

# **St Thomas', Trowbridge and St John's, West Ashton Monthly News June 2025**

**St Thomas  
Trowbridge**

**St John's  
West Ashton**

**Kingfisher**



**Holy Trinity  
Trowbridge**



"It is good to realize that, if love and peace can prevail on earth, and if we can teach our children to honour nature's gifts, the joys and beauties of the outdoors will be here forever." – Jimmy Carter

# Hello from your new vicar!

I am writing this on the eve of my installation service, looking forward with great hope and expectation at the journey God has ahead of us all. Yet before we take that step, I would like to take a moment to look at whose shoulders we stand upon. Firstly, a thanks to my predecessor Allan. I don't know Allan, yet in these churches he has shepherded for many years I see great love. This is a huge testament to him, and those who have led these churches before him. For this I am so deeply grateful. To everyone who has stepped up during the interregnum, a little or a lot, a huge thank-you. Reading comments such as during this time we have not just stood still, but dared to look forward, shows the beauty of a church pulling together. It is often in times like this we see God moving in ways we couldn't have previously imagined. Isn't He amazing?! Practically too, thank you to all those who have worked hard to prepare the vicarage and a warm welcome for me, Elle and the boys (not so much you Scottish Power, or you BT!!). Seriously though, it has been a big move for us, and you have made us feel so welcome in your love, thank you. Finally, I have to say a huge thanks to Paul, Frankie, Jean, and John. Your work in keeping the churches and office up and running, both physically and spiritually has been phenomenal. Thank you from the depths of my heart. From first meeting you, and those others on the interview days, I had a sense that you are wonderful people I would love to work with. The cake and biscuits did help(!), but the love and dedication shone through too. God confirmed the call here in and through you, and so right now I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

As we step into life together, we thought you might like to know a bit about us & what led us here. We are a family of 4, with Ben just finishing studying Criminology at Plymouth Uni, Tom in his second year studying Physiotherapy at Cardiff Uni, and Elle who is a trauma counsellor. We lived and worshipped in Warminster for many years, part of the family at Christ Church. It was there I came back to faith, and over the years eventually answered God's call away from the AV desk to Lay Worship Leading and then ordained ministry. I trained at Trinity College, Bristol, before completing my curacy in the Avon River

Team (a team of 7 churches to the north and east of Stonehenge). Before all that I have worked in IT for several large companies, Ramsay Healthcare (who run 35 hospitals across the country) was the last appointment, but before that Virgin Mobile here in Trowbridge. Faith played a huge role in my time at Virgin in particular, I especially think of the Christian fellowship we brought together at the difficult time of transition from Virgin Mobile to Virgin Media. God drew us together and led us through.

Alongside all of this I have led ecumenical men's ministry in Warminster (called Strive) – yes, we have been over and visited MenUnited over the years. We are regular New Wine attenders and can confidently say that New Wine has been instrumental in shaping our walk. We walk a lot, we love the outdoors, I have climbed a few mountains. I love all sport, but most especially football – I am an Everton fan, which is rarely easy!

Twice in my church life I have felt like I am home. The first was a shock, after recently re-committing my life to God I remember throwing my coat on a seat and relaxing in a chair at Christ Church in Warminster & thinking – goodness me, I feel like I am home! The second was when sneaking in the back at St Thomas', after Bishop Andrew asked me to consider this role late last year. Feelings can be tricky things, but I am sure both were God encouraging me along.

I hope that many more get to call our churches and time with God 'home'. This is my prayer as we embark on the next leg of the amazing adventure, together with our loving saviour Jesus.

Every blessing,  
Simon.

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Deadline for July's magazine:  
Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June

# St John's Update

May saw St John's hold a PCC Meeting followed by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

Both being chaired by the Vice Chair : Peter H.

The Churchyard is being kept under control but unfortunately the mower had a problem with the drive belt and had to be repaired. A paint specialist/supplier viewed the church internal walls and suggested treatment for the damp issue. A report was to follow.

4th May Morning Worship incorporated a remembrance of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day. A rehearsal of our New Vicars Licensing Service took place, an air of apprehension was evident and it all seemed rather daunting - but all those involved got the gist of what was required, and when. Then the day arrived - 22<sup>nd</sup> May - and my what a joyous service it was. St Thomas' was full; wow so many clergy in robes in one place - The Archdeacon was there and the Rural Dean did an excellent job.

