

# Parish of Sandal Magna Newsletter



29 April 2021

**The lost are found, the found grow and the lonely are enfolded**

## **Rupert's Address to the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, 28th April, 2021**

I love the story of the public being asked to name a boat which breaks ice, and choosing to call it Boaty McBoatface. Eventually it was given the more dignified name of the Sir David Attenborough, and the comic name consigned to a small Rigid inflatable boat.

One biblical image which isn't in my book, but perhaps should have been, is the image of a boat.

Boats feature in different shapes and sizes, from the Noah's Ark, to Jonah's ship, to the fishing boats of Peter and James, to the cargo ships which carried Paul on his missionary journeys. You may have noticed that in all for of these stories it was not plain sailing. In fact storms were a fact of nautical life, and in all four stories, people are saved by God's miraculous intervention.

A boat is a wonderful metaphor for the church. (The nave of a church comes from the latin word navis, meaning ship.)

A boat is a place of security and protection from the dangerous sea.

A boat is a place of exploration and adventure.

A boat is a place from which to fish.

A boat depends on a good crew pulling together and a good team of people at the helm.

Sally and I have enjoyed so much being part of the leadership team at the helm of this beautiful church. It has been a privilege and an honour to serve here alongside such amazing, gifted people over the years, thinking of those who began this journey with us, Dermot and Doreen O'Connell, David and Betty Littlewood, Peter and Margaret Moulding, Mervyn Ellis, Bob Coursey, Mavis Rowley, Rose Lee, Judith Parkin, Andy and Julie Owen to name just a few, because there are hundreds! Andy Owen. Sally couldn't understand a word he said!

We could not have come this far without such a supportive **PCC**, such brilliant and inspiring leaders and servants of Christ, and such a loving, serving and faithful church family.

And I am confident, as we prepare to leave, that the boat is in safe hands.

We have a strong, mature and representative PCC, which will be chaired by Craig Orr, who brings much experience and a positive, can do attitude.

We have a gifted **Staff team** of 12 disciples, who are responsible for many ministries, and who will be led and pastored by our Reader, Angela Elphick.

Angela will use her gifts of preaching and leading worship also to head up the preaching and worship of the church, with the excellent support of:

Viv Buckley and John Arnold at the 10am in St Helen's,  
Richard Hughes, Mark Taylor and Ed Brindley at the 11am in St Helen's,  
Margaret Walker, Rose Lee and Sue Lee at the 11am at St Paul's.



We have a diligent **Finance team** with our treasurer Janet Crossman working with Andrea North and the Standing committee.

We also have an experienced **Transition Team** who will manage the process of the Interregnum. This team consists of our four Churchwardens, Andrea North, Ed Brindley, Craig Orr and Brian Pratt; Angela Elphick, Ruth McCallum, and Margaret Walker. This team will be chaired by Ed Brindley, who will also be responsible for our digital notice board and social media.

We will have the support of Bishop Tom Butler, Canon George Nairn-Briggs, and other local ministers for Holy Communion, Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals, which will be organised by a strong Parish Administration team of Ruth McCallum, Denise Chivers and Anne Francos.

**The Spring** under the leadership of Cath Moxham, and **CAP & Portobello Community Forum** guided by Sarah Cutts, with their teams and their buildings are flying. Please support them in prayer and in practical ways as they emerge from lockdown.

So all these little boats which make up the church will be well helmed and superbly crewed.

It's important to recognise that there may be the occasional squall or upset which rocks the boat. This is where we remain rooted in the Word, particularly Paul's words to the Colossians: *So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offence. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.* Colossians 3:12-14

We need to remind ourselves that Jesus is in charge of the boat and he is in charge of the storms. I love the story where he is so trusting that he can sleep in the boat in the middle of a terrifying storm: *Then he got in the boat, his disciples with him. The next thing they knew, they were in a severe storm. Waves were crashing into the boat—and he was sound asleep! They roused him, pleading, "Master, save us! We're going down!"* Matthew 8:23-25

We need to be as trusting as Jesus was, during this time of transition, as the boat travels from one shore to the other.

**Our confidence is in Christ, our priority is prayer.**

We can be praying for the continuing life and witness of the Church which will flourish during this time. We can also be praying for the person God has in mind to become the next vicar of this beautiful parish.

Prayer gives us a buoyant hope. I used to do a lot of dinghy sailing in Hong Kong when I was young. We capsized a lot, but the boat never sank, because it had buoyancy bags in the hull. So we would just step on the centreboard, and right the boat. Prayer is like the hidden buoyancy of the church which keeps us afloat, and forging ahead.

With the wind of the spirit filling our sails and Jesus in the boat alongside us, we can continue on this journey of faith with vision and confidence in the course which lies ahead.

