

Thought from the Rectory May 2019

A few months ago, Bishop Nicholas agreed that I should take a ten week sabbatical. This began on 22nd April, straight after Easter, and will continue until the end of June. It's recommended that clergy take one every 7 years; I've been ordained for 13, so it's overdue!

The word sabbatical is derived from the same root as Sabbath. A sabbatical is an opportunity to set aside time for mental renewal, spiritual refreshment and physical rest, so as to return refreshed in ministry at the end of it.

After 13 years I do feel in need of rest, reflection and renewal and my aim is to come back ready to lead the churches of Canalside into the next stage of their journeys and growth. I will be living in the Rectory for some of the next two months, and away in my caravan at other times. Anne will still be around much of the time and involved in the life of the churches.

I will be doing a number of things; going on retreat, engaging in some reading and doing some research visiting other churches as well as some time for personal rest and relaxation.

Through study and research, I will be looking at ways of developing our ministry to families in the Benefice. Our popular Messy Churches are held in Semington and Hilperton 4 or 5 times a year. I am going to visit other churches to get some ideas for introducing regular Sunday teatime services in our churches, which will particularly appeal to families.

I am thankful that so many of our congregations contribute so much to the life of our churches and that things will continue while I'm away. Sunday and midweek services and funerals will be covered by ministers from our team and by some visiting clergy. Involvement in our schools will continue with the Open the Book and Collective Worship teams, as will the May Messy Churches in Semington (11th) and Hilperton (18th).

Please contact Michael Gamble, Benefice Administrator on 07795400262, email canalsidebenefice@gmail.com or the appropriate churchwardens in the first instance for any queries during the period of my sabbatical. Contact details can be found on the Benefice website, www.canalsidebenefice.org.uk.

I look forward to returning at the end of June, ready to reflect with you on what I have learnt so that we can continue to develop the ministry of the Canalside Churches for our village communities and beyond. On the Sunday I return Joy Albone will be ordained in Salisbury Cathedral and will join us as Curate. I'm sure you will join with me in welcoming her.

With best wishes,

John

Rev John Rees, Rector, Canalside Benefice.