

*'I came that they may have life,
and have it abundantly'*

- John 1.10 -

WORSHIP

We are on a journey towards being a healthier church: a growing and nurturing Christian presence based in the communities of Ubley, Compton Martin and Blagdon with Charterhouse.

Please share our journey and renew our church life.

What is in this edition of Pathways?

The second edition of **Pathways** includes our New Programme of Worship which will begin on the first Sunday of September. To explain this is:

- a summary of feedback;
- how we reacted to that feedback;
- what has been altered and not altered and why;
- a brief explanation of each style of worship.

In our first edition of **Pathways** we shared a possible new programme of worship for our Benefice. We asked for feedback which was received via email, the Open Forum, one-to-one conversations and by members of our three PCCs. The Worship Steering Team listened, reflected on, prayed about and made some alterations to the suggested programme. The revised programme was presented to our three PCCs who unanimously endorsed it.

The principles that guided the Worship Steering Team's thinking about the nature of worship are these:

- Growing the Body of Christ and the unity of our Church family.
- Encouraging people to experience God's presence in different ways.
- Encouraging people to be open to learning more about God.
- The need for teams of people to collaborate together to lead our worship.
- Having a variety of styles of worship that enable everyone to experience God's presence.
- Offering a mixed economy of worship to encourage the wider community to discover God.
- Creating missional worship.
- Growing our music ministry through the development of singing and instrumental music.
- Identifying the church building that is most suitable for each style of worship.

From September the Worship Steering Team will be keeping a close eye on the worship programme. At the end of next year they will be presenting their findings to the PCC, with recommendations for revision.

Please read the following article. If you know what worship is, please read it to confirm what you know; if you want to learn more about worship,

there will be something new to learn; if you are unsure why you worship, then read to explore and discover how worship nurtures our relationship with God, through Jesus, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



Worship and its potential beyond
what we may be used to
or even experience

Refreshing our Tradition

The relationship between Christian and culture seems broken. Long shaped by public holidays marking the church's year; by the church's involvement in all stages of family life, people came to the church's door. Familiar prayers and hymns from school days were used on civic occasions. Less so now, the reality is that fewer seek out the Church's ministry.

Worship needs to reflect this change; it must incorporate what is good, challenge what is bad. Worship must resonate with the deep feelings; be open to creativity, encourage imagination. Those who prepare worship will reflect critically on the context of our lives today; it is a process without end; they will reflect also on the traditions of the church and the inheritance formed over the centuries.

*Religion has always been deeply involved
with the way praise, recognition and respect
create the atmosphere in which we live
and the values we live by.*

Theologians D.W. Hardy & D.F. Ford

The question raised for us, here in Blagdon, Ubley and Compton Martin, is how to shape worship in a way that enables the whole community to encounter God. The challenge is to shape it both to our tradition and the present movement of the Spirit today. Simply to embrace present culture tends to lose our rich inheritance; it risks being drained of content and meaning. On the other hand, to retreat to the margins of our culture and society risks removing faith into a church out of touch with its community.

We seek a *middle-way*; fresh, locally-grown worship, supported and encouraged by the centuries of the wonderful liturgical tradition the Church of England.

Tradition is entrusted to us: our liturgical traditions inherited over centuries. They have also changed, and do so now, to meet present needs; they express the values, technology, media, the workplace, family life, local and world issues and needs of today. The focus must be on creating the very best for God. This we set out to do. Recent refreshment of worship has come to us in *Common Worship*; its stated aim is to draw people to the heart of God's love. It is proving valuable. Christian life is the recognition of the love of God. The Church knows this; it enjoys and celebrates it. Praise recognises the abundance of God's love.

At the heart of ordinary Christian life is recognition of the love of God.

All creation is a work of God's love. Jesus Christ is God's giving of himself in love to restore and fulfil all creation.

The Holy Spirit is the pouring out of this love in endless transformation and fresh creativity.

A way forward

The worship programme we are crafting seeks that *middle-way*. We hope its variety will speak to your spiritual needs. It is, for those for who worship, a natural part of being alive. Just as important, it is for those for whom worship is presently not their habit, who are beset by doubts yet hope to acknowledge a *Presence* beyond human understanding. We are shaping a worshipping life that enables praise of God, and knowledge of God; that is lively and convincing enough to be worth vigorously defending.

Principles

Praise is a distinct way to communicate the gospel; other communication is an overflow of this; like the spread of a scent. It is important to the whole of Christian communication that worship is focused on praise and thanksgiving. Living your faith, telling the story of your faith, is essential to knowing and trusting God. In good worship you recognise the reality of God's love; the desire to share becomes irresistible.

Praise of God recognises all this and first of all enjoys and celebrates it.

