

The Garth Ministry Area News

Well, the second edition of MA News has come a little quicker than we might have expected in the light of Vicki's announcement last weekend that she has tendered her resignation. Vicki writes below about the decision she has made and following that there are some initial responses from the MA Council and the Ministry Team which both met earlier in the week...

Vicki writes...

Dear Friends,

It was with heartfelt sadness we announced last Sunday that I have tendered my resignation as The Garth Ministry Area Leader. I can now inform you that I shall be moving after Easter Sunday. Many of you know that I have spoken out publicly in The Church Times about there being a "culture of fear" in Llandaff Diocese. Since then, a survey of the clergy in Llandaff, along with a flood of messages from clergy from this and other Dioceses in Wales and England have confirmed to me that the clergy of the Church in Wales are not safe in their "workplace". Although many of you are concerned about the absence of the Dean from Llandaff Cathedral and the fact that a tribunal found our Bishop has a bullying case to answer, this situation is really not unique. Others suffer too. It is for this reason, and this reason alone that I have resigned my ministry here. I have enjoyed working with each of you and have valued your warm friendship and support. Whilst I had expected to be part of a bigger team of clergy serving in the parishes and Plas Dwr as this was promised when I was appointed, and I remain disappointed that our ministry area is expected to function effectively with just three clerics, it is the culture, the manner of its delivery and the effect it has on the lives of clerics and worshippers that concerns me most.

I have done my best to bring to birth our ministry area and it is with a heavy heart that I hand this on to others. Clergy, no matter how long they stay in a parish, are passing through - any priest will tell you that in a very real sense, we are "aliens in a foreign land". In many ways, this is the only way in which the prophetic voice can operate and speak out - yes, as clergy we are called to embed ourselves in the communities we serve and build up relationships that are healthy honest and joyful as we celebrate what Jesus continues to do in our lives; but now and again, a priest may find herself/himself called to step beyond the gathered community and address the wider church, especially when conscience can no longer tolerate behaviour that wounds us all as a Christian family. That is how I have found myself in recent months and it is a matter of personal integrity that will not allow me to keep my head down.

You, the people of this ministry area, are the church. Each and every one of you who gather to give thanks and to praise the God of heaven, known to us in Christ our Lord, are the church. Your steadfast commitment to your church, your service to one another and to our communities make the gospel real and inviting. As a ministry area you now have the opportunity both to cling to those things you treasure in your churches, but also to find new ways to work together to better serve the needs of others. In a few weeks time I will leave you in good hands. The Ministry Area Council that you appointed, our Lay Chair, along

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with our Ministry Area Team will ensure our churches flourish as they have done over the years. There will be time to say goodbye properly before too long but for now I shall continue to hold you all in my prayers as I gradually hand on my duties to others.

I understand some people have speculated that I am going to a new job - that is not the case. I am resigning from ministry and will wait until God reveals what He may. In the meantime, I am moving to Herefordshire with my family and we are open to whatever the future may bring under God's grace. None of us knows what the future holds but having stood up for those things I believe in I am at peace, placing my life in God's hands

Best Wishes

Vicki

Steve writes...

In the light of Vicki's decision, the Bishop has asked me to act as Interim Ministry Area Leader until such time as an appointment can be made and I am willing to do this. All of us in the Ministry Team are very saddened to be losing Vicki after all the work she has put in (at considerable cost to herself) in establishing the MA and developing & leading our team, as well as the churches in her care. We do, of course, fully accept Vicki's decision and are deeply distressed that she, and to a lesser extent all of us in the Garth, are part of the 'collateral damage' of this latest failure of 'the church' to practice what it preaches.

God, in His infinite mercy and patience, bears with His people when they mess things up. Like many a parent He is a master at picking up the broken pieces of plan A and making a plan B out of them. The challenge we now face in The Garth is to discern what that plan B is and to bring it into being.

One of the big advantages of being a Ministry Area is that we are now served by a team of lay and ordained ministers, so although Christ Church, St John's & St Mary's are losing 'their vicar' they will still have the familiar faces of Amanda, Iwan, Lindsay, Belinda & myself to help see them through this time, as well as having others to help cover services for the interim period. As a team we are already working to ensure as much continuity as possible.

