

The Benefice of Gloucester St George with Whaddon  
**St Margaret of Scotland, Whaddon**  
*Worshipping, Caring, Pioneering ...*

## Newsletter for Autumn 2019

Dear Friends

### New ideas this autumn

This time last year we had just finished our St Margaret's Festival. Nothing quite so exciting this autumn, but a couple of recent services deserve a mention.

### Our first Churchyard Service

On 29<sup>th</sup> September we held a service aimed specially at those who visit the churchyard to tend a grave – and there are a remarkable number who do just that. It was short and simple, and outdoors: 'bring a broly if wet, but there will be spares in the porch if you forget' was the advice.

The response was very encouraging: 57 people attended, of whom probably two-thirds were not regular churchgoers. The service started outside the porch and worked round anticlockwise, stopping among recent burials and at the main area for cremation burials. There were three well known hymns (many thanks to Hans for the music technology) and suitable prayers and readings. Most people stayed for refreshments in the church, and many pastoral contacts were made or renewed. Pat Mitchell even discovered some people to whom she was related but had not previously met: Gloucester is a small world.

Will we do it again? Most definitely. This sort of thing is quite a lot of work, in planning, advertising, catering, clearing up and so on - but tremendously worthwhile.

### Harvest of the Sea



The following Sunday, 6<sup>th</sup> October, was our Harvest Praise, with the special theme this year of the Harvest of the Sea. The church was transformed with nets on which decorated card fish (*below*) were hung as part of our prayers. As well as two traditional harvest hymns we sang "Wide, wide as the ocean" with all the actions. The gospels

**Harvest of the Sea ....  
nets and fish after our service**



have many references to fish: Bruce spoke about Luke 5: 1-11. It was good to welcome 27 adults and 7 children. The picture shows the net and fish after the harvest offerings had been taken for the Foodbank – these amounted to 128kg! Our next united service is on Christmas morning.



“O ye whales and all that move in the waters, bless ye the Lord”

## **Candlelit Carol service**

Our candlelit carol service this year will be on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm. We have a couple of changes this year: a new carol book and a new family-friendly sitting area. The new book will include six new carols and will be much more legible with 15 point Gill Sans!

We hope that young families will sit in the chancel this year, where children will have a better view and can sit on kneelers and so on and, if necessary, pop out through the priests' door to the nearby loo.

## **New Housing**

We mentioned in our last newsletter the construction of 250 new houses to the south of Grange Road. Plans are now being discussed for no fewer than 2000 houses stretching all the way to Naas Lane, with local community facilities and industrial units as well. This is a major political issue and raises huge concerns about transport, infrastructure and flooding. It could be that within ten years Whaddon parish will be transformed, and the outlook from our churchyard benches may be very different.

## **Porch problems**

There is not a lot to report yet on the porch. The trial pits have been dug. The work was carried out by an archaeologist, so the report covered not only the soil mechanics but also the archaeology of the porch. The bad news is that underpinning is probably too risky an operation to pursue. It may be that we will have to pin the outer wall to the side walls of the porch and see what happens. The 'nuclear option' would be to dismantle the entire porch very carefully and rebuild it on a new and firm foundation. We have been awaiting (and chasing!) ball park figures for these options.

## **PCC meetings**

We are continuing to have joint PCC meetings with St George's. This means quite a large group around the table at the Vicarage, but it seems to work well, with a wider vision, and a readiness to listen carefully and to contribute accordingly. One of our new members, Mike Smith, works in Manchester and for one of our meetings, was present by Skype from the wilds of New Mills, thanks again to Hans, our resident technical wizard. The technology behaved itself and Mike was able to hear and to contribute to discussion. Whatever would our forefathers have made of it!?

## **Our link with Tanzania**

Just after Easter, a group went out from Hucclecote church to visit Tanzania. We were very pleased to be able to send greetings and a gift of money to our link congregation at Eden, near Kasulu in western Tanzania....



Eden church in W Tanzania, May 2019

On Easter Day we got up a card, to be signed by people at our 9am and Family Praise services, with greetings to our Christian brothers and sisters at Eden. By amazing good fortune we were joined that particular Sunday by John and Margaret Cooper, married almost exactly fifty years previously at St Margaret's ... and who signed the card in the local Swahili! They had worked in Rwanda and Tanzania, hence their special knowledge. We hadn't seen them for four years, so how lucky was that for timing?! The Hucclecote group had a wonderful visit and came back with many pictures and a letter of thanks

from the folk at Eden, who were most appreciative of our gift and greetings. Their final line shows their total trust in God's providence – this from one of the poorest countries in the world: "As you can see the present building is temporary, we desire to make a permanent building with no worry that God will enable us".

### **Dates for your diary...**

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> October 4pm at St George's: "Time to Remember" (our bereavement service).

Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> November at St George's: St Margaret's Sunday Lunch (advance booking needed.)

Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> December 5pm at St Margaret's: Advent service of readings and hymns.

Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 7pm at St Margaret's: Candlelit Carol Service.

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December 10am at St Margaret's: Service for all, with short communion to follow.

### **How you can help us sustain the life and work of St Margaret's**

Please remember St Margaret's in your prayers, asking God for his blessing on all that we do in His name. Please pray especially for Helen McGeoch, our Pioneer Minister, who is doing great work in the schools and in the wider community of Tuffley. We are always hoping and praying for new members. We need to know what forms and times of worship people find most helpful. If our services are not right for you, please say what you would prefer.

We always need help with the cost of maintaining the building, the churchyard and our ministry. The best way is by standing order, which helps us to budget and makes tax reclaim easier. But any type of giving is welcome. You may wish to consider a legacy – please ask if you need advice about how to do this.

**Thank you for your help and support, which mean a great deal to us.**

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**Website for St George's and St Margaret's:** <http://www.glos-stg-stm.org.uk>

**NB:** you can download our monthly magazine Crossroads on the website

### **Normal Service Times**

1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday	10.30 am	Family Praise
	5.00 pm	Evensong
2 <sup>nd</sup> 4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	9.00 am	Sung communion
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday	5.00 pm	Evensong
Thursdays	10.30 am	Holy Communion