

MISSION STATEMENT

“Sharing the fun, friendship and peace of knowing God’s love with everyone”

As I write this, the Rugby World Cup is dominating the television and many people right across the World are glued to their screens. On the surface it can appear to be an aggressive and unfriendly sport but in fact, many of the players are not only real gentlemen but also devout Christians who are ready to share their faith with the many thousands who follow the sport. Indeed, in some cases the entire team openly follows and shares the teachings of Jesus - such as the teams from Fiji, Tonga and Samoa.

In fact, the Samoan Rugby team caused quite a stir when they walked through the doors of St Mary's church in Brighton recently. The Bristol prop, Perensie, explained that his team "have prayers every afternoon and every night before dinner. That is something that we do all the time, but Sunday is the Sabbath day, so we went to church." Not to be outdone, the Argentine team and the Italian team had an audience with the Pope.

The South African scrum half, Ruan Pienaar, has also spoken out about his faith this month saying, “Being a Christian I have always believed that there is far more to life than rugby. I am here to influence people and to touch lives." England and Saracens player, Billy Vunipola, added, “The biggest thing for me has always been my belief in God. I moved away from that for a short time, but I am convinced that knowing Jesus has made me a stronger and more-confident person.”

Nili Latu joined the debate when he said, “For the Tonga team, everything revolves around our faith. Members of the team view the Bible as the most important part of our match preparation. It is like a manual that tells us what to do in our lives, and we apply it to the field as well.”

As Christians we should applaud these honest and open opinions. People can learn a lot from these players and, indeed, the game itself. In our church we too are a team. We have a goal to work towards and must pull together in order to reach that goal. We must support each other and play our part well because every individual player is vital to the team’s success. We must refer to our “manual”, follow the instructions and obey the rules. And, whenever our efforts drop short or are kicked into touch, we must try harder to reach that elusive goal.

Steve

From the Registers

Funerals at All Saints	Raymond Websdale	Anne Marshall
All Saints	Stewart Gorton	Norah Darby
Burial of Ashes	Maurice Valentine	Frederick Browning

Our sympathy goes to all the bereaved families

Baptisms

13th Sept.	Nora Catherine Godwin-Nkwocha Noah Giuseppe Adams Jayden Robert Martin
20th Sept.	Sydney Isla Harrison

We welcome the newly baptized into our Church family

MEMORIAL FLOWERS

were placed in church

Precious memories of
KATH LADBROOKE (17th September) and LADDIE LADBROOKE (16th October)

Forever in our hearts,
Love from their families in Colchester and Peterborough

VISITING CLERGY

During the interregnum we have been extremely fortunate that our services have continued as normal, thanks to the help of many visiting priests. In many ways, it has been quite refreshing to see such a variety of approaches and enjoy sermons in many different forms. Each one has been different and uplifting. They have all been eager to help us and we are extremely grateful. We have enjoyed dramatic “thoughts for the day” as heard on radio, thought-provoking play readings as seen through the eyes of the disciples and some excellent singing voices. Each one has been refreshing and uplifting.

The priests too have told us how much they have enjoyed their visits saying that they have felt so welcome and looked-after. A huge thank you goes to Chris and Keith who have hosted breakfasts between the services, and to Peter who has stepped in to provide breakfast if they have not been around. Several of the priests have said how much they will miss visiting us and that they hope to return to us in the future if needed.

They came to us as stand-in rectors, and they left us as friends. A huge thank you to all for your encouragement and support.

Rector's Reflections – Part I - this month:

Harvest: Three things about this rather modern festival!!!

The interesting thing about harvest is that people have become keener on celebrating it the further they have got from being the ones who gather in the crops in the fields.

The harvest festival is a festival which most people think goes back into the mists of time. We imagine joyful peasants accompanying horse drawn carts full of produce back into barns. We imagine the whole village coming together to celebrate that all has been safely gathered in. And a lot of us, quite probably, think back to harvests that we knew as a child and fondly imagine that it was ever thus. Not so, of course.

