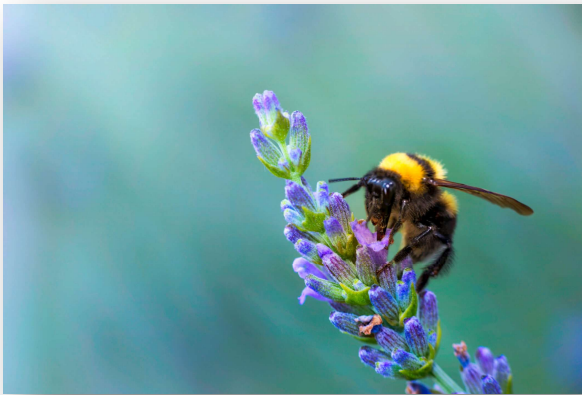


St Mary's News

July 2021

(not quite out of Coronavirus lockdown)



Includes

Priesthood of all believers – the Revd Tony Rindl
Surviving to Thriving – the Revd Josh Brocklesby
Ordination photos

.... and much more!

Priesthood of all Believers



In recent years there has been a revival in the interest of pilgrimages. Perhaps the most famous being the Camino de Santiago, the Route of St. James with pilgrims starting from various locations around Europe and walking to

Compostela de Santiago in North West

Spain. I was very fortunate to walk part of this route a few years ago from Le Puy to Conques, a particularly beautiful part of the route through a lovely part of France. Despite the thousands who now walk all or part of the Camino the numbers are few in comparison with Medieval times. I think for the modern pilgrim it can be a combination of recreation, that leads to physical and mental health and a more spiritual act that leads to a closer connection to God and creation. Whilst the Medieval pilgrim may have been driven by a desire for healing and a relief from poverty and misery, the modern pilgrim is still looking for meaning and purpose and feeling of accomplishment.

The slower pace of life and the rhythm of walking from place to place, often relying on the generosity and hospitality of strangers and fellow pilgrims, gives a fresh perspective. This helps pilgrims to reassess their lives and when they return home may inform life choices, re-evaluating many aspects of life and the general direction of travel through life.

As people of faith we recognise the parallels between physical journeys and spiritual journeys and for the Christian our spiritual journey begins with Baptism and ends in our physical death. There are moments of sunshine and beautiful scenery, meeting warm and friendly people along the way. There are also moments of bad weather, long drags through uninspiring countryside, tiredness, and cold, unwelcoming receptions in strange places. There are times when it is a gentle downwards slope where much progress is made and at other times it is a hard uphill slog. Then there are significant milestones, those important moments in our life that reflect choices and events in our lives.

The 26th June was one such day in the lives of two members of St. Mary's Church as Ash David and Phil Macaulay were ordained as deacons in the Church of England.

For both, it has been quite a journey to get to this important moment in the lives. It hasn't always been easy as they have faced the rigors of the discernment process and the intensity of theological training.



Whilst there have been many joys along the way there have been many sorrows as well. It was good that many of those who have walked alongside Phil and Ash over these past few years were present at St. Albans Abbey to witness their ordinations. It was of particularly gratifying to see Ash's two sons Aaron and Asher who are credit to Ash and their late mother Jyoti. I would wish to express my admiration for Ash's commitment and faithfulness to his calling. Please do continue to remember both Phil and Ash in your prayers. I have no doubt they can both look forward to fruitful and rewarding ministries. (*Ordination photos on page 8 & 9*)

There were a number of old friends at the cathedral and it was particularly lovely to see Kate and Chris Carter. Kate seems to be doing well in her curacy and like Josh will be entering into her third year. Whilst we would hope to have Josh for a little while longer it won't be long before he and Kate will need to give thought to where they might go when their respective curacies come to an end. Similarly Cath will be entering her final year of theological college and hopes to learn where she will be serving her curacy.

