



An important announcement from Rev'd James Hutchings
Barnes Team Rector & Vicar of St Mary's, Barnes

I am writing, with great sadness, to let you know I have decided to resign as Rector and retire (early) from stipendiary ministry. My final Sunday as incumbent will be Sunday 7th July 2024.

As many of you are aware, my wife Alice was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease soon after we moved to Barnes in 2019. This meant gradual adjustments to my ministry and our home life, and I am very grateful for the love and support which the parish have given to enable this to happen. However, Alice's condition is now at a point where I cannot satisfactorily combine my ministry with the time we need together. I first agreed this with the diocese before Christmas, and more recently with the churchwardens, clergy & readers. I delayed this announcement until now, to avoid it being a distraction during Lent and from the celebration of Easter.

Alice and I hope to move by the early autumn, to Teddington, although we can continue to live in the rectory for up to 6 months after July. I hope to help with taking some Sunday services after ceasing as incumbent and before moving, but will not have any other involvement in the parish.

The impending vacancy inevitably causes extra work for others, particularly Churchwardens and other clergy. I hope to do everything possible over the next three months to reduce this impact, and enable the PCC and diocese to plan ahead for recruiting my successor. Information about this will be decided and publicised in due course, but the process does take time and so a new Team Rector will not start until some months into 2025, at best. However, I am confident that St Mary's will manage well, led by the Churchwardens team and PCC, together with Revd James Marston and other ministerial colleagues in the parish, team ministry and deanery. I know the Archdeacon and others in the diocese will be active in helping the parish too.

It has been an immense privilege to serve you over the past five years. Barnes really is a special place to live! St Mary's is a wonderful parish in which to seek to proclaim the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ. It has been inspiring to see the Holy Spirit at work in so many different ways in the church and wider community. I will have the opportunity to reflect more on this, and look forward to thanking so many people who have been partners in my ministry, and given so much support to Alice, me and our family.

Leaving a role, parish and team which I have found so fulfilling will be hard. I have wrestled and prayed about this decision for some time. However, I am clear that this is the right time for Alice and me to make the most of life together.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13:13)

And with all best wishes,

Rev'd James Hutchings, Barnes Team Rector & Vicar of St Mary's, Barnes