



The Parish Churches
of
Cobham with Luddesdowne and Dode

Changes to Church Services

Sunday 18th July 2010

Dear Church

As you know over the last couple of months we have been considering changes to our services. I initially brought up the subject at the PCC and the following Sunday I addressed the congregation with the initial thoughts and ideas. I made available a copy of my talk that day in a letter for all to see. At that time I invited everyone to feed back to me their thoughts on the matter.

I want to thank everyone who took the time to write to me and speak to me and assure you all that your letters were read and considered carefully.

I then summarised all the responses that you wrote onto a sheet of A4 to try and see what the overall message was. As you can imagine, this was not an easy task or a clear one because everyone had something different to say and we all would like different things. However, I have tried to incorporate as much as possible into the changes that we have made and as a result very little has changed. You will see that there have been three significant changes.

1. The 8.30 BCP HC on the 2nd Sunday at Luddesdowne will now start at 9am. This is to try and give Luddesdowne a more regular service time rather than a different time every week.
2. The BCP evening prayer at Cobham has moved from the 3rd Sunday to the 2^d Sunday because several people thought that we didn't need two BCP services on the 3rd Sunday and this will enable us to have a BCP at Cobham on every Sunday.
3. The BCP HC on the 4th Sunday at Cobham has moved from 10.30am to the new time of 9am. This service will be followed by tea/coffee and then a new service at 10.30am called Parish praise. This keeps the BCP service, although at a different time, but does not put it at the very early slot because some people felt that 8am or 8.30am was too early for the mainly elderly congregation who attend this service. It also allows for a new service of parish praise at the 10.30 slot which several people have been asking for. There was a concern that this would separate out into two congregations those people who currently attend the present 10.30am BCP. However, it is hoped that having the tea/coffee in the middle of the two services will enable a cross over between the two and enable people to still see each other. Doing it this way means that people have a greater choice. People can choose on the 4th Sunday to attend either the 9am service, the 10.30 service or both if they so wish. It is hoped that it may also attract some of the Luddesdowne folk to Cobham on this Sunday.

On Tuesday of this week your PCC met to discuss these changes and they voted in favour of these changes. The vote was 9 votes for the changes with 2 abstentions. I felt that this was a very affirming vote and hope that you will support this PCC decision.

I hope that you can see the value of these changes and how your preferences have been listened to and accommodated as far as possible. Inevitably there will be some things that you like and some you dislike but I hope that you will be gracious enough to try and accommodate the changes as much as possible. Obviously, for some, these changes will seem

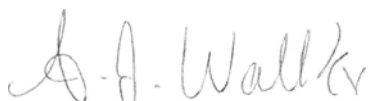
that we have gone too far, and for others it will seem that we have not gone far enough, but I believe that we have made an appropriate compromise. As with all changes we will just have to wait and see how effective these changes prove and we will review them in 6 months time.

You will remember that I also called a day of prayer and fasting^s after I received all your letters. This was felt necessary to enable us as a church to listen to what God might be saying to us in all of this. During that day, several people offered pictures, thoughts, words and scripture which they believed God had given to them. I then offered you another Saturday morning feed back session to discuss the things that God had given us. About 15 people attended this meeting which I felt was a good turn out and representative of both churches. I arranged people into 3 groups and gave them a copy of all the pictures, words etc that we had received. Each group discussed what they thought God may have been saying through the pictures and fed them back to me. I put the feedback on a wall chart and then summarised again what we all agreed God was saying to us. From that feedback it was clear that we needed a more flexible type of service and that we needed to develop the discipleship groups which you have already heard me mention. I will be bringing this up again soon as I hope to start these discipleship groups in September for the leaders first and then for the wider congregation.

I hope that you will work with me in making these changes as smooth and exciting as possible. There will inevitably be teething problems as we work out the finer details. It is my hope that by making these changes we will see new growth in the church, both in new people attending and in depth of faith and relationship with God.

God bless you and thank you once again for taking the time and effort to put your thoughts on paper and for attending the various prayer events. Do please continue to talk to me about the changes and the way things are going.

Yours in Jesus Christ

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "A.A. Walker". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid and personal.

Revd Angela Walker