

## Vicar's Letter for July 2018

Dear Friends

As we come to the end of another school year, we look forward to welcoming Year 6 children, along with their parents and carers, and indeed the whole school, to church at the end of term for what is becoming a lovely tradition: the Year 6 Graduation Ceremony. It is a chance to celebrate the achievements of the Year 6 pupils and to send them on their way with our blessing as they look ahead to starting new schools in the autumn. This Graduation is always a mixture of emotions: celebrating their successes with songs, readings and reflections as well as some tearful farewells! Each child is presented with a bookmark with the Lord's Prayer on it and with a personal blessing as a reminder of the love of God, whatever their faith, surrounding them wherever they go.

If you have the opportunity, why not come along to St Matthew's church on Tuesday 24th July at 2pm for this school celebration?

Endings can be hard, but beginnings can be full of promise. I think the Year 6 Graduation captures both those aspects and reminds us of how life is always changing, and we are always moving forward, having to leave some things behind and reaching out to new things.

Here are some 'beginnings' we are giving thanks for at St Matthew's:

- the granting of the go-ahead to install a drop down screen and a projector for our Deaf/hearing and other services. We haven't yet got a date for the work to begin, but we are praying it will all be completed for Christmas!
- our organist, Paul, who has been with us for 5 or so months and isn't new any longer. He is settling in well and we are very much appreciating his playing, including a new musical setting for the Eucharist by Appleford.
- Our new Churchwarden, Mike, who joins Colin; our new PCC members; our new Treasurer, Joel; and our new Gift Aid Secretary, Bims. We thank God for each one of them and their generosity in giving of their time and talents to work for the Kingdom at St Matthew's.
- Our ALMs (Authorised Lay Ministers) and in particular for Anne Jeffries as she is commissioned in September to be school chaplain at St Matthew's. She and I have already had some exciting talks with Mr Tom Johnson, the Headteacher, as to ways to use her gifts to encourage prayer and spirituality in the school.

And here are some endings, and however hard change is, we give thanks for them too:

- for Bobbie, who has completed 6 years as Churchwarden. Thank you, Bobbie, for your commitment and love and dedication to St Matthew's; and for your steady guidance and wisdom over the years.

- for Rita, who after many years of faithful service has decided to step down from being editor of our Parish magazine. Rita is so hard working and so quietly efficient. Ensuring the magazine is compiled each month is not an easy task, believe me! I know you join me in thanking her for her commitment to producing the magazine over the years.

The future of the magazine has been a subject of discussion at our PCC meetings for a few months now. It has come to our awareness that we are having to throw away quite a large number of copies printed each month. And we have discovered that we are losing over £800 per year in our producing the magazine. As you can imagine this is something that is causing concern - we can't really afford to lose that much each year!

In addition, the number of contributors to the magazine has decreased, and even though the price of the magazine has not changed (still 50p, so only £6 a year), sadly not everyone who takes the magazine pays for it.

So we have had to look very long and very hard at the future of our magazine: at its distribution, at who might take over from Rita and at the costs involved.

Sadly, we cannot find anyone to replace Rita and her sterling work, so we have reached the decision to run the magazine in its present format till the end of the year - this is to honour those who have paid an annual subscription, as well as our advertisers.

Then from January we plan to continue to buy in 'Crux', the Diocesan insert, and to include with it an insert, consisting of my monthly letter, the diary dates for the month and any other pertinent items of news and forthcoming events. 'Crux' costs 25p and we are suggesting that the new-look magazine remains at the price of 50p a month.

So, to you, our cherished magazine readers, we hope that you will consider this ending and new beginning and continue to purchase and read our news sheet/magazine and stay in touch with us at St Matthew's. If you currently have the magazine delivered to you, we are hoping this will continue, but your completion (or not!) of the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) form in the June edition of the magazine will indicate this to us.

Wishing you a joyful and happy summer

With every blessing

Kate