

## All Saints' Spring Newsletter.

*The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped. (Psalm 28:7)*

Greetings to you all, dear friends, in these more hopeful times as we witness the vaccine programme being rolled out nationally and internationally, despite the UK still being in lockdown.

Services at All Saints began again with great joy on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December following the end of the second lockdown and on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> we were able to enjoy our annual carol service via the RNLI Facebook page, due to the determination and enormous generosity of Peter Leech and Harmonia Sacra, who offered to fund all the costs involved including the technical aspects of the live stream. The service received well over 1,700 views and over £1,500 was raised for the Weston branch of the RNLI. A fantastic achievement.

In the light of some churches around the country having remained closed since March 2020, we are fortunate that the doors of All Saints have still been open for worship when permitted, and that the interior is a Covid safe environment, thanks to the hard work of Terry, Janice and Father Andrew. A somewhat reduced Weston Choral were even able to rehearse Christmas carols there each Tuesday evening throughout the winter, to bring some festive joy to local communities during Christmas week.

Our Midnight Mass saw our choir gathered again in the Lady Chapel, and a splendidly decorated church, porch and crib scene, once more due to the hard work of Janice, Myra and Allison. Congregation numbers were good and social distancing maintained.

Epiphany Sunday was due to be a special thank you to Father Stuart for his services as an associate priest at All Saints, as his licence now expires, but unfortunately illness prevented him from presiding.

We give thanks for his subsequent recovery, and for the fact that he will still take services across the Bath and Bristol diocese.

On Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January All Saints' church held its last Mass for the time being, in line with the third lockdown.

We have lost friends along the way. In mid-January Betty Watkins died after a short illness. She was a dear friend to many, always cheerful and always thinking of others. Ron Fox, who had been brave for a long time in the face of poor health, passed away in April. Ron had given many years' hard work and service to both St Saviour and All Saints.

Doris Keirle died peacefully in Cadogan Court in Exeter on the 19<sup>th</sup> November, just two months short of her hundredth birthday, and her funeral took place at All Saints on the 7<sup>th</sup> December. Doris had been baptised, confirmed and married at St Saviour, and served as Church Warden there for three years, as well as being an active member of the PCC and Mothers' Union. She had the honour of carrying the Mothers' Union banner from St Saviour to All Saints when the churches merged. Doris was a real character, full of fun right up to the end. We miss her.

We also bade farewell to Brian Bewley who passed away on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December at Acer House in Weston. Brian had also given many years' service to the church before his recent illness.

And it is with great sorrow that we say goodbye to Gordon Pullin, our organist and Director of Music for many years since the sad death of Chris Manners in 2013. Gordon grew up in Norwich and it is to that beautiful city that he returns. He has been such a wonderful friend to us all at All Saints, an inspiration to our small choir, introducing us to many new pieces of music, and coaching us with skill and patience, and a source of immense musical knowledge, particularly of the church tradition.

As a young man Gordon was awarded a choral scholarship to St John's College Cambridge, and during his life he has also been a member of choirs at Coventry Cathedral, York Minster and St Paul's Cathedral, as well as a renowned soloist. We shall miss his glorious voice, his musicianship and his kindness. We wish you every happiness, Gordon, and you go with our love, prayers and thanks.

Our last goodbye was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February to Captain Sir Tom Moore; the nation mourned a hero, who showed us all the nature of humility and graciousness.

Streaming has become widely available during the last year as a way of accessing different forms of worship, and we are grateful to Humphrey for passing on his brother's services from St Mary Magdalen RC church, Willesden. The Locking Deanery Service of Light was also live streamed this year on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> January, with songs, prayers, personal stories and a sermon based on Revelations chapter 7. The acquisition of internet capacity at All Saints opens up possibilities for our own streaming of services and this is in the planning stage, but throughout the last year we've been very glad of the work of Terry and Philip in sending the pew sheet, hymns and lectionary, as well as diocesan communications.

Despite the temporary closure of the church and halls, the parish family of All Saints continues to look after its members through phone calls, texts, and emails, and there has been a world-wide affirmation of the need to find ways of reaching out to people, given that touch and closeness are prohibited, and may be for some time to come. It's been hard for those separated by distance from friends and family, particularly grandparents unable to see their grandchildren, and for residents in care homes.

However, many of us have now already had our vaccinations and although it's difficult to plan for the immediate future we nevertheless draw strength and hope from our faith, and as we

approach the season of Lent we continue to pray for each other, for ourselves, and for a closer relationship with God.

May He bless and protect each one of us.