

Rector's letter, June 2019

Dear Friends,

Prayer at Ordination Time

Nowadays in the Church of England, the majority of Priests and Deacons are ordained at the end of June, on or around the feast of St Peter, June 29th (i.e. In the season called 'Petertide'). Two people we have included in our prayers in the last few weeks are David Sheppard, and Michael Wilcockson. Most of you will remember David who, last year, was with us as an ordinand. He was ordained last summer as a Deacon in St Albans Diocese, and is serving as a curate in Ware. He asks for our prayers as he is ordained Priest, to continue in Ware, where I am sure he has already endeared himself to his new church community, and that his artistic and star-gazing talents have been noticed and appreciated. But do continue to pray for him, and for his son, Rupert.

Michael Wilcockson is coming to us as a part-time, non-stipendiary curate, in early July, after being ordained (this Saturday, June 22nd) in Oxford diocese. He was made a Deacon in Oxford last year and has begun his curacy-training by continuing to serve in the religious life of Eton College, where he has been a teacher of Religion and Ethics for many years. He has also worked as a Lay Reader attached to the chapel, conducting confirmation classes, etc. During his year as a Deacon, Michael has also been finding a bit of time to shadow the vicar of two parishes local to Eton. He will continue his curacy with us in a completely parochial setting, and I very much look forward to having him as a colleague from the middle of July.

Very many of us already know Michael and Alison his wife, who have been coming back to Linton in school holidays and half-terms, to the house which they are doing-up for their retirement. While in Linton, he has sung in the choir, preached for us and read at some services. In the Easter holidays, he served at the altar with me. He has also conducted services around Christmastime in Bartlow, Shudy Camps and Horseheath where his ministry was much appreciated. Although he is now retiring from Eton, he will continue teaching on a part-time basis in Cambridge, and he has also been accepted to be a chaplain to the Army Cadets in Essex, which means he will spend part of the summer holidays away at camp. However, he is very keen to get stuck-in to ministry here, and I have already lined-up for him a wedding blessing, a wedding, and leadership in St Mary's Youth Group from next term. I think we will all benefit from the particular gifts he brings in the coming years, and I will make sure he continues as a curate to the whole Team of our churches.

It has been arranged that Michael should be licensed to his ministry in this diocese by Archdeacon Alex Hughes on Sunday July 14th at a service of Evensong in St Mary's Linton at 6 pm. There will be refreshments afterwards in church, and we hope that members of all the Team Parishes will get together to welcome Michael and Alison very warmly. They will be completing their move to Linton later that week, and I hope that he will preside at the Eucharist at Linton the following Sunday, July 21st.

Please pray for Michael and Alison, both this weekend around his ordination, and as he comes to Linton. His name on St Mary's new noticeboard, due to be up by this weekend, will precede him – but only by a very short time.

I have just seen a notice of the ordinations which will be taking place in Ely Cathedral at Pentecost – 12 new Priests, and nine new Deacons. Please pray for God's blessing on all of them, too.

Picnic-style Eucharist, Sunday 30th June, on the Camping Close

You may have seen that our Parish Eucharist next Sunday, 30th June, is planned to be a bit different. In celebration of the Scarecrow Festival, the idea arose of having an outdoor service. All being well, we will be holding it on the Camping Close at 10 am, and the hope is to make it have the atmosphere of a picnic –i.e. that we should sit on rugs, (or folding chairs, for those who have problems with sitting on the ground), sing simple songs unaccompanied, and use a modified and shorter form of liturgy. The aim is to have an informal atmosphere, which passers-by could join if they were interested or intrigued – which is why we shan't simply bring chairs out and sit in serried ranks outside, much as we might do inside, but rather arrange ourselves in an 'open circle' or horseshoe shape! I shall preside without an altar, and we shall pass the communion elements around. Perhaps we might catch a little of the atmosphere of the feeding of the 5,000, which was obviously such an important event for the early church that all four Gospels record it! Although a 10am service might not be the best time for an actual picnic, do bring drinks and biscuits to share afterwards if you'd like to, along with your own picnic rug and/or folding chairs. There will be sidesmen/stewards to help us all get seated appropriately. Obviously, we will aim to be finished and ready to get on with the next stage of our Scarecrow Festival hospitality by 11am. If the weather is wet, we shall have the service in church, if possible creating space there to sit in a similarly informal way. Do come along with an open mind and heart to worship in this way. I know I'm looking forward to it! In the evening, we plan to hold a 'Songs of Praise' type service at 5pm to conclude the Scarecrow Festival.

I also look forward to the chance to meet with and chat to lots of people over the Scarecrow Festival. Please join me in praying that all the hospitality we offer, and all the community events we share in, will be used by God to create relationships which share his love and touch people's hearts with it.

Your friend and Rector,

Maggie.