



Dear St Mary's and All Saints'

November 30th feels a long time ago, the date I first read your parish profile and wondered if St Mary's and All Saints' Putney might provide the right role for me? That early question was soon submerged by the mayhem and joy of Christmas and re-emerged during my post-Christmas break when the answer became 'yes', with ever growing excitement (and nervousness!)

The key to my growing excitement was both that I could see useful skills, experiences and gifts that I could offer and plenty of challenge and stretch for me to take on! Over and above that, the excitement was driven by the resonating of our shared conviction that God wants all to be gathered into God's kingdom and so the church, and each of us, is called to play our part in this generous, love giving and including agenda of God.

I have served in three parishes in Leicestershire: a curacy in Melton Mowbray, vicar to a group of villages around Barrow upon Soar and, for the last seven years, vicar to St Mary's, the town centre church of Hinckley. Like St Mary's Putney, St Mary's Hinckley is a church open every day of the year, with a café and second hand book shop and a vision to make God's living, loving presence real through prayer, worship and loving and caring for everyone every day.

Helena and I are married and Helena works as a teacher. Five years ago Helena was ordained after training at Queen's College Birmingham. She offers ministry as a self-supporting minister both in school chaplaincy and in the Hinckley parish. Please do pray for Helena as she resigns from her job and seeks an employed ministry role in London. Our son Ed is at university in Edinburgh and Anna takes her 'A' Levels this June.

After the intensity of the recruitment process, there is now a time for you and for me to focus on living in the present and what God is calling us to, in the here and now, whilst also beginning to pray for and look towards the new beginnings opening up in September.

I write this on the morning of Ash Wednesday. My prayer is that we all will be able to spend time in the wilderness of God's grace and discover with joy that, in wilderness, we discover and receive the richness of God's abundant, generous, resurrection life.

God Bless, John