Praise is therefore an attempt to express the abundance of God's love.

In worship, if you listen carefully to what you are saying and what is being said, you will be growing in understanding of what God is doing. Praise and thanksgiving are the starting point in understanding God's love; it is to be shared amongst the people with whom you live.

Some homework

The last word comes from Scripture written around 15 years after the first Easter Day. Use this as an exercise.

- Read through the passage and when a phrase stands out, pause, think about it.
- After a few minutes read the passage again; something else might spark a thought.
- Question what the passage might mean for you and perhaps share your thoughts with someone else.

Philippians 4.4-9

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me [Paul], and the God of peace will be with you.

Our New Pattern of Worship

Starting Sunday 5th September 2021

“Decisions about worship are to be shaped more by the church’s missionary calling, than by the congregation’s preferences. The point is not what we dislike or like but what the worship of God and our participation in God’s mission in the world both require.”

Bishop Graham Cray

What has altered from the suggested programme:

- Each of the three parish churches now has worship on two Sundays per month. We listened to views of the Church family anxious about only one Sunday per month of worship. BCP at St Michael’s has been moved to the 2nd Sunday. Evening Worship on the 4th Sunday has moved to St Bartholomew. It will no longer be limited to Said Evensong but will encompass a variety of styles of worship.
- Many people were keen to see St Hugh’s used on more regularly and said they valued the 5th Sunday worship there. We have effected this change.
- Families with young children are welcome at all worship. We particularly welcome them to Messy Church, Gathered Eucharist and Café Church.
- Breakfast@9 is no longer at the same time as In the Spirit of BCP.

What has not been altered:

- We have not changed the time of 9.00am or 10.15am because this allows hospitality between two congregations as one worship ends and another begins.
- Congregations choosing to travel between church buildings, thus increasing fellowship, has been a particular strength of the pandemic. We encourage our Church family to continue this. It decreases the carbon created by heating our buildings. It nurtures friendship and strengthens our Christian community.
- Worship is a shared experience. Our relationship with God is strengthened when we are together. This applies equally to leading worship. Our different styles of worship will be team lead.

Worship is not a habit; when we find something of quality and express our appreciation, that very expression adds something to the situation. This is even more so in the case of praise of a person. To recognise worth and to respond to it with praise is to create a new relationship. This new mutual delight is itself something of worth, enhancement of what was already valued. So know this: if God is God, then praise of God is central, not a habit.

Theologians D.W. Hardy & D.F. Ford

HELP SUPPORT OUR WORSHIP

Many of you will have helped to support our worship in the past.
Many of you might feel called to be involved in our future.

Our new pattern of worship needs lots of people to help with reading during worship, preparation of the altar, leading intercessions, welcoming, hospitality, creative arts (drama, art, music).

Please speak to Simon at worship or email him at: priest.bcmu@gmail.com

We look forward to hearing your ideas.

The New Pattern Worship

Sunday Worship					
Time	Sunday 1	Sunday 2	Sunday 3	Sunday 4	Sunday 5
9.00am	Café Church Worship of the Word <i>St Andrew</i>	In the Spirit of BCP Holy Communion <i>St Michael</i>		Breakfast@9 Worship with Breakfast <i>Blagdon Baptist Church</i>	
10.15am	Sunday Eucharist Holy Communion <i>St Andrew</i>	Sunday Eucharist Holy Communion <i>St Bartholomew</i>	The Eucharist Worship of the Word with Holy Communion <i>St Andrew</i>	Sunday Eucharist Holy Communion <i>St Michael</i>	Sunday Eucharist Holy Communion <i>St Hugh</i>
4.00pm		Messy Church <i>St Bartholomew</i>			
5.00pm	New Horizon: Eternal light Worship of the Word or Holy Communion <i>St Hugh</i> <i>Spring/Summer/Autumn</i>			Evening Worship Sometimes Holy Communion <i>St Bartholomew</i>	

Weekday Worship & Prayer				
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
8.40am	Morning Prayer <i>St Bartholomew</i>		Morning Prayer <i>St Michael</i>	Morning Prayer <i>St Andrew</i>
9.15am	Intercession Group <i>St Bartholomew</i>			
12.00pm				In the Spirit of Iona With or without Holy Communion Zoom or <i>St Bartholomew</i>
5.00pm			Sung Evensong Said if no Choir <i>St Andrew</i>	
6.45pm			Contemplative Prayer Group Zoom	
7.30pm		Seeker Worship? <i>Venue?</i>	Seeker Worship? <i>Venue?</i>	

Styles of Worship

Café Church

Everyone is invited to gather to eat and drink together as part of worship. We put out chairs and tables in St Andrew's, serve coffee, tea, juice, croissants and cakes while a relaxed style of worship takes place maybe with an activity included, certainly with the freedom to contribute creativity and share life experiences. Led by a variety of people with different experiences of faith. The Christian viewpoint about life and the possibility of God is shared, as well as an encouragement to experience with the divine. Being aware that some people feel uncomfortable in a formal church set-up, we invite everyone to Café-church: Give it a shot!