The 'all is safely gathered in' style of harvest festival is something that is pretty modern and goes back little further than our Victorian forebears. The hymns that people tend to think of as being traditional harvest hymns, some of which we sing today, have relatively modern dates to them. And you will find little mention of harvest festival in Cranmer's prayer book.

If ever there was a traditional harvest, it was Lammas-time - the celebration of the first fruits of the harvest at the start of August. The idea being, and this one does go back into the mists of time, that you offer to God the first bit of the harvest, out of thanksgiving for all that the Lord has given you and set one's labours, the harvest, the community to God for his blessing.

Yet we still celebrate it here, and I think that it is right that we should. For three reasons.

Firstly, it is good to be thankful. To be thankful is to be human.

Secondly, it is good to recognize the labours of others. For to remember our interdependence is to think of others and to do so is to extend our sense of thankfulness to include not only our creator God, but our neighbours as well.

Thirdly, it helps us to be more aware of creation, our environment, our gardens and parks, and our place as human beings on this beautiful, but fragile planet.

So let us carry on celebrating this very modern festival called Harvest whether we are in small villages or cities as Peterborough, and be thankful to God, grateful to others and caring towards our environment.

Rector's Reflections – Part II - this month:

Firstly, may I thank everyone who worked so hard towards my service of welcome. To Steve and Peter and everyone else, myself and Karen are most grateful. It is important to let you know that those who came from my former benefice wrote back warmly thanking you all for your hospitality, welcome and kindness. Thank you!

One of the important priorities at the beginning of my ministry will be – as soon as possible – to visit everyone on the electoral roll. However, I know that there may be people who look to All Saints as ‘their’ church and yet are not on the roll. If you are not on the electoral roll, or you know of anyone in such a position then please do let me have their name and address care of my e-mail, phone or a note pushed through the Rectory.

Rectory phone number: **579778** (this is a new number so please delete the previous number that you may have)

mark.bridgen@btinternet.com

I have 132 names on the roll, plus other names that come via the request above. To visit all will take some time, but I am setting myself the deadline of the end of November to achieve this as there are of course other areas of ministry and meetings I will be involved in during this time.

Another of my priorities is to welcome and really encourage your views of the life of the fellowship/ church. It might be that there are areas in mission and ministry we are not as effective in as we should; or areas that need to be strengthened; or you feel individuals taking too much on themselves; or opportunities that we are missing. I would truly welcome all such reflections shared with me in confidence.

I am conscious that the PCC has been putting together our Growth Action Plan and the importance of both sharing that and implementing it as soon as possible. The priority for undertaking this will come before Christmas as it will be wonderful to start the New Year in celebrating our strengths, encouraging one another in fellowship and renewing ourselves in mission and ministry for the Lord here in the parish.

With my prayers and best wishes to you all.

Rev Mark

MOTHERS' UNION DIOCESAN FESTIVAL.

On Saturday 12th September, Margaret Webb and I enjoyed the Diocesan Festival service at Peterborough Cathedral. The address was given by our World-wide President, Mrs Lynn Tembey.

Mothers' Union banners from around the whole diocese were paraded at the beginning and end of the service.

JOAN WAINER

CONGRATULATIONS to Jenny and Michael Such on the birth of their granddaughter, Phoebe, born on 29th September. Also to mum and dad, Heather and Jonathan. Heather was a faithful member of our church choir for many years and still sings with us on special occasions.

BISHOP'S LETTER

Please note that there is no Bishop's Letter in this month's magazine. This is because the Diocese has not been able to produce magazine resources for this month due to circumstances beyond anyone's control. News from around the diocese, which usually is included in the electronic mailing is also missing for October. Normal service should be resumed next month.

CONGRATULATIONS to Eddie and Kathy Wynn on the occasion of their very special wedding anniversary. Eddie was church warden at Paston for many years.

All Saints' Church Hall

FOR HIRE

at very reasonable rates.

