

WEEKLY MESSAGE FROM OUR VICAR, ALEX – 20th November 2023

Dear Church Family & Friends,

Hoping you're all well.

The last few weeks have been busy and productive ones for our parish - with marvellous food bank collections in both October and November (photo attached from November) and a certificate of thanks from the Food Bank, saying our October collection created 181 meals for hungry people. Praise God for this - and thank you to everyone who contributed.

Thanks to the hard work of Tricia and Deirdre (and all of your donations), we have sent 98 shoe boxes off to Operation Christmas Child - giving gifts to children in other countries who would otherwise have nothing. Thank you!

Our parish Remembrance Sunday services went well - as did the one at the war memorial in Banstead, which I had the privilege of leading this year (I have now been invited to be the British Legion Chaplain for a while, until All Saints Banstead get their new Vicar who is due after Easter). Please also see a photo of some poppies the Beavers made for the St. Paul's garden - which have been enjoyed by us and lots of our neighbours in the last week. Also, on Thursday we had a wonderful visit from Aberdour School to St. Mary's (about 60 year 3 children and their teachers) coming to learn about church and also to find out about Christmas). It was another lovely occasion of many in recent times.

Sadly recently, there have also been several deaths and anniversaries in the parish. With Sheila Plimmer and Mary White dying recently - and with the anniversary of Alastair Watson's death on November 11th. The Plimmer family send thanks for the support at Sheila's funeral and thanksgiving service last week - and Mary White's funeral is on Wednesday this week (22nd November at 12 pm at NE Surrey Crematorium in Morden, SM4 4NU) - with a thanksgiving to come (likely in January).

There is much more I could write about this wonderful and busy time of year. As always, I am so grateful to the hard work of so many in our church family, who reach out to others in God's love every week. Thank you!

A few dates coming up in the next couple of weeks:

On Sunday 26th November, there will be a whole parish communion service at St. Mary's at 10 am

On Sunday 3rd December, there will be an Advent whole parish communion service at St. Paul's at 10 am

On Sunday 3rd December, there will be a Banstead Five Advent service at All Saints Banstead at 6.30 pm

On Wednesday 6th December from 2-4 pm at St. Paul's, there will be our next Food Bank collection (it is early in December to enable the Food Bank to distribute everything for Christmas). We will not be doing parish 'parcels of love' this year, but will support the food bank in providing Christmas hampers to families in need in the local areas. However, if you know of someone locally who may need extra support at this time of year (and who would not be receiving food bank donations) then please let me know - as we can arrange 'extras' as needed.

This link shows the up to date information on the food bank requests at the current time (it will be refreshed again before December 6th):
<https://epsomewell.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>

Love and prayers
Alex

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