

From the Vicar - July 2025

I hope you are well.

I'm writing this on Trinity Sunday evening (15th June), at the end of a busy, but rather special, weekend. On Trinity Sunday, we are invited to enter into the divine dance of love which is at the heart of the doctrine of the Trinity. Christians believe that there is one God, in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Each person is separate – the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Father, and neither is the Holy Spirit – and yet they are one God, united in love.

As the Scriptures teach us, “God is love, and those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them”. God does not only love us, God is love. Love is the very essence of God's being. And God (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit) is such an abundance of love that it can't be contained – love flows out from the very heart of God, into the whole of creation. “We love, because God first loved us”.

The relationship between God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit is one of abundant, everlasting love – and we are invited to participate in that love. Jesus invites us – and commands us – to love one another, as he has loved us.

Last Friday (13th June), I experienced some of that abundant love which flows out from the heart of God into the whole of creation – into all that God has created – when I re-affirmed my baptismal vows, and gave thanks for my new name; and when Martin and I celebrated our 25th Wedding Anniversary. Supported by many friends from All Saints' Church, the College, and the parish of Cuddesdon and Denton, and further afield, we felt surrounded by, and enfolded in, love.

Thank you to all who supported us, and who celebrated with us, on this joyful and significant occasion. It was lovely to be joined by so many people from the church, College and village. Cuddesdon has been a special place for me and Martin since we moved to Vine Cottages in 2014, to train at the College, so I'm very grateful for the opportunity to minister here and to be supported, loved and

encouraged in that ministry. Thank you, Cuddesdon and Denton.

Today (Sunday 15th June), after leading worship in All Saints' Church and in St Mary's, Garsington, I attended the Leavers' Service at College; and I again experienced an out-flowing of God's abundant love. I'm sure I'm not alone in finding these Leavers' Services – and all farewells and endings – a little difficult. Farewells, goodbyes, endings and transitions are difficult and, often, painful.

I'm sure I wasn't the only one who was reflecting that, in just six months' time, we will be bidding farewell to Bishop Humphrey, the College Principal and a good friend and neighbour to many of us, as he begins a well-deserved retirement. Humphrey and Emma will both be greatly missed.

And, on Thursday of this week, many of us will gather in All Saints' Church, as we give thanks for the life of, and say our final farewells to, Lynda Gray – a much-loved member of All Saints' Church and Parochial Church Council, of Cuddesdon and Denton WI, of the Cuddesdon Literary Group and, I'm sure, of many other village gatherings.

Farewells, goodbyes, endings and transitions are difficult and, often, painful – and yet, they are an inevitable part of life on earth. In the Farewell Discourses, in John's Gospel, as Jesus says goodbye to his friends, on the night before he dies, he commands them to abide in his love, and to love one another as he has loved them.

Friends, as we say goodbye to some College families, and to Lynda, and as we perhaps navigate other farewells, endings and transitions, let us, too, strive to love one another. As we reflect upon the love that is the very essence of God, and which flows out from the heart of God, let us seek to live in love and unity with all people, and with all of God's wonderful creation.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

With love from

The Revd Tom (Vicar) x