Phil and Ash are not the only ones from St. Mary's experiencing significant milestones in their journey of faith. David Scourfield begins his ministry as Lead Chaplain with Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy at the beginning of the month. Dave is no stranger to the chaplaincy having volunteered as a Street Angel in the past and at one time served as a trustee. I am confident that he will bring a fresh impetus to the chaplaincy at what is important time as the town continues to move out of lockdown. He will no doubt build on the successes of the chaplaincy in recent years. I am particularly excited



about his appointment as I think under his leadership there will be the opportunity to develop strong links between the chaplaincy and St. Mary's in serving the needs of our town centre community. If that is not enough, alongside his work with the chaplaincy Dave will also be training for ordination from September.

As a church we can be very proud of those mentioned and it is an encouraging sign of a healthy church that we have been able to foster so many vocations in recent years. I have mentioned Kate, Ash, Phil, Dave, Cath and others and it is exciting to see how God is calling them and using them. That process normally begins with a willingness to serve in the local church and getting involved. The success of our church is dependent of people stepping up and having a go. Cath will need to gather a team around her to develop the children's and families work post lockdown, remembering this time next year she will be leaving us to serve as a curate in another church. We have vacancies on the PCC and need someone to volunteer to take the minutes. We can never have enough stewards and people on the welcome team. We will eventually be serving teas and coffees once more. We need readers, those leading intercessions, and again more singers and musicians. Connect Group Leaders and hosts are vital as we develop a structure of learning and mutual support within our church community. There are countless ways in which you can serve. We are not all called to be priests and deacons in the Church of England, but the bible talks about the priesthood of all believers. We all have a unique calling and unique relationship with God. When we respond to that calling it will open up doors and present exciting opportunities. Remember you are never too young and never too old to be called by God into new and exciting areas of Christian service. What will be your next step on your journey of faith?



The Revd Tony Rindl

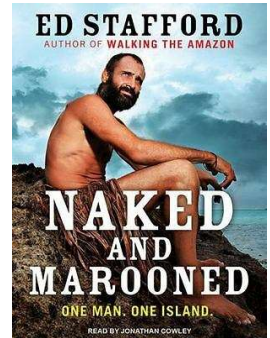
Surviving to Thriving

I mentioned before in a Sermon and perhaps in a previous article that my brother and I quite enjoy watching a TV series by someone called Ed Stafford. The series is called *Naked and Marooned* and its where Ed, who is a former Captain in the British Army, gets dropped off in remote locations around the world, alone and with nothing. It's fascinating to see how vital the basic necessities, we can so often take for granted, are to living. Water, shelter, shade in sun

and warmth in cold and then also food. But as Ed often says he doesn't simply want to survive in these places he wants to tip the balance further so that he begins to thrive. He wants to get to the stage where life is no longer simply about ensuring he can continue to live but to where he can enjoy living again. And so if he gets things under control, he sets out to thrive too.

It is an interesting way of looking at life which moves beyond survival programmes and has something for us in modern life. Personally, I know, and I'm sure there are others who feel this, that there are times of survival in life. Times when we just need to get through the day. We just need to get past that meeting, that deadline, that exam. There are times when we just need to focus on survival. The last year and a half have included more of this than normal for most. But there is a certain point when we need turn to look beyond just surviving and seek to thrive. Jesus comes and says we are to have life and life in true abundance. That life is meant to be a life of joy made complete in him. And therefore I think Jesus does not want life to be simply about surviving but ultimately about thriving.

What thriving looks like for each of us will be different. We are all beautifully different and diverse and so how our lives look when we thrive will be different too. But I think there are three main areas we need to look to in order to thrive and they link to our physical, mental and spiritual health. Interestingly, these are three areas covered by Jesus in how we are to love God, to love God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind. Therefore, care and looking after ourselves in these areas are part of our ability to offer God love. When we thrive, we increase our capacity to not



only love God but also as Jesus then says, to love our neighbour. Thriving in these areas is an act of increasing our capacity to love!

Now these areas cover everything in our lives and so remember that we have seasons in life. Do not feel guilty if you are not thriving in one of them, sometimes it is just about survival. But it is also good to discern at points what would need to change, what would you need to do to begin to take steps towards moving from surviving to thriving. Maybe, through lockdown and this pandemic, you've started eating a bit too unhealthily, maybe you've stopped exercising as much or even at all! Perhaps during lockdown you haven't spent enough time focusing on your own mental health, taking the time, space, rest or help required. Or maybe you've lost the rhythm of prayer, of spending time with God and journeying deeper in your faith. We will all be in different places and situations, but we can all, at the right time, think about taking even small steps from surviving into thriving.

