Rector' Report – November 2026

Where are we now?

Having begun my ministry as your Rector just a couple of months ago, my priority has been to give time to getting to know people, meeting with teams and individuals, and beginning to understand the life, context and character of this church. I have also spent time reading and reflecting on the notes from our PCC away day. These conversations and reflections are helping to shape my understanding of where we are and where God might be leading us.

My initial observations are that there is much to celebrate. The people of this church seek to encounter God and are committed to building a loving and inclusive community. Relationships with God and with one another lie at the heart of all that happens here. I continue to be in awe, of the generosity with which so many people give their time, energy and gifts in service of the church and its wider community.

Worship and the life of the church

In our worship, the ministry teams, vergers, serving team and organists have gone out of their way to welcome me and help me settle into this new role. I am grateful for their flexibility and generosity as we have navigated some of the nuances and differences in the way worship is now being led. The Eucharist remains at the heart of our worship, and since September we have shared in festivals and special services together.

We remembered God's provision and celebrated the Harvest through a supper and our inaugural beetle drive, followed by a shared breakfast and family service. Alongside the celebrations, we collected donations for the local foodbank.

We held a service for those who mourn the loss of a child, joining in solidarity with the national Wave of Light. The introduction of this service opened up some deeply moving pastoral conversations, reminding us of the importance of creating space for grief, remembrance and hope.

For All Saints' Day, we celebrated High Mass, incorporating incense and plainchant. It was a wonderful expression of our church tradition, bringing together charismatic and Anglo-Catholic strands.

Remembrance Sunday saw young children and their families bring handmade wreaths to church for the Village Act of Remembrance. Later that afternoon, the church was once again filled with young people from our uniformed organisations, in a service that was wonderfully organised and supported.

A church at the heart of its community

It is encouraging to see that Holy Trinity continues to be regarded by the wider community as their church, particularly at significant moments in life. Since September, we have celebrated several baptisms and an interment of ashes, and we are delighted that a local couple have booked their wedding for next year.

Our church site, so wonderfully maintained by the buildings and grounds teams, offers considerable opportunities for outreach and engagement with the local community. Making the most of this space often involves moving benches and tables and reconfiguring the church furniture to accommodate different activities! These practical acts of service are another reminder of the many people whose often unseen contributions make so much possible.

The Autumn Fair was a particularly wonderful example of the church community coming together in service of the wider community. It brought together people across the church, alongside local charities, to raise funds and strengthen connections. It was a whole church effort and a real celebration of what we can achieve together.

We are also delighted that our Families Worker has received national recognition for her work establishing Make Lunch, which offers practical support and hope to families in our parish who are in need. Groups supporting families, children and young people continue to flourish, as highlighted in the Families Report. Harvest Craft and Praise is a particular example of the smaller communities that develop within the wider church family, each offering a place of belonging, friendship and faith.

Beyond our regular church activities, it is encouraging to see church members being a visible presence at other community events and activities. Initiatives like the table tennis club and Men's Breakfast are spaces where relationships develop and create opportunities to ask questions about faith.

I see a church with a strong sense of community, a generous spirit and a genuine desire to serve. There is much already happening here, and much for which we should give thanks.

Where do we want to go?

Consolidation and Hope

Alongside celebrating all that is already happening, we have established this is time for consolidation: taking stock, strengthening what we have, and allowing ourselves time to discern our next steps. We do not need to rush but need to be attentive to what God is already doing among us and where we are being called to join in.

One theme that is increasingly emerging in my reflections is **hope**.

I am continuing to reflect on what it means for Holy Trinity to increasingly become and recognised as a beacon of hope within our local community. At a time when many people face challenges in their lives, the church has an important role to play. We are called to offer a place of hope, rooted in the promises of Christ, where God can be encountered and where belonging and care can be found.

As this vision takes shape, I see four important pillars that will underpin our life and ministry together going forward:

Worship – creating opportunities for encounter and to be built up through the Eucharist.

Prayer – deepening our life of prayer, individually and collectively, and placing our community and our mission at the heart of our conversations with God.

Pastoral care – continuing to be a compassionate, welcoming and inclusive community.

Discipleship – encouraging one another to grow in faith, discover our gifts and live out our calling as followers of Jesus every day.

These four pillars are not separate, but interconnected expressions of the reason for the hope that is in us and what it means to be church. Together, I hope we can form a strategy through which we can strengthen our faithful community and communicate this message to the wider community.

What are our next steps?

There are already some opportunities emerging for us to put this vision into practice.

Later this week, we will be screening *The People's Emergency* film, which sets out starkly the impact of the climate and nature crisis. As a church situated at the heart of our local community, we have an opportunity and a responsibility to respond. We need to consider how we can take action, and work in partnership with other local organisations.

Christmas will provide another significant opportunity to connect with people across our community, including many who may not attend church and this year, I want **hope** to be at the heart of our Christmas message, drawing on Romans 15:13: *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."*

My prayer is that we will be able to share the promise of a God who offers hope, even in uncertainty and that this message will not simply be heard at Christmas, but something people experience through the love they always encounter at Holy Trinity.

As I continue to get to know this church and discern the way ahead, I am conscious that there is much to give thanks for, and much potential still to explore. I want us to take time to listen to God, to one another and to our community. If we can hold together worship, prayer, pastoral care and discipleship, I believe we can continue to grow as a church that offers a beacon of hope to all those around us.

Thank you for the warmth with which you have welcomed me, for all that you already give, and I look forward to this next chapter of our life together.