Excellent venue for children's parties, funerals, celebrations and other one-off events.

DAYTIMES AND WEEKENDS

A couple of daytime sessions are free for regular booking too, so if you know anyone who needs a place to meet at very good rates.

CONTACT

booking secretary : Marion

allsaintschurchhall@aol.co.uk

Ring 01733 702663

MARK GIDDINGS

Handyman & General maintenance

All aspects of glazing windows, patios, soffits, fascias & guttering.

also

Bricklaying & Carpentry

Most DIY jobs.

Tel. 07961067975

Giddings1@ntlworld.com

ANY JOB ...BIG or SMALL

In and around Peterborough area

PASTON MOTHERS' UNION

Paston Mothers' Union held their monthly meeting on Thursday 3rd September in the church hall. Branch leader, Sylvie, welcomed members, and our visitor Pat, to the open meeting.

Starting with the usual service of hymn, prayer and reading (taken from the Mothers' Union Service Book) we then sang our hymn. The reading was given by Mrs Ivana Smith and apologies were taken. The secretary gave a summary of the June and July meetings which were approved and signed.

There were no problems arising from the treasurer's report. We had given money to Jan King to help with flowers for 27th September, and members were thanked for their donations to the monthly flower tin. We then went on to discuss forthcoming events.

The Diocesan Festival is to be held on September 12th in the Cathedral and the world-wide president, Mrs Lynne Tembey, will be visiting the diocese at this time.

On September 26th we are hosting the monthly coffee morning and volunteers were asked to be at the hall for 9.30am. We then discussed the Collation Service and our contribution towards refreshments. Sylvie asked for Mothers' Union Diary orders and added that the moneys should be paid as soon as possible please.

Ideas for our 2016 outing were suggested by Dorothy, Jessie and Dorothy – Thorpe Hall tea party, helping to raise funds for the hospice, Grettons' mystery tour and Skegness, The Victorian Farm Museum and Stratford upon Avon. Sylvie said she would follow up the ideas, cost/coach etc. A decision will follow later.

Birthday cards were given out. Dorothy thanked everyone for her 90th birthday chocolates and the members' donation in lieu of present which will be donated to a charity of her choice. We also wished June and Bill Kirk a happy 55th wedding anniversary. Refreshments were then served before the meeting closed at about 4.00pm.

Our next meeting is on Thursday 1st October and this will be our annual general meeting at 2.00pm.

On November 5th our speaker will be from John Lewis PLC. Again at 2.00pm. The Advent Carol Service is to take place on Thursday 3rd December at 2.15pm in All Saints Church, with refreshments served afterwards.

Joan Wainer.

Parish Diary for October

3rd	8am	Men's Breakfast	Church hall
4th	10am	Harvest Family Service followed by Harvest lunch in the Church hall at about 12.00 noon	
5th	2-4pm	Church open for the Harvest Displays	
& 6th			
7th	2-4pm	Paston Church Friendship Group	Church
8th		Discovery School Harvest Festivals	Church
		9.30am Juniors	
		10.45am Infants	
	2.30pm	Bishopsfield Holy Communion	
10th	8.30am	Church cleaning	
11th	6pm	Harvest Songs of Praise	
13th	7.30pm	Deanery Synod at St. John's, Werrington	
14th	7.30pm	Standing Committee	Church hall
15th	9.00am	Altar Guild	Church
	2.30pm	Anchor Court Holy Communion	
17 th	7.00pm	Quiz Night	
24th	10-12pm	Coffee morning and Fair Trade Stall	Church hall
31st	10.00am	All Souls' Service	Church

Dates for November

1st		All Saints' Day	
8th		Remembrance Sunday	
29th	10am	Christmas Bazaar	Church hall

PASTON CHURCH FRIENDSHIP GROUP

Next meeting Wednesday 7th October 2-4pm in Church

For more information contact Merry Sayegh Tel. 575272

A Thank You letter from Phillip and Julie

Julie and I really enjoyed our last services with you all on Sunday 30th August and it was a great send off for us in usual Paston style after the 10am service with food, drinks and a wonderful kind presentation. Julie & I would want to say a very heart-felt thank you for your kindness and enthusiasm for our ministry to All Saints over the last 4^{1/2} years.

