

The Virger



*Summer 2019
Issue 303*





FROM THE EDITOR



Welcome to the Summer 2019 edition of The Virger. This is the last edition with me at the helm. I have decided to step down owing to poor health. It has been a privilege to have served the Guild as the Communications Officer over these last 5 years. Items for inclusion in the next edition should be submitted by the Deadline Date below.

Saturday 24 August 2019

How should you do this....Submissions for all editions of The Virger should reach me before the set deadline. If they miss this date, they may be held over to the next edition. All articles should be sent in MS Word files only and photographs in JPEG format. Please attach text and image files separately in one email.

If you have events being planned, please submit them as early as possible for inclusion so we can advertise all Guild and Branch events as widely as possible. In the interim period, please send all articles directly to:

John Kirby-Shearer
email CEGVNatChair@gmail.com

Please note that in order to protect personal data, personal email addresses in this online version have been adjusted to that of Guild email addresses.



SAVE THE DATE—CANTUAR FESTIVAL 2019



**Leicester and Peterborough with Derby Branch Committee
extend a very warm welcome to you all to attend this Festival
which is being held on**

Thursday 19 September

at the Cathedral Church of Saint Martin, Leicester

Easy access by Train/Motorway M1 - Junction 21

**Accommodation will be available at the New Diocesan Hotel -
Saint Martins Lodge, Cathedral Gardens, offering 28 rooms;
other Hotels/Lodges within 5 minutes walk of the Cathedral**

Visits/Tours to include:

**The Richard III Story and Exhibition Centre,
the Kings Tomb and stunning windows by Tom Denny in the Cathedral
The Church of Saint Mary de Castro, where Geoffrey Chaucer was married
The Church of Saint Nicolas, the oldest Church in the City**

**Join us on Wednesday 18th at 7 p.m. Compline in Saint Nicholas Church
Stay over on Friday 20th for a tour of Taylors Bell Foundry in Loughborough,
if enough people are interested**

The views and opinions expressed in the articles and letters in this edition of The Virger should be taken as those of the author unless it is specifically indicated that the Central Council of the Church of England Guild of Vergers has given its endorsement.

The Central Council of the said Guild accepts no responsibility for the accuracy or otherwise of statements, or for any offence caused by any of the articles or letters published herein.



FROM THE DESK OF THE NATIONAL CHAIRMAN



I am writing this quarter's round-up sitting in my garden bathed in brilliant sunshine in Edinburgh. Who would have thought that such good weather would grace the Scottish capital city. One of the main reasons for moving up here was to get away from the heat of the English Capital. However, it does give me a short window in the year to sit and read.

It is hard to believe that we are heading rapidly into the summer months. When we think of holidays, and those who work in terms, we are half way through the summer term and children are gearing up for exam season and then summer holidays. For vergers, it means more tourists to our churches and Cathedrals, and concerts along with garden parties. For some, there is just no let up. It is also a busy time as we prepare for our annual Training Conference at West Malvern. If you have not booked, please do, Margaret Burston would be delighted to hear from you and booking forms will be available on our website.



If you do get some free time and you are north of the Watford Gap, I can recommend a visit to Lindisfarne and the burial place of St Cuthbert. I had the joy of making a second visit in April this year. It was a grey and very windy day, but the views were breathtaking. It is a special place that never fails to be inspirational and calming. It is part of the Northumberland coast line that will always hold a special place with me ever since my first holiday there in 2014. This area was also the first Festival Lite that the Guild held covering Berwick, Bamburgh and Alnwick.



John Kirby-Shearer



FROM THE DESK OF THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN



Dear Friends,

Jesus said, 'You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.'

As I write this letter to you I am just about to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of my priesthood (I hope very much to be able to celebrate with many of you at Conference!). Anniversaries and events such as Confirmations and Ordinations are not just special days for the people concerned, although of course, they are that, but such occasions raise the awareness of our own vocations and ways in which we are called to serve our Lord Jesus. We are all called to be saints: to be those people who are like stained-glass windows that the light shines through brightly; people who are known by their compassion, their kindness and their love. It is a tremendous responsibility to be 'called' for we are the outward 'face of Christ' to the world. It pays us to read through the promises made at our Baptism and Confirmation from time to time, to remind ourselves just what we promised and to assess within our own lives just how we have been keeping those promises. Many of us renew baptismal vows during the period of Easter, and for the clergy there is the moving service on Maundy Thursday when we renew ordination vows and aim to make a fresh start in fulfilling the vocation that we have. I invite you to use the period of the beginning of Trinity to refresh your understanding of your vocation – whatever that might be, and perhaps to look for new ways in which this calling might be realized.

I have been re-reading the slim volume called 'The Didache' which was written in the late first century. It gives a clear message that Christian identity is always a claim to 'citizenship' that is much deeper than anything that human society can provide. Christian will always live 'at the margins' of society because they will recognize the final and unsurpassable authority of the dying and risen Lord Jesus. He, they insist, is the only one who has the authority and the power to show us what is true, and good and real (authentic) within our universe. Whatever happens within the Church or within the world, nothing can make Christ less real, less loving or less authentic and this is very re-assuring in a Church and a world of turmoil, controversy and uncertainty. We are fortunate that we can worship in freedom and peace; unlike some of our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world, where to confess the faith is a matter of life and death.

I pray that you will rejoice in the Resurrection and 'keep the Feast' and that you will have a Spirit-filled Pentecost, and will be ready to serve Christ in new and exciting ways as you think about your several vocations.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at the Training Conference in August.

With every blessing and my love,

Canon Maureen



PRAYER REQUESTS



If you know of someone for whom prayers would be of benefit, or someone who has been prayed for and has recovered or shown improvement, please inform the **National Chaplain** or the **National Welfare Officer**.

Our prayers are asked for:

*Blackburn, Chester & Manchester: **Tony Hales, Freda Murphy, Patricia Platt and Margaret Scott***

*Gloucester, Hereford & Worcester: **Stephen Guy***

*East Anglia: **Marjorie Wakeling and Val Pizzey***

*Oxford: **Gerry Knight, Molly Payne and Bill & June Pearce***

*Saint Albans: **Peter Hudson***

*Somerset & Avon: **Marek Barden, Pat Dawes, Lionel & Mary Holway, Trevor Llewellyn and Joy Stevens***

*York: **George & Doreen Cook***

And everyone not specifically mentioned who need love, counsel and the grace of our Lord.



