



Jonathan Smith writes ...

There are points in the life of any organisation where it's time to press pause and have a thought as to whether everything is as it should be; to ask whether changes should be made to make things more robust for the future.

As a Mission Area, we seemed to have reached one of those points. For the last few years, we have enjoyed settled leadership which has enabled some modest growth both spiritually and numerically in our churches. We have benefitted from the 'St Asaph Centre for Mission' staffed by Chris Lawton and Josh Smith from the Church Army. From this has developed the 'Tin Can Youth Centre' besides a number of other initiatives.

Now changes are afoot. We congratulate Sam Erlandson as he moves to St Paul's Craig y Don, a large church on the eastern side of Llandudno and becomes Mission Area Leader of Aberconwy MA which stretches down the eastern side of the Conwy Valley. Also, Captain Chris has been selected for ordination and will train full time from September. Our prayers go with him although he and the family will remain in the Vicarage at St Mark's until summer 2021. Alongside these changes, we welcome the arrival of Hope Street Church, the church plant into the former Burton shop through Church Revitalisation Trust, part of Holy Trinity, Brompton in London. Led by Rev'ds Andy and Rachel Kitchen, plans are now in hand for a delayed launch next January. Over and above all this, our churches are having to deal with the ongoing effects of Coronavirus in the community and the wider world.

With all this in mind, we are engaging in a short season of reflection. All our congregations are encouraged to take part. There are two key documents: 'Options for the Future' and a supplement which set out as succinctly as possible where we are at and the possible options we have. Alongside these is a questionnaire available both as an online 'survey monkey' and in paper form.

These should be available from your church but can also be found on the Mission Area website at <https://plwyfwrecsam.org.uk/> You can of course feed back via email, letter, socially distanced chat or whatever to me, or to your vicar, wardens etc. Thanks. I am looking forward to what you have to say.

Every blessing to you all

Bob Bendith

Jonathan



Sunflowers in the Vicarage garden, Caigmillar Road, sown at the beginning of lockdown as part of Captain Chris' activities for children on Caia Park

All Saints' and Holy Trinity

All Saints'



At the end of August we said goodbye to our priest Father Sam. We will miss greatly Sam's dedicated ministry, his enthusiasm and passion for mission. He will be missed particularly by the Youth Group and Sunday School as he has built such good rapport with youngsters.

We wish Sam and his family every happiness as he moves to Llandudno, to become Mission Area Leader of Aberconwy MA which stretches down the eastern side of the Conwy Valley.

Judi Jones & Nick Roe



The Art Project on the theme of Baptism : a striking tribute to Sam's ministry at All Saints.

Top photos: a socially distanced presentation for Sam on his last Sunday with us.

Photos: Nick Roe

Holy Trinity

Sunday 23 August was Father Sam's last service with us at Holy Trinity after serving us for five years. During this time he has led us with much enthusiasm, both spiritually and socially.

We now have a very thriving Sunday School and Mothers' Union. Sam was also very involved with many village activities including the Youth Group and the schools, which resulted in their joining us in many of our church festivals.

We will all miss Sam very much but we wish him, Karen and the children every happiness as they move to Llandudno.

Beryl Edwards



Online Worship

During Lockdown many churches everywhere have developed online worship, reaching many who do not normally go to church, as well as regular worshippers who are unable to attend. Here is a list of online worship available from Wrexham Mission Area churches.

St Margaret & St Mark

Sunday service on the church Facebook sites at 4.00pm each Sunday and then available on their web pages. A 40 minute service of the word featuring a sermon and music digitally recorded by the choir of St Margaret's and contemporary music from Josh Smith and friends at the Tin Can.

St James & St John

Sunday Service on Facebook available at 10.00am each Sunday and then available on their web pages. A 30 minute service of the word with a sermon and gentle contemporary worship music.

St Giles' Parish Church

Sunday Service recorded live at the church each Sunday morning and uploaded to You Tube in the afternoon. Also available on the church Facebook site and their web pages.

A traditional Eucharist with hymns and sermon.

Evening Prayer is also available on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays each week on the same platforms.

The Facebook sites for each church are easily accessed by googling 'Facebook'. It is easier if you are a Facebook user already.

Google 'You Tube St Giles Wrexham', to find their channel.

Everything is available on the web sites to view without strings attached although there may be some delay in the material being put up.

Go to the Mission Area Web page: <https://plwyfwrecsam.org.uk/> and click on the church in question.



Altars at All Saints' (Christmas 2019) and Holy Trinity (Flower Festival 2017). Photos: Nick Roe

St. Mark's



Chris out and about in the community

Reporting on the early weeks of Lockdown in the previous Mission Area News, there was the sense that this is all novel and something many of us had never experienced before. Reporting now, another three months on, you have to be impressed at the fortitude of many of our church family who have coped with all that social distancing can mean when you live alone, with loved ones living far away. All of us will have heard of acts of good neighbourliness, and we have experienced that as a congregation in several ways.

