

Annual Parochial Church Meeting - 24th April 2022

Associate Rector's Report

As I write this report, I realise that I have been in the parish for 6 months already. In normal circumstances, I would have hoped to have visited and met most of you by now but the restrictions of Covid 19 have put me back a bit. I hope that the coming year will enable me to press forward with that goal. Thank you all for the welcome we received when we arrived in the parish although the weather has not been so welcoming causing a large horse chestnut to come down in our garden destroying our fence and almost hitting the horse which lives in the glebe field next door! We really do feel part of a caring community here in Chelsfield. I have enjoyed the challenge of ministering during the pandemic, and it is good that we have been able to begin to look forward to future ministry and mission. The new service booklets are being introduced at both Chelsfield and Well Hill and I hope they are being well received. In addition, the benefice is now using IknowChurch and I hope it will aid communication and administration. I am looking forward to the coming year and I know the parish has planned to resume social activities in addition to our regular worship and it sounds to me like the church fete in the rectory garden is well received in the village and I have discovered the joys of a village that produces its own Christmas Song each year and I hope to follow my predecessor Rev John in grabbing a cameo role in the future! I am pleased to see that the village hall has a varied programme of groups meeting there and I have visited some already including the community café. Our Toddler Group and Memory Café continue to thrive, and they both provide an important support to the community. As I write, it is also a week into the war in Ukraine and raging and the spectre of major war in Europe on a wider scale overshadows us. It is heartening to see the humanity shown by individuals and governments in providing aid and refuge to the people of Ukraine but that does not diminish the senselessness of war which will destroy the lives of so many people and for what? Our prayer for peace needs to be all the more stronger, and we need to pray that our leaders may finally see the futility of war.

The church has a role in all of this, and I know that we can provide aid to the people their and speak out against war. Let us pray that President Putin will see sense and show compassion.

It may seem strange to you that I have referenced the war in Ukraine in this annual report but the events of the world challenge us in how we respond as a church both in prayer and practical aid and I hope that when this report is read that peace will have been restored and that Ukraine is starting to rebuild.

In the coming year, I am looking forward to meeting those who I have not yet managed to meet yet and to continue to build a good working relationship with Rev Susan and the Churchwardens, PCC Members and Ministry Leadership Team.

Thank you to all those who have given their time and talents to St Martin's this year. The church could not function without your help and it has managed to survive and continue providing worship during this challenging year.

May God Bless you all

Rev Michael