FROM THE DESK OF THE GUILD CHRONICLER



For the first time a Catholic cathedral has appointed women as stewards. Cologne Cathedral is one of Germany's most visited landmarks and the tens of thousands of daily visitors will now see a sight unprecedented in a German Catholic cathedral: four women serving as supervisory stewards, or what's called a "Domschweizer."

'We are not aware of any other cathedrals that have female supervisory stewards', Cologne Cathedral spokesperson Markus Frädriich said.

Throughout history the position of cathedral supervisory steward has been filled by men. Such staff traditionally came from the Alps — hence the name "Domschweizer," which unites the German words for cathedral and a man of Swiss nationality. The name's origin dates back to the 17th & 18th centuries, when former soldiers from Switzerland went abroad to work at courts as security forces or security guards. They were considered particularly reliable. The name has stuck with the supervisory stewards of cathedrals through the present.

Today the job is not as much about safeguarding the Cathedrals as it is about making sure that everything is in order. The stewards are responsible for locking and unlocking the doors in the mornings and the evenings. They ring the bells, fill up the collections and discard burnt out candles. If necessary, they also have to reject uninvited guests. However, if it actually comes to a situation that threatens to get out of hand, an on-site security service steps in.

The new cathedral stewards, Claudia Drolshagen, Andrea Petzenhauser, Hedi Michels and Susanne Rückes, were all beaming as they presented themselves on Tuesday to the photographers in front of the medieval cathedral, wearing floor-length red robes studded with black velvet.



For the Dean of the Cathedral, Gerd Bachner, the female supervisory stewards stand first and foremost for a "welcome culture" in the cathedral and thus are an "enrichment" to the team. The remaining 26 cathedral stewards are men.

Bachner wanted to send a positive message with the new selection — that the public face of the church is also female. "A day of joy," the Dean proclaimed, "a historic day!"

The supervisory stewards are supposed to ensure peace and quite in the Cathedral, and the four new recruits have experience in that from their previous jobs. Drolshagen, for example, is a trained geriatric nurse: "The Cathedral fascinated me as a child," the 55-year-old said. Petzenhauser, at 35 the youngest in the quartet, comes from the southern state of Bavaria and is a business lawyer and translator: "For me, the Cathedral is the symbol of my new home!" she said. The four were selected from a total of 250 applications.

Article was published in "Deutsche Welle" – May 2019.

James Armstrong
Guild Chronicler



CENTRAL COUNCIL ROUND-UP



As part of improving our communication, this section of the magazine will be used to give a round up of what was discussed at Central Council which was held in Birmingham in March. As you should all be aware by now, there has been much discussion around the restructuring of the way the Guild is managed. As outlined in a letter from the Chairman, branches are not changing, nor will be majorly affected. However, the post of Area Leader is changing and the numbers being reduced. They will become Regional Representatives and will look after an area with four branches in each area. In this age of modern communication, it is now possible for communication to be quicker, easier and cheaper than travel. The restructure paper was widely discussed and circulated to Fellows and members and had seven revisions. It was presented to Central Council who adopted it and its next outing will be at the AGM for formal adoption.

As a result of the restructure of the management, it also meant that the constitution would also need updating. It was decided that a pared-down constitution would be adopted, to avoid further revisions being required in the future, but that there would be a series of Standing Orders written that could be changed when and if necessary by the new Executive Group.

The magazine was discussed and plans are afoot to give it a much needed revamp. It is the shop window of what we do as a Guild and should reflect this. We are looking for lively articles and details of forthcoming events rather than retrospective items. It is hoped there will be a diary section, so that the whole Guild is aware of things happening around the country in other Branches.

A full Festival at Leicester Cathedral is also organised for September 2019. Full details will be found elsewhere in the magazine. September 2020 will be the focus of the Canterbury Province Festival, so keep an eye on details that will follow soon.

The search is currently underway for a new Chaplain as Canon Maureen Palmer is stepping down in August 2020.

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FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS



At this years Annual Training Conference, the Central Council will be meeting and during this time we will be looking at the forthcoming roles and to seek, with your approval, to fill these. These candidates are then presented to the AGM for you to appoint.

Please remember that this is **Your** Annual General Meeting and, especially this year, we have major changes to vote on such as the restructuring (that you would have already been notified about by the General Secretary) and **your voice** is important.

The Central Council is inviting members to consider themselves for the for the following positions:

Training Registrar

This is a three-year role, to look after the students on the diploma course. Some of the jobs include:

- to enrol new students onto the Diploma Course
- to send and receive student's course work
- to send this course work to the relevant accessors
- to communicate with the students with their results
- to keep records of which students are enrolled and their status
- to report to the Training Officer and the Training Committee.

Sue Ansell is willing to stand again for this role, however any person within the Guild is invited to contact the General Secretary.

Sue Ansell

I have been a Verger at St Nicolas Church, Cranleigh, Surrey since July 2000. I love being a Verger and since Joining the Guild in 2001 have met so many lovely people who have become friends. It is good to meet new faces at the Festivals and at conference.

I have been a widow for 19 years now. So my role as a Verger has filled a very big gap in my life. My two grown up sons live locally, which is good.

I have been your Training Registrar for nearly 6 years and have enjoyed the role. I always get a lump in my throat when I see Vergers being presented with their Foundation Units and Diplomas, as I feel we have gone on a journey together during the study time, I am hoping to carry on in the position if you are willing for me to do so.



Communications Officer

This is a three-year role, to look after the communications of the Guild. Some of the jobs include:

- to maintain the Facebook page
- to be the Editor of the Verger Magazine and liaise with the outside page setters, and printers.
- to contact Branches to ensure that copy for the Magazine is forthcoming
- to actively seek copy and advertisers
- to distribute the magazine to Branches
- to report to the Standing Committee

This role is due to be vacant from August 2019, and we are actively seeking any person to fill this role. For further information please contact the General Secretary.

The National Treasurer

This is a five-year role, with currently one year still remaining in the current term. Some of the jobs include:

- to ensure that all invoices are paid in a timely manner
- to pay all expenses as expediently as possible
- to receive all Branch Capitulations
- to actively ensure that the Guild's money works to the benefit of the Guild
- to deal with legacies left to the Guild
- to report to Central Council the state of the accounts
- to maintain a healthy available funds

This role is due to be vacant from August 2019, and we are actively seeking any person (from within or outside the Guild) to fill this role. For further information please contact the General Secretary.

