

Rectors Report 2022

Where are we?

I recently wrote of my admiration for people I have encountered over the past two years. The way they (you) have all managed to work through very difficult times. Difficult times, of course, remain. Some of our challenges now are (1) to recover some of what we have mislaid (the good habits of meeting with others and of attending church) and (2) to build on some new and unexpected foundations (the new prominence of technology; the loss of some traditional momentum)

The PCC met recently to reaffirm our focus which is on young families while continuing to meet the needs of existing worshippers. We had been looking into this well before Covid derailed things and had started to devote some attention to it. The main work over the past few years has been done in Young Church and we have successfully established the “Church for All” services since May 2021. My thanks to all who have worked so creatively and so diligently.

Activities external to the Parish

- I was appointed Governor at Wexham Court Primary School in March 2021 and in September was elected Vice Chair. In December I resigned as Governor of Farnham Common Village Schools.
- Since June 2020 I have been a Volunteer Chaplain at Wexham Park Hospital, devoting one afternoon a week to visiting.
- I continue to serve on the Deanery Standing and Finance Committee and as a Bishop’s Reviewer of Clergy.

Thank you to all who have done so much, and thank you for supporting me, practically and in prayer which has made this past year a joy.

Where might we go?

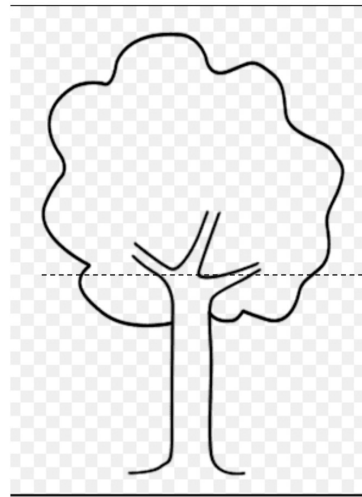
I suggest below a couple of areas for us to prioritise, these reiterate parts of my report from last year. You might ask why I don’t have finance as a separate section. While our finance situation remains a worry, we are doing all we can to manage it. And while we have some ideas to work on, we must continue to look to God’s goodness in this area as well as in others.

Engagement

Engagement not only with people who regularly attend services, but also those in the wider community. How are we to do this?

How do we re-engage with people who have drifted, especially with young families.

How do we re-engage with the Gospel too. It is insufficient to be seen as nice friendly people. That is good, and we are (mostly!) but we have a gospel to proclaim. We have good news to share. We want to see people grow in the faith, and be fruitful (see the diagram which I've shared before). How can people grow in the faith and be fruitful? Perhaps we start by asking how can we grow in the faith and be fruitful?



Fruitfulness

Enabling those who follow Jesus to live in ways that bear witness to God's action in our lives and in the world

Growth

Enabling those who have come to know Jesus to grow in faith and in love of God

Beginnings

Enabling others to hear about Jesus Christ and to follow and trust Him.

Technology

It is seen as a truism that we should be engaging "digitally" with people. I think this is neither obvious nor a truism. Technology was, for a time, a lifeline but many of us are probably queasy about seeing another YouTube service or attending a Zoom meeting. But it is something we need to do and do well.

We had a generous grant from the diocese to fund the installation of Wi-Fi in the hall.

Last year I wrote that "We will doubtless continue with the use of technology: Mail Chimp; YouTube; Zoom, more use of Facebook". Well, MailChimp continues, we have recently opened up our Facebook page. But I've hardly used zoom and the last clip I posted on YouTube has clocked up 1,442 views (which is about 1,400 more than the other clips) - but it was a clip of the hedge being trimmed!

You might not know it but we have a fairly extensive presence online - try searching for "A Church Near You" and type in Wexham. When you go to our site you should see it is all up to date. Thank you to those who keep this and our church website looking clean and accurate.

Amazing Resource Available to us

In all of this, there is an amazing resource available to us. We have managed to do so much as a parish. For a small parish with a part-time incumbent, we can be pleased with what we are able to do. There is a bit of a trap here, that I find myself falling into.

Our resources are finite as is our energy and inventiveness. A challenge for me, a challenge for us, is to continue to do all we can while not relying solely on what we can do. How can we school ourselves to rely more on God?

Andrew Parry
April 2022