

Mary Sumner 1828-1921
Founder of the Mothers' Union

Mary Elizabeth Sumner was born in 1828 at Swinton, Manchester, the daughter of Thomas Heywood, a prominent banker and philanthropist in the city. In 1848, she married a young curate, George Henry Sumner, nephew of Archbishop Sumner, who was himself to become Bishop of Guildford in 1888. A mother of three children, Mary called a meeting in 1876 at which the **Mothers' Union** was founded, providing a forum in which to unite mothers of all classes in the aim of bringing up children in the Christian faith. Baptism and parental example were its two basic principles. At first a parochial organisation, it grew steadily into an international concern, encouraging the ideal of a Christian home. Mary died on 11 August 1921 and is buried, along with her husband, in the grounds of Winchester Cathedral.



St Cross Newsletter

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Vicar: Revd Paul Deakin,
St Cross Vicarage, Mobberley Road,
Knutsford
WA16 8EL
Tel. No. 01565 640702
email: revdpauldeakin@gmail.com
Web address: www.stcrossknutsford.org.uk



Our Curate, Mike Duncombe, writes.....

The Life of a Curate: Excitement, Challenge, and Joy

Every curate's story starts with a single, unforgettable day—ordination. This is more than just a ceremony; it marks a moment of transformation, the old you is gone, and the new “clerk in holy orders” is born. As we waited to process into the cathedral I could feel the vibrant anticipation and hear the murmur of gathered friends, family and congregation. My heart was full of eager expectation and nervous wonder. It's both an end and a beginning – the end of years of discernment, formation, and college; and the beginning of a new life. The day had finally arrived!

And what a day! So much love, so much gratitude, so many people, so much cake, so much imposter syndrome!

The very next day, still floating on a cloud, I started here at St Cross as Curate. Although, I was ordained as Deacon, my job is “Curate”—really it should be “Assistant Curate”, because the Vicar/Rector/Incumbent is the “Curate” – the one who has responsibility for the cure of souls in the parish. Confusing? Of course, this is the Church of England, after all!

“Deacon” really means someone who serves and looks after things. Hence also “Arch-Deacon” – the chief servant. My first job was to change

the posters in the displays at the front of the church and by the west entrance; I've just done it again, so I must have been here a month!

As a curate, I'm here to learn, work where I can, obediently doing as I am asked, having confidence in the guidance of my "Training Incumbent" (Paul) – a bit like an apprentice. In the last month, I've done new things – a house blessing, for example, and a deliverance visit, as well as helping Paul with a wedding and a funeral in another parish in the Deanery. And I've done things that I've done before – Home Communion at a residential home, for example, and reading the gospel, and preaching. There have been moments of challenge – remembering all the new names, singing the different hymns, Gloria settings, and other sung parts of the liturgy, and remembering to stand in the right place!

I'm full of gratitude: to Paul for his careful and patient sharing of his ministry; and to Allison and Hil for their help and support. And I am very grateful for the warm welcome I've had from you all.

I feel very affirmed – I feel more certain than ever that I'm in the place God wants me to be, doing the thing he wants me to do. Less of an imposter now I've learned to put my collar on!

As a curate I have stepped into a world where tradition meets modernity, where the ancient rhythms of faith and church life are played out in the present, among real people with real joys and sorrows. It is a vocation well-suited for those, like me, who are excited by the beauty of holy worship, the challenge of loving others, and the joy of connection to God through the Holy Spirit. It's exhilarating, daunting, and incredibly life-affirming.

And I am so very happy to be here!

Yours, in Christ

Mike

Diary for August

Mondays (except Bank Holidays)

2-4pm Monday Together in the Parish Room

Fellowship, refreshments and activities supporting the work of the church.

Tuesday 12 August

7.30pm Lectio Divina (on Teams)

Wednesday 27 August

7pm PCC Meeting (on Teams)

Accessing Sermons

Most sermons at St Cross are either recorded as a Sound or Video Recording. These are available via our website.

If you go directly to YouTube for our Video Recordings (search on St Cross Knutsford), that helps to raise our online profile. If you SUBSCRIBE to the Channel (which costs nothing) or give a LIKE to a sermon, or give a COMMENT, that increases our online presence still further.

If someone asks you about the preaching here you can SHARE a link.

It is Mission and Evangelism easily put into action.



There were no Occasional Offices in July