I know some people might feel guilty spending this time and attention on themselves but please don't! Even Jesus regularly took time by himself and at times focused on his own needs and state of mind. When we are thriving, we are increasing our capacity to love and share that love with others. As we thrive, we fill up more on the abundance of God's love for us and that overflows out of us. And let me be clear thriving is not the same as worldly success! Thriving is not earning more or having more, but it is being more of the wonderful person God has created us to be. It is us operating more with a full tank rather than running on empty. It is us operating out of, and from the abundant love God has for us.

And so I pray that God would help each of us and St Mary's as a whole to look to thrive as we enter into a new season!

Best,

Josh

The Revd Joshua Brocklesby



PCC Report – June

Meeting on 21st June – by Zoom

Finances Peter Dean reported that expenditure to the end of May had continued to be lower than budget, with the result that the accounts were showing a surplus of income over expenditure. However, income had not risen significantly as a result of the Appeal. The Finance Committee would undertake a detailed assessment of the position once the half-year figures were available,

Buildings Roger Courtney advised the Council that further investigation had shown that the boiler in the Church Centre flat could not be repaired economically and it would need to be replaced. With other necessary work in the flat, expenditure on the property would considerably exceed the budget figure. Redecoration of the carpeted area in the Church Centre had been completed. The cooker was due to be installed that week Tilly Elliott gave an update on her investigation of curtains and blinds for the Church Centre.

Pre-School Alison Saunders informed the Council that the Pre-School had successfully applied for a Covid-related grant and numbers had increased. The Council endorsed the objectives of the three-year plan that the Pre-School Committee had prepared, including showing the Pre-School's finances more clearly within the overall PCC accounts. The Committee had emphasised the need on safeguarding grounds to install children's toilets and Roger Courtney was asked to arrange for plans to be drawn up in anticipation of future funding for this work.

Mission Action Plan (MAP) The Vicar reiterated the proposed timescale for preparation of the MAP, including the visit from Bishop Michael. The July Connect Together would start the process. The comments and suggestions made at the meeting would be noted.

Vicar's Report Tony outlined his intentions for future services. The mid-week service would immediately move to being completely live. Starting from the first Sunday in September, there would be a monthly service at 5.30pm which it was hoped would be a suitable time for shoppers and residents of the parish and he hoped that this would also be supported by members of the congregation. On the first Sunday also, the 10.30 service would be Worship for All with a short Holy Communion at 9am. The 10.30 service on other Sundays would continue to be Holy Communion. This pattern would continue until Christmas but would be

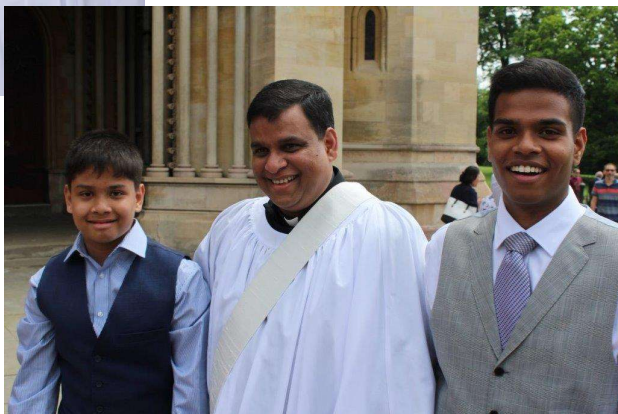
reviewed in November. Subject to future guidance, he wished to encourage the congregation to return to worshipping in the church.

The Council decided that from September, all being well, its meetings would revert to being at the church.

Roger Courtney

Petertide Ordinations

Ash David was ordained to the Diaconate in St Albans Cathedral on Saturday 26th June and will serve his title as Curate at Broxbourne with Wormley.



Phil Macaulay was also ordained to the Diaconate in St Albans Cathedral on Saturday 26th June and will serve his title as Curate in Sandy.



