

## Parish of Wimbledon Team Rector's Report

There are all sorts of questions that come at the beginning of an incumbency, not least because important decisions are wisely put off until the new Rector arrives. Behind many of these questions lies one big question. What is the Parish of Wimbledon for? Why be one parish and not four separate churches? The current situation is an accident of history rather than a considered plan, but that history is an important factor in reflecting on what the answer to the question is. In addition, we need to listen to one another and find out what the Parish means to each of us and our churches and what we hope it might mean. The most important consideration of all is 'Where is God calling us?'

This is a question that each of the churches has been addressing in the last few years through their Mission Action Plans, but it is not a question that has been asked yet at a parish level. My intention over the coming year is to work together with you to create a Mission Action Plan for the Parish by discerning where God is calling us. Work on this has already begun with the Clergy and laity from across the team meeting together weekly to pray together for the parish and the clergy and lay ministers of the team meeting monthly to discuss ministry across the parish and to support each other in our work. In addition to this the Team Clergy had an away day together in Lent to reflect together on what it meant to be a team and the relationship between the individual churches and the parish.

This work will be continued over the coming months culminating in a Parish Away Day on the 25<sup>th</sup> November at the Kairos Centre in Roehampton for everyone in the parish to contribute towards discerning a clear vision of where God is calling us to be over the next five to 15 years.

At the same time as working out where we are going we need to ensure that we have a vehicle that is fit to carry us there. There are some things that we need to start addressing now, while others will need to wait until we have a clearer view of where we are going and what resources we will need to get there.

Whatever the final direction of travel is, we need to start reviewing the governance structures of the Parish. The parish was set up as a Team Ministry in the 1970's and was one of the first in the Church of England. In the intervening time the Church of England has learnt a great deal about how to structure teams to enable them to function well and a number of good governance structures have become part of the legislation that supports the mission and ministry of the Church. I am intending to review our current structures with the aim of bringing proposals to the next APCM for a new team constitution that adopts the best practice and current legislation for the running of the team.

I will be setting up a Governance Working Party to work with me on this and I would be very pleased to have offers or suggestions of people with skills in this area, experience of the History of the Parish and ideas for the way forward. The principles guiding this project will be preserving what is working where we can, making sure that responsibility and accountability are held together, ensuring transparency, keeping administration and

bureaucracy to a minimum and working out what areas of our life together are best left to the individual churches and giving them the legal responsibility for it; and what things are best managed across the parish.

This is a demanding but very important task, which if we do well should enable and support the mission and ministry of the church. I am hoping to complete it in a year, but it may take two. It will be very important to be regularly consulting the churches and their members so that we can find a way forward that everyone can support.

There are two other big projects that need to be undertaken to enable us to move forward together. We need to review our financial structures and make sure that they are serving the ministry of the church well. I am meeting with the Team Treasurers in midsummer to look at how the current system works and this will then feed into the review of governance. Once we have a clear sense of direction for mission and ministry in the parish it will be clearer what the best financial structures are to achieve this.

Thirdly, as we gain a clearer sense of where we are going we will also get a clearer idea of what other resources we need to get there. We need to look at clergy housing and the property that is held by the parish. What housing do we need to support the mission and ministry of the team? Are we using the resources we have in the best way? I know some work has already been done on this by the PCC, but we need to be clear about where we are going before we make any final decisions if they are to support the growth of the churches.

After five months as Rector it is clear to me that there are some areas where doing things as a team is of great benefit. I am hugely grateful to the Team Clergy for their willingness to continue to take a greater burden of the occasional offices at St Mary's and to share in this important pastoral work. It seems to me to be important that everyone in the team knows both how they benefit from being part of the wider parish as well as how they contribute towards it. Our new Team Clergy expenses policy enshrines this by allocating the fees earned by the clergy when they take occasional offices to pay clergy expenses across the team.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July Yunghee Koh, who has been on placement for Ordination training at St Mary's will be Ordained as curate to the parish. Both for Yunghee's benefit and for the benefit of the whole parish Yunghee will be licensed as curate to the parish rather than St Mary's. She will be based at St Mary's, but she will be ministering at the other churches in the team two Sunday's every month and will also be working across the whole parish during the week on appropriate projects.

I want to conclude by saying that I still have a great deal to learn about the Parish of Wimbledon, but I am very much looking forward to travelling with you as we discern together where God is calling us.

Mandy Hodgson