As I said after the services I have thoroughly enjoyed the time and have learnt a great deal from being part of the team at Paston, and also of course, my thanks must go to Revd Gill for her guidance and teaching, and for the opportunities that I was given for my ministry among you and the wider community of the area.

I thank you for your generosity for the cheque that you collected for me (us), and I would like you to know that I will probably put that towards two things: a new surplice ready for when I am licensed to Langham and the Oakham group, which may be sometime in November I understand; and also towards a petrol hedge-trimmer because Langham Vicarage has a lot of bushes and hedges! - and is of a similar size to your Rectory at Paston!

Thank you also for the pot of plants which will in due course be planted out in prominent places within the vicarage garden.

Thank you also to all those who came to support Julie at her licensing and installation at Langham on Tuesday 1st September.

Finally, I would want to leave you with a verse of scripture and encouragement for your own ministries and for the work at All Saints and in Paston, Walton and Gunthorpe, in whatever way you find you are serving our Lord in that place. God bless you, and again, with many thanks:

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith”

Hebrews 12 v2

With our love and prayers
Phillip and Julie

Congratulations to Dorothy and Eddie Hall on celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary on Tuesday 15th September.
From members of the Mothers' Union and all of us at All Saints' Church.

EDITH CAVELL CENTENARY YEAR

Born in 1865 near Norwich, Edith Cavell was a vicar's daughter, an English matron of a teaching hospital and an influential pioneer of modern nursing in Belgium. As a teenager she attended Laurel Court School in the precincts of Peterborough Cathedral.

When World War 1 broke out she was visiting her mother in England. She returned to Belgium as she felt her nursing skills would be needed more than ever and felt it was her duty to stay in the occupied country rather than return to the safety of England. Edith's hospital became a Red Cross hospital, and wounded soldiers of all nationalities were equally treated there. Her strong Christian beliefs motivated her to help all those in need, both German and Allied soldiers. She once said, "I can't stop while there are lives to be saved". However, when some wounded British soldiers, who had been cut off from their comrades, arrived, Edith had to face a near-impossible dilemma: if she helped the soldiers she put at risk the neutrality of the Red Cross and would possibly endanger others working with her. If she refused to help them they would be in danger of being executed, along with any civilians who had harboured them.

Edith decided to help them despite the risk to herself. "Had I not helped, they would have been shot", she later said. She then agreed to join a Belgian underground movement and helped more than 200 Allied soldiers to escape to neutral territory. When the network was betrayed, she was arrested, tried by a court martial, found guilty of treason and sentenced to death.

This month marks the centenary of her death on October 12th 1915, aged 49. Many special events are taking place in Peterborough to mark this anniversary.

Friday 9th October -- Edith Cavell - A talk by Diana Souhami

7.30pm at Peterborough Cathedral

Tickets: £11 (£5.50 under 18), including glass of wine or soft drink after the talk.

Sat 10th & Sun 11th October -- Cavell, Carbolic and Chloroform

At Peterborough Museum, Priestgate, Peterborough

Timed tours half hourly through each day, 10.00am – 4.00pm.

The tour experience lasts around 50 minutes.

Costumed re-enactors bring this theatrical tour to life as the process by which wounded men were treated during the Great War unfolds around you. You will also meet "Edith Cavell" and find out the real story behind this remarkable lady.

Admission: £6 adults, £4 children/concessions, pre-booking is recommended.
To book call 01733 864663

Saturday 10th October & Sunday 11th October

Exclusive Tours of Laurel Court

12.00 noon and 2.00pm each day, starting at the Welcome Desk at the main entrance to the Cathedral. Pre-booking is essential. Tours last around 30 minutes.

