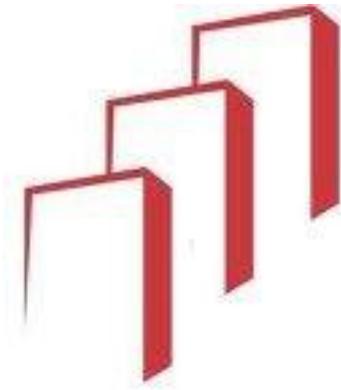


Milestones in a Ministry



Fr Neil Kelley at St Faith's: 1999-2012

To mark the ending of his 13 years' ministry as Vicar of the United Benefice, we present year-by-year edited highlights, in words and photographs, of each year's events at St Faith's

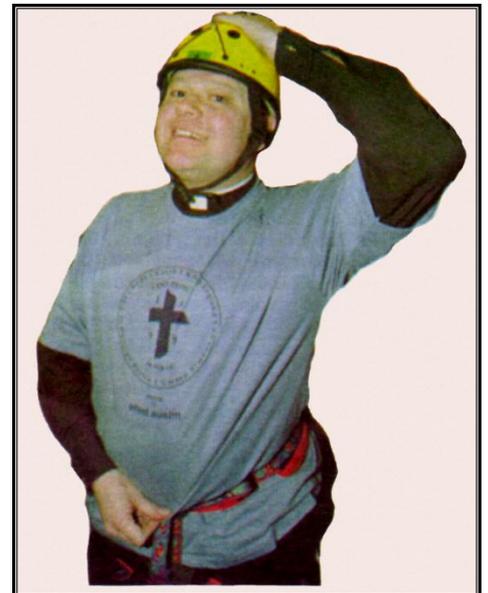
A.D. 1999



In the Beginning...

Fr Neil on a
Warden's sofa
before his arrival in
the parish

And apparently
gearing up for a
sponsored abseil –
definitely not from
that sofa... it was in
Kirkby!



It would be impossible to mention all that happened in that first year, but equally impossible not to focus first on the Induction service on April 29th, marking the beginning of Fr Neil's ministry, as reported in the following month's magazine.

Here Beginneth ...

We seemed to have been waiting for ever (since February 1997, actually) but Thursday April 29th came at last. Like most big events, it took weeks of planning by a host of people, with concerned folk constantly hoping it would be all right on the night. And it certainly was. The Induction of Fr Neil was one of St Faith's great occasions. Too much happened at Merchant Taylors' afterwards, and again in church on the following Sunday evening, for a full account, but a few snapshot impressions may give the flavour...

Huge processions in and out (one Bishop, two Archdeacons, a plethora of Priests, a representation of Readers, a king-sized Choir) ... 120+ processing in all, with a total of 50 robed priests: is this a record for St Faith's? ... St Chad's Principal in his doctoral dressing-gown ... civic representatives ... a whole pew-full to kneel with Neil and be blessed for service at St Faith's and St Mary's ... chairs filling both chapels and right to the back wall ... a massed congregation featuring large contingents from St Mary's, from Kirkby (Anglican and Roman Catholic), as well as others from Chiswick, Warrington and many other places ... difficult to count but probably over 500 people in church (and most of them also at the Feeding of the Five Hundred afterwards!) ...

... Marvellous music ... Ged and the Choir splendidly sounding forth Parry's 'I was Glad' at the very beginning ... Olivia Blackburn singing Caccini's Ave Maria to a hushed full house ... Taize choruses, and hymns ancient and modern ... sounding brass from the Merchant Taylors' players and resounding organ music from David Houlder and Mike Foy ... Powerfully symbolic liturgy (the new experimental Diocesan order of service) ... movement to all corners of the church and the handing over of water, oil, holy books and vessels ... simple, heartfelt intercessions from the young people of both churches, with a plea to our new Vicar to stay for a very long time ... an abundance of rich ceremonial, causing more than one comment that it was more like a coronation ... the strong yet relaxed conducting of the service by Bishop John, aided by many others ... the power of moments of silence and the presence of so much prayerful devotion ...



... The walk on a balmy summer night to the fine and floodlit front of Merchant Taylors' ... food and wine in plenty, long and lovingly prepared and expertly dispensed ... a general air of bonhomie and euphoria, with a measure of entertainment from Archdeacon and Vicar ... people staying on long after most people do at post-induction parties ... packs of guidebooks and the magazines of both churches given to all and sundry ...

Festal Evensong, Procession and Te Deum on the following Sunday evening ... a goodly number in the pews and another augmented choir ... the lovely Stanford setting ... more incense (lots more incense) ... possibly the greatest concentration of honourings of the Blessed Virgin Mary at St Faith's since the Lord knows when ... a stirring maiden sermon and a call to service from Fr Neil ... the wearing of three birettas (surely another first?) ... the legendary but well-attested transporting of one of these exotic articles of headgear alone in a taxi from St John's, Tuebrook to grace the head of Fr George (yet another first) ... yet more junketings, this time in the church hall ... exhausted satisfaction all round ...

In brief, Rick Walker and I have been touched and overwhelmed by all the compliments we have received on behalf of St Faith's by so very many people, both from our churches and from elsewhere. We can only pass them on, with our heartfelt thanks, to all those who shared with us the preparation for this great event and who should now share our satisfaction and delight that it went off so well. St Faith's, as always, owes much to the sustained and professional efforts of so many of its people, together with gallant assistance from many at St Mary's (surely the best of omens for the future), which made this extravaganza the memorable event which it undoubtedly was. Everyone at St Faith's gives thanks to God for sending us Fr Neil and looks forward to great things in the months and years ahead. Some of us look forward to a quieter time as well, but we're probably just kidding ourselves...





Meanwhile, in the north aisle...

The celebration of the centenary of the foundation of St Faith's was underway before Fr Neil's arrival, and a stained glass window commemorating past worshippers at the church had been designed and commissioned previously.

It was installed and dedicated later in the year, created round the words from the much-loved hymn 'In our day of thanksgiving': These stones that have echoed their praises are holy, And dear is the ground where their feet have once trod.'



Coming soon... the year 2000
Until then... the [home page](#)