

St Ippolyts Church, St Ippolyts, Nr Hitchin



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Reflections

A FEW WORDS FROM YOUR VICAR

Since I was appointed as Vicar of the Benefice of St. Ippolyts with Great and Little Wymondley several people have said 'I thought you already were a Vicar, does it mean you get paid more? What will be the difference from how things were before?'



Here are a few words of explanation. Prior to 1st November 2010 I was your Priest-in-Charge, in other words I had a licence from the Bishop to be 'in charge' of the three parishes. Under employment rights, technically, a Priest-in-Charge does not have the same rights as a Vicar, although the church hardly ever distinguishes between the two. Now I am your Vicar it means I have what is called the freehold of the new Benefice of St. Ippolyts with Great and Little Wymondley which technically gives me more security, but in reality it won't make much difference to how I live and work among you. In January 2011 something called 'Common Tenure' comes in with reference to the way clergy are appointed. After it has been introduced there will be no more positions where freehold is given to a priest, instead all priests and bishops will have a common tenure, meaning all have the same security of employment, as I understand it. It's all very complicated but I feel it is a good thing and so come January I shall relinquish my freehold, then I will have the same 'rights' as any other priest or bishop under common tenure.

And in answer to your question, no I don't get paid any more as your Vicar as I did as Priest-in-Charge. Clergy are paid what is called a stipend rather than a wage, and I hope the Church of England never changes that. For if you are paid a wage you are paid for what you do, whereas I am paid a stipend which means I am paid so that I can do the work I do! For in reality how can you pay me for what I do? Some days are spent visiting the bereaved, some days are full of telephone and e-mail messages and responses, and some provide thinking time - preparing for services and sermons. And all my days are spent living amongst you in our benefice. One thing hasn't changed - the Vicar HAS to live in The Vicarage, experiencing the joys and sorrows of village life, the wonders of our surroundings and worshipping with you in the churches.

>As we come to the seasons of Advent and Christmas we think again of the One whose life was truly incarnate. Jesus, the Word made flesh who came and dwelt among us, experienced the joys and sorrows of a physical life within the villages of the Holy Land, experienced the wonders of the desert and mountains and pastures around him and was well known as one who worshipped alongside his friends and family in the local places of worship.

Jesus wasn't paid for what he did as he lived amongst his followers, rather he paid the price so we might live and have life in abundance.



I look forward to the abundance of life God will bless us with in 2011, within the Benefice of St. Ippolyts with Great and Little Wymondley and I am happy to be your Vicar.

With my love to you all.



Have a Happy Christmas and New Year. Reverend Ann