

PASTORAL LETTER NOVEMBER 2026

Tony writes:

In the Church Year, at the start of November we look back to the lives of 'All the Saints'; to those who have travelled before us in faith, leaving us examples of lives that in a variety of ways, have made sense of God, and the life of Christ. We see examples of how God's Spirit inspired them and learn something of their relationships with each other and God himself, through Jesus.

This November as a United Parish, we are also very much looking back to the wonderful ministry and love of the Revd Dr Jacky Barr, as she has left us, and is busy preparing now for the start of her new ministry in the parishes of Atworth with Shaw, and Whitley, in the Diocese of Salisbury on the 10th November. We hold her in our love and prayers, praying for her and the church and community she is now travelling with.

In their Parish Profile which was provided to Jacky to give her an idea of what these parishes are like and looking to for the future, they included these words:

We are looking for that someone
Who will lead us in God's name
Who will guide us on our journey
Who will nourish and sustain

We're a group of willing players
Our teamwork ethic's strong
We have skills and great potential
Our love for Christ, it drives us on

We can testify in this United Parish to how God equipped and enabled Jacky to lead us, guide us, nourish us, sustain us, and love us over the last nine years, deepening our love for Christ.

This month in ‘Morning Prayer’, there appears daily the Canticle, *‘A Song of the New Creation’*, based on Isaiah 43, which includes these words:

1 ‘I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your King.’
2 Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters,
3 ‘Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of. old.
4 ‘Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
5 ‘I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people,
6 ‘The people whom I formed for myself, that they might declare my praise.’

This is not saying forget the past, after all we begin the month by thinking about all the saints, then shortly afterwards on Remembrance Sunday we will recall the horrors of war. What the canticle calls us to do is not to cling to the past and dwell on ‘The Good Old Days’ but look to the ‘new thing’ that God is doing.

God’s promise for Jacky and her new parish and community, is the same for us here in our United Parish. Whatever the future holds, and however long ‘The Vacancy’ lasts , he is the Lord, the Holy One, who makes the way ahead navigable and sustainable. There will come the day when we too like our brothers and sisters in Christ now led by Jacky, will praise God for preparing us and our new minister for the ‘new thing’ he is doing.

“I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert,
To give drink to my chosen people,
‘The people whom I formed for myself,
that they might declare my praise.”