

Vicar's Blog - The Next Stage

Most of you will have heard by now that I am staying on as Priest in Charge of Wilden, Colmworth, Ravensden, Keysoe and Bolnhurst, but I write quite wistfully on 22nd January – the day when my interim 2-year post would have ended. And reflecting on the two years I've been with you.

On Sunday 14th February the Archdeacon of Bedford is coming to Commission me and all of us for the next stage of our journey together as we proclaim the Good News of Jesus, we hope at a 'live' service at 10am at Colmworth, but it will also be online hopefully live streamed if we can sort out the technology!

As my initial role was time limited, after 6 months we had an open review on 22nd July 2019 on a beautiful hot summers evening! After 12 months I wrote a mid-term report for the Bishop on progress and possible ways ahead. On 22nd July 2020 Bishop Richard and Archdeacon Dave joined us for a ZOOM (how else?!) gathering to share and reflect on us a way ahead. So here we are still here together which is great! God has blessed, guided and provided for us.

But as Priest in Charge there is still an element of non-permanence to our work and ministry, and COVID19 has reminded us this is true of life of course. So, whilst I don't intend us to continue with 6 monthly reviews, the Diocese have set us a target of 2 years to find a long-term way for these Parishes to be viable and sustainable in the long term. Jesus tells us He is the Vine, we are the branches, but a vine needs something on which to grow – a trellis - as God has given us His church.

In my report to the Bishop last Spring which we shared on 22nd July, I set out 4 priorities and challenges for our churches as we move forward:

- Effective Governance – both as 5 individual parishes and together.
- Increasing the usage of our 5 beautiful Grade 1 listed Parish Churches.
- Partnerships with other churches and groups around us
- 'Growing younger' – not only children and young people but serving all ages

As Parishes we've considered our 'MAPS' 'Mission Action Plans' - we've wanted to be more welcoming; outward looking, working in partnerships, commitment to continuing to hold services, and use music and the arts as well as hospitality to reach and draw more people especially into our buildings.

So I look forward greatly to the challenges before us in the next 2 years and hope you will want to particulate fully with us in the Church of Jesus Christ.

Timothy Wilson