Your newly formed MA Council had its first full meeting on Monday which enabled us to address the challenges we face and make a few key decisions. We agreed to postpone the re-advertising of the existing vacancy so that we could reassess our needs in the light of Vicki's impending departure, and I am meeting the Archdeacon on Friday morning to take this forward. We appreciate that this additional delay will be especially frustrating to the people of St Fagans but were in agreement that it was better to take time over making

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the right appointments to the right roles rather than rushing things and living to regret it. It is obviously in everyone's interests to ensure that we take no longer than we need to!

I encourage you all to pray for Vicki and her family and for all involved in decision making for the MA in the coming weeks. May God's Spirit lead each of us to see where he is leading us at this time, so that we may know "this is the way, walk in it" (Isaiah 30.21).

Ministry Area Council (MAC)

Other matters addressed by the MAC this week including formally adopting the Church in Wales Safeguarding Policy and creating an email contact point for safeguarding concerns, addressing the importance of good communication, assessing the 2021 accounts and agreeing some approaches to increasing income by developing a better investment policy. Our overall financial situation in 2021 looks OK because the shortfall in income was substantially covered by grant funding provided by the Church in Wales because of the pandemic. However, we recognise that 2022 may prove more challenging as there will be no further grant funding after this quarter but some sources of income may well take a long time to return to previous levels. The value of supporting your church by Gift Direct and the importance of ensuring all giving goes to the intended church were both stressed, and we will focus further on these two matters in the coming months. We also reflected on the recent appointment process for the vacant post ministering to St Fagans and Plas Dwr which concluded with no appointment being made as the candidate interviewed was felt to not be suitable for this particular role.

Youth Club

The newly established Ministry Area youth group (for young people from school year 6 and upwards) now has meeting dates for the rest of this school year.

These are 13th March, 3rd & 24th April, 8th & 22nd May, 12th & 26th June and 10th July.

Meetings will normally be by 19.00-20.15 at Christ Church, Radyr and will involve worship geared towards young people, chat, games and food.

For more info or to book a place please contact Cheryl Evans (029 2019 5344 - cherylrhiwbina@icloud.com)

Social Event

Thanks to all who attended the social event on St David's Day and to John Kiff for the excellent quiz and Chris Dale for tech support! A total of £420 was raised for Christian Aid's invaluable work across the world.

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Growing Spiritually in Lent

A reminder of the excellent sessions Lindsay & Belinda are running during Lent

Lent with the Saints (Encounters with our Lord Jesus)

Lent sessions - at Christ Church, Radyr – 10.30-12.00am

15th March - Francis of Assisi 1181-1226...a personal commitment

22nd March - Therese of Lisieux 1873-1897...a response to God's love

29th March - Teresa of Avila 1515-82...a wayward girl finding herself

4th April - Dewi Sant/St David..the Welsh saints..doing the little things.

Each address is followed by an imaginative contemplation on a portion of scripture. With the help of the saints we will come together to seek a personal encounter with Our Lord Jesus.

For more info contact Belinda Huxtable (077 3424 8869 - curateofradyr@gmail.com)

Good Friday

Holy Week services remain as detailed in the previous edition except that the 7.30pm evening service on Good Friday is now at Christ Church, Radyr. Entitled ***At the Still Point of the Turning World***, the details for this special service are as follows:

An evening of specially chosen music and poetry for Good Friday, with the Morganna String Quartet. Over the centuries the story of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus has inspired composers and writers, like J. S. Bach and Arvo Part, John Donne and T. S. Eliot, to create some of the world's greatest works of art. This is an opportunity to reflect on the profound meaning of the day, and to invite friends and neighbours who perhaps might not attend a traditional religious service.
Admission free. Donations to DEC Ukraine Appeal

Contact Details

Rev'd Vicki Burrows remains the main point of contact for Christ Church, Radyr, St John's Danescourt & St Mary's, St Fagans until Easter. 075 1596 5781 vicki.burrows@icloud.com

For other churches and MA matters please contact Rev'd Steve Willson. However, Steve is moving to Pentyrch Vicarage on 17th March so will be taking some time off over the next two weeks. Emails can still be sent to stevewillson@cinw.org.uk but best to contact Vicki for any urgent matters. Phone number until 17/3 2081 1476, thereafter 2140 3854.

Corrections? Things missing? An event you'd like to advertise? Interesting news to share? Questions?

Anything you'd like to be included in the next MA News can be sent to:

Rev'd Steve Willson - stevewillson@cinw.org.uk