

## Rector's Letter - Rev'd Jeremy Trew - October 2023

Dear All

October brings with it many changes: Any last vestiges of Summer finally give way to Autumn; the trees start to darken as they approach their final drop; and the shops truly gear up for Christmas. Hot-cross buns also appear in Tesco, but that is a theological conundrum beyond my ken.



In the Saffron Walden and Villages Team we will also be noticing some significant changes. At the end of September we said goodbye to John Saxon, and in October we also say farewell to Alex Jeewan. These two have been a great blessing to the Team and will be greatly missed. I will certainly miss them as respected colleagues. I am sure that you will join me in continuing to pray for them as they settle into their respective “pastures new.” We must trust that, as God called them to minister here, in calling them away that same God still has plans for us.

In early September we welcomed Hilary Walker to the Team as she was ordained Deacon in Chelmsford Cathedral. At the very end of September, we were also able to celebrate Ella Harris being ordained priest. I am very excited to be able to work with these two as they are both very able, although in different ways. Please note that they are still in training. Their roles are not to fill all the gaps left by John and Alex’s departures. Both will be playing a full part in the life of the Team, but only as it serves their training needs.

Bishop Roger has been to meet with Parish Representatives and help us move the recruitment process forward. Archdeacon Robin has also been part of this, although we will also have said goodbye to him at the start of October as he retires. Before he did so he helped me secure the services of Rev'd Gary Fleming, a final year curate, who will be helping out with Sunday services for a while. Please make Gary feel welcome.

And then there are our retired clergy (although simply “not paid” might sometimes be a better title). When I was ordained these wonderful people with their many years of experience were normally called upon for holiday cover or in case of unexpected illness. Now the Church of England is dependent upon them. Sometimes we ask too much of them, especially with the great number of vacancies this Deanery has and is experiencing. Nevertheless, I am most grateful for the way they have stepped forward to keep as many services running as possible.

And then there is you. You are the Church. Well, technically, you and everyone else who gathers together when we meet. The real success of this time of clergy vacancy will truly be down to you, and people like you, who pray and offer services in ways small and great, and who together make old buildings come to life with your worship and love. A vacancy, and vacancies, are an opportunity for the local Church to show what it is made of. I am confident that our local church, in all its manifestations, is well built and on a good foundation.

You are, as always, in my prayers.

Jeremy

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