For further information on any of these roles please contact the General Secretary CEGVGenSec@gmail.com



FOR YOUR DIARY

Members

You may be interested in events happening across the country hosted by local branches. Please ensure that you contact the local contact prior to attending in case details have changed, especially times or locations. While we are a local Branch-based organisation, we wish to remember that we are equally a National organisation. If your Branch wishes to have their events listed here please let us know.

15 June 2019

The Leicester and Peterborough with Derby Branch hold their summer outing to Lichfield Cathedral and invite members to join us at the 12.30pm Eucharist or at 5.30pm for Evening Prayer. Please contact CEGVGenSec@gmail.com, for further information.

19 June 2019, 10.00am

Chichester, Guildford and Portsmouth Branch will be visiting the Arundel to see the Corpus Christi Carpet of Flowers in Arundel Cathedral. We are meeting at St Nicholas Church at 10am for Communion and coffee, and are then free to explore the cathedral and town. Lunch at St Nicholas and finishing the day with Evening Prayer and watching the Corpus Christi procession from the Cathedral to the castle. For further information please contact CEGVGenSec@gmail.com

24 June 2019, 10.00am

Salisbury Branch will be visiting the Royal Naval Air Station in Yeovilton, Somerset. We will be visiting the Chaplaincy, having a windscreen tour of the Air Station and having Evensong in the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Church, where Canon Maureen will admit our new members and Branch Chaplain. Members of other branches are very welcome to join us. If you have not yet been admitted to the Guild, you are invited to be admitted during the service. If you would like to join us, please contact CEGVGenSec@gmail.com for further details. We look forward to seeing you.

6 July 2019, 3.30pm

Blackburn, Chester and Manchester Branch have a Choral Evensong at Christ Church, Timperley, Altrincham. Our Chaplain is preaching and the service is being led by the vicar, The Rev'd Jim Bridgman. The choir is Cantores Oecumenica led by our organist, Neil Provost. Vergers are invited to Robe.

We will be meeting for lunch prior to the Service. I need to know numbers by the **21 June** at the latest.

Anyone wishing to come should contact CEGVGenSec@gmail.com for full details.

This is a big day for the Branch and we would be delighted if any other Vergers wish to join us, but they must know by the 21 June if you intend to join them for Lunch.

22 July 2019, 7.30pm

The Leicester and Peterborough with Derby Branch will be meeting at St Kyneburgha Castor, Peterborough, PE5 7AX for a Eucharist and meeting. St Kyneburgha's is a grade1 listed church. It is one of the top 10 of 100 churches in England dated around the 4th Century with Roman, Saxon and Norman stonework. We invite interested members and Church Crawlers join us. We hope to admit a new member from Peterborough during the Eucharist. As refreshments will be provided please email CEGVGenSec@gmail.com if you hope to join them.



FOR YOUR DIARY *cont...*

Monday 12 – Thursday 15 August 2019

Annual Training Conference Elim Conference Centre, West Malvern. Anyone wishing to come should contact Margaret Burston on CEGVConference@gmail.com

Wednesday 18 & Thursday 19 September 2019

Leicester and Peterborough with Derby Branch have offered Leicester Cathedral as a venue for a Full Festival. Further details can be obtained from CEGVGenSec@gmail.com

Monday 10 – Thursday 13 August 2020

Annual Training Conference Elim Conference Centre, West Malvern. Anyone wishing to come should contact Margaret Burston on CEGVConference@gmail.com

Wednesday 16 September 2020

East Anglia Branch have offered St Edmundsbury Cathedral as a venue for a Festival Lite. More details will be forthcoming in the near future.

Monday 9 – Thursday 12 August 2021 *tbc*

Annual Training Conference Elim Conference Centre, West Malvern. Anyone wishing to come should contact Margaret Burston on CEGVConference@gmail.com

If your Branch has any events that you wish to have advertised on this page please contact the Communications Officer
CEGVCommsOff@gmail.com



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ADVENTURE INTO PRAYER – TRY USING POETRY



Prayer and poetry belong together. Both rely on patience to listen and ponder; both rely on words to express the inexpressible; both require our full attention. I have divided this talk into two parts: first, the poems which speak of our own faith as individuals and our response to God our creator, sustainer and lover, and second, poems relating to the life, death and resurrection of our Lord.

In the poem called 'Disclosure' by Ann Lewin, an Anglican priest, likens prayer to a kingfisher. It is a bird so hard to see—you wait and wait and seemingly nothing happens until there is a flash of iridescent blue—so ephemeral that you hardly believe that you have seen it. Yet after all the waiting, it passes in a flash and you wish you had had the opportunity to study the bird and its colour more carefully. The God-flash in prayer comes and even though you have that moment of understanding, you long for the next experience.

*But sometimes, when you've almost
Stopped expecting it,
A flash of brightness
Gives encouragement. [1]*

I think all poets struggle to find their own unique voice which expresses their inmost feelings and what they wish to communicate. In a similar way, God has a unique voice to communicate with us which will stir us to listen and respond. From the Reformation through the Puritan age, poetry was considered a decadent form of art. It was the language of erotica and idolatry and it belonged to the bedroom and the [forbidden] stage. Poetry was certainly not for theologians or devout Christians. Yet there was a precedent for we have the Old Testament heritage of the Psalms and the love poem, 'The Song of Songs.' The Psalms are the 'News of the World' writings for 'all human life is here'. The 'Song of Songs', which was highly regarded in mediaeval times and indeed until the 15th Century, when it fell from favour as being erotic and unseemly. Bernard of Clairvaux was so entranced by the images within the Song of Songs—that of Christ the lover, and his bride, the Church, that he wrote some 86 Sermons on this short book for his brother monks. However, whatever Christian stamp we put on the poem, we cannot forget that the 'Song of Songs' is in fact a love poem: a dialogue between a lover and his beloved.

