

What's happening in the life of St Andrew's and St Bartholomew's

APCM Vicar's Report 2017

Deuteronomy 6.10-12

¹⁰ When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you—a land with large, flourishing cities *you did not build*,
¹¹ houses filled with all kinds of good things *you did not provide*, wells *you did not dig*,
and vineyards and olive groves *you did not plant*—then when you eat and are satisfied,
¹² be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

Last weekend, Susie and I went back to my previous church in Egham for the opening of their new Church Centre. A very impressive building which cost at least £5.5m! Two thoughts struck me:

- Thank God we don't have a £3m debt as not all the centre is paid for, and
- Thank God we are here in Churchdown. This is home and family.

This is an amazing church which often blows my mind away. We have had some spectacular services, there were about 600 in Church on Easter Day, and over 1000 on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

But also, in the less dramatic warp and woof of life. The love people show, the care given, the hospitality offered, the service rendered, the sacrifices made, the willingness displayed are just as spectacular. These are the stuff of a good church.

The other day I read out to the staff a very moving blog written by a young mum who had just been widowed. In pain, she wrote that when she comes to church, she doesn't need impressive lights, or perfect coffee, or snappy straplines on the modern logo (all good things) – she just needs to be loved, cared for and noticed.

That should be our driving force. Not numbers, not buildings, not exhilarating services (all of which are good), but love. 'Family' is what we aim to be.

That's why this passage is so foundational. Moses instructs the Israelites after 40 years in the desert before entering the promised land. When things are going well, remember:

- You did not provide. It's not your doing but God at work in our midst. This is a bit of a blow to our pride, and humbling.
- Do not forget the Lord who saved us. This is a great reminder of how precious we are.

Remember these two things, our confidence and humility, and they are catalysts for a loving, caring church. So, forgive us for failing in this, but let's strive to get it right.

I've been looking at our two Vision Statements – 2008/2012 and 2014/2018. About 37 items to aim for,

and we have achieved at least 29 – that's 80%. Not bad!

Probably the main outstanding items are:

- Courtyard
- Mentoring
- Prayer – we are not good at corporate prayer

But to add to this we need stackable chairs in the church to make the space more flexible!

More immediately we have the task of finding a new Youth Pastor as Jay leaves us at the end of August. I am so grateful to Jay for his ministry here for the last five years. The youth work has grown both spiritually and numerically, and the link with FAST in Romania has been very impressive. Thanks too to Daisy for being such an excellent intern.

The church is getting bigger. The ER is 499 adults. We have over 100 young people as well. That makes us a 600+ church. With growth come particular challenges to structures, not just having enough seats:

- Circle of belonging moves from congregation to small group. Connect Groups are vital. 3 Pastor couples help oversee the groups, and the Rothwells act as co-ordinators. Downside – difficult to feel belonging if not in a group. Cliques? Get lost in a big church.
- Leader – he needs to give Vision and Preaching. Upfront role. Downside – lose touch, unknown, distant.
- Specialised ministries – more paid specialists. Downside – disenfranchises others, they feel unwanted, difficult to offer their gifts.
- Sunday services – moves from having needs met to the worship experience. Downside – focus on experience and not relationships.
- Decentralised decision making. Empowers the different ministries. Downside – power bases, loss of cohesion.
- Deliberate welcome strategy – first impressions are vital from car parking, entrance hall, directions, notices, friendly faces. Downside – never really learn newcomers names and keep up with regulars.

Growth is good. Challenges are real. We aim to keep the family feel. It is a corporate effort. We are all the welcomers. We are all the hosts. We take responsibility for everyone else.

It was honouring to be made Canon of the Cathedral as it meant the Diocese noticed what was happening here, but it is a collective achievement. It is a joint honour because it is a church family working together.

So lastly, thanks:

- To my amazing staff team. Clodagh
- To Julian and Julia Myrans for their verger duties
- To Susie for doing the real work behind the scenes
- To the unsung heroes too many to mention
- To the congregation for being a family proud to belong to

'Be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.'

