

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



'in the midst of life we are in death'.

Dear Friends,

As I write this letter Ginni is preparing to take her husband Colin's funeral. We all knew that she was feisty, but had no idea that she was so strong! Our thoughts and prayers remain with Ginni and their children: Lauren, Luke and Erin.

Colin's illness and death has been a poignant reminder to us all of that saying in the Book of Common Prayer, *'in the midst of life we are in death'*.

A poem which is sometimes used at funerals or sent in bereavement cards is 'Death is nothing at all'. The opening words of the poem, written in the early 20th century by Henry Scott Holland, Canon of St Paul's Cathedral, seem to suggest death is not as important as we think it is! However, from my own experience of bereavement and from being alongside those who face death and those whose loved ones have died, this is simply not true.

Death is always significant and it challenges us to face things we would rather avoid. To be fair, Scott Holland offers a particular perspective on death and his poem has been taken out of its context, but it's interesting that it has become so popular as a comfort to those who have been bereaved.

Scott Holland wrote of a person who had died as having 'slipped away into the next room' and he here he is mindful of the words of Jesus in St John's Gospel, *'In my Father's house there are many roomsand I go ahead to prepare a place for you.'* We believe that through Jesus we

can be in 'God's house', or in other words in His presence. And we can experience something of being in God's house, His presence, here and now in this life.

Our death is movement from our earthly existence, where we have only glimpses of God, into the 'next room' of the complete presence of God.

Our life with God is possible through Jesus. His life, death and rising to new life opened the door into the love and goodness, peace and joy, wisdom, truth and justice... into all that is God.

Through Jesus we see God and we also see the potential for everyone to reflect the image of God. Death cannot destroy that image.

Love is stronger than death. Death is not 'nothing', but it is not the end. As we seek to live as Jesus lived we can offer that hope to others.

Love,
Jo

Colin Dear RIP

Colin has been so very significant in sharing Ginni's life and her journey to priesthood. What a joy it was that her Ordination to the Priesthood was brought forward so that Colin could be present and in good enough health to be involved.

Colin has dealt with this illness with a quiet courage and faith, and we value all that we have experienced of him during this year among us.

Remembering the Outbreak of World War 1

August 4th 8.00pm

We will be commemorating the outbreak of the First World War, 100 years ago, on Monday 4th August at 8.00 pm around the War Memorial in Parliament Square Hertford.

This will be a short Act of Remembrance lasting about 15- 20 minutes together with the Town Council, local dignitaries the uniformed organisations and townspeople. We will be accompanied by Ware Brass. Please join us for this significant occasion.

September 14th 3.00 pm

There will also be an ecumenical town-wide service, honouring all involved, to be held here at All Saints on Sunday 14th September at 3.00 pm. As well as providing a more expansive reflection for those who attend on 4th August we look forward to welcoming those who were unable to be present on that occasion.



"It's not a new stained-glass window – the Youth Club put its skateboard ramp too close to the church's west wall!"

The Rt Revd Paul Bayes: Bishop of Hertford

You will be all too aware that Bishop Paul has been nominated to be the next Bishop of Liverpool.

He has been an outstanding Bishop in the way in which he has offered great warmth and accessibility in his pastoral care and leadership in the diocese, in his tireless work as Warden of Readers and Chair of the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee.

There will be a Service of Farewell to Bishop Paul on Saturday 26 July at 4.00 pm at the Cathedral. For those who are robing we would ask you please to be robed in the Lady Chapel by 3.45 pm. There will be reserved seating for other guests in the Nave.

After the Service, guests are asked to remain seated for the presentation. Unfortunately, it is not going to be possible to offer any parking but there are plenty of public car parks in the City and a large car park at Westminster Lodge which is situated at the bottom of Holywell Hill.

If you would like to honour his ministry by either making a personal donation to his farewell gift and/or by inviting your PCC to do so, could I ask you (or your PCC Secretary/Treasurer please to send cheques made payable to the **Bishop of St Albans Special Account** to me at Abbey Gate House by **Monday 14 July**.

I look forward to hearing from you. Please pray for Paul and Kate as they make preparations for their move to Liverpool.

Yours sincerely

+ Alan St Albans