

“Hello St. Paul’s with St. Mary’s”

Alison and I are beginning to let it sink in that, after more than fourteen years, it is time for us to be moving to pastures new and to come and join you at St. Paul’s with St. Mary’s. I’m chilling with coffee, recovering from the interview process. Meanwhile Alison...



Charlotte and Chris thought you might like to know a little about us but before that I want to thank them, Paul, and all the others involved for the ways in which they have interacted with us and encouraged us throughout the interview process. It was quite intense but whenever I reflect on how tired it made me feel, I quickly remember that they all went through it twice! So thank you to them, and a special mention to the PCC for a lovely online Zoom social which made us feel so welcome and excited, as we began to hope that we would be coming to join you. So a little about us. I’ll go first and then my wife,



Alison, can add in all the bits I missed out!

My background is that I’m a former scientist, having worked for eleven years in natural rubber research running an electron microscopy laboratory before answering the call to ordained ministry. Alison and I met in 1988, (I was her drummer in a heavy rock/metal band), and we married the following year in a whirlwind romance. I trained for three years at Ridley Hall in Cambridge, getting an MA in Pastoral Theology and then did four years as a curate at St. Andrew’s in Bedford before moving to my post of Tanworth in Arden, a rural outpost of Birmingham diocese.

Clergy tend to have an unusual mixture of interests across their parish, theological and personal lives, so in the parish I have loved being creative with how we worship by developing new services that attract different groups of people while maintaining a strong focus on preaching, teaching, writing and leading or participating in small groups. My own theological interests encompass the conversations taking place between science and Christianity, and developing an understanding of new religious movements and their growth. Music plays a big part in my switch-off time, and Alison and I still play in a band together.

Both of us are originally from the North (of) London area so in many ways it feels for us as if coming to you feels like coming home. It certainly puts us much closer to our family and friends. And between now and when we join you, please feel free to look up what we’re doing from the www.tanworthchurch.co.uk page, just so long as you don’t skip any of your own services! Now over to Alison...

Alison writes:

As the bearded-one has said, we met through music, releasing our first album with our band in 1996 which has led on to other recording projects over the years. I am privileged to make a living from music (Before Covid came along!) and my main line of work is as a wedding harpist and singer trading under the name "Aelvenharp Weddings", which I am looking forward to growing in a new region once we are "back to normal", whatever that is!

My background is in drama, theatre, dance, as well as music, although up till Paul went into training I worked in the Harrow branch of Scripture Union/Wesley Owen Bookshop, which partly explains why we have ended up with rather a lot of books. I also managed to



The two of us co-leading a seminar at Greenbelt

squeeze in an MA in Christian Spirituality from Heythrop College in London when Paul was serving his curacy in Bedford.



Paul 'helping' Alison at a Wedding Fair

It was in Bedford that I started the young women's choir, nChant, and we went on to release an album, perform at various churches around the diocese including St Alban's Abbey, and also becoming a regular feature at the Greenbelt Christian Music and Arts Festival. Paul & I have been involved with Greenbelt all our married life. We have run venues, performed, led workshops and worship events. In more recent years we have been part of the vision bearers for Forest Church, a loose network of people seeking to engage spiritually with the presence

of the Holy Spirit revealed in the natural world.

I am really looking forward to becoming a part of life in Wooburn and especially offering what I can to work alongside the other musicians, which I know Paul is keen on doing too. We can't wait to get to know you all.

So this is a little of our story so far, and we look forward to hearing your stories. The leading of God into rural ministry in Tanworth has meant that we have seen the Holy Spirit at work in ways that we had not imagined, and grown in unexpected ways. As that chapter now draws to a close we look forward to what new exciting things await in the next chapter of the lives we will share as we move to be with you in your community at Wooburn Green. We hope you have a good Christmas, despite the restrictions, and may the peace of the Lord be with you.