

Dear Friends,

I would like to introduce myself as one of the new curates in our deanery. I was ordained a deacon at Winchester Cathedral at the beginning of October, and will be serving my 3 year post with The Reverend David Roche in Whitchurch with Tufton and Litchfield. We moved to Whitchurch earlier this year, having had a wonderful 15 years living in Longparish.

Before my change of direction, I enjoyed working as a small animal vet (with the occasional swan from the Thames). Then, as our boys got a bit older, I'd planned to continue vetting, and to find some voluntary Christian work for one day a week. I ended up volunteering for 3 years with The Waterfall Trust in Southampton – a Christian charity supporting women recovering from addictions. Little did I know when I started that I'd end up leaving my veterinary work, to change direction completely!

As we look forward to November, it's a time to remember. On the first Sunday, we celebrate the lives of saints, and we remember our loved ones who are no longer with us. Then on Remembrance Sunday, we remember the massive human cost of war both in our lifetimes and in the past.

But this year will certainly be different. The collective remembering through the 2014 and 2018 Remembrance Concerts now seem a distant memory amid the current Covid-19 restrictions. How we long to be able to gather in large groups to share music, and memories/stories of our local heroic men and women who gave so much for our freedom; without social distancing, face masks and hand sanitising. Even our Holy Communion practices of remembering the life, death and resurrection of Jesus have been limited by Covid-19.

So how important it is to read the awesome words of St. Paul:

'For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.' (Romans 8:38-39)

However we 'remember' this year (please check out the services available), I urge you to hang on to St. Paul's words, and to the hope that they offer us.

With my very best wishes,

Rev. Nicky Smallwood
Assistant Curate

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