CHRIST CHURCH BARNSTON ST MICHAEL'S PENSBY

Weekly update **10th August 2020**

Dear friends,

I want to begin this letter with some significant news that will be a surprise to many of you.

Chester Diocese has been rearranging the way it supports parishes in mission. They have created a new post, the Director of Outreach, to oversee that support. The post was advertised a few weeks ago. I spoke with Ruth and with some friends, prayed about it and applied. A little over two weeks ago I was interviewed and after that I was offered the job. After more frantic conversations and prayer, I accepted. It means that at the end of this year, just after Christmas, Ruth and I and the family will be leaving Christ Church and St Michael's.

This has been a very difficult thing to think over and decide about, and I want to add a couple of things:
First, I do sense God's hand on this. I was not looking for another job and Ruth and I were not wanting to leave. I did not particularly want to leave parish ministry. I am convinced that the local church is the primary instrument by which God achieves his purposes in the world. But for Anglican churches the environment in which they operate makes a big difference. The diocese can do much to encourage local churches mission and evangelism and church planting. With the coming of the new Bishop and new appointments in the outreach department there is a chance, I believe, to make a difference to the work of the gospel in this region. Incidentally, I think it is encouraging for us that the diocese recognises the value of the purposeful development that we have been working on in our church here.

Secondly, Ruth and I are aware that there is still a lot to do in the coming 5 months. We are not going for quite a while. There will be much time and many opportunities to talk about this. For me, there is a lot to do as the church finds its way through the next stage of the coronavirus and as we continue in our purpose as a church, making Jesus known to the people of our community.

As I said at the start, I know that this news will be a surprise for many of you and I am sorry to be letting many of you know by post or by email. I was reminded recently that while change creates uncertainty, or even anxiety, we are utterly secure in the hands of our loving God. We can remember this and will find it to be true. We can go further: change is often God's opportunity to do new things in his people, helping them to grow. I am sure this will be the experience of all of us in the months ahead.

Peter

<u>This week</u><u>'s news:</u>
APCM - The Church of England is asking churches to hold their APCM's before the end of October, and to do so in person (ie not on Zoom or any other online means). We will be holding ours on September 13th, at 10.30 am. We will be electing PCC members, Deanery Synod members and Church Wardens and receiving the accounts. We are making a further revision to the electoral roll in preparation for the meeting. If you are not already on the electoral roll and would like to join,

you can get a form from our church website or by ringing Cecelia in the office. We will be able to accommodate the usual number of attenders in a safe way, so we do encourage people to come.

Regarding our **Sunday services**, our hope and prayer is that bit by bit we will be able to come back together in church. Do come if you feel able. While our online services and radio broadcasts have been a huge blessing, there is no real substitute for meeting together in person. We anticipate that the next service to start will be an 8.30 am Communion service at Christ Church, though no date has been fixed for this. More broadly, the PCC have been considering our Sunday services and think that this disruption to our normal pattern of services gives us an opportunity to think again about how we organise things. This would allow those with children to have different possibilities - coming early on a Sunday if there are other Sunday morning activities later in the morning, or to come later if they prefer to take things slowly on a Sunday morning. Similarly, those who prefer a more formal service would be able to come later in the morning than is currently possible, and our sense is that this would be appreciated by those who find early starts difficult. There are other advantages, in allowing the church to be set up for the 9.30 service in advance. A provisional pattern would look like this:

8.30 am Holy Communion at Christ Church
9.30 am Morning service with children's work at St Michael's
10.30 am Morning service with children's work at Christ Church
11.00 am Holy Communion at St Michael's

As we gradually return to a full complement of service, this is the pattern that we are intending to work towards. It will be good to hear your thoughts and comments.

We continue to be grateful for the great generosity of **Don Macardle,** who left the church about £56,000. We thank God for his desire to bless the church and the significant way he was able to do this. Our apologies for misspelling Don's name last week.

Please continue to pray for our services. The services will continue to be available on Flame Radio (**1521MW**) and a recording of the sermon can be heard on Dial a Sermon on **0151 318 0420.**

Do join us as we **pray** this week
To join in Morning Prayers:
From Tuesday 11th August to Friday 14th August from 9.00 to 9.20.
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85818436645

To join in Pray at Home:
Through the Summer we will continue to pray each Thursday evening from 7.00pm till 7.30pm.
To join us on Thursday 13th August
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84048079083

Book Group:
Please join us as we continue to discuss God's Big Picture. We will meet 7.45pm - 8.30 pm on Thursday 13th August and will be discussing chapter 4
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84048079083