

## September 2021

*Reverend Michael writes:*

***Isaiah 43:19 See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?***



Whenever a priest moves to a new parish it is a significant new beginning in their lives and ministry. It almost always involves a new role and a new home and living in a new community. These can be challenging and stressful (particularly if one has been in a previous parish for many years) but I have been reflecting over the past few weeks about the extra new beginnings that I have embarked on alongside my new role as associate rector here.

Some of you may not know that I got married last month to Sue. The day was a wonderful occasion, and we were fortunate to be able to have so many of our family and friends join us now that Covid restrictions have been relaxed somewhat. Both Sue and I had our own homes before we were married and combining two into one will take some time and organisation. Moving house is thought to be one of the most stressful things we do in life, and I can well believe that! Our marriage has added another new beginning but in addition I have identified two other new beginnings that will impact me. Firstly, there is the creation of the new benefice linking Chelsfield with Green Street Green and Pratts Bottom. How this is going to develop is yet to emerge and I hope that together with Susan I will be able to contribute to the process. The other new beginning is our coming out of lockdown this summer and although the pandemic is far from over, we are beginning to shape new ways of living and relating to one another.

With all these new beginnings I have been drawn towards that verse from Isaiah at the top of this article: ‘See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?’ Isaiah is the most quoted prophet in the New Testament and this verse may well point to the birth of Jesus and that new thing that God did by sending his own son into the world.

New beginnings bring new opportunities and challenges and this verse encourages us to trust that God has a plan for us individually and for humanity as a whole. I am really looking forward to the challenges the future brings and to meeting you all over the coming weeks and months.

May God bless you all

*Rev Michael*

Following the wonderful occasion of Michael’s licensing, by the Bishop of Tonbridge, as Associate Rector of the benefice on Wednesday 25th Aug. we celebrated with Michael his first Sunday at St Martin’s on 29th.



Michael’s arrival has given us a welcome focus over the summer and we look forward to sharing in ministry with him across the benefice at this exciting new chapter in the development of our parishes.

We continue to pray for Michael, Sue and the whole family as they settle into new routines and also for us all as we seek to move forward in faith and fellowship.

*Rev Susan*