We have appreciated the regular letters from Jonathan and with it the Bishop's pastoral letters. These, together with radio and TV services have helped many, while others have been able to tune in to St Mark's services on Facebook.

Here are three other ways our ministry has been maintained, with the help of good neighbours:

The younger teams of volunteers running our food bank outlet each week, shielding the over 70s. A particular thank you in this regard to the YWAM team.

St Marks actually started a new ministry during lockdown by distributing PPE Visors. But we could only do this because two members of St Margaret's joined our team to make this work. Well done Steve & Helen, Rhi, Elaine and Chris.

And very important to us is our ministry of prayer for the Caia Park community and the three churches' ministry on the Park. We have continued right through Lockdown thanks to Zoom: the internet tool enabling us to pray together once each month and Caia Friars continuing that prayer cover with our lists of items to use each day in our quiet times. Another example of where good neighbourliness is exhibited.

And as we mentioned in the last edition, in Josh, Chris, Elaine and Jonathan we have had our missionaries being good neighbours delivering round the community news, materials, social media messages, food parcels and last but not least at the Tin Can they even organised a gardening session – well done folks!

So plenty going on, but also some moving on. Moving in is Jo our new curate, but moving on is Captain Chris, who after five years with us, commences training for the ministry. Thanks Chris for all you have done amongst us, we'll really miss you!

Art Ellinson



Jo Mackriell joins Jonathan for our reopening service

St Margaret's held its first 'in person' service since lockdown on Sunday 26 July with around 35 members of the congregation present. Due to the congregation being far larger than the socially distanced configuration of the building permits, people are having to 'book in' at present. Everyone agreed that it was good to be back; to hear each other saying the amens and the responses.

No singing is permitted at present, but St Margaret's choir has become increasingly adept at working various technologies to allow members to record themselves in their own homes and then have their efforts blended together to form a virtual choir. The results are used for congregations to listen to in church and for the online worship which continues at 4pm on Sundays. David Evans, musical director along with Helen and Jayne Belton and Matthew Ellis are particularly to be congratulated for their efforts.

The choir has also made a number of socially distanced visits to offer celebratory song for life events, including significant birthdays and wedding anniversaries. These have been well received.

Jo Mackriell, our new curate has started, having been ordained deacon in an almost empty cathedral on July 4. We are delighted to welcome her and pray that she will be able to build up relationships with everyone given the circumstances.

Jonathan Smith



Why Hope Street?

It can't be stated strongly enough that the vision of Hope Street Church being established in the former Burton shop in town is to reach out to the majority of people living in Wrexham who have very little understanding of Christian faith. Most of our fellow citizens are one or more generations removed from a time when most people in the UK had at least a working knowledge of the Bible and some idea of what church was for. In the swinging sixties, young people knew what they were rejecting when they passed over Christianity for sex, drugs and rock and roll. Today, their grasp is far more hazy. Younger people have had more freedom of expression than their grandparents could have imagined, but has it made them happier? Today, so many of the people we pass on the street have a sadness, a longing for truth and hope in their lives. In the wake of Coronavirus, even the buzz of a good night out is not available.



As established churches, we do seek to offer the love of Christ to these masses. Baptisms, weddings and funerals are times when they will come to our churches. Others will touch base with us as they seek places at St Joseph's for their children or access the Foodbank. We are always there to love and pray for our community. There are those who respond positively. We nurture them into faith and the church community.



But such is the disconnect for many, a traditional church building and what goes on inside just does not cut it for them. However nice the vicar was at the funeral or the smile of the lovely lady at the parent and toddler group, the whole infrastructure can be a barrier to going further and discovering the living Christ. Hope Street will try to strip away some of those hurdles. It will offer a newly refurbished 21st century building, communication for those who can't remember a world without internet, teaching, music and sacrament presented in a way that ticks boxes for those who might find traditional church strange or unhelpful. There is also the advantage that the leaders will be able to invest time in those showing interest which can be difficult for the busy traditional parish priest with all the expectation of the institution on her or his shoulders.



Hope Street won't be for everyone. It won't be right for every young person. Some will still feel drawn to their family church and there are young people who enjoy organ and choral music as part of their spirituality. But if there are people finding forgiveness and new life in Christ through Hope Street, it will have been worth it. More details in the current edition of Teulu Asaph and at <https://www.hopestreet.church/>

Jonathan

Photos of the Burton building before (top 2) & after restoration:

Nick Roe

Options for the Future

A brief digest of the discussions currently taking place in the Mission Area

What options do we have?

