

Parish of Sandal Magna Newsletter



The lost are found, the found grow and the lonely are enfolded

January 2022

A New Year Message from Bishop Tom

In ancient Israel Jewish boys learnt to write by copying verses from The Book of Proverbs and in doing so they learned more than the skill of reading and writing, they took in a curriculum for humane living. They learnt to distinguish right from wrong, to love justice and mercy. They learned the social skills to relate to the family and the community, and above all to relate to God.



Earlier generations in Britain taught young girls social skills in a basically similar way by getting them to embroider verses from scripture or poetry with uplifting messages. I inherited from my mother such a piece of embroidery which she had made as a young girl. It is from the pen of the Victorian poet Adam Lindsay Gordon and reads "IN THIS LIFE OF FROTH AND BUBBLE; TWO THINGS STAND LIKE STONE: KINDNESS IN ANOTHER'S TROUBLE, COURAGE IN OUR OWN."

I suspect that Her Majesty the Queen, as a young girl, went through the same discipline of embroidering uplifting verses because she quoted from those words in her first Christmas broadcast in 1952. Maybe the words came back to her mind recently as 2021 carried with it the recent death of Prince Philip and 2022 carries the promise of her Platinum Jubilee in June.

During these months of a parish interregnum coinciding with the challenges of a COVID pandemic, many people at St Helen's and St Paul's have stepped up and shouldered together the strands of Christian leadership which make the parish such a special place. We have seen innumerable examples of kindness and courage and we thank God for them. I believe that, although 2022 will bring its own challenges, the parish is well equipped to eventually welcome its new vicar, and with courage and kindness move into a future full of opportunity and hope.

Tom Butler.

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Vacancy Update

It is January at last. This is the month of the interviews for our new vicar and so our representatives, Ed and Viv, are going to be busy.

On Tuesday 18th, the candidates will be taken on an afternoon tour of the parish and our facilities, where there will be an opportunity perhaps to meet one or two key players. In the early evening there will be a small informal buffet at The Spring when they will meet the leadership team. Wednesday is the day of the formal interviews, when decisions will be made.

This event is really important in the life of the church and so we need to be vigilant in prayer to help identify God's person for our parish. Pray for wisdom and the Spirit's guidance for the recruitment panel.

Remember that even if we are able to recruit on the day, there will still be several months before the new vicar arrives. Pray for our parish leaders, give them stamina and the ability to see the best way forward.

Brian Pratt, Churchwarden

Fabric Repair and Improvement Requests

Craig Orr, our warden responsible for fabric, is, as you can imagine, quite busy at the moment. We wardens often receive requests for repairs and renovations at varying times during the week and I must confess that I sometimes forget to tell Craig until much later!

So we have devised a cunning and foolproof plan. In future all requests for building repairs and improvements should be made via the Parish Office team. They will collate the information and ask questions, thus enabling Craig and his pals to prioritise and make informed decisions about how to proceed.



Irritated by that drip? Give the office a ring and leave a message with your phone number and they will get back to you.

Brian Pratt, Churchwarden

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Hymns Ancient and Modern - an article from our organist

*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice; rejoice, again I say, rejoice'
'O worship the King, all glorious above; O gratefully sing his power and his love
'Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here'*

Selecting hymns for worship is both a **privilege** and a **challenge**. They are chosen according to the season in the church year, their relationship to the readings and any theme for the day. They should complement each other and where possible, be in a variety of styles.

It is often said that the quality of congregational singing can be a barometer to gauge the spiritual life of the church. To help us we have a tried and tested hymn book - 'Ancient and Modern: Hymns and Songs for Refreshing Worship'. The first edition of A & M was published in 1861. In 2013, more than 150 years later and after sales of over 200 million copies, the latest edition, as used in church today, was published.

As a chorister, I purchased my first copy of A & M in 1957 - the Standard Edition first published in 1922 containing 779 hymns. I also have on my bookshelf the 1950 Revised Version of 635 hymns together with the 1983 New Standard Edition of 533 hymns which brings us to our current book of Hymns and Songs for Refreshing Worship which contains 846. The fluctuation in numbers shows that the collection has changed over the years as has its title. You can read more about the history of A & M in the preface of our hymn book when you are next in church.

