

I begin this report with a sincere "thank you" to everyone who has welcomed Pat and me so warmly to St. Mark's and St. Paul's. Geoff and Paul our Wardens and Elaine Labourel deserve special mention for all they have done to help during the transition. I am aware that with both Elaine and the Bosworths moving on after many years of faithful ministry this is a time of significant change. I am aware of how disappointing the very short tenure of the previous Chaplain felt; I have never before moved to a church where the question of "how long are you staying" has been asked of me so often and with deep feeling from the moment I arrived!

I have not yet been Chaplain here for a complete calendar year. I am writing this report just over nine months since coming to Versailles. As such this report is a matter of seeing things with relatively fresh eyes and I offer some relatively naive reflections on my first few months.

Our building is in a challenging location; very few people find us on the first time of looking! However new people do manage to track us down and it is encouraging to meet new people at various stages of a journey of faith. We need discernment as to how we can be more "intentional" in our mission and not rely primarily on people simply turning up on a Sunday. In the Autumn I expect we will hold an Alpha course and it is not too early even for every one of us to be praying about who we can invite.

I am impressed by the desire and commitment of the church to share partnership with overseas mission through both prayer, financial giving and in some cases personal visits. Giving to mission is an encouraging sign of the Kingdom.

I am encouraged by all those who are committed deeply to serving in ministry here. Again as a newcomer I am impressed by the way people enable ministry to take place faithfully and regularly. The teams on Sunday, musicians, youth and children's leaders and many other serve week by week. I am struck particularly by the commitment of the team involved in Operation Stephen, a laudable piece of Christian service. I am aware, however, that almost every team functions with a "low margin" of extra capacity and is in need of more volunteers and runs the risk of the committed team members growing weary.

Overall my vision for St. Mark's is growth arising from health; we seek healthy church life and relationships and look to God to give growth.

As I write this report I am hearing news of another vote in the UK Parliament on legislation relating to "Brexit". The uncertain process and even more uncertain outcome could discourage us but this is opportunity to demonstrate the security of our hope in Christ,

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.”

(1 Peter 1:3–4 NIV11)