

# St Mary's News

May 2022



## *Includes ....*

The Joy of Diversity – the Revd Joshua Brocklesby

Work with Children & Families – Cath Da Costa

St Albans Easter Monday Pilgrimage – Andy Roby

Wednesday Fellowship Jubilee Celebration – Val Bordley

*.... and much more!*

## The Joy of Diversity



It was great to officiate and preach at the Founders' Day services for both Watford Grammar School for Girls, and for the Boys school last month. The church was full, with well over 800 students and teachers across the services. Normally, when I speak at different events or services, I quickly have a good idea over what I will say but when thinking about what I could tell a room full of secondary school students I got a bit of a mind blank! Because I realised, I know nothing of their lives. I know nothing of what the last few years have been like for them. I know nothing of what the latest cultural trends are for them. I don't even really know what social media platform they all use now.

And so, as I thought about it, I realised that out of the places and things I speak at that these services were ones where, as the speaker, I was very different to those listening, more so than in most other situations. And when faced with difference, when faced with diversity, I was aware I had two choices either I can be afraid of it and give in to the fear of not knowing or understanding or I can see it as an opportunity to learn and grow. And that really is a choice we all have to make. When we face difference and diversity, we can either be afraid of it or we can embrace it and find the joy in it.

I'm biased but I see difference and diversity as a gift because I am a product of it. My mother is Jamaican, and my father is British. And I'm sure that growing up in Kingston, Jamaica in the Caribbean and growing up in a small town in south Yorkshire in England could not be more different experiences for my mother and father. There's a different culture, different weather, different history, different food, different vocabulary, different people. It meant my childhood was also one of difference because along with being read things like Winnie the Pooh in English I was also read books about Anansi the Spider Man in Patois.

Growing up I had shared elements with my friends, but I also had things they did not understand or hadn't even heard of before. Sometimes being different is hard because there maybe nobody around who understands things that are important to you. They may in not knowing give

in to the fear and think it's weird or how you do things isn't how it should be done. But actually, there is such opportunity in our difference and diversity for beautiful creativity. For new things to be made, experienced, and learnt. Many British people might think it's not really a traditional Sunday roast if you have jerk chicken, rice and peas and plantain and sweet potato alongside Yorkshire pudding and roast potatoes etc. but you know what it's amazing! Diversity is a gift, a gift of creativity!

As Christians we should see the gift of diversity as something which comes directly from God. We believe everyone is made in the image of God, all of us! Each person special, unique and different and yet each beautifully in the image of God. It was funny that at an interfaith event recently I was asked to speak about why interfaith dialogue and work is important. And I started by saying that for Christians one reason is because we believe each of us is made in the image of God, every person therefore is to be loved and cherished for who they are. After me it was the Rabbi's turn and as it was the Sabbath, he had sent a pre-recorded message for everyone, so hadn't heard what I said. And you know what? He started in exactly the same way I did. Two different, diverse religions but also with so much in common and so many shared views. It is one of the joys of inter-faith work that along with learning about our many differences you also learn about our shared values and outlooks.

Further, as Christians we should also see the beauty of diversity in creation. We have a planet with so much beautiful difference, so much diversity and creativity on display. Even just in the UK we have different landscapes, environments, panoramas. How boring would it be if it were all the same?

So much joy can come from our interaction with nature. The gift of diversity should be seen in creation, enjoyed in creation but also protected. We should not allow our selfishness as humans to impact the rest of creation. Diversity is a gift, a gift of beauty!

It's all the more important to celebrate diversity because we can see in the world, even now, that there are many who do not think the same.



They are afraid of it. Afraid of our differences and so want to stop it. To make everyone the same, to think the same, believe the same, be the same. There are many in the world who see difference and give into the fear and put-up walls. They want to reject it and push it away. But God wants us to break down walls not put them up.

I think this is even more important for us as Christians because being in the season of Easter we have Pentecost on the horizon. The celebration of the descending of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples. And what is extraordinary about this event is that the Holy Spirit descends and confirms the gift of diversity for us. Because suddenly everyone could hear the apostles speaking in their own language. People from all over the world heard the apostles speaking in their own mother tongue! It could have been the other way round, they could all have been able to understand the language of the apostles, a sign of uniformity rather than diversity. But that was not the case, God wanted to confirm the importance and the gift of diversity at the very beginning of the church. Diversity is a gift which is part of the foundation of the church.