- A. With Sam's departure, we have to decide whether we would like bishop Gregory to make a 'like for like' replacement or whether we feel that the ministry at All Saints and Holy Trinity can be maintained in another way. It is one area in which we have some say over our financial outgoings. Each full-time stipendiary priest working in our MA adds £26,243 to the parish share. Yet, we are called to be people of faith...not bean counters!
- B. Are we content to keep open all the churches in their present form especially in the wake of the Coronavirus? A reduction in the number of churches would only save that church community the cost of maintaining its own buildings. Their part of the share would be distributed to the other churches. How far members of the congregation would transfer is a moot point. While none of our churches have great financial reserves, all probably register as viable according to diocesan tests. Whatever, all our buildings including St Peter's Hall, currently run by the MA as a potential mission resource, need to be considered.
- C. How do we take forward the legacy of the Centre of Mission? Besides the Tin Can, there is work with children and families on Caia Park and other valuable community links and school's work to be considered. Josh will remain in post and his salary is assured until September 2021. But serious consideration needs to be given as to how the Tin Can work is sustained this coming year without Chris and its longer-term future and development. Hope Street will and should be part of that discussion or the person appointed to All Saints and Holy Trinity.
- D. It would be good to think again about the constitution and legal status of the MA. When the benefice ended, there was keenness for each church having its own autonomy. This has worked well, and the MA conference has been able to concentrate on more imaginative matters than did its predecessor, the 'PCC'. In the meantime, all the other MA's in the diocese have become parishes and charities. This undoubtedly helps with fundraising and grants and gives them an edge in world where the historic understanding of churches as unregistered charities is less understood. St Giles has recognised this and made itself a charity with all the rights and responsibilities which comes with it. I feel that our remaining 6 churches are left somewhat exposed without charitable status and consideration ought to be given to putting in place what would be necessary to make this happen. It would mean that Wrexham churches were covered by a number of associated trusts and charities: St Giles, the Mission Area, Hope Street and St Mary's, Bersham.

This gives an idea of the issues we face. The MA conference meeting on September 15th will give some response to these matters which will go forward to Bishop Gregory. If you would like to share your thoughts with us, please do so by letter, phone call, email etc to any of the clergy and contacts given on the back page or access or go to <https://plwyfwreccsam.org.uk/mission-area-review-2020/> to see more details and take part in the Survey Monkey.

Jonathan

Wrexham Mission Area News

Editor: Nick Roe. 07807772307

nickroe01@gmail.com

St James' Church Council held an online meeting on 24 June to discuss the reopening of the church building. The decision was not to open it until we could meet for congregational worship, but preparations were put in hand so that we would be ready when we got the go-ahead.

We held our first Sunday service on 19 July, and have met in church each Sunday since. Like every other church, we've had to put away pew Bibles, hymn books, service sheets, etc. We're using our projector and screen each week, and most services have been non-eucharistic. We've had at least 11 people in church each week, going up to 18.

On Sunday 26 July, we celebrated our Patronal Festival. We were very pleased to welcome Captain Chris, as had been arranged before lockdown, to preach. That was our one Communion service so far, and it was a joyful, if rather muted, occasion.

The extra measures which we all have to put in place to minimise the risks of passing the virus around do put a big strain on a few people. But it's good to be able to meet again in person, and to know the Lord's presence with us as we gather in his name. We look forward to a time when we can sing again, and enjoy refreshments together as well.

Sarah Errington



The garden has been lovingly tended during lockdown, mainly by David and Janet

I believe that St John's is now the only church in the Mission Area not yet open for congregational worship. We've been delayed by the knock-on effects of having had a flood in the church hall, which we discovered at the beginning of June. As a result, the contents of the hall had to be removed, and have been stored in the church. The loss adjustor was called in, and we are now almost ready to move things back into the hall. The flooring in the hall has been replaced throughout, with the exception of the gents' and accessible toilets, and the walls have been repainted. There are a few 'snagging' issues to clear up, but the hall looks fresh and bright, and will be ready to welcome groups back once we're allowed to reopen it.

They say that the Lord works in mysterious ways . . . the floor in the main hall had needed replacing, so although it wasn't affected by the flood, it gave us the opportunity (and the spur!) to include it in the works, at a time when the building was out of use in any case.

Other works which have been carried out, or are in progress, around the church and hall include the removal of two trees from the front, which had died during the winter; the tidying up of the garden; and work on the roof, guttering, soffits and fascias. So it's been a busy period since lockdown restrictions were first eased. Our buildings will look much better cared for as a result. I am very grateful to Gerry Becker, who recently accepted the post of Vicar's Warden, and who has been working very hard in recent weeks to oversee much of this work, as well as cleaning in church in preparation for reopening the building. Also to my husband, Steve Errington, who has overseen the work in the church hall, and been instrumental in making sure the hall will look its absolute best once everything is completed.

Steve has also been working towards getting the long-planned work on the church toilets underway very soon. Once completed, the existing toilets will be updated, and there will also be an accessible toilet in church, which seems appropriate in an accessible building such as St John's.

