

## **From the Vicar - September 2023**

Last month, I wrote about how quiet Cuddesdon seemed, after a large cohort of ordinands and families left the College in June.

I'm delighted that new ordinands have now arrived, and continuing ordinands returned, and the college is a hive of activity. I've really enjoyed meeting some of the new ordinands, and their families, and College staff, and I look forward to getting to know them a little over the next couple of years.

We celebrated our Harvest Festival and College Welcome service on Sunday 24th September, which was a very joyful occasion. I was delighted to see so many people from the village and college, and a number of visitors from further afield, too. The Church was beautifully decorated for Harvest, and the choir really enhanced our singing, as they celebrated their first anniversary. Many thanks to all involved. We also enjoyed a lovely Harvest Supper in the Village Hall – many thanks to Mark and Linda, the Village Hall Committee, and various helpers. It was a great evening.

The nights are getting longer, and the days shorter, I turn my mind towards our autumn services. This year, the Benefice Service of Light, at which we remember our loved ones, friends and neighbours who have died, will take place in All Saints' Church, at 3pm on Sunday 5th November. It occurs to me that we usually have a bonfire and fireworks on the recreation field on that Sunday – but I hope people will be able to attend both. St John's Gospel begins with its wonderful prologue about the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us, and the light which shines in the darkness and cannot be overcome. At the Service of Light, we give thanks for those who have died, and we remember that, in the darkness of death and grief, Christ's light continues to shine. Jesus' resurrection gives us reason to hope and trust that death is not the end, and that our loved ones are not lost, but rest in peace, in our Father's house, with all the saints who have gone before us. And on the morning of 5th November, we will celebrate All Saints' Day, our Patronal Festival, in our Parish Communion service at 9:30am. All are welcome to all our services.

The following Sunday, we mark Remembrance Sunday, after which we will begin to look towards Advent. I hope that we will have our usual Advent Carol Service, on Advent Sunday; and this year I am looking forward to a traditional Village Carol Service of Nine lessons and Carols, on Saturday 16th December. I'm also very much looking forward to the exhibition of prints and engravings depicting the birth and early life of Jesus, which will take place in Church from 4th December – further information to follow next month!

As the nights lengthen, and we journey into October, I wonder if you, too, find yourself spending more time in reflection, remembrance and prayer? If you want a quiet space to reflect and remember, All Saints' Church is open daily. You are welcome to pop into church to pray, or to ponder, or to enjoy some peace and quiet. We hope to prepare a new prayer space soon, with a book for prayer requests and, perhaps, some prayer candles. Do let us know if there are any other prayer aids, or anything else you would find helpful, to support you in prayer and worship.

God bless

Karen x