In our Evening Encounter service on 5<sup>th</sup> June we will be celebrating this gift of diversity which was present right at the beginning with the first Apostles, and a gift which St Mary's greatly benefits from. It is beautiful how diverse we are as a community and so we will celebrate that in this service, as we will also at the Global Bring and Share lunch also advertised in the magazine. But the gift of diversity is not something to only be celebrated at one off events, it is something to be celebrated all the time. Each of you has a unique voice, a unique perspective and St Mary's needs you. We need your voice, your passions, your skills, and talents. Do not let fear stop you from playing a part. Because the more diverse a community, the more we grow together and the more we experience the joy which comes from this gift of God.



God bless,

*Josh*

## Work with Children and Families

Dear Friends,



It has been an exciting time in Children and Families Work at St Mary's this past month. How wonderful to once again be able to return to those Easter events which bring such joy to the children and such an enriching opportunity to serve and reach out into our community for those of us who helped support them. A huge thank you to those of you who did help - with the Easter parties in our weekly KidsChurch and Toddler groups, with the knitted chicks schools' outreach (whether it was through knitting the chicks or donating eggs) which provided a wonderful opportunity to go back into schools and share the Easter story and a real joy to hand out the chicks to awed, appreciative children, and of course at our traditional Easter Eggsperience on Good Friday.

The Easter Eggsperience is that moment when it feels like Easter to me - a moment when I remember what happened 2000 years ago as I retell the story to the children but also as the very act of helping with the event is in itself a way of embracing who I am as a redeemed child of God and a beautiful way to live out my gratefulness and love for my Heavenly Father. If you were not there, you really did miss a truly lovely morning of crafts, fun games, Easter Egg hunts and storytelling.

The past couple of months have been wonderful in that as the time of lockdowns has receded so our children's groups - both those during the week and those on Sunday morning - have grown from strength to strength. It has been great to return fully to doing the job I took up almost four years ago as your Children and Family Worker - to engage with children and families in a variety of ways, to have God conversations with children and adults, to support families that come into our church so that they are enabled to be and take part in our services, to be asked to pray with people often not



Christian or churched but just people reaching out in a time of crisis. I have loved my job and I have loved partnering with you all as I have done it, which is why it has recently also caused me so much grief.



I feel like over the past year the perception is that all I ever do is ask for your time in the need to find enough helpers to keep things running – so I am not going to do that now! I am just simply going to tell you how things are.

I have tried my best in all that I have done to keep to the job description that I was presented with when I signed the contract for my role, but there is one element in which I have truly failed: to embed Children and Family Work into the core mission and ministry outreach at St Mary's – fundamentally it has felt that while there was a great heart for this area which led to my being employed, essentially the task of reaching out to new families and teaching our faith to the children who come in through our doors has been left to a tiny group of faithful, incredibly hardworking, committed people and it has felt like a huge battle to keep it going.

The truth of the matter is this...

**The church does not have the money to employ  
a new Children and Family Worker and so,  
much of what I do, will just stop after 26<sup>th</sup> June...**

**There will no longer be  
a Centre Club (our Tuesday Toddler Group);  
KidsClub will stop on Monday afternoons;  
there will no longer be  
Youth Club on the first Sunday of the month**

**If not enough people come forward,  
then we will cease to put on events  
such as Easter Eggsperience, Saints and Sausages, Pancake Tuesday, etc**

The school's work with St Mary's Preschool, Central Primary School, St John's CofE, Watford Fields Junior School, Watford Fields Infant School, Chater Infant School, Chater Junior School, Holywell Primary, Townsend, Parmiter's School, Watford Girls Grammar, Watford Boys Grammar, West Herts College will stop

*(naturally, Tony will welcome schools into St Mary's and go into schools where he can as he did before I started, but he has so much else he needs to do, too)*

We will lose the connections we have made with the Language Café, Watford Women's Centre, families through Watford and Three Rivers Refugee Partnership, The Parent and Toddler Group Project, Watford Schools' Trust, Herts Reusable Nappies Discount Scheme.