Some tour times are now sold out. Two extra tours are now being offered on Saturday 10th October, at 1.00pm and 3.00pm. A unique opportunity to go inside Laurel Court, the 18th Century grade two listed building that was once the school where Edith Cavell was a pupil teacher. The tour will be led by Stuart Orme of Peterborough Museum

Monday 12th October -- Two minutes' silence at 7.00am

At Peterborough Cathedral, followed by 7.30am Morning Prayer with Holy Communion.

Exactly 100 years since Edith Cavell's execution by firing squad, at dawn in Brussels on 12th October, two minutes silence will be observed in the Cathedral. All are welcome to join in this solemn act of commemoration and the service which follows. After this a day of quiet will be observed in the Cathedral. All are welcome to visit for silent reflection, perhaps to light a candle and to pray.

Monday 12th October

Peterborough and the Great War website launch

Peterborough Museum will launch a new website focussed on the First World War in the city.

Saturday 17th October -- The Edith Cavell Centenary Concert

7.30pm in Peterborough Cathedral

Peterborough Cathedral Choir, Youth Choir and Festival Chorus will perform a programme of choral music from the 1914-18 period, short readings from Edith Cavell's letters and other associated material and the opportunity to sing along with some of the songs popular with soldiers at the Front.

Sunday 18th October -- Choral Evensong for St Luke's Day

3.30pm at Peterborough Cathedral

This service will be led by the Peterborough Cathedral Choir. The preacher will be The Revd Canon Peter Woodward, a relative of Edith Cavell.

Saturday 24th October -- Great War Fashion

2.30pm in Peterborough Cathedral

Fashion historian Lucy Adlington will give a presentation about the experiences of women during the First World War as reflected in their clothing. There will also be a display of original clothing.

HARVEST FLOWERS

I would like to begin by extending the sadness of Guild members to the families of June Griffin, who had been a member for many years and was known for her lovely arrangements and the children's scenes she created, and also Norah Darby who both died recently. The family of Norah are farmers and for many years they have provided us with all the corn we needed for the harvest displays. For this, we have been most grateful. We will miss them both.

Iris Parker, who has been a member for many years and whose advice and fantastic arrangements we will miss greatly, has retired. Many thanks for your loyal support Iris, and we wish you a peaceful retirement.

With the Induction and Collation of the new rector taking place one week before Harvest we decided to decorate the church for this service and extend it to the next weekend when we would add the usual harvest tributes.

I would like to thank sincerely Irene Johnson and Chris and Keith Warren for helping me when the flowers arrived and all the Guild members for their beautiful arrangements. Peter and Steve were with us on the Saturday morning, so thanks, to Peter for opening up and serving the coffee and biscuits, and to Steve for well, just being there!! Sincere thanks also to everyone who donated towards the cost of the flowers and to Morrison's who generously provided the harvest sheaf of corn loaf. Without the help of all of you it would not have been so successful.

Love and thanks as always, Jan.

PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL HAS A NEW ENTRANCE

Many of us have admired the glass entrance to St John's Church in Cathedral Square which has added light to the church building and opened it up to shoppers in the city centre. Now, thanks to heritage lottery funding, the Cathedral also has a brand new glass doorway which allows disabled access. His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester, officially opened the new West Front entrance, marking the completion of phase one of the Cathedral's heritage and education project, paid for in large part by a Heritage Lottery Fund award.

"The re-landscaping of the area between the Norman Arch and the porch means that there is now step-free access all the way from the far end of the city centre," said the Dean in his address at the opening service. "The new glazed, insulated porch means we can open the medieval doors pretty well all year round, thus offering the visitor a vista which encourages entry and exploration."

HARVEST AT PASTON ALL SAINTS

Harvest is always a special time in our church. It may well have been celebrated here in All Saints for the last 800 years. Until the early twentieth century, our church was surrounded by farms and countryside. We were known as “the church in the fields” when Paston was still a tiny hamlet and Fulbridge Road a mere dirt track linking Dogsthorpe to Werrington. The local area relied on farming and crops. Many parts of the parish were still like this when I first came here in the early 1970’s. Then we could still walk all the way from Paston to Peakirk on a Sunday afternoon and pass nothing but fields and the occasional shed or farmhouse.

