

## Vicar's Letter for September 2017

Dear Friends

September already and the schools will be beginning a new school year, some young people will be moving schools or starting to prepare for college or university. Here at St Matthew's, even with the plans for changes proposed for Stretford Mall and all the roadworks, we are constant in our regular worship and fellowship, and are a reminder, we pray, to ourselves and our community of the ever-present and ever-loving God in Jesus Christ whom we worship and serve.

This month we celebrate our **175th Anniversary** on Saturday 16th and Sunday 17th September. We will be having the church open on 16th with flower arrangements on the theme of 'Celebration' and a chance to look at displays marking the last 175 years of our present building. Our popular hot pot lunch will be served in the hall with the good fellowship as always.

Sunday 17th will be a Celebration Service with the Bishop of Manchester preaching and leading the service, followed by a buffet lunch. We are all very much looking forward to this weekend! Do come along and celebrate with us - you will be most welcome.

We are also celebrating with Kim as she is commissioned as an **Authorised Lay Minister (ALM)** to assist in Worship. Kim has already been a great asset in our worship, but following her training she will be more involved in planning and taking part in the leading of worship. Her commissioning will be in Manchester Cathedral on Sunday 10th September.

We also are hoping that this month or next we will start to have our **Tower Clock** repaired. The Diocese has granted us permission to have this work now done, and by the time you read this we should have the faculty (the authorisation) in our possession to begin the work. The repair of our beautiful clock will cost over £3000 but is such a landmark and will look wonderful once completed. We hope it may be done by Christmas.

With this financial outlay as well as other plans we have - such as a drop down screen and fixed projector - for use in some of our more informal services, we are having to look at our finances. With this in mind we are asking everyone to seriously consider their giving - not just to see if people can increase their giving even by 50p a week - but also to consider **giving by Standing Order**. We are so grateful for your generosity.

As you know, the weekly envelope scheme for giving has been in place for many years, and this will not be stopped, but we all know that it can be hard to find the right amount to put in the envelopes each week and if you miss a week then you have to try to find double.... and so on. Giving by Standing Order takes away all that hassle. It is easy to set up with your bank - just drop into your local branch or do it online. Standing Orders also helps St Matthew's know how much money will be coming in each month, which will in turn help us in our budgeting and finances.

Here are our **Bank details:**

Account name: Saint Matthew's Church, Stretford

Account No: 10166352

Sort code: 16-32-28

Many people like to put something in the plate at services when the collection is taken, and giving by Standing Order can leave people feeling a bit embarrassed as they are not putting anything in. So we have some little laminated cards at the back of church 'St Matthew's Offering Card' which you can pick up and place in the collection plate as it comes round, as a sign of your giving.

This September I will be taking a **3 month sabbatical** until just before Christmas. All clergy in stipendiary (paid) ministry are encouraged to take a sabbatical every 10 years of ministry. I've been in ministry 15 years now so feel I would really benefit from a short time of doing something with a slightly different focus. So, what will I be doing? As well as some holiday I will be spending time reading and reflecting theologically and biblically on the subject of ecology, and looking at projects and ventures on how we can work more for the care, protection and restoration of the natural world and for its flourishing as Christians. I think at its foundation it is all about how to live peaceably and respectfully with creation, of which we as the human race are only a part.

My aim is that what I learn during these three months will be useful in practical ways for my future ministry here at St Matthew's. And I am sure I will be sharing it with you in the magazine as well.

So for the next few issues of our magazine our Churchwardens, Bobbie and Colin, will be writing to you in this letter spot. I am most grateful to them and to Simon and to others who will be taking on extra duties in my absence - a lot of planning and preparation is going on to ensure that everything runs so smoothly I doubt you'll even know I'm away!

With every blessing  
Kate