

Vicar's Letter for January 2019

Dear Friends

Happy New Year! I hope it will be one in which you will know God's richest blessings. In preparing this letter I have also compiled the Diary dates for January and looking at them there is a wide and busy month ahead of us in terms of meetings and services which give a flavour of the range of activities and involvements there are in and from St Matthew's.

Let me draw your attention to some of them:

Firstly and most importantly is our regular prayer life, not only Sunday worship but also our midweek Wednesday Eucharist and our Tuesday Ecumenical prayers, where Christians of different denominations join together in prayer and worship. As we look at our world and begin a New Year with continuing wars and division, injustice, poverty coupled with many people experiencing anxiety, fear, confusion and pain our prayer is even more important than ever. As well as corporate prayer part of our Christian discipleship is to pray daily, so I do urge you to make daily prayer a priority - even just 5 minutes! We will be holding occasional Bible Studies through the year and our first one will be on Tuesday 15th January at 7.30pm . Again, I would encourage you to come as together we learn and share more of God's word to us.

Then there are Meetings! Lots of meetings! We have Standing Committee to prepare for our PCC meeting and plan the agenda. The Standing Committee meeting gives us an opportunity to raise topics or areas for wider discussion, and ensure that our PCC meetings run smoothly. PCC meetings take place every other month, ideally with Standing Committee in the intervening months. PCC membership from the wider congregation enables the views of the congregation to be heard. I value the wisdom and guidance within PCC meetings to help us reach decisions and plan for the future.

In addition to these meetings we also have our Worship Planning Group which meets 4 or 5 times a year to look at various festivals and services and prepare for them. Again, this meeting highlights the importance we place on our worship, to make sure it is of a high standard, and is organised and led not just by Simon and myself but embraces the gifts and leadership of others.

Our Mission Action Planning Meeting helps us to look beyond what happens within the walls of our church, out into the wider community - how can we let others know of the Good News of Jesus and of God's love for them? How might we at St Matthew's meet some of the needs of our wider parish.

And finally, January is the month when we pray and focus on Christian Unity, so there will be a 'Songs of Praise' service hosted this year at St Matthew's for us all of whatever denomination to meet to sing and pray together. Do come along - it will lift our spirits in the cold and dark of January!

with every blessing

Kate