Jonathan

PRACTICAL EVANGELISM COURSE

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect ... - 1Peter3:15

Remember the positive responses from those who attended last June? Comments included:

“Worthwhile ... Motivating ... Confidence building ... Good reminders ... Informative ... Ideas ... 5s Gospel ... Enjoyed it ... Learned a lot ... Prompted and Challenged me...”

“I have felt challenged and prompted to unleash the good news that has laid almost dormant within me - very thankful for the course ...”

Overwhelmingly, when asked, those attending said, **“Yes!” ... they would recommend that others attend this programme...**

So now is your chance to consider taking part this year! If you would like to attend, or support in prayer [please sign up in the church foyer.](#)

The course includes; recognising that we can all serve God in reaching out to others through living Spirit filled Christian lives and being genuine friends / sharing how many of us do this already / identifying personal styles of evangelism / preparing and reviewing a list of people to pray for / initiating spiritual conversations / preparing personal testimonies / exploring ways to develop praying for others - including prayer triplets / learning (being reminded of) the biblical basis of the Gospel, and illustrations which help communi-

cate this / learning how to pray with, and support, those who wish to make a commitment.

We have changed the format in response to ideas from last year, leaving the evening sessions slightly shorter with more time for prayer and reflection - by adding in the Saturday morning.

(Its always more helpful to be able to plan to attend all the course sessions, but a CD is available if you have to miss one because of a prior commitment.)

Course costs £10; includes course booklet and refreshments. If you would like to know more please speak to Richard Badley, Phil Williams or Carole Jonah.

Richard Badley

FLOWER CELEBRATION THANKS

A big thank you to all those who came and supported the weekend. We had twenty flower arrangers, from St Andrew's and St Bartholomew's doing the beautiful displays, they all worked hard to make our lovely church and the cottage look very special.

The three teams doing the refreshments did a splendid job keeping everyone happy and fed. We are so grateful to all those who supported the celebration financially, especially the local businesses for their help. We could not have done it without the help we had from so many people, the team at St Andrews and Loraine in the office.

The flower celebration would not have been possible without the commitment, dedication and hard work from Sybil Izzard, she gave so much time and energy to making it a success.

Thank you to everyone.

Betsy Wilson



A big thank you to everyone who supported the Make A Mother's Day Appeal cake stall at the end of March. A total of £355 was raised for MU projects which support and enable mothers worldwide to support their children.

Tuesday 16th May at 7.30pm

Lorraine Roe's testimony -
*Lifelong awareness of
God's Goodness*

If you missed her earlier this year here's another chance to hear Lorraine's amazing and inspiring journey.

Thursday 25th May at 2.30pm



Faith in Action
What exactly does MU do?
How relevant is it today?

Come along and find out what MU is all about - everyone welcome.

Janet Ross

**HELPING REFUGEES IN
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

GARAS is our local charity providing support and assistance to **destitute refugees and asylum seekers** who have fled Middle-Eastern countries, including Syria and Iraq. They help with housing and basic food, toiletries, and household items. They help refugees to find work and provide specialist support, including trauma counselling.

GARAS rely entirely on donations and many churches and community groups support them across Gloucestershire. We want to support them too! We aim to collect **specific items of food and toiletries listed by GARAS** and take them on a weekly basis from Churchdown to GARAS in Gloucester for onward collection by refugees and asylum seekers.

Could you offer us a collection point?

To do this **we need a collection point in the vicinity of St. Andrew's** - a person who is willing to have a crate/box in a convenient place where items can be donated and then **regularly collected** by one of our team members. If you are able to help by offering your porch or front doorstep for this venture please contact Debbie Bevan or Sarah Matheou. 07702920083. matheou@hotmail.co.uk.