Most of the Puritans did not find poetry helpful to prayer or to their understanding of the Scriptures—perhaps the exception is George Herbert who tried to suggest that prayer was the poetry for everyday. These are two verses from 'Matins':

*I cannot open mine eyes,
But thou art ready there to catch
My morning soul and sacrifice:
Then we must needs for that day make a match.*

*Teach me thy love to know,
That this new light, which now I see,
May both the work and workman show:
That by a sun-beam I will climb to thee. [2]*

I am sure that many of us can identify with his sentiments in the poem 'Matins': the reluctance to open our eyes to greet the new day; the reluctance to go to church. The poem suggests that God has nothing to do but to listen and respond to our prayers! Herbert, unlike some of his contemporaries, did not apologize for his work but rather, he put into words, and memorable words, the foibles and difficulties that he experienced in his prayer.

R.S. Thomas, who died in 2000, wrote this poem 'Alive' to express the glory of God and his creation in his prayer. He writes 'I listen and it is you speaking' and 'The darkness is the deepening shadow of your presence ...'

*The darkness
is the deepening shadow
of your presence; the silence a
process in the metabolism
of the being in love. [3]*



ADVENTURE INTO PRAYER – TRY USING POETRY *cont...*



R.S. Thomas speaks of the 'metabolism of love', the care and concern for everything created, indicating that prayer not only brings us into communication with God, but into a deeper understanding of ourselves.

God moulds us into the people of his kingdom, sometimes by hammer blows and sometimes by gentle strokes, such that we become his 'work of art' able and ready to become disciples for the kingdom. Having formed us for himself, Philip Larkin sees courage and love as drawing around a person. He does not mention prayer and yet the whole poem speaks of the 'nothing we have to give' and the word of love that comes with the spring.

*Was I so scant of these
That, for a word of love
Said among the lengthening days,
I have nothing to give?* [4]

We do not normally think of Michelangelo as a poet: he is the artist who painted the Sistine Chapel in Rome, the Virgin on the Rocks and countless sculptures, such as the 'Pieta' in St Peter's Rome, and other prayer evoking masterpieces. However, he left us a portfolio of poetry including this sonnet on love 'To Tommaso dei Cavalieri'. It could equally have been written as a prayer to God.

*Just as the moon owes its illumination
To the sun's light, so I am blind until
To every part of heaven your rays will reach.* [5]

Michelangelo is inspired by love and feels that through it he is enabled to do great things: he sees glorious light with the eyes of the beloved; he wings to heaven on love; on the breath of the beloved his own lips find speech and he is illuminated by love. I guess too, that his paintings and sculpture were inspired by the same degree of love that he expresses in the poem. I believe that this was the experience of the disciples, if only fleetingly, at the Transfiguration and more lastingly at the Resurrection, when their prayer was amazingly focussed of Christ alone.

As we read these poems we see the marvellous height, depth and breadth of prayer and in so doing the 'holiness' expressed by the poems is drawn into our own life of prayer – it is an expression of divinity.

Why does it work?

- Both prayer and poetry make connections between our inner life, our spirit and imagination with the outer world of sensory experience with the mundane every-day.
- Poetry helps us to explore the capacity of our soul. Often poetry does this more effectively for us than our own rambling prayer. It enlarges the soul's 'centre' or 'circumference' so that we are restored and healed in a way that prayer alone cannot do.
- Both prayer and poetry take us into the depths of ourselves and impart a sense of expectancy, of quiet and of rhythm.
- Both prayer and poetry impart a desire, indeed a demand for the truth, but this is often a rather uncomfortable medium for us to ponder. Words speak to us because the stark is hard to tell and we have to face it head-on rather than sentimentalize it.

Canon Maureen

Poems quoted: [1] 'Disclosure' Ann Lewin 'Watching for the Kingfisher'. 2009
[2] 'Mattens' George Herbert 'The English Poems of George Herbert'. 1974
[3] 'Alive' R.S. Thomas 'Laboratories of the Spirit'. 1975
[4] 'Draw close around you.' Philip Larkin (1945) 'Early Poems and Juvenilia'.
[5] 'To Tommaso dei Cavalieri' Michelangelo 'The Sonnets of Michelangelo' 1961.



FANCY A QUIET DAY?



Situated close to the Cotswold Escarpment and a mile or so from the village of Broadway in the Vale of Evesham lies a hidden gem. The House of the Open Door is an ecumenical Christian retreat centre located in a beautiful 17th century complex on the edge of the village of Childswickham. It is to this retreat centre that members of the Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester branch “retreated” for a Quiet Day at the end of April.

For many vergers the end of Lent and Easter can be a gruelling time with a seemingly exponential increase in workload until finally Easter Sunday is upon us. I have often observed the similarity between verging at this time of year and a hamster madly racing round its wheel. It therefore with relief that those who are able, head off for the Annual Branch Quiet Day, well

away from the demands of work and ready for physical rest and spiritual sustenance.

This year the **Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester Branch** continued with our well tried format. Arrival 10.00am to 10.30am followed by the first address by the lead, circa. 20 minutes – quiet time/reflection 11.00am to 12.00am – a noon service of Holy Communion followed by lunch. 2.00pm second address, again 20 minutes or so followed by quiet time/reflection. 3.15pm ish tea, coffee and biscuits, wrap up – thanks and farewells and then depart. The start and finish times are designed to accommodate those travelling distance.

Through the good efforts of our Treasurer, Robert Beattie, we were able to engage the Rev'd Canon Owain Bell, a retired clergyman, as lead for the day. Canon Owain's two addresses were both enjoyable and insightful – drawing on his own rich experience together with material from *From the Bottom of the Pond* by Simon Small – *The forgotten art of experiencing God in the depths of the present moment* and *The Little Office Book* by Angela Tilby on which our mid-day office was based. We learned about the tug of the next job, the incessant chatter of the mind, simply being, the importance of being able to receive as well as give; the rule of St Benedict and St Benedict's beautiful prayer:

O gracious and Holy Father,
give us wisdom to perceive thee,
intelligence to understand thee,
diligence to seek thee,
patience to wait for thee,
eyes to behold thee,
a heart to meditate upon thee, and
a life to proclaim thee; through
the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord

A Quiet Day provides that opportunity to stop, reflect and recharge. In computer terms a “hard reboot” comes to mind. Sharing worship, prayer, hospitality and fellowship with friends and colleagues is a great blessing. Sitting in silence and stilling the mind is a great joy. Immersing oneself in God's creation, listening to the babbling brook, watching the birds and insects darting to and fro and feeling the warmth of the sunshine on your face and then gradually coming back into the stream of everyday life re-energised. Who could ask for more from a Quiet Day?

