

St James West Littleton Annual Parochial Church Meeting 2018

Incumbent's Report

I would like to thank the PCC for their service to the church and especially the church officers: David Adams as both Church warden and PCC minute secretary, Elizabeth Sandeman as Church warden and Michael Horgan as our long-serving Treasurer.

St James' Church continues at the heart of most village activities and my appreciation also extends to those who support the church in other ways: cleaning, arranging flowers, tending the churchyard, washing the linen, and setting up for services; and in the wider parish - preparing food, hosting social events, and generously opening their gardens for the church. I am also grateful to Christopher Bell who maintains our musical worship on a monthly basis and on special occasions.

The worship pattern continues unchanged with at least two services a month, usually in the morning, unless it is the special Open Gardens or Harvest evensong services. St James' church provides regular BCP services which are appreciated for their consistency. The Rev. Christopher Mulholland has worked alongside me over the last five years in maintaining this service pattern and as he enters more fully into his retirement, we will miss his humour and pertinent words, but hope we will still see him occasionally.

Earlier this year we said goodbye to Rev. Ness Whiffin at the end of her curacy as she took up her first Team Vicar post in Witney, but unexpectedly have now said 'hello' to a potential new curate, the Rev. Lynne Godfrey, and a new LLM, Mr Charles Keen who has moved into the Benefice. We are fortunate to have an able team of lay ministers who will help us maintain our current pattern of worship.

Our social events help to connect us with the wider parish. Already in 2018 we have had the Madrigals, with the Open Gardens' weekend planned for June and the expectation that we also celebrate Harvest with the village and hold our Christmas Carol concert.

West Littleton members also support the Benefice particularly joining for the Plough Service and Remembrance in Marshfield Church. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the end of WWI and the war graves in the churchyard have been acknowledged by a new sign on our gates provided by the CWGC.

St James' PCC has shown continuing generosity in response to the Diocese request for a pledge towards the cost of ministry, and more congregation members have been encouraged to give through standing orders. The amount we need to give to the Diocese to cover the costs of ministry in this Benefice is significant for our smaller churches and means our giving levels need to be regularly reviewed as we encourage each other to be as generous as we can.

Church Activity 2017-18

Attendance has stayed much the same with regular attendees from nearby villages as well as from the parish itself.

Since last year's APCM, there has been one funeral in church with burial. There were two weddings, and one baptism, with another baptism planned for June this year.

Diocesan News:

The Rt. Rev. Mike Hill, Bishop of Bristol, retired in September after 15 years as Diocesan Bishop. We will hear who our new Bishop is towards the beginning of May and look forward to a new chapter in the life of Bristol Diocese.

The Diocesan vision remains our focus for the next few years, as we continue to help people to connect with God, each other and build community. Nationally, the Archbishops are calling all Christians to pray for our nation from Ascension to Pentecost, praying 'Thy Kingdom Come'.