Convention was held after the death of King George V and King Edward VIII being declared king but before his abdication. There was unrest and rumours of war in Europe, people were fearing another world war. I read this in the Invitation to the Convention:

The invitation we issue is not merely to a time of spiritual enjoyment, but is rather a call to come apart from the ordinary occupations of life and its busy rush, in order that, in the quiet of this little town which nestles among the mountains in one of the fairest spots of God's creation, we may come face to face with God Himself, and listen to His voice as He speaks to us through His servants.

In 1936 people needed time to hear what God was saying in their changing world. These words were written eighty-eight years ago and they are just as relevant today. We live in a constantly changing world but God remains faithful and true. We like the people of 1936 need to take time out to hear God's voice. To be reminded of His love for us, to turn the focus of our lives back to Him.

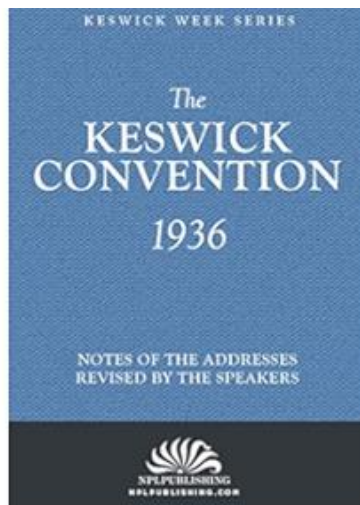
In the Chairman's Welcome he finished with these words:

*But if God is to do His work, if the Lord is to set us free from every kind of bondage, if He is to make us clean and useable men and women in this world of need, we must be utterly honest in His presence; we must not seek to hide things from Him and from one another. We must be prepared to be **utterly honest**. I knew a lady missionary who died because she kept from her doctor the very thing she ought to have told him. She went to see him about a malady from which she was suffering, but managed to hide it from him in some strange way, and he treated her for some minor ailment. She died because she was not honest. We*

*must be utterly honest in God's presence. Then we must be **utterly willing**, willing that He should do what He sees is necessary in order to accomplish His work however painful or costly the process may be. Then we must be **utterly yielded**. If that is true of us then the Lord will do His work, and this will be one of the most glorious Conventions we have ever known. It might be the last, because the Lord Jesus Christ is coming again.*

These words challenge me to be more honest with God, to try to be more willing for Him to do what is necessary in my life to make me more like Him and therefore be more yielded to Him. The day I gave my life to the Lord was the start of a long journey of discovery and so it continues. These words from 1936 have been a reminder that we all need to have the right attitude when we go to a Christian gathering be it Keswick, New Wine or The Big Church, so that we meet with God and truly hear His voice speaking to us. We are not going to Keswick this year but we plan to go next year for the 150th Convention and I shall be remembering these timeless words.

Val Saxby



Ugandaid

“Since our Ugandaid Focus Months of March and April we have decided to take on another student. Our lovely Church family have been so supportive of our previous students Mary Faith and Phiona so much so that Steve the Ugandaid leader who came to join us in April wondered if we would like another named student who would be funded by the money already given by the St Thomas' giving. We felt this would give us a specific focus and someone to personally pray for. So Christine, the other Ugandaid leader have sent the following: Steve and Helen enjoyed being with you a few weeks ago, and we really appreciate how much support we have from St Thomas' Church for Ugandaid. I think it's a great idea for the church to have a student for particular support, and I'm pleased to introduce Omal Pius. Pius is a 20 year old orphan from Eastern Uganda who is studying Motor Vehicle Mechanics. His father was killed in the civil war, and his mother was poisoned.

Secondly, may I flag up our next visit to Uganda, in case anyone from the church is interested?

We will be taking a team over from 17th February for 2 weeks. It will be a modest size team, about 14-15 people, and will focus predominantly on Nile Vocational Institute. We will probably do something practical on site, take all the students out for a picnic and games day, be involved in a Sunday service, and spend time with our students, as well as giving them all gifts from the UK.

No specific skills are needed, as you know, just an open mind and open heart, and sense of adventure! We have tried to keep costs as reasonable as possible over the years and currently we are looking at flight plus £600 for everything else. Flights are currently about £690, but we hope we may catch them a bit lower.

Of course, anyone coming could meet Pius as well!



We do have other information available about our team visits, and would always like to talk to anyone considering joining us.

Let's pray someone is moved to come along."

If you would like any more information about NVI, student sponsoring or indeed the amazing joy of joining a team to Uganda please have a chat with Pauline or myself.

An update on Mary Faith.

Mary Faith and her husband Paul had a baby boy by C section on I think April 28th. They are both well and the baby is called prince (maybe part of his name, maybe title, maybe description? Elijah Zion.

Thank you to everyone for your prayers for this little family.