GARAS Mission:

At GARAS (Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers) we offer support to those seeking asylum in Gloucestershire, welcoming them when they arrive, advocating for them in their daily struggles, supporting them if they face being sent back as well as helping them adjust to their long term future if they are recognised as refugees.

BISHOP MICHAEL A FINAL MESSAGE



Alison Perham wanted you all to have this final message from Bishop Michael written on 16 April 2017.

Dear Family, Friends and Colleagues

I remain hugely thankful that you surround me with your prayers, that is a real comfort to me and to Alison and the family. My faith remains strong and at my side is a crucifix and I have access to the Eucharist at home every other day, which is a joy.

The illness has progressed as we knew it would and I now am really not very well. Communicating my thoughts is becoming more difficult and at times frustrating, but I do want to communicate something of this time with you and say something about where I find myself.

I have always had a really strong sense of the community of saints and that has grown stronger as the years have gone by and I continue to have a sense of this great fellowship of people who fill my life and have enriched me. I think they will go on being that group of people talked about in the Letter to the Hebrews, the 'cloud of witnesses' that will go on supporting. It is the communion of saints that really has always sustained me, they are wonderful people. That collect for All Saints' Day draws heaven and earth together as we live in this life with the communion of saints:

*Almighty God
you have knit together your elect
in one communion and fellowship
in the mystical body of your Son Christ our Lord:*

*grant us grace so to follow your blessed saints
in all virtuous and godly living
that we may come to those inexpressible joys
that you have prepared for those who truly love you
through Jesus Christ your son our Lord
who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit
one God, now and for ever*

I am trying to say Night Prayer each night and that sustains me at bedtime. I sometimes fall asleep over it, but it is a good ending to the day and I'm always conscious of the sense of other people praying at the end of the day. When I'm tired, it ends the day well.

At this time, I find myself waiting, and I want to say verses from Psalm 62:

*On God alone my soul in stillness waits;
from him comes my salvation.
He alone is my rock and my salvation,
my stronghold, so that I shall never be shaken.
Wait on God alone in stillness, O my soul;
for in him is my hope.'*

I would like to end with a blessing, for you and for all whom you love:

*May the love of the Father enfold you,
The wisdom of the Son enlighten you,
The fire is the Spirit kindle you;
And may the blessing of the Lord God
Come down upon you
And remain with you always
Amen*

With much love and gratitude
+Michael

ANGEL TREE—HOW YOUR GIFTS HELP

In 1994 **Prison Fellowship England and Wales** launched its first Angel Tree programme—delivering 60 Christmas gifts to the families of prisoners. Last year nearly 5,000 gifts were sent nationally, including about 50 gifts from St Andrew's. A big thank you to everyone involved in the 2016 Angel Tree programme. The full report can be seen on the notice board, or ask Dave Fisher for a copy.

The following are some of the quotes left on Angel Tree feedback forms that were sent with each gift:

"I can't believe me daddy has sent us something from prison, am gonna keep it and open it Christmas eve."

"I am extremely grateful for the gift but I did not tell my daughter about Angel Tree—she just thinks the gift is from Daddy and she was elated as it's the first Xmas gift she's ever had from her Daddy."

"Many thanks. My son cried and got very emotional. It was very unexpected and the first time in too many years that he had got anything."

"It is wonderful thing to see the twins receive gifts from their mother who they haven't been able to visit as too far away & living with me (grandmother) on limited means. Wonderful idea, thanks from all of us."

"Their Dad said they really enjoy receiving a present I have used *Angel Tree* for the last four Christmas's making this the 5th Christmas. I think it's brilliant from a parent's point of view especial-

ly as I am a lifer prisoner."

"They said Daddy thank you, we thought cause you was in prison we wouldn't receive any presents from you. We love you. Thank you for getting my kids their presents."

"He asked 'how did you get that for me mummy, while you were in prison' and then said 'Your the best mum ever!'"

