

## Vicar's report on behalf of All Saints Church, Mears Ashby

A year ago, on the day before the Feast from the East landed, I arrived in the village, and was licensed as your vicar on Mothering Sunday. My first year has simply flown by, and I'm very much enjoying village and church life. All Saints Church is a beautiful sacred space in which to worship God. Caroline Napier and Kate Payne, and the POC have worked hard over the past year to maintain our Grade II\* building and its churchyard. During the Harvest Songs of Praise service in September 2018, we thanked all the villagers who help to make the church and its churchyard look so lovely month-by-month, and those who raise funds for the church through the monthly coffee mornings (which are such a wonderful part of village life). For me, the highlight of the Harvest service was Richard Payne walking down the aisle complete with scythe looking like a friendly grim reaper! I hope that we can do the same again this year (that is, thank everyone!). As a POC, we paid our 2018 parish share to the diocese in full.

Our vision is to be a welcoming church that, like the early Church in Acts 2:42-47, has the goodwill of all villagers and are well supported by them. We want to offer apt, moving and memorable services at key times in the year - such as Christmas and Easter, Mothering Sunday and Harvest, and All Souls and Remembrance Sunday. Our services have been greatly enhanced by Tony Edwards on the organ and his newly formed 4 Villages Community Choir. We are growing as a church family (over 40 people come to church on a regular basis), average Sunday attendance is 15 - 20 and festival services are very well supported as the following figures show:

Harvest Songs of Praise	54
Service of Remembrance for our loved ones	50
Remembrance Service for WW1 100	181
Carol Service	117
Midnight Mass	45

WW1 100 was such a moving occasion. It has also been an honour and privilege to conduct village funerals for some well-known and loved villagers. In 2018-19, we lost:

Bill Walker, Brenda Marden, Betty Copperwaite, Jim Chater, Jean Miller, Sid Brown, Nellie Pratt, Katharine Stockdale and Barbara Roberts.

All of them have been included in our new Remembrance Book, which you can find in church by the prayer table. On the anniversary of death, lost loved ones are remembered in our prayers during church services.

On a more cheerful note, it has been a joy to welcome the children and teachers, parents and carers of Mears Ashby CEVA Primary School in church for the end of term services, and to lead collective worship in school on Tuesday mornings. It is such a lovely school, and I enjoy being part of its social life (chocolate bingo is great fun!). Thank you to Kate Payne for all your help with the school services. And, in 2018, I also very much enjoyed taking two baptisms and a wedding in church. We have an open and welcoming approach to couples and families wanting to mark a special occasion at All Saints. We are your village church.

Later in the year, we want to host an event in the village to find out what more you'd like from your village church and how we can best support your daily and spiritual life.