

All Saints Alive

VICAR'S VIEWPOINT



A locked Church?

Dear Friends,

I came across an intriguing idea that one vicar had, which was to place a great chain and padlock theatrically across his closed church doors on a Sunday with a great big notice,

“You’ve been coming here long enough, now get on and share the Gospel in the world”

Initially I was rather impressed at the daring challenge of the message. But the truth is that most of the week we are all getting on with living out the good news of God’s love in our lives in the world, at work, with our friends, families and clubs with those we meet. Many volunteer in visiting, advising, and working for charities. We come back to church every week to recharge our spiritual batteries, gain inspiration and be part of the family of God.

Coming across a locked door can be very disappointing and possibly even distressing. The message could come across as ‘this is our church not yours’. Bishop Alan has encouraged all churches to have their doors open as often as they can, as places for people to look around, reflect and enjoy the sense of prayer and closeness to God.

It isn’t easy to feel that we can entrust our lovely church to be open for all comers. But we have all had that feeling when we’re on holiday or exploring another town where we see a church and we long to look inside or perhaps just sit in the quietness after a busy or demanding day. Should we look again as a church family

and think about whether we may be able at least to open our church a little more often, perhaps for the whole of Sunday for a start?

As we come to Passiontide and Easter, we should be aware that Jesus’ ministry took place in the open, among people – not secretly, behind locked doors or hidden from view. It is one reason why we have a Good Friday Witness in the centre of Hertford, an open witness to the fact that Jesus is for everyone. He did not sit in the temple, waiting for people to come to him (though at least the doors would have been open for that) – he went to the people, and ministered to them, and to many of the most needy people, at that.

His entering of Jerusalem, his trial and execution were public events. The resurrection morning was not hidden from view, but few people were present because no one seriously expected a dead person to return to new life.

These were real events in the real world, for real people like you and me. Jesus promised new life to all who believe, and through his sacrificial death he achieved that. That is why we observe the coming days with great reverence and awe. The symbolic tearing of the curtain in the temple which separated us from the holy of holies means that God is for everyone – in life and beyond into eternity.

When Christ was in the tomb that first Easter he was raised and broke out of the limits of a physical body into the fullness of the resurrection where there are no bounds and life is whole and complete. Christ

should not and cannot be bound, shut in, kept only for ourselves, we need to share to live out God's love.

You won't find the door locked for our services, of course, but when you leave we hope that everyone will want to "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord" – to share the wonder of Jesus' message, his sacrificial love and the new life he offers.

And I would like to hear from any people who feel that they might offer time to keep our church open for others (and I do feel that it could be very helpful personally, to spend that time in a holy space), that they may feel that they are welcomed into this special place which stands as a witness to the all-embracing love of God.

Love, Jo

Wanted – pilgrims and a leader!



EASTER MONDAY PILGRIMAGE 2017

St Albans Cathedral

Monday 17th April
Gather from 1pm
Service at 3pm

Journey together - Play together - Sing together

#StAlbansEMP Share your pilgrimage

Diocese of St Albans Living God's Love

Generosity Joy Imagination Community

Join other pilgrims from across St Albans Diocese to celebrate the risen Christ on Easter Monday at St Albans Cathedral.

Now in its eighth decade, the annual Pilgrimage and service have become a family event which now includes grandparents, parents, young children (in pushchairs), babies (in prams), the family dog (on a lead) and of course muddy boots!

All are welcome.

We gather on Easter Monday, 17th April, in the Abbey Orchard around 1.00 pm for a picnic and games together. We then join the procession into the Cathedral for the Easter Monday Service which begins at 3.00 pm. The service finishes by 4.30 pm in plenty of time to walk or drive home.

In the past we have taken part, often walking some of the way.

It would be great to revive this tradition. If you feel able to lead a party from All Saints please speak to Jo. We have plenty of supporting information and ideas and some potential pilgrims too!

Nothing happens here!

Every year we produce a report for the Charity Commissioners setting out what we have done as a charity in the last calendar year (January to December).

As we know, churches are always thought of as rather sleepy, slow-moving places where little happens.

We were a bit surprised by just how much there was to choose from for the 2016 report, though the same has been true for each of the last few years!

For a bit of fun, please take a moment or two and see how many things that we did do in 2016 (apart from the day-to-day) you can recall.

There's a partial list to check your recollections against on page 5.