Watford Foodbank Management Team

Watford Foodbank is a registered charity which has been operating in our town for 9 years by providing emergency food to local people in crisis. We are part of the Trussell Trust national network of over 400 foodbanks and operate according to their guidelines. We are run entirely by volunteers and receive food donations and financial support from many local churches, schools, businesses and individuals. We have a warehouse in North Watford and four other distribution points in churches around the area, from where we provide around 300-400 food parcels per month helping about 800-900 people.

We are now looking to expand our Management Team with people who have compassion and empathy to help those in need, and feel they have the skills to contribute to the running of this operation. If you feel called to this work and would like to discuss what might be involved, please contact us at

info@watford.foodbank.org.uk. You can find further details of our work at watford.foodbank.org.uk.



Current Affairs **Connect Group**

International Aid: **Correspondence with Dean Russell MP**

Last month's St Mary's News included a report from the Current Affairs Group of its April meeting with Dean Russell, MP for Watford. Among other issues, we raised our concerns about the Government's policy to "temporarily" cut the international aid budget from 0.7% to 0.5% of GDP. Dean's view was that in any Parliamentary vote, he would vote for the cut. However, he offered to engage further with our arguments.

In the event, a significant number of Conservative MPs, led by Andrew Mitchell, attempted to overturn the cut by bringing the issue to a Parliamentary vote. The means of doing this was an amendment they proposed to the Advanced Research and Innovation Agency Bill (the ARIAB) which the Speaker was due to consider on 8 June.

On 7 June, Andy Roby wrote to Dean urging him to rethink his position if the amendment was selected and a vote held upon it. Andy has worked on internal development for the British government since 1983, including spells overseas working on forestry in Jamaica, Cameroon and Indonesia. He now leads the UK's international water policy work in the Climate and Environment Directorate of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)

Andy argued that the cut:

- is contrary to the International Development Act;
- breaks a commitment in the Conservative Manifesto;
- is very small when set against the budgets for other areas e.g. health (£230 billion)
- undermines the UK's ability to tackle the pandemic and boost a global recovery; and
- undermines the UK's ability to persuade other rich countries to spend internationally e.g. through the COVAX vaccination scheme and on climate change in the run up to COP26.

On 9 June, Dean replied:

As you may be aware, the amendment was not selected by the Speaker of House of Commons yesterday, as it was deemed not to be in scope of the [ARIAB] on advice from the Speakers' clerks, therefore no vote took place.

However, I understand and appreciate your concerns over this country's commitment to those less fortunate overseas. This country has been and always will be open and outward-looking, leading in solving the world's toughest problems and striving to be a force for good in the world. Whether it's stepping up to support desperate Syrians and Yemenis in conflict zones, leading the way in eradicating Ebola and malaria, or supporting millions of children to gain a decent education, I am proud that UK aid is keeping the UK safe while helping the world's poorest stand on their own two feet.

Nevertheless, we must be honest about where we are. The UK is currently facing its worst economic contraction in 300 years because of the pandemic, and a budget deficit double that caused by the 2008 financial crisis. At this time of unprecedented crisis, tough choices must be made, which is why the Chancellor announced a temporary reduction in the UK's aid budget from 0.7 per cent to 0.5 per cent of the UK's Gross National Income (GNI).

Whatever the percentage, my hope is that going forward, there is greater transparency over what is achieved by Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). In this spirit, we must improve how we communicate this aid to the British public and tie it in with clear objectives. I would argue that we can see the overseas aid budget as an investment into Global Britain, and that we can benefit greatly from funding development overseas.

Until we can convey this to the British public, I would also argue it is difficult to justify why we are sending an arbitrary figure overseas without proof of impact, particularly as we seek to bring public finances back under control as we emerge from the pandemic, where Government spending has far exceeded what was expected before March 2020.

