

From the Vicar's Desk

December 2011

A few changes

All churches need to change and evolve to keep up with our society which is changing and evolving. Congregations need to re-think and adapt what they do if they are to attract new people to worship at their services and remain living and growing bodies. This is true of St Martin's and the PCC has been thinking about ways of making our worship more appealing to newcomers while retaining what is good and valuable in our current ways.

Many in the church have been aware that our All Age service on the first Sunday of the month has been neither sufficiently modern and informal to attract young families nor sufficiently traditional to please those who come every week. The Music Group has made great strides forward in its singing and playing, but the service as a whole has fallen between those two stools. So at the last meeting the PCC decided (after a few months of pondering) to try a new approach.

In 2012, beginning on the first Sunday of February, the service will be in two parts. The first part, of 30 minutes, will be a service of songs, prayers, a reading and a talk or activity that involves all ages. It will be quite informal and will aim to attract the families of the many children who come to our after-school clubs and holiday clubs. Then, after sharing the peace and a hymn, there will be a short pause when those who want can go into the Sugden Suite for refreshments and a chat. Parents who have noisy children will be pleased that they do not have to keep their children quiet for the communion. They can go out and relax in the Sugden Suite.

After the pause the second half of the service will begin, which will be communion for those who wish to stay in church.

This is a pattern that is working well in other churches and the PCC has decided to give it a try at St Martin's for twelve months and see how it goes.

Another change

The PCC has also decided to accept the recommendation of a working group that the format of the St Martin's magazine change in the new year. In response to the results of the questionnaire that magazine readers returned earlier in the year, it has decided to publish the magazine four times a year, with full reports and news from all the church organisations and officers. In this way it will become a record and celebration of all the different events that take place at St Martin's and in the schools and elsewhere in the parish. Members of the PCC will be responsible for submitting the reports and ensure there is plenty to read. There will be no charge for copies but donations will be requested. The PCC will again review how well this new format is working out after twelve months.

The PCC is hugely grateful to the committed team (Ian Knowles, Marjory Robinson and Neil Robinson) who have edited, printed and kept the accounts for the current magazine over many years.