Bishop Andrew, in his inevitable style, gave an inspiring and uplifting sermon. It all seemed to run smoothly. We commend that St John's was incorporated in playing a small part in this special occasion. We must mention that Simon did exceptionally well, even though he must have been nervous - Bless. Speaking with various folk, and that Simon and family had lived in the area for some years before; it was amazing how many folk knew of them in one way or another - all good reports - a reputation to live up to !

It must be stated that Mandi's article on St Thomas' Churchwardens in last month's Church Magazine, rings true and we at St John's reiterate our thanks and appreciation for all their work during the time since Allan's departure.

We head into June and the period of Pentecost (Whitsun). Pentecost is seen as the day the Church was born, with the Holy Spirit inspiring believers to carry out Jesus' mission to make disciples of all. Acts 2:1-4. This is then followed by Trinity Sunday.

Simon will be taking his first service at St John's on Trinity Sunday (15 June).

We welcome Simon and his family into our rural church life and wish them every best wish for the future. Please come and meet our new vicar - he would be pleased to meet you too.

St John's services for June and July are as follows :

1st June - Service of the Word; 15<sup>th</sup> June - Holy Communion with Simon.

6<sup>th</sup> July - Service of the Word; 20<sup>th</sup> July - Holy Communion.

June marks the beginning of the astronomical summer and the summer solstice; not to mention Glastonbury Festival - hope you got your tickets !! Enjoy whatever you do.

“From your hand, O Lord, we receive everything. You open your gentle hand and offer the gift of inward peace. If sometimes it seems that your arm is shortened, then you increase our faith and trust, so that we may reach out to you. And if sometimes it seems that you withdraw your hand from us, then we know that it is only to conceal the eternal blessing which you have promised - that we may yearn even more fervently for that blessing”. Amen. (S Kierkegaard).

Jean



St John's Commemorates VE Day 80th Anniversary







A view from St John's of a field of buttercups

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“Clocked” this time piece in a hall in Marston. On the “face of it”, what a true message !

# Simon's Licensing

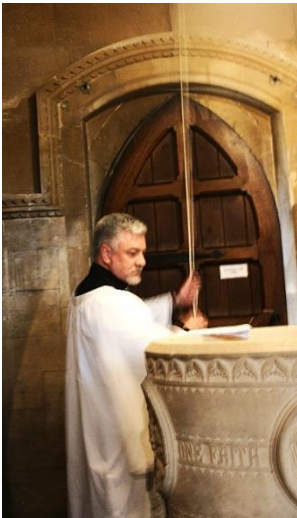
Wow what a wonderful and uplifting service! To see the church full with over 200+ people and to hear voices raised in worship and loudly declaring the responses to the Bishop's questions for us to support Simon in his role as our vicar. I am sure we are all looking to forward to Simon's ministry, to see how his godly gifts and skills will enhance how we continue to serve God in our church, parish and community.



It was truly inspiring to see so many of our congregation taking part within the service, both young and old. The worship team did a great job in leading us into God's presence. As usual our catering team did a marvelous job for the refreshments after the service; the wine and nibbles went down well 😊 Our thanks have to go to Paul and John for all their hard work in putting the service together. Paul had to do a lot of liaising with all who took part but had everything worked out so it all ran smoothly on the day. These are just a few photos from the event.







The old saying is "the number of rings of the bell is the number of years he will be with us"

.... Not sure that is true as Allan didn't ring it 25 times! Lol

## Simon's licensing – a big thank you

I want to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to everyone who contributed in any way to Simon's licensing service on 22<sup>nd</sup> May. One way and another a lot of people were involved! I won't try to name specific individuals or groups because I'm bound to miss someone. But I'm grateful to the various teams who planned and carried out their part of the evening so well, as well as to all the individuals who played a part. Some people were visible, while others worked behind the scenes. A huge thank you to you all! The licensing service was a very encouraging occasion, and such a special way to mark the beginning of Simon's ministry among us.

I've also written, on behalf of our two churches, to Bishop Andrew, Archdeacon Alan and Jake Eggertsen, to thank them for their part in the service as well as for their support through the interregnum and in the process that has led to Simon's appointment.

We are very grateful to God for the way he has brought Simon and Elle to us, and we warmly welcome them into our church family. We were blessed with a wonderful celebration of that new ministry on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, and we look forward with excitement to God's leading and empowering as we move forward.

Paul E

# Azaria and David



We had an extra blessing for mission fans on Sunday 18th May because Azaria and David, our mission links from Central America, were in the country and were free.