I have long called for greater clarity on the role of international aid, and I wrote an article on this in 2012, which may better highlight my position: <https://www.thirdsector.co.uk/dean-russell>

charities-explain-importance-international-aid/communications/article/1135555

Nevertheless, I am encouraged that the UK will still be spending more than £10 billion on fighting poverty, tackling climate change, supporting girls' education, resolving conflicts and improving global health. As one of the most generous aid donors in the G7, with a commitment considerably higher than the OECD average, and coupled with our expertise and convening power, the UK remains a development superpower.

The UK is, for example, the biggest bilateral donor to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the largest fund in the world dedicated to improving education in developing countries. Likewise, our contribution to the COVAX AMC is amongst the largest, and will support COVID-19 vaccines for up to 92 developing countries by contributing to the supply of 1.3 billion doses in 2021, and vaccinations for up to 500 million people.

I have been assured that the UK will return to 0.7 per cent as soon as the fiscal situation allows and I will lobby my colleagues in Government to ensure that this is the case.

In fact, there is no need for the UK to choose between a so-called temporary cut in aid and financing the UK during the pandemic since it is perfectly possible for a leading economy like the UK's to finance both and/or to cut or delay things of lesser priority. Moreover, it needs to be borne in mind that because we give a percentage of the UK's GDP, the amount we give reduces when our GDP reduces. The FCDO's own figures show that the reduction in GDP during the pandemic resulted in a £712 million reduction in aid, before the Government cut is taken into account. These cuts have an impact on millions of vulnerable people, in many cases endangering lives. Nor, in making these savings, has the Government considered the potential additional costs to the UK of e.g. destabilised countries, increased terrorism, increased migration and the UK's enemies, such as China and Russia, increasing their influence by providing the shortfall.

What's more, the UK's failure to secure more financial commitment to climate change at the G7 has been attributed partly to the cuts in our own ODA.

The aid watchdog, the Independent Commission for Aid Impact, was highly critical of the Government's approach to aid in its June report (see [ICAI-follow-up-2019-20-reviews.pdf \(independent.gov.uk\)](#)). It said the FCDO had shown too little "transparency and openness" over its cuts in aid, and some had been made "without consultation". It also rated the Government's responses to its previous advice as "inadequate" in all three areas.

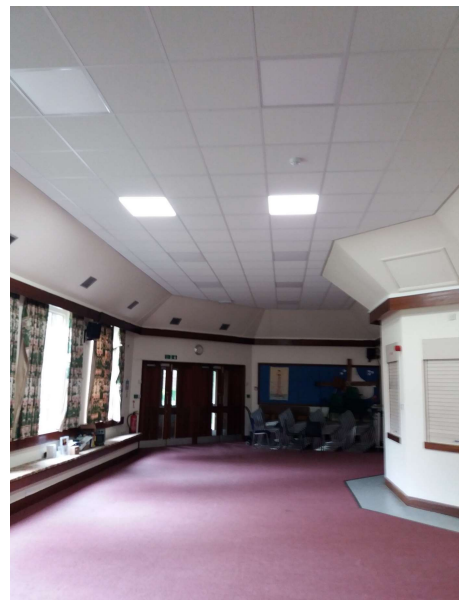
Note: Andy's views in this article are expressed in his personal capacity and do not represent the views of the FCDO.

Andy Roby & Marcus Jones

Church Centre Update

After the church centre roof was replaced the ground floor ceilings and tiled floors were replaced. Note no holes!

Tilly is now working on replacement curtains.





The new cooker got its first use preparing food for a small gathering after Ash's ordination.

Current Affairs **Connect Group**

The state of the **British Church**

Last month, the Current Affairs Group discussed ***The Church in Britain: immoral and irrelevant?***

*The question comes from an article about religion in the UK in connection with the 2021 Census: **Census set to show Christianity fall as more believe in ghosts than God.** The author refers to research that many young people consider the British church is immoral and irrelevant. How the British church in general, and the Church of England in particular is perceived is an important issue for all Christians as we seek to ponder what church leadership and mission will look like in the post pandemic future.*

Background

According to a Tear Fund survey conducted last year during the pandemic, overall, one in four people in Britain tuned in to Christian worship. A third of young adults aged between 18 and 34 watched or listened to an online or broadcast religious service, and one in five adults over the age of 55.

