

## Thought from the Curate

What excites you? What challenges you?

At the start of a New Year we are encouraged to try new things, to improve our health, our diet, and/or our lifestyle. For me, my 'new year' started last July as I begun my ordained ministry in Staverton, Hilperton and Semington. It has already been six months of doing new things, or at least of doing things new to me, such as leading services in each of our churches, including funerals and baptisms, Messy Church, leading Remembrance Day commemoration and so much more, and I know I have many more 'new' things to experience in the coming months! It has already been a six-month period of challenges and excitement, and I can honestly say, not a single regret. I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many of you and hearing your stories.

One of the real joys though, has been going into schools to meet with the children of Semington, Hilperton and Staverton Schools, to lead Collective Worship and experience the growing spirituality of children. Children are so open and honest in their approach to matters about God, they are not afraid of asking questions, and some of their questions can be very challenging indeed. Earlier today, I had one young girl ask me which came first, God or the Big Bang, and I could only answer her question in the way I understand faith and science, that is, that I believe that God created the world with the Big Bang. A simple and for many a too simplistic explanation, I know, but that is because none of us really can understand the mystery of God, and that is what faith is all about.

Faith is accepting that there are things about God we cannot understand, and realising that understanding them does not matter, we just have to believe in the mystery of God, that God can do things, and be things, even when we do not understand or know how God does them. This for me is what really challenges and excites me, continuing not just on my own journey of faith, but encouraging others to explore, begin and continue their own journey. To get to know God, who is not afraid of the questions we might ask him (or her). To begin to realise for themselves that God loves them unconditionally and longs for a relationship with each and every one of us to show us that love.

So, this year, as you consider what excites you or challenges you, you may wish to consider where God comes into your life. If you want to know more, never be afraid to ask. Perhaps you might wish to come to one of the services in the coming weeks, such as our new tea-time service, Tea@TheTin on the third Sunday of each month, where all are invited to come and find out more about God and God's love for you! Each service will start at 4.00pm in the Tin Church on Horse Road, Hilperton Marsh. We look forward to seeing you there and getting to know you!

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