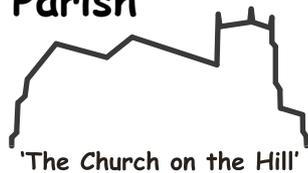


Mottram Parish



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5th May, 2019

I will be leaving my post as Vicar of Mottram this coming Summer and as a family we'll be moving out of the area. There will be much to say in the coming weeks, but for now I want to mention three things.

Why are we going?

Simply put, we're going because Holly and I have both very clearly heard the Lord calling us on from here.

Some of you will remember that, when we first arrived, we expected that we were here for a 'long time'. 7-8 years is not a short time, but this is not as long as we had anticipated. We have made our life here, the Vicarage is the only home our girls remember and we genuinely did not expect to be leaving now.

But this is our daily task, as Christians, isn't it - to go where the Lord calls us? Most often that might be into a particular conversation, or to serve somebody in a particular way, or to love another person. For us, at this time, it feels rather larger - it's a call to move house, for the girls to find a new school, for both Holly and I to work elsewhere. But we do it because the Lord who has called us is faithful and we can trust Him whatever changes His call involves.

Where are we going?

We will be moving to the Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham, where I have been invited to join the Bishop's senior team as 'Principal of the School of Discipleship'. That's an unusual title, but the role will involve preaching and teaching across the Diocese, supporting and resourcing churches and lay people in a whole variety of contexts - on Sundays, for church weekends away, leading the training for people preparing for licensed ministries (such as Readers) and so on.

It's a genuinely exciting role, which I think will build well on my experience so far. On top of the past decade in parish ministry, you will know I've had a substantial teaching ministry - both at St Mellitus College (training future vicars) but also here in parish as we've run the Dig In programme amongst other things.

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What about Mottram?

I feel a genuine confidence for the future of Mottram Parish - and that's for two reasons.

First, there are so many encouragements in the ministry here. Not only over the whole span of our time with you, but very particularly in recent months. It will break our hearts a little to leave, but we will do so knowing we're leaving a church in good health and with much opportunity ahead.

Second, because if we believe we're called away from here, then we do certainly trust the Lord has the next chapter in Mottram firmly in his hands. If He knows where *we* are going, He knows what will be happening here too - and that's truly the real cause for confidence.

I will officially be Vicar until 31st August though in practice my final Sunday is likely to be at the end of July. I'll continue with one or two duties during August, but that'll really be the month in which we take some holiday and move home.

Please do pray for us as a family - there's much to process, to do and organise. But please do also know that we, as a family, are much in prayer for the parish in these times too.

With love in Christ,

James Halstead