

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT

Happy Holy Days!

Dear friends,

"I am just so looking forward to a change of scene" we often say as we get ready for our holidays or a day out. It is amazing how a beautiful seascape, hills and valleys, historical sites or even just a house swap can make a difference in our lives and put issues in a different perspective or even lead us to change our attitude and help us to live our lives in a renewed way. Change can revitalise us.

Looking at our worship and services and our church life from a fresh perspective and making some changes will, I believe, help us to grow spiritually as Christians in our knowledge and love of God and then to reach out and appeal to other people so that we grow in numbers too. It has been great to celebrate together in the All the Family Service, joined by so many new families and also looking at different ways of understanding God. We want to build on this and so our patterns of worship are changing slightly but we still will have the choice of worship, old and new.

Jesus encouraged the disciples to turn and lead transformed lives. When he taught them about prayer he was building on their knowledge but also changing their perspective so that they could truly pray to the God who was doing a new thing for his people, ever-present in their daily needs and freeing them from the sin which held them back.

Holidays were originally Holy Days, the only real quality time that many people had for their own enjoyment and personal growth. It is a comparatively recent idea to have a fairly large entitlement to time off from labour. It is valuable time, and at its best it



can be transformative. Alain de Botton once observed, having taken an exotic holiday to "get away from it all", that it was a lovely place but he realised that he had – inevitably – taken himself with him. We all do that, but the fresh encounters can expand our horizons and enrich our lives. And a holiday does not have to be a religious pilgrimage (valuable as they are), but we can find sources of inspiration in creation, and a sense that God loves us and is with us wherever we go too.

As people of faith, we can grow through knowing that God is with us in all circumstances, and we can be refreshed in faith as our lives change through a wider experience of the world.

Happy Holy Days to everyone,

Jo

Family Eucharist

We are growing in numbers at All Saints, which is what we have all hoped, prayed and worked for. Our all-age Family Service is the fastest growing service.

The Ministry Team now feels that it would be good to have a Family Eucharist on the third Sunday of the month which would build on all age orientated worship and connect it with Holy Communion.

Matins is still very much valued at our church, but it has become clear that many see Matins with Holy Communion as an unhelpful compromise.

We will therefore hold a service of Choral Matins at 8.50 am on the second Sunday of

the month. Matins would be a 35 minute service. Martin Penny, as our new Director of Music, will organise the choir pattern of worship and rehearsal to co- ordinate with this and the Junior Church will now meet on the second and fourth Sundays of the month.

This change in our pattern of worship will be reviewed by the Internal Affairs Committee of the PCC after six months and we value your comments during this process.

The monthly service pattern for our main morning services from September would be:

Week 1

10.00 All Age Family Service

Week 2

8.50 Choral Matins

10.00 Parish Communion

Week 3

10.00 Family Eucharist

Week 4/5

10.00 Parish Communion

Should we admit children to receive communion before they are confirmed?

Belonging?

Children are not simply 'the Church of tomorrow', they are part of the Church of today! Children have a rightful place in our regular worship and we need to remember our duty of good nurture and support for lifelong Christian discipleship.

Many Churches have already admitted children to Communion and are discovering that good Christian nurture is not simply a matter of teaching but also of loving and living, like the normal interaction of family-life. They have discovered that Confirmation has gained in importance as a rite of commitment and strengthening in adulthood.

One parish priest said, "Previously, children came from Sunday school via confirmation class to adult worship and then most of them

left. Now they stay and we can be sure that when they are confirmed they not only believe but they also belong."

History

The Anglican Church, in common with Christians of other traditions, have come to recognise that baptism is the universal sign of complete initiation into the life of the Church. This was the case from the time of Cranmer (and before him) at least until the mid-nineteenth century.

An Anglican Liturgical Consultation in 1980s and 90s called for all baptized persons to be admitted to Communion. Since we welcome to Communion baptized communicant Christians of other denominations, what is it about children that bars them from full participation at the Holy Communion?

The Future

Some parents break off a piece of the sacramental bread to give to their children at the altar because they believe that all the baptized are part of the family-meal. The Church of England, has introduced a straightforward process for parishes to welcome children to Holy Communion in an ordered way with a time of preparation and education. When children are admitted to Communion in one parish they cannot subsequently be refused Communion in other churches.

After prayerful consideration the PCC will decide together whether we at All Saints would like to welcome children to receive communion. We would ensure that there would be time to learn together in our services and the children will learn more at junior church and possibly on an activities afternoon.

If this goes ahead it seems that **Advent Sunday**, the first day of the Christian year, would be a good day on which we would like to receive children and young people aged around six and over to communion for the first time.

The PCC will be considering these changes at the 8th July meeting, and members will be interested to hear people's views.