Organising a Quiet Day need not be a burden – keep it simple; it doesn't have to involve a large number of people or be action packed. You can include friends and of course colleagues from other branches.

Key planning considerations are:

- Keep it simple.
- Choose the right person to lead – we always include a mid-day Eucharist so an ordained minister is a must. In each Diocese there are many retired clergy who would love to help out.
- Theme(s) of the day, format and timetable.
- Location, location, location - ideally a space for coming together but also opportunities for people to be on their own.
- On site catering.
- **Don't fill** the schedule with activity and liturgy – allow plenty of quiet/reflection time.
- Never underestimate how much a group of vergers, on retreat, can stretch out lunch time.
- Transport and car sharing – minimise travel costs by car sharing and maximise accessibility.
- Cost of the day - verging is a vocation – endeavour to keep the costs down.

Needless to say in our branch the Annual Quiet day has become quite a popular event. If you don't already have a one why not try it?

David Anwyl-Hughes
Branch Secretary



BRANCH DIGEST

YORK BRANCH

York Branch went on a summer tour in 2018 with two visits to places with connections to Saxon saints.

In July there was a visit to Ripon Cathedral (where part of St Wilfrid's Crypt still exists) where there was a tour of the Cathedral, Communion in the Chapel of the Resurrection, and lunch at the nearby Royal Oak pub.

In September there was a visit to Beverley Minster, where St John of Beverley had his shrine (the location of which is still marked in the nave floor). The day started at St Leonard Molescroft on the northern edge of the town before heading to the Minster for a tour, Communion, and the admission of Eleanor Robinson to the Guild. Lunch was taken at the nearby Monks Walk Inn where the late Neil Pickford (one-time Area Leader of the York Branch), had been landlord (his wife still runs the inn).

Two visits to York followed, one to end 2018, and one to begin 2019. The meeting at the end of November began at St Olave's Church with our branch AGM (moved from its usual January date due to the unpredictability of the weather!). This was well attended and officers from the previous year were re-elected to office. During the Communion, where we were blessed with Canon Maureen presiding and preaching on the theme of Christ the King (which had been celebrated the previous day). Canon Maureen also admitted a Mr Bodden, from Bradford, to the Guild. We then headed to the Dene Court Hotel where 32 of us, including Canon Maureen, had our Christmas lunch.

The latest meeting, in March, saw us return to York for a service and meeting at our usual AGM venue of St Michael le Belfrey. Numbers were down this time due to illness, but we were boosted by clergy and people from Hull Minster as Dave Allum was admitted to the Guild during the Communion Service. A smaller contingent went for lunch at Gusto, just off Stonegate, where the youngest member of the branch was admitted to the position of Branch Correspondent.

A short thank you to the vergers and people of the Cathedrals of Liverpool and Chester for an enjoyable two days at the Northern Province Festival earlier in May where a few members of York Branch were in attendance.



And finally, back to the youngest member of the branch... who, by the time this goes to print, will be hearing wedding bells!

Ben Elliott
Branch Correspondent



BRANCH DIGEST



LEICESTER AND PETERBOROUGH WITH DERBY BRANCH

Our year started with the branch AGM on 28 January. We are happy to report that all of the branch officers were returned to their respective offices and thanked for their service and dedication to the branch. Thanks were given to our secretary Kathryn Mobbs for arranging an interesting programme of meetings for 2019 across the three dioceses. A committee was formed under the leadership of Les Mitchelmore the Area Leader to arrange the September Cantuar Province Festival 2019. To be held at Leicester Cathedral on 19 September 2019. Details and booking forms as included in this copy of the Virger

On 25 March, 13 members and friends enjoyed our annual branch social, with lunch prepared by the church community at Saint Crispin's Braunstone Town Leicester.

We wish to share our congratulations to Peter and Beverley on their wedding. 271 family, friends and members of Leicester Cathedral community gathered to celebrate the wedding of two of the cathedral's vergers, Peter Collett former head verger and Beverley Farrand.



The Very Rev'd David Monteith, The Dean, presided with The Rt Rev'd Guli Francis-Dehqani, the Suffragan Bishop of Loughborough, preached and the former head server (now ordained) The Rev'd Clive Watts lead the intersessions. This was a real Cathedral family occasion as both Peter and Bev had been choristers before becoming vergers.

On 20 May, we held our Branch meeting at Derby Cathedral, for choral evensong followed by tea in the newly refurbished refectory 'The Sanctuary' gift shop and café. We then returned to the Cathedral for the Eucharist and branch meeting.



Cantuar Province Festival 2019 19 September, Leicester Cathedral

You will see in this copy a booking form for your next Festival, our festival team is ready and eager to receive your completed forms ASAP.

Leicester Cathedral, while not vast in size, has a lot to offer visitors. Combined with two other churches and the Richard III exhibition (all within 5 mins level walking of the cathedral) this offers a very enjoyable and memorable day. Come for the day or stay over in the cathedral's NEW St Martins Lodge Hotel offering 28 rooms opposite the cathedral gardens. These can be booked via CEGVGenSec@gmail.com for the conference special rate.

Have a good summer and we hope to see you in September.

Les Mitchelmore
Area Leader



BRANCH DIGEST

EAST ANGLIA BRANCH

Central Council graciously agreed to allow our Branch to change its name to more represent the Area that it serves, so before you think this is a new Branch, we were (in the past) known as the Ipswich Branch,

At our March Branch, held in the beautiful Parish Church of St Mary's in Linton, just on the outskirts of Cambridge, we enjoyed fellowship in worship lead by our Chaplains and a bring and share lunch. It was a great pleasure to welcome Robert, from Great St Mary's Church in Cambridge into our ranks. The reason why this Church is known as Great St Mary's (or St Mary the Great) is to distinguish it from the Church a short way down the road, known as Little St Mary's, and the Little/Great aspect is regarding the size of the Church.



Robert (pictured above (left photo) with Pam Cobb [Area Leader], Robert, and our Chaplains) was admitted by our Branch Chaplains The Rev'ds Alan & Catherine Forsdike.

Stephen Stokes

SALISBURY BRANCH

Friday 22 February 2019 was the centenary of when Army Chaplains became Royal Army Chaplains, an honour bestowed upon them by King George V on this date in 1919.

