

# ST MATTHEW'S PARISH NEWSLETTER

April 2021

## MESSAGE FROM REV NIALL STRATFORD

I am reminded of the words of that 'Classic' song by 'The Three Degrees' – 'When will I see you again- when will we share precious moments'. Not having ever previously met any of you who form the community of St. Matthew's it is indeed a strange way to introduce myself. But then arriving in the midst of a pandemic is of itself - to say the least - a little strange!



'We must catch up'. What is the appeal of these four simple words? We are instinctive communicators. In general, as human beings, we enjoy companionship. A fellow 'soul mate' with whom to share life's experiences.

It does us good to mingle and chat, to share stories and events, to plan, to relax and unwind. To be able to meet with family or friends is something we always took for granted. Covid 19 has awoken us to re-examine the ordinary and the extraordinary in so many differing ways. It is as if the common tasks have to be re-learned or perhaps more correctly re- earned!

'Hope' – What is the appeal of these four letters? Hope is a firm assurance regarding things that are unclear and unknown. Without hope what are we?

Longer days- sunny evenings – increased freedom are just some of the many positive aspects of life to look forward to and when we really examine our lives on the Emerald Isle- we have so much for which we ought to be grateful.

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* Romans 15 v 13

**Niall**

## PARISH CONTACTS

### Rector (Interim)

Rev Andrew McCroskery Tel: 087 419 6071

Rev Niall Stratford

### Parish Administration

Jonathan Bell Tel: 087 254 0378

Nicky Bell Tel: 087 688 7049

### Hon Secretary

Lindy Farmer Tel: 087 2246203

### Hon Treasurer

Jonathan Bell Tel: 087 254 0378

### Church Wardens

Miriam Hollowed (Rector's), Geraldine Wallace (People's),

Virginia Stewart (People's)

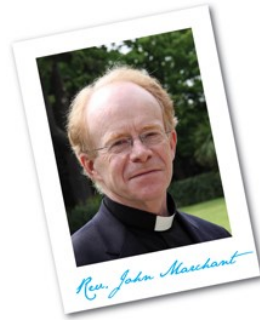
### Glebe Wardens

Robbie Hamilton (Rector's)

### Select Vestry

Lindy Farmer, Jonathan Bell, Gordon Kelley, Miriam Hollowed, Gladys Raethorne, Robbie Hamilton, Claire Wheeler, Steve Griffiths, Virginia Stewart, Karen Woods, John Wallace, Geraldine Wallace

## A FOND FAREWELL



With a small number gathered in the Church for Holy Communion on the 4<sup>th</sup> April and with many of our Parishioners and wider Community on the Live Stream, we said a fond farewell to **Reverend John Marchant**

When John and Pat joined the Parish as Priest in Charge in 2013 - there was a lot to be done and there were some opinions at the time that St Matthews wouldn't have the resources to remain open and may have to close its doors. It was very clear however that he was not prepared to accept that fact.

In his time as Rector in St Matthews and together with a willing and able Select Vestry he oversaw some major changes and developments from the re-opening of the front doors after 40 years to the construction of the new Columbarium Wall for Parishioners and the Community. Also, there had been some difficult decisions to be made from time to time, but all in all he leaves the Irishtown & Donnybrook Union of Parishes in a very strong position for the future.

The Archbishop of Dublin commented recently when he visited the Parish to dedicate the new Columbarium Wall, he described John as tireless, responsive, industrious, helpful, courteous, outreaching and Godly!!

A Parishioner also added recently that "Without any fuss, you have re-modelled the church and the parish to make them a better fit for the community and it is such a shame you cannot stay longer". Also the Clergy in both St Patricks Ringsend and Star of the Sea Church have wished him well and complimented his work in the Community.

John was disappointed that one of the consequences of the Pandemic that he had not been able to Confirm 9 now past pupils of St Matthews School and it will now be with Zoom probably and the Archbishop to help them confirm their Christian beliefs.

St Matthews National School gave him an emotional farewell recently and that is clear testimony to the relationship that he had nurtured and strengthened greatly between the School and the Parish.

John was never afraid to say what was right for the good of both St Matthews and with St Mary's and when he set his mind to a project it was invariably achieved with willing acceptance.

St Matthews Church is without doubt a better place by his presence and service for both the Parish and the wider community and together with the assistance of Steve Griffiths and the Select Vestry he leaves the Parish with a clearly designed plan for the future for the next incumbent to help implement.

We also look forward to hopefully welcoming him to our Live Stream on some Sundays and we will be able to say that we have people attending our Service from places as far away as Bolton, Switzerland, New Zealand and as close as Ballinteer.

St Matthews will miss him greatly and we wish John and Pat many happy and healthy days in retirement from full time ministry and when we can hopefully have them back to the Parish to say a proper farewell.