

A few words from the Vicar

Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP Collect, 25th Sunday After Trinity)

November already!

It doesn't seem all that long ago since our 500th celebrations; the wonderful concert by Greater Manchester Police Male Voice Choir, our superb open weekend and last but not least our harvest Oktoberfest celebration.

All were cracking events that raised our profile in the community and, as a bonus, provided a much needed boost to Church funds. So, many thanks to all who came along to support the celebrations and a big thank you to all of you who worked so hard to make the celebrations a huge success.

It has been a special time personally for me too. As I reach the fifth anniversary of my licensing here, the celebrations have reinforced my sense of gratitude (and amazement) that God has called me to minister here in Ainsworth and Bradley Fold as your Vicar!

It's a shame we can't celebrate our 500th anniversary every year! Well, although we can't ever celebrate our 500th again, we do have a permanent reminder, our comfy new pew cushions!

We will also continue to have fun together, just as we and our predecessors in Ainsworth have always done. For example, at the end of this month we have our annual Christmas Fayre (11am – 2pm Saturday 21st) and our Christmas meal (12 noon, Sunday 29th November). You are all warmly invited to come along.

By the way, if anyone has an idea for a social event in 2016 (and is willing to organise it), then please see me.

Talking of celebrations, we do of course celebrate Communion every Sunday and, for me as a priest, presiding at the Eucharist is at the very core of my calling; at the very core of my being in fact. It's that important!

But, now that Revd Elaine has joined us it is a pleasure when she presides because I can join you as we approach the Lord's Table in humility and gratitude together. I can meekly kneel (as the Book of Common Prayer instructs) to receive

Taking Communion is always a very special moment for me. To make the most of it, I always spend time in prayer before waiting in line for my turn to receive the bread and wine. And then, when I return to my seat, I pray again, giving thanks for receiving Communion, before sitting in silence as we await the Post-Communion Prayer.

I know I am not unique in this. Indeed this is meant to be standard practice within the Church of England. Nonetheless, it is a spiritual discipline I have cherished for a long time and I commend it to you.

Something else I have come to cherish is the Book of Common Prayer. I must admit it has grown on me and believe it or not, I even have a Mattins and Evensong App on my iPad! Indeed, my holiday reading was a book about the BCP, which I must admit isn't the usual reading material people take on holiday with them and gave rise to some odd looks in my direction.

One of my favourite BCP prayers is the Collect for the 25th Sunday After Trinity (see above), otherwise known as 'Stir Up' Sunday! If you read it carefully you can see why this prayer has reminded generations of Anglicans that the time has come to make their Christmas puddings.

For me, said or sung, BCP Evening Prayer / Evensong is a perfect end to a busy Sunday. You are more than welcome to join me!

Every Blessing

Dave