In the Spirit of BCP

With a reverence for our liturgical heritage, we offer this moment of worship, as a continuation of the Common Prayer that has been a part of the Church of England's liturgical life throughout our country since the 17th century. You are invited to share in this quiet and gentle liturgy of Holy Communion, which offers food for thought.

Breakfast@9

An intergenerational church gathering with breakfast at Blagdon Baptist Church.

Sunday Eucharist

Since a famous journey on the road to Emmaus, when two bereaved friends invited a stranger to share their family meal and recognised the stranger as the risen Jesus, groups of Christ's followers have met him in the breaking of bread.

Every minute, somewhere in the world, Christ's sacrifice on the cross is recalled and, whether it is as a rich ceremony in a medieval cathedral or a scrap of black bread saved from meagre rations on a packing-case in a prison hut, it is the way in which the vast majority of Christians obey the Lord's command, '*Do this in remembrance of me*'.

Come and discover the eucharistic worship (the 'thanksgiving'), and meet Christ through the breaking of the bread.

The Eucharist

This Eucharist is varied and inclusive; and can involve activities such as drama, craft, discussion that explores the theme of the day. It will be led by different people. There will be music and singing and a welcome for all round the Lord's Table. By simply gathering on the Lord's Day, we are forming a genuine community not just in word but in deed.

The Eucharist is about bringing the Church family together. It is also a social activity. We want to be strengthened and inspired by the companionship of fellow Christians.

Our gathered Eucharist is a symbol of communion in our community.

Messy Church

Messy Church drawing families together: children, parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. The aim is to share the Christian faith and its viewpoint about the world with families who might find it easier to engage with less formal worship.

Each session is based around a biblical theme involving craft (hence messy), a time of celebration with a story, song and prayer, eating together and taking something home. It is relaxed and informal enabling people to talk and share together.

We wanted to find a time that was easy for young families. We will need a team to plan, but there is the need for others to come along and help and share in exploring our faith together. We will start with one monthly session but this could be expanded in the future.

A New Horizon - Eternal Light

@ St Hugh's - *The Little Church with a Big Heart*

The vision for St Hugh's is to provide a quiet reflective space for Contemplative Spirituality. A place where we can meet God as we are, simply, humbly, boldly opening our hearts to receive God and acknowledging God's presence dwelling within us - that still small place of calm.

It is GOD'S SPACE where we learn to be comfortable one-to-one with God whilst supported by others. Rather than a contradiction, alone with God, *together*, enables us to draw strength from each other; learning and growing in disciplines to enhance our own individual prayer life and relationship with God. We are all one in Christ.

Our Worship will embrace many facets offered by tradition; spirituality; pilgrimage; reaching deep into the past learning from the wisdom and simplicity of the Desert Fathers, *simply* opening our hearts and minds; *humbly* listening to God in the present; enabling ourselves to walk *boldly* into the future working for his Kingdom on earth, exploring God's new plans for us, knowing He is holding us safely in the palm of his hand.

Evening Worship

Our Sunday evening worship will encourage people to embrace the possibility of God free from the fear of censure and able to forget the God they do not believe in and meet the God who believes in them. From Iona and Taizé to 'Home-crafted' worship, simplicity and creativity will enable people to find a deep capacity for sensing God within.

Morning Prayer

Morning Prayer is an opportunity before the day really starts, in what traditionally has been called the 'Office'. It is corporate prayer that has been said throughout the world for centuries. There is a familiarity that can trace its origins back to the worship in the synagogue that Jesus experienced; psalms, canticles, scripture readings and prayer. Corporate prayer is a continuous activity all over the world.

In the Spirit of Iona

At the heart of Iona worship is the commitment to the belief that all worship is a symbolic way of expressing our service in life offered to God. In the Spirit of Iona is an opportunity in the middle of a day to pause and re-centre our lives. Through prayer, silence and listening to each other, we remind ourselves that worship is not about making us 'religious people' but rather about being made more fully human.

Seeker Worship

Most church worship is for those who have a general grasp of the Christian God - the committed believer, the occasional churchgoer those who are familiar with traditional hymns, who will listen to a sermon with no visual content; they might meet together to offer worship to God, to learn from Scripture, and have fellowship with each other.

This is good; and it works; it feeds the soul and gives direction to life. However, it is not appealing to all, and for some is alienating and uncomfortable.