Thanksgiving ceremonies and celebrations for a successful harvest are both worldwide and very ancient. In Britain, we have given thanks for successful harvests since pagan times. We celebrate by singing, praying and decorating our churches with baskets of fruit and food. Looking through old church documents, tithes were often paid to the Rector of Paston in the form of crops or farm animals. We believe that in Victorian times, in the days of Rector Joseph Pratt, harvest was celebrated here in fine style with people visiting from miles around and filling the church to overflowing in the days when there was an upper floor “gallery” to accommodate the huge crowds.

Harvest and thanksgiving is still celebrated in fine style today. My first visit to Paston All Saints, back in the early seventies, was to see a most wonderful flower festival. We still put on equally good shows today. Every year the flower arrangers never fail to impress as they fill the church with colour and beauty. This year is no exception. As well as the flower displays we have vegetables and, for the second year running, Morrison’s Bakery have generously baked and donated a wonderful corn sheaf made of dough, which forms the centrepiece of our chancel display.

By the time you read this magazine our Harvest family service will have taken place and the chancel will hopefully be full of cans of food and boxes of cereals. These will be taken to the Peterborough Food Bank after our Songs of Praise on Sunday 11th October. This will help people less fortunate than ourselves. The large sheaf of corn by the altar was donated by the family of Mrs Darby whose funeral took place in our church last month. For many years she delivered the corn for our displays and she was always generous in her support.

Our harvest supper (recently changed to a harvest lunch) is also a traditional part of our festival and is a time for good food, fellowship and fun.

Please join us at our Songs of Praise Service on Sunday 11th October when our collection goes to help the needy and poor.”

“Let us with a gladsome mind, Praise the Lord for He is kind”

Fun Corner

NEVER GIVE UP

An elderly lady in Essex, lost her little dog and she was really upset, especially after having her for 12 years. However, three weeks ago they found the little dog outside Barking !

BODY REALISM

Last week my friend had a tattoo on his left arm of an anchor. It was so realistic it took him 4 hours to get out of the bath.

HAZARDS IN THE HOME

My cousin has been really dogged by his house being burgled. His wife has a clever idea by putting a pair of bras up and down the stairs. When asked what they were for, she told him that they were booby traps.

USE OF THE ALPHABET

My friend George has now been married 35 years and his wife asked him to describe her. He looked at her for a few minutes and said, "You are like an alphabet". "How do you mean?" she asked. "Well, you are A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, K." "What does that mean?" She enquired. George began "A- you're adorable, B- you're beautiful, C- you're cute, D- you're delightful, E- you're elegant, F- you're fabulous, G- you're gorgeous and H- you're heavenly!" His wife smiled endearingly and looked very pleased. "Oh that's lovely!" she said, "But what do I, J, and K mean?" George looked at her and said, "I'm, Just, Kidding!" If you want to speak to George he is on Level 4 Ward Y of the hospital, but he may be needing plastic surgery.

NEW EMPLOYMENT

Did you hear about the chicken who ate 2 tonnes of cement? He is now working as a bricklayer

SPOILT FOR CHOICE

Two cannibals were watching the 100 metres at the Olympic Games. One said to the other, "I could eat a couple of runners for my main course!" His friend said, "I'm not so hungry, I think I'll just have the starter."

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

If Merlin the Arthurian Wizard flew from Heathrow to New York, would he be classed as a Flying Sorcerer?

Doug Scott

COLLATION part 1 : the preparation

Once the official announcement had been made that Rev Mark would be joining us at the helm of Paston Church, preparations swung into place for the Collation Service. It was almost as if someone had opened up a hot-line between the churchwardens, Archdeacon Gordon, his secretary Pat and the Rural Dean. Guidelines for organising the service were received and a date was fixed for the celebrations. This largely depended, of course, on the Bishop's diary.