Yet all is not well. According to a *Church Statistics* report, UK church membership was 10.6 million in 1930, about 30% of the population. It had declined to 5.5 million by 2010 (11.2%) and is calculated to fall 8.4% by 2025. However, the so called new churches, often one or more of ethnic, evangelical or charismatic, have bucked the trend, as has the Orthodox church in Britain. Evensong in cathedrals also remains very popular.

On the one hand, many would argue that the church has nothing to do with popularity contests but is tasked by God to keep his standards of personal holiness, to be salt and light in society and to preach the gospel to Britain. The conservative Anglican Mainstream argues that the evidence appears to suggest that:

“committed Christian young people are leaving Anglican churches in Britain and gravitating towards congregations and ministries which offer vibrant worship, clear biblical teaching that equips them to stand firm against immorality and godlessness in society, and create opportunities for leadership, evangelism and social action based on agreed biblical foundations.”

It goes on to suggest that the problem is lack of leadership because “too many people tasked with presenting the Gospel up front in churches are simply not up to the job”. It argues that church leaders need to think strategically by listening more to God, setting aside personal ambition, working more closely with other churches and, if necessary, closing down failing churches.

On the other hand, more liberally minded Christians argue that the decline in numbers is due to the emphasis of many churches on being biblically conservative especially on issues related to sex: sex before marriage, same sex marriage, transgenderism and often embracing gay conversion therapy, creating a church that is exclusive and not fit for purpose.

The Catholic and Anglican churches have undoubtedly been diminished in the eyes of the nation by the high profile reports into sexual abuse, especially as its leaders attempted to cover up what had taken place.

The Anglican Church's Investigation Report of October 2020 acknowledged in its executive summary that [*italics our emphasis*]:

“The culture of the Church of England facilitated it becoming a place where abusers could hide. *Deference to the authority of the Church and to individual priests*, taboos surrounding discussion of sexuality and an environment where alleged perpetrators were treated more supportively than victims presented barriers to disclosure that many victims could not overcome. Another aspect of the Church's culture was *clericalism, which meant that the moral authority of clergy was widely perceived as beyond reproach...*”

To these failures of Christian leadership can be added historic issues such as the continuing presence of monuments within our churches commemorating slavers and, in some cases, even commemorating those who brutally suppressed slave rebellions.

What does Britain think about the British Church?

This year's Census is a once-a-decade snapshot of the country. It has included a voluntary question about religion since 2001. In 2011, returns showed 59.3% ticking Christianity, a fall from 71.6% a decade earlier. Emerging data from surveys and academics suggest that Britain has entered a post-Christian era and the Census results are expected to show further generational disengagement from organised religion with less than 50% of people ticking the “Christian” box.

Of particular interest is the research by Abby Day, professor of race, faith and culture at Goldsmiths, University of London.

For 20 years Day has studied the Baby Boomer generation in Britain born post-war into religious families, who were baptised and confirmed in the Church of England. She maintains that the permissiveness of the 1960s allowed the Baby Boomer generation to reject the Christianity of their church-attending parents in favour of values they found more relevant, inclusive and humane. The Baby Boomers then raised a generation of Millennials who are those most likely to choose ‘No Religion’ on the census. Professor Day has said that these post-Christians:

“are motivated by ethics concerning gender and sexual equality, social justice, climate change and compassion. The churches failed to

deliver on those moral issues and so lost moral authority. Today's younger generations have a different sense of soul, meaning and morality and it's one that rejects the church's record of abuse, racism, homophobia, and sexism.”

Day nevertheless expects that some will have chosen the 'Christian' category in the Census box because it conforms to a sense of identity. Day categorises these non-religious Christians in three ways: 'natal' (because it's about baptism and family); 'ethnic' (because it's about culture and country) and 'aspirational' (because being Christian is being good).

Reflections

We observed that most of the problems described above were found in the Catholic and Anglican churches of Britain since together they accounted for the majority of churchgoers. However, the average person in the street makes no distinction between denominations and regards a scandal in any church as characteristic of “the Church” as a whole.

We considered the churches who are bucking the trend of decreasing numbers. The common thread was that they offered a *deep spiritual experience*: charismatic and contemporary on the one hand, or mystic and choral on the other.