Seeker Worship is different and deliberately so. It is anonymous - you can walk in and out without disclosing anything about yourself, you are not asked to say, do, give or sign anything. Creativity is at the heart of the experience. Talks will be topical and relevant dealing with everyday situations (not holier than thou). The time together is for anyone who wants to enquire, discuss and ponder the Christian faith and viewpoint in an informal setting. It asks people to take the claims of the Christian faith seriously and to see how they apply to everyday situations. A modern form of worship suitable from age 19 to 100.

Evensong

This weekly worship is lead by music sung by our Church choir and arranged by our Director of Music. The words are contemporary but based closely on the traditional texts from The Book of Common Prayer.

HELP SUPPORT OUR WORSHIP

JOIN OUR CHOIR,
ENSEMBLE OR BAND

Please contact Rachel,
our Director of Music, at:
rachel.branston@gmail.com

Music is an important aspect of
worship. We look forward to
growing our musical life through the
new pattern of worship.

Our Kairos Prayer

*God of all time,
God beyond and behind time;
may we know what is too late
and what is too soon.
May we always recognise the right time
in the light of your timeless love.
Amen.*

Summary of Feedback about the original proposed pattern of worship

- The Worship Steering Team is part of the Healthy Church programme. The discussion about the way forward is more open with invitation to join in with comment at the Open Forum. We have come to discuss proposals openly together. We now have the potential to achieve by working together rather than in opposition. This might mean helping to steer a different course to the one proposed rather than blowing it off course.
- Prayer is the way forward and of utmost importance – it is in following the will of God that we can move forward in God's time. Not rushing to do something without consultation is the only way to result in a sustainable pattern of worship that both satisfies the needs of regular church goers and reaches out to others. We must listen to God and to every member of the congregation who wishes to express a view.
- Services for younger people. Will they come? Could we invite 6th Former to the Seeker Worship?
- Messy church will bring school children into church. Ubley School has a close relationship with St Bartholomew's and Simon will continue leading communal worship there when the pandemic restrictions are lifted. Blagdon is not a Church of England school. Could Messy Church be an after school activity?
- A chance to have children in church leads to the development of the church family be it village or Benefice. This is about Fellowship, not buildings, and fellowship is about letting God shine out. This review will feed us and renew us. Simon challenges the congregation spiritually and gives them something to think about and take away with them. He makes the journey to God more accessible to people of 21st century, and more attractive to younger people.
- Services for young families are at different times. It helps if the time is the same each week so that a pattern of attending is established. Times may need to be modified.
- Three services in one church on a single Sunday might divide rather than unite meaning that people may drift away: *feast or famine*. Two BCP services on one Sunday in one church could attract the same people who may only attend once. A service every Sunday in the village gives the Christian community the chance to meet and some would welcome this. The three villages have almost independent congregations who rarely visit the other churches. There is concern that the congregation in each village would dwindle and go elsewhere if the village church was only used one Sunday in a month.
- Alternatively, why travel to an outside parish if there is a service within our community?
- Providing different venues and activities is a start to reaching out to the community and offering a wide range of worship. The idea is to build and grow a bigger team to move between the villages and to share responsibility.
- It has been suggested that using one building per Sunday would help move to carbon neutrality but travelling across the Benefice will raise carbon emissions. There is no history of congregations moving from parish to parish; nor do the numbers warrant 3 services in one day in one church. Post-Covid there is more choice but why shouldn't the congregations stay in their own village? The proposed pattern of worship appears to serve individual villages less well. It is not the time to cutback services when we are trying to rebuild our congregations.
- There is a wish to continue the service at St Hugh's on the 5th Sunday. Why is there is no proposal to hold services at St. Hugh's in the winter?
- Under-used buildings may close. This is happening across the country. There are financial implications to be discussed.
- One parish instead of three will mean less administration and fewer meetings and will give the church more time for missional life that we should be sustaining: coming together for "the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and prayers" (Acts 2:42) – the theme of Simon's first sermon in this parish three years ago. Simon's role is to implement the vision for which he was appointed.
- Lack of consultation. Previous churchwardens with so much experience have not been consulted about the changes.
- Much time, thought and prayer has gone into trying to provide something for everybody and in a way that might work. Nevertheless, we must all be aware of differing views and be prepared to re-view and change as necessary and to be unconditionally positive.
- The inclusion of different styles of worship are much appreciated.
- A request for more 'lay-led' services. Why are services led by a team rather than one person; could we have more participation by the congregation? Lay-led services can be less liturgical, formal and more attractive to younger people.
- Music is a draw for people. This will be an area we will continue to develop.
- The Open Forum has shown that people feel passionate about the church; the proposals are very wide ranging - something for everyone. Let us journey forward together in faith.

Contact Details

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