

Spring has Arrived

Spring has arrived, a time of new life. New can be good but it can also be frightening at times. Sometimes starting something new is the hardest thing to do. It's not easy to take that first step, to start a conversation with someone you don't know, to commit the first words to paper, to start a new project or job.

At the start of this year I took up running (currently I can manage a light jog) in an effort to get fitter for an event I am doing with work in May. Taking that first run was one of the hardest things to do. I repeatedly put it off. I downloaded the BBC Couch-to-5Km app, I purchased equipment that I might need, and I waited for the weather to be a bit nicer. I did just about everything apart from step out of the door. Eventually I did it! Eventually I took the first step, and then the next and the next. It was hard work but worth it, I'm even enjoying the running now. But making that start was difficult.

Before Christmas we started the process of appointing a new vicar. We've had meetings, we've written and then rewritten our Parish Profile, we've asked the congregation what they want in a new vicar and we've asked the community what they think of St James. Very soon the advert will go out and, hopefully, we will start to get applicants. And for them it will be something new. A new job, a new location, new friendships to build, new relationships to grow, new opportunities to share their knowledge and love of Christ.

Whoever applies will have looked at the list of what we want from our new vicar and felt drawn and called by God to apply. They will have looked at our profile and decided that they, with God's help:

- Can help us to **grow disciples**, especially in areas of the parish and with age profiles (13-45 year olds) that we are not currently reaching.
- Is **outward focussed** and will develop contacts on the “**fringe**” of church on the journey towards **a mature faith**.
- Will help our congregation to grow deeper in faith through **preaching and teaching**.
- Is a collaborative team player, able to **nurture, motivate and affirm** the gifts and contributions of others.
- Has a love for prayer and a **desire to encourage others to pray**.
- Is **friendly and approachable** with a sense of humour!

We pray that God will be with us here at St James as we start this new chapter in the life of this parish and community.

Rob Oliver