



The Good News



St Peter's, Hersham

Issue 3 – September 2018

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter which celebrates the great things God is doing through St Peter's, keeps you up to date with what's happening, and invites you to get involved in spreading the Good News of Christ in our community.

Martin's been gone five months now – So, when will we welcome our new vicar?

In the last edition of *The Good News* we explained how we would go about recruiting our new vicar. We stressed that, as usual in the Church of England, the Diocese would not immediately provide us with a new leader, but that they would encourage a period of prayerful discernment during which they would help us understand our church's context, culture, strengths and weaknesses and develop our vision for the future, so that jointly we could identify the sort of person who might best enable us to achieve God's purposes here in Hersham.

As expected, this process has not been quick, but a team led by Suzanne Barrett has guided us through. Many members of our congregation were interviewed, and we were all invited to fill in a questionnaire giving our views on the future of our church. The PCC and other leaders in our parish life then attended a Vision Day to pray for God's guidance and to listen to his prompting about what we should celebrate about our church life and where we should be doing more.

All these discussions were fed into the drafting of our 'Parish Profile', a document designed to provide information to people who might feel called to be our new vicar. This includes a 'Statement of Needs', summarising the gifts and experience which we sense our new vicar will need. The Parish Profile has now been agreed by the PCC and the Diocese, and you can read it through our website. Some paper copies are also available at the back of church, but the most important sections are included later in this newsletter.

We are delighted that we have now been given the go-ahead by the Diocese to advertise the position in the Church Times in September with a deadline for applications in mid-October. Once these applications are received, our Parish Representatives, Tony Skrzypecki and Jane Anderson, will work with the Diocese to prepare a shortlist of candidates who will be interviewed on 14 and 15 November.

On the first of the two days of interview, the applicants will visit our parish and meet a wide range of people. The second day will include the formal interviews so that, guided by the Holy Spirit, our Parish Representatives together with the Diocese can decide who should be appointed.

Assuming that all goes well, that a suitable candidate can be identified and that he or she accepts the offer of the position, it is likely to be several months before our new vicar can be released from existing responsibilities and move to Hersham. The most likely outcome, therefore is that he or she will be in place fairly early in 2019.

Maintaining parish life

In the meantime, St Peter's continues to be an active and vibrant parish, and there is no sign that we are losing momentum. Our well-established teams (Christian Development, Pastoral Care, Treasury, Maintenance, Safeguarding, Mission Support, Youth, Welcome, Baptism and many more) are pressing on with their work unabated.

We are, of course, blessed in that our team of ordained and licenced ministers and Pastoral Assistants is able to continue the most important aspects of our worship life and pastoral care, and so far we have not had to cancel any significant services. Our service rota is now fully staffed right up to the end of the year.

As we said in our last edition, we are confident that the vacancy will continue to be a good time at St Peter's and we pray that for many of us this will be an opportunity for personal growth. That said, during this period we do need to be generous:

- Generous in our prayers for God's guidance as we complete the recruitment process.
- Generous with each other, when things don't run quite as smoothly as normal, and
- Generous with our energy and time, when responsibilities need to be taken up or jobs done.

Regarding this last point, it has become evident over the last few months that some of our activities are highly dependent on a very few individuals, and some people have had to step down from responsibilities they formerly covered. It would be unfortunate if our new vicar's first job were to be trying to fill some important gaps, and so another edition of *The Good News* will follow shortly suggesting some areas where we hope you might feel called to get involved.

Some extracts from our Parish Profile

Welcome to St Peter's, Hersham!

We hope and pray that reading this profile will help you discern whether you might be the person whom God is calling to lead us in the next stage of our walk with him. We can offer...

- A **true parish church** that already has a place at the heart of our village that is valued way beyond its established worshipping community and regularly attracts new people through its doors – **a platform for growth.**
- An **outward looking church** that reaches out to schools and other local organisations, that runs a foodbank and maintains four global mission support links – **ambition for growth.**
- A **church family** that welcomes new people and seeks to support its members by providing something for all ages, is open to new ideas and has a sense of creative dissatisfaction – **a longing for growth.**
- A **team structure** that seeks to go beyond simply supporting the vicar, and increasingly takes on real responsibilities, pastoral and missional as well as administrative – **an engine for growth.**
- A beautiful well-maintained **church building** with well-delivered liturgy, a variety of services and good music – **a magnet for growth.**
- A core of **committed, hard-working church members**, an **efficient parish office**, a **strong financial balance sheet** and **underused property assets** – **resources for growth.**

But, if all this sounds too good to be true, we fully acknowledge that we face some very real challenges...

- Despite all our efforts, and in common with many churches, we are experiencing a steady **decline in regular church attendance.** Our congregation is ageing and disproportionately female and, although thanks to the generosity of past generations and other income sources our finances are strong, our **committed giving** no longer covers our regular outgoings.
- We are **failing to capture** the imagination and commitment of many of those with whom we come in contact.
- We have a lot to learn in helping our people progress in their **personal faith and discipleship.**
- In the past we have benefitted from a large **team of ordained and licensed ministers** most of whom have now moved on or are approaching retirement. We will need to develop a new model of church, encouraging more vocations and committed lay leadership in ministry as well as in administration.
- Realising the potential of our **property assets** to support our mission will be a very major, multi-year project that will require persistence and resilience.

If you are excited by this opportunity we look forward to meeting you and can assure you of our prayerful and active support.

Our vision for five years' time ...

St Peter's will continue to be a parish church at the Heart of the Community open and welcoming to all.

- We will have a deeper faith and greater spirituality as we continue to **involve** all members of our core congregation (wherever they are on their journey of faith) to develop in personal discipleship and in confidence in sharing our faith with the people we meet.
- We will **attract** more younger families into our worshipping community, so that our church family reflects more closely the ages and gender of people who live in our parish.
- We will more purposefully welcome new people into a living faith through our involvement with the community, **engaging** with those whose lives we touch by showing them the love of God and providing opportunities for worship, learning and getting to know each other.
- We will be in the process of implementing a strategic property development plan which utilises all our assets to support our ministry and vision.

Our Statement of Needs

We are looking for a dynamic, prayerful leader who will value and maintain our existing traditions as a parish church open to all and valuing a wide range of churchmanship, and who will work with us to develop our vision and guide us in its implementation.

- Your **passion** for teaching based on your strong, love-centred, personal faith, (coupled with humility!) will lead to a deepening of our own faith and spirituality and give us the confidence to become disciples of Christ within the wider community.
- Your **collaborative and approachable leadership** style will strengthen and further develop our established team structure to enable growth of both church and individual alike. You will have the ability to identify, encourage, empower and support new leaders from within.
- Your infectious **sense of purpose and joy** will inspire our existing congregation, enthuse and equip us to attract new people to church, particularly more men, younger people and youth. You will be outward-looking and will enjoy providing fresh impetus as you lead us through the necessary changes while remembering our older members and maintaining our sense of family.
- Your **experience, confidence and energy** as a leader will guide us as we consider how best to develop our substantial property assets so they better support God's mission here in Hersham.

We are excited about this new stage in the life of St Peter's, and we are looking forward to meeting you, ready to be inspired by your example as you support us in showing the love of Christ to all people. We do realise that in our ambition we are aiming high, but you might be just the person God is calling to work alongside us.

Could this be you?

www.stpetershersham.com

Attracting

Engaging

Involving