

20 January 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we embark on this new adventure in our journey together, let us pause in gratitude for the long-standing ministry of Julia, our vicar. Julia's first contact with this parish was in the 1980s, as a member of the congregation. She answered her call to ministry here and became our vicar in 2002.

What an amazing connection, and how blessed we have been to have a 'rock of faith' in our midst during 33 years of massive local changes. Many in the parish have grown in every sense alongside Julia over three decades. Even for those like me who are 'late-comers', it will be a shock and a great loss when Julia is no longer in our midst. Julia's mantra, 'God will provide', will remain as a promise and reminder for us.

We have all been called, like Julia, into the communion of St Peter de Beauvoir. We share the sense of standing alongside each other in this sacred place, of celebrating together in all its spaces – church, crypt and garden – and of welcoming neighbours and strangers alike into our wider community of service. Though we will be without a vicar for some time, our shared love of and commitment to St Peters Church remains. It is our turn, alongside the Church Wardens – Anna Dalton and Mae Fredericks – to become this 'rock' and support for each other.

By the end of 2021, we hope to welcome someone new as our vicar. Let us nurture this space. In our role as stewards of God's gifts, let us continue to look after our church and dig where are. We know what grows well here.

One way to see the months ahead is as preparation time. Just as the gardener uses winter to renew the soil and to decide what to sow, so we need to review where we find ourselves and our church community and to seek God's help in our next steps.

This is why we want to ask for your contributions to the Parish Profile. The Parish Profile will help our three Parish Representatives – Amanda Bart-Plange, Stephen King and Rosie Wesemann – to show and tell who we are, what we value and how we hope to develop and grow for the future.

This document will present us as a church community to candidates for our next vicar. The profile will also inform Area Dean, Revd Andrew Wilson, who together with Bishop of Stepney, Rt Revd Joanne Grenfell, as they guide the Parish Reps through the interview and selection process.

The Parish Profile should represent you, and with that goal in mind, we have prepared a questionnaire, which we hope all of you will complete for yourselves or as a family. We also invite you to share the questionnaire with neighbours who may not be on the electoral yet who see St Peter's as an important part of their lives in some way.

We hope as many of you as possible will complete the questionnaire and return it by Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February.

Many and diverse responses will enrich and complement the story our parish profile. This will supplement the story that our representatives, church wardens and team

leaders tell. In this way applicants will come understand who we are, where we come from and where we hope to journey and grow together in faith.

As restrictions are slowly eased over time, we may emerge into a very different local community and find new opportunities. We have in the past worked together with others from outside our own congregation in new ventures and we want that to continue.

Very soon we will find ourselves in Lent which will afford more opportunity for us to pray and reflect. We hold onto God 'our rock' knowing in the words of Psalm 62:

*That you, O God, are strong and that you, O Lord, are loving.*

Knowing God wants good things for us, we can anticipate a future in which we will meet again together in church and crypt and garden. That will be a joy-filled time – the thrill of seeing people we know, the wonder of our voices coming together as one in song and prayer, the comfort of sharing the peace and offering a helping hand or bowl of soup.

Much later in the year, in God's time and with God's grace, we pray we will harvest the fruits of our preparation time, by meeting and welcoming a stranger in our midst, a new Vicar.

Wishing each of you God's blessing and protection and thanking you for your support,

In friendship and peace

Jay Wilkes

Lay Vice-Chair, St Peter De Beauvoir Town PCC