

PRESS REPORT

ST. GARMON'S begins a New Era

On Sunday 2nd February over thirty people gathered at St. Garmon, Llanarmon Mynydd Mawr, to celebrate a past era and begin anew) with the Archdeacon of Montgomery, Dr. Peter Pike, the Area Dean The Rev'd Pam Powell (recently appointed Canon Chancellor of St. Asaph Cathedral), and a number of clergy, including Vera Lewis, Kit Carter, Tony Saddler, Judith Prust and Presbyterian Minister Gwyndaf Richards with Tom Morris representing Llanrhaeadr Ym Mochnant Methodists.

The service was led by The Rev'd Mike Powell, assisted by Mrs Fran Stocking who led the congregation in prayers and intercessions. Lessons were read by Dr. Peter Crocker and Arthur Tyerman, and hymns were accompanied by organist Mrs Lynda Thomas.

During his Address, Archdeacon Peter reminded us of the long history of Llanarmon Mynydd Mawr as a place of pilgrimage and worship, beginning back in the 5th century when it is told that Germanus (St. Garmon) came to this area from Auxerre in France leading a crusade, relating how he led a band of Britons, who would be the predecessors of the good folk here, in a fight against the Pictish Scots and the Saxon English raiders. But they were heavily outnumbered - so the story goes - and Garmon said to the small band of Britons, 'When the crucial point comes I shall shout Hallelujah and you shout Hallelujah. I'll shout Hallelujah three times.' At the point where it seemed that the Britons - the Welsh - were on their back foot, Garmon shouted 'Hallelujah' and everybody responded, 'Hallelujah' which echoed all around the valley, three times - and it's said that you couldn't see the English and the Scots for dust.

Peter also related that at a church he was once, there was a mirror on the way out of the vestry and you just looked at yourself briefly to make sure that you had everything on the right way round, and underneath it simply said, 'Hallelujah, anyway!'

"That's often how we think and feel isn't it? That it's difficult - the life of faith - that following Jesus Christ sometimes brings to our hearts, and indeed to our lips, 'Well, Lord, Hallelujah anyway!' Even on this occasion, when it's quite rightly a day of sadness and a day of hope, we don't pass over the sadness that people feel, because this a very, very special place of prayer. People have come here to meet the Lord, to be re-kindled in faith.

"I want to shift from our gathering today, to who we are as people, all of us, whether or not we have been and hope to continue to be regular worshippers here. This is for all of us in this building. There is a threshold here with possibly the most amazing view in Christendom when you open the door, providing it isn't raining. Isn't it amazing, it's just a prayer, before you can put any words to it. Also, each of us have ears, in a sense 'thresholds' to the world. We listen as people speak to us, sometimes with hesitancy, sometimes in real grief and anxiety. Let us be part of Christ's living temple by keeping these thresholds open to others.

"You can touch the silence - almost eat it - in here when it's empty. Well, each of us, by the grace of God, is to allow Jesus Christ to be quiet and centred in our own lives. Remember that lovely scripture: 'You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee'. And that can be true of you and me; where we live, in Oswestry doing the shopping, or wherever - living temples.

"So I am suggesting that people will come to you - they will cross your path - for this is how it is in life. They will come to you and actually be re-kindled by the Lord Jesus Christ who lives within you.

"I want that to be the message of hope this afternoon; sadness, thanksgiving, thinking back into the past to all the lovely things that many of you have experienced in this building, and also a commitment and trust in the Lord for the future. I finish with a sentence from our reading from Exodus:

'The Lord says, "I will go with you and I will give you victory".

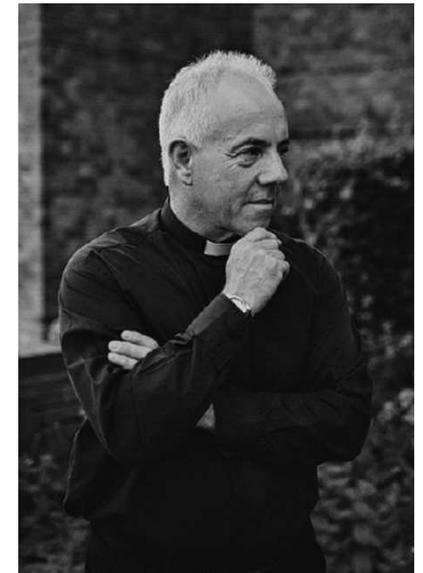
"It is of course the victory of love, of God's love shown to us in Christ on the cross, and the strength and power of serving in that way by his resurrection and by the gift of the Holy Spirit."

After the service everyone shared light refreshments while they joined in conversation about the present, past and future, and thus concluded a sad but joyous occasion in the life of St. Garmon Llanarmon Mynydd Mawr.

The full text of Archdeacon Peter's Address is available on the Mathrafal Deanery web site or from Arthur Tyerman. There is also a DVD film of the service in circulation.



Mike Powell leads the service



Archdeacon Peter Pike