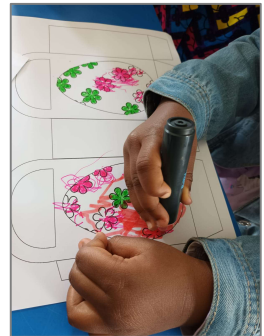
### Who will meet pastorally with families?

Thanks to that tiny core of people I spoke about, there are some things that will continue such as

- engagement with St Mary's Preschool through the Preschool Committee
- Worship for All services put on by the Worship for All Team
- Sunday School and Pathfinders – our children's teaching provision on a Sunday morning

but I worry at what cost – there are so few of them and they are trying so hard to do so much that they run the risk of burn out and not ever getting fed themselves.

At a recent Sunday School meeting the Sunday School Leaders proposed the following with regards to our Sunday morning provision – these are proposals, and we are bringing them to you, the congregation, to help us discern what we should be doing:





Creche for children 0-3 years: due to lack of adults, parents will need to remain in charge of their child, but we offer a range of areas they can access – they are welcome to remain in church using the toys and resources in the Children’s Area, they can make use of the carpeted lounge area (we are looking into how we can relay the audio from the service into this area), or they can come into the Sunday School session supporting their child there.



Sunday School will be split into two age groups to better meet the children’s needs: *Scramblers for 3-7 year-olds* and *Explorers for 8-11 year-olds*. We are looking at creative ways of organising this so that we can provide three to four sessions a month, but in order to do this we will need parents and others to sign on as helpers – according to our Safeguarding Policy we are required to have at least two adults per group. Without this support we will have to decrease the number of sessions we provide.

In line with the Church of England and therefore our own Safeguarding Policy, all helpers and leaders are required to have a DBS and to have completed the statutory and therefore required Safeguarding training. If enough people came forward, then one might in practice only be required to do a few Sundays per year.

Pathfinders for those 11 and above will run twice a month with youth being encouraged to serve in some way during alternative weeks. Again, this relies on parents or others coming forward to be helpers.

This is such a valuable part of our mission and ministry – together as a church we are raising and teaching the next generation as we promise to do at each baptism service – it is both our legacy and our future. As a church, it is beholden to us – all of us – as to what value we will give to this area in the life of our church and how we will go about putting it all into practice.



Please pray! Please pray for inspiration and discernment as we continue to plan for what will come next. Please pray for the group who are currently fighting to keep things going. Please pray for our children, youth and families. Please pray



for all those families who have made connections through our various groups and who will no longer have anywhere to come to.

I encourage you if you have any comments or questions, please do make contact.

God Bless

*Cath Da Costa*

Children and Family Worker

[Familyworker.stmaryswatford@gmail.com](mailto:Familyworker.stmaryswatford@gmail.com)

07961564385



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**We are invited to join the congregation  
at St Luke's Watford**

**Ascension Day**

**Thursday 26th May  
at 7.30pm**

**Service**

The poster features a white dove in flight against a blue sky with white clouds. The text is arranged in a clear, readable layout, with the event name and date prominently displayed.

## Easter Flowers

We are very grateful to all those who provided floral arrangements for Easter - the Church looked stunning - thank you to our flower arrangers.



# St Albans Easter Monday Pilgrimage 2022

- From the Slough of Watford to the Zion Hill of St Albans Abbey

*Health Warning:* Ecclesiastical Puns ahead....



Some may have got out of the habit, others would have none (!) of it, but we four (Alison, Victor, Sarah and Andy) faithful and devout (!) St Mary's Runners took up the annual challenge last Easter Monday and ran 15k to St Albans Abbey. We congregated at the historic centre of Watford (that is right next to the dead centre of town – the graveyard)

and headed up-river via The Diving Man in Waterfields Park near Water Lane – water was something of a theme for this journey.

If you have never done this route you are missing a gem; for as Watford's satanic mills quickly fade behind you, the dreamy sheep-filled pastures of the Munden Estate open up with green vistas of the broad Colne Valley - and you can just open your lungs and breath as the Hertfordshire countryside stretches before you. Not quite Hardy country – but certainly far from the madding crowd.

