

Vicar's Report, 2022 - All Saints, Dogmersfield

*I rejoiced with those who said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the Lord."*

Psalm 122 v1

Sunday worship:

In 2022 we were able to hold a full pattern of eucharistic and non eucharistic services were able to be held at All Saints which was a welcome return to normality after 2 years of disruption due to the pandemic. I am very grateful to LLM Sarah Groombridge for her dedicated and faithful leading of the Matins and Family services, and to the other clergy, LLMs and lay leaders in the other parishes in the benefice who enable us to be able to continue this pattern. We welcomed a new curate Rev Helen May as she was ordained in July 2022 as she moved with her husband and daughter into the benefice curate's house in Pool Road, Hartley Wintney. Jacqui Harry's retirement in 2022 was a sad farewell and I am thankful to her for serving the church for so long. The choir have continued to lead worship well despite this setback and we are enjoying the joy that both Graham and Henry bring as they share their skills as organists.

A church building is often a focus for the community in times of grief or concern, and All Saints opened its door to respond to the death of our late Queen and also the war in Ukraine. While we know God is omnipresent, there is something comforting about being in a building dedicated to Him, prayed in for hundreds of years and used to bring to him our acts, as well as our cries, of mercy for the suffering world.

A whole selection of special seasonal services are creating new traditions at All Saints and it is encouraging to see growing numbers attending them. I am personally delighted to see locally grown flowers and environmentally friendly techniques being used in the way the church is decorated to and thank Jo Howard for encouraging this.

Occasional offices:

Many are welcomed warmly in preparation for their weddings and baptisms too of which there were 4 of each in 2022. Sadly, many of these couples or families do not return afterwards. All couples are prepared at a Marriage Preparation Day with other couples getting married in the benefice in February each year. The clergy are supported by a team from St John's who run workshop sessions for the couples covering Love languages,

Communication, Resolving Conflict, Money Matters, Parenting and Marriage in the sight of God. Baptism families are also prepared by the clergy so they understand the significance of the promises they are making. It is important that the church community is present for baptisms to welcome the child into the family of the church as the liturgy says, and so they are carried out in Sunday services. Sadly, there were 2 funerals at All Saints too. The Wardens and Sides people are appreciated for their part in this work of hospitality and the Revell's kind permission to park beside their drive adjacent to the church makes services possible and I am grateful to them for these gifts.

PCC: The PCC met 5 times in 2022 and I am grateful for the warm houses we met in during the winter months. Jo Howard has masterfully captured our minutes and turned them around very quickly for which I am deeply thankful too.

All Saints Primary School: It has been a real encouragement to see the relationship between the school and church grow in 2022! A benefice team including Sarah and Susan take weekly collective worship and as vicar I speak at the festival and special Services for the school. It was extra special for me to be able to commission the new head teacher Debbie Nichollas in a service. 2 church members from the Benefice continue to act as Foundation Governor roles, together with the me, the incumbent as ex-officio. 2 local residents have also joined the governors recently as well as a Local Authority governor. The school expects a SIAMS inspection next year.

Support: With help and advice from Diocesan officers the church is in a better position in regards to paying the CMF and I feel more confident about future sustainability. I am very grateful to all those who so generously support the church financially, particularly those who give regularly and generously and those who fund raise. I am grateful to the Friends of All Saints for their support and hard work in helping the church community to be able to consider the project involving the bell tower.

Lastly, a big thank you to the Church wardens: To Christine for her tireless work and Jacqui for her faithful and long service.

Rev Angie Smith
Vicar
March 2023