

Faith Matters

.....in the Clarendon Team

Welcome to this first issue of 'Faith Matters' which will be produced on three or four occasions per year. The Team Council spent a whole day in November 2009 looking at how they could best work together and also began to discuss and prioritise a number of topics which impacted on the Clarendon Team. One of these was the issue of communication across the team and to church members in all our parishes. To take this forward a working group was set up to generate ideas and initiatives and report back to the Team Council and PCCs. The idea of a regular written communication dealing in greater depth with issues of faith, organisation and activity took hold, and this is the first issue.

'Faith Matters' aims to update and inform members of our church families and is complementary to the weekly team newsheet and items which might appear in our parish magazines - though it would undoubtedly have some interest to a wider audience. It will be produced in a paper format in order to reach all members of our congregations though it will also feature on the Team website. This particular edition is dedicated to a single topic but this may not always be the case. 'It is hoped that 'Faith Matters' will evolve as the months pass - and may get much bigger - but it would be great to have some feedback from you regarding the content together with any ideas or topics which you might wish to see covered in future issues. Contact details will be found overleaf.

Pastoral Care in the Clarendon Team

The Team Council awayday of November 2009 identified the area of pastoral care as an issue which was important and one where we needed to have some clarity. Looking after and caring for our fellow Christians and the wider village communities (the need is great!) is a charge which Jesus put before us and the bible contains many examples of our responsibilities to others. This is a key part of our faith and the during many of its meetings during 2010 the Team Council sought to find a way to respond to the need - making effective use of our resources and which was clear and easy to understand. The Team Council also looked at how pastoral care was offered elsewhere before putting a new way of doing things before our PCC's. All the PCC's agreed to the new approach at their September 2010 meetings. How we will offer pastoral care is outlined in the rest of this issue of 'Faith Matters'. The changes in clergy numbers in recent years means that to cover all of the Team's large geographical area we as Christians all need to be involved in Christ's work - and we should make maximum use of the skills and dedication of our trained team of Lay Pastoral Assistants. This issue also provides some background detail to their role, responsibilities and training.

The Clergy

Nils, Elizabeth, Cynthia and Jane are always available on any pastoral issue but are not allocated to a specific area as workloads may be high and their availability may not be immediate. However in order to give a focus to this work the Team is split into two geographic areas with a named contact point. Jane Dunlop will be the focal point for Alderbury, West Grimstead and Whiteparish with Cynthia Buttimer performing the same role for Winterslow, Farley and Pitton, West Dean and East Grimstead.

The clergy will deal with any enquiry as they see best - either personally or passing the task to someone else - Lay Licensed Ministers or LPAs. Here they will be ensuring that the visits are carried out and needs met appropriately.

Lay Pastoral Assistants

Pastoral Care is not exclusively a function for the clergy and as a team we are actively encouraging lay pastoral ministry. We have some thirty trained and dedicated LPAs across the team whose skills and abilities we should be using to maximum effect. Most parishes have a co-ordinator who will meet regularly with Jane or Cynthia as will our Lay Licensed Ministers.

Members of the Church Family

This is probably where much pastoral work is carried out - mostly unseen and unheralded! As individuals we are all close enough to those around us to see a need and respond as Christ would have us do. We should also be sensitive to when to bring in others to assist on a specific issue.

In summary then, we have a structure which gives us the ability to cover the Clarendon Team area effectively, and also provides an internal and external focus to each parish via their named clergy person - Cynthia or Jane. However, we have a considerable body of trained LPA's to call on and utilise, so perhaps we should highlight and examine their role. Firstly, the title 'LPA' is not a great one and has more meaning for those of us inside the church rather than the wider community where they spend a lot of their time. They are effectively 'Church Visitors' and this is probably how they would introduce themselves when they meet up with people outside the church.

Within the Clarendon Team. LPA's have been around since the mid-1980's in some parishes - even 25 years ago thought was being given to the provision of pastoral care for when clergy numbers would reduce!

LPA's are baptised and confirmed members of the church whose skills and personal gifts have been recognised and welcomed by the local church - they are 'called out' after careful and prayerful discernment. There is a formal training course to complete involving ten modules which also highlight teamwork and listening skills. The confidential nature of their work is instilled and they are commissioned by the church on completion of the training course. These are ordinary Christian people, ministering to those around them - often people who would not want to see a member of the clergy appear on their doorstep. They are not there to push the Christian faith but to lend a helping hand or a listening ear and to give of their time.

Typical LPA Activities

It would be impossible to provide a comprehensive list but the following would give some idea of what LPAs are involved with:

- Visiting newcomers
- Attending people in hospital
- Visiting the sick, housebound or lonely
- Baptism preparation
- Supporting the bereaved
- Marriage preparation
- Prayer ministry
- Being with the elderly

All this requires dedication, an ability to communicate and above all a willingness to listen to those to whom they minister. Their work is totally confidential and is not passed on without the agreement of the person concerned.

Attributes of an LPA

Again, this cannot be an exhaustive list but the following characteristics would be typical:

- A team player
- Having a loving and compassionate heart
- A willingness to listen to and give of their time in response to God's call
- The ability to keep confidences
- A good listener
- An ability to build relationships

Teamwork

LPA's meet regularly with their co-ordinators to share good practice and experience.

It is possible that those with particular skills could be used across the team should the need arise.

So, having explained the model we have adopted for Pastoral Care, highlighting the part which we all play and examined the resources we have available within our body of LPAs, who are they? The following is the current listing:

<p>Alderbury Pat Hammond Alan Harris Jenny Harris Richard Wharton Keith Foster Steve White Co-ordinators: Jane Foster and Doreen White</p>	<p>West Grimstead Co-ordinator: Possibility of joining with Alderbury</p> <hr/> <p>East Grimstead Co-ordinator: Possibility of joining Farley and Pitton</p>	<p>West Dean Sophie Whitmarsh Alan Bannister Co-ordinator: Possibility of joining Farley and Pitton</p>	<p>Farley & Pitton Sue Sinclair Mark Phillips Sara Bossom Co-ordinator Gill Morgan</p>	<p>Winterslow Carole Hampton Mary Jennings Catherine Merker Val Thompson Bill Thompson Rosemary Griffiths Hilary Sandle Pam Thorne Lesley Waters Peter White Sara Barratt Co-ordinator; Cynthia Buttmer</p>
<p>Please provide any feedback or ideas for future issues to Richard Carter (01980 863539), Debbie McIsaac (01722 712758) or Joan Davies (01722 712758).</p>		<p>Whiteparish Alan and Sue Manners Paul Gooderham Belinda Knapman Jane Lax Shirley Near Lynn Walworth Co-ordinator: Pat Boyle</p>		