

Musical News

Chris Benham

Chris Benham has accepted a position at St Edmund's School. This is an exciting position for him as he will be responsible for a great deal of the extra curricular music and the chapel. Unfortunately for us this means that Chris will have to step down from being Director of Music at All Saints in Summer 2009. He has been an exceptional Director of Music, ensuring that our choral tradition has been of the highest standard and has given generously of his time and talent in many ways to All Saints.

Chris will continue to be very involved in the life of All Saints as he is keen to continue running Soundbites and play the organ when he is available. He will remain with us through the Summer choir trip to Bristol Cathedral, which will be his final task in this post.

The next Director of Music

The Vicar, with the Churchwardens and Ministry Team, are appointing Martin Penny Director of Music from September 1st 2009. We have assessed Martin's abilities against the requirements of the parish and feel full confidence in his qualifications and commitment to the post.

We welcome Martin to this new task among us, and look forward to a more formal welcome when the change comes to complete effect.

Worship and Music at All Saints', Hertford

Criteria used in making the new appointment

The appointment of an appropriate musician to lead and develop the choral and musical aspects of our worship at All Saints is a key element in our worship and witness. The singing of hymns, presentation of anthems, use of settings to the Eucharist and Offices and the playing of appropriate organ pieces all contribute to the quality of the worship, enhancing the presentation of the liturgy.

With the appointment of the Vicar 18 months ago, there was a clear expectation that All Saints would develop its work to ensure the increasing involvement of new members, including young families. This emphasis involved the recognition that All Saints must

ensure a warm welcome and appropriate worship for a wide variety of people. This suggests that everyone who participates in the presentation of worship recognises the need for flexibility and accessibility. A fine balance needs to be struck, blending the artistic presentation of choral and organ music with the need for congregational participation.

The Diocese of St Albans' vision is one that we embrace in our parish and in our Team Ministry in Hertford. "The Kingdom of God is about the reality of God's active presence in our lives and in our world. Our mission is to play our part in making that wonderful life changing reality known. We are committed to developing ways of doing so that have integrity, intelligence and imagination. Let us celebrate the wonderful variety and breadth in our mission and rejoice that at the heart of it all is the reality of the love which God has shown us in Jesus Christ. In today's changing and diverse world we need that variety. We are working to develop fresh expressions of church and 'refreshed' expressions: Churches, whatever their form or style, which love to welcome and look to connect."

All Saints' tradition of high quality choral music is a highly valued aspect of the church, providing a wide range of experiences during the liturgical year. At the Sung Eucharist and at Choral Evensong the sung setting and anthems provide a rich worship experience with artistic integrity. Exceptional services such as the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols and the Advent Carol Service bring together the presentation of the faith with music from past centuries and contemporary pieces.

The monthly Family Service is also seeing steady growth in numbers attending, needing modern and traditional hymns and a suitable choir presence to sustain and strengthen the music, offering a lead in hymn singing and occasional choral pieces.

We have therefore appointed a fine musician who will work with the Vicar and Ministry Team to ensure both the continuation and development of the Choral tradition while at all times facilitating the involvement of people and offering the variety of music needed to progress our vision of outreach, worship and welcome.

Love Jo