



The Lion

A Monthly News Sheet for St. Mark's Church, Basford

www.stmarksbasford.co.uk

February 2020



And it came to pass...

Welcome to the 166th Monthly Sheet I've had an input to! I can't quite believe that 14 years (all but 2 months) has elapsed since I sat here writing something about myself for the news sheet by way of an introduction to your new Priest-in-Charge. I was 44 years old when I arrived after serving a 4-year curacy in Telford; I was keen and eager to crack on in my new role, re-united with Pat Dunn (with whom I had trained a few years earlier) and I settled quickly.

My late father, who was a good judge in many matters, often commented as to what a good parish Basford was and how well I'd done in securing it as my first living. Indeed he was right and the ensuing years have been good ones seeing many positive developments in mission and concerning the fabric of the building. The years have been comfortable and enjoyable.

You will know many of the factors which have come together from my perspective which suggest that now is the right time to move to a new role. Having made the decision to move, coming to terms with the fact that I really am leaving you all gives rise to mixed emotions. I take solace in the fact that St. Mark's has a congregation in good spirit which has held up (numerically) better than many churches; it still attracts new folk when they encounter the worship and welcome that we offer.

New faces we've welcomed over recent months are a great encouragement, not only through their presence but their enthusiasm and commitment demonstrates the way God works in hearts and minds and how we manage to make the gospel relevant and accessible. This church has much to offer and the new incumbent should rejoice at the level of support (s)he will receive from you together with the inherited systems and infrastructure we've developed. The future should be bright and the parish will, without doubt, seem an attractive proposition to those seeking a position in these parts.

Change is something which none of us warm to intrinsically because it brings unknowns and threats. The related opportunities that change also brings are often harder to see but nonetheless real and realisable. With age,

I have learned to take a much more philosophical (or perhaps I should say theological) view of change and learned to accept that such is inevitable and necessary. Change is very apparent within God's creation, something I stress regularly within the context of funerals. The cyclical nature of the material world has parallels in the spiritual. This should not really surprise us as the latter was the prime mover behind the former; God spoke and things came into being. God himself doesn't change but the world (universe on the biggest scale) and those created in his image, yet having a physical dimension, must. Ultimately, our physicality gives way to the spiritual and change only ceases at this point.

Despite the size of the parish, Basford is a busy church, perhaps I made it all the more so by sinking a lot of energy into my role. When I think of all the different styles of services we've offered, the special events, the pilgrimages, there's been little opportunity for boredom to set in. The attractiveness of the building and its worshipping congregation makes for a lot of engagement with people, some we don't see regularly, but they certainly appreciate what we do for them along their life-journey. A quick look at the APCM records tells me that (including the extension of my ministry more latterly in Wolstanton) I've seen 392 baptisms, 128 weddings and 348 funerals over the years. That makes for a sizable contribution to lives and families in this area – what a pleasure to have such an opportunity. Much of my work here has, of course been shared with others. For a long time, I was grateful for the conscientious contribution of Eileen Gray. Pat Dunn has been ever-present and a rock of support throughout my time here. Those occasional offices mentioned above have been undertaken with the assistance of vergers and organists which made each service a team effort. Julie, Janet and Ed have contributed amazingly as Readers too to say nothing of the solid support from the Wardens and their deputies. The choir under various, competent leaders has added so much to the worship. The gardening team, finance team and treasurers together with the variously made-up PCCs have all pulled together to make my time here trouble-free and thoroughly enjoyable. I can't begin to convey how appreciative I am of this situation. As Area Dean I have many of my colleagues' horror stories as to their treatment by their parishioners – they are so far removed from what I've

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experienced here. As a help in the vacancy (at least in the short term) I leave behind Patrick whose encouragement and practical help I have greatly valued over the last 4 years. Ensuring that both parishes prospered during the days when Wolstanton (with its pressing needs) was acquired would have been impossible without him. I must also say that Graham Fowell's relatively short time with us, due to his wisdom and experience, added disproportionate value. I'm pleased to hear that Graham will make a reappearance during the vacancy – something to enjoy.