So how many different hymns do we sing? Well, in the current seasons from the first Sunday of Advent (28th November 2021) through Christmas and Epiphany until the end of January 2022, we have (or will) sing 45 different hymns of which five will be repeated. Week in, week out, I chart the number of hymns we sing to come to almost 200 per year.

That only leaves 646 more and I am sure the worst thing is that we haven't sung your favourite! Please let us know if that is the case and we will do our best to oblige but of course, you have to sing the first verse as a solo!! Seriously we look forward to hearing from you. OK - so that is request number one!

Request number 2 - I know from comments received that you enjoy the support given by the choir in leading the singing during the act of worship. Not only do they sing well but look well in their robes - well, the ladies do but the gentlemen's cassocks are beginning to show their age. Is there a seamstress who could help to give them a new lease of life before we send them to be cleaned (that is the cassocks, not the men).

I look forward to hearing from you and on behalf of myself and the choir, wish you all a Blessed and Happy New Year!

John Arnold Organist

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Oasis Christmas Gifts

Thanks to kind donations the Oasis team were able to deliver cards and delicious home made Christmas cake to over a hundred of our Oasis family. Once again it was a great pleasure to meet so many friends. Let us pray that this year Covid gets under better control so that we can consider meeting together in person.

Janet Porritt and Anne Pratt, Oasis Team

Cafe Church 2022

As of 2022, Stephanie Rutherford and Sarah Osborne will be organising and leading Cafe Church. This is exciting news for us as a church. It's great to welcome new leaders and to encourage growth. Please give them all your prayer and support as they take on this new venture.

Angela Elphick



Stephanie says: I live in Horbury with my husband Stefan and 2 year old son, Jack. We have been coming to St Helen's since the beginning of 2018 when we moved to Wakefield from Cheshire. I am a hospital doctor training in surgery although I haven't returned to work since having our son. I grew up in Sussex but stayed in The North since meeting Stefan at Leeds university. I wasn't raised as a Christian but have always believed there is a God. I came to realise that Jesus was my saviour and that He wanted a relationship with me when I was 20 years old (I'm now 34) after a big "Godincidence" at my first visit to church, from then on I have been a committed believer. I love playing tennis and regularly play at Sandal Lawn Tennis Club. I am a bit of a mad cat lady; we have two felines who I adore. I feel God has given me the enthusiasm to get more involved with St Helen's and I am very excited to be looking after Café Church with Sarah Osborne.

Sarah says: I live in Mapplewell with my husband Hugh, daughter Abigail, Rupert the cat and several goldfish. I work as a junior doctor in mental health and has been coming to St Helens for 5 years from when I lived just around the corner. (contd...)

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Cafe Church continued...

Sarah says: I grew up in a fairly conservative Christian background and can't really pinpoint when I became a Christian although my approach to my faith has changed over the years. However I can recall how happy I was to find St Helen's church. It felt so open and welcoming, accepting people wherever they are in life and faith. I haven't seen any church quite like it. I hope I can return this gift somehow through helping at cafe church.

Women's Fellowship

Our next meeting of the Women's Fellowship will be held in the Emmaus Room at 10.30am on **Monday 10th January**. We will be meeting for a social cuppa and chat, and to reflect on our Christmas celebrations. Should the COVID guidelines change and we are unable to meet, the Women's Fellowship secretary (Gill Heap) will let you know !
We look forward to seeing you all.

Gill Heap

Changes to Services in January 2022

The second Sunday in January is now a joint confirmation service. This means there will only be one service across the whole parish on 9th January - at 10.30am at St. Helens. The third Sunday (16th Jan 2022) will now be as follows:

- 9:30am morning praise at St. Helen
- 11am cafe church at The Spring
- 11am communion at St. Paul's

We would encourage people to continue to make safe and loving choices when attending services so that we don't spread covid. We are holding a joint Confirmation service as we think it is important for our whole parish to support those who are committing their lives to God, but would ask for people to respect others as we do this. We are keeping a close eye on covid advice and will communicate as quickly as we can about any changes to services or additional guidance we might introduce, and thanks to people for continuing to support these measures.

Ed Brindley

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