## Rare Bird sighting

Our route stuck close to the river, fording the Colne by Munden House where we encountered a rare tenor songbird – the Greater-spotted Woodpecker *Charlius Lockettus* – or rather he spotted us and took some video.... Soon after we branched left along a clear-flowing Ver river, via more mills and wetlands, convents and long-lost Roman vineyards.



## Zion Hill



In no time the Great Abbey hove into view, and with it the promise of rest and succour at Ye Olde Fighting Cocks which has happily re-opened with a great new menu and plenty of ale. The last climb up the hill, glucose levels restored, is magnificent, as the Abbey signals God's glory, and thousands of other pilgrims gathered for an uplifting pilgrims' procession into the building and a wonderful service of praise.

If you are interested in such adventures but feel daunted and overwhelmed by a 15k trek, or if you just want to shed a few Covid-kilos and reduce your blood pressure, why not start with a short walk in Cassio Park next Saturday with St Mary's Runners and Walkers, and see where it takes you? It must be good for you if GPs are now prescribing it!



As Lao-Tzu put it – the longest journey starts with the first step, and happily for St Mary's Runners and Walkers, every Saturday ends with a hearty breakfast in a friendly and supportive group of the like-minded. Contact [andyroby2001@yahoo.com](mailto:andyroby2001@yahoo.com) or 07414 832983 if you are interested – all are welcome. We meet at 8.30am at 6, Cassiobury Drive (Alison's house).

Andy Roby



**Save the Date!**

**Global Bring and Share Lunch  
Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June**

Let's celebrate being able to get together again as a church community by having lunch together in a safe outside setting.

Bring your favourite dish to make it a Global lunch that reflects the many food cultures within our congregation.

**Details to follow.**



**Language Café**

First Tuesday of the month  
11.30 am – 1pm

St Mary's Church, Church St,  
Watford WD18 0EG



For more information, contact  
Cath Da Costa 07961564385

## Wednesday Fellowship

Hello to all the members of St Mary's - I am Val Bordley and joined the Wednesday Fellowship when I moved into Watford five years ago when John ran our group.

When John moved Frances took over until she also moved.

We had all the lock downs which had a great impact on the health of many of our members, so I was keen to start up the Fellowship again and so took over as organizer. This has been very difficult as so many members have not been able to return owing to failing health however, the few that have, want it to continue and I am doing all I can to enable this.

On Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> June I am planning a Jubilee celebration in the church centre and would like members of our church to join us to make it a very special day. We will never see a 70<sup>th</sup> Jubilee again and so it is a real time to celebrate and hopefully with the church family coming together for this time it will be a day to remember. I promise it will be a good afternoon starting at 2.00pm with a talk about our Queen, a sing-along to cds as I have not been able to find anyone to play the piano, then a really nice tea. The cost will be just £3.00 per head and there will also be a raffle.

I sincerely hope that you will join us on the special day so as a church family we can celebrate together. I will need to know how many people to cater for and how many places to set at the tables. I can take names after church when I am in the church centre, or you can give names to Josh to pass on to me.

So please come and join us, with best wishes from Val.



# Who's Who at St Mary's

## Vicar

The Revd Tony Rindl | 01923 225189 / 07792 505480  
[tony.rindl@gmail.com](mailto:tony.rindl@gmail.com)

## Curate

The Revd Joshua Brocklesby | 07764 738596  
[jbrocklesby.stmaryswatford@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:familyworker.stmaryswatford@gmail.com)

## Facilities Manager

[stmarysfacilitiesmanager@gmail.com](mailto:stmarysfacilitiesmanager@gmail.com)

## Church Office

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01923 225189

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# Services

## The Church is open each week

Monday to Friday  
between 9.30am and 3.00pm  
and on Saturday  
between 12.00noon and 2.00pm

## Sunday

9.00am Holy Communion (said) in church  
on 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday only each month;  
10.30am Morning Service in church and via Zoom  
every Sunday;  
5.30pm Encounter in church and via Facebook Live  
on 1st Sunday of month only  
(preceded at 5.00pm with refreshments)

## Wednesday

12.30pm Holy Communion in church  
  
(for Zoom links please contact Church Office)

Please keep up to date with what is on offer  
via our Facebook page  
or the website [www.stmaryswatford.org](http://www.stmaryswatford.org)