

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



Colour me calm

The best seller at the moment in book shops and on line is not a book with any text, but a colouring book for adults! In Britain four out of the top ten best sellers are colouring books for adults. Joanna Batsford has sold millions of books with amazingly detailed pictures to colour with charming titles like "Enchanted Forest" and "Secret Garden". They even managed to outsell Harper Lee's second novel, after "Catcher in the Rye", "Go Set a Watchman".

The huge trend for colouring-in arises because it is not only that there is some aspect of nostalgia to a time in childhood when we enjoyed colouring in books but more importantly they help relax and de-stress and can also aid mindfulness. In fact, there are specific mindfulness colouring-in books! These claim to help you meditate and be creative, "colouring your way to peace and calm". There was some wry speculation on a current affairs programme as to whether the Governor of the Bank of England coloured in during his coffee break and which politicians may need to take up such a book!

Whether we feel tempted to take up this new hobby or not, I think that we can achieve the calm, peace of mind, and meditative mindfulness affect by prayer and contemplation, reading particular Bible passages, and attending a service like Choral Compline. The rhythm and patterns of prayer and verse and music help to draw us out of the busyness and worries of everyday life into the connectedness, wholeness and calm of God's love, relieving our anxiety and heaviness of heart.

We could start with Psalm 139, which reassures us of the comfort of God knowing us through and through.

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.

You know when I sit down and when I rise up;

you discern my thoughts from far away.

You search out my path and my lying down,

and are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue.

O Lord, you know it completely.

You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;

it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Oh and by the way, if you do also want to colour in then All Saints' Art on Thursday evenings has been known to do this as well as their excellent painting!

Love Jo

Bishops, Synods and Rural Deans.

How does the Church of England work, why do we have Bishops and what are these elections for General Synod?

At All Saints we are part of the Church of England, which in turn is part of the

Anglican Communion: a family of approximately 80 million Anglican Christians in more than 40 countries across the world. We are part of the Diocese of St Alban's which is in the southern Province of the Church of England, under the care of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The Diocese of St Alban's has an office and runs committees which provide services like advice on HR, Worship, Finance, Buildings, Land, Mission, Social Action, Communications and Education.

The Church of England is governed through a structure of 'synods' or assemblies that operate at all levels of the Church. The Churches have their Parochial Church Councils which make decisions about the local church and in turn elects people to represent them on Deanery Synod. Each Deanery Synod is made up of clergy and laity who make decisions together about their local area; our deanery stretches from Watton to Ware to Hunsdon to Stanstead Abbots, serving two towns and eighteen villages. They in turn elect people to be on Diocesan Synod who in turn elect people to be on General Synod.

Each of these is a level of governance in the Church and each is a vital part of the decision making process. They all work closely: Parochial Church Council with the Vicar or Rector; Deanery Synod with the Rural Dean, Diocesan Synod with the Bishop; General Synod with the Archbishop. Bishops in the Church of England are ordained to be shepherds of Christ's flock and guardians of the faith of the apostles.

A Diocesan Bishop is the 'chief pastor' of everyone in his - or, as now in Gloucester, her - diocese, lay people as well as clergy. They are required to proclaim the Gospel, teach and uphold 'sound doctrine' and to be an example of 'righteous and godly living'. They are also 'principal minister' within their diocese.

In this diocese, the Bishop of St Alban's The Rt Revd Alan Smith is the diocesan or senior bishop, with responsibility for oversight of the whole diocese. He is supported by two

'Area' Bishops, the Bishops of Bedford and Hertford, to whom he delegates certain powers in their own Areas.

As the established Church, Bishops are appointed by the Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister who looks at the recommendations of the Church leaders. They are responsible for ordaining clergy and confirming those who come forward for 'confirmation' of the promises made at baptism.

We look forward to the consecration of Revd Canon Dr Michael Beasley on Thursday 14th of May at Westminster Abbey and his joining us to celebrate and preach on his first Sunday as Bishop at All Saints on **Sunday 17th May at 10.00am.**

Rural Dean

The Bishop of St Alban's has asked me to be the Rural Dean of Hertford and Ware. No, we won't be moving on! I'll be Rural Dean in addition to being your Vicar, Team Rector and Chair of the House of Clergy for the Diocese.

Yes, it's true I did try to say no, but Bishops have the final say and we clergy swear to be obedient to them when we are appointed to our parish and Bishop Alan told me they were looking for a safe pair of hands, as I have been a rural Dean before, and of course it is an honour to myself and to the parish! Is there more money in it? No! Just rather more work!

The work will be to Chair the Deanery Synod, Clergy Chapter and committees, keep in very regular touch with all the clergy and churchwardens of the churches and with the Bishop and Archdeacon, inspect the churches and help in the appointment of new clergy in parishes when their clergy retire or move on.

I do hope that you will all support the Deanery and myself by your prayers and understanding.

The Bishop will licence me as Rural Dean when he joins us on **Sunday 17th May at 10.00am**