
CHILWELL PARISH

KEY NOTES FROM MEETING WITH ARCHDEACON SARAH

Date: Tuesday 13 June 2017

Venue: Christ Church, Chilwell

Time: 7:00pm

Approximately 70 people attended the meeting.

Penny Wallace welcomed everyone then opened by reading Ps 23 and praying. She handed over to Archdeacon Sarah.

Archdeacon Sarah acknowledged that it was great to have so many interested people at the meeting. She went on to summarise where we were with the recruitment process. The Church Pastoral Aid Society (CPAS) have led the process for two rounds of advertisements and, now it has been more than nine months since the vacancy started, this is handed over to the Archbishop of York as standard process. In reality, this means that Bishop Paul is now leading the search for a new vicar. Bishop Paul has been heavily involved from the start and has been on the selection and interview panels so far. He cares about who is appointed at Christ Church and sends his greetings. CPAS will still be involved in the process as it continues.

Bishop Paul, CPAS and Archdeacon Sarah are actively searching out possible candidates for the role of vicar in Chilwell Parish. These discussions are very sensitive and so details cannot be divulged. Bishop Paul, Archdeacon Sarah and the others involved are committed to finding the right person in order to make an outstanding appointment and who will be able to commit to the church for more than 10 years.

They will not make an appointment if there is any doubt. It is better to wait than to make do as there is nothing worse than appointing the wrong person; both the vicar and the congregation will be unhappy. They want the parish to thrive and the new appointee to thrive. We hold out until the right person is found.

It is a time when the congregation in the Parish of Chilwell must trust spiritually that God has a plan, and trust that Bishop Paul, Archdeacon Sarah, CPAS and other members of the diocese are all searching actively for a vicar for the church. Penny and Clint will be involved in any decisions.

Archdeacon Sarah opened the floor for questions:

Q: There were separate reasons why the two latest candidates dropped out and didn't attend interview. Can you tell us any further detail that might help us inform future candidates?

A: The reasons are confidential, but could have been gleaned from the parish profile. In the end, there needs to be a connection with the parish churches and local area, and a spark ignited from God (did their "heart sing"?) to see the opportunities. Neither candidate had this vision for Chilwell Parish so they weren't the right people for the job.

Q: What are the opportunities in Chilwell Parish that Archbishop Sarah herself sees?

A: This parish has wonderful opportunities that Archbishop Sarah would have loved to have been involved in had she been looking for an incumbency. There is a strong history of engagement, ministry and mission. The parish knows what "growing disciples" means and how to be salt and light in the community. There are lots of different opportunities; older congregations that can be more open to change than busy 40 somethings, children, young people and families – a potential to move in that generation as generally under 40s are underrepresented in the Church of England. There are challenges, for example, finances, diversity/unity with different services, how to grow a large church into a resourcing church, strong personalities where vicar must lead and challenge, and also consult and listen. The main point is that Bishop Paul and Archbishop Sarah think that the Parish of Chilwell is a fantastic opportunity.

Q: Can you tell us some healthy ways to wait?

A: First remember that the Lord and head of the church is Jesus, and he cares passionately about us. It's not just a human process – we need to remember hopefulness, as despair undermines our belief. Second, if there are doubts or feelings of frustration/annoyance/concerned that there is something hidden, etc, please speak up in a healthy way to understand that people are working hard on our behalf (although they can't speak openly about details). Murmuring is destructive. Third, recognise the pressure on the wardens/leaders. Fourth, don't get stuck – see where God is leading and follow him rather than wait for an incumbent.

Q: I am surprised and disappointed in CPAS. Couldn't they have done more to find someone?

A: They did search and contact people from their records of those who were looking to move on, and some who applied were from contacts from CPAS. And they are still looking.

Q: If there are a large number of vacancies in the diocese, do you have time to help us?

A: The number of vacancies is generally due to a high number of retirements – lots of clergy started at the same time as each other and now they're retiring. New recruits into the Church of England are coming through so in years to come it will be better. Recruitment becomes harder the more north of the country you go! Phil Williams has been appointed to set up a team to help churches that are in transition or have other needs. He will help us, and Archbishop Sarah will be available at key moments when Penny and Clint need her. In future, the dioceses may need to be more flexible about recruitment and succession planning and there is a sense of things changing,

Q: Is there flexibility on whether the parish will accept someone who could mentor curates?

A: The requirement of having experience of mentoring curates won't be a deal breaker, but the person who is appointed would be someone who has the potential (e.g. emotional intelligence, relational skills) to be able to mentor a curate in the future if they haven't already had experience. However, Christ Church will always be seen as a church that will take curates as a resourcing church.

Q: Were there many female applicants?

A: No details can be given but, on a general note, it can appear from Archdeacon Sarah's perspective that it's easier to get a female bishop than a female vicar who leads a large resource church! Women are under represented here. Perhaps it's confidence issue on both sides. The wider church is working to address this.

Q: Does Inham Nook play a positive or negative role in recruitment to this post?

A: Huge positive as there are different cultures and missional opportunities reflected in the two churches within the parish, and how do the two churches build on and help each other.

Comments:

Thanks go to Clint and Penny, and the deputy wardens, staff, retired clergy, associate ministers, lay readers and so many others for their support during this time.

This has been very encouraging especially for future prayer meetings as many of us have felt discouraged.

Archdeacon Sarah thanked everyone for coming and suggested any addition questions come through Penny and Clint or directly to her when she preaches in the morning at a service in July.