

Rector's Letter – October 2019

Dear Friends,

It is hoped that the film of 'Pilgrim's Progress' will be shown at the Saffron Screen in the near future. Based on the classic story by John Bunyan, it is described in the publicity as: 'An epic journey, faithfully adapted to modern-day. Christian faces distractions, challenges, and perils at every turn of the way. He ends victorious, with helpful guides, as he stays on the narrow path to the distant Celestial City.' Whether you can see it here in Saffron Walden or elsewhere, I encourage you to grab the opportunity.



One particular quote from this gripping and insightful story that has been resonating with me of late is this: "A man there was, and they called him mad; the more he gave, the more he had." Let me explain why I have been struck by this ostensibly paradoxical statement for surely when you give something, you have lost it. This contrary assumption – the more we give, the less we have - is blighting much contemporary politics and undermines interpersonal relationships. It puts everyone on the defensive, is divisive and makes collaboration seem undesirable. Instead, wars between nations – military or trade - and battles for supremacy between individuals become the name of the game.

'Sharing God's love' is our mission statement. When we love, the more we give, the more we have. When I reflect upon the life within this parish, at St Mary's, Saffron Walden, and St James', Swards End and at St John's, Little Walden, I see this truth in action. Indeed, this virtuous circle is at work. The more love we share, the more love there is. The more love there is, the more love we have to share.

Looking back on my life, I have been particularly aware of this reality when I have moved from one location to another. These transitions inevitably involve an awareness of loss, a leaving behind of people and a place. Alongside this grief, are the memories and relationships I take with me, and the people I carry that will remain in my heart and prayers. Another way to look at it is that I have left part of myself behind every time I have moved. Yet, this has not left me diminished. In fact, the opposite is the case: I have been enriched.

One particular vivid example of this – I imagine – universal human phenomenon was my return to Uganda in 1990. I had taught in a remote school in the east of this beautiful country which Winston Churchill once described as 'the pearl of Africa' from 1986-1988. My time at Bulucheke Secondary School was formative, and my investment in the place and people deep. When I stepped out of the plane at Entebbe airport as the leader of Church Mission Society venture for students to gain some awareness of cross-cultural mission, I felt the heat and saw the banana trees with their large leaves waving in the breeze in greeting. It felt profoundly, and at one level, disturbingly, like a home-coming. I knew in that moment how connected I still felt to the place and its people where I had served. That bond is still strong.

Now I am into my final three months. My final working day is Sunday 24th November, and my final service at St Mary's, Saffron Walden is at 10 am that day. I have so enjoyed my 11 years living and working in Saffron Walden, ministering here within our Team ministry and the Deanery. I have felt privileged to work and share my life with you. As a family, we have been very happy and all thrived because of the strong and fruitful relationships we have

forged with many of you. Thank you. I hope and pray that together we have all discovered the great truth that when it comes to 'love': the more we give, the more we have. I am determined to make the most of my few weeks, including my next letter for Parish News which will be my last.

I close with some further words about love from the great hymn to love from Paul's first letter to church in Corinth.

'Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.'

With love,

David

Previous copies of Rector's Letter

[Aug-Sept 2019](#)

[July 2019](#)

[June 2019](#)

[May 2019](#)

[April 2019](#)

[March 2019](#)

[February 2019](#)

[Dec 2018/Jan 2019](#)

[November 2018](#)

[October 2018](#)