

Christ Church in the Manche

DIOCESE IN EUROPE
THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



This year 2017-2018 began with some hope of an interview for a priest in charge. Our Archdeacon, **Meurig Williams chaired our AGM on 23 April 2017, and informed us at that time of an** advertisement that the diocese was putting out in early May 2017, which included our chaplaincy. . . . The upshot was that NO CANDIDATES came forward for Christ Church in the Manche and by the summer, having digested this fact, we had to re-orientate ourselves as a chaplaincy. *If the diocese didn't have a candidate to offer us and if, as we could see at that point, we were less able to afford a priest in any case, then we had to look to ourselves for ministry and leadership.*

As the autumn began further adjustments were becoming obvious. Humphrey confided in the leadership team that he had received a medical diagnosis which (although it wasn't conclusive or precise) made it clear that he must retire. With courage and dignity, this is exactly what Humph did, surrendering his position as churchwarden on the last day of 2017 and precipitating a Meeting of Parishioners to elect a new churchwarden to fill the casual vacancy. This meeting was duly held on 28 January 2018 and Alan was elected as our new churchwarden.

At the start of this year, then, came the report of the land survey and our hopes of selling the land to clear the mortgage were dashed. This news firmed up the resolve among the leadership that we must minister to one another and cease viewing ourselves as treading water until a priest comes along.

Consequently, we begin this new church year 2018-2019 with the following situation: Chris and Donna are leading the ministry at Gratot; David and Mary are leading the ministry at Virey; and the churchwardens are working with the ministers in a Leadership Team, which feeds into the mission of the Chaplaincy Council.

As you will all know, this not a secure situation: our ministers have been beleaguered with health and family problems (including, in Donna's case, the recent loss of Roger); your churchwarden, Alan, is likewise challenged; and I have different challenges, which include earning a living, coaching my daughter through her English GCSE and re-orienting myself for my next step.

Therefore, much support in prayer and practicality is needed for all—we must minister appropriately to one another. More specifically, the churchwardens invite potential candidates for the role of churchwarden to come alongside the current wardens NOW. You can come and join a Chaplaincy Council meeting; spend time with the wardens in a Skype meeting; assist in some tasks to get the feel of that ministry. I will be strongly encouraging this process at Virey.

But challenges accepted, we are God's people and if we are faithful to Him, He will be faithful to us. We've had to say goodbye to several members in recent weeks and months and God's people need to be ministered to. So please get behind the ministry that is in place and let's go forward together in faith and unity into 2018-2019.

Yours in Christ Jesus

Alan Wellstead
Churchwarden