



St Paul's Church



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Dear all

Last weekend I was kindly invited to lead at preach at a service of Holy Communion at St. Nic's, Allington. A couple of months ago, you may remember that we held a joint service with St. Nic's here at St. Paul's to pray for the process of choosing a new leader, and I was asked to speak on one of my favourite topics which is how a congregation might best think about supporting a new incumbent. The point I made then was that clergy training has been improved and refined over the years by the dioceses, such that most of us feel well prepared (at least in theory) to become the new leader of a parish after an interregnum, *but* no attention seems to be paid to helping congregations think through the process of welcoming a new leader in a healthy and helpful way.

The leadership team at St. Nic's said that they felt my advice would be helpful to their congregation at large and so I was asked to give a version of my talk last Sunday, and I was able to weave it in quite nicely with some thoughts about 'Thomas the Doubter' from John's Gospel which happened to be the lectionary passage. For those of you who missed it here at St. Paul's, here's a much briefer version of that same advice for a congregation welcoming a new leader:

- **SPACE** – It can be difficult to get used to being in a new place. Whilst it's brilliant if people are welcoming, it's also easy for a new incumbent to feel overwhelmed so please give them a little space to settle in.
- **TIME** – A new leader will not know everything about us and our churches straight away. Of course they have read the parish profiles, but it takes time for 'real' stories to emerge; it's not a process that can be rushed so please give them time.
- **FREEDOM** – The really great thing about a new person is that they come with fresh eyes and will see possibilities that we won't see, and so it's really unhelpful for them to hear things like, 'That'll never work', or 'We tried that before and it failed'. Let's give them the freedom to explore fresh ideas or even revisit old ones.
- **PATIENCE** – By the same token, it may be that a new leader decides not to change things for a bit while they work out what to prioritise. We may find this frustrating, especially if we've been waiting for the new incumbent to come along and alter something we really don't like, but let's be patient and allow them to work things out in their own way.
- **PERMISSION** – Lastly, it's really important that we give the person permission to fail. They may very well try something that doesn't work so let's be kind if that does happen. Permission to fail is really important because it encourages boldness and creative thinking. If we are too quick to put them on a pedestal and tell them that they're perfect, the law of unintended consequences will mean that they will end up being wary of trying anything slightly risky, worried about disappointing us.

I'll be back with you this Sunday so if you'd like to talk about any of these ideas further, please grab me after the service. The next round of interviews for the post are scheduled for early June so let's all pray for a really positive outcome for our churches.

Rev Anthea

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

SUNDAY 14th APRIL – Easter 3

10.30 am All-Age Holy Communion – Rev Anthea

SUNDAY 21st APRIL – Easter 4

9.15 am for 9.30 am - Bubble Church

10.30 am Experimental Worship – Gwyn

SUNDAY 28th April – Easter 5

10.30 am - Holy Communion – Rev Anthea

SUNDAY 5th MAY – Easter 6

10.30 am Café Worship – Gwyn

EVENTS

THURSDAY 18th APRIL

2.30 pm – Fellowship: Life as a PC – PC Julie

FRIDAY 26th APRIL

7 pm – Church Crafts

FRIDAY 3rd MAY

9.30 am - Baby & Toddler Group

THURSDAY 9th MAY

2.30 pm – Mothers' Union: Grand Canyon Edna & Janette

THURSDAY 16th MAY

2.30 pm – Fellowship: Outing to Great Comp Garden

NOTICES

Revision of Church Electoral Roll

Notice is hereby given that the Church Electoral Roll of the Parish of St Paul's Maidstone will be revised by the Parochial Church Council, beginning on Sunday 14th April 2024 and ending on Sunday 28th April 2024.

FOOD BANK

The next delivery will be next week Friday 19 April.

PRAYER RESOURCE

week beginning Sunday, 14th April 2024

'Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.' (1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18)

This week we give thanks for:

- Any quiet space we can find to listen to the sounds of the world: the twitter of birds, the sigh of the breeze, the ripple of water; may these sounds give us a greater appreciation of God's wonderful creation.

Please pray for:

- Those involved in the Mozambique ferry disaster.
- The people of Gaza as they face much uncertainty; pray for those returning to Khan Younis to search amongst the devastation for what is left of their lives.
- The people of Ukraine as Russian drone strikes continue to hit residential buildings, killing people and cutting off power supplies.
- God's wisdom to guide us in responsibly caring for creation, reducing our waste, living sustainably and valuing the rich diversity of life.
- Our young people returning to school or college after the Easter break.
- St Paul's and St Nicholas as we continue to work together to appoint a new incumbent.
- Our Church family: all who are struggling; and for Edith, Pat, Alice, Jill, Trevor, Maureen, Sandra, Brenda and Elizabeth; and for Ruth, Meaghan and Linda.
- The area in which you live; thank God for its joys and pray for his help in the challenges.

You may like to use this prayer during the week:

Loving Jesus, help me to see with your eyes, reach out with your touch, love with your heart, and respond always with your gentleness. Amen.