

## **Rector's APCM 2024 Report.**

On 9th October 2024, it was my privilege to be installed, inducted, and licensed as Rector of the East Medina Plurality by our Diocesan Bishop Rt Revd Jonathan Frost.

### **Who We Are**

The four churches of this plurality are,

Saint Edmund's in Wootton,

St James in East Cowes,

St Mark's in Wootton, and

St Mildred's in Whippingham,

These four churches form three distinct Parishes that serve their communities in a big-hearted way, as seen in their giving to local charities.

(please see Treasurer's Report for specific details of donations).

### **Our Common Goals**

The four churches offer contrasting styles of worship, but have the common goals;

to see the church grow

to become more engaged with children and families

to connect more effectively with the wider community

### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding practices, procedures, and policies have all been under review since Autumn 2024. The Plurality is fully committed to being a 'safe place' where all can worship and find fellowship in a welcoming and nurturing place.

During 2025 we will appoint a Plurality Safeguarding Officer who will work with the Parish Safeguarding Officers, and together they will form the Safeguarding Team who will work collaboratively and supportively across the Plurality.

(Please see the Safeguarding Report)

### **Children and Youth and Families**

In November 2024 we launched our 'kindness through chocolate' approach to Mission, which involved taking boxes of chocolates into local schools' staff rooms every half term. This was well received by staff and enabled us to develop our relationships with the schools of Wootton, Priory, and Queensgate. By demonstrating our value and appreciation of what the school staff do for the children of our community, we have been invited by all three schools to take assemblies and to teach some RE lessons from Spring 2025.

(please also see the reports on Children/Youth ministry)

## **Worship and Services**

Circumstance and previous diary commitments, prevented us from developing new opportunities for whole Plurality worship in 2024, so we will be seeking to develop this in 2025.

By way of encouraging an element of unity in Worship, all member churches introduced the Church of England's 'Common Worship : Holy Communion Order One' booklet.

Officiating clergy have the freedom to select which version of the Eucharistic prayer of consecration that they use (there are 8 to choose from), as we strive to achieve a mixture of commonality and contrast.

We increased the frequency of Sunday Holy Communion (HC) services at St James and St Mildred's and trialled mid-week Holy Communion services in St James and St Mildred's. The weekly HC service at St James quickly established itself and has 12 regular worshippers. Mid-week HC at St Mildred's, however, was less successful and was suspended after Christmas 2024. The midweek HC services at St Edmunds and St Mark's remain well attended.

Christmas services across the Plurality were well attended by regular worshippers and visitors, and all commented on the welcoming atmosphere of the churches. This is down to hard working Wardens, PCCs, church officers, and numerous volunteers, who give so much of their time for the benefit of all. Without their huge commitment, our churches wouldn't be where they are today – so a HUGE thankyou to them all!!

## **Occasional Offices**

All 3 Parishes have bookings for weddings in 2025, and two of the three parishes have taken enquiries for Baptisms in 2025 too.

## **2025 and the Way Ahead**

2025 looks like being another busy year for all our Parishes.

However, growth and revival will only come when we seek the Lord's way to do this and partner with Him in what He is doing in our area. So as we turn deeper into 2025, let's commit ourselves to deepen our prayer life and seeking Him in all we think to do.

For if we do it His way, we will not fail!

*Revd Sandra Matthews (Rector)*