

RECTOR'S LETTER FOR JANUARY 2019.

Dear Friends, “ There is a time for everything “ says Ecclesiastes, as I reflect back to the start of my journey to the U.K. and time at Sale and Sale Moor beginning on the 25th of August 1997 to June 1999, arriving in Gawsworth on the 15th June 1999 to 31st January 2019 when I shall relinquish my Rectorship of Gawsworth and North Rode, whose pastoral care I have had since December 2014.

I want to give thanks to God our Heavenly Father for giving me such a wonderful opportunity to serve His people in the Chester Diocese. On the 10th of November 2018, I attended Synod for the last time as a member of the House of Bishops in our Diocese and expressed my gratitude and thanks to the Lord Bishop of Chester, Rt. Revd. Dr. Peter Forster, the House of Bishops, Clergy and Laity for all the help which they have given to me and my family since we arrived 22 years ago. I want to thank the Parishes of St Anne's with St Francis, Sale for making us so welcome when we first arrived in England. The house was furnished and there was food to feed us for many days. Our first Christmas in England was most memorable when a Parishioner brought a box full of all the tropical assorted food that made our Christmas so special.

Moving to Gawsworth in the Summer of 1999, also very memorable, the Rectory was fully furnished and my induction, such an overwhelming experience, when the procession led by the Cross and Choir followed by Clergy and the Bishop of Stockport went from Gawsworth Hall through the Patrons Gate into the Church. I remember Bishop Geoff's sermon, when he said, Willie, “cast all your worries on Jesus, for he cares” wise words from the Bishop. I did just that during my time here. The late Tim Richards my Patron also gave me some advice when he said, “Bishop past Rectors looked after us, but you having come from Melanesia, it is now our turn to look after you and your family.” He also said, “this is your Parish, you do what you like”. I did just that !!!

I want to thank Barry Rose and John Nettleton the two Church Wardens who were responsible for bringing me to Gawsworth, they also gave me advice, they said, “We want to make you the best Parish Priest,” I must be honest I have failed them miserably. May I pay tribute to past Church Wardens, P.C.C. members and Parishioners who have shared worship and fellowship with me, all of which has enriched my ministry. The past clergymen, Ven. Canon Jim Draper, Revd. Father Noel Dickson, Lay Readers Emeritus Morris Clegg and Charles Burney have given me so much help in sharing the Ministry, and now today Canon Paul Moulton and Lay Reader Emeritus Keith Parrott, they continue to give me a lot of help which is very much appreciated. I also need to thank the Melanesian Mission U.K. and the Anglican Church of Melanesia U.K. for their past and continuing assistance after my retirement.

I want to thank our Patron Rupert Richards with his mother Elizabeth and his brother Jonathan for all the help and support which they give to our Church and to me personally. Thank you to our only Church Warden Carole Townshend, P.C.C. Secretary Jane Curley, Treasurer Colin Bodimeade, all the members of our P.C.C. past and present, those with different responsibilities in running our Parish smoothly. Well done, you good and faithful servants of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thank you to Keith our Organist and Choir master, Eileen Morten and choir members for leading us in worship, thank you Bell ringers, Sidesmen, flower arrangers, fundraisers, farmers for the produce you have given me, cleaners, coffee makers, readers, working party, magazine editorial group, Ken Williams & Barbara Wilson with Anne Jackson the printer, also Jane Robertson Magazine distribution. Jane Palmer for her 35 years work with the Church of England Children's Society, Ray Bowers for the 200 club, the Buildings committee, David Moore for our new website and Facebook page, mothers union, study group, sacristan, servers, Fundraising team, Ida and her Christmas Tree Festival team, and all who give freely of their time and skill to help make this Parish a beautiful happy place. To all of you who have helped me in so many ways, God Bless You All.

Thank you North Rode Church Warden & Treasurer Marilyn Ainslie, P.C.C. Secretary Diane Lowe, Organist Norman Bebbington, choir members and members of the Parish Church Council with our congregation thank you for your faithfulness and care for the people of God.

I want to thank our Methodist ministers past and present along with their congregation for their friendship and fellowship in the Gospel over the years I have been in Gawsworth and North Rode.

Last but not least I want to thank Suzanne Moore for all the help she has given me as my personal assistant, keeping my diary and reminding me of my appointments, booking Baptisms, weddings, funerals for the Church. Thank you Suzanne and David for your wonderful support and the help you have given me over many years.

May I take this opportunity to pay tribute and thank you to those outside the Parish for giving me the a wider involvement in the Community in Cheshire, John Richards during his year as High Sheriff of Cheshire, asking me to be his Chaplain 2002 / 2003 ; The late Mr Anthony Gaddum, the Upper Bailiff of The Worshipful Company of Weavers for asking me to be his chaplain during his year as President of the Weavers Association in London, also Mrs Hilda Gaddum for asking me to be her Chaplain when she was Mayor of Cheshire East 2015 / 16. Cheshire Constabulary for my being a member of the Independent Advisory Group, also to the Commissioner of Police for my being a member of the Independent observer group to observe the protest concerning fracking in Cheshire

If I have failed you in any way I ask you to forgive me. I pray that God may keep you all safe and if our paths do not cross here I am sure we will see each other in the presence of our Lord, Saviour and King, Jesus Christ.
My wife Kate and family join me in wishing you all a prosperous New Year in 2019.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and love of God be with you all.
Shalom my friends goodbye.

+ WAP.