Now we could really set to work. The PCC were determined that we should make this an occasion to remember and we were determined that everything should be of top quality. First the invitations had to be designed and printed. We decided to include a picture of our beautiful church and to have the invites larger than normal and printed on good card. Several refinements were made along the way until we were completely satisfied with the design.

The next big job was to draw up a list of local dignitaries, friends and community representatives who should be invited to join us for this special occasion. The timing was awkward as local schools had already broken up for the long summer holiday, so it was decided to send the headteachers an email invitation as well as the official card. Church wardens and lay reader, Yvonne, met several times to plan and review progress. As is expected in these situations, many people did not reply to the invite (even those who intended to come) and this made the job harder. However, we contacted some by other means and eventually managed to chase up all those people who were needed to play a part in the service.

Now we could turn our full attention to designing the booklets for the order of service. It seemed to be a very big booklet! At one point it was forty pages on my computer but we managed to get this down to just over thirty! This included a photograph of Mark on the front cover (hi-jacked from the Gnosall website) and a picture of our church on the back. Various drafts went backwards and forwards between us and the Diocesan officers (at times they seemed so nit-picking) but the secretary Pat Collishaw was an absolute star. She proof-read the whole thing and eventually it was ready to go to print. It was only then we realised that this was our job too (I thought the Diocese may have the necessary facilities, but this was not so) Minuteman, our magazine printers, were excellent and produced a copy for proof reading very quickly. Thanks to the whole team there. At last preparations seemed to be coming to an end.

However, we still had to sort out, who was doing what in the service, and this gave us more headaches, but at last everything was agreed and we could start planning the rehearsals. (It was like producing a full-scale concert!)

The official rehearsal with Ian, the Rural Dean, was arranged for Tuesday evening. We walked through each part of the service and everyone took notes as to where they should be and what they should do. This did not stop several of us getting together on other occasions that week to refresh our memories and check that we had written down correct instructions. (Is that a sign of age?)

On Saturday the Flower Guild moved in and what a brilliant job they did ... as usual! There was a real festive spirit as they began to weave their magic. Three hours later the job was done! The church looked (and smelt) beautiful. As I opened the church door later that day it almost took my breath away. The flowers along the back aisle greeted me, and once again I was proud to belong to Paston Church. Now all we could do was wait for the day to dawn!

COLLATION part 2 : The big day

For many, the day began early over in the church hall. Tables and chairs had already been set up after the coffee morning on Saturday and the ladies moved in to sort out the feast. As more and more people began delivering their cakes and savouries, the table began to look really inviting. By twelve-o'clock the table was positively heaving. What a mouth watering display. (We do food well in Paston, and once again I felt proud to be part of it) Soon it was time for us all to go our separate ways and put on our glad-rags ready for the final chapter of a long story that had begun way back in November when Gill announced her retirement.

Everyone was prompt. The excitement grew as the church began to fill. Visitors from Gnosall had guided tours around the church and they were full of fun and excitement, even after their long journey! It really was a pleasure chatting to them – and, of course, trying to get little pieces of chit-chat about our new incumbent.

The church filled and official guests arrived (including our MP)... The Bishop had last-minute talks with key folk, the procession of clergy arrived from the church hall and the service began. I am relieved to say that everything seemed to go without a hitch. The hymns were rousing and sung with gusto by all present. The pomp and ceremony ran smoothly and everyone did a grand job! It was lovely to find humour in the service and it was such a relief when, at last, it was all over and we could relax over fellowship in the church hall. At the end of the day it was sad to say goodbye to all our visitors, and to wave off our new friends from Gnosall.

A really huge and heartfelt thank you to everyone who helped in any way! It was a real Paston team effort and I am sure that we will share happy memories for many years to come. A warm welcome to Mark, Karen and family ... we all look forward to working closely with you in order that God's church in this community may grow and flourish.

