

Friends

The 8th of this month will mark 6 months since I was licensed as Vicar of St John's. It feels more like 6 minutes!

I can't tell you how right it feels to be here. It has felt like that since I first read the parish brochure, at interview, and ever since. I feel well blessed and well placed. Thank you to all of you for welcoming me and for all you've done here to make it such a fab community to join and to bring my family to.

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This month your PCC will be gathering for an extended meeting, an 'away day'. We will be taking a breath and raising our eyes from the week to week business of church life, taking a bigger view and looking further ahead.

We will be wondering about the calling of this church in this parish, where God might be leading and how we can meet him there. Do please pray for us, that we would be attentive to God, the needs of the congregation and the needs of the parish and those yet to join us. Because of course the church is one of the only groups that exists not for its own benefit but also for the sake of others.

Jesus is for everyone. For you, for me, and for them.

We are all beloved children, whom God longs to be in relationship with.

Our calling is not to serve ourselves, but to serve God and neighbour. But its easier to seek our own comfort and harder to know what others might respond to, and once you are on the inside, well its nice just to rest and enjoy the benefits.

But whilst St John's is our home, and that home should be safe and comforting, we are called to open our home, share it and sincerely welcome others in. Indeed, more than that, go out into the streets a beckon them in. Just as in Jesus' parable of the wedding banquet, when the servants were called to go into the streets and extend the invite to anyone who wanted to come.

What a challenge! Anyone who has ever had any family or friends stay with them for a while, knows that usually by day 3 you are ready for them to go! But our future, their future and the future of the church, and indeed the world, depends on us being able to share well with others.

To share our faith, share our hope, to share our time and our space, and our resources.

Maybe that is something we can focus our Lenten prayers on, to share more of ourselves with others, in our own personal lives and as a church.

This might involve being more honest with God and ourselves about our fears and self-centeredness.

It might involve trusting and valuing others more than is comfortable.

It might involve being less independent, asking for help, or relying on others more than self.

It might involve giving up something we value, as a way of reducing our dependence on the material, in preference for God and others, e.g. giving time or money away to good cause.

Jo