Blessings Jane and Pauline



Nile Vocational Institute



St Johns commemorates D Day on 9 June



A real poppy in bloom for D Day
At St John's. A poignant reminder of
those who served and died on the 80th
Anniversary of D Day (14 June).

Guide Dog Puppy Update

As I write this on Thursday 27 June (sorry Frankie late again) it is Gucci's first birthday and she is currently at the vets undergoing an op to ensure that she will never have pups!!!

This may seem strange to do it on her birthday – although of course she has no idea that it is her birthday!! – but there was a window of about 3 working days when she could have this done, a certain amount of time has to elapse after her season but she has to be a year old!! Quite complicated.

It feels very strange in the house without her for a few hours

She loved having Esselle stay for almost 3 weeks and they had fun together particularly in their free runs and they slept head to head together – although we did separate them over night. With the very early light mornings we weren't going to risk them starting to play, full on, at about 5 and waking us up!



Esselle is now back home in North Oxfordshire and no doubt used to a new routine in her home with a new baby girl, Meera, on the scene.

Gucci has missed her a lot, but she has settled down although not overkeen on the weather being so hot over the past few days. This has meant very early and very late walks – when the pavement wasn't too hot which can be a problem for their paws.

So if all goes well with her op today and her recovery over the next couple of weeks it is then probable that she will go off to big school at some stage in August to do her more formal training and if that is successful (which we are sure it will be) her introduction to and parthering with a visually impaired person – possibly in time for Christmas in a new home.

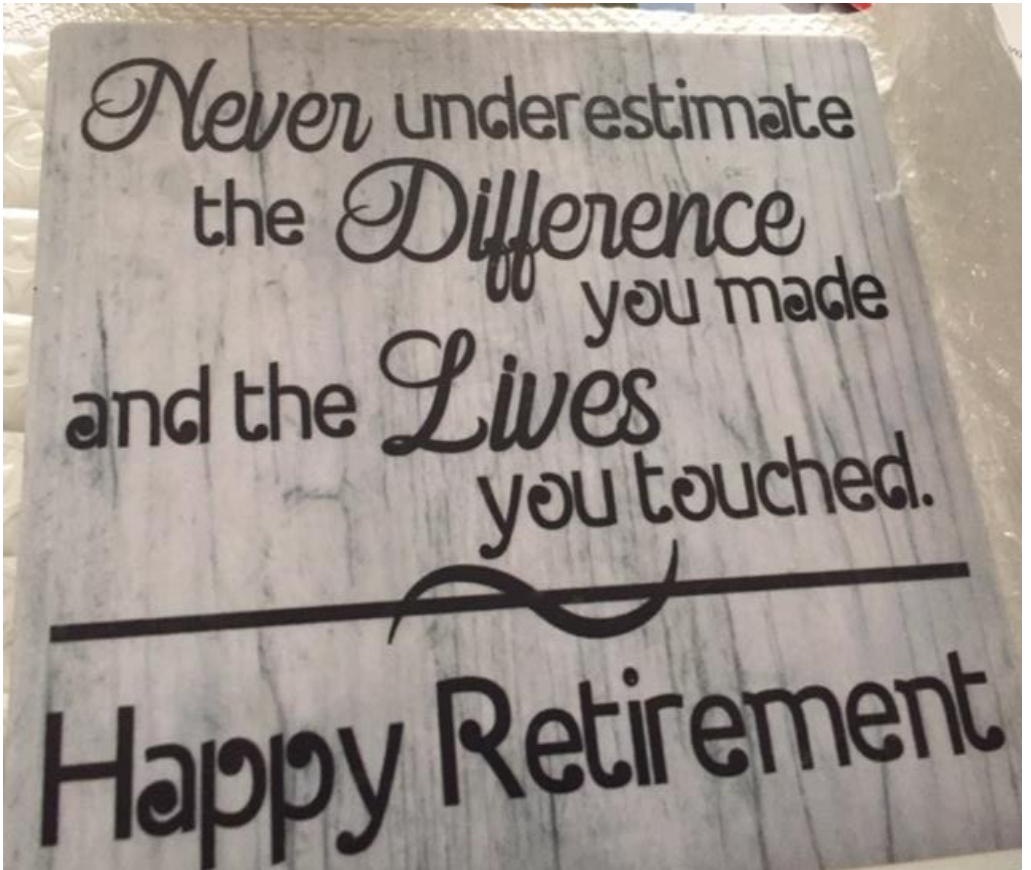
Pat Kerbey



Allan's last PCC Meeting at St John's.



Before his retirement, the photograph shows Allan's last christening at St John's. Proud parents Kristina and Paul Rush, with baby Albie Allan. Also shown are Albie's sister Mia and Godparent Alice.



A message for Allan on his retirement.