Maggie - our secretary - and I felt privileged to have been asked to accompany the padres from Tidworth Garrison on this special occasion. A service & reception was held at the Guards Chapel in Wellington Barracks, Westminster, in the company of her Majesty the Queen.

After a very moving service we all congregated in a marquee for wine and canapes. It was a great day even the sun joined us.

In the picture from left to right:
Padres Mark Henderson & Gary Birch, Christine, Leonie, Maggie and padres Stephen Pratt and Nick Adley.



Christine Ibberson
Branch Chairman



BRANCH DIGEST



OXFORD BRANCH

The Oxford Branch made the Spring visit to Douai Abbey on Tuesday 26 March, commencing with coffee and biscuits—of course!



Our new Chaplain, The Rev'd Marie Jackson, was inducted by the retiring Chaplain, The Rev'd Peter Viney after which we commenced our day by celebrating the Eucharist.

The Rev'd Marie's talk was a Lent Reflection on Repentance leading to Easter and the glorious Resurrection. She reminded us that, although Lent is 40 days and nights, it does not include Sunday—does this mean that our fasting can be broken and chocolate eaten? She did provide us with a selection of chocolate eggs and bunnies to enjoy.

We all have a variety of different challenges in our lives, physical and

mental, which are a part of life and cannot be ignored, and although we don't enjoy negative things, we must embrace them. Can we embrace our problems and act positively? We were encouraged to read from 2 Timothy 1 vv. 1–18 and understand that fellowship, such as we find in our church community, is hugely important to a healthy and well balanced life. A question to ponder, do challenges push us towards power or timidity?



After the morning session, we joined the Monks in the chapel for their midday service; although the Oratory had been badly damaged by the recent storm and all the lanterns had been blown out, we were still able to use the lovely building, after which we enjoyed a delicious lunch, followed by tea or coffee in the Courtyard in the sunshine.

Afternoon Session: *Mark 8 vv. 1-8* We read in this Gospel passage where Jesus feeds the five thousand. We should develop an Attitude of Gratitude. The Revd Marie suggested that, every day we write down all the things that have made us grateful that day. This can be a great encouragement when we look back at each day's entry.

We then had some time to reflect on The Rev'd Marie's teaching as we went out into the lovely grounds around the Abbey, before we ended our day with prayer and a safe journey home.

Our next visit will be to the Parish Church of St John the Baptist in Burford in June.

Heather Ringrose
Branch Correspondent



THE DIPLOMA COURSE



The Central Council of the Guild, at the recommendation of General Synod, formulated a course to cover the work and ministry of the Verger. The course is formulated in four units set in two stages:

The first stage is the **Foundation** Unit, which comprises sixteen assignments, covering preparation for worship, care of the building, record-keeping, and archives, care of the churchyard, and caring for the people of God.

The second stage comprises of the other three units:

- The Verger as **Pastor** covers the individual's personal development, their relationship with the people and God, care for others, and for Church resources.
- The Verger as **Historian** covers the history of church building, architecture, and the history of worship, including the Book of Common Prayer, and the Bible.
- The Verger as **Administrator** covers communication, forms and registers, and the structures of the Church.

Students who engage with the full four units are expected to attend at least one full CEGV Annual Training Conference prior to completion.

Those who complete the course successfully receive a diploma, an academic hood, and the right to use the post-nominal letters '**Dip GV**'.

If you are interested in learning more about the Course, please contact:

the **Training Registrar: Susan Ansell** CEGVTrainReg@gmail.com
or the **Training Officer: Robert Beattie** CEGVTrainOff@gmail.com.



MEET OUR NATIONAL LIFE MEMBERS...



National Life Member of the Guild – Peter Hudson

I became a Guild member back in 1986 having just been accepted for a full time Post of Verger–caretaker working 6 days a week at All Saints High Wycombe, But as there was no guild in Oxford Diocese I had to travel to St Albans branch, this was before the M25 came into Existence.

I was admitted to the Guild at St Marys Hitchin in May 1986 and in I eventually founded the Diocese of Oxford Branch in 1988 along with Jeanne Scott and Michael Golby and others local to The Diocese of Oxford as it was quite a distance for some members in Berkshire to travel.

I have held the title honorary life member since 2009. I organised a national rally in St Albans.

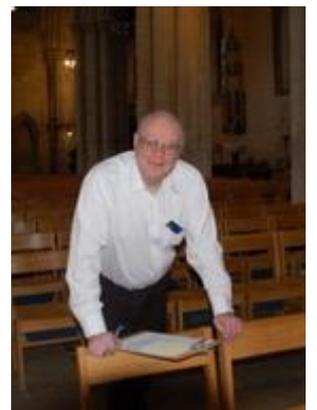
I moved to become Virger at the Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Albans in 1990 and served there until Retirement in 2015 reaching position of No. 2 Canons Virger.



I retired to a small village Wheathampstead 7 miles from St Albans. I attend St Helens Church, am a member of PCC and am on the church cleaning rota once a month, where I clean the cross, candlesticks, etc. I joined the local U3A, convener of Computer Group, the Treasurer for St Albans West district Guiding Group AND, believe it or not, volunteer Back at the Cathedral one Morning a week getting up early to get 0820 Bus doing a job I started before I retired, I also have a garden and joined local horticultural Society to learn a bit more.

The last year has been somewhat difficult following the loss of my dear wife just after our 46th wedding anniversary, who had been suffering with health problems all her life (We lost our only son to Cancer in 2012) but she never ever complained.

My faith and my Christian family have kept me going. At times it's not easy but the Lord knows what I need and he is there for me.





MEET OUR NATIONAL LIFE MEMBERS...



National Life Member of the Guild – Raymond Fowler

I joined the Church of England Guild of Vergers in March 1976 as a member of the St Alban's branch. The service of admittance took place at my parish of Bromham in Bedfordshire, on Holy Cross day that year. Giving directions to Frank Lane and Charles Wellings, I said "turn right off the Northampton road and take the second field gate on the right, drive some way through the park and the church stands alone surrounded by fields" (It does to this day.)

I was a part-time honorary vergers at St Owens Bromham for twenty-two years, once at a reception in the village hall the Bishop of St Albans said that he had heard of my work at Bromham. When I told him that I was considering applying for full time posts, he said "when you do, let me know". By the time I did apply for a post Bishop Runcie had become Archbishop of Canterbury so I did not take up his offer.



