

View from the pew

Janet Oldham

I am lucky enough to have been able to walk through some of Hertfordshire's lovely countryside recently and I couldn't help but marvel at how blessed we are to have enjoyed the snowdrops, followed by an equally lovely show of daffodils and now the woodlands are carpeted with the rich blue/purple of our British bluebells.

We are indeed fortunate to live in such a lovely part of God's beautiful World.

SPIRITUAL CHURCH

Mothering Sunday was a lovely less formal service led by Jo and aimed at the younger families and many thanks, as always, to the Mothers Union for their hard work in making up beautiful posies for all to enjoy.

It was good to see many young people in church with their parents and, in some cases, grandparents.

Palm Sunday

On a lovely sunny day, we enjoyed a beautiful morning service led by Jo and ably accompanied by our choir in which the traditional palm crosses were distributed.

The glorious sunshine continued into the late afternoon when a group of 18 plus enjoyed a delicious afternoon tea and the time to chat to each other (many thanks to all who contributed to the food table).

This then led into a service of Meditation and Music, which was both beautiful and very moving. It was a pleasure to see and hear the 'Ford Four' in *Miserere Allegri*.

Maundy Thursday

As many of you know this is a particularly special day in Holy week and, at the end of the service, the Altars were stripped and laid bare and the lights were partially dimmed as clergy and choir left in silence.

Good Friday

At the morning service, it was great to have Bishop Michael of Hertford with us and it was also good to see a good number in the congregation. Geoff led the service and his sons Chris and Tom read the story of Easter to the children and their families in short chapters interspersed with hymns.

The children enjoyed waving the palm fronds, and afterwards they made decorated crosses, chalices, baskets of eggs, palm fronds (thanks to Kath and team of helpers), whilst members of the congregation enjoyed a tea/coffee and hot cross buns, courtesy of the Freeston family.

Later Jo led the Bircherley Green Good Friday Churches Together service with Bishop Michael giving the blessing. Martin B read a bible reading and Janet B led prayers.

After the service, it was good to chat to friends and members from other churches.

The hour before the Cross was held, as usual, at All Saints from 2–3pm.

Easter Sunday

In a beautifully decorated church, Jo led our glorious Easter celebrations with the bare cross of Lent now transformed into a beautiful floral cross.

We welcomed well over 200 to this service, including a goodly number of children.

Lots of excitement was generated as we waited to discover who had won the different categories of our decorated egg competition.

ACTIVE CHURCH

The flower teams worked hard on Easter Saturday to decorate our church with lovely

fresh flowers. Also hard at work, on our behalf, the Work Party repaired the Annexe porch and undertook some routine maintenance.

FUTURE DATES

On **Sunday 7 May** we will be holding a small lunch party for those relatively new members of All Saints, particularly bridal couples, together with some of our longer standing congregation members. This will be by invitation.

Saturday 20 May Coffee morning and Plant Sale. Our green fingered gardeners will by now be busy growing plants for us to buy, so please note the date and come along with family and friends. Contributions for the raffle or cakes for the cake stall will be much appreciated.

Sunday 21 May Civic Service when we welcome the new Mayor of Hertford and Town Council Members.

Monday 22 – Weds 24 May "a house of prayer" at St Andrew's Church 8-9.15 pm

Thursday 25 May – Ascension Day Team Taize stylr Service at St. Andrews Church 8-9.15 pm.

Sunday 4 June, there will be a Celtic Team Eucharist at St. Andrews Church, when Archdeacon Janet will preside and preach.

After the service we will be holding a lunch in St. John's Hall for Jo, to celebrate her 60th birthday.

Finally, this is my last View from the Pew.

The last four years have passed very quickly and it has been a great privilege to be your Churchwarden.

It has been an interesting journey full of memories – World War I Centenary Memorial service, the wonderful service for Archdeacon Trevor's retirement, Jo being made Canon, welcoming Michael our new Bishop of Hertford and Archdeacon Janet, Christmas Tree and Wreath Festivals, Vestry

roof repairs and the 2016 Quinquennial to name but a few.

I have very much enjoyed working with colleagues on your behalf and would also like to thank you for all your support.

Just to let you know that the new Memorial Garden is moving slowly forward.

I leave the care of All Saints in the experienced hands of Colin Bird and Richard Toyn and I know they will work well together on your behalf.

I will continue with my role as Chair of the Social Committee and on the PCC. I will also join Brian Dilley's team of sidesmen.

I hope I can also count on your help from time to time to keep the flowerbeds surrounding the Church tidy and help with keeping the wider churchyard tidy.

Love and God bless you all.

Janet

