Rector's Reflections – Great Brickhill APCM 9th April 2019

(Thanks)

As always, I would like to express my thanks for all the support I continue to receive, in this church and village (and across the benefice), as in recent times I have been continuing to adjust to living alone following the loss of Pauline.

In particular, I would like to note our thanksgiving for the life and ministry of Bishop Alan as our Area Bishop over many years. His recent death was a great shock to us all, and as I reflected on my own memories of Bishop Alan, I was especially grateful for all his understanding and support through the challenging years of trying to combine parish ministry with care for Pauline.

(Prayers of Love and Faith)

The Church of England introduced these prayers for same sex couples in committed relationships in December 2023. (full texts are available on the C. of E. website – we could give the links for these, or print the texts, if requested)

Following recent PCC report, can report:

I am ready to offer prayers with couples or families at home

PCC supported my willingness to offer prayers for couples within Sunday services ('stand alone' services of blessing not available at present, may be later ..)

(Sabbath rest)

Along with my thanks above, I am particularly grateful for all the support that makes my sabbatical possible: (Archdeacon Guy's encouragement), visiting clergy, Jeremy and others leading services, along with churchwardens and many others.

In our recent Lent course, we discussed the sabbath rules of the Old Testament, and I believe that, while these are not 'law for us as Christians, there is wisdom in a pattern of activity balanced by rest / enjoyment / thanksgiving to God. Finding that balance is a challenge for all of us.

My sabbatical leave, will include some holiday, time alongside the Christian community at Lee Abbey, combined with time with family, and space to reflect on recent years, and seek God's renewing for the next stage of my ministry here.

I look forward to rejoining you in July.