In 1978 I was appointed Beadle of Edgbaston, St Bartholomews, a joint appointment with my wife. There followed two pretty unhappy years, but we made some very good friends that we keep in contact to this day, and the Birmingham branch of the guild was a support.

In 1980 I was fortunate to be appointed vergers at Worcester Cathedral and two years later was made Custos. At that time Worcester had no branch but was part of the Birmingham branch. Fairly soon the Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester branch was founded by the cathedral vergers firstly but soon attracted parish church vergers as well. I served as branch chairman for a while and then as area leader of a very large area. I also served on the committee which set up the training course and at its inception acted as one of the tutors. In 2000 I was appointed National chairman, I had retired in 1998 so I felt that I had time to devote to the role, however my wife's serious illness made it tricky for a whole year out of the three.

I have never regretted joining the Guild and still try to attend branch functions when I can.



Look out for more articles about our Fellows and Life members each issue



ABOUT YOU, OUR MEMBERS...



We would like to congratulate our following members:

Canon Maureen Palmer, National Chaplain, on celebrating her Silver Jubilee of her Priesting

Ben Elliot, York Branch, on his marriage to Maria on 22 June 2019

David Anwyl-Hughes, Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester Branch, on obtaining his music theory exam ABRSM grade one with distinction, we wish him well as he starts towards his grade two.

Peter and Beverley, Leicester and Peterborough with Derby Branch, on their recent marriage

Michael Scott, Peterborough and Leicester with Derby Branch, on his appointment as Head Vergers of Derby Cathedral

Lawrence Kidman, East Anglia Branch, on his 80th Birthday

**If you know anyone who deserves a mention please let us know,
this is your Guild and we are proud of you all**



OBITUARY—JOHN MARSH

21 August 1936 – 7 February 2019

A Thanksgiving Service to celebrate the life of John Marsh was held on 12 March at St Edmundsbury Cathedral. Both National and local members of the Guild of Vergers were well represented supporting the many friends, colleagues and family of John.

Following National Service John married Joyce in 1961 and they had two daughters. Discovering, whilst the girls were at the school they attended, there was a shortage of playground supervisors. John offered his services and was a 'Dinner Lady' for 41 years, until 2015. He also guided countless children through their Cycling Proficiency tests.

After an early career with the Co-Op John began life as a verger at St Mary's, Bury St Edmunds in 1966. He later gained the position of Head Verger at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, retiring after more than 25 years' service in 2001. He was the first ever recipient of the Order of St Edmund, awarded for special services to the cathedral. John was an active member of

the Guild, a longstanding Area Leader for the East Anglia area and served as National Chairman 1992–1995. He was awarded Life Membership in 2009, the same year he was presented with Maundy Money by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. He served as Guild Chronicler from 2003–2006.



Following retirement John continued to help verge when required, was a volunteer in the cathedral shop and engaged in the education of children, both in the Cathedral and on school visits with the Diocesan Discovery Centre. Many tributes were received for a man who was truly special, always with a ready smile. He will be sadly missed.



FROM A WALSINGHAM PILGRIM

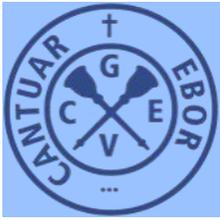
I returned from Walsingham on Thursday evening after a wonderful few days at England's Nazareth. Though I could see no immediate similarities to Nazareth which was a dust bowl last time I was there. There is at Walsingham a replica of the house which Jesus grew up in that is called 'Holy House'. The grounds are beautiful with trees newish and mature and the planting was lovely with the roses in full bud. My room was in the new wing 2nd floor above reception with lift. A fab room with en suite, overlooking the gardens as well as the 3 huge crosses that dominate the garden.

Though the Churchmanship of the venue was not mine, Canon Maureen and Rev'd Tom gently and sensitively steered us few through "The compulsory Walsingham Pilgrim Manual". My favourite experience was Stations of the Cross which led us around narrow paths and ancient buildings ending up in the garden and the 3 huge crosses.

The good food was served on a similar way as we are used to at Malvern and the hundreds that were on Pilgrimage with us were soon served. Our cost for full board and our rooms was £106 + £20 deposit. which is below expected. We were blessed by edge to edge blue skies, no clouds at all, but a sharp east wind made me keep my jacket on being a tender blossom! Though I did walk the 'Pilgrims Mile' to the Slipper Chapel which, of course, is another mile back. I am going to enter Canon Maureen and Rev'd Tom into the Olympics, though I was always going to be keeping watch at the back they were eventually out of sight.

I was glad I went on this Verger opportunity as I had loads of chances to light Prayer Candles all over the place for the living and the dead!

Irene Money



PILGRIMAGE TO WALSINGHAM OR 'A POSE OF FLAMBAYED VERGERS'



On Tuesday the 14 May a small band of vergers, arrived in Walsingham a small village in Norfolk and the home of the Anglican Shrine of Our Lady, Mary of Walsingham.



Our three day pilgrimage was part pilgrimage, part retreat, part holiday, away from the pressures of work we were able to relax and let the holiness of that place infect us.

We had our "first visit to the Holy House" where we heard the Gospel of the Incarnation. We went to Mass in the Holy house and later, after dinner, we returned to the Shrine for the Healing ministries of Laying on of Hands and anointing and Benediction. A beautiful way to end a long day. Some rounded it off with a gin or three in the bar.



The next day we had our own Stations of the Cross, in the wonderful shrine gardens contemplating the mysteries of the Passion, followed by intercessions in the Holy House, and a pilgrimage Mass in the Shrine Church attended by all the Pilgrimage groups, (which was a lot). In the afternoon we walked to the Slipper Chapel, the Home of the Roman Catholic Shrine, to view and to pray there, especially for Christian unity.

Back at Walsingham we had some free time before Dinner and the Evening Liturgy and Procession of Our Lady through the Shrine Grounds at which Vergers provided the Lights (flambeys) of honour round the Statue. One of our numbers was having a Birthday (Oliver) so it was right to end the day with a glass of gin.

Our last act, following breakfast on Thursday was to say Mass in the Holy House and our last visit.

