



The Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear Friends,

As we near the end of September, I feel that we have much for which we can give thanks in the Benefice

All our churches are now open for worship on Sunday mornings and we have commenced holding the Friday morning celebration of Holy Eucharist at Holy Trinity. We have also continued the Wednesday afternoon transmission of either Choral Evensong, Choral Vespers or Compline. I am sure that we all continue to thank those who have made and continue to make this possible in various ways.

Also, on September 12<sup>th</sup>, Wendy and Brian Pendry held a Yard Sale in support of Wales Air Ambulance, Christchurch and St. Mary's. It raised £235 for each charity. We are grateful to Wendy and Brian for organising this and to those who helped and those who supported the event.

Looking ahead to October, in addition to our current schedule of services, we will be commencing Evensong (at Christchurch on the first Sunday and at St. Mary's on the remaining Sundays). Please note that these services will be held at 3pm. We are also commencing celebrations of Holy Eucharist on Wednesday mornings at St. Mary's. These will alternate with the Friday morning celebration at Holy Trinity. There will also be a service of Vespers at St. Mary's at 4 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. I am grateful to Tim Pratt for leading this. The full schedule of services across the Benefice for the month can be seen in the *Four Churches Magazine*.

We also have two mission and outreach initiatives during October. Our harvest initiatives of supporting the local Food Bank and the Church in Wales Centenary Appeal and our participation in the Shoebox Appeal run by Blythswood Care will enable us to share what we have with those who are less fortunate. Full details of both initiatives can be found on the *Four Churches Magazine*. I have been asked to mention that there are only two or three weeks remaining in which to make donations for the Shoebox Appeal as they will shortly be transported to the receiving countries.

**Assistant Priest: Reverend Jeff Pearse**

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In last week's Pastoral Letter, I mentioned that it was likely that the vacancy for our next Incumbent would be advertised in the very near future. We now have the good news that it will be advertised this coming week with a closing date of October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Please continue to pray for those who will be involved in the choice of our next Incumbent and also for those who will be guided by God to express an interest.

Next Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, the ordinations which would normally be held at Petertide will take place at Newport Cathedral. Please pray for Kay Denley and Mary Moore who will be ordained Deacon and the Revd's Lea Ryder, Lisa Taylor, Bronwen Summers, Matt Sellers, John Thorne and Heulwen Rees who will be ordained Priest.

It would be remiss of me not to mention that these positive items of news are taking place at a time when there are major concerns regarding the increasing rates of coronavirus infection in all parts of the United Kingdom. Each government has found it necessary to introduce new restrictions. In Wales five local authority areas have been put into local lockdown measures and, as I write this letter, it has been announced that the counties of Cardiff and Swansea and the town of Llanelli have been added to that list.

The next few months appear to be very uncertain, and we are being warned that there are likely to be effects on employment, hunger, loneliness, domestic violence and mental health. As I mentioned in last month's *Four Churches Magazine* we will need resilience – the ability to keep going in the face of challenges. As Christians, we are given resilience by the knowledge that God is with us at all times, giving us His support; we are never alone. We are called to be aware of those who are suffering in any way, to pray for them and to give them the care and compassion in whatever way we feel we can.

As we face the uncertainties of the months ahead, may we hold before us these words of Our Lord from Matthew's Gospel – "I am with you always, to the end of time"

With every good wish

Jeff

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