Report to the Parish Council from St Mary and All Saints Bradley

This is my first report to the Parish Council since I was licensed and installed as Rector of the Benefice of Bradley Church Eaton, Derrington and Haughton on 18th July 2020, and I would like to express my thanks to the people of Bradley for the warm welcome I have received and for the support that they give to the life of St Mary and All Saints Church.

Over the past two years, like most other organisations, church life has been drastically affected by the effects of the pandemic. As a result of the church being closed for worship several times and the restrictions in place we had to find different ways of being church together and so we have used our Benefice Facebook page, Zoom and also a telephone conference system for services. Even though our services are now back in church we continue to say morning prayer together on our FB page and also use Zoom for our Lent/Advent courses and some meetings. The use of Zoom has enabled people from all four churches to get to know each other and to make it possible for people without transport to attend courses which otherwise they wouldn’t have been able to do.

Over the past 18 months we have developed a closer working relationship with the other churches in the Benefice and now have a joint mission action plan. Services patterns and activities are discussed at benefice meetings rather than just a single PCC so that we can support each other and avoid and clashes with events. The current service pattern was put in place just after easter last year. Each church has 3 Sunday services a month, one 8.30 service from the book of Common Prayer, one 10.30 common worship service and one 4pm service which is an all age service without communion. Congregations are encouraged to attend churches across the Benefice when there isn’t a service at the church in their own village, and many people do travel around in order to attend the style or time of service that they prefer. We continue to monitor the guidance for places of worship in relation to covid and adjust our practices accordingly.

Since being open for worship again it has been wonderful to be able to catch up on the events which had to be postponed and so have held one wedding and 10 baptisms with more booked in the coming months.

We are gradually introducing midweek services and activities as we recognise that not everyone is around on a Sunday, and not everyone wishes to attend a formal church service. On the first Tuesday of each month we hold ‘Table Talk’ at Bradley which is an informal, slightly structured, time of conversation and refreshments. We are looking to introduce other regular activities across the whole benefice over the coming 12 months. The introduction of the new benefice magazine has been well received and it is encouraging that sometimes we receive more material than we can fit in.

Last July our Church warden, Gina Krupski resigned from her post and the post has remained vacant ever since. We are lucky to have a very committed PCC who have taken on extra responsibilities to ensure that the church has continued to run efficiently. The building remains in good repair and we are now focusing on the work which was recommended at our last quinquennial inspection. We are lucky to have a very valued team of volunteers who maintain the building and the church yard to a very high standard.

The Friends of Bradly Church (formally the fundraising group) are a sub group of the PCC and have held several major events which have not only raised funds for the church but also provided opportunities for the village to come together and reconnect after a long time of isolation, and encouraged visitors to Bradley form the surrounding area. They are now looking at other events for the coming year.

On the 15th May we will be holding our Annual Parochial Church Meeting where our full annual report for 2021 will be presented. The meeting will take place at 11.45am following our Sunday service.

I am truly grateful for all the support that we receive from the community in Bradley and for the many gifted and dedicated volunteers who care for our church, and for the opportunity to serve you all as your Rector.

With Every Blessing

Rev’d Cath Brumfitt