I think that all who attended found the peace of the place, the worship, and the fellowship with each other and our fellow pilgrims to be both life enhancing and life refreshing, to quote one of our numbers "Following our beautiful Pilgrimage to Walsingham O that happy time on Verger Pilgrimage".

Dear Mother of our Saviour Christ,
we hail thee and depart.
Our pilgrimage is now complete.
We leave petitions at thy feet
Enfold then in thy heart.



Fr Tom Cameron
Assistant National Chaplain



THE LIVERPOOL FESTIVAL



What an amazing couple of days! On the 2 & 3 May we held the Ebor Festival in Liverpool. It had been months in the planning and organising, and the three of us were finally ready to welcome people to our city, Cathedral and branch. In total we had forty-six people attending the festival and it was a pleasure to welcome each and every one of them. We welcomed Andrew Ware, a director from Hayes and Finch on the Thursday. He stayed with us throughout the day and chatted to us, handed out catalogues and helped to welcome everybody to the city.

We started the festival with a communion service in the Lady Chapel at Liverpool Cathedral, followed by lunch, after which it was time to enjoy tours and some free time. A lot of people chose to walk along Hope Street, which links our two Cathedrals, and to take a tour of the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King. Others enjoyed a walk around the city or a tour of our Cathedral. It was then all back to the Cathedral for refreshments before robing for our grand procession into Evensong. It is always a wonderful occasion when we can use the building to the full, and we certainly did that. At twenty-seven minutes past five we all processed the length of the Cathedral's great space, from the West into the Presbytery where we stood as the choir and clergy processed in from the EaSt We enjoyed a wonderfully sung service by the Men and Girls of the Cathedral Choir, with our own Canon Maureen joining Canon Ellen Loudon in reading the lessons. After Evensong, and the obligatory group photograph, it was down to the dining room for our supper of Scouse with bread followed by sticky toffee pudding and custard. Then it was off to bed for a good rest, ready for more the following day.



On Friday morning we stood in a very windy car park waiting for our coach, which turned up with one minute to spare. Then we were off to Chester Cathedral. We were welcomed at the Cathedral by Corentyn the Head Verger, who then took a few brave souls up to do the tower tour. The rest of us either enjoyed a tour of the Cathedral by one of our members Stella Stiles, or went and enjoyed some time walking around Chester. Then it was back on the coach and back to Liverpool for evensong before we parted company and went home.

I know that Gratten William, Marion Baker and myself, as well as those of us from the Liverpool branch who came to help and support, enjoyed the festival immensely. We hope that all you who came had a wonderful time. We loved meeting you and enjoying the fellowship that is so important to us at the guild, and we hope you see you all again soon.



Tracey Rogers
Branch secretary



THE GUILD SHOP



The Guild Shop has Guild branded articles available to all Fellows, Full and Associate Members. (Non-Members are invited to make contact with the General Secretary about joining the Guild: CEGVGenSec@gmail.com)

These will add a little something to every Vergers's uniform, whether it's a Guild Fleece or a Guild Gown Badge to spice up your official Vergers robes. The Shop has something for you. For more information on the shops products, to order a catalogue or place an order contact:

Current Shop Stock (as of May 2019)

GS001 National Constitution Book		£2.00
GS002 Guild of Vergers Gown Badge		£16.00
GS003 Guild of Vergers Lapel Badge (full member)		£6.50
GS004 Guild of Vergers Lapel Badge (associate member)		£6.50
GS005 Guild of Vergers Name Badge		£7.50
Please note, there are only two lines available on the name badge eg....Andrew Baker Salisbury Cathedral		
The badge is now available with a pin or magnetic fixing, please state your preference.		
GS006 Guild of Vergers Cufflinks		£20.00 per pair
GS007 Guild of Vergers 75 Years Book (John Campbell)		£2.00
GS008 Guild of Vergers Car Sticker		£1.50
GS009 Guild of Vergers Book Mark		£1.00
GS010 Guild of Vergers Card Selection (with Bible text inside)	12 Cards	£10.00
or individual cards for £1.00 each (see GS019)		
GS011 Guild of Vergers Pen		£1.00
GS012 Guild of Vergers Paper Knife		£5.00
GS013 Guild of Vergers Lanyard		£3.00
GS015 Guild of Vergers Fleece		£30.00
Fleece Sizes Ladies:	Small (8-10), Medium (12-14), Large (16-18), X Large (46) & XX Large (48).	
Fleece Sizes Gentlemen:	Small (38), Medium (40), Large (42-44), X Large (46) & XX Large (48)	
GS016 Guild of Vergers Silk Tie		£16.00
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GS022 Guild of Vergers Blank Cards (pack of 10 cards with 2 designs)		£2.50
GS023 Guild of Vergers Bag (Serving the Church, Leading the way...)		£7.00

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'Church of England Guild of Vergers'
a donation towards postage on larger orders would be appreciated.**

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ANNUAL TRAINING CONFERENCE



The Verger in Ministry

With the weather turning (in the most part) for the better, summer is not too far away.

This means that we are in full swing planning your Annual Training Conference.

Come join us in the beautiful West Malvern hills, with beautiful surroundings, great (en-suite) facilities, but more importantly fantastic company.

A chance to make and to renew friends from across the Guild, to share in Fellowship, to chat, hold meetings, engage in seminars, exchange ideas, issues, and to Break Bread together.

This Conference is there for everyone, whether you are an old hand or a new broom, a chance to engage in some



training and learn new skills.

Conference takes place from Monday 12 – Thursday 15 August, at a cost of ONLY £260.00 per person* based on a single occupancy room. This is Full Board with access to the on-site swimming pool included.

**Elim Conference Centre
De Walden Rd
Malvern
Worcestershire
WR14 4DF**

For more information please contact our wonderful conference secretary, Margaret, CEGVConference@gmail.com

* bursaries are available, should they be needed, please contact (in confidence) the National Chaplain, Canon Maureen CEGVNatChap@gmail.com



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THE GUILD PRAYER

Almighty Father, from whom every family in heaven and earth is named,
who has called us into the fellowship of your Church,
grant, we pray, that in all our churches we may fulfil the duties
and enjoy the privileges of our spiritual home.
And on those who offer themselves for service as vergers in the house of God
bestow the fullness of your grace,
that, united in love to you and to one another,
we may show forth your glory and hasten the coming of your kingdom.
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

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www.cofegv.org.uk