In my reflections on change around leaving Basford, that aforementioned phenomenon of a cyclical reality has been reinforced by events which have, in some ways, been comforting and assuring. However, in themselves, some of these same events have been emotionally tough. I'm speaking of course of losses. Over time I have been involved pastorally with many members of St. Mark's who have become unable to worship in church due largely to physical challenges brought on by age. I built up a considerable group of 'regulars' with whom I have spent special times. Sharing Holy Communion and listening to their stories cemented meaningful and mutually rewarding relationships. In fact, my Holy Communion kit and Bible were often accompanied by a tool box, hammer drill and extension lead on visits to those without any their own DIY helpers at hand. This *hands-on* approach to parish ministry really helped me convey the truth that God cares for every aspect of our lives much to the appreciation of some! Alas, everyone in this category has now departed this earth and I feel genuinely bereft as a result. Some losses (recently experienced) have been devastatingly tough and almost incomprehensible – funerals of dear friends have taken place which, at my arrival, I would never have even contemplated the possibility of seeing. As a balance (and in some ways a merciful antidote) my last act of leading public worship here will be to baptize Arthur John at the tender age of 5 weeks. New life (bearing the name of another dear and departed friend) within a family that has, in one way or another, travelled with me from my days training to be a Reader in the late 80s. You see, there it is - that cycle - full circle in this case; I've both witnessed and lived it. Such is the life of a parish priest; costly but filled with privileges.

You can see from these brief musings just how much I have to think through as I leave. It will take some time to adjust and despite my time-consuming engagement with ministry elsewhere, there will be a kind of grieving to go through, I guess for you too. It's good to recognise this; let's be gentle with ourselves over it. However, now I move on to a new role which is not only new to me but one which is relatively new in concept too. One thing is for sure, it won't last 14 years! Having been a 'late-comer' to ordained ministry, Basford has received the greater part of what I can offer and I'm pleased that it has. It will feel very strange driving past the building in the future whilst being 'disconnected' but I will no doubt pick up on your news and I'm sure you will see me again when you are under new leadership.

I wish you all well and God's blessing during the vacancy and I hope and pray it will not be too long before an appointment is made, your future direction becomes clear and you feel settled and happy with everything.

In all things remember, as members of the Church, we are (as St. Paul put it) running a race as if to win the prize. Let's continue in our various settings, changed or otherwise, to press on in God's strength. The songwriter Michael Perry has given an inclusive twist to some words of St. Jude and I offer them to you as my final words in thankfulness to you and in praise of him whom we serve "To him who is able to keep us from falling and to present us before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy, to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and for evermore! Amen.

With love.

Terry

Worship Services during February

2 nd	Candlemas	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	'First Sunday' with HC
5 th	Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
9 th	3 rd before Lent	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Holy Communion
12 th	Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
16 th	2 nd before Lent	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Family Worship with Baptism
19 th	Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
23 rd	Next before Lent	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		9.30am	Holy Communion
26 th	Ash Wednesday	8.00am	Morning Prayer
		10.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		19.30pm	Holy Communion

Diary Dates for February

4 th	Tuesday	10.30am	Adult confirmation prep
8 th	Saturday	09.00am	Prayer Breakfast
8 th	Saturday	18.30pm	Terry's Leaving do
11 th	Tuesday	10.30am	Adult confirmation prep
11 th	Tuesday	19.30pm	PCC Meeting
18 th	Tuesday	10.30am	Adult confirmation prep
20 th	Thursday	19.30pm	Contemplative prayer
21 st	Friday	18.30pm	Pancake party
25 th	Tuesday	10.30am	Adult confirmation prep
27 th	Friday	18.30pm	Fish and chips plus film

Early March Dates

3 rd	Tuesday	10.30am	Adult confirmation prep
4 th	Wednesday	19.30pm	Reading Group
7 th	Saturday	09.00am	Prayer Breakfast
10 th	Tuesday	10.30am	Adult confirmation prep