The Church Council has decided that we will open for congregational worship in September, and at least for the first month, hold just one Sunday service. We decided to avoid our normal time slots, to make the point that these services will be aimed at members of all our congregations, and will not follow the patterns used in 'normal' times. Our online services will continue, as there are some people who will not be able to be present in church.

Sarah Errington



The church hall with its new floor and paintwork.

Well, we're back!

It's been a very long haul since Mothering Sunday, but it's great to see the life of the church blossoming into life around us once again. I've said very often to the St Giles' folk how impressed I have been by the fact that they have looked after one another, and kept in touch. And now that at least we have some public services, I am able to see people face to face once again.

It will, of course, take us a very long time to get back to something approaching normal, as we have been forced to adapt all our lives to a new pattern. And life has been very tough for many of us. But, at the same time, it is lovely to be able to hear so many stories of hope and love: we have had no fewer than four couples wanting to book weddings because they have discovered that in the lockdown their love has grown and matured, and they now really do want to spend the rest of their lives together.

So many things, however, have been cancelled or postponed. The Revd James Tout was due to be ordained priest in June, but that we hope will now go ahead at the beginning of October. At St Giles' we were also hoping to have a celebration of VE Day in May with poppies filling the area under the tower: sadly we were not able to do this, and people had to make do with an image of a single poppy at recorded Evening Prayer that day. But for VJ Day we were able to make use of the poppies, which will be a feature of the church until Remembrance Day, but also, I hope a very necessary symbol of hope and resurrection for us all.

Jason Bray



Wrexham Mission Area

Mission Area Leader: Rev Jonathan Smith

Mission Area Administrator: Ann Owen

01978 355808 or 07751 422594;
office@wrexhamparish.org.uk

St. Giles' Parish Church LL13 8LS

Sundays: 8.00 am Eucharist; 9.30am All Age Worship; 11am Sung Eucharist; 6pm (1st Sunday only) Cymun Bendigaid; 6pm (3rd Sunday only) Taizé Prayer. Thursdays: 11am Eucharist

Vicar: Rev Dr Jason Bray. 07957 222418;
vicar@wrexhamparish.org.uk

Curate: Rev James Tout

St. Margaret's, Garden Village Chester Rd LL11 2SH

Sundays: 8.15 am Holy Communion

9.30am Sung Services (HC 2nd & 4th)

5th Sundays Joint with St Mark's

Wednesdays: 11am Holy Communion (except 1st) at Abbeyfield, Box Lane

Vicar of St. Margaret's & St. Mark's:

Rev Jonathan Smith: 01978 350797;
jonathan@plwyfwrecsam.org.uk

Curate: Rev Rebecca Sparey-Taylor
curateofwrexham@outlook.com

St. Mark's, Caia Park, Bryn Eglwys Rd LL13 9LA

Sundays: 9.30am Traditional Services 1st & 3rd

11.00am All Age Worship (HC 2nd & 4th)

Vicar of St. Margaret's & St. Mark's:

Rev Jonathan Smith: 01978 350797;
jonathan@plwyfwrecsam.org.uk

Assistant Curate: Rev Rebecca Sparey-Taylor
curateofwrexham@outlook.com

St. John's, Rhosnesni, Borras Rd LL13 9ER

Sundays: 2.30 pm: Sunday Worship (1st & 3rd); Holy Communion (2nd & 4th)

Rev Sarah Errington: 01978 266018;
vicarstjohnswxm@gmail.com

St. James', Rhosddu, Rhosddu Rd LL11 2NW

Sundays: 11am: Sunday Worship (1st & 3rd); Holy Communion (2nd & 4th)

Vicar of St. John's & St. James's:

Rev Sarah Errington.: 01978 266018;
vicarstjohnswxm@gmail.com

Holy Trinity, Rhostyllen, Esclusham, LL14 4DW

Sundays: 9.30am Sung Eucharist (3rd Sunday: Family Eucharist)

Contact for All Saints' & Holy Trinity:

Rev Jonathan Smith: 01978 350797;
jonathan@plwyfwrecsam.org.uk

All Saints', Poyer Street, LL13 7RT

Sundays: 11am Sung Eucharist (Family Service 2nd Sunday)

Contact for All Saints' & Holy Trinity:

Rev Jonathan Smith: 01978 350797;
jonathan@plwyfwrecsam.org.uk

Gift Aid Secretary: Mrs Claire Lunn 01978 263719
Claire.1.lunn@gmail.com

St. Mary's, Bersham

1st Sunday: 11am Morning Prayer; 3rd Sunday 11am Holy Communion. Contact: Lloyd Fitzhugh:
01978 263522 lloydfitzhugh@gmail.com

Church Army Officer:

Capt. Josh Smith
07983 881412 j.smith@churcharmy.org.uk