In Watford, the two most thriving churches are Stanborough Park, which is deeply committed to its surrounding community e.g. in the local foodbank operation, feeding local schools, and Soul Survivor. Both are at the charismatic/ Pentecostal end of the spectrum.

One Connect Group member explained that he is Lay Chair of Churches Together in a Midlands city. He confirmed that of its 70 churches, only the cathedral and charismatic churches were thriving. In his own non-conformist church during lockdown, the minister's message had been “keep the faith” which he found irrelevant and uninspiring. In contrast, the vicar of the local Anglican church had talked of a time of suffering for everyone, whether or not Christian; and he'd stressed the need for that church to engage more fully with the local community. Together with several other churches he set up an organisation to do just that. This showed the importance of vision and leadership. Christianity should not be

restricted to merely keeping the faith but to demonstrating God's love to the local community.

We agreed that this should be the approach. Indeed, there had been several well publicised cases of churches loving their communities by feeding them during lockdown. And more widely, churches are involved with the homeless, food banks, debt counselling, Street Angels and a host of other initiatives. A 2020 report from the Christian think tank, *Theos Growing Good: Growth, Social Action and Discipleship in the Church of England* demonstrated that churches which become involved in social action tend to be ones that grow numerically and spiritually.

We agreed that while we recognised the validity of the findings of Professor Day, we did not think that the British Church as a whole could be dismissed as "irrelevant." The picture was more complex with some churches involving themselves in local communities while others banged on purely about believing the right things and were failing in their mission to preach and show the love of God.

We asked ourselves, given Day's findings that young people's morality was based upon particular concerns, where did that morality come from? We concluded that British society, although post-Christian, nevertheless reflected the influence of 2,000 years of Christian teaching in its attitudes and institutions, however imperfectly. We do not live in a godless society because all love comes from God and there is much love from sources in our society that were not with volunteerism having increased. Christians do not have a monopoly on acts of love and, in any case, we tended not to badge initiatives such as New Hope or the local foodbank as specifically Christian.

We considered the role of leadership. Some felt that the selection criteria for ministers was arcane, prioritising theologians who can preach over those who could be visionary leaders. Accordingly, we have too many ministers in the British church who are academic and introvert, who see their main task as preaching on a Sunday, and who devote a disproportionate amount of their time to that end because they believe that the congregation marks them on preaching ability. Instead, we need leaders who can delegate by encouraging laity to take on preaching and other roles within the church and inspire them to acts of love. Stanborough Park was successful because it was involved in social action and young people want to

love others and get stuck in. This is an approach we might consider in St Mary's where we have a deficit of the 20s age group.

We agreed that there is a need to move away from clericalism and deference to clergy. We want our leaders to have authenticity, honesty, transparency and integrity. Leaders will make mistakes. Admitting to them and moving on is part of true leadership. In contrast, sexual abuse, homophobia, racism etc had been covered up in the Anglican church (and others).

We noted that Jesus taught his disciples to avoid a deferential attitude towards religious leaders because this encourages pride (Matthew 23.7-12); and that, on the contrary, the standard for leaders is humble service, not lording it over people, but being examples to them (1 Peter 5.1-4). When they act in this manner, we are exhorted to trust them and submit to them (Hebrews 13.7).

We felt therefore that scripture's model is for church leaders to come alongside people in their preaching and pastoring and not set themselves up as superior by telling others what to do and judging them. (However, the clergy has an important role in teaching and maintaining orthodox belief). Younger people especially find the old authoritarian model of clergy objectionable.

Indeed, we observed that one title for the Pope was the *Servant of the Servants of God*. This ministry of servanthood was something Pope Francis was keen for ordinands to grasp. We recognised the difficulty for Christian leaders who, on the one hand tried to exercise servant leadership but had more worldly expectations of leadership thrust upon them.

