

Pioneering Ministry

“For us, the key question is what ‘love your neighbour’ means in practice.”

Sophie and Will Burditt grew up in the same Northampton church, and both studied Theology at Moorlands College.

Now they’re married, as well as being partners in the Gospel, as a new pioneer minister team in the vast new housing estates springing up at



Old Sarum.

“We’ve lived in Salisbury for about 18 months”, Sophie began, “and worshipped at St Francis’, which we love as it’s so mission minded. The Old Sarum ministry is part of St Francis’ parish, so when this post became available we prayed, then jumped at it!

“Our predecessor, the Revd Penny Joyce, left great foundations for us to build on. We can see where God was already at work in the area before we came.”

Will continued, “Old Sarum is a community in formation. There is a mix of private and social housing, and a big military presence. There

are many Christians, but the only local congregation is a Messy Church meeting in the well-used community centre. There is a primary school, but the first shop won’t open until October.

“We’ve been influenced by new monasticism. Graeme, an early retired Christian, has just moved into our big house, and we’re seeking someone to fill the last room. We also have a baby on the way in November! We want the house to be a prayerful centre, from which faith and community can grow.

“Above all we’re looking to be authentic in all we do as pioneer ministers.”

Monthly Letter

The Rt Revd Dr Edward Condry
Bishop of Ramsbury

I love church vestries. Yet, almost every time I go to a church, someone apologises.

“I’m sorry it’s a bit of a mess.” “I’m sorry, it’s so small.” “There isn’t really anywhere to put your bag.”

“Please don’t apologise”, I try to reassure.

Vestries, like souls, are full of the loved and the necessary, as well as the regretted and the discarded. Ten years’ of candle ends saved. Last year’s Christmas crib on top of a cupboard.

Health and safety notices, and

registers. Records of parishioners and their pilgrimage. A thank you note for paying the parish share in full in 1986.

A piece of medieval wooden carving: an angel that has fallen perhaps. A safe with an old chalice touched by the lips of parishioners for hundreds of years.

Some oasis, in lumps of various sizes. Old flower vases. A door out into the churchyard, locked and rarely used except when the Bishop comes in order to make a grand procession round the church.

Very often a Victorian fireplace to keep the bearded cassocked Victorian rector warm. And in all this holy clutter we say our prayers before beginning worship, the Sunday service.

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I love it. Holiness is not the same as order and purity. It comes out of the jumble and upset of everyday lives. Mop buckets and brass candlesticks in need of cleaning speak more of faith than any pristine order.

George Herbert, our Salisbury saint, wrote a poem called The Church Floore about the stone flags on the

floor of Edington parish church, where he was married to Jane Danvers in 1629.

A small prize might be available for anyone who can come up with a Herbertian ode in praise of church vestries. Not a huddle, but a Holy Muddle. Alleluia.

Space for Youth

Steve Dewar, a Youth for Christ worker who worships at St Mary's, Potterne, helped run a Pop-Up youth café in Devizes and Trowbridge this summer.

"The Pop Up Café started last summer", said Steve, "With big cuts in state youth provision, Wiltshire Council supported us and gave us access to one of their vehicles. The Church is now the biggest youth services provider in this area.

"We provide games equipment and a covered space for youth to hang



out. The support of volunteers from churches and the wider community in both towns is invaluable.

"To me, it's about spending time with, listening to young people."

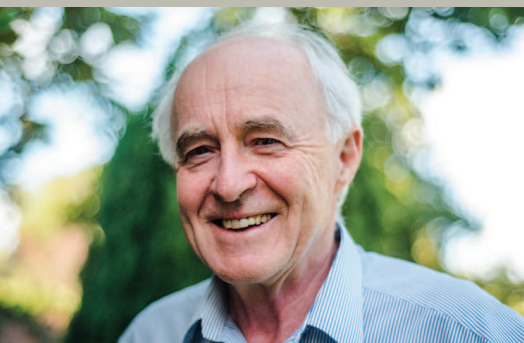
"We hope to run the Pop Up Café in more towns next year."

Good News for the World

"It's not enough to help the poor. We need to ask why they are poor."

Retired from a career in management consultancy, David Morgan now chairs the Diocesan Environment Group. He worships at St John's in Wimborne Minster and helps run a local fresh expression of church called 'The Point'.

"My parents sent me to Sunday School, but I left after confirmation. When I was 15, my sister got involved in a local evangelical Anglican church



and encouraged me to join her at the youth group. I engaged with the gospel at their Easter weekend house party in 1966, where I gave my life to Christ.

"I was involved in Christian Union at school and university, and I met my wife Jean through a group using the creative arts for Christian outreach."

Job moves for David saw the Morgans involved in the lay leadership at Anglican and Baptist churches in various towns. They settled in Wimborne Minster ten years ago.

"We have long been involved with Tearfund, the Christian development agency, sharpening my understanding of the gospel as involving global justice.

"John 3:16 says Christ was sent to save the whole world. Personal salvation

Making History

Evidence of Christian burial going back to perhaps 770 AD has been unearthed at Holy Trinity, Bradford upon Avon.

Wessex Archaeology uncovered more than 70 skeletons during part of a four-year, £2 million, project to make the church a community-friendly space.

The remains will be given a proper Christian reburial after analysis.

The Revd Joanna Abecassis, Rector said, "These are some of the earliest Christian burials in Wiltshire, placing Bradford at the forefront of the spread of Christianity in Wessex.

"It's humbling to think that we worship in a place where Christians have done so since a time closer to when Christ walked the earth than to our own."



matters, but the gospel is more than that: it is good news to everyone and all creation.

"Indulgence by rich countries and people is unfair to the poorest. A sense of fair play is built into our natures by God. He cares about justice; so must we.

"After retirement, I gave some of my new free time to A Rocha UK, a Christian charity working to protect and restore the natural world. We have found that the new Eco Church award scheme helps churches care for God's creation in worship, teaching, action and community outreach.

"Several local events explaining how to engage with Eco Church will be held in the coming months. Do come along."