"This is my 7th Xmas in prison and was never able to send my child a present which came from me, so when my partner told me my daughter wept a little it truly meant something to her to get a gift from me. So I can't thank you enough."

"Thank you, you are a godsend to me and my children."

"They were overjoyed. Thank you kindly. I think this is a brilliant organisation. Well done. Thanks again."



THANK YOU FROM CLODAGH AND DAN



We want to express our gratitude for everyone who showed us such generosity and kindness as we took our leave over the Easter weekend. Thank you for your prayers, words of encouragement, cards, flowers and gifts and for those who baked, served and played during our afternoon tea.

Paul Hobbs painting will bring us much pleasure in the years to come and we have decided to buy some garden furniture with our unexpected and much appreciated cheque.

It has been a huge privilege to be part of the leadership team of such a lively and Jesus centred church community. We arrived as visitors and we leave as family. Before we arrived at St Andrew's & St Bartholomew's we had to say goodbye to the church where I had served my curacy and where Dan had learned to be a, 'clergy spouse' and the children, 'clergy kids' (their words). At that time Ffion asked me, 'how do we say goodbye to our church family?' I told her the same way we say good bye to our family in Ireland and Wales: with a hug and a wave and a 'God Bless, see you soon'. We are and will continue to be part of the family even though we live and worship on the other side of the hill.

We thank God for you all, our brothers and sisters in Christ and pray that you grow in faith and continue to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with the wider community.

With all our love and thanks
Clodagh & Dan

REFORMATION SERMONS

Our upcoming sermon series will focus on the **Reformation** – its Principles and its Passion – in recognition of the 500th anniversary this year. Three key Reformation principles will be highlighted: Faith, Scripture and Sacraments. Each of these represents a radical change in the Christian belief and practice of the time - for which many gave their lives - so we should certainly not take these for granted today:

FAITH – the Reformation boldly proclaimed, 'Faith alone', and 'Grace alone'! We are justified by faith in Christ – not by good works, not by giving our wealth to the church, not by anything we can do! Our salvation is the free gift of Christ, by his grace alone – not granted by Church, priest, or Pope, nor any human act, except that of Christ on the cross.

SCRIPTURE – 'Scripture alone' – meant that the word of God is our one true authority for faith and life. The Church has no power or authority except as it acts under Scripture – and Scripture is the judge over tradition, reason, human knowledge and experience. Therefore it should be available to everyone, no longer the exclusive possession of the educated and priestly elite.

SACRAMENTS – Baptism and the Lord's Supper were to be celebrated as visible signs of God's saving grace and new covenant – no longer as mystical or magical elements which were the preserve of the priests to distribute to those they deemed as worthy - or wealthy. The Reformation proclaimed that forgiveness cannot be bought, and salvation cannot be earned; rather we remember and celebrate Christ's transforming work, for us and in us, through the sacraments.

Dan Button

WORSHIP FOR MAY 17

All services will be at St Andrew's unless otherwise stated

- 7th May Easter 3**
 9:00am Holy Communion
 10:30am All-Age Communion
 6pm Evening Prayer @ St. Bartholomew
 7pm FUEL
- 14th May Easter 4**
 9:00am Holy Communion
 10.30am Morning Worship
 11am Matins @ St. Bartholomew
 7pm FUEL
- 21st.May Easter 5**
 9am Holy Communion
 10.30am Morning worship
 7pm FUEL
- 28th May Easter 6**
 9:00am Holy Communion
 10:30am Morning Worship
 6pm Holy Communion @ St. Bartholomew
 7pm FUEL
- 4th June Pentecost (Hothorpe Weekend)**
 9:00am Holy Communion @ St. Andrew
10:30am NO SERVICE
 6pm Evening Prayer @ St. Bartholomew
 7pm FUEL

Weekday Services

9:00 am Monday to Friday in the Quiet Room - Morning Prayer
 10:00 am every Thursday in the Quiet Room – Holy Communion

USEFUL CONTACTS

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