We thought it would be too good a chance to miss to get them involved in the All Age Service. They did a wonderful job showing us, through a quiz, how little we knew about Guatemala. They also updated us on the work that they do in Guatemala City. David has been working hard with reaching out to youngsters

through getting them to sing together, while also organising at least four worship bands in his church. Azaria has continued building relationships with families in Bethania, a suburb of the city. She has also been training mentors for young people, while writing a complicated paper in Spanish to aid the government and show them what they are doing. Please pray for their work.

Azaria and David were also able to spend time at Messy Church on Saturday and chat with many people after the service on Sunday.

Thanks to all who fed and housed them while they were here in Trowbridge.

Robert J, CMS Mission Rep

# Martin and Jenny's Big Day Out

On Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May we attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace hosted by the King and Queen 'to celebrate and recognise those working in education and skills'. When notification of the invitation arrived I was naturally very excited, but Martin was a little confused and wondered if he had been randomly selected by a computer from some list of retired teachers somewhere. Only after the event did he find that it was in fact due to a nomination made by a very kind and thoughtful person.

The news prompted the usual flurry of activity around wardrobe, with me concerned about still fitting the dress I wore for Tom's wedding and Martin trying to remember where his suit was and worrying about how much all the fuss and palaver was going to cost.

When the big day came everything went splendidly. The weather was beautiful and simply the fact that we were out on a day trip together was refreshing. After a straightforward journey there was a little waiting around watching the changing of the guard and talking to some King's Scouts who were helping to marshal the crowd. When we eventually entered via the main gate we had time to visit the gardens, which Martin had been looking forward to the most.

The buffet style food was top-notch, and what really stood out was the care and attention of the palace household staff who could not have been more welcoming. About an hour or so later the King and Queen arrived to the sound of the National Anthem, and they began to circulate with the close attention of the beekeepers and gentlemen ushers. We didn't get the chance to speak to them, but I did get the photo I wanted. Martin was off listening to the music and chatting away with someone, but we both thoroughly enjoyed the day.

God presents opportunities at the strangest of times and circumstances. We wanted to get an earlier train back, but the cost was too prohibitive, so Martin suggested we go to the nearest pub for a couple of hours. I wasn't so sure, but we were short of alternatives. We sat next to a young man and engaged in conversation. He was intrigued as to why we were all dressed up and got into a conversation about what we had been doing and about what motivated and inspired us. It turned out he was from Bristol but worked away from his family a lot.



He had been brought up as a Baptist, but for years he had been lost spiritually and was searching for a new direction. Martin mentioned the Persian poet Rumi, who said something along the lines of, 'if you seek starlight you become a star, if you seek only to exist, you become bread'. We thank God for the work he does in our lives.



I am very proud of my husband. Completely by chance I found out his nomination had come from his boss. He shared it with me, and even though I was very tempted to share it more widely I know he'd not forgive me. It is sufficient to say that it was a humbling experience for him. He said that as a Christian teacher, all the wonderful things that had been recognised and written by his boss were just things that a Christian teacher should be doing anyway, and therefore not anything special. He reminded me of two examples from scripture:- **Luke 10:25-37 and James 2:14-26.**

Jenny





# New Wine 2025

## Bath and West Showground

Well, where has the year gone? Simon and I have been accepted as Village Hosts again this year and we are so looking forward to going back to Shepton Mallet again this year. Last year was a bit like going home but your parents had redecorated and moved the furniture around.

We (and quite a few others) would like to offer you the chance to experience this wonderful festival for a day. New Wine have said that day tickets will be available in June. So I am proposing that on Thrus 31<sup>st</sup> July we will provide refreshments all day and an evening meal.

So if you would like to come and join us, I know some people have already asked me if this possible all you need to do is buy your ticket from the website at [new-wine.org](http://new-wine.org) and let me know. There will be a few things you will need to bring such as a packed lunch and a chair but we will provide the rest so that you can have a wonderful day.

Lyndsey W





St John's Church, West Ashton  
Trowbridge, Wiltshire

## IN GOD'S HOUSE

*There are a faithful few, who work unseen and*

*Unobtrusively give of their best.*

*Who spend their lives perfecting little things,*

*which often pass unnoticed by the rest.*

*Theirs are the hands that dust the altar rails,  
that change the flowers and keep the linen fair.*

*They sweep the aisle with cheerful reverence*

*And polish silver with a murmured prayer.*

*These are the quiet ones, who freely give  
their time, thought and love with glad accord;*

*who softly tread the by-ways of resolve –  
and share the peace of God for their reward.*

*J B Howes*