

## Vicar's Letter for July 2017

Dear Friends

You may recall some time ago I talked about the use of a generous legacy that had been left to us at St Matthew's Church, and that after much discussion and discerning the PCC were looking into appointing a paid Children's and Youth Worker on a 3 year contract. However, after two attempts at advertising and interviewing, it has become clear to us that that is not the way forward, as we were not successful in finding the right person, so we have, with sadness, taken the decision not to pursue that any further.

So it was back to the drawing board with more prayer and discussion! We have now followed a different avenue and it seems right to now use the legacy to appoint a new organist and musical director. So I have great pleasure in announcing that from mid-August Dr Steven Robinson will be playing for our Sunday services on our newly refurbished organ and working to build up our choir as well as establish a singing group.

Let me say a little more about having these two - the choir and singing group - working alongside each other. We are looking to recruit choral scholars from the local universities to sing on Sundays during term time to enhance our existing choir. This will be a formal choir for which the ability to read music will be essential, as well as to attend regular, weekly choir practices. The choir will then sing on our Sunday morning services from the choir stalls, and we expect, will be robed.

In addition we would like to encourage others who enjoy singing but who cannot perhaps read music to a high standard, or at all, and who cannot attend weekly choir practices, to be part of a singing group - in a Gareth Malone style! - with a monthly practice and the opportunity to sing at our more informal services - our 3rd Sunday Worship @ 10 and our 5th Sunday All Age Eucharist. Is this something you would like to be part of? If so, do let me know and then we will be well on our way to start our singing group.

Steven will be visiting schools to encourage our young people to love singing and church music, and he hopes to hold special services - already he is planning for an Advent Carol Service on Advent Sunday - and concerts throughout the Church's year.

Music is important to so many and church music in particular; it can help us in our prayer and in our listening to and meeting with God. Music can touch us deeply and evoke memories and emotions. It can strengthen, inspire, guide us and heal us. St Matthew's has had a long tradition of music and of church choral music and we wish to continue this and build on it for the future.

Please do pray for Steven as he takes up this new role. Please pray too for a good response from choral scholars and from others to be interested to come forward to form a singing group. Please also continue to pray for the life of our church on this new venture, especially as we prepare to celebrate 175 years of the present building of St Matthew's Church!

There is so much to give thanks for. Let us join with the psalmist who wrote:

'O sing to the Lord a new song;  
sing to the Lord, all the earth.  
Sing to the Lord, bless his name;  
tell of his salvation from day to day.' (*from Psalm 96*)

With every blessing  
Kate