In that respect, the media had frequently asked where the Anglican Church was during the pandemic. In *A Defence of the Church of England* published in *The Spectator* the Archbishops replied, "We have been burying the dead, comforting the bereaved, feeding the hungry and praying for our nation." We lauded the efforts of our own clergy who had ministered to up to 100 people a day at Watford General Hospital during the height of the pandemic. We noted that while the public were understandably critical of sexual abuse cover-ups, homophobia etc in the Church they tended to be unaware of the good that is being done.

We reflected on the changes in society. Thirty years ago the church had a monopoly on what happened on a Sunday and now we are competing

in a large leisure market and not keeping up, exacerbated by many having to work on a Sunday and unable to attend church services. The pandemic had caused us to appreciate physical interaction with people. We no longer wished to sit staring at people backs in church but to engage face to face and talk about what is happening in the world. Zoom services have enabled us to worship in precisely that way and churches need to consolidate that lesson. In St Mary's could the default seating position be more "in the round"?

In conclusion, British churches need to become more relevant and more moral by listening to the ethical concerns of younger people and actively promoting gender, sexual and racial equality, social justice, climate change and compassion.

The Current Affairs Group



Sometimes it's through us
that God wants to reach out
to someone who's lost hope
and put their hands in Jesus's hands.

-Archbishop Justin Welby

THE ARCHBISHOP
OF CANTERBURY

Watford Town Centre Chaplaincy – an update

As with so many organisations it has been a frustrating year for our volunteers as the restrictions of Covid have limited our activities. The Chaplains continued communication with shops and businesses online but when many were closed or staff working from home this has proved challenging, but they persevered with emails and phone calls and, of course, their prayers. The Street Angels have hardly been out as the pubs and clubs were all closed. Having said that, following online safety training, there were volunteers out in the High Street for a time last summer, being a visible, encouraging support to shoppers, and recently the Street Angels have resumed Saturday night patrols and Chaplains are resuming some face-to-face work. We pray now for a brighter future for our town centre.

Frances Novillo, Lead Chaplain, left WTCC towards the end of 2020 and the Trustees appointed David Scourfield in her place. David is no stranger to the chaplaincy, or to St. Mary's, having previously volunteered as a Street Angel and at one time a Trustee. He will begin his work with the Chaplaincy on 1st July – please do pray for him and for the Chaplaincy at this new stage in its life.

WTCC is extremely grateful to all at St Mary's for your continued financial support, for your prayers and for providing office space – thank you.



The Mountain.

lessonslearnedinlife.com

If the mountain seems too big today
then climb a hill instead.

If the morning brings you sadness
it's ok to stay in bed.

If the day ahead weighs heavy
and your plans feel like a curse,
there's no shame in rearranging,
don't make yourself feel worse.



If a shower stings like needles
and a bath feels like you'll drown,
if you haven't washed your hair for days,
don't throw away your crown.

A day is not a lifetime
a rest is not defeat,
don't think of it as failure,
just a quiet, kind retreat.

It's ok to take a moment
from an anxious, fractured mind,
the world will not stop turning
while you get realigned.

The mountain will still be there
when you want to try again,
you can climb it in your own time,
just love yourself til then.

— Laura Ding-Edwards

Services

The Church is open
on Wednesdays and Saturdays each week
between 12.00noon and 2.00pm
for Private Prayer

Sunday

10.30 am Morning Service in church and via Zoom;
5.30 pm Reflection via Facebook

Wednesday

12.30 pm Holy Communion in church

Monday to Saturday

Morning Prayer via the Church website

Please keep up to date with what is on offer
via our Facebook page
or the website www.stmaryswatford.org

Who's Who at St Mary's

(They all continue to be available via the phone or online)

Vicar

The Revd Tony Rindl | 01923 225189 / 07792 505480
tonyrindl.stmaryswatford@gmail.com

Curate

The Revd Joshua Brocklesby | 07764 738596
jbrocklesby.stmaryswatford@gmail.com

Churchwardens

Alison Saunders | 01923 244390
Peter Dean | 07876 154387

Children & Families Worker

Cath Da Costa | 07961 564385
familyworker.stmaryswatford@gmail.com

Office

office@stmaryswatford.org
St Mary's Church, Church Street, Watford WD18 0EG
currently only open on a Monday morning

www.stmaryswatford.org